CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RELEVANCE

Larry Poston (2000:9) comments that Max Muller, the founding father of the academic discipline known as comparative religion studies, believed that most people never examine their personal religious faith in comparison with another world religion. "He who knows one knows none" (Swatos 2008:1). If we apply this statement to Christian-Muslim relations, then Christians cannot know their own faith without understanding the Islamic faith. In the same way, without understanding the faith of Christianity, Muslims cannot know their own faith. The paradoxical implication that one must learn another religion in order to know one's own religion could better render a meaningful solution for the tensions of Christian-Muslim relations. However, this proposal has met with obstacles derived from the respective mandates of the believers.

In the heart of Christianity and Islam there is the call to make known their faith. This is called "the Great Commission" (Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16) in Christianity while in Islam it may be called "the Jihad."[1] However, when they follow their own mandates without adequate knowledge of the other's faith, religiously driven conflicts are inevitable. Kateregga and Shenk (1980:xvi) accurately present the problem of Muslim-Christian interaction:

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[1] Literally Jihad means "an effort" or "a striving" (S 9:5-6; 25:52). The mission of Islam is also called "*da'wah*" (call to Islam). See 6.7.2.3 "Understanding of Christian mission and Muslim *da'wah.*"

Hundreds of millions of Muslims and Christians are neighbours to each other. The faithful in both communities believe that they have been called by God to be witnesses. Yet they seldom hear each other's witness. The collision of their histories has created walls which separate. Although both communities worship the same God and seek to be the people of God, they seldom listen to one another.

As many religions eventually become the culture of the believers, at least in the case of Islam, the above mentioned problem of Muslim-Christian relations seems to originate from behaviour produced by ethnocentrism. Hiebert (1983:39), in his competent discussion of cultural anthropology, defines ethnocentrism as "judging other people's behaviour by one's own values." Ethnocentrism can very well become religiocentrism when both Muslims and Christians interact with each other within the values of their religions without understanding the other's religious values or teachings.

Furthermore, the tendency towards religiocentrism in Christian-Muslim relations has affected all levels of society, including the various scholarly communities. As a result, both Christian and Muslim scholars have been concentrating on arguments that aim to establish their religious pre-eminence (Gilchrist 1999:5). Due to the recent global conflicts between Muslims and Christians, much publication and study on the issue of Muslim-Christian relations has been undertaken. However, the majority of these works seem to deal with rational arguments of the relational problem between the two religions. Scholars make use of a deductive approach[2] to the relational problem which first examines the consequences of the

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[2] For the definition of "inductive approach" and "deductive approach" see 1.7.2 "Explication of terminology" in this chapter.

problem, then attempts to deduce the cause of the problem. This approach can possibly identify the cause of the problem but may not adequately explain the origin of the cause or its development into different problems.

On the other hand, the inductive approach analyses the cause of the problem in order to infer a general conclusion. Therefore it can answer both the questions of the origin of the cause and its development into other problematic areas in Christian-Muslim relations. Respectfully, this thesis embraces the inductive approach to the text with an unbiased religiocentrism. As a result, this study makes an effort to close the gap between Islam and Christianity. The effort is made through a comparative understanding of the relationship of God with man in the Bible and the Qur'an with selected examples. This study may be timely as it is valuable in respect to today's global conflicts which are arising from religiously oriented cultural clashes. In the area of Old Testament studies, this research may contribute a better understanding and deeper insight in the areas of theophany, immanence and the transcendence of God by providing perspectives of God in the Semitic and oriental worldviews. This will be accomplished through the study of selected examples in the Qur'an illustrating how God related with Adam, Abraham, and Moses. For example, in the story of Moses' encounter with "the burning bush" (Ex 3:2; S 20:10; 27:7-14; 28:29-35), the biblical interpretation reflects God's fiery theophany (Niehaus 1995:187) while the Qur'an indicates the ontological status of Moses when encountering physical fire, *naar* (S 27:8). This brief comparison, which will be exposed in the later part of this thesis, brings a Semitic (Qur'anic) understanding of the impossibility of God's metaphysical presence, which challenges the biblical interpretation of the theophany of "the burning bush."

1.2   PROBLEM SETTING

Claude Moss (1943:1) defines an antinomy as "a pair of necessary truths, which must be held together, and yet, which appear to contradict each other." He provides a few examples of Christian antinomy: (1) God is three and God is one, (2) Jesus is both God and man, and (3) God is omnipotent, yet man has free will. My initial research reflects another antinomy of God, which is that God is transcendent and immanent, in reference to God's manifestation to Adam, Abraham, and Moses. This antinomy has been somewhat neglected by the majority of scholars and apologists from both Christian and Muslim perspectives. This oversight is not limited to the specific examples of my research but it also extends to the study of the Qur'an by biblical scholars, as John Reeves (2003:43) states:

> Many contemporary biblical scholars are aware that Bible and Qur'an share and exploit a common layer of discourse consisting of a number of stories and themes featuring and drawing on certain paradigmatic characters, such as Noah, Abraham, and Moses, however, do not pursue the literary ramifications of this nexus, and hence they remain remarkably oblivious to the rich reservoirs of traditional lore tapped and channelled by the Qur'an and its expounders.

Out of the many indications of this paradoxical relationship between God and creation in the Old Testament, Isaiah 57:15 expresses both the transcendence and immanence of God:

> **Isaiah 57:15**   For this is what the high and lofty One [transcendence] says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy [a cause of transcendence]: I live in

a high and holy place [transcendence], but also with him [immanence] who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

A brief observation of the text concludes that, while God dwelling in a high and holy place is evidence of his transcendence, at the same time he is present among the lowly and contrite, which is evidence of his immanence. In this context of Isaiah, the lowly and contrite are identified with those who abused and exploited Israelites. Of this transcendent-immanent nature of God, Brevard Childs (2001:471) concludes that "God is totally transcendent, yet at the same time God truly 'tabernacles' with his people."

On the other hand, the Qur'an emphasises the absolute transcendence of God similarly to the biblical account, yet lacks any element of the immanence of God:

> **Surah 6:103** No vision can grasp Him. But His grasp is over all vision: he is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things.

> **Surah 7:143** When Moses came…said, "O my Lord! Show (Thyself) to me That I may look upon thee." Allah said: "By no means canst thou see Me."

> **Surah 16:50** They all revere their Lord, High above them, and they do all that they are commanded.

> **Surah 17:43** Glory to him! He is high above all that they sat! – Exalted and great (beyond measure!).

Surah 17:57   Those whom they call upon do desire (for themselves) means of access to their Lord—even those who are nearest.

Surah 20:114   High above all is Allah, the king, the truth!

Surah 112:4   And there is none Like unto Him.

All of these verses imply the separation of man from God and deny man's direct access to God. First, when Moses requests to see Allah in Surah 7:143, God's denial suggests the impossibility of a direct encounter with Allah. Ali (1989:649) comments that the concept in Surah 16:50 is similar to the biblical fear of the Lord because "Allah is so high above the highest of his creatures, that they all look up to him in awe and reverence." Surah 17:57 indicates that it is impossible to have direct access to God. This applies even to Mohammad ("even those who are nearest") who sat "a two bow's distance in the heaven" (Musk 1989:151). The "bow distance" is referred to as 100 to 150 yards (Ali 1989:1378). Thus, it is a total of 200 to 300 yards distance. The only use of this measure in the Qur'an is in Surah 53:9, where the angel Gabriel stands a distance of two bows away from Mohammad during the revelation of the Qur'an. It is not God who reveals the Qur'an to Mohammad but the angel Gabriel, and Gabriel maintains his ontological (physical) distance from Mohammad during the revelation. This is another indication of the ontological transcendence between man and the heavenly being. Surah 112:4, "And there is none Like unto Him," sums up the whole argument and especially warns Muslims against anthropomorphism, which Ali (1989:1714) defines as "the tendency to conceive of Allah after our own pattern, an insidious tendency that creeps in at all times and among all peoples."

Conclusively, the people of Israel in the Old Testament experienced their God in transcendence and immanence (Is 57:15) while Muslims believe in a total transcendence of God which precludes the experience and knowledge of God (S 6:103; 20:114). This fundamental difference is deepened by the incarnation of God in the Christian faith in the New Testament (Jn 1:14; Phlp 2:7-8; 1 Tm 3:16), which completely separates the theology and beliefs of the two religions. Accordingly, the different concepts of the revelation of God may have resulted in the separation and conflict between Islam and Christianity, which is evident in the course of human history.

Furthermore, the Old Testament's perception of the transcendence of God is due to the collision of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man. This is clearly seen at the foot of Mount Sinai where God sets a boundary of limited access to himself for the people of Israel (Ex 19:12). The people can only gain access to God after they consecrate themselves (Ex 19:10, 22). However, the nature of God's transcendence in the Old Testament is contradictory as it relates to the Qur'an. Many of the biblical transcendence incidents parallel to the Qur'anic account are accompanied by the immanence of God. For example, God reveals himself to Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:16) and expresses a desire to dwell among the Israelites (Ex 25:8; 29:45, 46). On the other hand, although it needs further exposition, the Quran's understanding of the transcendence of God is possibly due to the expansion of the sinfulness of man's nature as seen in Exodus 19:12. This brought about the total separation of God from man and will be further discussed in chapters 4 and 5. The Islamic concept of the transcendence of God, therefore, is similar to that of biblical holiness as Sweetman (1967:112) confirms in his definition of the transcendence of God in Islam. He says the transcendence (*tanzih*) and the declaration of immaculateness (*taqdis*) or sacredness are connotations of the Islamic transcendence of God. He provides definitions of *tanzih* as

"purifying" and *taqdis* as "consecration" or "hallowing" which share the same Semitic root (*qds*) with Hebrew word קֹדֶשׁ (holiness).

Exposition of the different aspects of God's revelation in the two Scriptures should not be based on mere philosophical theology, which discusses the result of the problem. On the contrary, the exposition should be based on the Scriptures themselves, which reflect the causes of the problem. When examining the Bible and the Qur'an for the relationship between God and man, many passages and episodes are strikingly similar to each other. Yet, there are some crucial differences in almost every occurrence. For example, the account where the three visitors announce the birth of a son to Abraham in Genesis 18 is comparable to Surah 11 and 15 as an identical event. Yet the Qur'an indicates that only two visitors came to Abraham (S 51:24) instead of the three in the Old Testament (Gn 18:2). In Genesis, the third visitor is identified as God (יהוה, Gn 18:1), and he remains in the scene of Abraham's supplication for Sodom (Gn 18:16-33), indicating the immanence of God in this event. On the other hand, the Qur'an affirmatively deletes the third visitor, who is identified as God, from the beginning of the scene (S 11:69), thus indicating the absolute transcendence of God in this context.

