

# The Islamic Practice of Hijab in Contemporary Society: Missiological Perspectives for Christian-Muslim Engagement”

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1014MG0151>

Received: 06 July 2026; Accepted: 11 July 2026; Published: 22 July 2026

## ABSTRACT

The Islamic practice of the hijab remains one of the most visible expressions of religious identity in contemporary society, attracting significant theological, cultural, social, and political attention. While extensive scholarship has examined the hijab from sociological, feminist, legal, and religious perspectives, its implications for Christian Mission and interfaith engagement have received comparatively limited scholarly attention. This article analyzes the theological foundations and contemporary significance of the hijab within Islam and explores its relevance as a point of engagement in Christian missionary practice.

Using a qualitative and interdisciplinary approach, the study draws upon Islamic theological sources, Christian missiological literature, and contemporary scholarship on Muslim-Christian relations. It examines the Qur’anic basis for the hijab, its historical development, and its diverse interpretations among Muslim women in different socio-cultural contexts. This article further evaluates Christian theological perspectives on modesty, identity, discipleship, and religious witness, identifying areas of convergence and divergence between Islamic and Christian understandings of faith expression.

This study argues that the hijab should not be viewed merely as a religious symbol or cultural marker but as a meaningful expression of faith that can provide opportunities for respectful dialogue and missionary engagement. A nuanced understanding of the hijab enables Christian missionaries and interfaith dialogue practitioners to engage with Muslim communities with greater cultural sensitivity, theological awareness, and missional effectiveness. This article contends that informed engagement with Islamic religious practices contributes to reducing stereotypes, strengthening mutual understanding, and fostering constructive relationships between Christians and Muslims. It concludes that the hijab can serve as a valuable point of contact in contemporary Christian missions, facilitating authentic witness while promoting peaceful coexistence and interreligious cooperation in increasingly pluralistic societies.

**Keywords:** Hijab, Islam, Christian Mission, Missiology, Muslim-Christian Relations, Interfaith Dialogue, Religious Identity, Contemporary Society.

## INTRODUCTION

Religion can be explained as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe<sup>1</sup>. It is predicated on the existence of a superhuman agency or agencies, involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. It is defined as Man's effort to get in touch with God. Man, as recognized by most religions movements or traditions, once had a good relationship with God until man transgressed against Him, and as a result there was a separation. Man’s transgression became a barrier between man and God. Christianity believes that man is struggling to overcome its sinful nature to be able to be reconciled with God. This is an on-going struggle, a daily affair, and the death of Christ eases the path towards reconciliation with God.

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<sup>1</sup> [\(Ferber, 2023\)](#)

Islam on the other hand believes that man's struggle to overcome sin has been completed already; therefore the sin of Adam has no control over man in his daily experience<sup>2</sup>. According to Islamic teachings, what is needed now is to live a submissive life to God (hence the name). Man must always bear in mind the essence of revering God in all his dealings. Consequently, man must avoid whatever will lead others to sin, but rather strive for what will bring dignity to mankind. According to Islamic teaching, the practice of HIJAB is one way of bringing dignity to mankind. This will be considered in detail in the subsequent discussion. (in a subsequent section)

The Muslim believes that the true follower of Allah must without any shred of doubt adhere strictly to the teachings of Islam; teachings which were directly revealed through Mohammed. Muslim believe Mohammed to be the last and the most authentic Prophet of Allah, i.e. the messenger<sup>3</sup>. For them, whatever Mohammed received or purported to have received from Allah must be accepted and adhered to, without any ambiguity or inquisition. This to a large extent is what underpins the seeming and often actual fanaticism of Muslims.

This paper will attempt to examine the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the practice of Hijab among Muslim in our modern times.

### Statement Of The Problem

It is particularly strange in modern society, to see anyone covered entirely from head to toe, be it with transparent fabric or otherwise. Considering the trend of sophistication in modern fashion this is even more remarkable. Socially, culturally, financially, physically, spiritually, even physiologically, fashion is believed to have an overarching influence on modern society. Yet, despite this pervasive influence, the practice of Hijab is still prevalent amongst Muslims. One invariably wonders what drives Muslims to hold so unrelentingly to this practice of Hijab. Is it peer pressure? Is it fear of rejection? Or is it simply the sheer tenacity in their determination to adhere to the teaching of Islam? Religion, generally, is strongly affected by the prevailing culture and it is uncertain whether the practice of Hijab is predominantly a cultural issue.

