

The Islamic Punishment for Blasphemy

Diversity in Sources and Societies

Gordon Nickel

During the month of Ramadan in the summer of 2016, two gunmen shot and killed a popular singer in the city of Karachi in Pakistan. As the story developed, the reason for the killing was not immediately clear. Some media reports said that the gunmen killed the singer, Amjad Sabri, because they accused him of blasphemy. But to many this would seem strange, because Amjad was a singer of *qawwali* and *naʿt*, which generally praise Allah and especially the messenger of Islam.

On the surface, the story indicates a diversity of practice and perhaps theology among the Muslims of South Asia, who together make up about a third of the global Muslim community. Songs of praise to the messenger of Islam are widely—and wildly—popular and a characteristic part of the culture of South Asian Muslims. How could other Muslim views about the practice be so different as to motivate murder?

In the same country, Pakistan, the media were trying to account for another event earlier in 2016. A reported one hundred thousand people attended the funeral of a convicted killer in Rawalpindi. Mumtaz Qadri had publically assassinated his employer, the governor of Punjab province, Salman Taseer.¹ Qadri was charged and convicted of the murder, for which

¹Carlotta Gall, “Assassination Deepens Divide in Pakistan,” *New York Times*, January 5, 2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/01/06/world/asia/06pakistan.html. Cf. Paul Marshall and Nina Shea,

he was eventually executed. So why the outpouring of popular approval for what he had done? The answer concerns the efforts of the Punjab governor to defend a Christian woman, Asia Bibi, who had been accused of blasphemy against the messenger of Islam. Again, these were signs of a diversity so significant and so deeply felt among Muslims that murder could be popularly approved.

Our observations about diversity among Muslims and within Islam can lead us, on the one hand, to study more attentively the reasons for these differences and, on the other hand, to consider missiological responses to a range of situations that the church faces in her encounter with Islam. The observations offered in this chapter come out of academic study of the sourcebooks of Islam and a felicitous acquaintance with Muslim societies in the majority world, especially South Asia.

We should not be too surprised that Western non-Muslims do not understand the nature and extent of diversity in the Muslim world. Most Muslims themselves are not too sure about it. An August 2012 Pew Research survey asked Muslims in Muslim-majority countries whether they believe there is only one true way to understand Islam's teachings or if multiple interpretations are possible. In 32 of 39 countries surveyed, half or more Muslims said there is only one correct way.² In most Asian countries, only about 1 in 5 believed Islam is open to multiple interpretations. In sharp contrast to this, 57 percent of Muslims in the United States said Islam is open to multiple interpretations, compared to the global median of only 27 percent.³ The only two Muslim countries close to the American percentage were Morocco and Tunisia.

An American Muslim, therefore, is much more likely to talk about diversity within the Muslim community than most Muslims in Muslim-majority countries. This seems worth noting, because it is generally the voices of American Muslims that we hear on subjects like diversity. We are thankful for those voices. But we could reasonably ask whether on this

Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes Are Choking Freedom Worldwide (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 99.

²Pew Research Center, "The World's Muslims: Unity and Diversity," August 9, 2012, www.pewforum.org/files/2012/08/the-worlds-muslims-full-report.pdf, 11.

³Pew Research Center, "The World's Muslims," 108-9. "Unlike Muslims in most countries surveyed, American Muslims are inclined to see their faith as open to interpretation" (108).

subject they represent the majority of Muslims in contexts where Christians serve Jesus in Asia or Africa. (Here, ironically, diversity in the sense of different Muslim American voices may actually mislead our examination of Islamic diversity. We may need to ask how preferring or prioritizing Western Muslim voices would influence both our research and our missiological reflection.) Even so, some 37 percent of American Muslims believe there is only one true way to understand Islam.⁴

This essay will focus on one particular Muslim practice, punishment for blasphemy, as a way of inquiring into the nature of Muslim diversity. It will set modern diversity against the background of the Islamic source documents. Muslims around the world agree on their twin sources of authority: the Qur'an and the *sunna*. What then would account for the diversity observable among various Islamic groups today?

DIVERSITY IN SOURCES AND SOCIETIES

Traditional Muslim accounts of the first centuries of Islam tell about a number of famous splits in the Muslim community, chief among them the Shi'a-Sunni split. We read about the differences between the Khārijites and the Murji'ites, the Mu'tazila and the Traditionists. The Shi'a split seems to have occurred because of a struggle for political authority in the rapidly expanding Arab conquest. But other differences raised issues of what it means to be a Muslim. The Khawāraj, for example, had a much more rigorous concept of adherence to orthodox belief and practice than the Murji'a, who were content with a simple confession of faith. Differences of approach between these early groups seem to have continued to the present day, and we can certainly look to see whether these differences affect the diverse approaches to the Islamic practice in focus in this essay.

Helpful characterizations of Muslim diversity have been advanced by Andrew Rippin and Tariq Ramadan. Rippin gives a basic division into Traditionalist, Islamist, and Modernist.⁵ Ramadan further separates these divisions into a range of "Salafi" varieties. Interestingly, Ramadan distinguishes Sufism from what he calls the other five "major tendencies" in Islam,

⁴Ibid.

