

Al-Shāfi'ī's Perception of *Tahrīf* and its Implications for Muslim-Christian Relations in Marsabit County, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper examines the knowledge that Muslim teachers in Marsabit have on *tahrīf* and its effects on Muslim-Christian relations in the area. Muhammad acknowledged Judaism and Christianity as monotheistic religions and their scriptures as revelations from God. However, Muslim scholars later claimed a deviation of these scriptures from the “original ones”, a teaching known in Arabic as *tahrīf*. *Tahrīf* is a severe accusation against Jews and Christians as untrustworthy, and their respective faiths as an adulteration. In this paper, Jews refers to those who follow Judaism. *Tahrīf* is examined, based on the the Qur'an and the Hadith as interpreted in the Shāfi'ī school of Islamic law that dominates in East Africa. Teachings by Abū Abdullāh Muhammad Ibn Idrīs Al-Shāfi'ī, the founder of the school, and Ibn Kathir, a famous Shāfi'ī scholar, have then been compared with those of Marsabit Muslim teachers. This document is based on research conducted in Marsabit between 2019 and 2021 where ten Muslim teachers were interviewed. The research finds that *tahrīf* is perpetuated in Marsabit ideological Muslims,

which impacts negatively on both the ideological and ordinary level of relationships between Muslims and Christians. Ideas from ‘affect regulatory theory’ have been used to explain effects of *tahrīf* on the Muslim-Christian relations. Active dialogue between teachers of the two religions is proposed to address challenges arising from *tahrīf* towards promoting dyadic and inter-group relations in Marsabit.

Keywords: Tahrīf, Muslim-Christian Relations, Shāfi‘ī, Al-Shāfi‘i, Ordinary Muslims, Affect Regulatory Theory.

Introduction

Islam has encountered other religions since its inception in Mecca in 610 AD. The religion emerged in a majorly polytheistic context, yet with Jewish and Christian monotheists. These religious interactions and their consequences have a rich past that continues to impact the present. Religious interactions will continue in the conceivable future due to the increasing global human mobility. Many Muslims acknowledge Judaism and Christianity as monotheistic religions and their scriptures as revelations from God. However, they have questioned the authenticity of the current Christian scriptures, claiming that they deviate from the “original ones.” This phrase is used by many Muslims who presume corruption of the Jews and the Christian scriptures. Original scriptures here refer to what pre-existed the alleged corruption. The “original scriptures” are believed to be hardly available today. The claim of deviation emerged with Muslim scholars who saw such allegations as supported by the Qur’an. Other scholars have viewed such a teaching as an easier explanation for differences between the Muslim and Christian texts as explained in this paper.

The claim of *tahrīf* of the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments, was started by Al-Kassim bin Ibrahim and Al-Tabari in the 9th century. They claimed misinterpretations of the

Bible that gave a different meaning rather than alleging textual changes. However, the claim was taken further by Abu Muhammad Ali Ibn Ahmad Ibn Said Ibn Hazm, otherwise known as Ibn Hazm (d.1064), who claimed textual changes. He was a Muslim literary scholar, historian, jurist, and theologian of Islamic Spain in Andalusia (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ibn-Hazm>). Unlike Al-Kassim and Al-Tabari who faulted Christians and Jews for misinterpreting what is written, Ibn Hazm accused them of introducing errors in the Bible that rendered it unacceptable.

The doctrine of *tahrīf* is explained using two Arabic words. The first, *tabdil* means “adulteration” in content and meaning by a change or replacement of words. The other word, *talbis*, means alteration of the truth with falsehood through interpolation (insertion) and extrapolation (conclusion by assumption) to deliberately cover the truth. *Tahrīf* in this paper means tampering with the authenticity of the entire Bible (Sabjan & Akhir, 2005, p. 33), and it has not sought to distinguish between *tabdil* and *talbis*. This paper has focused on the claim of *tahrīf* only as it relates to the Christian scripture, the Bible. The study has not included Judaism, which also uses the Old Testament part of the Bible. The understanding of *tahrīf* by Muslims is explained as it is understood by the Shāfi‘ī school of Islam.