What is the cause of the difference? Was there any editorial work in the Qur'an based on the Qur'anic writer's prior understanding of the absolute transcendence of God? Or as the Qur'an itself claims (S 5:48), has the former revelation of God (the Bible) been so corrupted by Jews and Christians (Ali 1989:263) that God revealed the final and correct version of the Holy Scripture, the Qur'an? One affirmative fact at this stage is that both Muslims and Christians believe the Bible to be the "Word of God." The Qur'an confirms that the same God revealed the Bible and the Qur'an (S 29:46; 2:136). However, the contents of revelation from the same

God in the two Scriptures are considerably different even in identical episodes. If this difference between the two Scriptures has any influence on the process of formulating the respective Christian and Muslim theology and practice, there will be unavoidable theological disagreement between the two religions. Hence, the difference in the Scriptures is possibly one of the root causes of the conflict between Muslims and Christians seen today. For example, Christians' view of the immanence of God allows the incarnation of Jesus while Muslims' strict adherence to the absolute transcendence of God does not allow God to be human and to live among them. Thus, Christians' testimony of Jesus to Muslims would meet with an uproar for committing one of the greatest sins for Muslims, *Shirk,* idolatry or ascribing plurality to the deity (Hughes [1885] 1998:579).

At this point, I sense the need to investigate aspects of the transcendence of God, particularly in the context of God's major encounters with some of the significant figures of the Bible and the Qur'an. They are, namely, Adam, Abraham, and Moses. The proper understanding of God's relationship with man may bring a better understanding of the differences between Christianity and Islam, achieved through a comparative understanding and implications of the transcendence of God in the theologies of Christians and Muslims.

1.3   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this thesis is therefore to investigate the transcendence of God in the Bible and the Qur'an, particularly within the limits of corresponding accounts of God's relationship with Adam, Abraham, and Moses. Selected passages will be used as examples to fulfil the aim of the study. Through this study an attempt will be made to determine what constitutes different aspects of theologies and practices of Christianity and Islam.

The objectives of research are expressed through the following major research areas. These objectives are:

- to present an overview of the research as well as the various aspects of research methodology (chapter 1).

- to describe the similarities and differences in the Qur'an and the Bible and to present an appropriate approach to the exegesis of the elective passages (chapter 2).

- to establish the preliminary preparation of the study as well as to orient the readers to the theological issues of the transcendence of God (chapter 3).

- to investigate how God reveals his will in respect to the Qur'an and the Bible, particularly the Old Testament (chapter 4).

- to describe and analyse the transcendence of God revealed in the Old Testament and the Qur'an, within the limits of the parallel passages dealing with Adam, Abraham, and Moses (chapter 4).

- to find the cause of the differences between the corresponding episodes of the Old Testament and the Qur'an with regard to the transcendence of God (chapter 5).

- to analyse the implications of the transcendence of God with regard to the differences in Christian and Islamic theology (chapter 5).

- to conclude the study as well as to discuss any solutions for the Christian-Muslim conflicts and the necessity for further studies (chapter 6).

1.4   METHODOLOGY

The basic approach to the study of the transcendence of God is a comparative exegetical and literature study (chapter 4) as well as a comparative theological analysis (chapter 5) of both the Qur'an and the Bible. In the process of exegetical study the redactional approach to the Qur'an is evident in chapter 4. The redactional historical approach (or redaction criticism) is defined as an analysis focusing on the literary and theological contributions of the authors by analysing the way they modified their sources to arrive creatively and purposefully at their own special emphases (Grenz, Guretzki & Nordling 1999:100).

Within the limits of this thesis there is no attempt to study the extensive biblical or philosophical theology of the transcendence of God. Instead, the major approach is to examine the transcendence of God as a theological theme, or theologoumenon, in the light of the grammatico-historical approach. The grammatico-historical approach is the combined analysis of a text from two major criticisms: grammatical criticism and historical criticism. Grammatical criticism includes all attempts to answer questions pertaining to the language of the text (Hayes & Holladay 1987:27) while historical criticism is concerned with the historical settings of biblical texts (Stuart 2001:116). In addition to historical criticism, the reader's approach to the background and situation will be utilised to understand how the

people in the episode actually understood the appearance of God in particular situations, in order to fully understand the historical settings of the text.[3]

In the process of exegesis, this thesis employs the inductive approach to the Scriptures and analyses of the theme, the transcendence of God. As an inductive study method, the approach is a movement from the particular to the general; the thesis will formulate the understanding of the transcendence of God from the relevant passages of the Old Testament and the Qur'an. Then the findings of textual studies will be applied to the specific implications for the theologies of Christians and Muslims. This approach should provide some advantages by identifying theological reasons for the Christian-Muslim conflict, which originate from the different understandings and practice of theology.

There are three processes of the inductive method: observation, interpretation, and application. These processes are further explained as follows (Kyomya 1998:5):

- **Observation**: This asks the question, "What does the text say to the reader?" Thus it will note what is to be understood in the texts of the Old Testament and the Qur'an. As many of the corresponding episodes of the two texts differ from each other, this section will also discuss some of the editorial arguments of the texts in light of redaction criticism.

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[3] Orthodox Islamic belief holds that the Qur'an is the divine word as delivered directly to Mohammad. "Thus the Qur'an is literally the Words of God, repeated, without error, by his 'envoy' or 'messenger' (*rasul*), as he is called in the Qur'an, and as every Muslim must believe" (Peters 2003:26). In this respect, with the Qur'an being "Words of God," Islam upholds strong resistance to the application of historical-critical methods, which is stated here as one of the various approaches, to the Qur'an (Winter 2004:61). However, in order to achieve the purpose of this thesis, the exegetical method of interpretation is applied to both Scriptures, the Qur'an and the Bible. See also 1.4.2.

- **Interpretation**: This asks the question, "What does the text mean?" In this section, the thesis will be explored beyond the lexical or dictionary meaning of "referent." The section will employ the grammatico-historical method of exegesis, which seeks the meaning of a passage in its context, taking into account the rules of literature, grammar, syntax, and figures of speech to seek the values of its witness in light of its historical background. This approach will include, but is not limited to, historical and cultic background, textual criticism, grammatical and syntactical analysis, lexical study, and theological analysis. Chapter 4 will deal with interpretation after a brief presentation of an observation of the texts.

- **Application**: This asks the question, "How does the text relate to the particular [then and today] situation?" Here, the question asked is in relation to the theological implication of the transcendence of God over the formation of Systematic Theology (chapter 5). The basic approach to this section is a comparative theological analysis of the transcendence of God. Chapter 5 concentrates on whether the concept of God's transcendence, derived from chapter 4, has any significant impact on the theology of Christians and Muslims.

This study of the transcendence of God is further based on a literature study. The Bible, the Qur'an, language tools, relevant books, and periodicals will be the major resources for the exposition and analysis.

1.4.1 Underlying assumptions in the research

Although Christians share the Old Testament with Jews, in this thesis, the Old Testament refers to part of the Scripture of Christianity. The interpretation and exegesis are confined to

the perspective of Christianity, especially from an evangelical-conservative Protestant perspective. There are other theological perspectives that differ from this view. For the exegesis of the Qur'an, Sunni belief or orthodox Islam is the main argumentation.

The Scriptures used in this thesis are "The New International Version" (1978, revised 1983) for the Bible and "The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary" (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1934, revised 1989). It was a requisite decision to choose these Scriptures due to the various translation processes of the Scriptures. John Gilchrist (1995:139) comments on the translation of the Qur'an: "Unlike the Bible, authorised translations of the Qur'an into English, published by a number of recognised scholars, have never been produced. Virtually every English version has been the work of only one man, whether done by Muslim scribes or by Orientalists in the West. As a result each translation to some extent reflects the bias of the writer no matter how sincerely he may have attempted to produce a text as close to the Arabic original as he can." Therefore, it has been the considered decision to choose the most popular translation of the Scriptures, both the NIV and the Ali version of the Qur'an, in the Muslim world as well as in the West. I will refer to different translations if called for in the contexts of exegesis.

Both Muslims and Christians treat their Scriptures as inerrant; both adherents of these faiths see their Scriptures as the "Word of God," which is incapable of erring (Grenz et al 1999:66). Since there are many crucial differences between the Bible and the Qur'an, the inerrancy of the Scripture brings conflicts between the two groups of believers. However, for academic research, it is presupposed that both the Bible and the Qur'an are the Word of God without any further argument of inerrancy. The dogmatic description of how these believers want to view their Scriptures is not challenged in this study. Muslims treat the Hadith as fallible, but

based on Muslims' high respect towards the Hadith, this thesis will treat it on the same level as the Qur'an in the exegetical argument. God will be used in the general sense of deity, applying to both Christian and Muslim faith. If there is a need to distinguish between the two deities in the argument, Yahweh will be used when referring to the Christian deity while Allah will be used for the Muslim deity.

1.4.2 Delimiting the concerns of the research

As the Qur'an declares its status as a sequential Scripture to the Bible (S 5:48), there are many biblical accounts retold in the Qur'an, especially from the Old Testament.[4] However, these biblical stories appear in the Qur'an without ample details, so exegesis of the Qur'an is heavily dependent upon the corresponding biblical account in order to compare the relationship of God in both Scriptures. Therefore, in the process of exegetical analysis of the text, I will apply the biblical exegetical method of literary grammatico-historical approach to both the Qur'an and the Bible within the limit of the corresponding texts employing the biblical and Qur'anic theology, not the history behind the texts.

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[4] There are 25 prophets mentioned by name in the Qur'an. Following are the major prophets of the Qur'an: Adam the "Chosen of Allah," Noah (*Nuh*), the "Prophet of Allah," Moses (*Musa*), the "Converser with Allah," Abraham (*Ibrahim*), the "Friend of Allah," Ishmael (*Isma'il*), the "Sacrifice of Allah," Jesus (*Isa*), the "Word of Allah" and the "Spirit of Allah," Isaac (*Ishaq*), Jacob (*Ya'qub*), David (*Dawud*), Solomon (*Sulaiman*), Elijah, Elisha, Jonah (*Yunus*), John the Baptist (*Yahya*), Zechariah (*Zakariya*), father of John the Baptist. Salih, Hud and Shu'aib, The identity of the last three is not clear (*Prophets* 2002:1). Many of the biblical prophets in the Qur'an have extensive similarity to the biblical accounts, especially Adam, Abraham, and Moses. These three persons are chosen for discussion as they are foundational figures of both Christianity and Islam as well as for the comparable textual similarities.

1.5   HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis for this study of the theologoumenon, namely the transcendence of God in the Old Testament and the Qur'an with regard to the eclectic passages, is as follows:

Exegesis of the parallel passages dealing with Adam, Abraham, and Moses in the Old Testament and the Qur'an shows that the (ontological) transcendence of God[5] in the Old Testament is due to the sinful nature of man. Due to the unholy nature of man, the Holy God cannot be with man, yet God uses his transcendent nature as a medium to approach man. On the other hand, due to the presupposition of the absolute transcendence of God, the Qur'an is redactionally written to propagandise against God's immanence in the Old Testament and thus maintain God's absolute transcendence from his creation.