The second issue is that of identity as a consideration in the practice of Hijab in Islamic society. In the Arab Emirate or among the Taliban, an extreme form of Hijab is practiced, such that even the face of the Female Adherent of Islam must be veiled. Women in Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia must follow strictly enforced dress codes; the hijab is mandatory. In countries such as Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia, women are forced to wear it against their will and suffer physical violence, cultural exclusion, and even death if they do not adhere to the laws.<sup>4</sup> In other countries, wearing the hijab is not required and is only encouraged and worn at will<sup>5</sup>. The veil exists therefore as a dichotomy and is contrary to the modern societal trend of being identifiable for security reasons, or for reasons of self-realization.

Thirdly, in recent years, the hijab has become the catalyst for dispute between some western governments and Islam. France banned ostentatious religious headwear in public schools<sup>6</sup>. In England, a student lost a legal battle to wear her jilbab to school<sup>7</sup>.

Also, in Nigeria, an Ikeja High Court on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, upheld the ban on the wearing of Hijab (Muslim head scarf) in public primary and secondary schools in Lagos state

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<sup>2</sup> [\(Rahman et al., 2015\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Mozaffari, Mehdi. "What is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept." (2007).

<sup>4</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam; the role of the media in influencing women wearing hijab: an analysis, Journal of image and graphics, volume 1, No. 1, March, 2013, 50

<sup>5</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol, March, 2013, 55

<sup>6</sup> [\(Choudhury, 2019\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [\(Dustin & Phillips, 2008\)](#)

Justice Modupe Onyeabor dismissed the suit instituted against the Lagos State Government by two 12-year-old girls under the aegis of the Muslim Students of Nigeria, Lagos State Area Unit.

The government had banned the use of Hijab on the argument that it was not part of the approved school uniform for pupils<sup>8</sup>.

### The Purpose Of Study

The primary purpose of this work is to identify the origin of the practice of Islam, from the available literature, and get to understand the real meaning of the practice of Hijab. This information will be useful as a tool in our contemporary Missionary Approach to the Muslim and win them to Christ.

Secondly, as an academic exercise, it is imperative to know and examine the reasons for the varying practices of Hijab among Muslims so that any evangelizing of Muslims is undertaken with tact and circumspection.

### The Importance Of The Study

Our Lord Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples of all nation (Matthew 28:18-19). This is the core mandate of the Church. Undoubtedly, it would be difficult to win someone over to Christianity without an appreciable level of their core belief system.

Everyone believes in one thing or the other. Even atheists believe that there is no God. That is their belief and there might be a reason for it, rightly or wrongly. The Muslim has a belief system and one of them is Hijab. It is incumbent upon every Christian missionary to know much about prevailing Islamic practice, and use the information in their mission to win Muslims to Christ. This is the basis of this work and gives relevance and significance to its findings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Hijab in Islam

Islam is a monotheistic and Abrahamic religion articulated by the Qur'an, a book considered by its adherents to be the verbatim word of God (Arabic: *Allāh*, IPA: and by the teachings and normative example (called the *Sunnah* and composed of *hadith*) of Muhammad (c. 570–8 June 632 CE), considered by them to be the last prophet of God. An adherent of Islam is called a Muslim<sup>9</sup>

Muslims believe that God is one and incomparable and that the purpose of existence is to worship God<sup>10</sup>. Muslims also believe that Islam is the complete and universal version of a primordial faith that was revealed many times before through prophets including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. They maintain that the previous messages and revelations have been partially misinterpreted or altered over time, but consider the Arabic Qur'an to be both the unaltered and the final revelation of God. Religious concepts and practices include the five pillars of Islam, which are basic concepts and obligatory acts of worship, and following Islamic law, which touches on virtually every aspect of life and society, providing guidance on multifarious topics from banking and welfare, to family life and the environment<sup>11</sup>

The word Hijab refers to both the head covering traditionally, worn by Muslim women and modesty in Muslim styles of dress in general<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> ([Abubakre, 2018](#)).