Tahrīf, possibly more than any other allegation, is the most challenging issue in the Muslim-Christian relations discourse. This paper focuses on *tahrīf* as claimed against Christians and how it is interpreted in the Marsabit situation. Two major Shāfi‘ī sources have been referred to in understanding teachings of this school of law on *tahrīf*. The two Al-Shāfi‘ī writings are *Kitab al-Umm* (<https://dokumen.tips/download/link/imam-shafi-kitab-al-umm-english-shafi-kitab-al-umm-englishpdf>) and the *Risala* (1961). The paper has taken a special reference to Abū Abdullāh Muhammad Ibn Idrīs Al-Shāfi‘ī and Ibn Kathir, as major Shāfi‘ī scholars. Idrīs Al-

Shāfi‘ī is the founder of Al-Shāfi‘ī school of Islamic law and his teachings are used by many Muslims in the jurisprudence. Ibn Kathir diligently examined the Hadith and the Qur’an and wrote one of the most famous *tafsir* (commentary of the Qur’an). His views in interpreting Islamic teachings are significantly influential and worth consideration in this research.

Brief History of Shāfi‘ī *Maddhab* and Ibn Kathir

There are four schools of law (*Madhhab*) under the Sunni branch of Islam. These schools emerged in the 8th and 9th centuries to help in the interpretation and application of the law as given through Muhammad in the Qur’an and the Hadith. *Madhhabs* play the role of interpreting and helping in the application of Sharia as the guide of Islamic faith. The Shāfi‘ī school was founded by Muhammad Ibn Idris Al-Shāfi‘ī (767-820 AD). He took a middle ground by upholding reasoning. He utilized the strong Hadith and ignored the weak ones. Shāfi‘ī has been regarded as the most influential Muslim scholar, “master architect” of the Islamic legal theory and “the father of Islamic Jurisprudence” (Musa 2007, p. 163; Hallaq 1993, p. 587). Shāfi‘ī interpretation of Islam has a unique perspective of *tahrīf* as it is explained later in this paper.

Imam Ibn Kathir (1300-73) was a famous Shāfi‘ī scholar. He learnt under Ibn Tamiyyah, who is blamed for intolerance and Islamic extremist positions opposed to many other opinions. Ibn Tamiyyah influenced Ibn Kathir into a polemically inclined relationship with Christians. Ibn Kathir regarded *tahrīf* as a deliberate Jewish and Christian corruption of their respective scriptures (Hagler, 2015, p. 308). His view that Jews and Christians intentionally produced false texts influences many Shāfi‘ī scholars’ perception of *Ahl-al-Kitāb* and the relationship they have with them. *Ahl-al-Kitāb* (people of the Book) in this paper refers to the Jews and Christians.

Shāfi‘ī on *Tahrīf* in the Qur’an and the Hadith

Imam Al-Shāfi‘ī restricted the definition of *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book) only to Jews and Christians who are descendants of the people of Israel, based on the wording in Surah 5:5 (Sanni, 2014, p. 41). Conversely, those people aside from this tribe are not regarded as the People of the Book even though they place faith in Judaism or Christianity. The Shāfi‘ī school explains,

The People of the Book are limited only to the Jews and Christians of the Children of Israel because their prophets, namely, Musa and 'Isa (Peace Be Upon Them) are sent only to them and not to the other tribes. As it is unto them the Torah and the Evangel are revealed, the Qur'an justifies their position by addressing them as the People of the Book (Sabjan & Akhir, 2005, p. 26).

Sabjan & Akhir, Shāfi‘ī scholars in Malaysia reject the present day Christians as people of the book. These scholars regard Islam as unique from the other “Abrahamic” religions because these religions have not been faithful to their revelations. This limited definition makes the Shāfi‘ī school reluctant to accept the Christian Bible as authentic.

***Tahrīf* in the Qur’an**

Some scholars have considered *tahrīf* as a teaching that can be cited from the Qur’an. This paper examines the doctrine where it is specific on Christians or all people of the book, and it excludes where it is solely about Jews. Several verses have been used to accuse the people of the book in general, but some are specific to Christians. One of the most popular texts arguing for *tahrīf* of the Christian scripture is Surah 2:79, where it states, “Then woe to those who write The Book with their own hands, and then say: ‘This is from Allah,’ to traffic it for a miserable price! Woe to them for what their hands do write, and for the gain they make thereby.” Idris Al-Shāfi‘ī understood this to be general for Jews and Christians (Bicer, 2020). However, Ibn Kathir

considers the People of the Book here to refer to the Jews and it does not include Christians (<https://quranx.com/tafsirs/>). It is not clear to all if it referred to one or all people of the book.