The differing concepts of the relationship of God with mankind shown in the divergent exegesis of Adam, Abraham, and Moses may have been foundational to the entire Islamic and Christian faiths. Furthermore, they may have caused some of the major differences between Christian and Muslim theologies, with the one allowing God's presence with man in Christianity and the other denying God's presence with man in Islam. The differences may also have constituted a root cause of Christian and Muslim conflicts. On the other hand, explicating the differing concepts of the transcendence of God and their effect on the theology of Christianity and Islam may result in better Christian-Muslim relations by promoting understanding of the root cause of the differences.

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[5]   See the definition of "transcendence" and "ontological status" in 1.7.2. In this thesis, the transcendence of God is referring to God's ontological transcendent state from humankind.

1.6   CHAPTER DIVISION

Significant differences as well as similarities between Islam and Christianity are noted in the theologoumenon of the transcendence of God, based on exemplary chosen texts in events between God and Adam, Abraham, and Moses. Their implications for overall Muslim and Christian theologies will be discussed. The following provides an overview of this thesis:

- Chapter 1 includes rational statements on the subject of God's relationship with his people, particularly referring to the theologoumenon, the transcendence of God. It presents an overview of the problem statement, aims and objectives, as well as various aspects of research methodology, hypothesis and study outline.

- Chapter 2 presents a background study of the Bible and the Qur'an. It will focus on the methods of divine revelation and the relationship between the two Scriptures.

- Chapter 3 orientates the readers to the theological issues of the transcendence of God from the viewpoints of both Christian and Muslim scholars as well as Jewish scholars. The issues of transcendence in Buddhism, Hinduism, and other societies will first be presented for the purpose of orientation. The study of chapter 3 will carry out a literature review of the "Ways of Transcendence," edited by Edwin Dowdy (1982).

- Chapter 4 focuses on the exegetical and comparative studies of the corresponding passages and episodes between the Old Testament and the Qur'an in order to investigate the transcendence of God revealed in the text. Survey and analysis of the biblical and

Qur'anic passages on the transcendence of God in events with Adam, Abraham, and Moses will be carried out.

- Chapter 5 applies the results of chapter 4's findings to the general theologies and practice of Christians and Muslims. Such areas include anthropology, soteriology, pneumatology, bibliology, and theology proper. This chapter will explore how differing views of God's transcendence influence overall Christian and Muslim theology and contribute to the disunity and conflict between adherents of these faiths today.

- In Chapter 6 a synopsis of the results and findings of the research as well as the implications of the thesis' finding for Christian and Muslim relations will be provided. Several suggestions for further research will conclude the study.

Ibn Warraq (1995:1) divides Islam into three categories: "Islam 1, Islam 2, and Islam 3. Islam 1 is what the Prophet taught, that is, his teachings as contained in the Koran. Islam 2 is the religion as expounded, interpreted, and developed by the theologians through the traditions (Hadith); it completes the *sharia* and Islamic law. Islam 3 is what Muslims actually did do and achieve, that is to say, Islamic civilization." This thesis' outline may be compared to that of Warraq's division of Islam. Chapters 1 to 3 prepare for the main studies. Chapter 4 correlates with Islam 1 by employing exegetical studies of the Qur'an and the Bible. Chapter 5 may correspond to Islam 2 in a discussion of the theological issue of the transcendence of God which is brought forth in chapter 4. Chapter 6 brings forth some issues of Islam 3. Therefore, the study touches on all aspects of Islam with a focus on the foundation of Islam, Islam 1, which refers to the Qur'an.

1.7 ORTHOGRAPHY AND TERMINOLOGY

1.7.1 Orthography

The adjusted Harvard system of reference is used in this thesis. The system is also called the author-date reference system, and the major reference is *Form and Style in Theological texts: A Guide for the Use of the Harvard Reference System* by Killian (1989). *The Chicago Manual of Style,* 14th edition, will supplement the Harvard Reference System by Killian.

All scripture references of the Bible are from the New International Version (1985) unless otherwise indicated. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament is from the fourth corrected edition of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (1977) by the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft. Greek text references for the New Testament are from Nestle-Aland 27th Edition (1993) while the Greek translation of the Old Testament is based on the LXX Septuaginta Rahlfs' (1935). The English translation version of the Qur'an is from Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1989), and the Roman transliterated version of Haleem Eliasii (1997) will be used for the Arabic text of the Qur'an. Unlike the Bible, which has reference to particular books, chapter, and verse such as Genesis (Gn 1:1), Exodus (Ex 1:1), and Leviticus (Lv 1:1), the Qur'an has only Surah (chapter) and verse as (S 1:1) references.

All Arabic words are transliterated and italicised in this thesis. In the case of the Arabic word that is recognised by the normative use of the noun and proper noun in English, anglicised forms are in use. For example, the word for God in Arabic is used as "Allah" instead of "*Allah*" when it occurs within the English sentence. Hebrew and Greek are used in the main

text with definitions when it first occurs followed by the words alone in the immediate succeeding arguments.

The different expressions for God in the Hebrew and Arabic translation and transliteration are capitalised, such as Yahweh, the Lord, and Allah. Accordingly, any of the words from the ninety-nine names of God in Islam will also be capitalised. The different words for Christian and Muslim Scripture are capitalised. However, instead of employing various terms such as the Book, the Holy Scriptures, the Mother of Tablet, and the Word, the unified form of "Scripture" will be used for both Christian and Muslim Scripture unless those terms are a part of the original text. The derived form of the Bible and any pronouns that refers to God will not be capitalised here. However, the Qur'an, Qur'anic and Allah are capitalised.

1.7.2   Explication of terminology

Depending on the context of the terminology used, the meaning and implications of a word or terminology can be varied. This thesis employs few terminologies that may be interpreted in various ways even without reference to particular context among scholars. Some of the following terms are already mentioned in this chapter's discussion of methodology. Other are listed to clear the ambiguity of the terms.

Exegesis: A word derived from the Greek verb "to lead out," is the careful historical, literary, and theological analysis of a text (Gorman 2001:31).

Grammatical Criticism: An analysis of text that includes all attempts to answer questions pertaining to the language and literary features of the text. This includes both the words

themselves, either alone or in phrases, as well as the way in which the words are put together or the syntax of the sentence. Rules of grammar in effect at the time the passage was written may also need to be examined if it appears that meaning and understanding depend upon resolving grammatical issues (Hayes & Holladay 1987: 27).

Grammatico-Historical Criticism: This method of exegesis seeks the meaning of a passage in its context, taking into account the rules of grammar, syntax, and figures of speech to seek the values of its witness in light of historical background. This approach will include, but not be limited to, historical and cultic background, textual criticism, grammatical and syntactical analysis, lexical study, and theological analysis.

Historical Criticism: Historical criticism is concerned with the historical settings of biblical texts, including the establishing of names, dates, and times for events mentioned or attended to in a given passage. The aim of historical criticism is to produce a useful understanding of the relevant historical factors behind the text (Stuart 2001:116).

Immanence: As the contrast to transcendence, immanence refers to God's existence in all parts of the universe. Just like transcendence in this thesis, the term is limited to the usage of the ontological status of God's existing inherently to his subject.

Inductive and Deductive: Induction is the basis of the scientific method used in this study. It is the method of reasoning that infers conclusions from observed patterns from particular facts or individual cases in data under study. Deductive reasoning deduces conclusions that are logical and necessary consequences of the premises. It reasons from the general to the specific (Sawyer 1999:151).

Ontological Status: Ontology is a branch of metaphysics[6] which is concerned with the nature of being. In Christian metaphysics there are three arguments: arguments for the existence of God, for the attributes of God, and for the relationship between God and the world (Hasker 1983:105-117). In the arguments for the existence of God, "ontological arguments set out to prove that it is logically impossible that God should not exist—that denial of God's existence is self-contradictory" (Hasker 1983:106). Ontological status refers to the existence status of God's being with mankind in this thesis.

Reader's Approach: This approach to a text is also called "reader-response criticism" and "reader-oriented criticism." Clines and Exum (1993:19) well define this somewhat ambiguous terminology of exegesis thus: "Reader-response criticism regards meaning as coming into being at the meeting point of text and reader—or, in a more extreme form, as being created by readers in the act of reading." In this thesis the reader's approach looks into the understanding of the circumstance of text by the original or early reader that includes the person involved in the biblical and Qur'anic events. This is done through "four view points— those of narrator, character, plot, and implied reader. The task of the real reader is to assemble meaning through these viewpoints by searching for (constructing) a consistent relationship between them" (Tate 2006:440).

Redaction Criticism: The primary meaning of this criticism is an analysis that employs "the quest for perceiving the ways in which the final author(s) of the text purposefully adopted and adapted sources" in order to create meaning in a new context (Gorman 2001:15). Western scholars of Islam, such as Geiger, Bell, and Wansbrough, promote the work of

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[6] Others treat ontology as synonymous to metaphysics or "first philosophy" as defined by Aristotle in the 4th century B.C. (Preece 2003:958; Keller 1975:1107).

Mohammad as redactor of the Qur'an. Firestone (2003:10, 12, 19) provides the accounts of the three scholars' views: Geiger upholds that, in some cases, Mohammad purposefully distorted or misrepresented Jewish teachings in order to make them fit the historical, cultural, ritual, or moral-ethical contexts in which he was working, Bell demonstrates that the present form of the Qur'an is the result of the careful editing, revision, and sometimes replacement of passages with Mohammad's cut and pasted verses, and Wansbrough examines how Qur'anic words, phrases, symbols, and ideas fit into the unfolding of generic scripture. His models are drawn mostly from the Bible and rabbinic tradition to demonstrate how the Qur'an developed organically within a sectarian biblical/rabbinic milieu. Muslim exegetes also sought Jewish and Christian texts that would explain the Qur'anic references to see how the Qur'an stood at the end of a series of revelations from God to humankind in the first Islamic century. This approach produced negative attitudes by the beginning of the third Islamic century. "Any relationship between biblical figures and themes found in the Qur'an was held to be the result of God's previous revelation to humankind, and any differences were the result of Jews and Christians corrupting that revelation. The Qur'an was not regarded as an imitation of the Bible" (Robbins & Newby 2003:24). Islamic scholars' attitudes closed the door to any scientific approach to the texts. Redaction criticism in this thesis, however, is limited to the argument of the formation of the Qur'anic texts corresponding to the Old Testament. The discussion of the transcendence of God is limited to biblical material in the Qur'an which is entitled to criticism, for both biblical and Qur'anic materials are sent by God according to the Qur'an (S 39:1,2; 45:2; 46:2; 76:23; 97:1).

