

Are God & Allah the same?

An Anonymous Arab Christian from the Middle East
(doctoral degree in Islamic studies, decades-long service with & teaching on Muslim ministry)

Published under "Featured Article" at www.globalmissiology.org, October 2007

OUTLINE

This piece has five sections:

SECTION 1. Peter Wagner's article.

SECTION 2. David Johnston's article <david.johnston@yale.edu>

SECTION 3. Dave Rumph's article <rumph@cp10.es.xerox.com>

SECTION 4 Emir Caner's book & piece

SECTION 5 The response of an anonymous Arab Christian from the Middle East

SECTION 1. Peter Wagner's article.

--- Peter Wagner:

Who Is Allah?

by C. Peter Wagner

Printed in Global Prayer News (Jan.-Mar. 2002, vol. 3, no. 1) published by Global Harvest Ministries.

Since September 11, the name "Allah" has been appearing in our national media day after day. Who is Allah? Who is the person for whom large numbers of individuals are not only willing, but desirous, of sacrificing their very lives?

Is Allah just another name for God? Can over one billion people now alive expect to go to heaven because they pray to Allah five times a day, keep an annual Ramadan fast in his honor, and travel to Mecca to honor him? Ask them and they will tell you that there is no other way to be sure of getting to heaven, unless, of course, one is willing to die as a martyr to the cause of Allah in a jihad or holy war.

Our Problems

This poses a problem for Christians in America where freedom has always been one of our highest national ideals. We Americans will fight for the right of Muslims to worship in a mosque, teach the Koran, and wear turbans or scarves on their heads. But we are equally zealous to preserve the rights of Christians to inform Muslims that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father but by Him.

That also poses a problem for those of us who are committed to focus our prayers on the 40/70

Window through 2005. [The 40/70 Window is the region between 40 and 70 degrees north latitude, stretching from Western Europe through Central and Northeast Asia.] Target Silk Road is a vast Muslim-dominated area. Many of the nations in Target Europe have been witnessing a rapidly-increasing Muslim population for years. While we are praying that God will bless the Muslims in the 40/70 Window, we are also aware that Allah is not a mediator between God and humans. Muslims will receive the blessings of being part of the family of God only if they turn from Allah and give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Political Correctness and Spiritual Correctness

Because we as Christians will always defend our ideal of freedom as a basic human right, it is easy for us to go overboard on political correctness at the expense of spiritual correctness. Political correctness is a value related to the visible world and spiritual correctness is a value related to the invisible world. It is very important to understand the difference between the two.

The Visible World

While President Bush is a born-again Christian, it is his responsibility as President to assure Muslims in America that they have freedom to serve Allah if they so choose. In the September 14 service in the National Cathedral in Washington, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian clergy participated, even though the service, keyed by Billy Graham's message, was unquestionably and, very appropriately, Christian in nature. In the September 23 memorial event in Yankee Stadium, Christian leaders were accompanied by Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. This is the kind of political correctness that centuries of Christian faith have molded in the United States.

A similar public reaction would scarcely have been expected if events had been conducted in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, Qatar, or any number of other nations whose character has been molded by centuries of submission to Allah. Political correctness is seen by many of them as only another manifestation of the inherent weakness of Christian civilization. It would not occur to most followers of Allah to fight and die for freedom in the visible world.

The Invisible World

However, our Christian principles of freedom and political correctness in the visible world do not carry over to the invisible world. In the invisible world the ideal is not liberty and justice for all, but rather the salvation of souls. God did not build multiple highways to heaven. He sent His Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (see Jn. 3:16). Those who do not believe in Jesus, including those who worship Allah, are destined to spend eternity in hell. They are on the wrong road.

Allah Is a Creature

Allah is the proper name of a spirit being. He is a person created by God. Even though he doesn't have a body, and even though he is not human, and even though he was not made in the image of God, he is an angelic being. But he is no more God than is Wormwood or Beelzebub or Apollyon or Shiva or Buddha or Baal or Lucifer. All of them are beings created by God, but who

ended up agents of darkness, just as Satan did.

What does God think of those who choose to worship Allah? To express it in the vernacular, it makes God mad! Romans 1:18-32 says that the "wrath of God is revealed" (Rom. 1:18) against those "who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25).