<sup>9</sup> [www.citifmonline.com](#). Captioned: Court bans use of Hijab in Lagos public schools. retrieved on 17-10-14

<sup>10</sup> (Kounsar, 2016

<sup>11</sup> ([Ghafran & Yasmin, 2019](#))

<sup>12</sup> Mozaffari, Mehdi. "What is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept." (2007).

Also the Arabic word ‘Hijab’ literally means curtain or cover<sup>13</sup>. Most Islamic legal systems define this type of modest dressing as covering everything except the face and hands in public<sup>14</sup>. Most Islamic Scholars believe that Hijab can be given the wider meaning of modesty, privacy and morality. The modesty in Qur’an concerns both men’s and women’s gaze, gait, garment.

Still another definition which is metaphysical is where al-hijab refers to the veil which separates men or the world from God<sup>15</sup>.

According to the Encyclopedia Islam and the Muslim world, the meaning of Hijab has evolved with time. To a very large extent, the term hijab or veil is not used in the Qur’an to refer to an article of clothing for women or men, rather it refers to a spatial curtain that divides or provides privacy<sup>16</sup>. Some also believe that the words for a headscarf or veil used in the Qur’an are Khimar and jilbab, not Hijab<sup>17</sup>. It is in the English-speaking world, where the use of Hijab has become limited to mean the covering on the head of the Muslim women. However, as stated earlier, this is more accurately called a Khimaar.

The Qur’an instructs the male Muslim to talk to wives of Prophet Mohammed behind Hijab<sup>18</sup>. This Hijab was the responsibility of the men and not the wives of Prophet. However, in later Muslim societies, this instruction, specific to the wives of Prophet Mohammed was generalized leading to the segregation of the Muslim men and women.

According to the interpretation of Qur’an sura Al-Ahzab 33:59: “O Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters, and the women of the believers to bring down over themselves [part] of their outer garments. That is more suitable that they will be known and not be abused. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful”<sup>19</sup>. Al-munajaba’s interpretation of this part of the Qur’an means that, Jilbab (which for them is synonymous with Hijab) is that any garment that meets the following conditions: -

- it is an outer garment an extra layer, something worn over the clothes
- it is thick and opaque and loosely cut so that it conceals what is underneath it
- it is worn with a Khimar and with socks and shoes, it should cover from the shoulders to the ankles, if it is worn without these, it must cover everything but the face and hand like a cloak.

According to Al-Muhajabah, The Qur’an and Suma spelt it out clearly that Hijab consist of modest behaviour in lowering the gaze, guarding the private parts, and avoiding showing off and of modest dress<sup>20</sup>. Furthermore, other available literature shows that Hijab is the principle of modesty in Islam and includes behaviour as well as dress for both male and female. Even as Hijab means barrier or partition according to the Arabic etymology, in Islam it has a broader meaning. The most visible form of Hijab is the head covering that many Muslim wear. The woman who wears Hijab is called Muhaajaba<sup>21</sup>.

Muslim women are required to observe the Hijab in front of any man they could theoretically marry<sup>22</sup>. Meaning Hijab is not obligatory in front of a fathers, brothers, grandfathers, uncles, or young children. Hijab in the sense

<sup>13</sup> [\(El-Ali, 2021\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [\(Rahmawati et al., 2024\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> (Muhlasol, 2023)

<sup>16</sup> [\(El-Ali, 2021\).](#)

<sup>17</sup> [\(Muthalib & Novianda, 2020\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> Mozaffari, Mehdi. "What is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept." (2007).

<sup>19</sup> Rohman et al., 2024

<sup>20</sup> Qur’an sura Al-Ahzabayah 59

<sup>21</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam; the role of the media in influencing women wearing hijab: an analysis, Journal of image and graphics, volume 1, No. 1, March, 2013, 50.

<sup>22</sup> [\(Hanif, 2021\)](#)

of veiling can also be achieved by hanging or placing a screen between women and men to allow them speak to each other without changing dress.

