

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Doctor of Ministry
Emphasis in Mission

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

**TITLE: A BIBLICAL AND MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DISCIPLING
MUSLIM BACKGROUND BELIEVERS IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in northern Nigeria in the 1930s. To-date, the church has grown to a Union Conference of three local Conferences with a total membership of about 39,984 members. In over 80 years of the church's existence in the north, converts from a Muslim background in the church today still compose less than 0.07% of the total membership.

Having served as the Adventist-Muslim Relations Coordinator for three years, it is evident from my experience that the church passionately desires for the conversion and spiritual nurture of Muslims; yet, the active involvement of membership and the achieved results are regrettably below expectations. Over the years, the few converts from Islam that were accommodated in the homes of either pastors or members turned to be a burden to them and to the churches. It is also very unfortunate to hear that some of the converts robbed the churches or families where

they were accommodated and ran away. These kinds of experiences raise suspicions, affect mutual relationships, and kill the spirit of witnessing.

This dissertation studied the challenges of discipling converts from Muslim religious backgrounds and developed, implemented and evaluated a process for empowering church members to disciple MBBs in a way that will maximize their retention in the church.

The study first established a theological foundation for discipling the MBBs. Beginning from the last command of Jesus to his disciples that required them to make disciples of all nations, the study described who a disciple is and what is discipleship. Moreover, reaching all nations entails transcending cultural and language barriers, contextualizing the message become inevitable. Hence, the study defined and provided a biblical basis for contextualization.

The study researched literatures to glean what Missiologists and others have said and done in regard to MBBs discipleship. Bevans, Hiebert, and Travis models of contextualization were studied. The two outstanding approaches that are experimented by many in discipling MBBs are Extractionism and FDIC (Insider) methods. However, the form, nature, and extent to which these contextualization approaches are to be done has remained a point of debate. This study agreed with the extraction approach because it is more biblical.

In order to increase the retention of the very few converts from Islam, it was necessary to discover the challenges that such converts are faced with and possible factors that give rise to backsliding among them. The study designed survey instruments and gathered information from well informed individuals. It was revealed by the surveys that: The MBBs faced real challenges; The MBBs are better nurtured individually; The Church does not have ongoing Discipleship programs for MBBs;

The church needs an MBBs discipleship ministry; Relevant discipleship materials and frequent training are necessary, and there is a need for MBBs empowerment.

On the basis of the foregoing findings, the study designed and implemented the following interventions. First, awareness-creating and motivational workshops and seminars were held. Second, a special MBBs discipleship ministry was formed, trained and equipped in the local church. Third, an empowerment scheme for helping the convert to become self-reliant was to be put in place. Fourth, a discipleship manual is developed and members are motivated and trained to disciple MBBs. This project has started well. When this ministry survives and is replicated in all the churches in northern Nigeria, it is potentially going to increase the overall retention of the MBBs.

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A dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment of

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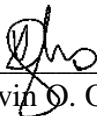
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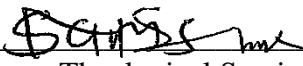
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FDIC	Faith Development in Context
GCAMR	Global Center for Adventist Muslim Relations
MBBs	Muslim Background Believers
NWNC	North West Nigeria Conference
OSO	Other Sheep Outreach

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Description of the Ministry Context

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country, and also the country with the largest Muslim population on the continent. It is estimated that there are over 173 million people in Nigeria, of which about 46.1% are Muslims, 46.3% Christians and 7.6% followers of African Traditional Religions.¹ There are over 250 ethnic groups; the major ones being Hausa-Funali, Igbo, and Yoruba.²

Nigeria has become a focus of attention largely due to incessant political-religious violence in the northern region. Because of the predominance of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims, Islamic religion plays a very vital and conspicuous role in almost every aspect of living in the north.

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect that claims to be committed to the Prophet's Mohammed's teachings for propaganda Jihad, and it holds that western education is contradictory to *Sharia Law*. The sect has terrorized the northern Nigeria so much. Many people have lost their businesses and life investments at a throw of a bomb in markets places, residential areas, streets, bus stations, etc. Over 16,000 persons have been massacred in attacks and counterattacks by the sect. More than 850,000 people

¹ Brian J. Grim et al., eds., *Yearbook of International Religious Demography 2014* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 224–25.

² Martin P. Mathews, *Nigeria: Current Issues and Historical Background* (Hauppauge, NY: Nova Publishers, 2002), 7.

have fled the conflict zone, as a result of untiring violent attacks.³ The persistence of the situation has worn out the patience of many Christians. While some hold the belief that vengeance is of the Lord, some have decided to take arms. Consequently, the adherents of both Islam and Christianity have been polarized, and this has greatly undermined Christian witnessing among Muslims.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in northern Nigeria in the 1930s. To-date, the church has grown to a Union Conference of three local Conferences with a total membership of about 39,984 members. The headquarters of the three conferences are located in Kaduna, Jos and Abuja respectively.

In over 80 years of the church's existence in the north, converts from a Muslim background in the church, today still compose less than 0.07% of the total membership. During the early 1980s, Pastor Luka T. Daniel took the giant step of devoting time to studying the religion of Islam with the aim of finding a better way to witness to the Muslim community. He laid the foundation of Muslim outreach. The very promising program soon lost steam, as the laity failed to fully embrace it. Many factors could be attributed to that, some of which are: negative perceptions, hatred and prevalent tensions that have always existed between Christians and Muslims in the area; also because of ignorance, and the lack of an effective structure for proper implementation, evaluation, and sustainability.

In the early 1990s, Pastor Ayuba Gimba Mavalla, building on the previous foundations, concentrated the church's effort to the least resistant Maguzawa people of northern Kano and part of Kastina. That resulted in some breakthrough in areas like Sitti, Jigawa, and Kastina. However, not long after the recorded successes, the

³ Oren Dorrell, "Boko Haram: Facts, History, Leaders, and Origins of the Terrorist Group," *Religion*, May 9, 2014.

enterprise dwindled into obscurity. Ten years later, Pastor Mavalla came up with a more structured strategy that came to be known as the “Other Sheep Outreach” program. Unfortunately, too, the program was short-lived.

The director of the General Conference of Adventist Muslim Relation (GCAMR), Jerald Whitehouse and his associate, Oscar Osindo, came in 2007 to offer new insights on how to be effective by improving what the field had been doing.⁴ The aftermath of their visit generated some controversial debate bordering on methodology⁵.

Having served as the Adventist-Muslim Relations Coordinator for three years, it is evident from my experience that the church passionately desires for the conversion of Muslims; yet, the active involvement of membership and the achieved results are regrettably below expectations. The attitude of local Adventists towards Muslims, shaped by a long history of love-hate relationship, has not been cordial. A few pastors and lay members have directly or indirectly had bad experiences as they sought to be of help to some ‘converts’ from Islam. Usually the converts, due to the perceived danger both to them and to the church, were extracted and relocated to, supposedly, more convenient places that it was hoped, could provide security for the converts and the church. It is very unfortunate, that in most of these cases, too much burden was placed on the host families. On the other hand, the converts’ attitudes,

⁴ The GCAMR is a General Conference-approved center that "focuses on the difficult task of raising awareness about Islam, cultivating an understanding of Muslims within Adventism, suggesting ways of relating to Muslims, and preparing materials to assist the church in its Muslim relations." Bruce L. Bauer, ed., *Faith Development in Context* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2005), 34.

⁵ More detail on this is discussed in chapter three under the subheading “A historical review of MBBs Discipleship in Northern Nigeria”

especially their demands, resulted in misunderstandings that eventually drove the converts away.

Over the years, the few converts from Islam that were accommodated in the homes of either pastors or members turned to be a burden to them and to the churches. It is also very unfortunate to hear that some of the converts robbed the churches or families where they were accommodated, and ran away. These kinds of experiences raise suspicions, affect mutual relationships, and kill the spirit of witnessing.

Statement of the Problem

Jesus Christ has commissioned the church to make disciples of all nations, beginning from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). The immediate context of the Adventist Church in northern Nigeria includes the Hausa-Fulani people who are predominantly Muslim. For decades, the church has witnessed very little success in terms of gaining converts from the Islamic faith; at the same time, many of the few converts have backslidden. One of the possible causes of the poor success is attributed to the volatile nature of Islamic fundamentalism, which is characterized by religious intolerance and bigotry often resulting in indiscriminate killings and burning of churches. What is not known and needs to be addressed are the factors responsible for the low retention of converts from Islamic backgrounds.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation was to study the challenges of discipling converts from Muslim religious backgrounds with the aim to develop, implement and evaluate a process for empowering church members to disciple MBBs in a way that will maximize their retention in the church.

Justification

Considering the fact that the church gains very few converts from Islam, an intentionally structured discipleship program is necessary to increase their retention in the fold. The church needs to be aware of the reality of the challenges that believers with a Muslim background are faced with and the special attention that is necessary because of their peculiar background. It is essential for the church to know and appreciate the potentials of these converts becoming effective soul winners if they are to be properly disciplined.

The converts are often confronted by considerable material and financial challenges as a result of being ostracized by their families, relations, and former faith communities, consequently, a structure is needed that can empower them to become self-sustaining believers who will be contributors in the church rather than remaining dependents. The converts require not only economic, social and psychological adjustment; they also need to grow spiritually. Therefore, they ought to be helped to discover their various gifts, talents and be given the opportunity to put these into practice to the glory of God.

Delimitations

Although there is a challenge with membership retention in general in northern Nigeria, this project will focus only on the retention and discipling of converts from Muslim religious backgrounds. For security to both the converts and the church, most of the converts are relocated to two districts, Kaduna and Bukuru in North-West and North-East Conferences respectively. This study will be conducted in Kaduna districts only.

Methodology

In chapter 1 the primary purpose of the research is outlined as being to explore the fundamental cause for low membership retention, and to develop a biblical approach for discipling converts from a Muslim background. The chapter highlights the context that necessitates the study, identifies the problems and shows how relevant the study is to the church and especially to the converts coming from an Islamic background.

Chapter 2 examines theological foundation for discipling believers from a Muslim background by: analyzing the concept of discipleship and its purpose in the Bible; exploring the plan of God for Muslims as predicted in the Book of Isaiah 60:7, 8; and, a brief study of biblical theology for contextualization.

Chapter 3 provides a review of relevant literature of Evangelical and Adventist on contextualization among Muslims. It discusses Islam: background, nature, and religious practices. It also provides a concise understanding of contextualization, its meaning, models, and levels. Moreover, the chapter focuses on contextual discipleship approaches for discipling converts from Islam as advocated and experimented by both Evangelicals and Adventist.

Chapter 4 provides the analysis of the field research and the designed intervention. The chapter begins with a concise socio-cultural and political-religious profile of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. The second section reports survey performance and evaluation of findings. The findings, alongside insights gathered from the theological reflection and the literature reviewed, formed the basis for the program developed. Finally, a brief description of the proposed intervention is provided in the last section.

A narration of the chronological order on intervention implementation is provided in chapter 5. Furthermore, an evaluation of the process is discussed. The last chapter gives a concise summary of the thesis, describes evaluation methods and the standard for data interpretations, with conclusions drawn from the exercise. The outcomes of the intervention are enumerated and conclusions drawn with recommendations for further studies.

Expectations

This study is hoped could benefit individuals and churches that are witnessing among Muslims. Because it identifies the factors affecting the retention of converts with a Muslim background, and also offers alternative ways of addressing those challenges, it could be a model for discipleship that will maximize the retention of the converts and minimizes the rate of backsliding. The study is expected to enhance church members' understanding and appreciation of discipling converts from Islam

CHAPTER 2

THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR DISCIPLING THE MBBs

The last command of Jesus to his disciples was, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:18-19). This passage of scriptures, commonly refer to as the Great Commission, is of great significance because it is the last recorded personal command of the Savior to his disciples.

This chapter examines the theological foundation for discipling the MBBs by: (1) analyzing the concept of discipleship, its purpose and models in the Bible, (2) discussing the discipling of gentiles in the early church as it relates to the MBBs discipleship; (3) studying biblical theology for contextualization, (4) lastly, the chapter concludes with a summary.

The Great Commission

For Jesus, discipleship is an all-consuming priority. At the beginning of his public ministry, was a determined call: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). Thereafter, he spent three years personally discipling the twelve, and others of his disciples. Shortly before his ascension to heaven, his last instruction to his disciples was: "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt.28:19).

Eric Russ opined that “apart from his sacrificial work on the cross, the most significant thing our Lord did upon the earth was to make disciples.”¹ Russ surely is right because, had Jesus built physical structures founded an empire or only led a revolution; he would have been long forgotten. The sustainability and expansion of the gospel has been, humanly speaking, on the response of the disciples to his last command; and on it will it thrive until the return of Christ.

Without a doubt, the gospels show how discipleship was a thing of highest priority to Jesus. Hence, studying discipleship is a very important teaching that can be imagined. The understanding of who a disciple is should precede any meaningful study on discipleship.