⁵Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), 190-99.

and he seems to believe that the majority of Muslims fall into a category he calls “Salafi Reformism.”⁶

What would account for the differences among the six groups? Ramadan writes,

We find a diversity of readings of the Qur’an that can be attributed principally to the greater or lesser role the human intellect is allowed to play and, consequently, to the scope for interpretation that is permitted as an integral part of the Islamic field of reference.⁷

Rippin explores how the response to modernity plays into Muslim diversity and notes that revival movements not only resist the ideology of modernity, but also bring traditional understandings from Islamic source documents into the center of Muslim identity.⁸

Norman Calder offers an analysis of diversity in an important article on Islamic orthodoxy. He notes that Sunnis appeal to the Qur’an and the hadith “when they are expressing and interpreting their faith”⁹ and shows by this measure why groups like the Ismailis are judged unorthodox. Calder gives an interesting list of literary genres through which Sunnis define their relationship to Allah and their messenger: *qiṣaṣ al-anbiya* (stories of the prophets); *sīrat an-nabī* (life of the prophet); the Qur’an; the hadith (traditions attributed to Muhammad); *fiqh* (Islamic law); *kalām* (theology); *tafsīr* (commentary on the Qur’an); and *sharḥ al-ḥadīth* (commentary on the hadith).¹⁰

Many scholars who seek to account for diversity among Muslims will commonly cite the Qur’an and perhaps the hadith. However, our analysis of Muslim diversity in the interests of missiological response should encourage us to consider the other source documents that Calder indicates as well as others not listed here. As we will discover, such study is certainly necessary for our examination of the Islamic punishment for blasphemy.

⁶Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24-28.

⁷Ibid., 22, emphasis mine.

⁸Rippin, *Muslims*, 224-28, 235-38.

⁹Norman Calder, “The Limits of Islamic Orthodoxy,” in *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 73.

¹⁰Ibid., 74.

PUNISHMENT FOR BLASPHEMY IN ISLAM

When researching Islamic sources of authority related to the punishment for blasphemy, the scholar finds substantial unanimity in Islamic law, on the one hand, and some ambiguity in Qur'an, *sīra*, and hadith, on the other. This makes the topic ripe for the analysis of diversity. The diversity is evidently not related to what most orthodox Muslims came to accept as the divine law, but rather to their understanding of the sources from which Muslims believe the law was derived.

The punishment for blasphemy in Islam is certainly a small slice of Muslim belief and practice. However, as we will see shortly, it relates to a larger web of concern constituting a considerable part of Islam. The reason for this sharper focus is that it is difficult to get a grasp on generalities, but by studying a particular belief and practice we may hope to gain a better understanding of Muslim diversity.

The virtue of this topic is its connection to stories made familiar by Western media and at the same time its relevance for the daily life of Christians living within Muslim societies. How many in the West had thought much about the topic of blasphemy in Islam prior to hearing reports of the fatwa against Salman Rushdie in 1989? The issue likewise generated extensive discussion after the reaction to the Danish cartoons in January 2006, the Muhammad video of September 2012, and the Charlie Hebdo killings of January 2015. At the same time—though seemingly of much less interest to the West and its news media—Christians in Pakistan have been suffering under Section 295-C of that nation's penal code since 1986.

This essay will not deal with the stories that have drawn the most attention in the West, because all of these stories have been politicized to the point that it has become very difficult to discuss them without prejudice. Rather, this essay will probe the understanding of the sourcebooks of Islam in Muslim-majority contexts for the sake of missiological response. Paul Marshall and Nina Shea have helpfully described and analyzed the better-known news stories in their book *Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes Are Choking Freedom Worldwide*, which “[surveys] the contemporary use and effects of such accusations and threats.”¹¹ However, the basic

¹¹Marshall and Shea, *Silenced*, 13.

theological questions are the same for both the ancient sources and the latest news stories.

Killing blasphemers is certainly seen as negative and even evil to most people in the modern West. But this punishment is not necessarily seen as negative, and certainly not evil, in a Muslim-majority country like Pakistan or Bangladesh. Investigation of the Islamic punishment for blasphemy is not a matter of saying something negative about Muslims. Evaluations of right or wrong in this case are in the eye of the beholder.

Islamic law—that is, *fiqh* expressed in written form in *furūʿ* (“branches”)—is relatively straightforward on the punishment for blasphemy. Most jurists ruled that any Muslim who blasphemes is thereafter considered an apostate and is therefore condemned to death.¹² Some jurists ruled that the blasphemer remains a Muslim but may still be executed for a *ḥadd* crime. As for non-Muslims, blasphemy will also incur the punishment of death.¹³

The question of what actually constitutes blasphemy in these legal sources is interesting and relevant for this study. Blasphemy was understood to apply primarily to Muhammad, and it seems that only later on was it applied to Allah, or to prophets.¹⁴ Lutz Wiederhold excludes blasphemy against Allah from his research because “the sources used mention it only occasionally.”¹⁵ The distinction between language judged to be against Muhammad and language against God was based on the concept of the “right of Allah” and the “right of [humans].” In the case of speaking against Muhammad, “Islamic law takes a more severe view than in the case of reviling God,” in the words of

¹²*Minhāj al-ṭālibin*, a law manual written by the Shāfiʿī jurist al-Nawawī (d. 1276), considers the blasphemer an apostate. *Minhaj et Talibin: A Manual of Muhammadan Law According to the School of Shafii*, trans. E. C. Howard (London: W. Thacker & Co., 1914), 436-38. Lutz Wiederhold writes that at the latest since the *Minhāj*, “blasphemy against the Prophet(s) is mentioned regularly among the acts that constitute *kufr* in the chapters on apostasy (*riddah*) of the Shāfiʿī manuals of positive law (*furūʿ*).” “Blasphemy Against the Prophet Muḥammad and His Companions (*sabb al-rasūl, sabb al-ṣaḥābah*): The Introduction of the Topic into Shāfiʿī Legal Literature and Its Relevance for Legal Practice Under Mamluk Rule,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 42 (1997): 46.

¹³Abdullah Saeed and Hassan Saeed, *Freedom of Religion, Apostasy and Islam* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 37-39; Mark S. Wagner, “The Problem of Non-Muslims Who Insult the Prophet Muḥammad,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 135 (2015): 529-40; Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 149-52.

¹⁴Saeed and Saeed, *Freedom of Religion*, 37-38; Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 150.

¹⁵Wiederhold, “Blasphemy Against the Prophet Muḥammad,” 40.