For most scholars, until the imperialists invaded Muslim Countries and the Muslim started mixing with non-believers, all Muslim women were accorded great respect and dignity<sup>23</sup>. For them non-believers were finding it difficult to come any where near the boarder of their Muslim Sisters' purity. The Hijab did not only protect them from those eyes of non-believers, but also gave them the freedom, and independence from being misused by them. They believed that when the Muslim female refuse to observed the Hijab they bring shame and destruction upon themselves.

Modesty is an important symbol of faith. For her to observe proper Hijab is to dress up modestly and appropriately, covering all parts of the body except the face, forearm, without showing her figure or curves, and without using any sort of make-up. Consequently, Hijab gives the Muslim women an air of authority, dignity and respect, which a non-believer can never claim to possess. Only those who are well behaved can expect admiration and high esteem from others, and definitely those who do not try to attract men can be called well-behaved persons. Accordingly, those who reject Hijab and wish to attract men are suffering from inferiority complex. Therefore, Hijab has such benefits as a guard against any assault, equality with men, aim of respect and honour and most importantly, obedience to Allah, which is equivalent to blood of Martyr. Hijab requires women to avoid any sort of attraction to men and rightly so.

Muslims also believes that when Allah commanded female Muslims to observe Hijab, it is because of the universal damages that could be caused by refusing to observe it, for when a woman goes out to expose her charm, it attracts men and this may set off a chain of undesirable events causing harm to several people in the society<sup>24</sup>.

Hijab gives an aura of freedom to womankind, facilitating their movement and protecting them from provocation and wanton greed of the human wolves. The Muslim believes the removal of Hijab makes a woman vulnerable to the lust of men. Therefore, by refusing to observe Hijab, one has destroyed his or her faith. Islam means submission to Allah in all of one's action (as already stated). Those who refuse submission cannot be called Muslim. This is the extent to which the observation of Hijab means to Muslims.

### **The alternative view on the practice Hijab**

The above notwithstanding, it must be clear and obvious so, that Muslims differ as to whether the Hijab should be required on women in public as it is in countries like Iran, and Saudi Arabia; whether it should be banned in schools, as it is in France and Turkey or whether it should be left for the women to decide as it is in the United States<sup>25</sup>.

Other Muslims take a relativist approach on the subject matter. They believe that the Commandment to maintain modesty must be interpreted with regard to the surrounding society. For them what is considered modest or daring in one society may not be considered since in another.

According to One Leila Armed, nowhere in the whole of the Qur'an is the term Hijab applied to any women other than the wives of Mohammed<sup>26</sup>. Also, Reza Aslam and Leila Ahmed agreed that the stipulations of the Hijab were originally meant only for Mohammed's wives, and were intended to maintain their inviolability. This was so because Mohammed conducted all religions and civic affairs in the mosque adjacent to his home<sup>27</sup>. They argue that the term darabat al-hijab (taking the veil) was used synonymously and interchangeable with becoming Prophet Mohammed's wife and that during Mohammed's life, no other Muslim woman wore Hijab. According

<sup>23</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam 50.

<sup>24</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam. 2013, 52.

<sup>25</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam; the role of the media in influencing women wearing hijab: an analysis, Journal of image and graphics, volume 1, No. 1, March, 2013, 50

<sup>26</sup> Mozaffari, Mehdi. "What is Islamism? History and Definition of a Concept." (2007).

<sup>27</sup> Aslan, Reza, *No God but God*. 2005, 76.

to Aslam, Muslim women started to wear the Hijab to emulate Mohammed wives, who were revered as “Mothers of the Believers in Islam”. For him, there was no tradition of veiling until around 627 CE in the Muslim Community<sup>28</sup>.

Finally, as stated above, Hijab is practiced by Muslim women as a way of covering one’s self in other not to expose one’s vital parts which must only be seen by one’s husband when lawfully married. Some Muslims believe that Hijab covering for Muslim must be compulsory as part of the Sharia i.e. Muslim Law. Others like Leila Ahmed and Reza Aslam have a contrary view as already mention, therefore while some Muslim whole heartedly embrace the observation of Hijab, others protest, by observing it in an inconsistent Fashion or flouting them whenever possible<sup>29</sup>.