Who is a Disciple?

The word “*disciple*” generally means a pupil, student, apprentice or an adherent. “A man was known as a *machetes* or disciple when he bound himself to another in order to acquire his practical and theoretical knowledge. The word was sometimes nearly synonymous with the term apprentice.”² To be a disciple is to be a committed follower of someone- a Master.

In the Old Testament, the term disciple or its exact concept is not found. People were enjoyed to be subject to the will of God (Deut.6:10-12), but were not referred to as disciples. The word disciple is found in the Bible only in the Gospels and Acts.

¹ Eric Russ, *Discipleship Defined* (Maitland: Xulon Press, 2010), 18.

² *Ibid.*, 19.

In all the synoptic gospels the term is generally used in its plural form; the singular form only occurs in John where it always refers to a particular person. In the book of Acts, the singular term of the word appears only 4 times in references to an individual who professes and believes in and follow Jesus.

Moreover, the gospel of John, the uses the term *disciples* to refer to both committed and the uncommitted followers of Christ. The later, when they eventually realized that they were not his type of disciples, they left (John. 6). The usage of the term in John 8 was in reference to people were true and committed followers of Jesus.

Consistently, the Gospels (with the exception of Luke) refer to the 12 as Disciples. In the books of Luke and Acts, the twelve disciples are referred to as Apostles. Luke uses the term in the book of Acts, as synonymous with the true believer in Jesus (Acts 6:1, 2, 7). Moreover, He uses the word disciples for the first time to describe Christians in Acts.11:26.

There are two passages of scriptures that provide a richer description of who a disciple is: Mark 3:13-15; Matt.4:19. The book of Mark 3:13-15 reads:

“And He went up to the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed the twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons” (emphasis supplied).

Here a disciple is one who firstly, is summoned or called by Jesus. For by nature, no man can voluntarily follow Christ except he is drawn to Him (John.6:44). Secondly, the individual ought to be with Christ (constantly), listening, observing and learning from Christ for the purpose of becoming equipped. And lastly, a disciple eventually becomes co-laborer with his master. Being with Christ enables a disciple to mature in Christ, and the evidence of such maturity is doing the mission of Christ.

The second biblical passage that helps in describing a disciple is Matt.4:19. Addressing Andrew and Peter, Jesus says, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of

men.” Commenting on this, Russ rightly pointed out that “a disciple is one who: knows and follows Christ (Follow me), is being changed by Christ (I will make you); and is committed to the mission of Christ (fishers of men).”³

Summarizing the ideas from the two scriptural passages analyzed above, a disciple can, therefore, be defined as anyone who makes a conscious decision to accept the call to follow Christ and is personally and deeply committed to a lifelong following of Jesus. As a result, he is changed and equipped to remain devotedly working for the salvation of others.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus was often followed by a “great multitude” (Luke 14:25). One day he said to the crowd round about him, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters - yes, even his own life - he *cannot be my disciple*”(v. 26 emphases supplied). This probably was a shock to the disciples. But Jesus continued, “And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me *cannot be my disciple*” (v. 27 emphasis added). Again he emphasized for the third time, “In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has *cannot be my disciple*” (v. 33 emphasis added). Thrice Jesus repeated the phrase “cannot be my disciple.” Luke seems to be making a contrast between the multitudes following him (uncommitted followers) with the disciples (committed follower).

Characteristics of a Disciple

There are many identifying marks that characterize a disciple (committed follower) of Jesus. This study considers the following seven: Acknowledging the

³ Russ, *Discipleship Defined*, 20.

Lordship of Jesus, Total consecration, Wholeheartedness, Obedience to the Word, Continuance, Fruitfulness, and Brotherly love.

Acknowledged the lordship of Jesus. A public confession of allegiance to Christ is one of identifying marks or characteristics of a disciple. There is nothing like a secret follower of Jesus. Jesus desires that anyone who comes to him should "... acknowledge me (Jesus) before men" (Matt.10:32). To the individuals who confess him before men, he guaranteed "I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven" (Matt.10: 32)." However, those who are ashamed or afraid of publicly acknowledging Christ will be denied by Jesus before his father who is in heaven (Matt.10:33). In the same vein, Apostle Paul declares, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Rom. 10:9, 10).

Jesus wants to be confessed for who he is. He demanded to know what his disciples believe about him, so he asked, "Who do you say I am?" (Mark 8:29). Moved by the Holy Ghost, Peter answered, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). It appears that was one of the goals of Jesus' ministry, to lead men to the point of fully convinced, and that they can publicly confess, that Jesus is the Christ.

Total Consecration. After the confession of Peter about the true identity of Christ, Jesus began to direct the attention of the disciples to his imminent suffering and death. He said to them clearly, "the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). This was a fitting preamble to the admonition that will follow: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself

and take up his cross and follow me” (Mark 8:38). Jesus here gives a clear requirement for a would-be disciple- Self-denial and self-sacrifice.

Ellen G White, underline “Self-denial” and “self-sacrifice” as a mark of a true disciple. Her comment on the passage is, “He [Christ] calls His followers to a life of consecration and self-denial. . . . Only by self-denial and self-sacrifice can we show that we are true disciples of Christ.”⁴ There are people who continually lament what they had denied themselves in order to be disciples. Others continually grumble because of the difficulties that they are brought to bear for the sake of Christ. Let those know that it is a choice, if they choose Christ then let them endure. For he that called them is faithful.

Wholeheartedness. One of the hard sayings of Jesus about who can be his disciple is this one, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26). This saying has perplexed many bible students. Is Jesus literally saying that one should hate father, mother, wife, yes, all relations, including self in our order to be his disciples? If this is literal, then it will be a contradiction of lots of teachings in the Bible. The one who hates cannot be of God for, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (1 John 4:8).

The usage of the word *hate*, in Luke 14:26, is classified by Gugliotto, in the *Handbook for Bible study*, as an *overstatement*. He argues that “Jesus is emphasizing the cost of discipleship, not advocating hostility toward our loved ones.”⁵ Certainly,

⁴White, E. G.; *God's Amazing Grace; Amazing Grace*. Review and Herald Publishing Association. 1973, 23.

⁵Gugliotto, L. J. 2001, c2000, 1995. *Handbook for Bible study: A guide to understanding, teaching, and preaching the word of God* (electronic ed.). Review and Herald Publishing Association: Hagerstown, MD

Jesus cannot contradict himself. Spurgeon gives a homiletic interpretation of the passage thus; “The meaning of this passage is that Christ’s disciple must so love his Lord that, in comparison with the love he bears to Christ, all other love shall burn but dimly and be scarcely worthy of even being named!”⁶ Ellen G. White has an interesting exposition on this passage to the conclusion that “We are to have supreme love to God.”⁷ This therefor means a disciple must love Jesus above anything else; Christ must have wholehearted devotion.

Obedience to the Word. Obedience is another identifying character of a true disciple. In the context of the Great commission, Jesus command is, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them *to obey everything* I have commanded you” (Matt.28:19 emphases added). Earlier on, Jesus had said to his followers, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples” (John 8:31). One who is not submissive to the lordship of Jesus, cannot be his disciples. In most of his teachings, Jesus gave emphasis to obedience to the Word.

Luke records an account of a certain woman who was moved by the teachings of Jesus and she exclaims, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you” (Luke 11:27). But Jesus redirected her to what is significant when he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it” (Luke 11:28).

Similarly, Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount, what is often referred to as the “greatest sermon ever preached,” with these words:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words

⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, “Characteristics of Christ’s Disciples,” December 26, 1899, 3, <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols43-45/chs2650.pdf>.

⁷ Ellen G. White. *The Review and Herald; The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald; Review and Herald*. 2002.

of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew against that house, and it fell with a great crash” (Matt 7:24-27).

The contrast between these men is very striking. Given the same situations and under the same circumstances and privileges, each of the men made a conscious choice of where to build his house. Until the rains and storm came, all seems normal. But when the wind blew, and the flood came, soon it what revealed the very foundation upon which each has built his house. The one who built on the rock is termed Wise, and the one whose house was founded on the sand is a fool. Everything is illustrative of the fact that to obedient to the Word of God is like building on the rock, the very wise thing to do.

Continuance. A man is not qualified to be the disciple of Jesus if he cannot endure opposition and persecution. There are others who are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph.4:14). Jesus says it emphatically, “If you continue in my word, you are my disciples indeed” (John 8:31). A true disciple must persevere, holding on to the faith no matter how trying his circumstance may be. A disciple must have the faith that he is more than conquerors, and can say like Paul:

“What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is raised again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:31-39)

It is unfortunate, many converts who start to strongly falter and backslides in the face of afflictions. That proves that they are not true “disciples indeed.”

Fruitful for Christ. Fruit-bearing is another identifying mark of a disciple of Christ. Jesus himself says, “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8). Jesus further gives the purpose he calls for disciples by saying, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last” (John 15:16). What fruits are referred here? Presumably, these incorporate what Apostle Paul writes to the Galatians: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance” (Gal 5:22-23). In addition to that, the fruits could also mean replication – “by way of influencing the lives of others for Christ.” Paul might have had the latter meaning in mind when he expresses his desires to the believers in Rome of having “a harvest among you, even as among other Gentiles.” (Rom. 1:13).

Jesus also describes how it is possible for his disciple to bear fruit, by saying, “He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). It was on the basis of this declaration of Jesus, that Paul could say to the Philippians, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

Fruit-bearing can be expressed by the prayers of the disciples. Jesus implied that in this saying, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit.” Efficacious prayer is a fruit of a true disciple.

Brotherly Love. A genuine disciple is characterized by having “brotherly love.” Jesus says, “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Love is an identifying mark which can unmistakably be seen by all. John wrote, “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that

loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not knows not God, for God is love.”

A way of showing love is to genuinely concern about the needs of others. True love cannot say to the cold and the hungry, “Be you warmed and be you filled,” and not do something else. The counsel of Ellen G. White about showing love and meeting people needs should be a model. She said, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”⁸

What is Discipleship

By the above description of a disciple, all committed followers of Jesus are disciples. Bonhoeffer asserts that there is no Christianity where there is no discipleship. For him “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.... Christianity without discipleship does not exist.”⁹ He further says that “Discipleship means adherence to Christ, and, because Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship.”¹⁰ Reflecting on a speech delivered at Formation Forum in Los Angeles, by Willard, Hull both defines and describes discipleship as “the relationship I stand into Jesus Christ in order that I might take on his character. As his disciple, I am learning from him how to live my life in the

⁸White, E. G. 1905; 2002. *The Ministry of Healing; Ministry of Healing*. Pacific Press Publishing Association, 143.

⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press, 2015), 56.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

kingdom as he would if he were I. The natural outcome is that my behavior is transformed. Increasingly, I routinely and easily do the things he said and did.”¹¹

Definition of Discipleship

According to Smither, Christian discipleship is training on how to appropriately respond to God. He argues thus:

Discipleship focuses on actively following in the footsteps of Jesus. Christian disciples are not passive spectators but energetic participants in God’s activity in the world. In response to what God has done, Christian disciples offer their lives back to God by ordering their lives in ways that embody Christ’s ministry in their families, workplaces, communities, and the world.”¹²

Discipleship is not synonymous with a program or event that is limited to time or to new converts beginners. Sometimes discipleship is dwarfed by focusing too much on programs to the expense of having a personal, intimate and committed relationship with Jesus. Discipleship is a way of life, that is for whole life and “for all believers, Discipleship isn’t just one of the things the church does; it is what the church does.”¹³

Goal of discipleship

When some people use the word, they think of a process of becoming mature Christians. Others consider discipleship an evangelistic method – making disciples; which they believe is sharing the gospel to win others for Christ. These subtle

¹¹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2014), 16.

¹² Edward Smither, *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2008), 88

¹³ Russ, *Discipleship Defined*, 21.

differences in the understanding of discipleship approaches are made obvious by the responses of church and network leaders to the survey conducted by Exponential. The survey was intended to get views and opinions about the participants' understanding of the word “discipleship.” Many of those surveyed described discipleship as a “process” of becoming mature Christians, while others understand the term to mean a process of evangelizing or making disciples for Christ.

Although none of them has said it so directly, many pastors and authors surveyed gave the impression that discipleship is not about making converts, but becoming mature followers of Christ. Edmondson believes that discipleship is “the process of becoming a genuine follower of Jesus Christ.”¹⁴ Moreover, Stagg explains that: “Discipleship is the process of exemplifying, in an ever increasing manner, the character, convictions, and conduct of Jesus.”¹⁵ A believer becoming a mature follower of Christ is the main focus of these views.

A little expansion of the above description of discipleship is where the focus of discipleship is on others. Mac Lake succinctly describes discipleship as “an intentional process where one believer engages one or younger believers helping them process and discover their next steps spiritually in becoming more like Christ.”¹⁶ To the contrary, Bevans believes that discipleship is not a program that begins and end, it is rather “an organic process of helping others become and continue to be disciples of Jesus Christ.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Russ, *Discipleship Defined*, 34.