Make no mistake about it, Allah is not the Creator, he is a creature. Archaeological records show that he was one of over 360 deities, all demonic spirits, worshiped by different tribes of Arabs long before the days of Mohammed. Mohammed's tribe, the Quraish, had adopted Allah as their principal tribal deity long before Mohammed was born. Many traditional Arabs had regarded Allah as the "Number One" among their 360-plus gods, along with his consort, Allat, the moon goddess. When Mohammed received a supernatural revelation that Allah was the one god who created the universe, you can be assured that such information did not come from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who is also the Father of Jesus Christ. In other words, five times a day Muslims worship and serve a creature, not the Creator.

God's Holy Nature

When God sees this going on, His holy nature does not allow Him to be politically correct. Worship of Allah, no matter how sincere or pure-hearted, will not get a person to heaven any more than will worship of Inti or Amaterasu Omikami or Zeus or Guadalupe or Maximón or Baal or Quetzalcoatl or Kali or whatever one's created demonic spirit of choice might be. What does God think of those who worship creatures rather than the Creator? He regards them as fools (see Rom. 1:22)!

If we keep these things in mind, we will not fall into the trap of being so politically correct in the visible world that we begin to imagine that Muslims are such good people that they no longer have to be evangelized. If we are true friends of Muslims we will not allow our political correctness to trump our spiritual correctness. We will assert their rights under our Constitution of the United States while at the same time we will share with them the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our Assignment

Years ago, God assigned Global Harvest Ministries the task of taking leadership in mobilizing strategic prayer for unsaved people, first of the 10/40 Window and now of the 40/70 Window. Our specialty is warfare prayer, the kind of strategic prophetic intercession that attempts to neutralize the forces of darkness, orchestrated by the god of this age, which seek to keep people blinded to the gospel. Specifically, our desire is to see Muslims move from under the power of Allah to God.

Because of our commitment to obey this assignment of God, we have been the target of specific threats. My name has appeared on at least one hit list issued by those who worship Allah. Such things only remind me that I must not love my life unto the death (see Rev. 12:11). But

meanwhile Global Harvest Ministries, the Strategic Prayer Network, and Target 40/70 Window will continue to promote political correctness in the visible world and spiritual correctness in the invisible world.

SECTION 2. David Johnston's article <david.johnston@vale.edu>

Allah vs. God: Is He the Same?

by David L. Johnston

Reprinted in Body Life January 2002, with permission, from an e-mail message of 7 January 2002

Contrary to what others may teach and preach, I remain unconvinced that the God of the Quran is any different from the God of the Old Testament. If we say Jews worship the same God as we do, then we must logically grant Muslims the same "privilege." After all, they recognize Jesus as the Christ (though their definition is vague and comes nowhere near satisfying us), pointing to His virgin birth, spotless life and miracles--going a lot further in our direction than do Jews!

I am not saying the Qur'an is Scripture like the Old Testament. There is certainly that sense in which Christians share a deep affinity with Jews because they share part of the same Scripture. I am not talking about the text, however, but about the theology behind it. I am simply arguing that since Muhammad started at the same point as the Bible with regard to creation (the one God who created all there is), we are talking about three faiths (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity) that have this doctrine in common. As one reads the Qur'an (much of it reads like the Psalms or other parts of Scripture) one discovers the all-powerful God, the originator of all that is, the sustainer and the provider of all good things that humans (and other creatures) need. He is also the God of Adam and Eve (though she is not mentioned by name in the Qur'an), of Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, and Jacob, etc. . . . Is there another God like that? Granted, the element of fatherhood is missing, and love is not emphasized (though mercy and forgiveness are often mentioned).

But surely, if Paul could look at an Athenian statue and proclaim to his pagan audience that this is the "God" who raised Jesus from the dead, we certainly can proclaim to our Muslim friends that the Creator God they worship is the one who sent Jesus to redeem us from our sins! That is the point of my dissertation ("Toward Muslims and Christians as Joint Caretakers of Creation in a Postmodern World"): When it comes to the doctrine of creation we stand on common ground, and this in turn empowers us in the necessary task of breaking down the centuries-old enmity between Christians and Muslims. It's a pre-evangelistic task, all the more urgent in light of our current U.S. policy in the Middle East and Central Asia, which for a majority of Muslims around the world is seen as a confirmation of the "Christian" West's inveterate "crusading" temperament. Of course, we need to continue with current missionary efforts, in both intercession and church planting. But the "Crusader" image is a huge obstacle that must be removed before most Muslims can even begin to "hear" the gospel. That is why we urgently need to raise the prophetic voice with our government concerning our policies in that part of the world.