Special Revelation: "The term revelation means intrinsically the disclosure of what was previously unknown. In Judeo-Christian theology, the term is used primarily of God's communication to man of divine truth, that is his manifestation of himself or his will…this

revelation being further discriminated as *general* or universal (that is, revelation in nature, history and conscience) and *special* or particular (that is, redemptive revelation conveyed by wondrous acts and words)" (Henry 1988:457). In this thesis, the discussion of the transcendence of God is limited to the category of "special revelation," where God reveals himself to particular people. In this individual and particular sense of revelation, "theophany" may be cross-defined with special revelation thus: "A theophany occurs when God's presence is made visible and recognisable as a divine self-disclosure" (Yarbrough 2000:733). However, it must be noted that Islam considers the Qur'an as proof of theophany. In fact the Qur'an is treated as "*the* great theophany of the religions" (Winter 2004:50), for Allah did not reveal himself but his will through the Qur'an."

Theologoumenon: "A theologoumenon is a theological opinion. This word is often applied to opposing arguments in a theological debate, where both sides are rigorously orthodox. This happens because we possess sufficient knowledge to assure our salvation, but we do not possess all knowledge, and we cannot satisfy our curiosity about every matter. For example, scripture does not teach us precisely what demons are, so theories about demons are theologoumena" (Collins 2008:1).

Transcendence: Opposite to immanence, it means either God's independence from the world or his greater status. From this definition, there are various theological uses for this term. However, in this thesis, transcendence has limited usage in reference to the ontological status of existence *above and apart from the material world* in reference to the relationship between God and his subject.

CHAPTER 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BIBLE AND QUR'AN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Both Christians and Muslims have placed their faith in descriptions in either the Bible or the Qur'an and endeavour to live according to the teachings of their Scriptures. They also respect their Scriptures to be the true "Word of God." However, when believers of the two major religions face each other with their respective beliefs of scriptural supremacy, there is unavoidable conflict because "Monotheistic traditions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam are notoriously exclusivist in their theologies and discriminatory in their laws" (Sachedina 2006:291). Some Christians treat the Scripture of Islam as the result of a deceiving act of a satanic angel in the revelation of God to Mohammad (Poston 2000:181). Thus, the Scripture of Islam, the Qur'an, is accordingly the "masterwork of the Satan, an ingenious mixture of truth and lies that binds all its beliefs in a dangerous imitation of the truth" (Abd-Al-Masih [s a]:68) and the truth of God needs to be disclosed to Muslims. Similarly, Muslims believe that Christians possess an altered version of what was once the Word of God, and therefore it is no longer trustworthy. Only the Qur'an contains spiritual truth. "In any point in which the Qur'an and the Bible disagree, the quranic text is to be considered accurate" (Poston 2000:183-184). Braswell (1996:296) also says "If the Bible contradicts what is reported in the Qur'an, then the Bible is false or has been corrupted."

In spite of the Qur'anic claims of "confirmations of (revelations) that went before it and a fuller explanation of the Book [the Bible]" (S 10:37), and that the same God revealed both the Bible and the Qur'an (S 29:46), there are crucial textual and theological differences in the two Scriptures. These differences between the Qur'an and the Bible may have been the cause of the depreciating of the Bible or the Qur'an by their traditional believers. Then how can the similarities and differences of the Qur'an and the Bible best be described and treated without causing any unwelcome results? Were there distinct methods of God's revelation of the Scriptures that resulted in the divergence? What seems to be the cause of the differences? Are there any explications and solutions for the differences in the corresponding accounts of the two Scriptures? These are some of the few questions addressed here after a short introduction to the Bible and the Qur'an.[7]

2.1.1   Introduction to Bible and Qur'an

2.1.1.1   The Qur'an

The Qur'an is considered to have been existent in the highest (7th) heaven, but it was for some reason brought down to the third heaven, from where the angel Gabriel took it piece by piece to reveal it to Mohammad, the "illiterate" prophet. Mohammad then recited the Qur'an and shared it with the people around him (Nehls & Eric 1996:53). Mohammad received the Qur'an and conveyed it five verses at a time and immediately ordered the passages to be

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[7] Some groups of Christianity and Islam hold the view that the Bible and the Qur'an cannot really be compared with one another as one Scripture over against the other. This belief of religiocentrism is based on either Jesus or the Qur'an being the living Word of God among the respective believers (Phipps 1996:81). However, for academic research, the Qur'an is treated as subsequent to Scripture in this thesis. See 1.4.2, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 for further discussion.

written down. Mohammad's companions immediately committed the verses to memory five at a time (Layla 1992:232). In this way many of his followers could quote large passages, some even the whole Qur'an, by heart. Those who memorised the entire Qur'an were called memorizers or protectors of the Qur'an (*Hafiz*).[8]

After the death of Mohammad in A.D. 632, Abu Bakr became the first Caliph (*Khalifah*), successor to Mohammad. Under the influence of the second Caliph Umar, Abu Bakr compiled the Qur'an into one volume because many memorizers of the Qur'an (*Hafiz*) were disappearing from the scene through battles and natural death. The final version was checked and approved by all Muslims, who heard the Qur'an from Mohammad (Kateregga & Shenk 1980:30). The final Qur'an generally used today is authorised by Uthman, Mohammad's third successor (Nagel 1999:12). Therefore, the collection of the Surahs has been suggested in three stages: "The first time was by Mohammad, basing this interpretation on the report of Zayd B. Thābit that stated, 'We used to compose (*nu'allif*) the Qur'an from the leaves…', in the following way: 'Mohammad used to say that this verse should be put in this sūra.' The second time was under Abū Bakr, but not in a definitive codex. The third time was under 'Uthmān in a 'definitive single' codex" (Gilliot 2006:46). At the final stage of the collection of the Qur'an, "Uthmān ordered that the other codices should be burned or destroyed and that the 'codex of Zayd' ('Uthmānic codex') alone should be preserved (in Medina) and copies made to be sent to each of the main centres of the empire: Mecca, Basra, Kūfa and Damascus" (Gilliot 2006:45). The Qur'an is divided into 114 Surahs (chapters) in no chronological order. Apart from Surah 1 they are roughly ordered according to length, the second Surah being the longest (Nehls & Eric 1996:53).

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[8] *Hafiz* is an honorific title for "one who preserves, has by heart" (the entire Qur'an). *Hafiz is* sometimes addressed as *shaykh,* "master" (Graham & Kermani 2006:122).

Muslims see the Qur'an as the verifier and guardian of the revelations of God. Maulana Ali ([1936] 1992:27) explains it based on Surah 5:48, "To thee We sent the Scripture [the Qur'an] in truth confirming the scripture that came before it and guarding it in safety":

> The Qur'ān is thus not only a verifier of the sacred books of all nations as stated above; it is also a guardian over them. In other words, it guards the original teachings of the prophets of God, for, as elsewhere stated, those teachings had undergone alterations, and only a revelation from God could separate the pure Divine teaching from the mass of error which had grown around it. This was the work done by the Holy Qur'ān, and hence it is called a guardian over the earlier scriptures [the Bible].

Therefore, the Qur'an is treated as superior among all the books of revelation as the final revelation which is "a summary and clarification of the former scriptures" (Shenk 2006:87). The books indicated in the Qur'an (S 2:136; 3:3; 17:55; 87:19) are the *Suhuf* (Scrolls) revealed to Abraham which is lost, the *Taurat* (Torah) revealed to Moses, the *Zabur* (Psalms) revealed to David, the *Injil* (Gospel) revealed to Jesus, and the Qur'an revealed to Mohammad (Kateregga & Shenk 1980:25-26). Among these books, the Qur'an itself boldly claims its supremacy to readers in Surah 2:23 and 17:88:

> **Surah 2:23**   And if ye are in doubt as to what we have revealed from time to time to Our servant then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah if your (doubts) are true.

Surah 17:88 Say: "If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an they could not produce the like thereof even if they backed up each other with help and support."

Yusuf Ali (1989:21, 699) explains that these two verses (S 2:23; 17:88) are the test of the true revelation from God by challenging humankind and Jinns to produce one like the Qur'an in terms of spiritual truth in such noble language. Furthermore, "*The Muslim believes the Qur'an to be the absolute identical copy of the eternal heavenly book, even so far as the punctuation, titles and divisions are concerned*" (Nehls & Eric 1996:54). For this reason, Muslims do not accept critique of the Qur'an, whether by historians, scientists, orientalists or theologians. In fact, those who apply the techniques of biblical criticism to the Qur'an and other Islamic sources "have found themselves condemned in *fatwah*, decrees declaring them to be apostates and beyond the pale of Islam" (Masood 2001:xvi). On the other hand, the Qur'an, both the book itself and its content, is highly respected by Muslims as they recite or chant the Qur'anic verses in Arabic, the original language of the revelation. Therefore, to the believers, "the Suras demand no critical thinking, only a passive acceptance and obedience" (Abd-Al-Masih [s a]:72) for "**Allah's law** is not to be penetrated by the intelligence, it is **ta'abbudi**, i.e. **man has to accept** it **without criticism**" (Nehls 1991:3). Consequently, as Amar Djaballah (2004:15) agrees, the vast majority of Muslims conceive of the Qur'an as the uncreated and eternal Word of God, and they must believe it as is written.

2.1.1.2   The Bible

The Bible is divided into two parts known as the Old and the New Testament. Unlike the Qur'an, which consists solely of chapters, there are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament

and twenty-seven books in the New Testament in the Protestant canon. The Old Testament begins with the five books of Moses (Torah), known as *Taurat* in the Qur'an (S 5:44), followed by the twelve books of the history of Israel and the rise of the prophets. Five books of wisdom, or the poetic books, follow next. In this section, Psalms is known as *Zabur* in the Qur'an (S 17:55). Together with *Taurat, Zabur* is generally referred to as the entire Old Testament by the Qur'an and the Muslims (S 5:49, 71; Gilchrist 1999:51). The remaining seventeen books are known as the books of the prophets (or prophecy).

The New Testament is the Christian Scripture dating from the second part of the first century. Unlike the Old Testament, the Jews do not accept the New Testament as canonical. However, Muslims and the Qur'an accept it as *Injil* (S 5:46), the Gospel of Jesus, that is generally referred to as the New Testament. The New Testament may be divided into three major sections: history (5 books), letters (21 books) and prophecy (1 book).[9] These books were written between 50 and 150 A.D., but only in the second century did the designation "New Testament" first appear (Peters 2003:17). The term "New Testament" is a theological term indicating the prophetic promise of the Old Testament which is fulfilled in the New Testament (Jr 31:31; Mt 26:38; 2 Cor 3:14). The term was first used by an early Church Father, Tertullian (c. 200) to indicate the entirety of the New Testament (Gromacki 1974:42).

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[9] Other popular divisions of the New Testament according to literary style are: Biography (Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn), History (Ac), Pauline Epistles (Rm, 1 & 2 Cor, Gl, Eph, Phlp, Col, 1 & 2 Th, 1 & 2 Tm, Tt, Phlm), General Epistles (Heb, Ja, 1 & 2 Pt, 1, 2, & 3 Jn, Jude), and Prophecy (Rv).