¹⁵ ““Discipleship Is ...’ 70+ Leaders on Discipleship,” *Exponential*, June 13, 2013, <https://exponential.org/discipleship-is-40-leaders-on-discipleship/>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

One thing that is common to Bevis and Lake is the notion that discipleship is an art directed toward others for the benefit of helping them become mature followers of Christ. The biblical goal for discipleship is encapsulated in Jesus' word: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John. 15:16). Two goals are obvious here; the bringing forth of fruit (Evangelism), and the remaining in Christ (nurture). When discipleship program is directed to unbelievers with the hope of making them disciples of Jesus, the goal is evangelism. However, whenever teachings and church activities are directed to the disciples the goal of discipleship here is nurture. Therefore, discipleship could be said to have two goals; Evangelism and nurture. This study is concerned about the nurture aspect of discipleship.

Discipleship Models in the OT: Moses and Joshua

The term "discipleship" is not mentioned in the in the Old Testament; yet, the principles are can be garnered from God's covenant in the book of Exodus, "I will be your God, you will be my people" (Exod 6:7). This type of relationship required individual to walk with the Lord (Gen.17:1). Walking with the Lord presupposes obedient to his commandments. There are prophets who were mentors of others, and the relationship is such that could be said to evident discipleship principles. An example, Moses and Joshua's relationship are one of the models in OT.

In the *Complete Book of Discipleship* Hull pictures how the relationship between Moses and Joshua "manifests itself in the five characteristics of what humans need to grow and develop."¹⁸

¹⁸ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 56.

Relationship. From the time he went up the mountain with Moses, Joshua has never distanced himself from Moses. The time they spent together in the presence of God matures the relationship. He remained committed and was a faithful servant and learner until Moses' death.

Apprenticeship. Joshua was under the tutelage of Moses for a long time necessary to develop competence. He learned through observations and instructions. He learned from the mistakes as well as from the accomplishment of Moses, in both good and bad times.

Accountability. When Jethro offered Moses insight about delegating responsibilities, Joshua must have benefited from that. As Moses put to practice the lesson learned from his father-in-law, Joshua was not only involved in the process but probably was accountable.

Submission. All through the process, Joshua remains loyal to Moses even in the face of opposition by significant others. By submission to Moses, he was submissive to God.

Decision making. Taking the Israelites into the promise land required a considerable measure of basic leadership - a lot of decision making. Though he was not perfect, Joshua made critical decisions that were for the good of the nation. This he probably learned from Moses. He did not only make critical decisions, but demanded same from others. Close to the end of his life, he could say to the people of Israel "choose you this day whom ye will serve... as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15).

Discipleship Models in the NT: Jesus Model

Jesus demonstrated an authentic discipleship model for all believers. He invested most of his time and labor in teaching and training his disciples. He was

preparing them for the task of making “disciples of all nations.” According to Hull, “the church is called to make more disciples, to pray for more laborers, and to recognize leaders.”¹⁹

Discipleship was Jesus’ strategy for fulfilling the plan of redemption. He chose unqualified men and prepared them to be leaders in His plan of making disciples of all the nations. Coleman perceives this (Jesus’) strategy in stages, namely: “Selection, Association, Consecration, Impartation, Demonstration, Delegation, Supervision, and Reproduction.”²⁰

Selection. Jesus selected from the crowd, only a few to be with him. These twelve people were not learned, individuals. Most of them came from a very humble background. However, Jesus noticed hidden potentials in them. He knew that a few dedicated people can accomplish great things with his enabling power.

Association. Jesus always walked along with them wherever He went and in whatever He did. Jesus spent the most time with them and shared common daily life with them. Coleman comments: “Jesus made it a practice to be with them. This was the essence of His training program—just letting His disciples follow Him”²¹

“Without neglecting His regular ministry to that in need, He maintained a constant ministry to His disciples by having them with Him.”²²

Consecration. Jesus exemplified a life of total consecration and he taught the disciples how to live a life of obedience and total commitment to God’s word.

¹⁹ Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship*, 175.

²⁰ R. E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), 23.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

²² *Ibid.*, 43.

According to Coleman's statement, "Jesus expected the men He was with to obey Him. They were not required to be smart, but they had to be loyal."²³ True obedience is a fruit out of true love. Love for God is manifested only in reciprocal love. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15)

Impartation. Jesus taught His disciples by His lifestyle that there is greater joy in giving than in receiving. Jesus' life itself was a gift and offering to others. He promised them His peace to sustain them in times of tribulations (John 16: 33; Matt. 11:28).

Demonstration. Jesus' prayer life was a demonstration of dependence on God and His word. The disciples should have learned how important prayer is from Him. As a matter of fact, prayer was the secret of His power and success. In teaching them how to pray, his life became an embodiment of prayer until they could ask him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). Thereafter, Jesus repeatedly emphasized the importance of a prayerful life and the need to study the word of God. It was one of the indispensable parts of Jesus' discipleship training.

Delegation. Jesus involved His disciples in the various ways in which He ministered, such as distributing food, arranging accommodations for the group, and even letting them baptize people (John 4:2). And Jesus gave His disciples some specific instructions on their first missionary work so that they could experience a victory over the devil (Matt. 10:5-15).

Supervision. Jesus allowed his disciples to experience ministry directly in the field so that they could check and assess their own ministry by themselves. Jesus trained the disciples to check on their own ministry after they returned from

²³ Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 50.

ministering. For example, Jesus sent out 70 disciples to take the gospel to the villages and towns. And then, when the seventy came back from the mission field, Jesus called them to Himself and had them report on their work (Luke 10:17). The eighth stage is "Reproduction." Jesus made disciples who would reproduce and multiply other disciples that would continue the chain of multiplication. Jesus expected his disciples to reproduce and sustain their fruit in Christ. His admonition was "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16)

Making Disciples of Gentiles

"Making disciples of all nations" was something that was not only new but unusual to the disciples. Earlier, when Jesus sent the disciples on mission, it was with this instruction: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 10:5-6.

Since the then world was made of Jews and Gentiles, one could say that the commission to make disciples of "all nation" was calling attention to the inclusion of the gentiles to an already existing discipleship command of Jesus. The writer is not denying the inclusion of the Jews in the "all Nation" in context, but has chosen to focus on gentiles which were not the common practice hitherto. The goal here is to provide a link and motivation for discipline MBBs-who are gentiles in a sense.

The Jews, as it appears were not always comfortable having something to do with or for gentiles. One instance in favor of this view is Jesus' experience in Nazareth. Luke gave the resulting effect of Jesus' exposition of the Old Testament prophesy of Isaiah 61:1-2. When he had indicated that right there and then was the fulfillment of the Messianic prophesy (Luke 4:16-21), they were surprised. By the

time he expatiated on the mission of the Messiah - to save the Gentile (Luke 4:122-27) they were very enraged and wanted to kill him (Luke 4:28-29). Similarly, in Acts 22 is a record of Paul arrest. The arrest was based on the accusation of defiling the temple (Acts 22:30-32). The Jews would have killed Paul had the Romans soldiers not intervene (Acts 22:33-39). When Paul was opportune to address the crowd, he had their attention until he got to this statement: was able to get the commander convinced of his innocence had by bringing the Gentiles:

“And when the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing nearby, approving, and guarding the cloaks of those who were killing him.’ Then he said to me, ‘Go because I will send you far away to the Gentiles’” (Acts 22:20-21).

Hearing about gentiles there was uproar, people demanding the life of Paul.

There seems to be a conscious arrangement of the materials by Mathew that prepares readers for discipling the gentiles. Beginning from the genealogy of Jesus, three Gentile women (Tamar, Rehab, and Ruth) are included (Matt. 1:2-5). Chapter 2 records the coming of the Gentile magi (probably Ishmaelites from the east). While many Jews were unaware of the birth of the Messiah, the gentiles were already worshipping him. It is also important to note that it was in “Galilee of the Gentiles” that Jesus began his ministry (Matt.4:12-17).

The gospel of Matthew has a lot of reference to Jesus' encounter with gentiles during his ministry; most of which he greatly commended their faith. Among these gentiles of great faith were: the centurion (Matt.8). It is remarkable how Jesus talked about this man.

The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west,

and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. Matt 8:8-13

The “many” that shall come from the east and west are very indicative of the gentile nation.

As it has been indicated above, Christ had directed discipleship specifically to the Jewish people and totally exclusive of every other person (Matt. 10:5-7); yet it was in his master plan that Gentiles too will be reached (Matt. 10:16-18). Some time later, Jesus instructed Ananias, with respect to Saul (later to call Paul), to “Go, because this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the people of Israel” (Acts 9:15).

The Disciples’ Reluctance

There was hesitation on the part of the disciples for the discipleship of gentiles. It could be said that it was providential, occasioned by the death of Stephen, that missionary to gentiles began (Acts 8:1-5). After the stoning of Stephen, Philip went to the Samaritans (see John. 4:9). As for Peter, there was a great struggle in his mind that only God can resolve, and he did that by a special vision (Acts 10). In chapter 11, graphically convey the reaction which depicts the king of struggle the early church was because of Peter's discipleship of the gentiles – Cornelius. Luke captures the account, thus:

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. Acts 11:1-3

They pretended that their disapproval was because Peter “went to the uncircumcised and [ate] a meal with them” (Acts 11:3). However, the first verse clearly indicated

that it was because of Peter's discipline of gentiles. After Peter gave the testimony of all that happened, it is amazing how Luke describes their response:

“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” Acts 11:18-21

One could think the barrier to gentile was totally broken; alas, there was little effect on practices and attitudes towards the Gentiles. The probable reason was it was the time that the gospel was being taken across-culture. The disciples then had not yet developed the necessary understanding of, and God's dealings with other cultures different from theirs. Similar reluctance is noticeable in the Christian's attitude to witnessing among the Muslim.

Discipling Muslim Background Believers

Muslims are adherents of the religion of Islam. In reference to the Koran, Surah 49:17, Bill Musk states that “the concept of Islam in the Qur'an is one of personal, active faith expressed in obedience. It does not primarily refers to an institution or religious system as such.”²⁴ In this sense, Musk supports the claim that Islam “existed long before Muhammad and long before the final shape it came to take in the faith-expression that Muhammad oversaw.”²⁵ If this claim is true, then the question that demands answer is how long before Muhammad did Islam exist?

²⁴ Bill Musk, *Kissing Cousins? Christian and Muslim Face to Face* (Grand Rapid, MI: Monarch Books, 2005), 25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

Although Islam is not mentioned directly in the Bible, there is recorded in the Bible an outline of the Arabic people as the Children of Abraham who inhabited the “eastern country”. The history of the Muslim peoples, therefore, begins with the prophet Abraham and his descendants through Ishmael, his firstborn son.

Abraham

Abraham was the son of Terah, a descendant of Shem, who lived in the city of Ur of the Chaldeans. It appears that Terah was an idolater, for Joshua says of him that he “served other gods” (Josh 24:2). He had three sons – Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

He married to his half-sister, Sarah. When his brother Nahor died, Abram and his family, including his nephew Lot and his father Terah, migrated to Haran (Gen. 11:31-32). Though the reason for the migrations is not stated in the bible, Stephen says that God had appeared to Abraham before he dwelt in Haran, and had told him to leave his country for another land (Acts 7:2-4).

He was required by God to leave his father's house, his kindred, and his country; and was promised a great name and to be made into "a great nation" (Gen12:1, 2). Through Abraham God also promised to bless "all families of the earth" (Gen12:3). Not so long after the call, Abraham built an altar to the Lord.

The *nation* that was to come through Abraham was to have a unique culture and to be a context/means through which God intended to communicate to “all families of the earth.” This *nation* was to come through Sarai (earlier called Sarai), Abrahams wife. However, after ten years of following God with no visible results, Sarah was impatient with God's plan and comes up with a plan of her own. "And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai by accepting Hagar the Egyptian maid to be his wife”

(Gen. 16:2-3). Both Jewish and Islamic tradition suggests that Hagar was a daughter of Pharaoh by one of his concubines.²⁶

Hagar conceived and bore Abraham his first son: “and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael (Gen.16:15). Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram (Gen.16:15-16).

Isaac and Ishmael

Ishmael (God hears), as noted above, was Abraham's eldest son by Hagar the concubine (Gen 16:15; 17:23). After thirteen years, God again appeared to Abraham and assured him that the heir of the promise should yet be born of his wife, whose name was then changed to Sarah. Isaac was born to Abraham, in the hundredth year of his age, at Gerar. In his infancy, he became the object of jealousy and was disliked by his brother Ishmael (son of the bondwoman; and in this, a type of all children of the promise, Gal 4:29). Consequently, Hagar and Ishmael were driven out to seek a new home (Gen 21:1-34). In the wilderness of Arabia, their cry of distress was heard by God, “... and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, ‘What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not; for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him fast with your hand; for I will make him a great *nation*.’” (Gen.21:18 emphases added).