To summarize, I see five positive reasons why I believe Muslims, like the other monotheists (Christians and Jews), are speaking of the same God. The reasons are philological,

cultural/linguistic, theological, practical, and Missiological.

1. Philological: The word "Allah" is a Semitic word parallel to the Hebrew "El," referring to the highest god, creator of all that is. You can read the "Allah" and "ilah" (the generic word for a "god" in Arabic) articles on this in the Encyclopedia of Islam. Scholars of all stripes agree on this. Hebrew and Arabic are cognate languages (same Semitic origin, with Aramaic between Hebrew and Arabic), with many words in common, not to mention the wide cultural overlapping as well.

2. Cultural/Linguistic: Arab Christians used the word "Allah" for "God" before Islam came along, and continue to do so today. It is the only Arabic word for God--which our Arabic Christian brothers and sisters were using even before Islam. We are talking about 15 million Christians in the Middle East whose Bible translations have always used "Allah" for God, and whose liturgy and prayers are all directed to Allah as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

3. Theological: Allah was considered the highest god at the pre-Islamic shrine at Mecca. The Qur'an in many passages gives witness to the Supreme God, creator of the heavens and the earth, the God of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and other biblical figures as well. It also mentions Arabian monotheists by the name of "haneef," and Muhammad claims them as precursors of Islam. What is more, when Muhammad finally marched triumphantly into Mecca (630, only two years before his death), after eight years of self-imposed exile, he cleansed the pagan shrine of all other deities and proclaimed that it would now be dedicated solely to the One True God, Allah. This is an interesting act of contextualization, actually one example among many intentionally carried out by Muhammad. Finally, right from the start it is clear he believed and taught that he was a prophet preaching the same faith as the Jews and Christians.

Though he deviated much more from Christianity in the end, he never contradicted the basic biblical story line from Genesis to the prophets. (In the details, however, he follows much more the oral traditions passed down by the Arabian Jews than the Scriptures--of which he probably never had a copy for himself anyway.)

4. Practical: often the opposing argument goes, "they say they are worshipping the same God but in fact, because their faith is borne out of Satan's deceit they are really worshipping the devil." First of all, I don't believe anyone worships the devil while they are consciously worshipping God. He is the only one who can judge the human heart and discern its true intentions. But then secondly, as John says, "We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the power and control of the evil one" (I John 5:19). I would not want to be naive: any system that sets itself up against the gospel of our Lord Jesus falls into John's category of "the world." That is certainly John's intention in linking "the Jews" (Jesus' overt enemies in his gospel) to "the world": "The world would love you if you belonged to it, but you don't. I chose you to come out of the world, and so it hates you" (John 15:19). On the other hand, wouldn't we want to say that a person groping for God in their prayers (from whatever background) is at least a potential recipient of God's mercy in Christ? Only Jesus can judge the deepest intentions of the heart. The New Testament teaches us that through his Holy Spirit the "Son of Man who came to seek and to save the lost" is wanting to draw this precious seeker to himself. Thus when someone says, "I love God and want to draw nearer to him," I take that at face value and try to lead him or

her on from there.

5. Missiological: Without common ground we cannot even begin a conversation with a Muslim friend. If my opening statement is, "You and I believe in a different God," we have already lost a precious bridge to his or her heart. If in fact we can agree on a common Creator God who created humans as His deputies on earth, holding them accountable through the words of His prophets, and warning them of the judgment to come, then yes, we can start in a familiar place and build from there. This has certainly been our experience in years of ministry in the Middle East.

SECTION 3. Dave Rumph's article <rumph@cp10.es.xerox.com>

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

The Debate on Allah's Identity

by Dave Rumph

In the past week I have received at least two articles discussing the subject, "Who is Allah?" Of course all this interest comes as a result of the September terrorist attacks, and the subsequent war in Afghanistan.

The articles I received this week, from Drs. C. Peter Wagner and David Johnston, advocated quite different positions. So I've been pondering the question myself, and thought I'd share some of my thoughts. We have received permission to reproduce both articles in their entirety elsewhere in this issue of Body Life, and you might want to read each of them first before returning to this column.

Peter Wagner, as most of you know, is the founding teacher of 120 Fellowship, a former Fuller Seminary Professor of Church Growth, founder of Global Harvest Ministries and the Wagner Leadership Institute, and an internationally known expert on spiritual warfare and strategic prophetic intercession. His article (see page 5) appears on the front page of the current issue of Global Prayer News (Jan.-Mar. 2002, vol. 3, no. 1).