Abdullah Saeed and Hassan Saeed.¹⁶ As Muhammad is not in a position to avenge himself, they write, “it is seen to be the responsibility of the Muslim community to seek vengeance on his behalf by imposing the death penalty on the offender.”¹⁷

Muslims believe that Islamic law was expertly derived from four main sources, the first two being the Qur’an and the *sunna*. Do these two sources support the punishment for blasphemy in Islamic law? The basic vocabulary for blasphemy in the Islamic sources is a pair of verbs: *shatama* and *sabba*.¹⁸ *Shatama* does not occur in the Qur’an, while *sabba* appears only once—as part of a commandment to Muslims not to insult the idols of polytheists (Q 6:108). Academic treatments of blasphemy in the Qur’an tend to highlight verses that contain the verbs *iftarā* (invent lyingly, slander), *kadhhaba* (give the lie to, deny), and *kafara* (disbelieve).¹⁹ In such verses blasphemy would mean denial of standard Islamic views,²⁰ a concept we shall return to later in this chapter. However, a qur’anic term that seems to be generally neglected is the verb *ādhā* (to harm, hurt, irritate, trouble).²¹ A typical occurrence is Sura 33:57: “Those who hurt [*yu’dhūna*] Allah and his messenger—they Allah has cursed in the present world and the world to come, and has prepared for them a humbling chastisement” (Arberry).²² One can see where ambiguity might arise: the curse here is not only in the world to come but also in the present world, and the verse does not specify when the painful chastisement is to fall. There are other qur’anic passages that specify

¹⁶An interesting detail about these authors that is relevant to diversity is that though Abdullah Saeed and Hassan Saeed are Muslims from the Maldives, their book *Freedom of Religion* is currently banned in those islands. Marshall and Shea, *Silenced*, xv.

¹⁷Saeed and Saeed, *Freedom of Religion*, 39.

¹⁸Wiederhold, “Blasphemy Against the Prophet Muḥammad,” 40; *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 12, Supplement, ed. P. J. Bearman et al., 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2004), s.v. “Shatm,” 725.

¹⁹*Encyclopaedia of the Qur’an*, vol. 1, A–D, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), s.v. “Blasphemy,” 235–36; Carl W. Ernst, “Blasphemy: Islamic Concept,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, 2nd ed. (Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 2:975; *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, vol. 4, *Birsha–Chariot of Fire*, ed. Hans-Josef Klauck et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), s.v. “Blasphemy: Islam,” 122–23.

²⁰*Encyclopedia of Religion*, “Blasphemy: Islamic Concept,” 2:975; Rudolph Peters and Gert J. J. De Vries, “Apostasy in Islam,” *Die Welt des Islams* 17 (1976–1977): 3–4.

²¹*Adhiya* form IV. The term can also mean “to abuse (verbally), to revile or to insult” someone. A *Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic*, comp. Arne A. Ambros with Stephan Procházka (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004), 23.

²²The verb *ādhā* is also used in relation to the messenger at Q 9:61 and 33:53 (x2), and in relation to Moses in Q 33:53 and 61:5.

that a painful punishment would come “in the world [*dunya*],” including Sura 9:74—a verse cited by some Dēobandīs to support the death penalty for blasphemy.²³

As for the literary sources of the *sunna*: *Sīra*, *maghāzī*, hadith, and *taʿrīkh* present stories of Muhammad requesting or agreeing to the assassination of people who had mocked, insulted, or troubled him.²⁴ But there are also stories of Muhammad tolerating insults or leaving the punishment to Allah.

Many of the blasphemy stories come from the *Sīrat al-nabawiyya* of Ibn Iṣḥāq (d. 767) edited by Ibn Hishām (d. 833), and from the *Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* of Ibn Saʿd (d. 845). Other stories appear in the hadith collections of al-Bukhārī (d. 870) and Muslim (d. 874). The most common story is that people who satirize Muhammad through poetry are killed.²⁵ Several of the poets in the stories are women, while some are slaves and others are Jews. Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf is considered by some Muslim scholars to be the first person executed for speaking against Muhammad.²⁶ However, one particular story seemed to capture the epitome of blasphemy in the narrative sources: “In the eyes of the Muslim tradition, the vilifier par excellence seems to have been ʿAbd Allah b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ.” According to Muslim sources, ʿAbd Allah b. Saʿd is a scribe of Muhammad who begins to “question the reliability and accuracy of the Qurʾan.”²⁷ He invents his own recitations, then reads them at the end of the day to Muhammad, who approves them as his own.²⁸

There are also stories of Muhammad tolerating insults or leaving the punishment to Allah. These stories tend to appear less frequently in the early

²³Mufti Obaidullah Qasmi, “Blasphemy in Islam: The Quran Curses and Hadith Prescribes Punishment,” *Deoband Online Islamic Portal*, October 16, 2012, www.deoband.net/blogs/blasphemy-in-islam-the-quran-curses-and-hadith-prescribes-punishment.

²⁴Qaḍī ʿIyād, *Muhammad, Messenger of Allah: Ash-Shifa of Qaḍī ʿIyād*, trans. Aisha Abdarrahman Bewley (Granada: Madinah Press, 1992), 376-79; Jon Hoover, “Kitāb al-ṣārim al-maslūl ʿalā shātīm al-Rasūl,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 4, 1200-1350, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 854; Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 149-51.

²⁵Ernst, “Blasphemy: Islamic Concept,” 2:975; Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 150.

²⁶Wagner, “Non-Muslims Who Insult,” 533; Abdelmagid Turki, “Situation du ‘Tributaire’ qui insulte l’Islam, au regard de la doctrine et de la jurisprudence musulmanes,” *Studia Islamica* 30 (1969): 46-48.

²⁷Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 150-51.

²⁸See also *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al., 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1960), s.v. “ʿAbd Allah b. Saʿd,” 1:51. This is the story that Salman Rushdie tells through his character Salman the Persian in *The Satanic Verses* (London: Viking, 1988), 363-68.