Two Nations

It is important to note what is happening here, the *nation* God had promised Abraham was to come through his wife Sarah, now here again, God is promising to make the son of Hagar into a great *nation*. Ultimately, two nations came out from

²⁶ Musk, *Kissing Cousins?* 41.

Abraham, and they developed distinct cultures and religions-Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

However, to avoid confusion the bible made emphasis on which the covenant referred. It should be noted that God had promised Abraham, “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 22:18)²⁷. Twice God tells Abraham that Isaac is “your son, *your only son*” (Gen. 22:2, 16)²⁸. God knew that Ishmael was Abraham’s son, yet God reminded Abraham that Isaac was the son of Promise.²⁹

Abraham must have loved Ishmael dearly; it was in response to Abraham’s prayer that God reiterated the promised made to Hagar, that the descendant of Ishmael will be a great nation. God said: “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him and make him fruitful and multiply him exceedingly; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.” Gen. 17:20.

Negative notions about Ishmael

Christian understanding and attitudes to Islam are a critically determine factor in the discipleship of the same. There are many Christians, who see Ishmael as not only the despised son of Abraham but divinely cursed. This popular conception of Ishmael is based on, what could be considered, an ill-fated ignorance and misinterpretation of Genesis 16:12: "He will be a wild donkey of a man and his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand will be against him, and he will dwell in hostility toward all his brothers." Looking at this text in its context, there are key

²⁷ “The Scripture does not say ‘and to seeds,’ meaning many people, but ‘and to your seed,’ meaning one person, who is Christ (Gal. 3:16). Here Apostle Paul makes it clear that the seed (singular) was Christ: The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed.”

²⁸ Musk, *Kissing Cousins? Christian and Muslim Face to Face*, 48.

²⁹ Paul connects the dots from the son of promise to Isaac, and from Isaac to us – spiritual “children of promise (Gal. 4:28)

factors that suggest to the contrary. First, Ishmael's name was given by the angel of God and it means, "God will hear." (Gen. 16:11). The name was given to Hagar while she was yet conceived of Ishmael. Thusly, it is a name that contains an element of guarantee.

Also, Gen. 16:12 is given with regards to a guarantee to Hagar. How could the message intended to comfort Hagar be a curse? Culver opine that "It would be strange indeed for the covenant angel to try and motivate Hagar to return to Abraham's tent by pronouncing a curse on her child!" He further alluded that "the wild donkey metaphor is better understood in light of passages like Job 39:5-8. Here God describes the wild donkey as a freedom-loving creature and a wilderness wanderer."³⁰ Though there are lots of studies to the contrary, yet the question that those studies have not addressed is how a message that was meant could for comfort be a curse? Hagar could have been comforted only on the understanding that her child and his descendants would later become as free as the wild donkey. This study supports this particular view as its emphasis that God blesses, rather than curse Ishmael.

The Ishmaelites and Islam

The Islamic religion is traced back to, and is strongly connected with the person of Ishmael. Many Arabs, "following Mohammed's example, claim descent from Ishmael."³¹ Non-Arab Muslims also identified with Ishmael on "spiritual and theological grounds."³²

³⁰ Jonathan Culver, "The Ishmael Promise and Contextualization Among Muslims," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 63.

³¹ "Ishmaelite," *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963) p. 387. "Ishmael," *The Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia* (New York, NY: Funk & Wagnalls, Inc., 1972) Vol. 13, p. 461

³² Culver, "The Ishmael Promise and Contextualization Among Muslims," 62.

Islam teaches that Ishmael is the son of promise and that he was the one that Abraham was commanded to sacrifice.³³ There is a teaching in Islam that, when Ishmael and his mother Hagar were cast out (Gen. 21:8-14), they end up in Mecca. During Abraham's visit to his son Ishmael, both of them built an altar (the Ka'bah - where images of Abraham and Ishmael were later found). By the time the Arabs had fallen into idolatry and polytheism; Mohammad conquered Mecca and restored to Arabia the monotheistic worship of the God of Abraham. While these assertions cannot be validated in the Bible, they suffice background information helpful in understanding some claims of the religion.

God's Plan for the Ishmaelites

God through the prophet Isaiah described the inclusion of the Ishmael's children in the true worship of the living God.³⁴ The prophet predicted that "All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will glorify my glorious house." (Isa. 60:6, 7 Emphasis supplied). Nebaioth, and Kedar were the first two sons of Ishmael (1 Chro.1:29). Here the prophet points clearly that Ishmaelites will submit "unto the name of the Lord thy God (God Almighty), and to the Holy One of Israel (Jesus Christ)." Isaiah 60:9 (emphasis added). The coming of the Magi from the east with their offering of "gold, frankincense and myrrh (Matt. 2:1-2, 11), seems indicative of the literal fulfillment of Isa. 60:6-7. Furthermore, a consensus understanding among Missiologists is that an eschatological fulfillment of Isaiah 60:7

³³ The Koran, which came 600 years after the Bible, says the sacrifice took place in Mecca whereas the Bible has Abraham sacrificing Isaac on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem.

³⁴ Musk, *Kissing Cousins? Christian and Muslim Face to Face*, 44.

points to the salvation of many Ishmaelites that will become believers in Christ Jesus.³⁵

Because of the common belief that Ishmael is the father of all Muslims, the study appropriates the biblical prediction about Ishmael descendants to the adherent of the Islamic religion. Hence, discipling MBBs has a biblical mandate; as such, Christian should not be reluctant in carrying this injunction.

Background to both the reluctance of the early church towards gentile mission and of the Christians towards Muslim discipleship, are associated with cultural, racial and religious barriers. Until these barriers are understood and taken into consideration, there bound to be resistance from both sides. Christendom can overcome this barrier if necessary attention is given to study of cultural difference and by intentional contextualizing the gospel. Though it was not known by the name, there are forms of contextualization in both the Old and New Testament of the Bible. The need to understand the factors that necessitate contextualization, as well as examples of the same at bible time is very foundational to developing any contextual discipleship strategy.

Bible Contextualization

The bible as a whole is God's revelation of his divine to humanity in "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9). Being revealed in a given

³⁵ Many Missiologist study Isaiah 60:6, 7 and arrive at the conclusions that support the view that a significant number of the descendant of Ishmael will become believers in the Messiah. there is a general consensus that Arabs are definitely in view here, and by extension, all other Muslim. However, there are a number of commentators that disagree with this conclusion. Thomas S. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009); Alexander Pierce, *Facing Islam, Engaging Muslims* (Enumclaw, WA: WinePress Publishing, 2012); Phil Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization* (Biblica, 2003).

context, and understood through particular cultural lenses, communicating the biblical messages to other cultures has always been a challenge. Efforts to make the gospel understandable for people in the multi-cultural world required interpreting the message in the light of a given culture- hence the term contextualization.

The Word of God never changes. But we are living in the world that cultures are ever evolving. How can the gospel remain relevant to our generation and the next? The answer is by the application of sound biblical contextualization. Byang Kato describes contextualization to mean "making concepts and ideas relevant to a given situation. In reference to the Christian practices, it is an effort to express the never changing Word of God in ever changing modes of relevance."³⁶ Here again, the emphasis is on making the message relevant to a given context, hence contextualization is right and necessary.

Similarly, Flemming understanding of contextualization has to do with how the "gospel revealed in Scripture authentically comes to life in each new cultural, social, religious and historical setting."³⁷ The gospel coming to life could mean having a positive effect on the people in such as the way it had when it was first revealed.

According to Moreau "contextualization is the process whereby Christians adapt the forms, content, and Praxis of the Christian faith, so as to communicate it to the minds and hearts of people with other cultural backgrounds."³⁸ The point he seems

³⁶ Scott Aniol, *By the Waters of Babylon: Worship in a Post-Christian Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2015), 56.

³⁷ D Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 14.

³⁸ A. Scott Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions* (Grand Rapid, MI: Kregel, 2012), 36.

to be making here is that making disciples or proclaiming the gospel is inseparably linked with contextualization.

Contextualization in OT

Though not referred to as such, there are examples of contextualization in the Old Testament. The bible also gives possible reasons for the same. This study categorized the OT contextual experiences into two: from creation to the Tower of Babel, and from Abraham to Christ.

Creation –Tower of Babel. Principles of contextualization were introduced right in the Garden of Eden, where a man was placed. Mankind was “created in the image and after the likeness of God;” and was given “dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26). The man was blessed, and commanded by God to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen.1:28). The man had free and uninterrupted communication with God. But after the fall, the context and nature of the communication changed dramatically. Not only man, but even God saw the necessity for covering the nakedness of man. Because sin separates humanity and God, divine presence became unendurable for man. Ever since that time, man has run away from God.

By the time of Noah, the condition of humanity was so deteriorated, the man became very wicked "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). God had to destroy the whole humanity except Noah and his family (Gen 8:21). Again, God blessed humanity and desire to be "fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen.9:1).

Instead of replenishing the earth, humanity gravitated in one place with the aim of building a tower, eventually called "the Tower of Babel." Hitherto, humanity

had a common language and culture, but they abused that. As a means of preventing humanity from continuing in that endeavor, God confounded the language of humanity (Gen 11:1-9). As a consequence, the world now has linguistic, ethnological, cultural, social, political and religious diversity. So it can be argued that cross-cultural challenges that necessitate contextualization, emanated directly from the tower of babel.

Abraham to Christ. The event of Babel scattered humanity. The different cultures soon developed various ways of expressing their religious convictions about deity. The knowledge about the true God was soon disappearing on earth. Then God called Abraham, through whom he was to raise a peculiar people that will perpetuate the knowledge and the fear of true the God on earth.

God also established the covenant of circumcision, which was to be one of the identifying marks of the people of God, and it remains a cultural practice of the Israelites throughout the generations (Gen 17:1-27). Debated about circumcision in the early church, indicates strongly that it was one of the major obstacles for the disciples' reluctance to engage in the gentiles discipleship.

Abraham, as well as other individuals throughout the Old Testament, experiences God within a given cultural context. During that period, God emphasized his desire for them to be separate and distinct from the surrounding nations. This distinctiveness was perhaps for the purpose of discipling them to maturity, so they can in turn disciple other nations. Their discipling influence on the other nations would be the fulfillment of God's promise to bless "all families of the earth" through Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 28:14). So God set clear political, cultural and religious boundaries between them and other nations (Exod.23, 24).

The Israelites were required to drive out all the inhabitants of Canaan, this was in order to preserve their unique relationship with God. They were expressively commanded to “destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves” (Exod. 34:13). But they failed (Judg.1:27-33), instead, they covenanted with the Gibeonites (Josh.9). Consequently, they became morally, politically and spiritually unstable. Their constant compromises led the nation to religious syncretism, and subsequently to exile (Josh 24).

It could be argued that it was because of the divine requirement for Israel's distinctiveness that makes it difficult to identify examples in the OT that comprehensibly capture the essence of contextualization as it is understood and practiced today. However, there are many incidents of intercultural encounters of religious, political, trade and art.³⁹

Even though there is the absence of active, cross-cultural engagement of religious natures, the Israelites were enjoined to engage the *foreigner* among them with some religious regulations (Exod.12:19, Num.15:15-16). Most of such regulations relate to Sabbath observance, Day of Atonement, Passover, circumcision, sacrifices, and worship (Exod.12, 20; Lev.16, 17; Num.9; 2 Chr.6).⁴⁰

A more explicit instruction in this regard is found in the Book of Deuteronomy; God commanded Moses to, “Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy *stranger* that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the

³⁹ Some of the examples given for such encounters are found in the following passages of scriptures: - “Political, Joh 9; 1king 15:16-22. Religious Jud 6; 1kg 18; Zep 1). Trade 2 Chr 8;19 Ezek 27 Art Ezek.23) David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

words of this law” (Deut. 31:12). This passage clearly defines Israel responsibility to other people.

This study agrees with what has been identified by Gods instructions to the exiles in Babylon, which is contained in a letter by Jeremiah (Jer. 29), as “an example of conscious and deliberate adaptation, which comes somewhat closer to the modern understanding of contextualization.”⁴¹ In the letter, Jeremiah urges the captives in Babylon to "seek the peace of the city ... and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jer. 29:7). In seeking and praying was to be their religious responses towards the realization of something (peace and probably salvation) of the Babylonians.

Contextualization in the NT

The New Testament provides rich examples of contextualization. For brevity the study discussed the contextualization as exemplified by Jesus, and contextualization as contained in the book of Acts.

Example of Jesus. Nowhere better than the incarnation, is contextualization exemplified? Incarnation explains and models biblical contextualization. Jesus, who was "in the form of God," willingly "made himself of no reputation" by relinquishing his exalted position and privileges when he "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil.2:5-8).

⁴¹ Ibid., 4.

The apostle Paul made more emphasis on the incarnation when he says "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:16-17). It is probably a way of patterning his ministry after this revelation that Paul could say "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law" (1 Cor. 9:20).