Some available literature points to the following as some of the excuses Muslim women (especially those in the western world), assigned for their refusal or inability to comply with this important Islamic practice:

- I’m not yet convinced (of the necessity) of hijaab.
- I am convinced of Islamic dress but my mother prevents me from wearing it and if I disobey her I will go to the Fire.
- My position does not allow me to substitute my dress for Islamic dress.
- It is so very hot in my country and I can't stand it. How could I take it if I wore the hijaab?
- I'm afraid that if I wear the hijaab I will put it off at another time because I have seen so many others do so!!
- If I wear the hijaab then nobody will marry me, so I'm going to leave it off until then.
- I know that hijaab is obligatory (waajib), but I will wear it when Allah guides me to do so.
- It's not time for that yet. I'm still too young for wearing hijaab. I'll do it when I get older and after I make Hajj!
- I'm afraid that if I wear Islamic clothing that I'll be labeled as belonging to some group or
- another and I hate partisanship.
- Islam is in the heart, I don’t need to “show off” that I am a Muslim, it is a personal relationship between God and me<sup>30</sup>.

In a rebuttal to the above, some of the answers given by an Islamic scholar to the aforementioned excuses in relation to the practice of Hijab were as below

The Angel of Death my sister is visiting and waiting at your door for the order of Allah ta'aala to open it on you at any moment in your life. Allah said: When their term comes, neither can they delay it nor can they advance it an hour (or a moment). [Soorah Al-An'aam 6:34].

“Death my sister doesn't discriminate between the young or the old and it may come while you are in this state of great sinfulness disobedience, fighting against the Lord of Honor with your uncovering and shameless adornment. My sister, you should race to obedience along with those others who race to answer the call of Allah tabaaraka wa ta'aala: Race with one another in hastening towards forgiveness from your Lord and Paradise the width whereof is as the width of the heavens and the earth. [Soorah Al-Hadeed 57:21] Sister, don't forget Allah

<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, recent scholarly discourse emphasizes the significance of religious moderation and harmony in fostering cross-cultural understanding within diverse Indonesian contexts ([Mahmudulhassan et al., 2024](#)).

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.answering-christianity.com/top\\_11\\_excuses\\_of\\_not\\_wearing\\_hijab.htm](http://www.answering-christianity.com/top_11_excuses_of_not_wearing_hijab.htm). Retrieved on 07/11/14.

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.answering-christianity.com/top\\_11\\_excuses\\_of\\_not\\_wearing\\_hijab.htm](http://www.answering-christianity.com/top_11_excuses_of_not_wearing_hijab.htm). Retrieved on 07/11/14.

or He will forget you by turning His mercy away from you in this life and the next. You are forgetting your own soul by not fulfilling the right of your soul to obey Allah and proper worship of Him”<sup>31</sup>[19].

Allah stated about the hypocrites (Al-Munaafiqoon): And be not like those who forgot Allah and He caused them to forget their own selves. [Soorah Al-Hashr 59:19]

“My sister wear the hijab in your young age in opposition to the sinful deed because Allah is intense in punishment and will ask you on the Day of Resurrection about your youth and every moment of your life. In summary: Stop presuming some future expectation in your life will indeed occur!! How can you guarantee your own life until tomorrow?”<sup>32</sup>

So this sister of ours adheres to the Book of Allah and its commands as long as they coincide with her personal desires and understanding! She leaves behind those matters when they don't please her. If this was not the case, then why doesn't she follow the aayah: And do not show off their adornment except only that which is apparent [Soorah An-Noor 24:31] and the statement of Allah subhaanah: Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks all over their bodies [Soorah Al-Ahzaab 33:59]?

With this statement my sister you have now made a shari'ah (law) for yourself of what Allah ta'aala has strictly forbidden, namely beautification (at-tabarruj) and uncovering (as-sufoor), and the reason:

“Your lack of wanting to adhere to the order. The greatest blessing or favor that Allah has bestowed upon us is that of Eemaan (faith) and hidaayah (guidance) and among them is the Islamic hijab. Why then do you not manifest and talk about this greatest of blessings given to you?”<sup>33</sup>

Is there a greater blessing and favor upon the woman than guidance and hijab?