Muslim narrative sources, but are nevertheless familiar to many Muslims.²⁹ One of the best-known stories of this kind narrates the resistance that Muhammad faces when he visits the town of al-Ṭāʿif. According to al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), the elders of the town will not help Muhammad, and “their ignorant rabble and their slaves” shout at him and revile him.³⁰ In this account, Muhammad is alone and has already been rejected by the Quraysh of Mecca. Muhammad finds refuge in a garden, where a Christian slave from Nineveh named ʿAddās brings him a bunch of grapes and converses kindly with him.

In spite of the apparent ambiguity in the sources of the *sunna*, the advocates of the death penalty for blasphemy base their argument on hadith, *sīra*, and *ijmāʿ* (the consensus of Islamic jurists). For example, Mufti Obaidullah Qasmi of the Dr. Zakir Hussain College in New Delhi writes,

The death punishment assigned for blasphemy is agreed by all Islamic scholars of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaʿah and, is normally covered in Kitābul Hudud in Islamic juridical texts . . . , the evidence for blasphemy punishment being based on Ahadith, certain reported incidents during the lifetime of the Prophet (p.u.h.) and unanimous agreement of all Islamic scholars in all the ages (*Ijma*).³¹

If we find in the course of research that a command or practice attributed to Muhammad seems to have taken precedence over the Qurʾān in determining Islamic law, how would this affect our understanding of Islam and our missiological response? Some who write on Islam claim that if a practice or belief cannot be found in the Qurʾān, it is not Islamic. However, scholars seeking to understand worldview in order to formulate missiological response might consider a different angle. What is the place and importance of Islamic law in Muslim belief and practice—that is, in the Islamic worldview? Calder wrote, “Since the topics of the law cover all the major categories of a pious, and a social, life . . . , a work of furūʿ [that is, the written form of Islamic law], formally at least, constituted a literary depiction of

²⁹For example, Laiq Ahmed Atif, “Blasphemy and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be on Him,” *Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Malta* (blog), October 21, 2011, <http://laiqatif.blogspot.com/2011/10/blasphemy-and-holy-prophet-muhammad.html>.

³⁰*The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, trans. W. Montgomery Watt and M. V. McDonald (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 115-17.

³¹Qasmi, “Blasphemy in Islam.”

social reality in normative form.”³² In other words, according to Calder, the intention of Islamic law is to both reflect and define culture.

The most extensive legal discussion about the punishment for speaking against Muhammad came from Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) at the end of the thirteenth century in a book titled *The Unsheathed Sword Against Whoever Insults the Messenger*.³³ This is an important source for our purposes because the work was evidently sparked by an accusation against a Christian scribe near Damascus. Ibn Taymiyya’s thesis was that anyone—Muslim or non-Muslim—who abuses (*sabba*) Muhammad must be killed without further recourse.³⁴ He built his case largely on episodes from *sīra* literature “that demonstrate that the Prophet dealt harshly with those who insulted him.”³⁵ A Muslim offender becomes an apostate, he wrote, and a non-Muslim offender forfeits the so-called pact of protection; in Ibn Taymiyya’s view, this made both kinds of offender worthy of immediate death. Now, Ibn Taymiyya needed to deal with dissenting legal opinion that gave apostates the chance to repent before facing the death penalty. He therefore argued that speaking against Muhammad fell into a special category of apostasy that he called “aggravated apostasy” (*ridḍa muḡhallaza*).³⁶ Jon Hoover suggests that the large number of modern editions of *The Unsheathed Sword* indicates considerable interest in Ibn Taymiyya’s discussion today.³⁷

The punishment for blasphemy seems like a small slice of Islamic belief and practice, but it actually relates to a number of other phenomena that together make up a substantial portion of Muslim life, past and present. These phenomena are united by the Muslim practice of venerating Muhammad. This wider practice includes the decision to call Muhammad the perfect human, and the claim that he was sinless or immune from sin.³⁸

³²*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 9, *San-Sze*, ed. C. E. Bosworth et al., 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), s.v. “Shari‘a,” 323.

³³*al-Ṣārim al-maslūl ‘alā shātīm al-rasūl*.

³⁴Hoover, “Kitāb al-ṣārim al-maslūl,” 854; Thomas F. Michel, ed. and trans., *A Muslim Theologian’s Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya’s al-Jawāb al-sahih* (Delmar, NY: Caravan, 1984), 69–71; Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 151–52; Turki, “Situation du ‘Tributaire,’” 39–72.

³⁵Wagner, “Non-Muslims Who Insult,” 538.

³⁶Cf. Hoover, “Kitāb al-ṣārim al-maslūl,” on this translation.

³⁷Hoover, “Kitāb al-ṣārim al-maslūl,” 854.

³⁸Lutz Wiederhold assumes that the inclusion of the punishment for blasphemy in the legal manuals “was preceded and accompanied by a theological discourse on the righteousness and impeccability” of Muhammad (“Blasphemy Against the Prophet Muḡammad,” 69). A. J. Wensinck wrote that, in turn, “We must assume that [the dogma of prophetic sinlessness] arose out of the

Veneration also advances the life example of Muhammad as the model for all of humankind to emulate, and declares that the sayings attributed to Muhammad in the hadith have authority for human behavior in Islamic law.³⁹ This illustrates the importance of the *sunna* of the messenger as expressed in *sīra*, *maghāzī*, and hadith.

Beyond this, veneration includes a wide variety of other popular practices and beliefs: for example, the belief that Muhammad is alive and intercedes before Allah for his community. It includes the claim that the coming of Muhammad is prophesied in the Bible, and the practice of making this claim the criterion for judging Judaism and Christianity (as Martin Accad has explained so well⁴⁰ and as Walid Saleh has recently insisted⁴¹).