Jesus was born into a cultural context, from within which he contextualize his message to humanity. Growing in the culture he *studied humanity*, so much that John could say "he knew all men" (John. 2:24). It was on the basis of his informed knowledge of man that Jesus ministers to the people of that time. In his encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus addressed him as on the basis of what was to be a common knowledge of a Jewish rabbi. In the case of the Samaritan woman, Jesus demonstrated his sensitivity to her culture and communicated an uncompromised message within her context (John 4: 19, 29, 39). He first challenged her cultural worldview, addressed her religious notion about worship, and then he ended with the very substance of his message. What the above illustrations reveal about Jesus that is the very essence of contextualization is Anthropological knowledge; awareness of Cultural context, and clarity of the message.

Contextualization in the book of Acts. The account of Pentecost foreshadows the necessities for contextualization in the early church. Many were there in Jerusalem, who would not have understood the preaching of Peter and the other disciples, if not for the miraculous gift of tongues (Acts 1: 15; 2:8-11). This obviously underlines the fact that people are predisposed to respond favorably to the gospel when communicated in their own language.

Additional consideration to overcoming cultural barriers is suggested in *Acts* 6. Here there was a complaint from believers with the Hellenistic background. Their widows felt neglected and slighted. The apostles immediately respond to this complaint by appointing deacons, much of which were Hellenistic Jews. This was a demonstration of cultural sensitivity.

The Book of Acts chapter 10 gives an account of the traumatic experience of Peter in the face of cross-cultural discipleship. Hitherto, Peter's understanding of salvation was exclusive of a gentile. He, as well as the Jews, believes strongly that "it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation" (Acts 10:28). However, after his encounter with God in the vision, which was confirmed by messengers from Cornelius, Peter understood he should never "call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). Peter's confession thereafter was, "of a truth ... God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). The account is suggestive of the need for cultural flexibility in cross-cultural discipleship. In order to do this, it is necessary to subjugate some cultural/religious rituals that could be militating against discipling people of different cultural background.

After the stoning of Stephen, believers scattered from Jerusalem and "traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch" these Jewish believers were "preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only" (Acts 11:19). At the same time, Hellenistic believers that were "of Cyprus and Cyrene" were also in Antioch, but they "spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus" (Acts 11:20). That was a kind of "biracial" approach to discipleship. Anyway, God blessed their efforts with many converts. When the church in Jerusalem heard about the success of the work, they sent

Barnabas⁴² (Acts 11:22). He, in turn, went for Paul (Acts 11: 25). Being a Jew with a Roman citizenship, Paul's cross-cultural knowledge and experiences fitted him for this kind of situation.

When they got to Pisidian Antioch, they entered their synagogue. Because this audience was Jewish with some knowledge of the OT, Paul used Israelite history to prove that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 13:14-55). However, at Lystra, he adapted his approach to fit the Greeks that were worshipers of a pantheon god (Acts 14:1-15).

“Paul and Barnabas sought to contextualize the gospel... instead of appealing to Israel's history; they appealed to cosmology, world history, and common grace in the Bible. They were sensitive to the aspect of the biblical message most suitable for leading up to the gospel.”⁴³

Paul seems always to follow the example of Christ; in this approach similarity to Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman is obvious.

By the time of the Jerusalem Council (as it is commonly referred) the serious issues were "What is the saving gospel?" What necessitated the meeting was the teaching from Judean Jews, who insisted that “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). The resolution taken at the meeting reads:

“Wherefore, my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:19, 20).

Ericson succinctly articulates the dual impact of this resolution:

“The early Jerusalem church gave recognition to *two different contexts*. The first is the context of Jewish Christians who continued to observe the customs

⁴² His real name was Joses. “The apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus” Acts 4:36.

⁴³ Richard W. Engle, “Contextualization in Missions: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal,” *Grace Theological Journal* 4, no. 1 (1983): 85–107.

of Moses. The second context is the mixed community comprised... [of Jews and Gentiles] in fellowship on compromise terms.”⁴⁴

By this resolution, provides a good model for contextualization. Following the example of Christ, knowledge of the context is demonstrated and the core essential message is separated from cultural issues.

Biblical Principles for Contextual Discipleship of MBBs

There are some theologians and Missiologist who fear that contextualizing the gospel will lead to syncretism.⁴⁵ “While syncretism is a grave danger to mission...” argues Paulien, “its equal and opposite danger is the tendency to blind up outreach work in ways that limit God’s freedom of action in the name of doctrinal and lifestyle purity.”⁴⁶ Thus, contextualization is intrinsic to making the gospel relevant to its recipients.

Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy offer much support for the concept of contextualization. Paul’s ministry is full of instances that could serve as a model for biblical contextualization. It could be noted that Perhaps “Paul intentionally addressed his Jewish listeners one way but addressed pagan philosophers differently. When he addressed the Jews, Paul began with Scripture. When he addressed Gentiles, he began with general revelation.” Even though Paul emphasizes on the Gospel remains the

⁴⁴ Richard W. Engle, “Contextualization in Missions: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal,” *Grace Theological Journal* 4, no. 1 (1983):98.

⁴⁵ C. Ott, S. J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 266.

⁴⁶ John Paulien, “The Unpredictable God: Creative Mission and the Biblical Testimony,” in *A Man of Passionate Reflection* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2011), 86.

same, however, he seems to shift his presentations to fit the worldviews of his listeners.

When engaging in the cross-cultural mission (especially to Muslims), there are many biblical principles that should guide the process. For the purpose of this paper, 5 principles are discussed.

Act with sensitivity to the Message. Jesus addresses the disciples, saying, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear” (John.16:12). This passage suggests certain truths should be kept until a proper opportunity present itself. Notice how E.G White relates to the subject: “The minister must not feel that the whole truth is to be spoken to unbelievers on any and every occasion. He should study carefully when to speak, what to say, and what to leave unsaid.”⁴⁷ The compelling reason for keeping back part of the truth for a while is “because the people are not prepared to receive them now.”⁴⁸ She counsels that “we should dwell mostly upon topics in which all feel an interest, and which will not lead directly and pointedly to the subjects of disagreement.”⁴⁹

Allow for some Accommodation. “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God” (Acts 15:19). This principle suggests that a Muslim must not conform entirely to the Christian culture in order to be saved. When the early church began to witness gentile converts some insisted that they must all “be circumcised according to the laws of Moses” (Acts 15:1-2). The Pharisees went even further to demand complete observance of the “law of Moses” (Acts 15:5). Peter, Paul, and Barnabas held a contrary opinion. To

⁴⁷ E. G White, *Gospel Workers*. (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald, 1948), 117.

⁴⁸ E. G White, *Evangelism* (Washington D. C.: Review and Herald, 1946), 200.

⁴⁹ E. G White, “Overcoming Prejudice.” *Review and Herald*, June 13, 1912, 2,3.

them, the fact that the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles (Acts 15:8), “and the abundant evidence that God was working miracles in response to the Gentile mission (Acts 15:12),”⁵⁰ was enough evidence of their acceptance for God.

Show Consideration to the Culture of the people. “You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess” (Acts 19:37). There was a riot as a result of the downturn in sales of religious crafts in Ephesus, which was due to exorcisms miracle by Paul (Acts. 19:11-24). What should be noted in the speech of the city clerk, (Acts 19:35-41) was the fact that Paul had not spoken out in public against the local version of idolatry. He did not out rightly condemn their religious practices. Ellen G White passionately counsel on this matter

“Be very careful not to present the truth in such a way as to arouse prejudice, and to close the door of the heart to the truth. Agree with the people on every point where you can consistently do so.”⁵¹

Place no unnecessary barriers. “Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law, I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings” (1 Cor 9:19-23). Pauline explains that “This passage

⁵⁰ Paulien, “The Unpredictable God: Creative Mission and the Biblical Testimony,” 94–95.

⁵¹ E. G White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-Day Adventists*. (Basle, Switzerland: Imprimerie Polyglotte., 1886), 122.

certainly argues that we should place no unnecessary barriers in the way of those who need to hear the gospel. What the passage does not address is what happens after belief in Jesus, whether Muslim believers can or should stay in their traditional mosque.”⁵²

The question to grapple with is the meaning of this phrase, “To the Jews I became like a Jew.” Missiologist is in broad agreement that Muslim believers in Jesus should accommodate/experiment with some Islamic forms and cultural practices.⁵³

In any case, an approach to contextualization required two commitments: it requires a commitment to biblical authority; and a commitment to cultural relevance. The biblical message must be related to the cultural background of its recipients. It requires cultural sensitivity.⁵⁴

As Missiologist engage in contextualization, it is their duty to apply the scriptural message in such a way that it is relevant with the social foundation of its beneficiaries. In other words, they should aim at social affectability

Summary and Conclusion

The last command of Jesus to his disciples was, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." The sustainability and expansion of the gospel have been, humanly speaking, on the

⁵² Paulien, “The Unpredictable God: Creative Mission and the Biblical Testimony,” 98.

⁵³ Some example of these biblically permissible cultural and Islamic forms are "such as removing the shoes in a place of worship (Exo 3:5; Josh 5:15; Acts 7:33), prostration, or touching the ground with the forehead during prayer (Gen 17:3; Exo 34:8; Josh 5:14; Eze 9:8; 2 Chr 10:18; Matt 17:6; 26:39), raising hands during prayer (Ezra 9:5; 1 Kgs 8:22; 2 Tim 2:8), and even having a separate place for women.

⁵⁴ Carlos G. Martin, “C-5 Muslims, C-5 Missionaries, or C-5 Strategies?,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 7, no. 2 (Autumn 2006): 7.

response of the disciples to his last command; and on it will it thrive until the return of Christ.

The biblical goal for discipleship is encapsulated in Jesus' word: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain". Earlier, Jesus restricted the mission of making-disciples to the Jews only: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matt. 10:5-6. Hence there was a hesitation among the leaders of the early church in engaging in gentile mission in fulfillment of the Great Commission. Most of the factors that contributed in the cross-cultural discipleship of the gentile were cultural and social differences. The bible has given background knowledge of this.

Mankind was "created in the image and after the likeness of God;" and was blessed, and commanded by God to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." The free flow of communication between God and humanity was affected by the fall. Because sin separates humanity and God, divine presence became unendurable for man. Ever since that time, man has run away from God.

The deterioration of human condition predicated the flood. After which, God again, blessed humanity and desired them to be "fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen.9:1). However, humanity decided to gravitate in one place to build a Tower. In order to stop the ungodly ambition, God confounded the language of humanity. As a consequence, the world now has linguistic, ethnological, cultural, social, political and religious diversity. Discipleship in this multi-cultural world necessitates biblical contextualization.

Though in the Old Testament time, God set clear political, cultural and religious boundaries between the nation of Israel (Jews) and other nations (gentiles),

he however enjoyed upon them religious obligation to the aliens among them. In the NT, the incarnation of Jesus provided a biblical model for contextualization. In making disciples of all nations, contextualization is inevitable.

Making disciples of the Muslims people required consideration. Though Islam is not mentioned in the Bible, strong connection between the religion and Ishmael is observable. God had predicted through the prophet Isaiah, the coming to Christ of the Ishmaelites – the Muslim. This calls for the development of a purposeful contextual discipleship strategy for believers from a Muslim background.

There are people who fear that contextualizing the gospel will lead to syncretism. On this concern Paulien argues, "While syncretism is a grave danger to mission, its equal and opposite danger is the tendency to blind up outreach work in ways that limit God's freedom of action in the name of doctrinal and lifestyle purity." The chapter concluded with the consideration of some Biblical principles necessary for effective contextualization.

In the next chapter reviews relevant literatures on discipleship, the religions of Islam and contextualization with the goal of developing a contextual discipleship approaches for discipling converts from Islam.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUAL DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY IN THE CONTEXT OF ISLAM

The previous chapter presented a Biblical and theological foundation for discipleship in the context of Islam. The necessity of applying biblical contextualization in discipling the MBBs is emphasized. This chapter reviews the relevant literature of Evangelical and Adventist on contextualization among Muslims. It is structured into four parts. The first part discusses Islam: background, nature, and religious practices. The second part provides a concise understanding of contextualization, its meaning, models, and levels. The third part focus on contextual discipleship approaches for discipling converts from Islam as advocated and experimented by both Evangelicals and Adventist. Because the ultimate goal of this study is to design a program for discipling MBBs in Northern Nigeria, the fourth part is devoted to a historical review of MBBs discipleship in the region. The chapter ends with summary and conclusion.

Islam: Background, Nature, and Religious Practices

The word Islam is derived from the Arabic term *al- Islam*, which is literally translated “Submission to the will of God.”¹ The concept of Islam is said to be traceable Adam, the first man who submitted himself to God. Bill Musk alluded to this assertion of some Islamic scholars that Islam “existed long before Muhammad

¹ Arshad Khan, *Islam, Muslims, and America: Understanding the Basis of Their Conflict* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2003), 133.

and long before the final shape it came to take in the faith-expression that Muhammad oversaw.”²

In the ordinary use of the term, Islam refers to the religion that was formalized by Muhammad in the Arabian Desert, in the cities of Mecca in A.D. 570. The word Islam also expresses the most fundamental aspect of the religion: total surrender to the will of Allah. The Muslims demonstrate their total surrender to God by adhering to the teaching of the Koran, the Hadiths and religious requirements of the law--called *Sharia* in Islam.