Any husband, who desires that you be uncovered and adorned in public in defiance of and in disobedience to Allah, is not a worthy husband in the first place. He is a husband who has no feeling to protect what Allah has made inviolable, most notably you, and he will not help you in any way to enter Al-Jannah or escape from the Hellfire. A home, which is founded upon disobedience to Allah and provocation of His anger, is fitting that He decrees misery and hardship for it in this life and in the Hereafter. As Allah stated: But whosoever turns away from My reminder (i.e. neither believes in the Qur'aan nor acts upon its teachings) verily for him is a life of hardship and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection. [Soorah Ta Ha 20:124]

Marriage is a favor and blessing from Allah to whom He give whom He wills. How many women who wear hijab (mutahajibah) are in fact married while many who don't aren't? If you were to say that ‘...my being made-up and uncovered is a means to reach a pure end, namely marriage’, a pure goal or end is not attained through impure and corrupt means in Islam. If the goal is honorable then it must necessarily be achieved by pure and clean method. We say the rule in Islam is: The means are according to the rules of the intended goals.

If everyone was to apply your logic then they would have left the Deen in its entirety! They would have left off salaah because some would be afraid of leaving it later. They would have left fasting in Ramadhan because so many are afraid of not doing it later? Etc. Haven't you seen how Shaitaan has trapped you in his snare again and blocked you from guidance?

Allah ta'aala loves continuous obedience even if it were small or recommended. How about something that is an absolute obligation like wearing hijab?! The prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said: The most beloved deed with Allah is the consistent one though it is little<sup>34</sup>. Why haven't you sought out the causes leading those people to leave off the hijab so that you can avoid them and work to keep away from them? Why haven't you sought

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.answering-christianity.com/top\\_11\\_excuses\\_of\\_not\\_wearing\\_hijab.htm](http://www.answering-christianity.com/top_11_excuses_of_not_wearing_hijab.htm). Retrieved on 07/11/14.

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.answering-christianity.com/top\\_11\\_excuses\\_of\\_not\\_wearing\\_hijab.htm](http://www.answering-christianity.com/top_11_excuses_of_not_wearing_hijab.htm). Retrieved on 07/11/14

<sup>33</sup> W. J. Larkin, Jr. Theology of Mission, 2005. 14.

<sup>34</sup> (Ahmad & Baharuddin, 2020)

out reasons and causes to affirm truth and guidance until you can hold firm to them? Among these causes is much supplication to Allah (du'aa) to make the heart firm upon the Deen as did the prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam). Also is making salaah and having mindfulness of it as Allah stated: And seek help in patience and the prayer and truly it is extremely heavy except for the true believers in Allah who obey Allah with full submission and believe in His promise of Jannah and in His warnings (Al-Khaashi'oon). [Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:45]<sup>35</sup> Other causes to put one upon guidance and truth are adherence to the laws of Islam and one of them is indeed wearing the hijab. Allah said: If they had done what they were told, it would have been better for them and would have strengthened their faith. [Soorah Al-Baqarah 2:66]

If you hold tight to the causes of guidance and taste the sweetness of faith you will not neglect the orders of Allah after having held to them.

## Christian Mission

Christian mission is the divine activity of sending intermediaries, whether supernatural or human, to speak or do God's will so that his purposes for judgment or redemption are furthered. The biblical concept is expressed by the use of verbs meaning "to send," normally with God as the expressed subject. The Hebrew verb is *salah* [j:l'v] and the Greek is *apostello* [ajpostevllw]. These terms emphasize the authoritative, commissioning relationship involved. The Scriptures also employ the cognates *apostolos* [ajpovstolo] ("apostle," the one sent) and *apostole* [ajpostolhv] ("apostleship," the function of being sent), referring to the one sent and his function<sup>36</sup>.

The core duty of every Christian is to win everyone who has not come to the knowledge of Christ's salvation work on the cross, including the Muslim. This emphasis the importance of mission to the Church (which is the body of Christ), with its main aim of transforming the society, and meeting the felt need of the world as well as addressing the hopes of the fears of a people in a giving society<sup>37</sup>.

## DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT MATTER:

### The SWOT Analysis on the subject matter (The Reality of Hijab In our modern societies.

This section of the work will look at the subject matter from inside-out i.e. the Strength, Weakness, Opportunity as well as the Threat this practice poses to both the practitioners as well as the societies in which they live, within the context of our modern-day situation.