The Protestant Bible consists of 66 books: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The Catholic Bible has 73 books: 7 more books in the Old Testament than in the Protestant Bible. They are Tobit, Judith, Baruch, Wisdom, Sirach, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and parts of Esther and Daniel. In this thesis, the Bible refers to the Protestant Bible.

The canonisation of the Old Testament was historically undeviated compared to the New Testament. The three divisions of the Old Testament, Law, Prophets, and Writings (Psalms), were already recognised in the New Testament (Lk 24:44; see also Jn 10:35; 2 Tm 3:15). "This three-fold division was also attested to by Josephus (A.D. 37-95), Bishop Melito of Sardis (ca. A.D. 170), Tertullian (A.D. 160-250), and others. The Council of Jamnia in A.D. 90 is generally considered the occasion whereby the Old Testament canon was publicly recognized" (Enns 1989:171).

Even though Peter recognised Paul's writings as Scripture in 2 Peter 3:15-16, it is not until A.D. 363 that the Council of Laodicea stated that along with the Old Testament the twenty-seven books of the New Testament were to be read in the churches. In A.D. 367 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, declared that the twenty-seven books were the only true books. The Council of Hippo (A.D. 393) recognised them and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) affirmed that only those canonical books were to be read in the churches (Enns 1989:172; Harrison 1964:108-109).

Christians accept the Bible as the "Word of God."[10] They use the Bible "for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Tm 3:16). Christians also follow the example of Jesus whose teachings and personal life are based on the Old Testament. Therefore, Christians believe the Old and New Testament to be the "Word of God" and treat the entire Bible as guidance for their lives.

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[10] The phrase "Word of God" refers to Jesus (Rv 19:13; Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Jn 1:1) or a speech by God (Grudem 1994:47). In this thesis, it is a dogmatic expression to indicate that the faith tradition gives authority to the Scriptures.

2.2 REVELATION OF GOD

Christians believe that the Bible is the written "Word of God" through God's inspiration of different writers (Kenny [s a]:9). The Bible declares in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed [θεόπνευστος] and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." The Greek word θεόπνευστος in 2 Timothy 3:16 is a word composed of θεος (God) and πνευσις (blowing, breathing). Thus the word θεόπνευστος means "inspired by God" (NRS, NAU) or "inspiration of God" (KJV).[11] The Hebrew translation of the New Testament sheds better understanding of the inspiration. The Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew New Testament translates 2 Timothy 3:16 as, "כָּל־כִּתְבֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל־פִּי רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים" (all the writing of Holy Scriptures is upon (by) the mouth of the Spirit of God). This Hebrew translation indicates that the author of the Bible is the Holy Spirit through the inspiration of human writers and translators who wrote what Christians have today. In the process of writing, no thought or interpretation of the writers has been added as the Bible says in 2 Peter 1:20-21, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." Historically, the inspiration of the Scripture was first enunciated by Pope Gregory I (called "the Great") and open repeated thereafter (Peters 2003:21). Evans (1974:194-195) comments on inspiration as "*the strong, conscious inbreathing of God into men, qualifying them to give utterance to truth. It is*

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[11] NRS (New Revised Standard Version, 1989), NAU (New American Standard Bible, 1995), KJV (King James Version, [1611]1769).

God speaking through men, and the Old [and New] *Testament is therefore just as much the Word of God as though God spake every single word of it with His own lips."*[12]

However, Muslims can say "Divine inspiration does not mean divine dictation" (Kateregga & Shenk 1980:109). In this denial of the perfection of divine inspiration Muslims would argue that there is the possibility of human influences and editorial work in the writing of the Bible. Thus Kateregga (Kateregga & Shenk 1980:117) says, "the imprint of human personality is part of the content of biblical revelations." He continuously argues that the true revelation is "the true guidance that has been sent down (*tanzil*) directly from God." He means that in contrast to the Bible, the Qur'an had been dictated to Mohammad (*Wahyun*) in the original format of the heavenly copy. This implies that Allah himself is believed to be the actual author of the Qur'an.

In response a Christian scholar (Kateregga & Shenk 1980:32) says:

> Christians believe that the central fact of Divine revelation is God's Self-disclosure. God reveals Himself pre-eminently through His acts in human history. Divine Scriptures are, therefore, a revelation of God's Self-disclosure, and the Divinely inspired record of man's response to God's Self-disclosure. Christians do not perceive of revelation as Divine Books which have been sent down from heaven, but rather as the personal Word of

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[12] There are many other views of the inspiration of the Scripture. Yet, it is sufficient to deal with the view which is indicated above in this thesis. Enns (1989:160) lists other views such as: natural inspiration, spiritual illumination, partial or dynamic inspiration, conceptual inspiration, and divine dictation.

God engaged in lively, active encounter with man. That is the nature of Biblical revelation.

In the above Christian view of the revelation of God, Shenk presents and compares the two methods of revelation: the Muslims' way of sending down the word and the Christian view of writings as the inspired record of God's self-disclosure. This leads into further investigation of how God communicates with man, especially according to the Qur'an and the Old Testament.

2.3   MODES OF REVELATION

There are two notable statements of how God communicates with man in the Old Testament and the Qur'an. A biblical passage in Numbers 12:6-8, for example, may be compared with Surah 42:51.

Numbers 12:6-8   [6]he said, "Listen to my words: When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. [7]But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. [8]With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Surah 42:51   It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a Messenger [the angel Gabriel] to reveal, with Allah's permission, what Allah wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise.

The biblical passage in Numbers classifies mediators in God's communication on two different levels: general mediators and a unique authoritative mediator, Moses. To a general prophet, God reveals himself in visions and speaks in dreams (Nm 12:6). To Moses, God speaks face to face, clearly with no riddles (Nm 12:8).

The phrase "face to face" (פֶּה אֶל־פֶּה, literally "mouth to mouth") in Numbers 12:8 may indicate a contradiction of Exodus 33:20, which says, "you cannot see my face [פָּנַי], for no one may see me and live."[13] However, the context of Numbers 12 indicates "an anthropomorphism meaning that God spoke to Moses without mediation" (Hannah 1985:228). Out of the twelve NIV uses of the phrase "face to face" in the Old Testament, eight times are from the word "face" (פָּנִים), three use the word "mouth" (פֶּה), and once the word "eye" (עַיִן) is used.[14] From the usages of the phrase "face to face" it seems that the Old Testament uses the three words, "face," "mouth," and "eye" interchangeably when two parties are in close interaction with each other. Close interaction is not limited between man to man but also between God and man, which accounts for a major part of its usage. Bullinger (1968:873) expands this close interaction with the implication of the word "face." He asserts that the "face" would also indicate the divine presence in happiness and divine favour as in Psalms 17:15: "In thy face [presence] is fullness of joy." Thus, the figurative expression suggests a close relationship between God and Moses. The use of the phrase "face

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[13] This is further supported by John 1:18, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

[14] The biblical (NIV) references of "face to face" are: (1) eight times by the word "face" (פָּנִים), Gn 32:30; Ex 33:11; Dt 5:4; 34:10; Jdg 6:22; 2 Ki 14:8; 2 Chr 25:17; Ez 20:35, (2) three times by the word "mouth" (פֶּה), Nm 12:8; Jr 32:4; 34:3, and (3) one time by the word "eye" (עַיִן) in Nm 14:14.

to face" is clear when it characterises God's relationship with Moses as friendship, "The Lord would speak to Moses face to face (פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים), as a man speaks with his friend" (Ex 33:11; cf. Dt 34:10). Furthermore, God speaks to the people of Israel "face to face" at Mount Sinai from the midst of fire (Dt 5:4), another indication of God's presence and intention of a close relationship with man. It is a picture of immediate and profound intimacy that reflects God's initiative in revelation (Wessner 2002:116).

While the Bible indicates that God communicates directly with man (e.g., a special revelation),[15] the Qur'an strongly denies direct communication between God and man.[16] Surah 42:51 lists the three ways God communicates with man: inspiration, speaking from behind a veil, and the sending of a messenger. For Muslims, divine inspiration (*wahyun*) means either a suggestion supernaturally conveyed by God into the heart or mind of man, or verbal inspiration in which the actual words of God are conveyed in human language (Ali 1989:1261; Rahman 1989:99). The word inspiration implies a divine source that is beyond the world and the recipient. Even though some scholars may call this a direct revelation from God (Glasse 2001:383), the immediate context of excluding God's speaking to man ("It is not fitting for a man that Allah should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a Messenger…") suggests that there is no direct communication with God.

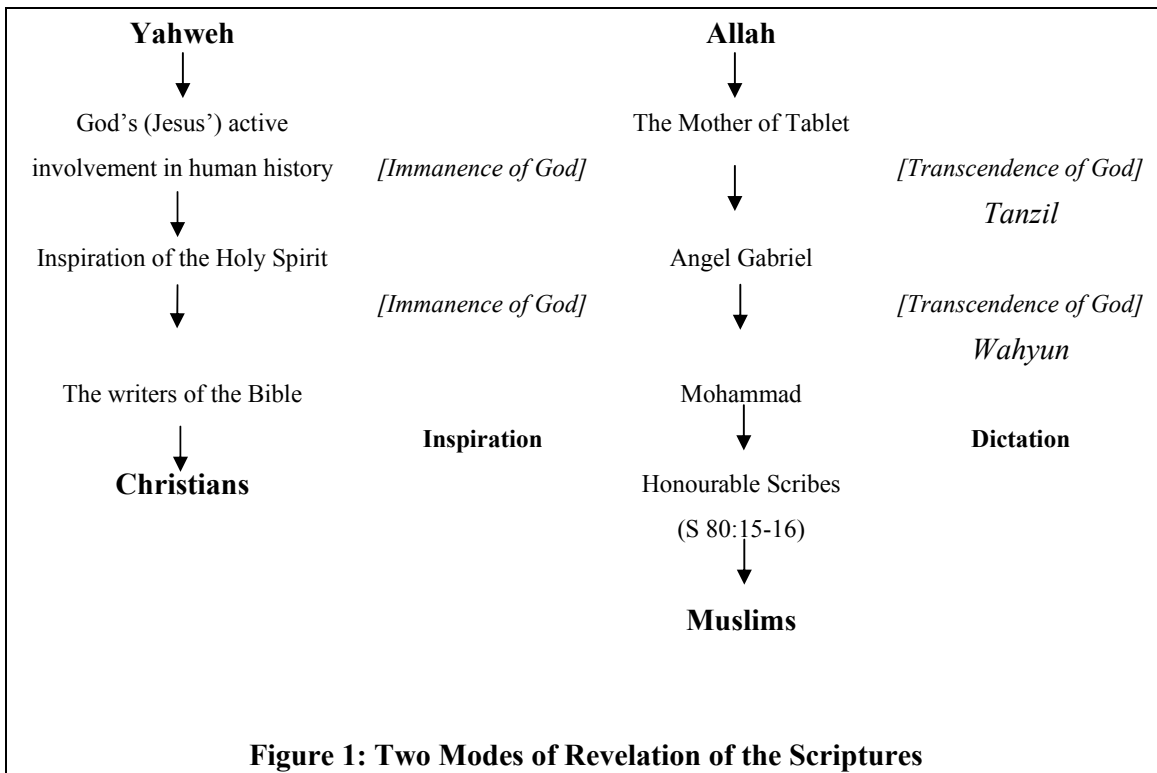[15] Jesus as revelation of God would be included in the category of special revelation (Jn 1:1-18).