The adherents of Islam hold the believe that Islam is God’s final revelation to man, and Prophet Muhammad is the last messenger to humankind – one who confirmed and perfected all the messages that God has revealed through the earlier prophets.³

Muhammad

The role of Prophet Muhammad is a key to a better understanding of the religion of Islam. Muhammad is said to be “important both for the inception of Islam as a major world religion, and the shaping of Islamic theology and civilization for the past fourteen centuries.”⁴ The belief in the prophethood of Muhammad is among the fundamental Islamic religious beliefs. The other beliefs encompass "personal faith, the creed and worship of the community of believers, a way of life, a system of laws"

² Musk, *Kissing Cousins? Christian and Muslim Face to Face*, 26.

³ Gordon Kainer, *Why Ask Questions About Islam?: Answers Christians Need to Understand* (Raleigh, NC: Lulu.com, 2016), 58.

⁴ Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 70.

and the overall "guidelines and rules for life in all aspects and dimensions."⁵

Muhammad, whose name literally means “the Glorified One,” is highly esteemed by the Muslims. Whenever his name is mentioned, the Muslim will add the phrase “*Salla Allāhu wa’alayhi wa salaam,*” meaning “may God's blessings and peace be upon him.”

The Koran

The word *Koran* literally means "something to recite." It is believed by all Muslims that the Koran is not only the very word of God, but a final message of God to mankind,⁶ hence it is greatly revered as the central religious text of Islam, sent down to Muhammad through the angel *Jibrael* (Gabriel). "For many Muslims, the Koran is the single greatest sign of God in the physical Universe. . . . As God's final revelation, the Koran contains the sum total of what God plans to reveal to humanity; therefore, behind the finite, literal message of the Koran is an infinite reservoir of divine wisdom."⁷ The Koran “contains three essential features: warnings of the coming judgment, stories about the prophets, and regulations governing the Islamic community.”⁸

⁵ J. S. H. Gildenhuis, *Ethics and Professionalism: The Battle Against Public Corruption* (Stellenbosch, South Africa: AFRICAN SUN MeDIA, 2004), 69.

⁶ Jay Smith, "Is the Koran the Word of God?" - Christian-Muslim Debate," accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www.debate.org.uk/debate-topics/historical/is-quran/>.

⁷ Jamal J. Elias, *Islam* (London: Routledge, 1999), 18.

⁸ William J. Saal, *Reaching Muslims for Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991), 30.

The Hadith

The literal meaning of the word *hadith* is communication or a narrative. In Islamic terms it simply means “reports about what the Prophet said, did, approved, and disapproved of, explicitly or implicitly.”⁹ It is more or less biographical information regarding Muhammad, that was perpetuated his community.

Arabian people, before the advent of Islam, had a strong admiration for their forefathers. They looked upon them as models in all aspects of life. This tradition was carried forward to the religion of Islam. When the prophet died, his posterity and adherence to the religion had the obligation to preserve what is later referred to as the *Hadith*. In areas where the Koran does not have specific answers or guidelines, they naturally sought for guidance on what the prophet had done. In order to strongly prove a point, one must show that Muhammad had acted in a similar way or said something to the same effect.¹⁰ Therefore, the *Hadith* is well-regarded by Muslim as a “major source of religious law and moral guidance, second only to the authority of the Koran.”¹¹

Early in Islamic history, Islamic scholars developed the whole body of the sacred tradition under two main divisions: the *matn* and the *isnad*. The *matn* constitutes the sayings, behavior, or reported incidences by many close followers of

⁹ Pierce, *Facing Islam, Engaging Muslims*, 34.

¹⁰ J. E Adams, “Islam,” *Encyclopedia Americana*. (Danbury, CT: Scholastic Publishing, 2005), 496.

¹¹ Mohammad Ali Al-Bar and Hassan Chamsi-Pasha, *Contemporary Bioethics: Islamic Perspective* (New York: Springer, 2015), 262.

the prophet, while the *isnad* consists of chain of transmitters of the hadith who provide Islamic Law (*sharia*)

The Islamic religion is by nature an eminently practical way of life, such as demands religious guidance and prescription in all the specific situations of life. Islamic law is to Muslims “the expression of God’s command for their society.”¹² The law “constitutes a divinely ordained path of conduct that guides the Muslim toward a practical expression of his religious conviction in this world and the goal of divine favor in the world to come.”¹³ Hence, *sharia* instructions are considered incumbent duties upon a Muslim.

Islamic Worldview

One of the simple definition states that “it is our view of the world and a view for the world.”¹⁴ Geisler and Watkins describe a worldview as “a way of viewing or interpreting all of reality.”¹⁵ James Sire definition is “A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.”¹⁶ By this definition, it could be said that every

¹² Jerald Whitehouse, “Communicating Adventist Beliefs in the Muslim Context,” *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 2 (2006): 68–87.

¹³ Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism*, 47.

¹⁴ William M. Brown and W. Gary Phillips, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview* (Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing, 1996), 29.

¹⁵ Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on Worldviews*, 1989, 11.

¹⁶ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 17.

individual has a worldview, so also is a people group and a religion. One's worldview is also referred to as one's philosophy, philosophy of life, mindset, and outlook on life, formula for life, ideology, faith, or even religion.

The faith and practice of Islamic religion can be categorized into Formal (official) Islam and Popular (Folk) Islam. Each of this form of Islam has a worldview. The table below graphically compares the two worldviews within Islam.

*Table 1. Islamic Worldview*¹⁷

Formal Islamic Worldview	Popular Islam Worldview
Cognitive	Heart-felt
Truth-oriented	Mystical
Ultimate Issues of life:	Everyday Concerns:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origin, heaven, • Hell, purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, guidance, • Success, prosperity
The Quran	Supernatural Power
Sacred Traditions	Spiritual Revelation
Institutional	Inspirational
Supplicative	Manipulative
“Thy will be done”	“My will be done”
Future reward	Here-and-now

Adapted with modification from Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God: Church Planting Among Folk Muslims* (William Carey Library, 2000), 22.

¹⁷Adapted with modification from Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God: Church Planting Among Folk Muslims* (William Carey Library, 2000), 22.

The Formal Islam Worldview

The formal Islamic worldview is theistic. It “emanates from the fundamental belief that life and existence came into being as a result of the will, desire and design of the One and Only Creator.”¹⁸ This worldview maintains that Allah should be revered as the one and only God, the only creator and the Supreme Lord of the universe.

Formal Islam is comprehensively legalistic. It is preoccupied with revealed truth and approaches God with submission and supplication. Moreover, it emphasizes the obligatory observance of the five pillars of the faith on all Muslims. These pillars of faith, *shahadah*, *Salat*, *zakat*, *sawm*, and *hajj* are observed by all Muslims in varying degrees.

The Shahadat

The term *shahadah* means the profession of/ or witness to faith. It is the recitation of a short Arabic creed “*La ilah illa Allah wa Muhammad rasul Allah,*” meaning, there is no God but the one God and Muhammad is His prophet. Devoted Muslims recite this statement many times in several occasions each day. The *Shahadah* is a prerequisite for membership in the religion of Islam. A person, who professes to be a Muslim by reciting the *shahadah*, must “act upon this belief in the oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad. . . . The verbal utterance must express genuine knowledge of its meaning as well as sincere belief.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Abdullah Muhammad and Junaid Nadvi Muhammad, “Understanding the Principles of Islamic World-View,” *The Dialogue* 6 (September 2011): 270.

¹⁹ Brian Kettell, *Introduction to Islamic Banking and Finance* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 2.

The Salat

The Muslim observes five ritual prayers daily, and in specific times: at *Fajr* pre-dawn, at *Dhur* (mid-day), at *Asr* (mid-afternoon), at *Maghrib* (sunset), and at *Isha'a* (after nightfall). On Fridays, Muslims assemble in a central mosque for congregational prayers. "Salat is preceded by a ritual purification and consist of a series of bowings, prostrations, and recitations from the Koran."²⁰ In traditional Islamic cultures, the *Muezzin* (the crier) summons people to prayer from the top of the mosque's *minaret* (tower).

The Zakat

The term *Zakat* has both the literal and technical meaning. Literally, it means "purity. The word is used technically to "designates the annual amount in kind or coin which a Muslim with means must distribute among the rightful beneficiaries"²¹ *Zakat* purifies the property of the contributor, and it's also a "healthy form of internal security against selfish greed"²² Not only the giver of *Zakat* that is blessed, even the heart of the recipient is believed to be purified. The effect of this practice helps to allay the distresses of the needy and poor.

The Sawm

The *Sawm* is the Muslims annual fasting in the month of Ramadan. The institution is believed to have originated after the *Hijra* (the flight of Muhammad to

²⁰ Charles J. Adams, "Islam," 10:501.

²¹ Zamir Iqbal and Abbas Mirakhor, *Economic Development and Islamic Finance* (Washington, DC: World Bank Publications, 2013), 29.

²² *Ibid.*

Medina).²³ Daily obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan begins at daybreak and ends at sunset. It is forbidden to eat, drink, and smoke during the day. In the case of sick persons or someone on a journey, fasting could be deferred until another equal number of days. But the elderly and people with incurable diseases are exempted from fasting on the condition that they feed one poor person throughout the month of Ramadan.

The Hajj

The Hajj means a pilgrimage to Mecca. It is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for all Muslims that are physically, mentally and financially disposed to embark on the journey. It is the biggest yearly convocation of believers worldwide. It is a common belief in Islam that “Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael, were the first pilgrims to the house of Allah on earth; the Ka'bah.”²⁴

The Popular Islam Worldview

While Formal Islam is concerned with legalistic code of ritual and laws; Popular Islam, by contrast, takes a more spiritualistic orientation to life. Its domain is demons, spirits, curses, sorcery, blessing, and healing. Popular Islam “confront the spirit world with an attitude of manipulation (My will be done).”²⁵ The primary concern of folk Islam is heart-felt, well-being, success, health, and is focused on the here-and-now.

²³ O. A. Musa, *Islam as a Religion: Faith and Duties* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1986), 64.

²⁴ Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 43.

²⁵ Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 21.

Though these people profess doctrinally to be practicing a formal Islam, but in real practice, they are animist. Samuel Zwemer rightly described popular Islam when he said “Islam and Animism live, in very neighborly fashion, on the same street and in the same mind.”²⁶

It has been estimated that “more than three-fourths of the Muslim world... is folk Muslim.”²⁷ Another estimate suggests as much as 85 percent of the Muslim world.²⁸ Many Muslims believe they are living in a world filled with “evil forces and invisible beings, both real and imaginary [that] wreak havoc in their daily lives.”²⁹

While the world contains “innumerable spiritual beings and forces that are hostile and menacing to their earthly well-being,”³⁰ the almighty creator God is portrayed as indifferent and not involve with the everyday affairs of men. That placed man at the mercy of Spirits, demons, evil eye curses and sorcery. Consequent to that, they resort to “the power of a shaman to deliver blessing and prevent bad fortune in the world.”³¹

²⁶ Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 22.

²⁷ Rick Love, “Power Encounter among Folk Muslims: An Essential Key of the Kingdom,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 13 (December 1996): 193.

²⁸ Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 22.

²⁹ Caleb Chul-Soo and Anna Travis, “Relevant Responses to Popular Muslim Piety,” in *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues among Muslims*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2011), 239.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 240.

³¹ Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 22.

Rick Love well described popular Islam by breaking it into five components. This categorization simplifies and yet comprehensively depicts the main components of the world-wide. See table below

Table 2. Five Components of Folk Islam

Component	Example of Folk Islam
1. Power(s)	Demons, Angels
2. Power persons	Imams, shamans
3. Power objects	Charms, amulets
4. Power places	Mecca, saints' tombs
5. Power times	Muhammad's birthday, Various days

Adapted with modification from Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God: Church Planting Among Folk Muslims* (William Carey Library, 2000), 24.

Power(s)

Popular Islam believes in the existence of spirit beings that can be either evil or good. The expression of the spiritual powers results to either white or black magic. "If the supernatural power is for good, or has its source from Allah, then it is considered white magic. Conversely, black magic has its source in Satan, and it is used to harm people."³² Some people often referred to as the evil eye, are believed to embody these powers and are capable of harming people.³³ No person could perform magic independent of the spiritual powers, and all the magic preform fall within one of the four types: productive, protective, destructive, and divination.

³² Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 25.

³³ Chul-Soo and Travis, "Relevant Responses to Popular Muslim Piety," 243.