David and his wife, Charlotte, are long-time 120 Fellowship missionaries who have been associated with ministry to Muslims for most of their lives, including extended stints in Algeria, Egypt, and Palestine. David is now doing post-doctoral work at Yale following a Ph.D. from Fuller. His position, as summarized on page 7 in his article from a recent e-mail, is similar to what I have heard also from others who are involved in direct ministry to Muslims.

Reconciling the Positions

Peter says explicitly in his article, and David would agree, that the only way to salvation is through Jesus Christ. Those who depend on anything but the finished work of Christ on the cross will not spend eternity with God. But does it follow that those who do not acknowledge Jesus as Savior and Lord are necessarily worshiping the wrong God? This is a hard line to draw. Most Christians believe that Jews, for instance, worship the same God we do, yet as evangelicals we

maintain that Jews still need to acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah in order to receive God's gift of salvation and eternal life. Is it possible for other ethnic and religious groups who have a wrong understanding (or no understanding) about Jesus--yet who worship a supreme Creator God--to be worshipping the true God, as best they know? Or are the Jews a special case? Could one assert that, without acknowledging Jesus for who He really is, it is impossible to know and worship the true God? i.e., that demonic forces will always take advantage of worship that does not give Jesus His rightful place, and will turn even sincere seeking into exaltation of a false created being rather than the one Creator? This question is at the core of the two articles we are looking at here.

Peter Wagner says "Allah" is a created, demonic being. David Johnston says "Allah" is the only word for God in Arabic, and is used by Arabic-speaking Christians to refer to the God they worship. What's going on here?

It seems to me that there are two Allahs! One is the God whom the Arab Christians worship, and one is a demonic imposter usurping worship of the true God.

We have seen this situation frequently in spiritual warfare circles. One example many of us are familiar with concerns Mary, the mother of Jesus. In many cultures, those who idolize her to an extreme extent have actually transferred their allegiance to an imposter, a demonic entity known as the Queen of Heaven who poses as Mary (or "the Virgin of Guadalupe," or any of several other aliases). Another example is seen in Mormonism. Mormons use the terms Jesus, Jehovah, and God in their worship, but an examination of their theology makes it clear they are not worshipping the same supreme being as orthodox Christians. The fact that the English terms are the same leads to considerable confusion when talking to Mormons.

Notice that the transfer of allegiance in both cases is a subtle one. The line between worship of the authentic Creator and an imposter is not easily defined, especially considering that we all worship amiss to some extent simply because of our limited human understanding.

Conversely, Islamic theology teaches many things about Allah that are contrary to Christian doctrine, but the worship coming from the hearts of individual Muslims may be based on understanding that differs from what is written in Islamic scriptures.

David Johnston argues that the Jews' God is the God of the Old Testament, the same God as that of Christians. And of course the God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New Testament. But are Jews worshipping the God of their book, or an imposter? They're certainly not worshipping the Messiah, who claims that "no one comes to the Father but by [Him]." I would propose that, even though the Old Testament and arguably the Qur'an have the same creator God, the Jews and Muslims don't necessarily worship Him, or do not worship Him in spirit and in truth. (The Qur'an, unlike the Old Testament, I would not hold as a reliable source of information about that Creator, and David Johnston likewise denies the Quran's authority as Scripture.)

If my understanding is right, the goal for evangelism of Muslim Arabs may well boil down to the transfer of their allegiance from the imposter Allah to the true Allah, since they're unlikely to

change their heart language reference to God away from the Arabic term. For non-Arabic-speaking Muslims (like Afghans, for instance), it's an easier distinction, since there is no reason for them to refer to God in some foreign language. They can and should abandon worship directed to "Allah."

Different Assignments

Peter Wagner says explicitly that the specialty assignment from God for Global Harvest Ministries "is warfare prayer, the kind of strategic prophetic intercession that attempts to neutralize the forces of darkness, orchestrated by the god of this age, which seek to keep people blinded to the gospel. Specifically, our desire is to see Muslims move from under the power of Allah to God." As Pete says, their focus is primarily on the invisible realm. Pete and Global Harvest Ministries rightly need to focus on battling the imposter Allah. In that realm, only "spiritual correctness" matters, without regard to evangelism strategies. They don't have to worry about the name confusion, since they're not doing much work with Christian Arabic speakers.