[16] Maulana Ali ([1936] 1992:78) lists three methods of revelation: (1) inspiration of an idea into the heart, *wahy,* (2) God's speaking to a man from behind a veil that includes *ru'yā* (dream), *kashf* (vision), and *ilhām* (voices in a state of trance), and (3) *wahy matluww*, revelation that is recited by the angel Gabriel which is the surest and clearest form of revelation limited to Mohammad.

The second mode of communication may further support the transcendence of God in his revelation. The phrase, "behind a veil," is interpreted not as a material veil, but as a mystic veil of light (Ali 1989:1261). The word veil (*hijāb*) is used six times in the Qur'an (S 7:46; 17:45; 19:17; 33:53; 38:32; 41:5) besides Surah 42:51. Four of those six occurrences refers to a non-physical veil that operates in a spiritual sense, such as the separation of darkness from light, or the believer from non-believers in heaven. The other two times (S 19:17; 33:53) it means a "screen" to separate one person from another. In the context where God is involved the veil is understood to be a non-physical veil, indicating the separation of God and man. If the word was taken to mean a physical "screen," it would be possible to see God once the veil is removed. Therefore, the presence of God behind a physical screen would indicate that God's immanence is within the limit of man's ontological experience of God. Thus, by interpreting the veil as a non-physical veil that separates God and man permanently, Muslims interpret this form of revelation as the absolute transcendence of God.

The last mode of God's communication, namely through an angel, is possibly the most dramatic example of the separation between God and man in the Qur'an. Surah 42:51 says that God speaks to man through a messenger who reveals his will. The messenger (*rasul*) is identified as the angel Gabriel (S 16:102), through whom revelations were given to Mohammad (Ali 1989:1261). Even though these texts do not indicate that the Holy Spirit is equal to the angel Gabriel, Muslim scholars identify the Holy Spirit as a title of Gabriel (Ali 1989:664; Shenk 2006:181; Abd-Al-Masih [s a]:30). The messenger was standing "a distance of but two bow-lengths" (S 53:9) when he conveys the revelation of the Qur'an to Mohammad. The "bow distance" is referred to as 100 to 150 yards (Ali 1989:1378). Thus, it is a total of 200 to 300 yards distance. This would be a visible distance in which to recognize a contour clearly, but not close enough to identify a figure. Thus, it can be treated as the

ontological transcendence of a heavenly being as distinguished from man. Furthermore, the fact that Gabriel had to receive a part of the Qur'an from the Mother of Tablet (S 43.4; 85:21-22), rather than directly from God, is a further indication of Allah's distance from both angel and man alike.

In summary, the following flowchart compares the mode of revelation between the Scriptures. Both the Qur'an and the Bible have their origin in God who reveals himself to humankind. However, in the process of revealing the Scriptures to humankind, there is a clear distinction of God's status of absolute transcendence in the Qur'an through the medium of the Mother of Tablets and the angel Gabriel. On the other hand, in the Bible an immanent God is revealed when revelation takes place through the presence and active involvement of God in the history of humankind and in the process of the inspiration of the Bible.

Yahweh
↓
God's (Jesus') active
involvement in human history   *[Immanence of God]*
↓
Inspiration of the Holy Spirit
↓   *[Immanence of God]*

The writers of the Bible
↓   **Inspiration**
Christians

Allah
↓
The Mother of Tablet
↓   *[Transcendence of God]*
   Tanzil
Angel Gabriel
↓   *[Transcendence of God]*
   Wahyun
Mohammad
↓   **Dictation**
Honourable Scribes
(S 80:15-16)
↓
Muslims

Figure 1: Two Modes of Revelation of the Scriptures

2.4 APPROACHES TO BIBLICAL MATERIAL IN THE QUR'AN

2.4.1 Introduction

Marilyn Waldman (1985:1) presents one of the major problems among the scholars who try to investigate the relationship between the Qur'an and the Bible:

> When scholars investigate the apparent transmission of material from one monotheistic scripture to another, they tend to assume that earlier materials are normative and later ones derivative. This tendency, if unmitigated, makes it difficult to appreciate either earlier or later materials in and of themselves; and it affects scholars' attitudes to the whole of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition and each of its various parts.

In the case of the Bible and the Qur'an the normative-derivative issue of the Scriptures can be examined through the *comparability* or *continuity* of the two Scriptures. If the later Scripture (the Qur'an) shows obvious continuity with the earlier Scripture (the Bible), then it would be possible to treat the Bible as normative and the Qur'an as derivative. However, if there is no continuity between the two Scriptures, then there is no need for the normative-derivative argument; the two Scriptures are *two distinct normative Scriptures* of distinct religions. It would not be necessary to discuss the normative between the Scriptures of Christianity and Islam but treat them as independently respectable Scriptures of the two religions. Through the following investigation of the continuity-discontinuity principle, an approach to the Scriptures will be determined.

2.4.2   Continuity between Bible and Qur'an

Jane McAuliffe (2002:315) asserts that there is both a connection and disconnection between the Bible and the Qur'an. She first presents continuity between the two Scriptures based on the following three grounds: theological understanding of God, the Bible as a precursor to the Qur'an, and the biblical predictive value for Muslim biblical scholars.[17]

First, McAuliffe (2002:315) arrives at the conclusion that the theological connection between the Bible and the Qur'an is based on "the common sharing of the understanding of God, his revelation, his prophets, and his will for humankind." For Muslim scholars, this argument of theological connection based on the understanding of God is generally accepted, as the Qur'an clearly indicates the God of Muslims and Christians are the same (S 2:133; 5:72; 29:46).

Muslims readily accept the concepts of God as creator, provider, ruler, and many other functional attributes of God that Christians support. However, with regard to Christians' understanding of the relationship attributes of God, Muslim understanding may not agree with that of Christians. For example, Christians attribute to God the names "Love" and "Father." A few biblical verses displaying the "love" trait are:

Exodus 34:6   And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate [רחום] and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love [חֶסֶד] and faithfulness.

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[17] The term "Muslim biblical scholars" means scholars who are Muslims but do research with biblical materials.

Psalms 103:8   The LORD is compassionate [רַחוּם] and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love [חֶסֶד].

1 John 4:7-8   [7]Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. [8]Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love [ἀγάπη].

1 John 4:16   And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love [ἀγάπη]. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

As seen from the above passages, Exodus 34:6 and Psalms 103:8 contain the word "compassionate (רַחוּם)" and "love" (חֶסֶד). In the English translation (NIV), the word חֶסֶד (love) seems to describe God as love. The word חֶסֶד is used in the Old Testament as "covenantal love" or "loving kindness" (Harris 1980:307). However, it is the word רַחוּם (compassionate) which may truly indicate that God is love. The word is the derived form of רֶחֶם which means "mother's womb." Its verb form רָחַם refers to deep love (usually of a "superior" for an "inferior") rooted in some "natural" bond (Coppes 1980:841). The psalmist uses the word רָחַם to express his love toward God in Psalms: "I love you (אֶרְחָמְךָ), O LORD, my strength" (Ps 18:1). In the book of Hosea (2:25 [Eng. 2:23]) God expresses רָחַם for his wayward people: "I will show my love [וְרִחַמְתִּי]." When the word is used by God, it either indicates the love of a mother (Is 49:15) or of a father (Ps 103:13). Hence, despite the fact that the word רַחוּם is translated as "compassionate" in the English Bible (NIV), it is acceptable to understand the word רַחוּם as "love" or "parental love."[18]

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[18] Nöldeke (1998:53) indicates that the Qur'an also borrows this word, רָחַם, as a proper name of God, "*Al-Rahman,*" which has been used in the opening Surah *Al-Fatiha* (S 1:1-7). However, it is translated as "Merciful"

In the New Testament, the word "love" (ἀγάπη) indicates God's unconditional love for his subjects (Stauffer 1985:9). In addition to the direct indication of God as "love" in 1 John 4, John 3:16 shows God's wilful direction of love toward man as it says, "For God so loved (ἠγάπησεν) the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Christians generally interpret this verse as God's self-sacrificing love to mankind, as God chose to love sinners to give eternal life (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown 1997:[Jn 3:16]; Richards 1987:716). 1 John 4:10 further explains: "This is love (ἀγάπη): not that we loved God, but that he loved (ἠγάπησεν) us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." However, the Christian interpretation of propitiation in John 3:16 and 1 John 4:10 is denied by Muslims as the Qur'an indicates that no one can take on himself the sins of another.[19]

In connection with the above expression of God as "love," the Bible further indicates another relational trait of God as "father."

> **Deuteronomy 32:6** Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?

> **Hosea 11:1** When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

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rather than any sense of unconditional love. Furthermore, in a classical type in Arabic, it expresses the intensity of the character of mercy (Jomier 2001:361).

[19] Surah 6:164; 17:15; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38.

Malachi 2:10   Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?

Matthew 3:17   And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Romans 8:14-15   [14] because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. [15]For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

All of the above verses indicate the attribute of God which unfolds into a personal relationship between God and his subjects as a father and his son. At least two verses (Hs 11:1; Mt 3:17) from the above citations are the self-declaration of God, where the Bible uses the analogy of human relationships to show the nature of God's relationship with man.

However, based on the prohibition of the anthropomorphism of God, the relational aspects of God's attributes are not acceptable to Muslims. Gatje (1971:19) provides an insight into this prohibition of anthropomorphic concepts of God: "when God's seeing or hearing or God's hands and feet are spoken of in the Qur'an, or even the idea that a man sees God, one must not take this literally." It is a result of the Muslim attitude toward God that they are "quite unwilling to have any traffic with theology, dialectical or rational. Their objective was not to define or understand God, but simply to describe" God as in the Qur'an and the Sunna (Peters 2003:235). On the other hand, Christians even interpret "the grossest form of anthropomorphism" such as in the Song of Songs "to reveal something new and profound about the reality of God" (Peters 2003:297). Thus, McAuliffe's assertion of continuity based

on the limited theological consideration of God may need to be further defined since, while there is continuity between Bible and Qur'an based on the functional attributes of God, discontinuity emanates from the relational attributes of God as seen from Christian theological considerations.