The productive magic is needed by those after prosperity, success, fertility, entice a mate, etc. The protective magic is believed to guarantee protection from curses and evil eye, from weapons and dangerous animals and reptiles. Destructive magic (black magic) is used to control or harm other people. Through this some can be made sick, and cannot be helped by a doctor except a magician. Divination is “learning about the future or about things that may be hidden.”³⁴ Divination is used to “discover the cause and cures of sickness or problems, to discover the future, or to help make a decision about their future.”³⁵

An example of divination is fortune telling. It is done sometimes by the use of the rosary or prayer beads (used to repeat God’s 99 names). Ayşe describes the form in which this fortune telling is done by saying:

In order to decide if a business venture should be undertaken, Muslims call on spiritual ‘experts.’ The rosary is rubbed, breathed on, and the Fatiha (first chapter of the Qur’an) read. After randomly choosing a bead, a saint counts toward the pointer, one bead at a time: “Yes,” “No,” “Maybe.” If the count ends on “yes” one can move forward with confidence.³⁶

Power Persons

The two primary categories of power people are the occultic and Islamic practitioners, shaman and imam respectively. However, some are considered gifted with some esoteric secrets to mysticism, and sometimes an elderly person in the community is considered another type of power person.³⁷

³⁴ Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 28.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ayşe Zişan Furat and Hamit Er, *Balkans and Islam: Encounter, Transformation, Discontinuity, Continuity* (Tyne, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 35.

³⁷ Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*, 29.

Power Objects

The commonest object of power is a charm or amulet. This is believed to contain supernatural power to protect or bless people. This inanimate object is empowered through ritual by a shaman, and it will be efficacious to the recipient upon fulfilling certain conditions or rituals. Special Amulets are made “with special Qur’anic verses are written and sewed into leather pouches. They are hung on ankles, arms and necks, or written on walls and vehicles for safety”³⁸ In most cases, fear of curses, misfortunes or the evil eye, drives ordinary Muslims to do all in their power to prevent them through the use of charms.³⁹

Power Places

The tomb of Usman Dan Fodion in Sokoto is considered a place to secure power for blessing or protection. Mecca is another place that pilgrims go in search for financial successes and special blessing and protections.

Power Times

Muslims the world over do celebrate Muhammad’s birthday. There are other special days that are considered lucky days.

In Morocco, jinn are believed to be busy during mid-afternoon prayers. In Iran, they are active at twilight, Saturday belongs to the jinn, but Muharram (first month of the Islamic calendar) is favorable. (This is when Shi’ites mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussein.) In Egypt, Thursday is a good day to begin *hajj* (pilgrimage) and sleep with your wife. In Pakistan, Thursday is the day to beg, and an auspicious day to die. In Algeria (Kabyle), mourners visit tombs on five consecutive Fridays. In Nigeria, Friday is the queen of days, but in the Philippines, it is the day when the King of jinn roams freely. In some places, to wash clothes on Wednesday, is to do so with sadness.⁴⁰

³⁸ Furat and Er, *Balkans and Islam*, 32.

³⁹ Chul-Soo and Travis, “Relevant Responses to Popular Muslim Piety,” 243.

⁴⁰ Furat and Er, *Balkans and Islam*, 38.

Summarily, the background, nature and religious practices of Islam are tied to either of the two worldviews. In order to witness to and disciple converts from Islam, Missiologists have contextualized the gospel. The study shall now consider what and how that is done.

Contextual Discipleship

How to define and apply contextualization⁴¹ in Islamic contexts has been a challenge for missiologists. While it is easy to define and describe what the term is, contextualization in relation to the Muslim remains amorphous, and lacks a single generally accepted form. It is considered a descriptive term for different methods and models of missiology within a different context.⁴²

Hesselgrave has lamented that the “word has already been defined and redefined, used and abused, amplified and vilified, coroneted and crucified.”⁴³ However, because of its importance and significance -especially as it relates to this study- the definition of the term is necessary.

Ott rightly observed that "the starting point for contextualization is a clear understanding of its key components: Context and Scriptures."⁴⁴ This means there is no contextualization in the absence of either of the two components. It is the art of

⁴¹ J. D. Payne and John Mark Terry, *Developing a Strategy for Missions (Encountering Mission): A Biblical, Historical and Cultural Introduction* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013), 136.

⁴² David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models*. (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker, 1989), 115–19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴⁴ Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 267.

bringing the context and scriptures together that result in contextualization. Hence, this section shall give an overview of these components as necessary background information for the study of Contextualization.

Context

Context has a variety of meanings and can be used in a different sense. General context can be geographical, cultural, historical, social or political. A reference could be made to the African context, or Nigerian Context, or Adventist context, etc.

In anthropology, according to Ott, “context includes everything that shapes a society and each individual person.”⁴⁵ He further indicates the identifiable contexts in relation to missions: “religious heritage, historical era, current event, social groups, economic group, educational group, Age, Gender, and personal circumstances.”⁴⁶ All of these different contexts influence the reading, understanding, reception and application of the scriptures in a unique way. But the most significant of all components of context is culture.

Culture

Little consensus exists among anthropologists as to the conceptual meaning of the word culture. To understand a culture, said Ashford, is like reading fiction.

⁴⁷ This is because “the reader must seek out elements of the socio-cultural context,

⁴⁵ Ott, Strauss, and Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*, 268.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Bruce R. Ashford, “The Gospel and Culture,” in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church and the Nations*, ed. Bruce R. Ashford (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2011), 110.

understand those elements as well as or better than the people do, and understand how these elements illuminate other elements within the same context.”⁴⁸

In the *Evangelical Dictionary of Missions*, Conn has written a helpful article that gives a general meaning. He says:

“The word ‘culture’ may point to many things – the habit of the social elite; disciplined taste expressed in the arts, literature, and entertainment; particular stages of historical and human development. We use the term ‘culture’ to refer to the common ideas, feelings, and values that guide community and personal behavior, that organize and regulate what the group thinks, feels, and does about God, the world, and humanity.”⁴⁹

A somewhat more comprehensive definition of culture by Williams Haviland is: “a set of rules or standard shared by members of a society, which when acted upon by the members, produce behavior that falls within a range the members consider proper and acceptable.”⁵⁰ This means over time, a people bound by one culture, formulates rules and regulations on what is acceptable and unacceptable, and it became binding on every member of the community. While the community encourages and rewards compliances to cultural regulations, it strongly disapproves/punishes any behavior it considers contrary to the norms.

Furthermore, Vanhoozer opines, “culture is the result of what humans do freely, not as a result of what they do by nature ... the cultural text creates a meaningful environment in which humans dwell both physically and imaginatively.”⁵¹

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹ Harvie M. Conn, "Culture," ed. A. Scott, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 252.

⁵⁰ William A. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology*, 5th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1975), 27.

⁵¹ Kelvin J Vanhoozer, “What Is Everyday Theology? How and Why Christians Should Read Culture,” in *Everyday Theology*, ed. Kelvin J Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 26.

Likewise, Louis J. Luzbetak defines culture as a “dynamic system of socially acquired and socially shared ideas according to which an interacting group of human beings is to adapt itself to its physical, social, and ideational environment.”⁵² What is common and emphasized in the above definitions is that culture includes: the values, feelings, and thinking of a person, the social structures, and behaviors of those people.

However, the often quoted definition of culture is that provided by Hiebert, he says culture is “more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a group of people that enable them to live together socially and that are communicated by means of their systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior and the material product they make”⁵³ Having defined culture, the study will proceed to describe contextualization.

Contextualization Define

There is a maze of definitions and descriptions of the term *contextualization*, this study shall select but a few. Gilliland explains that “contextualization is a tool to enable, insofar as it is humanly possible, an understanding of what it means that Jesus Christ, the Word, is authentically experienced in each and every human situation.”⁵⁴ What made this tool necessary is, “while the human condition and the gospel remain the same, people have different worldviews which in turn impact how they interpret

⁵² Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church, and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 74.

⁵³ Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 150.

⁵⁴ Dean Gilliland, “Contextualization,” ed. A. Scott Moreau, *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000), 461.

themselves, the world and the things you say.”⁵⁵ In other words, while the gospel is constant, culture is dynamic; hence, contextualization should be an ongoing reality.

Missiologist Dorell Whiteman tied in contextualization to an attempt to make sense to the people while tailoring the gospel towards meeting their needs. He describes contextualization as:

A process that involves attempts to, “communicate the Gospel in word and deed and to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people's deepest needs... thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their own culture.”⁵⁶

In other words, Whiteman believes that the gospel must be communicated clearly and that contextualization should be reflected in the forms, structures, worship, and every facet of the church in a given setting.⁵⁷

Moreau⁵⁸ made an attempt to synthesize and organize the various definitions of contextual approaches. His effort resulted into "half a dozen paradigms, and at least a score of models."⁵⁹ Moreau's insight is summarized in four points thus.

“(1) Contextualization is dynamic and progressive. (2) Contextualization relies heavily on cultural anthropology in its interpretation and application of the Bible. (3) Contextualization tends towards a localization of theology. (4) Contextualization tends to interpret historical failures in order to win large numbers of Muslims to Christ as the result of the cultural insensitivity of past generations of missionaries.”⁶⁰

⁵⁵ A. Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* (Grand Rapid, MI: Kregel Academic, n.d.).

⁵⁶ Darrell L. Whiteman, "Contextualization: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January 1997, 2.

⁵⁷ Payne and Terry, *Developing a Strategy for Missions (Encountering Mission): A Biblical, Historical and Cultural Introduction*, 138.

⁵⁸ Professor A. Scott Moreau is the chairman of the Department of Anthropology and Intercultural Studies at Wheaton College (Moreau 2004:1-34)

⁵⁹ Moreau, cited by M. Coleman and P. Verster, "Contextualization of the Gospel Among Muslims," *Acta Theologica* 2 (2006): 95.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 95, 96.

Looking at the four points, it is obvious that a lot is contained in each of them. The first point refers to what is true about culture as equally true about contextualization, they are both dynamic. Since contextualization is not independent of culture, then the second point it argues that contextualization is equally dependent on a cultural anthropological study.⁶¹ But cultures are different, what will be the end result of localizing theology as identified by the third point? Coleman rightly pointed out that such attempt will ultimately result into different theology for different people groups such as "an African theology, a South American theology, a Muslim-contextualized theology."⁶² He further says this will lead to "a theology contextualized for any group of people, tribe, nation, language and religious background."⁶³

The last point requires the understanding of the background presuppositions that warranted such conclusion. Madany⁶⁴ identified three assumptions that could lead to that:

(1) Large numbers of Muslims not converting to Christianity is interpreted as failure. (2) This "failure" appears to be the result of cultural insensitivity on the part of the missionaries. (3) The "failure" of the church to win many converts is considered less of a spiritual problem of the church than an anthropological problem.⁶⁵

An Adventist, Carlos G. Martin, states that "contextualization refers to the process of making the Biblical text and its context meaningful and applicable to

⁶¹ A. Scott Moreau, "The Human Universals of Culture: Implications for Contextualization," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12 (1995): 56–59.

⁶² Coleman and Verster, "Contextualization of the Gospel among Muslims," 97.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁶⁴ Madany, "Re-Thinking Missions Today."

⁶⁵ Coleman and Verster, "Contextualization of the Gospel among Muslims," 98.

the thought patterns and situations of a given people.”⁶⁶ The researcher agrees with Martin, contextualization should take biblical text and present it in a way that it is meaningful to the people within a given culture. It is when the message becomes applicable within a cultural context, that contextualization could be said to be effective.

Models of Contextualization

There are various approaches to and models of contextualization. This study briefly considers three renounce anthropologist and Missiologist: Steven Bevens, Paul G. Hiebert and John Travis.

Steven Bevens: Models of Contextual Theology

From a theological perspective, Bevens advocated four things that should be taken into consideration while doing contextualization:

(1) The spirit and message of the gospel; (2) the tradition of the Christian people; (3) the culture of a particular nation or region; and (4) social change in that culture due to technological advances on the one hand, and struggles for justice and liberation on the other.⁶⁷

Based on the degree of focus on any or several combinations of the elements identified above, Bevens categories contextualization into six models. The models are anthropological, translation, Praxis, synthetic, semiotic, and transcendental.

⁶⁶ Martin, “C-5 Muslims, C-5 Missionaries, or C-5 Strategies?,” 122.

⁶⁷ Stephen Bevens, “Models of Contextual Theology,” *Missiology: An International Review* XIII, no. 2 (April 1985): 186.

The “Anthropological Model”⁶⁸ emphasizes listening to culture. It claims that God’s revelations are “hidden within a culture.”⁶⁹ Hence the practitioners of this model are concerned with the central identity of individuals within a given context. The “translational model”⁷⁰ focuses on scriptural message and on the “preservation of Church tradition.”⁷¹ The model’s key feature is the emphasis it placed on the gospel as “supra-cultural.”⁷² The advocates of this model are concerned with “Christian identity within a culture.”⁷³ As for the “Praxis model,” the society informs the direction and the degree of contextualization. Revelation is considered as “God’s ongoing action in history manifested in situations and events.”⁷⁴ Hence the much emphasis is placed by the practitioners of this model on “Christian identity within a culture from the point of view of social change.”⁷⁵

The “Synthetic model” is the distillation of the first three models. It acknowledges that the culture and context are incomplete alone; the two ought to be complimentary. Human experience is where God’s revelation occurs. It emphasizes the consideration of the “totality of human experience” as the domain of God’s revelation. Similar to synthetic model is the Semiotic Model pays attention to cultures

⁶⁸ Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions*, 2012, 39. Stephen Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology,” *Missiology: An International Review* XIII, no. 2 (April 1985): 188.