The other important text is Surah 5:116-118, which claims that Jesus will deny having asked Christians to worship him along with Allah. Ibn Kathir describes it as a threat and a warning to Christians, chastising them in public. He refers to Hadith Sahih al-Bukhari explanation that this verse shows the crime of the Christians who invented a lie against Allah and His Messenger [Jesus]. Christians are here regarded as liars against God, and Muslims are even advised not to intermarry with them because they commit blasphemy. On Surah 5:48, Ibn Kathir cites several other commentators to support the view that the Qur'an is trustworthy, a witness, and dominant over every scripture that preceded it. He argues that unlike the previous scriptures, Allah has sworn to protect the Qur'an from corruption, a view that presents difficulties of God's unequal treatment of divine revelations.

Commenting on Surah 2:42, Ibn Kathir asserts that Judaism and Christianity are human innovations, and they did not come from Allah. The verse warns, "And cover not the truth with falsehood, nor cover the truth when you know [what it is]." Ibn Kathir claims that Christianity is incompatible with Islam, and Allah is against mixing Islam with it. In Surah 2:140, the Qur'an says that Abraham and the other prophets were neither Jews nor Christians, but Muslim. Christians were alleging a lie and they are, therefore, untrustworthy in character. Some acknowledged Muhammad, but others concealed the truth when they knew it (2:146). Therefore, if Christians were honest, they would accept Muhammad as some of them did. The truthfulness of those who reject Muhammad is in doubt (159:174; 3:71,187 Surah 3:73,78; 4:46. Some verses of the Qur'an, such as, Surahs 7:53,165 and 5:13-14, blame Jews and Christians, while 5:14 and 7:53 imply that Christians forgot most of what was given to them, and they will be judged for it.

In addition, Surahs 16:51 and 5:116 are a refutation of the trinity and that Jesus will denounce those who worshipped him.

The Qur'anic surahs above accuse Jews and Christians of *tahrīf*, either separately or together. However, it is important to note that accusations are leveled on some who engaged for profit, who forgot, or who made claims from the Bible that were different from the Qur'an. Ibn Hazm (b. 994), a controversial Spanish Muslim scholar, is one of the few known scholars to allege distortion of the Torah. He accused Ezra for its distortion (<https://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/aboutbible2.htm>). There is hardly a Muslim scholar who alleges corruption of the entire Bible or accuses all Jews and Christians of *tahrīf*. Kamil Husayn (d. 1979), a mystical and open-minded Muslim scholar from Egypt, argued that the claim of *tahrīf* was only directed to the Jews of Medina and the Christians of the Arabian Peninsula and not to all Jews and Christians in the world (Omar, 1992, p. 60; Waardenburg et al., 1999, p. 89). Having examined Qur'anic interpretations by Shāfi'ī Muslim scholars about *tahrīf*, this paper will analyze the Hadith teachings on the subject in the following section.

***Tahrīf* in the Hadith**

The Hadith have little information about *tahrīf*, but some of them have been used to infer on the subject, albeit vaguely. This section examines relevant Hadith and how they are interpreted by the two Shāfi'ī scholars referred to in this paper; Idris Al-Shāfi'ī and Ibn Kathir. According to Sahih al-Bukhari 7363, Muhammad was reported by Ibn Abbas to have said;

Why do you ask the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) about anything while your Book (the Qur'an) which has been revealed to Allah's Messenger is newer and the latest? You read it pure, undistorted, and unchanged, and Allah has told you that the people of the Scripture changed their Scripture and distorted it and wrote the scripture with their

own hands and said, 'It is from Allah,' to sell it for a little gain. Does not the knowledge which has come to you prevent you from asking them about anything? No, by Allah, we have never seen any man from them asking you regarding what has been revealed to you!

This Hadith has been repeated in al-Bukhari 7522 & 7523 to indicate its importance in the doctrine of *tahrīf*. Ibn Kathir has used it to accuse and reject Christians for *tahrīf*. “He [Ibn Kathir] claimed that the Arabic versions of the Holy Bible showed textual tampering in the form of additions and deletions” (<https://www.answering-islam.org/Shamoun/aboutbible2.htm>). Ibn Kathir supports the view by Ibn Abas that Allah does not accept any deed or work from anyone, unless it conforms to the law of Muhammad, since his coming as a prophet. Before Muhammad, “every person who followed the guidance of his own prophet was on the correct path, following the correct guidance and was saved.”