David Johnston, on the other hand, and many like him, have the assignment of direct ministry. They need to consider the best ways to bring the gospel message to Muslim individuals, families, and communities. They must seek how to reduce as much as possible the barriers Muslims face to consideration of the claims of Christ, without compromising the true gospel but also without carrying in any unnecessary Western cultural baggage. This "contextualization" is a fine line, and one that has been debated in mission and church circles for centuries. It's very easy to carry too much culture with the gospel. The Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 highlights just this kind of debate. The Jerusalem church wanted Paul to require that his Gentile converts hold to the entire Jewish law, while Paul and Barnabas argued that the law was cultural baggage, and not essential to the gospel.

The same sort of debate is going on here. As missionaries consider ways of contextualizing the gospel for various cultures, there is a movement toward "Muslim-friendly" translations of Scripture, ones that intentionally use Arabic names like "Isa" for Jesus and "Allah" for the Creator. Use of these types of translations has proved remarkably effective in places like Bangladesh. Some Christian groups working among Muslims have studied Quranic passages that speak highly of "Isa" and the "Injil" (New Testament), and then asked participants if they would like to know more about what the "Injil" has to say about "Isa." Often they are surprised by what they learn about "Isa" in the New Testament, find it much more compelling than the Qur'an, meet the true "Allah" (in whatever language), and eventually leave the Qur'an behind.

In the process, they will need to transfer their allegiance from the "Allah" who deceived them to the "Allah" who created them and has sought them from the creation of the world. Perhaps this transformation will come with a statement like, "I had no idea Allah was really like this." Over the course of time they will need to change several of their patterns of worship-but perhaps fewer than we might imagine. For example, they may choose to continue to pray five times a day, as Muslims do, but they would cease to face Mecca.

This transfer of allegiance is the goal of both the spiritual warfare and intercession that Peter Wagner has so effectively led, and the hands-on ministry of practitioners such as David

Johnston. Let's work together so that both efforts can be as fruitful as possible.

SECTION 4 Emir Caner's book & piece

Kindly visit the follow site for details:

<http://www.bpnews.net/BPFirstPerson.asp?ID=25477>



FIRST-PERSON: Are God & Allah the same?

By Emir Caner

Apr 23, 2007

SECTION 5 The response of an Anonymous Arab Christian from the Middle East

A Muslim background believer sent me this message.

“I realized lately that Christians' exclusion of Muslims is fiercer than Muslims' exclusion of Christians. An American friend of mine wrote an article entitled "Allah is God and Issa is his word" and published it in a newsvine. I personally liked it very much. But I was surprised by the number of Western hostile responses to the article to the extent that my friend deleted the article. It was on this link:

http://ebridge.newsvine.com/_news/2007/04/08/647776-allah-is-god-and-isa-is-his-word

Western Christians seem to have lost a great deal tolerance and common sense.”

In Arabic we have a saying: “Al mudhek al mubki” which means, there are things that make you laugh and weep at the same time. This is what came to mind when I received an email today with this bumper sticker. May God have mercy on the families of the dead and the wounded on all sides of the conflict, and on the many refugees and the countries that are hosting them.

Response to Dave Rumph.

As an Arab Christian my position regarding the "Allah" debate is closest to Johnston. I would like to address a few questions to Dave Rumph.

I appreciate the clarity that Rumph brought as he pointed out that Wagner's focus is on the invisible, while his critics addressed the visible and thus their responses were perceived by Wagner as irrelevant.

The issues that I would like to raise and address are the following:

1. Rumph attempted to speak of two Allahs, the real Allah that Arab, Indonesian and other national Christians worship, and the counterfeit Allah that Muslims worship. It is true that demons appear as angels of light 2 Cor 11:14. Just for the sake of argument, let us imagine a situation where a demon appeared like the angel Gabriel. Will that give us the right to say that there are two Gabriel's, one is the real Gabriel and the other is the counterfeit Gabriel? Or will we be more accurate to say that there is only one Gabriel, while the other one is a demon trying to "appear like Gabriel"?
2. Is there a danger when we begin talking about Allah who is to many national Christians in Muslim countries, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and attributing to His name Satanic attributes and powers. Is there a sanctity for that name that we should not take lightly? Could we be approaching the unforgivable sin of blaspheming against God Mark 3:29, Luke 12:10, Mt 6:9?
3. Who has the authority to "go to the realm of the invisible world" and figure out the spiritual map of the demonic world, then come out to the visible world and tell the rest of the body of Christ of who God is and who the counterfeit is? Is it an issue of deeper spirituality or unique gifting? If it has to do with spiritual gifting, how can we determine whether these conclusions are of the "balanced" nature or of the "excesses"?
4. According to Dr. Vern Middleton there are several passages in the Scripture that could be interpreted to point to the existence of territorial spirits such as Deut 32:8, 4:19, Ps 82:1,6-8, 95:3, 97:9, Is 24:21-22, Dan 10:13, 12:1, Rom 8:38, 1Cor 2:6-8, Col 2:15. The classic passage on spiritual warfare is Eph 6:10-20. From this passage we have no teaching about binding, discerning, naming, and praying down of territorial spirits. What we can do is to appeal to God to hinder and thwart the enemy.
5. Ed Smith of the Theophostic Ministry has an interesting concept of the demonic activity. He thinks that demons have a foothold in the lives of people, as long as these people believe lies about God, about themselves and about others. Once the lies are demolished with the truth 2Cor 10:3-6, demons to a great extent become powerless. I find that this attitude is consistent with the teachings of the Bible. In other words is the problem with Allah as a being or with the wrong and distorted theologies that exist in the Muslim minds and need to be demolished with the truth?

6. In the book of Daniel we see the interplay of Form and Function. Daniel and his three friends did not focus on the Forms but on the Function. They did not let the “questionable forms” prevent them from being true salt and light in the pagan empires of their day. (I see the Form as focusing on the name Allah, while the Function has to do with what is the truth about who Allah is, 'the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ').

Abednego was the Babylonian name given to Azariah the friend of Daniel. The word “Abed” in Hebrew as well as in Arabic means “slave or servant”. While the word Nego was the corruption of the Akkadian word Nabo the Babylonian god of wisdom. Azariah was given the name “the slave of the god Nego” by the official. Dan 1:6-7.

“Daniel was called Belteshazzar, after the name of my God”. This is a quote from the letter written by Nebuchadnezzar where he refers to Daniel with his Babylonian name which has to do probably with Marduk the chief Babylonian god that Nebuchadnezzar believed in. Dan 4:8

“The spirit of the holy gods is in him” (Daniel). This a phrase was repeated in several places in the book of Daniel. Dan 4:8, 4:18, 5:11. Daniel did not focus on defending himself by explaining that he does not believe in the Babylonian gods that Nebuchadnezzar and others believed in. Instead Daniel and his three friends were solid believers in the almighty God Yahweh. In their relationship with Him they did not compromise. Daniel and his friends focused on the Function, Yahweh and living for Him as salt and light, rather than on the Forms. Daniel and his three friends did not get paralyzed neither by the names given to them nor when their wisdom, faith and righteousness were attributed to Babylonian gods. The following are a few illustrations of this truth.

Dan 3:16 “Shadrach, Mechah and Abednego replied to the King O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and He will rescue us from your hand”. Dan 5:17 Then Daniel answered the king (Belshazzar) you may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else, nevertheless I will read the writing (on the wall) for the king and tell him what it means”. Dan 6:3 “Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom”.

7. Can we imagine what it will be like for the mobility of the Gospel among Arabs and other Muslim countries like Indonesia when the mass media in these countries begin to spread the news that the Evangelical Christians in America are calling Allah a demon. What will be the implications on the national Christians in Muslim countries? How will the missionaries in Muslim countries be treated and what will happen to the task of evangelizing the Muslims? Should a discussion like this be kept with maximum confidentiality, even to the extent of keeping it at the level of private prayer and small group discussions rather than on email?

8. Are the national Christians in Muslim countries grateful for our "deep insights" and "discoveries" by calling their God a demon? Are some of us Americans guilty for playing the role of "arm chair" missionaries telling the rest of the world what they should believe even about their God? How would we feel as American Christians if the Arab Christians begin to tell us that

the word God should not be used by Christians in America because of its "shady" past. My friend Dr. Hoskins says: "Our own Greek translation for the word "God" (Theos) comes from "Zeus", of pagan Greek origin. Finally, our own English word for God came from the proto-Germanic (approximately 1600 BC to 0 AD) pagan word for a god or idol and was neuter in gender until it was masculinized when the Germanic tribes converted to Christianity in the mid-first millennium A.D."

For a discussion of the word "God" in English I would expect that the main participants in the discussion should be English-speaking Christians while other international brothers and sisters could be invited as observers.