SWOT analysis is a basic, straightforward model that assesses the potential opportunities and threats, as well as the strengths and weaknesses inherent in a venture. It uses available information to explore internal factors (strength and weaknesses) as well as the external issues (opportunities and threats) that help to identify the best practice of best course in a project.

The major strengths that the practice of Hijab gives to the Islamic women is listed below. These have been the strong point of argument for most Islamic Scholars in relation to the Practice of Hijab:-

- The Hijab gives confidence to women in social participation as human being and not Sexual Commodity. For the Muslim this is the women of the faith, who are expected to carry themselves out in other not to be seen as tools to be played with, but rather by practicing Hijab it is incumbent upon all men to handle them with dignity and respect.

<sup>35</sup> (Abdelali et al., 2023)

<sup>36</sup> J.S. Pobbe, An invitation to be an African Anglican, 2000. 14

<sup>37</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam; the role of the media in influencing women wearing hijab: an analysis, Journal of image and graphics, volume 1, No. 1, March, 2013, 48

- For the Muslim, the practice of Hijab guides the women of the faith from the lustful looks of men<sup>38</sup>. Thus, they believed its absence has given rise to more reported cases of rape in society; which they assert could be curtailed, if only all women would observe Hijab.
- The Muslim believes that the blatant, almost-naked pictures and videos of women which have flooded society is the cause of most violence at home and in town. This they believe is causing much harm to the individual victim and the society as a whole<sup>39</sup>. And they believe also that the practice of Hijab is a safeguard against this.
- Furthermore, it is their belief too that the practice of Hijab helps the women not to divert people's attention from constructive social work. On this, it is believed that when people go to work and dress in a way that exposes most of the vital parts of their body (which ought to be covered) their presence alone would distract people's attention from the main productive work they had been engaged to undertake.

Not all the practice of Hijab improves the moral character of the society. Even as the strength and opportunity have been listed above, the weakness of the subject matter is enumerated below: -

- For many people (both Muslim and Non-Muslim) the Practice of Hijab seeks to imprison women. They believe that mankind created in the image of God is a free being and as such is expected to live to exercise his freedom in all his or her endeavors without hindrance. As well as to take decision on his or her own, without any limitation by whatever religious practice, such as the practice of Hijab.
- One of the weaknesses of Hijab according to most critics is that it subordinates women. Those who think in this way believe that all human being both men and women were created with the same dignity and aura and every person ought to be handled in the same matter.

In following the principles of a SWOT analysis, we need to look at the issue of perceived threat which the practice of Hijab poses to its adherents. This is mainly to do with one's individual identity, and is as follows:

- The practice of Hijab exposes the problem of identification. When two people are walking wearing the Hijab and one commits a crime, how will the security be able to identify the culprit, with faces covered, especially as facial identification is the primary and most reliable means of identity?
- There is also a question of how banks and state officials can effectively identify another by means of an Identity Card or Passport, when the face is covered by practicing the Hijab.

This knowledge of the rationale for practicing Hijab gives an opportunity to Christian to evangelism to Muslims. It would seem from the evidence offered that, it is out of a sense of insecurity that Muslims observes Hijab. The Christian can keep this in consideration in his mission to Muslims. He will know to make the point that security and social harmony cannot come as result of covering one's face. Neither would women not wearing a hijab in the workplace result in low productivity. But rather, social and family security can only come from God through Jesus.

In addition, the discussion I had with most Muslim Women who partially practice "Hijab" because of the exigencies of their religious situation revealed that: -

- by practicing Hijab things have changed over-right. One said she feels the extra respect she receives from men. She believes her people take her more seriously because she practices Hijab. She said she feels protected and confident when she steps out.

<sup>38</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam; 2013, 49

<sup>39</sup> Zulkifli Abd. Latiff and Fatin Nur Sofia Zainol Alam; 2013, 49.