Veneration also includes the Qur'anic claim that Allah and the angels "pray upon" the prophet (this is the literal sense of the verb *ṣallā 'alā* in Sura 33:56)⁴² and the command to believers to do the same. It is interesting to note that immediately following the command to "pray upon the prophet" comes this statement: "Those who abuse [*ādhā*] Allah and his messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world and the hereafter and prepared for them a humiliating punishment" (Q 33:57, Arberry). This is one of the key verses we indicated earlier that uses the verb *ādhā*.

I list these dimensions in anticipation of the missiological responses to the diversity surrounding my topic. A common feature of all these dimensions is the veneration of Muhammad, which in some of its diverse expressions certainly resembles deification. Muhammad veneration is a topic of academic research exemplified by Annemarie Schimmel's study *And*

growing worship of Muhammad." *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), 218.

³⁹al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Risāla fī uṣūl al-fiqh*, trans. Majid Khadduri, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1977), 109-22.

⁴⁰Martin Accad, "Muhammad's Advent as the Final Criterion for the Authenticity of the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī ajwibat al-yahūd wa-l-naṣārā*," in *The Three Rings: Textual Studies in the Historical Trialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Barbara Roggema et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 217-36.

⁴¹Walid A. Saleh, review of *Narratives of Tampering in the Earliest Commentaries on the Qur'ān*, by Gordon Nickel, *Al-Masāq* 28, no. 1 (2016): 104.

⁴²*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 10, *Tā'-U[...]*, ed. P. J. Bearman et al., 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), s.v. "Taṣliya," 359. Cristina de la Puente, "The Prayer upon the Prophet Muḥammad (*taṣliya*): A Manifestation of Islamic Religiosity," *Medieval Encounters* 5, no. 1 (1999): 121-29. Constance Padwick found in her study of Muslim prayer manuals that the *taṣliya* accounted for one-third of the total material of all manuals "at the very least" and was "the commonest of phrases on Muslim lips; the commonest of phrases in Muslim books." *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use* (London: SPCK, 1961), 152.

*Muhammad Is His Prophet: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*⁴³ and especially the classic monograph by Tor Andrae from nearly a century ago, *Die Person Muhammads in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde*.⁴⁴ Helpful missiological responses to the punishment of blasphemy would need to take into account the general web of concern surrounding the veneration of Muhammad.

An important primary source that explicitly connects the punishment for blasphemy to these wider dimensions of veneration is the book titled *Healing Through the Announcement of the Rights of the Chosen One* by the Spanish Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ ibn Mūsā al-Yaḥsubī (d. 1123).⁴⁵ The *Healing* includes major claims about Allah’s praise of Muhammad; for Muhammad’s miracles; on the obligation to believe in Muhammad as well as to obey and love him and follow his *sunna*; about praying on Muhammad; and for his sinlessness.⁴⁶ Then the book concludes with a long section on punishments for those who think Muhammad imperfect or curse him.⁴⁷ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ is unequivocal about the punishment: death. He presents extensive material from the Qur’an, hadith, *sīra*, and judgments of famous jurists. He claims that there is no dispute about this punishment among the *ulama* and the *salaf*.⁴⁸ Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ also adds that even if people speak against Muhammad without intent, through ignorance, or by a slip of the tongue, they must be killed without hesitation.⁴⁹

This is the understanding of blasphemy that seems to provide the background for the enactment of Section 295-C of the Pakistani Penal Code in 1986:

⁴³Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Prophet: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

⁴⁴Tor Andrae, *Die Person Muhammads in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1917).

⁴⁵*Kitāb al-shifā’ bi-ta’rif huqūq al-muṣṭafā*.

⁴⁶Interestingly, the *Shifā’* contains “probably the most authoritatively cited refutation” of the truth of the satanic verses incident; cf. *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*, vol. 4, *P-Sh*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2004), s.v. “Satanic Verses,” 533.

⁴⁷Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Muhammad, Messenger of Allah*, 373-448; Delfina Serrano Ruano, “Kitāb al-shifā’ bi-ta’rif huqūq al-Muṣṭafā,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographic History*, vol. 3, 1050-1200, ed. David Thomas and Alex Mallett (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 544.

⁴⁸Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, *Muhammad, Messenger of Allah*, 373-75.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 385-86. The *Shifā’* made Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ famous throughout the Muslim world and earned him the reputation of being one of the foremost anti-Christian polemicists of his time. Ruano, “Kitāb al-shifā’,” 544.

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.⁵⁰

Is there, however, any explicit link between classical source and modern society? In this case, there seems to be a connection. Mark Wagner writes that the influence of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s *Healing* was passed through Ibn Taymiyya’s *Unsheathed Sword* and his advocate Ibn al-Bazzāz (d. 1424) to the Ḥanafī scholars of South Asia and the “Islamicization” of law in Pakistan.⁵¹

WHAT IS THE DIVERSITY IN THIS CASE?

Returning to the stories of recent killings in Pakistan, the diversity within Pakistani society seems to be between Muslims who believe (1) that the punishment of death for blasphemy is right and just but should be administered by an Islamic government, (2) that Muslims may inflict this punishment individually without the initiative of the government, or (3) that blasphemy should not be punished in this way. Virtually all Pakistani Muslims would hold to the veneration of Muhammad and would agree that speaking against Muslim truth claims for Muhammad amounts to blasphemy.

In orthodox Sunni Islam there is unanimity on the punishment for blasphemy.⁵² Islamic interpretation of the Qur’an, hadith, and shari’a tends to be traditional, building on the authorities of the past rather than proposing new and creative approaches to the same questions. A recent illustration of this propensity is *The Study Qur’an*—a 2015 publication that offers interpretations from a thousand years ago but no comments from modern critical academic scholarship. In the case of blasphemy, tradition prescribes death, whether immediate or after first giving the offender an opportunity to recant. Diversity arises over the question of whether blasphemers immediately become apostates or whether they remain Muslims and are judged for a *ḥadd* crime. If apostates, there is also diversity over whether offenders should be immediately killed or whether they should be given an opportunity to repent. In all of these diversities, blasphemy deserves death.

