ABSTRACT

Entitled Abraham in Narrative Worldviews: Doing Comparative Theology through Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Turkey, this study has implications for the fields of contextual missiology, interfaith comparative theology and biblical interpretation in Islamic contexts. Many approaches to Abrahamic dialogue do not grapple with the Abrahamic texts of Genesis and the Qur’an in enough detail for meaningful comparison. In this thesis I introduce and utilize a model for comparing particular Biblical and Qur’anic narratives, along with their use by Christians and Muslims respectively. This approach builds on the tight connection between narrative and worldview to enable theological comparison of these distinct but related worldviews. The Biblical/Christian worldview categories of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Consummation are juxtaposed with Qur’anic/Muslim categories of Tawhid (Oneness of God), Prophethood and Afterlife in three sets of polarities in order to catalyse deeper comparison. In the main body of the study I examine separately the Genesis Abraham narrative, the New Testament treatments of Abraham, the Qur’anic Abraham stories, and finally the use of Abraham by Turkish Muslims through analysis of field research interviews. This prepares the way for comparing Christian and Muslim worldviews as expressed in their respective uses of Abraham. Using the central themes developed through the discrete studies and the polarities generated by my narrative-worldview model, I undertake a theological comparison of Abraham in Christian and Muslim worldview. This yields evidence that despite some common ground, the worldviews diverge deeply in each of the major polarities. The beginning of the story, with God as the sovereign creator of all things, and humanity entrusted with a particular set of responsibilities as God’s special creation, and the end of the story, with resurrection, judgment and heaven and hell, have significant common elements when looked at broadly. But the rest of the story, making up almost the entire sweep of the Biblical narrative, is vastly different. Looking through the lens of Abraham narratives, the two worldviews have little in common in terms of either plight or solution. Despite some limited overlap Abraham stands in a different story of God’s relationship to humanity.