Concerning the issue of the narrative connections between the Bible and the Qur'an, McAuliffe (2002:307) concludes that the Bible is a precursor to God's final revelation to Mohammad. She provides the fact that the Qur'an shares a great deal of narrative material, such as narratives about Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, with the Bible. In this, she rightly says, "Muslim and Christian identifications meet and mingle within the Qur'an" (McAuliffe 2002:307). The co-existence of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian traditions indicated in the Qur'an would yield to the firm continuity of the Qur'an with the Bible. Furthermore, as the theory of abrogation[20] nullifies source criticism of the Qur'anic text, Muslim scholars establish the continuity of Qur'an traditions with the Bible by confirming consecutiveness of the Qur'an as the corrected version of the Bible.

A last argument of McAuliffe is based on the predictive value of the biblical provision for Muslim biblical scholars. McAuliffe (2002:309) explains that Muslim scholars look for two sorts of passages, namely polemic and apologetic arguments in the classical Islamic context. They are (1) those which could be interpreted as announcing the advent of Mohammad and the triumph of his community, and (2) those which could provide evidence that the biblical text had been deliberately or inadvertently corrupted. These are mainly issues concerning Mohammad's annunciation in the Bible. Muslims scholars look at Deuteronomy 18:18, 33:2,

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[20] McAuliffe (2002:307) applies the theory of abrogation to the advantage of posteriority of the Qur'an as "the Qur'an is God's final and perfect revelation, and God is free to recapitulate and correct what went before."

Isaiah 21:7, Matthew 21:43, and John 15:26 as references to Mohammad or Islamic triumph (McAuliffe 2002:310).

So far McAuliffe provides arguments for the continuity of the Qur'an from the Muslim's point of view. There is no provision for the Christian biblical scholar's arguments that assert against such Muslim view of the biblical texts. It is possible to look into the Bible as the predicable prior Scripture to the Qur'an based on the interpretation of certain verses out of its own context in connection with Islam and Mohammad. However, the Islamic interpretation of the above verses (Dt 18:18; 33:2; Is 21:7; Mt 21:43; Jn 15:26) does not convince Christian [or biblical] scholars as these are seen as the New Testament interpretations of Jesus, the Holy Sprit, and the New Testament Church.[21]

From a Christian perspective, Coker (1931:95) brings a strong tie between the Qur'an and the Bible by investigating the influences of the Bible upon the Qur'an, such as the use of stories and ideas of the Bible which are incorporated freely in the Qur'an, especially from the Old Testament. For example, biblical accounts such as the creation and the rise and fall of the human race and Jesus in the New Testament are identical to accounts that appeared in the Qur'an. Coker (1931:99) has further argued the issue of the influence of the Bible upon the Qur'an and listed two key considerations:

> The primary literary source of the Koran is the Old Testament; the next source
> in importance is the New Testament; while a third source is the Talmud, the
> Targums, the Midrash, and the Apocryphal literature. Mohammed's

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[21] See 5.7.2 "Advent of prophet like Moses" for fuller argument of the passages.

appropriation of biblical material was probably through the medium of other

people and not by reading and studying the book himself.

The first consideration sums up Coker's argument that the Qur'an as a whole is derived from the Bible and other relative biblical materials. The fact of derivation of the Qur'an from the Bible would explain how the same materials appear in both the Qur'an and the Bible. As Mohammad was surrounded by the Jewish diaspora and sects of Christianity (S 5:82),[22] the second consideration describes how Mohammad received the materials for the Qur'an. The fact that Mohammad's acquisition of biblical material through the medium of other people is a possible explanation for differences between the Bible and the Qur'an, as oral communication tends to fail to deliver a perfect detail. However, the Bible was available to Mohammad at the time that Islam was formed (S 3:71, 93; 10:94; 21:7) for reference to the biblical content of stories, and this may lead to further arguments on the normative-derivative issue of the Scripture between the Qur'an and the Bible.

Meanwhile, Coker (1931:99) establishes continuity of the Bible in the Qur'an by showing the use of biblical materials by Mohammad in his formation of religious faith and doctrine. The chronological survey of the Qur'an divides Mohammad's use of biblical materials into roughly three stages: (1) in the devotional stage of the early *suras,* Mohammad uses phrases that have close parallels in Psalms, Job, Isaiah, and Ecclesiastes, (2) in the apologetic stage, biblical stories are used freely to prove and substantiate his apologetical claims, and (3) in the

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[22] Furthermore, the cousin of Mohammad's first wife Khadija, Waraqa ibn-Nawfal of Mecca, was Christian. There was also the presence of Jewish settlements in the oases and other Christian presence among the Meccans who traded with the Byzantine and Abyssinian empires, which were Christian (Watt 1970:8).

doctrinal stage, the chief doctrines of the Qur'an are laid down, and these doctrines come largely from the Old and New Testaments.

All of the above arguments of Coker refer to the personal use of the Bible by Mohammad as a redactor of the Qur'an; it implies that when Mohammad began his prophethood, he took biblical materials as foundational teaching materials for his own, correcting and editing the material to suit the need of the contextual setting of his time. John Gilchrist (1995) provides extensive scientific evidence of Mohammad as redactor, and the source of the Qur'an derived from Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, and Buddhist origins. Gilchrist (1995:ii) even asserts that "Muslim scholars have always been well aware of these evidences but on the whole have chosen conveniently to ignore them. I am not aware of any real attempt by a Muslim writer to face them objectively and provide explanations for their implications." However, what Gilchrist holds in his book, "The Qur'an: The Scripture of Islam" (1995), is contrary to the current trend of Christian scholars' position of dialogue with Muslims. Montgomery Watt (1970:vi) says "it has become imperative for a Christian scholar not to offend Muslim readers gratuitously, but as far as possible to present his arguments in a form acceptable to them. Courtesy and an eirenic outlook certainly now demand that we should not speak of the Qur'an as the product of Mohammad's conscious mind; but I hold that the same demand is also made by sound scholarship." It is the same attitude of sound scholarship that is present in this thesis. In conclusion, the use of biblical materials in the Qur'an by Mohammad serves as a firm evidence of continuity as well as a possible consideration to discontinuity due to the editorial work and reinterpretation processes, which result in textual similarities with key differences made in the biblical traditions in the Qur'an. For example, the biblical accounts of

Abraham's test in Genesis 22 is comparable to Qur'an 37:100-113 where Muslim scholars identify the son of Abraham as Ishmael and not as Isaac as appears in the biblical account.[23]

2.4.3 Discontinuity between Bible and Qur'an

Just as there is a strong connection between the Bible and the Qur'an, there is also a rational indication of the disconnection between the two Scriptures. In the argument of discontinuity between the Bible and the Qur'an, McAuliffe (2002:311) raises the Qur'anic charge of the corruption of the Bible and the abrogation of all previous Scriptures. However, it seems that the argument is portrayed from one side, namely the Muslim point of view which assumes the Qur'an as the final and correct Scripture for the God of Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

The first issue of literary discussion of the disconnection based on the Qur'anic charge of the corruption of the Bible may be found in Surah 2:75-79 and 3:78.

> **Surah 2:75-79** [75]Can ye (O ye men of Faith) entertain the hope that they will believe in you? Seeing that a party of them heard the word of Allah and perverted it knowingly after they understood it. [76]Behold! When they meet the men of Faith they say: "We believe" but when they meet each other in private they say: "Shall you tell them what Allah hath revealed to you that they may engage you in argument about it before your Lord?" Do ye not understand (their aim)? [77]Know they not that Allah knoweth what they conceal and what they reveal? [78]And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book

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[23] In the Qur'anic account, the son (Isaac in the Bible) is not identified and is interpreted as Ishmael by Muslim scholars. It will be further discussed in 4.3.4, "Test of Abraham."

but (see therein their own) desires and they do nothing but conjecture. [79]Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say: "This is from Allah" to traffic with it for a miserable price! Woe to them for what their hands do write and for the gain they make thereby.

Surah 3:78 There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues; (as they read) you would think it is a part of the Book but it is no part of the Book; and they say "That is from Allah" but it is not from Allah: it is they who tell a lie against Allah and (well) they know it!

These verses which indicate the distortion or concealing of the Scriptures are usual scriptural supports for the Muslim accusation of the corruption of the Bible (Shenk 2006:88). However, the text does not actually deal with the corruption of the Bible but the depravity of the believers. Surah 2 indicates that the believers "perverted," "conceal," and "conjecture" the Scripture on their reading and understanding of the text, while Surah 3 indicates that believers misquote the Bible. Yusuf Ali (1989:37) gives reasons for these concealments and neglecting of the prophecy in the Bible from the immediate context of the Jews of Medina who understood Deuteronomy 18:18 as reference to Mohammad. It says, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him." Here, a "prophet" in this verse is understood as a reference to Mohammad. Thus the Jews were trying to hide the claimed prophecy of Mohammad from the Muslims. Ali's assertion makes an applicable argument that is valid in a context of the uprising of Islam in Medina. However, the verses do not indicate the corruption of the text but of the believers' interpretation. Muslim scholars have no ground for textual criticism of the Bible based on this issue. For this, McAuliffe (2002:311) correctly

asserts that it is "…ambiguous Qur'anic accusations. In some cases the charge was understood to be not actual alteration but simply concealment or omission."

However, Surah 5:13-14 appears to be a more convincing charge of the corruption of the Bible. Concerning the Old Testament, Surah 5:13 portrays:

> **Surah 5:13**   But because of their breach of their Covenant, We [Allah] cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard: they change the words from their (right) places and forget a good part of the Message that was sent them, nor wilt thou cease to find them--barring a few--ever bent on (new) deceits: but forgive them, and overlook (their misdeeds): for Allah loveth those who are kind.

Since the next verse, Surah 5:14 additionally refers to the Christians' Covenant, verse 13 deals with God's covenant with Israelites. Thus corruption of the Old Testament is indicated in verse 13 as the Qur'an employs the words "change" and "forget" to indicate corruption by Israelites (S 5:12). Then there is the charge against Christians in verse 14:

> **Surah 5:14**   From those too who call themselves Christians We [Allah] did take a Covenant but they forgot a good part of the message that was sent them: so We estranged them with enmity and hatred between the one and the other to the Day of Judgment. And soon will Allah show them what it is they have done.

From Surah 5:14, it can be understood that Christians did not change the Bible but rather forgot some portions of the revelations from God. However, because of the strong Qur'anic statement of neglect and concealment of the revelation by both Christians and Jews, Surah

5:13-14 is open to the further consideration of source criticism of the Scriptures. A proper charge against a Scripture should be accompanied with an appropriate historical account of any changes.

On the issue of discontinuity of the Bible and the Qur'an based on the abrogation of previous Scriptures, the charge of corruption of the Book (the Bible) is justified in Surah 2:106. It reads:

Surah 2:106 None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten but We substitute something better or similar; knowest thou not that Allah hath power over all things?