(<http://www.quran4u.com/Tafsir%20Ibn%20Kathir/002%20Baqarah%20I.htm>).

The claim above is subjective and presupposes irrelevance of the previous revelations, since the coming of the Qur'an, a position that was not propagated by Muhammad. Further, unlike the previous revelations, the Qur'an is regarded to be protected from corruption. However, some Hadith agree with the Bible to show that indeed the texts are from the same divine source. Muhammad is understood to have come to revive religion which had been misunderstood by Christians, but he did not claim textual distortion (Beyanouni, 1994, p. 238). This study will now focus on some of the significant reasons for *tahrīf* by Al-Shāfi'ī in regard to Muslim-Christian relations.

Reasons for Al-Shāfi'ī Claim of Tahrīf

The main reason for Muslims' claim of *tahrīf* is the stark fundamental differences between the Bible and the Qur'an regarding the nature of God, the person of Jesus Christ, and salvation. However, the tradition that the "original" biblical records foretold the coming of Muhammad has made Muslim scholars find it difficult to accept the Bible in the hands of Christians today. Muhammad is also not acknowledged by Christians, leading to the accusation of distortion.

The early biographers of Muhammad affirm that all the previous holy books foretold his coming. Ibn Kathir, for example, states the following: "The rabbis and the priests found in their books, descriptions of him and of his time along with inferences relating to him from their prophets" (Carimokam, 2010, p. 31). Ibn Kathir goes on to quote several verses from the Qur'an to argue that the Bible predicted the coming of Muhammad:

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. But when he came to them with clear signs, they said, 'this is evident sorcery!' Who doth greater wrong than the one who invents falsehood against Allah, even as he is being invited to Islam" (Carimokam, 2010, p. 32).

Ibn Kathir records in his biography of Muhammad that the Bible in the Old Testament clearly predicted the coming of Muhammad and absence of the name of Muhammad in the Bible is a reason for the claim of *tahrif*. He takes a position that does not acknowledge legitimacy of other monotheistic religions in the world today. The other reason for the claim of *tahrīf* is the perception of Christians as *dhimmi*. *Dhimmi* literary means protected ones. It refers to Jews and Christians

living in a territory under Islam with whom Muslims enter into a legal agreement regarding their rights and terms of engagement. This researcher discusses the effect of ‘*dhimmitude*’ on *tahrīf* because it highlights the attitude of Islam about *Ahl al-Kitāb*. Jews and Christians in the territory of Islam were a protected people. The concept of *Ahl-dhimmah* (protected people) is based on the Qur’an Surah 9:29. It requires that Muslims fight into submission non-Muslims living among them and to give poll tax (*jizya*) for “protection”. As Pulcini quoting Ye’or says, “dhimmitude is a relative reality based on war, and as such, must be recognized for the threat that it is” (2002, p. 737). *Dhimmitude* refers to the social-economic and legal rights that are given to non-Muslims living under Islamic Sharia that allows them to litigate on their matters under regulated situations. These situations include giving of a tax, *jizya*, making *dhimmitude* a position inferior to Muslims in an Islamic territory.

In addition, the attitude of *dhimmitude* puts the Islamic texts as superior to the others, thus reinforcing the doctrine of *tahrīf*. *Tahrīf* gives legitimacy to reject Christianity and present its followers as having a corrupted text and expected to become Muslims. “Inheritance” of this corporate sin gives a basis of blame upon Christians even today. However, Christianity is regarded in the Qur’an as authentic and there is no claim of its abrogation at the coming of Muhammad. Despite lack of such claims of abrogation, *tahrīf* is advanced by Shāfi‘ī scholars as a reason for rejecting the Bible and Christianity. Such a perception negatively affects relations between Muslims and Christians and stifles dialogue between the two communities of faith. It is, however, important to contextualize the teaching of *tahrīf* in Marsabit and what it means for the Muslim-Christian interactions in the area.