- it gives them an identity as Muslim women. Moreover, for them, it is another way of obedience to Allah, for some of them; the wearing of Hijab has created an aura of respectability in their mind and environment and has enabled them to remember Allah more often.
- for some of them, they feel that at present when demoralization is increasing in the society, every woman should wear Hijab. They believe it is the only thing which protects a woman and makes her feels secured.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Islamic practice of hijab continues to occupy a significant place in contemporary religious and social discourse as a visible expression of faith, identity, modesty, and commitment to Islamic teachings. This study has demonstrated that the hijab is not merely a cultural artifact or a symbol of religious difference but a multifaceted practice shaped by theological convictions, historical developments, personal choices, and socio-political realities. Understanding these dimensions is essential for any meaningful engagement between Christians and Muslims in an increasingly pluralistic world.

From a missiological perspective, the study has argued that effective Christian mission among Muslims requires more than doctrinal proclamation; it demands cultural intelligence, theological awareness, and genuine respect for the beliefs and practices of others. The hijab, often misunderstood or misrepresented in public discourse, presents an opportunity for Christians to develop informed and empathetic approaches to Muslim communities. Rather than viewing the hijab as a barrier to communication, Christian missionaries and church leaders can recognize it as a point of contact for conversations about faith, devotion, obedience to God, religious identity, and moral values.

The study has further shown that while Christianity and Islam differ in their theological foundations and understandings of salvation, there are important areas of common concern, including modesty, spirituality, commitment to God, and ethical living. These shared concerns provide a foundation for respectful dialogue and relationship-building without compromising the distinct convictions of either faith tradition. Christian witness is most effective when it reflects the example of Christ through humility, love, understanding, and authentic engagement with others.

In an era marked by religious diversity, migration, globalization, and increasing encounters between faith communities, the need for constructive Christian-Muslim relations has become more urgent than ever. A nuanced understanding of the hijab can help reduce stereotypes, challenge prejudices, and promote mutual respect between Christians and Muslims. Such understanding contributes not only to effective missionary engagement but also to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

The article therefore concludes that the hijab should be approached as a significant religious practice deserving thoughtful scholarly attention and respectful engagement. For Christian mission, understanding the meanings and experiences associated with the hijab can serve as a valuable avenue for building trust, fostering dialogue, and bearing faithful witness to the gospel in ways that are both contextually relevant and ethically responsible. Ultimately, Christian-Muslim engagement grounded in knowledge, respect, and genuine concern for the other offers a more fruitful path toward mutual understanding and transformative encounter in contemporary society.

Also, it could be deduced from the above discussion, that the practice of Hijab is very dear to the Islamic Religion. They believe it to be the only solution to the moral turpitude that confronts society. The Hijab is also seen as a means of identity to the Muslim. Therefore, it is incumbent on prospective missionaries to the Muslim Community to be conscious of this fact and be guided by the issue that has been raised in this discussion. This would enable them to be judicious and circumspect in their interaction with Muslims, making the most of any opportunity of winning them to Christ.

However, it is the belief of many that, social harmony as they so desire cannot be achieved by the simple covering of one's face, but goes beyond that. Nevertheless, the issue here is the need to have enough appreciation of where Muslims. This will enable missionaries to avail themselves of every opportunity to present the truth and the

power of the gospel, that security and harmony can only be found in Jesus Christ; who said “come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest”.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Without any shed of doubt, I believe that many Muslims are looking for solutions to societal and matrimonial difficulties they are confronted with, like any other human being. Consequently, for them the solution to this situation is with the Islamic religion; as they have been told to believe. This work therefore recommends that every Christian missionary should make it a point to reach out to Muslims because they are winnable. However, the only means to reach out to them is to make every effort to understand and appreciate where they are coming from and help them with respect and dignity which they always strife for due to a sense of insecurity and inferiority complex, as reported in certain sociological contexts to come to the Lord, as we make them disciples of Christ.

This is our sole response to the Great Commission, as we depopulate heal and populate heaven.

Anything short of that will mean shacking of our religious responsibility, making the statement “rescuing the perishing and caring for the dying” meaningless. It is believed that the Islamic world is the known and yet unknown territory for the Christian missionary. Therefore, one of the recommendations is that further research should be conducted on the subject under consideration for better, deeper, and clearer understanding, as we carry the good tidings to our brothers and sisters of the other faith; Islam for that matter and heaven will smile on us.

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**Retrieved on 07/11/14.**