This verse indicates that the theory of abrogation is for the purpose of protection of Scripture by replacing what has been corrupted or changed with something better, the true revelation of God, namely the Qur'an. If the Qur'an is the result of abrogation of the previous Scriptures, i.e., the Bible, then the Qur'an must contain the corrected revelation of corresponding accounts between the Bible and the Qur'an. This means, then, that the Bible contains corrupted revelation, for God cannot reveal false revelation. Accordingly, in conclusion for Muslim scholars, the discontinuity between the Qur'an and the Bible is clear since the Bible differs from the Qur'an on account of human corruption of the Scripture. For Christian scholars, the exact opposite of the Muslim scholars' view would be maintained against the Qur'an.

2.5 APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP

Since there are traces of both continuity and discontinuity between the Bible and the Qur'an, it is difficult to present a solution for the disagreement of the two Scriptures. In the same way, it would be an arduous task to decide whether or not the Qur'an is derivative from the Bible. However, to a certain degree, I am endeavouring to bridge the gap between the two Scriptures by presenting the following suggestions for cross-examining the differences in the Scriptures. The few key considerations underlying the problem are the following:

1. The Bible was written before the Qur'an without any reservation for the succeeding Scriptures to follow (Dt 4:2; 12:32; Rev 22:18-19). This means there is no reserved Scripture to follow the Bible. Therefore the solution for continuity-discontinuity of the Qur'an from the Bible should not be found in the Bible.

Muslims would argue against this view as they see the Bible as a precursor to the coming of Mohammad (S 2:75-79; 46:10).[24] They would bring forth the issue of the prophecy of the coming Mohammad in John 1 where John the Baptist denies being "the Prophet" (Jn 1:21). Thus, "the Prophet," is treated by Muslim biblical scholars as a reference to Mohammad since it is capitalised in the English translation (Poston 2000:4). The promised Prophet in John is the same one God promised to Moses in Deuteronomy (Dt 18:15-19). The prediction of the coming of Mohammad in John and Deuteronomy was also the reason for changing or hiding the prophecy of the Prophet by the Jews at the time of Mohammad (S 2:75-79). However, the Old Testament's prophecy of the Prophet does not refer to Mohammad

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[24] See section 5.7.2 "Advent of prophet like Moses" for full discussion of the issue.

according to the Christian's interpretation. For example, Kaiser (1978:141) applied it to Jesus based on the theology of promised "seed" (Jesus) of Abraham (Gn 12:1-3). Kaiser also refers to the fact that the Prophet is further confirmed as Jesus in John 6:14 where the multitude near the Sea of Galilee exclaimed after they witnessed the miraculous sign of Jesus, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world."[25]

In the same way, the coming of the Comforter in John (Jn 14:16; 15:26; 16:7) does not refer to Mohammad as many Muslims claim. Mohammad applies John's prophecy to himself in Surah 61:6 "And remember, Jesus, the Son of Mary, said: 'O children of Israel! I am the messenger of Allah (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving Glad Tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad.'" Based on this verse, one would say the Greek reading of the *paracletos* (παράκλητος, comforter) is a corrupt reading for *periclytos*, meaning *praise* or *glorified*, "which is almost a literal translation of 'Mohammad' or 'Ahmad'" (Ali 1989:148, 1461). However, the Textual Criticism of the 27th edition of Novum Testamentum Graece (NA27, by Nestle Aland) results in no variant of the Greek word, comforter (*paracletos*). The word refers to the promised coming of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament context. Therefore, the Bible has no indication of continuity of the Qur'an, and continuity of the Qur'an should not be claimed on a biblical basis. Instead, the issue of continuity-discontinuity may be decided based upon the homogeneity of the Qur'an and the Bible. This will result in an individualistic (egoistic) conclusion as the answer is dependent upon the interpretation of the content of the Scriptures.

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[25] John 1:45; 4:19, 29; Acts 3:22-26 also indicate the Prophet as Jesus.

2. The Qur'an speaks respectfully of all the prophets and messengers before Mohammad. The respect of godly men is extended to the prophets and the Scriptures (the Bible) they brought to the people.

For a Muslim to deny the prophethood of Moses (Musa), David (Daud), or Jesus (Isa) is to deny the true teachings of Islam (Kateregga & Shenk 1980:117). Believers must respect the previous Scriptures as Mohammad himself believed the Qur'an confirms, extends, and completes the former Scriptures (S 3:3; 10:37). For example, Surah 10:37 indicates: "This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than Allah; on the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it and a fuller explanation of the Book wherein there is no doubt from the Lord of the Worlds."

Furthermore the Qur'an refers to Christians and Jews as *Ahl al-Kitab,* People of the Book. To these people the Qur'an admonishes (S 5:68) to the degree that where Muslims have doubts about the truth revealed in the Qur'an, the Qur'an commands them to ask the People of the Book. Surah 10:94 reads, "If thou wert in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee: the Truth hath indeed come to thee from thy Lord: so be in nowise of those in doubt." Therefore, Muslims should respect the Bible and its content whether it has been corrupted—according to their view—or not until the Bible is proved, with evidence, of corruption.

3. Due to the belief in the same God and the Scriptures, the Qur'an further encourages Muslims to live peacefully with the People of the Book.

Surah 29:46 commands Muslims to live amicably with Jews and Christians, "And dispute ye not with the People of the Book except with means better (than mere disputation) unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say 'We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; Our Allah and your Allah is one; and it is to Him we bow (in Islam).'"

Furthermore, the Qur'an describes the People of the Book as highly accepted people to Muslims in that the food and women of the People of the Book is allowed to Muslims.

> **Surah 5:5**   This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers but chaste women among the People of the Book revealed before your time when ye give them their due dowers and desire chastity not lewdness nor secret intrigues. If anyone rejects faith fruitless is his work and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).

The positive treatment of Jews and Christians indicates that Islam and the Qur'an are something more than simply a derivative from the Bible. It seems, at least from the view point of Muslims, that Islam may have been a sect of Judaism or Christianity or existed in close adherence to two faiths. This is seen in the emigration of more than a hundred faithful Muslims to Christian Ethiopia for the protection of the believers (Gatje 1971:9; Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith 2:290, 307, 412, 425; 4:364; 5:212; 7:698).

4. Pertinent sources of evidence of the Qur'anic derivative from the Bible are from the vast number of Old and New Testament narratives, the account of the functional attributes of God, and Mohammad's statement in the Qur'an toward the People of the Book, such as to seek truth from the Bible (S 10:94).

Therefore, any discussion of the continuity-discontinuity of the Qur'an from the Bible should be discussed from the derivative for it provides some common ground of investigation of the Scriptures and theologies. Focusing on something that both Christians and Muslims can agree upon brings better understanding of each other's theology and pursues a common goal to discover God's ultimate truths; it may lead to avoidance of any conflict arising from the differences of the Scriptures.

5. Major evidence of the discontinuity of the Qur'an from the Bible is based mainly on the Muslim theological interpretation of the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an denies entire basic teachings of the New Testament, such as the Triune God and sonship of Christ (S 4:171; 5:73).

It must be understood that the Qur'an respectfully describes the Bible as its precursor explaining any unclear content of the Qur'an (S 10:94), yet at the same time it denies the content and theology of the Bible in selective cases. The various sources of the Qur'an,[26]

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[26] In addition to the argument of Gilchrist (2.4.2), Abd-Al-Masih ([s a]:63) says as Qur'an (S 7:156) indicates that Mohammad was illiterate and "did not have full command of the Arabic script, let alone Hebrew, Greek or Syrian. He never had direct access to any Biblical source or to the translation of an inspired source, and thus totally relied on hearsay and oral traditions." Gilchrist (1995:87) agrees on the issue of oral tradition: "These evidence appear to be conclusive in proof that the Qur'an can not be regarded as a divine revelation to Mohammad. It contains too many of the sort of plagiarisms from local Jewish folklore that would have been expected if his material was coming instead from what he heard and learnt in conversion with those around

such as non-biblical materials and apocrypha, and the adoption of biblical materials as the source of the Qur'an, may have caused the denial of Christian theology and biblical content in the Qur'an. For example, the word "Trinity" is not a biblical word and does not appear in the Bible, yet the Qur'an emphatically denies the concept of Trinity in various places to promote Islamic monotheism (S 4:171; 5:73; 38:7; 68:41). Surah 4:171 reads: "…do not say: 'Trinity'. Stop saying that, it is better for you. Allah is only One Deity…" Surah 5:73 also indicates, "So believe in Allah and His Rasools and do not say: 'Trinity'. Stop saying that, it is better for you. Allah is only One Deity..." Furthermore, "Everything on which Jews and Christians are not in agreement with the Koran is considered by Muslims to this day as a falsification of the truth" (Abd-Al-Masih [s a]:68). Therefore, when it comes to the differences between the Qur'an and the Bible, Muslims' tendency towards casual denial of the content of the Bible over the Qur'an should be noted. The content and theology of Islam and Christianity behind the differences should be carefully investigated.

6. In the process of the revelation there is clear evidence of God's transcendence in the Qur'an and God's immanence in the Bible. The different aspects of revelation may have been the cause of the differences in exegetical and theological interpretations of the Scriptures as God's presence (immanence) is directly involved in the context of the Bible while transcendence of God prevails in the Qur'an.[27]

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him." Furthermore, Ali Dashti (1985:56) says the Qur'an "contains nothing new in the senses of ideas not already expressed by others. All the moral precepts of the Koran are self-evident and generally acknowledged. The stories in it are taken in identical or slightly modified forms from the lore of the Jews and Christians, whose rabbis and monks Mohammad had met and consulted on his journeys to Syria, and from memories conserved by the descendants of the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud.'"

[27] The concept will be further discussed and proved in 5.5, "Implications for bibliology."

With the above mentioned key considerations in deciding whether or not the Bible and Qur'an have continuity, one may come to a double conclusion. On the issue of doctrine and the New Testament, there is a discontinuity between the Bible and the Qur'an. On the other hand, there is continuity in the textual studies, especially between the Old Testament and the Qur'an. This continuity is based on the Quran's use of biblical or other communal traditions while discontinuity is seen in the different manifestations of revelation and the interpretation of the Scriptures by their adherent believers. Then, in conclusion, the Bible and the Qur'an contain textual similarities as well as theological differences. To handle the similarities and dissimilarities, both Christians and Muslims must regard the Scriptures with respect. The attitude of respect to the others' Scripture as the "Word of God" should be maintained to promote harmony and unity among the believers of the two major religions of the world. In the same way, Jesus and Mohammad should also be regarded as respectable figures by both Christians and Muslims. This implies that both Muslims and Christians will have to treat their Scripture as the authorised Scripture for their respectable religious practice, including exegesis and theology. However, when they cross-examine each other's Scripture, they must first consider the "common" ground of the Qur'an and the Bible as a foundational starting point for theological and exegetical consideration. Focusing on something that is comparable with respect to the other Scripture rather than focusing on the differences will result in a better understanding of both the Bible and the Qur'an, promoting better Christian and Muslim relations.