Understanding *Tahrīf* among Marsabit Muslims

Marsabit Muslim teachers hold that the books Jews and Christians possess today have been changed. Further, Jews and Christians are to blame for the existing differences between the Bible and the Qur'an. Even though the alleged corruption was unknown before Islam, Christians of today are regarded as following deceptive and unreliable texts. The idea of *tahrīf* has influenced the Marsabit Muslim teachers' perception of Christians. These teachers understand *tahrīf* as a partial change of the Torah and the *Injil* such that there is possibility of some Christians being in possession of the "original" version. They are of the view that some of the Christians might still be following the "old *Injil*," which they consider authentic. A conversation with Sheikh A, a prominent Muslim teacher went thus:

Researcher: What does *Ahl al-Kitāb* in the Qur'an mean?

Sheikh A: *Ahl al-Kitāb* means 'People of the Book.' They are those who were given a book, that is, the Jews, *manasala*, and Muslims. In the Qur'an, it refers to Jews and Christians. Mainly, books that are mentioned in the Qur'an are Zabur of David, Suf of Ibrahim, Torah of Moses, and the Gospel of Jesus.

Researcher: Are these *Ahl al-Kitāb*, the Jews and Christians of today?

Sheikh A: Really, the way it has been interpreted in Islam, it refers to all Christians of the time of Muhammad. However, they have now tampered with their book. I don't know whether you know the gospel of Barnabas; it says so many things. I don't know whether you have heard about it. The gospel of this time has been tampered with; and there is Luke, Mathew, etc. I don't know much though.

Researcher: Does it mean then that Muslims cannot regard Jews and Christians of today to be *Ahl al-Kitāb*?

Sheikh A: Ooh yes, it is like that, but it needs good study to answer that [question].

Even though this teacher was not prepared to clarify his position, the Marsabit Muslim scholars perceive Christians of today as following a distorted text. They are different from the *Ahl al-Kitāb* whose religion was authentic. A similar view was held by Sheikh S who leads one of the main mosques in town. He argued that it is hard to find *Ahl al-Kitāb* today, and that the term does not refer to all Christians. He referred to *tahrīf* when he stated, “You [this researcher] are not the *Ahl al-Kitāb* because Muslims do not believe in the gospel you have today. We Muslims say that Jews have also corrupted their book” (2020).

A Sheikh in Sololo argued that the New Testament is the one that is corrupted. He stated, “We believe the Old Testament agrees with Islam and if a Christian follows the Old Testament as it was given to Moses, I can even marry her without having to convert to Islam. But people here [Sololo] follow the New Testament” (2020). This is argument presupposes that some Christians can be admissible as *Ahl al-Kitāb* today, because the New Testament is understood as the corruption of the Old Testament. Sheik M gave an example of the late president of Palestine [Yasser Arafat] that “when he was alive, he had one Jew who was following his religion faithfully. Such a person who is following his religion keenly is accepted in Islam” (2020).

Christians who claim that God has a son or that Jesus is God are considered to have forsaken the "old *Injil*." Sheikh S argues that Muslims can embrace Christians who are following the "old *Injil*." He stated in Kiborana, (the language of the Borana people), "*Wora Injil ka duri aka gabusani dugefatu, infud*" (those [Christians] who follow *Injil* as it was brought down at the beginning can even intermarry with Muslims). Many Muslim scholars consider the Bible and Christian doctrines today to be different from the time of Prophet Muhammad. Khan argues that the council of Nicaea in 325 CE is the one that led to *tahrīf*, and that it was in this council that

monotheistic Christianity was declared false. He states, “Arius, the champion of Christian monotheism, and his followers were ordered to be killed.” (Khan, 2018). This interpretation supports the idea Muslim teachers propagate in Marsabit regarding Christians and Christianity.

Al- Shāfi ‘ī scholars adopt the view that Christians corrupted the *Injil* to the extent that they do not regard Muhammad as a prophet sent to them (Bicer, 2020, p. 256; Sabjan & Akhir, 2005, p.19). Even though this is not one of the reasons Borana Muslim teachers use to determine true Christians, they hardly regard the present-day Christians as *Ahl al-Kitāb*. This teaching and view of the teachers in Marsabit imply that Christians are hardly regarded as monotheist from the classical viewpoint. Christianity today is perceived by the Marsabit Muslim teachers as a corruption of what Jesus proclaimed. This perception presents Christians as an insincere religious group that is considered inferior to Islam and treated with disdain.