⁵⁰“Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860),” Pakistani.org, October 6, 1860, www.pakistani.org/Pakistan/legislation/1860/actXLVof1860.html.

⁵¹Wagner, “Non-Muslims Who Insult,” 538-40. For more on the influence of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ on Ibn Taymiyya, see Ruano, “Kitāb al-shifā’,” 545; and Turki, “Situation du ‘Tributaire,” 40, 61-63.

⁵²Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 151.

This chapter has described a number of medieval Muslim works that argue for death. This impulse continues into the modern age, Shabbir Akhtar's book *Be Careful with Muhammad!* being a good example of this.⁵³ Writing after the Salman Rushdie controversy, Akhtar reviews traditional Muslim thinking on blasphemy to explain the Muslim reaction to *The Satanic Verses*. A test for diversity in this area would be to inquire whether modern Muslim scholars have written books or articles disagreeing with this punishment or the concept of blasphemy upon which it is based.

Muslims generally agree that speaking against Muhammad is serious and deserves painful punishment, but some Muslims do not believe the Qur'an prescribes punishment in this world and therefore disagree with capital punishment. Other Muslims understand the Qur'an to prescribe punishment in this world and find this position affirmed by *sunna* and Islamic law. For example, the Indian modernist Muslim Wahiduddin Khan refers only to the Qur'an,⁵⁴ while modernist Laiq Ahmed Atif quotes the Qur'an and adds stories about Muhammad forgiving insults.⁵⁵ There is no question that these two writers venerate Muhammad, but neither mentions Islamic law in relation to blasphemy.

The harshest expression of punishment for blasphemy explored in this essay is Ibn Taymiyya's work *The Unsheathed Sword*. Ibn Taymiyya acknowledged only a narrow margin of diversity in cases of blasphemy: the difference between immediate death and the chance for repentance before execution. He argued for immediate death. Even so, in the words of Wagner, "Ibn Taymiyya's draconian version of the law against insulting the Prophet enjoyed great success."⁵⁶

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THIS DIVERSITY

Some Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī jurists disagreed with Ibn Taymiyya about the punishment of non-Muslims accused of blasphemy. This suggests a reason for

⁵³Shabbir Akhtar, *Be Careful with Muhammad! The Salman Rushdie Affair* (London: Bellew, 1989).

⁵⁴Wahiduddin Khan, "Blasphemy in Islam: The Quran Does Not Prescribe Punishment for Abusing the Prophet," *Times of India*, October 2, 2012, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/edit-page/Blasphemy-in-Islam-The-Quran-does-not-prescribe-punishment-for-abusing-the-Prophet/articleshow/16631496.cms>.

⁵⁵Atif, "Blasphemy and the Holy Prophet Muhammad."

⁵⁶Wagner, "Non-Muslims Who Insult," 538.

Muslim diversity from the four Islamic schools of law. For example, the later Ḥanafī jurist Ibn ʿĀbidīn (d. 1836) argued that “non-Muslims were wont to say things about the Prophet that Muslims would find offensive and should not be punished for it.”⁵⁷ The predominant school of law among the Sunnis of South Asia is the Ḥanafī school. Wagner explains, however, that though South Asian Ḥanafī scholars revered Ibn ʿĀbidīn, they preferred the approach of a different Ḥanafī jurist, al-Bazzāz, who was an advocate of Ibn Taymiyya and his *Unsheathed Sword*.⁵⁸

There are indeed differences among the schools of law related to the status of blasphemers and the punishment they deserve. Mālik ibn Anas, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Layth reputedly held that those who speak against Muhammad, whether Muslim or not, must be punished by death. Mālikīs say that blasphemers become apostates; they should be given a chance to repent, otherwise they deserve death. Similarly, Abū Ḥanīfa and Abū Yūsuf are believed to have accepted the repentance of the blasphemer. Shāfiʿīs hold two views: some say that blasphemers apostatize and should be given a chance to repent, while others consider speaking against Muhammad a *ḥadd* offense that should be punished by death and cannot be set aside by repentance.⁵⁹ Further, there was disagreement among the four schools—and even within the schools themselves, as with the Ḥanafīs—concerning whether leniency could be shown to non-Muslims accused of blasphemy.⁶⁰

Commentary on the funeral of Mumtaz Qadri suggests a second possible reason for diversity over the punishment for blasphemy, at least in South Asia: the strong (and opposing) Sunni movements in the region. One report noted that Barēlwī Muslims attended the funeral in large numbers and that the execution of Qadri has become a rallying point for Pakistan’s Barēlwīs. The Barēlwīs have even established a popular shrine or *mazār* in Qadri’s honor. In the South Asian context, the importance given to Muhammad has been a point of contention between the Barēlwīs and other groups like the Dēobandīs and modernists for more than a century. At issue is the strong Barēlwī belief that Muhammad intercedes with Allah on behalf of Muslims

⁵⁷Ibid., 540.

⁵⁸Ibid., 538-40.

⁵⁹Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 151, summarizing Ibn Taymiyya’s *Unsheathed Sword*.

⁶⁰Wagner, “Non-Muslims Who Insult,” 530.

at all times.⁶¹ Other important claims of this group's first leader, Aḥmad Riḍa Khān Barēlwī (d. 1921), included the following: Muhammad's knowledge of the unseen (and ultimately knowledge of everything); the preeminence of Muhammad's light; the claim that Allah created the world for Muhammad's sake; the belief that Muhammad, being created of light, had no shadow; and so on.⁶²

Related to the punishment for blasphemy, however, the distinction should not be overstated. In a recent public disagreement about the punishment in India, one modernist Muslim writer stated that speaking against Muhammad "is not a subject of punishment, but is rather a subject of peaceful admonishment."⁶³ In this case it was the Dēobandī scholars who took up the defense of capital punishment, stating that it was supported by Islamic sourcebooks and the consensus of Muslim jurists.⁶⁴

This recent Indian disagreement in turn points to a third possible reason for diversity: different opinions about the meanings and relative authority of the sources from which Muslims believe Islamic law is derived. Some Muslims find the *sunna* ambiguous about the treatment of people who oppose Muhammad, and do not believe the Qur'an clearly prescribes death. In these cases Muslims may simply prefer the Qur'an and the stories in the *sunna* that portray greater tolerance. Wahiduddin Khan cites a number of passages in the Qur'an where messengers are mocked, but concludes, "nowhere does the Quran prescribe the punishment of lashes, or death, or any other physical punishment."⁶⁵ Obaidullah Qasmi then attacks the modernist for "ignoring Hadith, the second most important source of Islamic faith and Shariah, which prescribes death penalty" for blasphemy against Muhammad. Qasmi claims that Islam is unanimous on this punishment except for the "Qadianis, a community regarded infidels by Muslims across the world."⁶⁶

Views such as that of Wahiduddin Khan may be expressed by modernist Muslim voices, especially in the West, but is it common to find

⁶¹*Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001), s.v. "Barēlwīs," 1:201.

⁶²*Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, s.v. "Barēlwīs."

⁶³Khan, "Blasphemy in Islam."

⁶⁴Qasmi, "Blasphemy in Islam."

⁶⁵Khan, "Blasphemy in Islam."

⁶⁶Qasmi, "Blasphemy in Islam."

them in the preceding thousand years of Muslim tradition? And would such voices have difficulty finding a hearing even today in some majority-Muslim societies? Khan does not deny that “a negative stance towards the Prophet will be judged by God,” but he does counsel believers to “observe the policy of avoidance” and speak the message of God in a way that addresses people’s minds. His case is theological: God has given humanity total freedom; to this Khan approvingly adds “the modern secular concept of freedom.”⁶⁷

There is an instructive case of diversity in a Muslim-majority society in the discussion of a related topic, the Islamic punishment for apostasy. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, a professor of law who teaches at Emory University, wrote in 1986 about how new formulations of Islamic law today could be based on the parts of the Qur’an that Muslims associate with Mecca.⁶⁸ An-Na’im called these verses “texts of freedom of choice” and explained how Muslims could choose to act on these rather than on parts of the Qur’an he called “the texts of compulsion and jihad” that Muslims associate with Medina—and upon which shari’a is based. He also wrote that this technique could be used in other areas of Islamic law.⁶⁹ The potential danger of expressing this approach in Muslim-majority societies, however, is indicated in Dr. An-Na’im’s report that the Sudanese advocate of the views he was describing, Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, had been convicted of apostasy and executed one year earlier.⁷⁰

It is important to observe not only the diversity but also the reasons behind it. Mahmoud Muhammad Taha sought to reconcile Muslim belief with twentieth-century values,

to revive ancient sacred texts in such a way that allows one to live in the modern world. . . . His vision asked Muslims to abandon fourteen hundred years of accepted dogma in favor of a radical and demanding new methodology that would set them free from the burdens of traditional jurisprudence.⁷¹

⁶⁷Khan, “Blasphemy in Islam.”

⁶⁸Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na’im, “The Islamic Law of Apostasy and Its Modern Applicability: A Case from the Sudan,” *Religion* 16 (1986): 197-224.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 216.

⁷⁰An-Na’im, “The Islamic Law of Apostasy,” 197.

⁷¹George Packer, “The Moderate Martyr: A Radically Peaceful Vision of Islam,” *New Yorker*, September 11, 2006, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/09/11/the-moderate-martyr.

Taha's vision was certainly attractive to the West, but it went against orthodox Islam. As George Packer notes, Taha was the "anti-Qutb" (that is, Sayyid Qutb, who has been very influential in the modern world).⁷² The views of modernist Muslim thinkers like Khan, An-Na'im, and Taha show a positive response to modernity and what Muslims know are the prevailing Western opinions about tolerance and religious freedom.⁷³

A further diversity may involve differences in the Muslim regard for Muhammad, in views of what constitutes blasphemy, or in a desire for leniency to blasphemers. If so, the expression of such differences continues to be extremely sensitive in some Muslim-majority societies. In 1990, a question was raised in the Pakistani parliament about whether a more lenient punishment could be considered. The Federal Shariat Court then ruled, "The penalty for contempt of the Holy Prophet . . . is death and nothing else."⁷⁴ More recently, in 2010 Sherry Rehman tried to suggest changes to Section 295-C and subsequently was formally charged with blasphemy.⁷⁵ In this scenario, any challenge to capital punishment for blasphemy itself becomes blasphemy.

MISSIOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

The missiological response to the Islamic punishment for blasphemy provides an opportunity to address both the social and physical challenges that Christians actually face in some Muslim societies today, and the theological issues that accompany the Muslim veneration of Muhammad.

At the start of missiological response comes the question as to whether Christians should declare that killing people for speaking against a religious figure is wrong, and to oppose it. Jesus himself—who is not just a religious figure, but the divine Son of God and Savior of the world—said, "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven" (Mt 12:32). Why then should people kill to defend their claims for a merely human figure? Should Christians consider asking their Muslim friends to oppose and stop this punishment?

⁷²Packer, "Moderate Martyr."

⁷³See for example Peters and De Vries, "Apostasy in Islam," 21-24.

⁷⁴Marshall and Shea, *Silenced*, 86.

⁷⁵Agenzia Fides, "Sherry Rehman, Promoter for Amending the Blasphemy Law, Incriminated for Blasphemy," Pakistan Blasphemy Laws: Ending the Abuse of the Blasphemy Laws, February 18, 2011, www.pakistanblasphemylaw.com/?p=341.