Implications for Muslim-Christian Relations

The population of Muslims in Marsabit county is estimated at 40-46 % and that of Christians as 32-40% (Zirulnick 2015, p. 3; Charnley 2019, p. 5; <https://learn.elimu.org/topic/view/>). However, the percentage of Muslims among Borana people, though hardly documented, is significantly higher than the county average. Religion deals with several components which include emotions, belief systems, the systems of rites and ceremonies, rituals and ceremonial equipment, and religious people (Rejekingsih & Rusnaini, 2019, p. 244). *Tahrīf* is one of the most emotive accusations against Christians by Muslim scholars. In this section, the understanding of *tahrīf* has been interpreted in the Muslim-Christian relations issues in Marsabit, using ideas from ‘affect regulation’ theory by Schore & Schore (2007). ‘Affect regulation’ is a means of moderating emotions that are due to accusations. Attachment among people does not enhance relationships without addressing the dyadic regulation of emotions (Schore & Schore,

2007, p. 4). The accusation of Christians by Muslims leads to detachment between members of the two faith groups and reduced social interactions. ‘Affect regulation’ is of value where Muslims can identify with the feelings of the Christians due to the claim of *tahrīf*. Muslim-Christian relationships will be enhanced when Muslims seek to identify with the anxiety *tahrīf* brings in their relations with Christians. Members of the two faiths should not only acknowledge the negative attitude these accusations bring, but also seek to promote a secure space of understanding through dialogue. Further, Christian leaders’ interactions with the Muslim teachers, though tense, continue to exist because of the emotional regulations by Christians in the wake of accusation of *tahrīf*.

This research shows that Marsabit Muslim teachers’ view of Christians is significantly influenced by the Al-Shāfi‘ī teachings about *tahrīf*. Their support and propagation of this teaching promotes Muslims’ mistrust and perception of their Christian neighbors as erroneous. A healthy interaction between Muslims and Christians will require dedication to building a strong base of trust and care for each other rather than one of suspicion and criticism. Whenever negative claims are made on an issue of such a great personal value as scriptures, there are consequent undesirable psychological and emotional responses that hurt relationships. Marsabit Muslims will do well to appreciate the frustration *tahrīf* evokes and seek engagements with Christians in ways that ensure good neighborliness. Muslims and Christian should create a sense of interdependence and not independence, security and not mistrust, mutual respect, and not supersessions. The Qur’an states that the word of God cannot be changed (Surah 6:115; 10:64; 18:27) as it is also affirmed by Al-Shāfi‘ī (1961, p. 124). Even though this is understood by many Muslims to apply only to the Qur’an, extension of this view on the Christian scriptures is

fundamental in addressing mistrust to allow objective dialogue. Dialogue is key in understanding each other's perceptions, feelings, improve relations, and progress of people of the two faiths.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has presented the understanding of the Shāfi'ī school regarding *tahrīf*, but it has not delved into merits or demerits of the argument. As already explained, *tahrīf* is commonly used by the Muslims teachers in Marsabit to perceive and describe their Christian neighbors. Most of them perceive and present Christians as untrustworthy for knowingly or unknowingly deviating from the Word of God. Only a few of the Muslim teachers leave room for possible existence of Christians who qualify to be *Ahl al-Kitāb*. The perception of many of the teachers has negatively affected the Muslim-Christian relations, especially at the ideological level. The 'affect regulation' theory has been utilized to explain the cognitive and social psychological effects of *tahrīf* and to address the negative influence on the Muslim-Christian relations. The fact that Christian scripture is considered untrustworthy creates a perception of Christians as following a fabrication, adulteration, and half-truth. Muslim and Christian leaders can play the role of providing security for each other, especially to Christians who are easily kept away by the propagation of criticism of their scriptures. This can be done through meaningful dialogue for clarifications of areas of contentions in the two faiths. Emphasis needs to be given on the areas of commonalities while addressing differences to reduce anxiety and avoidance. Muslims can play the role of significant others on Christians and enhance the confidence of each other in their midst to improve on their relationships. On the other hand, Christians have been called to forgive (Luke 6:37), live good lives that glorify God, despite any accusations (1 Peter 2:12), and to continually be light (Mathew 5:13-16).

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