The second step would be to try to bring some precision to the terms in which Muslims describe blasphemy and to state clearly whether we accept those terms. Without this clarification, all is confusion. The concept of blasphemy often found in the Muslim legal sources is basically a denial of any of the essential dogmas of Islam,⁷⁶ following the meaning of *kafara* and *kadhhaba* noted earlier. This includes—and arguably mainly concerns—Muslim truth claims for Muhammad. Missiologically speaking, for Christians this is exactly the point. Are Muslim claims for Muhammad and the Qur'an true? If, on the basis of the criteria of the gospel, Christians judge Islamic claims not to be true, how could this be called blasphemy? This means that the present terms of the discussion are themselves fundamentally unhelpful and need to be reformulated. Do non-Muslims really have no right to question the full range of Muslim truth claims for Muhammad? Do Muslims have no right to question these claims? If they have a right, should non-Muslims consider defending their right?

The challenges that Christians face in Pakistan because of Section 295-C are not the same as the challenges facing Christians in other Muslim societies. The Muslim world is diverse. However, missiological response needs to treat the particular diversities. What is the appropriate counsel to Christians in Pakistan when their biblical confessions of the glory and authority of the Lord Jesus seem to some Muslims to imply disrespect for the messenger of Islam? When Christians disagree with the glorification of Muhammad over all other humans? When they say that the life of Jesus in the Gospels is the model for human behavior, not the story of Muhammad? That Jesus is Lord, not another? What is the appropriate advice for Christians who are accused of blasphemy when they confess the divine Sonship of Jesus, and at the same time and in the same societies are accused of blasphemy for not affirming the full range of Muslim truth claims for Muhammad?

Section 295-C of the Pakistani Penal Code says, “by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly.” Is it possible that Christians in Muslim-majority societies, declaring their biblical confessions about Jesus, could be judged to “impute” or “insinuate” words about Muhammad?

⁷⁶See Peters and De Vries, “Apostasy in Islam,” 2-4.

What kind of missiological leadership does the church in the majority world need to help her respond biblically and faithfully to the challenges of Islam *as the church experiences Islam in her own diverse contexts*? Does it help the global church for North American Christians to say, “Such and such in our view is not the true Islam, so we needn’t concern ourselves with that”? “Such and such an expression smacks of stereotyping Muslims, therefore we need to keep away from that”? The whole point of recognizing diversity should be to address the particular expressions of Islam that the church actually faces in her diverse contexts. Is it possible that the Western cultures in which many of us live have influenced us to the point that we hesitate to deal with questions that large sections of the global church face—never mind to boldly lead out in missiological response?

Happily, a number of Christians with a good knowledge of Islam and experience in Muslim societies have ventured to respond to the Muslim veneration of Muhammad in various ways. Constance Padwick, in her wonderful study *Muslim Devotions*, wrote that fully one-third of all the expressions she discovered in her survey of prayer manuals relate to the *taṣliya*—that is, the Muslim “prayer upon” the messenger of Islam commanded in Sura 33:56.⁷⁷ In contexts of concentrated Muhammad veneration, this *taṣliya* can be heard from Muslims throughout the day and seen written in Arabic on front-room walls and roadside signs. Padwick advised the church in Muslim contexts to keep this in mind and to develop its own collective expressions of praise to the Lord Jesus.⁷⁸

Kenneth Cragg considered Muhammad veneration in a chapter of his book *Muhammad and the Christian*, at the end of which he asks,

How should the Christian relate in both thought and community to this Muslim “possession” of and by Muḥammad in the soul? *The question is the most searching of all those we have to face.* There must be careful note of the fact that Islam, even in spite of itself, finds place for categories of relationship between divine ends and human means, between the eternal and the historical, unlike and yet akin to those that are at the heart of Christian experience in Jesus as the Christ.⁷⁹

⁷⁷Padwick, *Muslim Devotions*, 152.

⁷⁸Ibid., 165-66.

⁷⁹Kenneth Cragg, *Muhammad and the Christian: A Question of Response* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984), 65, emphasis mine.

As one would expect, Cragg found some possibilities in this question for mutual understanding. In spite of official pronouncements, Islam ascribes to Muhammad powers of mediation and intercession that it denies to the Messiah. Then Cragg continued,

There remains the Christian anxiety about a pattern of religious awareness which follows, in part, the Christian elements of divine/human “association” and historical “mediation” of the eternal, but joins them to a personality so far different from the central figure of the Gospel and from that Gospel’s categories of suffering and grace in which God’s reconciliation of the world consists.⁸⁰

Those who enjoy the dense Craggian prose will appreciate his point. The veneration of Muhammad joins to God’s eternal purposes a figure who does not express the gospel’s categories of suffering and grace and who thus cannot connect humanity to God’s reconciliation.

Samuel Zwemer studied the same material as Cragg in a short book called *The Moslem Christ*, but stated his conclusion in a more straightforward expression: “The sin and the guilt of the Mohammedan world is that they give Christ’s glory to another, *and that for all practical purposes Mohammed himself is the Moslem Christ.*”⁸¹

More recently, Mark Durie deals with Muhammad veneration in his book *Liberty to the Captives*. Durie’s concern is the spiritual health and growth of both Christians living in Muslim societies and new Christians from Muslim backgrounds. In addition to isolating the problem, he suggests a series of prayers that Christians can pray in order to abjure the veneration of Muhammad and be free from its spiritual grasp.⁸²

Missiological responses such as these show a realistic engagement with the phenomenon of Muhammad veneration and a responsible assessment of its social and spiritual dimensions. They recognize the diversities within societies related to Islamic beliefs and practices, as well as broad unity and consensus. These initiatives in turn help the church to think and act faithfully in the particular diverse contexts she faces within the Muslim world.

⁸⁰Ibid., 65.

⁸¹Samuel Zwemer, *The Moslem Christ: An Essay on the Life, Character, and Teachings of Jesus Christ According to the Koran and Orthodox Tradition* (New York: American Tract Society, 1912), 157, emphasis original.

⁸²Mark Durie, *Liberty to the Captives: Freedom from Islam and Dhimmitude Through the Cross* (Melbourne: Deror Books, 2010), 65-85.