⁶⁹ Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology,” 186.

⁷⁰ Moreau, *Contextualization in World Missions*, n.d., 38. Krikor. Haleblian, “The Problem of Contextualization.,” *Missiology*, no. 11 (1983): 104.

⁷¹ Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology,” 186.

⁷² Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology,” 187.

⁷³ Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology.”

⁷⁴ Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology,” 188.

⁷⁵ Bevans, “Models of Contextual Theology,” 186.

“by means of semiological analysis.”⁷⁶ It is also likening to anthropological and Praxis models in the way it vies revelations as “something discover in the context.”⁷⁷ Finally, the transcendental model is philosophical in approach. It focused on the “experience of the self of the human person.”⁷⁸ The subject and the starting point of contextualization is neither scripture nor culture, rather it is one's experience; for “Revelation is found in only one's personal experience.”⁷⁹

Paul G. Hiebert: Four Levels of Contextualization

Paul G. Hiebert proposed four levels of contextualization include: minimal contextualization, uncritical contextualization, critical contextualization, and divine revelation.⁸⁰ Hiebert is aware of the impact context makes on the understanding of communicators and receptors, but he is most concerned about the communication of the message.

The minimal contextualization

A central characteristic of minimal contextualization was the overdependence on words to express truths at the expense of feelings, morals, or anything remotely mystical.⁸¹ On the other hand, the weakness of this approach

⁷⁶ Bevens, “Models of Contextual Theology,” 196.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Bevens, “Models of Contextual Theology,” 198.

⁷⁹ Stephen Bevens, “Models of Contextual Theology,” *Missiology: An International Review* XIII, no. 2 (April 1985): 186.

⁸⁰ Paul Hiebert, “The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization,” in *Mission Shift*, edited by David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 84–99.

⁸¹ Michael Pocock, “Response to Paul G Hiebert ‘The Gospel in Human: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization,’” in *Missionshift: Global Mission Issues in the Third*

was in underestimation of legitimate values in other cultures and the uncritical assumption that the missionary's culture was as authentically correct as the truth of the gospel.

Shaw and Van Engen argue that contextualization is always more than a matter of mere words. "Communication as translation," said they, "is more important than grappling with exegetical issues and their transference into a particular context"⁸² As missionaries learned to value worldview and cultural heritage of non-Christian cultures, the pendulum began to swing from minimal contextualization to critical uncritical contextualization.

Uncritical contextualization

Hiebert clearly pointed out that "uncritical contextualization tends to prioritize culture over the Gospel. It minimizes the eternal truths found in Scripture in order to emphasize cultural convictions and practices."⁸³ Evangelical Bible translators moved from merely translating words to translating thoughts, though as close a correspondence as possible to the intent of Scripture writers.⁸⁴ This was the concept of "dynamic equivalence" advanced by E. Nida.⁸⁵ Hiebert is dissatisfied with dynamic equivalence because it implies that there are no "external, objective reference points... no way to test whether the meaning understood in one culture

Millennium, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 104.

⁸² R. D. Shaw and C. Van Engen, *Communicating God's Word in a Complex World* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 4.

⁸³ Pocock, "Response to Paul G Hiebert 'The Gospel in Human: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization,'" 107.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Shaw and Engen, *Communicating God's Word in a Complex World*, 31–32.

are the same as those found in another culture.”⁸⁶ For Hiebert, uncritical contextualization leads to applications and theologies that are unaltered to the true intent of the Scriptures.⁸⁷ His answer is a form of critical contextualization

Critical contextualization

This approach focuses on the balance between minimal and uncritical contextualization. The emphasis here is on the Bible, not on “humanly constructed beliefs.”⁸⁸ Hiebert explains that “not only must missionaries and ministers learn how to exegete humans, they must also know how to put the gospel into human contexts so that it is understood properly but does not become captive to these contexts.”⁸⁹

Pocock summarily described the critical contextualization approach of Hiebert thus:

Hiebert’s approach to critical contextualization has the enormous benefit of fully involving the recipient culture in the process of understanding God’s Word...local people and those from outside the community sit down to discuss matters that concern them. They discuss how situations have been handled previously in the community; the outsider may share how things were dealt with in his or her community. Together they search the Scriptures to see how God’s Word applies to the current situation, and they come to a conclusion that avoids both paternalism on the part of the missionary and syncretism on the part of the new believers. The process also yields the inestimable value of confidence in what the Spirit can do

⁸⁶ Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 27.

⁸⁷ Pocock, “Response to Paul G Hiebert ‘The Gospel in Human: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization,’” 107.

⁸⁸ Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 13.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

through their own local reflection, while connected to the larger community of God's people in other cultural contexts.⁹⁰

Missional theology

According to Hiebert, the following things must be emphasized in doing critical contextualization: “the importance of understanding social and cultural contexts for the sake of mission and that those contexts are not normative for Christians around the world.”⁹¹ This is to mean that “the heart of the gospel must be kept by encoding it in forms that are understood by the people, without making the gospel captive to the contexts.”⁹² Hence, he recommends this approach for as many who are trying “to build the bridge between revelation and human contexts.”⁹³

A careful examination of Hiebert four levels, a reminiscent of the well-known six levels of contextualization proposed by J. Travis is perceived. Whereas Travis's C1 to C6 have to do with the shape and texture of the church or Christian community, Hiebert, as we have observed above, is concerned about the message. To meaningfully contrast Travis and Hiebert views it is necessary to describe the Travis spectrum.

⁹⁰ Pocock, “Response to Paul G Hiebert ‘The Gospel in Human: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization,’” 109.

⁹¹ Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*, 18–19,31.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 45.

John Travis: C1–C6 Spectrum

To provide a concise understanding of the many approaches to discipling converts from Islam, John Travis (a pseudonym) developed six contextualization models. It is a grouping system that presents all the approaches in a scale of 1 – 6 showing the degree of contextualization. The scale progress from stage 1 –low contextualization, to stage 6 at the end of the scale represents a highest contextualization approach.⁹⁴

According to Travis, the main intention of developing the C1-C6 Spectrum is "to graphically portray different expressions of faith by MBBs."⁹⁵ He called attention to what the "C" represents, which is "a particular type of 'Christ-centered community' or follower of Christ, differentiated by language, culture, and religious identity."⁹⁶ Joshua Massey provided a descriptive summary of the Travis spectrum as follows:

⁹⁴ Joshua Massey, "God's Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (Spring 2000): 5–14.

⁹⁵ John Travis and Andrew Workman, "Messianic Muslim Followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (Spring 2000): 54.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Table 3. Travis Spectrum

	Description
C1 Model	“Traditional church using non-indigenous language. Christian churches in Muslim countries that exist as islands, removed from the culture. Christians exist as an ethnic/religious minority... C1 believers identify themselves as ‘Christians.’”
C2 Model	"Traditional church using indigenous language. C2 is basically the same as C1, except C2 churches, use the daily language of the surrounding Muslim population. Like C1, C2 churches avoid Islamic terminology and instead use a distinctively "Christian" vocabulary for religious description. The cultural chasm between C2 believers and the surrounding Muslim community is often still huge. C2 believers identify themselves as ‘Christians.’"
C3 Model	“Contextualized Christ-centered communities using Muslim’s language and non-religiously indigenous cultural forms. C3 makes use of local music styles, dress, art and other indigenous cultural elements. C3 makes a clear distinction between practices that are purely “cultural” and those which are “Islamic.” Islamic forms are rejected. C3 believers also identify themselves as ‘Christians.’”
C4 Model	Contextualized Christ-centered communities using Muslim’s language and biblically permissible cultural and Islamic forms (e.g., Praying prostrate, perhaps toward Jerusalem; washing before prayer and before touching the Bible; abstaining from pork, alcohol, or from keeping dogs as pets; using some Islamic terms; wearing some clothing popular among Muslims). C4 believers do not call themselves “Christians” but “followers of Isa (Jesus).” However, the Muslim community does not generally regard C4 believers as fellow Muslims.
C5 Model	Christ-centered communities of "Messianic Muslims" who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. C5 is much like C4 with the primary difference being self-identity. Whereas C4 believers identify themselves as "followers of Isa," C5 believers identify themselves as "Muslim followers of Jesus." Believers remain legally and socially within the Islamic community. Aspects of Islam incompatible with the Bible are rejected or if possible, reinterpreted. Believers may remain active in the mosque. Unsaved Muslims may view C5 believers as deviant and may expel them from the Islamic community. If sufficient numbers permit, a C5 "Messianic mosque" may be established
C6 Model	Small Christ-centered communities of secret/underground believers. This is more of a survival strategy than a contextualization model. These believers are forced to choose between rejection from the community or martyrdom and complete anonymity. While it may be best in the short-term for a convert to remain in a C6 position, it is certainly no longer term plan. Building an indigenous church or igniting an indigenous people movement is virtually impossible under these conditions. This strategy may be necessary for some countries where conversion to biblical faith is illegal and an underground church is still in the making

Adapted from John Travis and Anthrew Workman, “Messianic Muslim Followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (Spring 2000): 54

Of all the different classification and categorization of Contextualization in Muslim context, Travis' is the most referenced and debated. There is much experimentation on discipleship of MBBs derived from or sought to be explained by the Travis spectrum. The study shall now consider the different adaptations of and the reactions to the different levels of the type of “Christian community” for the discipleship.

Approaches to Discipleship of MBBs

Early in the history of cross-cultural mission, there was a concerted effort by the missionaries to adapt a cultural lifestyle and expressions that are biblical in order to be relevant within context. Such efforts were termed "indigenization" or "enculturation."⁹⁷ Even before the coinage of the term *contextualization* by Coe, missionaries made attempts of minimizing the “foreignness” of the gospel to a people group within their culture.⁹⁸ William Carey studied the Sanskrit and Hindi language so as to translate the Bible for the people.⁹⁹ Hudson Taylor embraced the cultural wear and pattern the place of worship in accordance with the context as an expression of “courtesy to the natives.”¹⁰⁰ It might be difficult to locate precisely where the

⁹⁷ M. Coleman and P. Verster, "Contextualization of the Gospel Among Muslims," *Acta Theologica* 2 (2006): 107.

⁹⁸ Dr. Charles H. Kraft, “Contextualization Theory in Euro-American Missiology,” *Lausanne Movement*, June 21, 1997.

⁹⁹ S. Wellman, *William Carey. Father of Modern Missions*. (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour, 1997), 119–32.

¹⁰⁰ V. Christie, *Hudson Taylor: Founder of the China Inland Mission*. (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour, 1999), 34.

above examples fit in Travis spectrum, yet in each of them are embedded some principles of contextualization.¹⁰¹

However, in relation to Muslims world, the concern about contextualization is not so much of cultural adaptation or enculturation. The focus is beyond the use of local dressing, greetings, or issues regarding diets (which are means of outreach); much attention is focused on how to disciple and nurture the MBBs.¹⁰² This seems to be implied by the Travis spectrum, it is a graphic portrayal of discipleship stages rather than outreach indicators.

The Spectrum shows the diversity of approaches in Muslim discipleship. All the approaches employed by Missiologist towards discipling converts from Islamic background are grouped by Martin into three major categories: extractionism, Contextualized, and Syncretism approaches (See figure 1)¹⁰³. According to Martin the “extractionist” experiment with levels C1 to C2. Level C3 and C4 are regarded as contextualized. The remaining two upper levels in the scale are said to be syncretic.¹⁰⁴ Even though Martin argues in support of this view, there are many who held a reasonable contrary view especially as to which point syncretism begins.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, it could be observed from the illustrated figure provided above, which was used by Martin in describing the C Spectrum, he fails to adequately

¹⁰¹ Coleman and Verster, "Contextualization of the Gospel Among Muslims," 107.

¹⁰² Robert C. Douglass, “Ongoing Strategy Debate in Muslim Missions.,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 11, no. 2 (1994): 75.

¹⁰³ Cited from Martin, “C-5 Muslims, C-5 Missionaries, or C-5 Strategies?,” 5. Adapted from Timothy C. Tennent, “Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques: A Closer Examination of C-5 „High Spectrum“ Contextualization,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 102, 103.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Phil Parshall, “Lifting the Fatwa.,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2004): 288–93; Douglass, “Ongoing Strategy Debate in Muslim Missions.”

describe of C3. While in the figure is shown Extractions to extend to C3, he limited it to C2. In other words, up to C3 could be extractionism and at the same time, some aspect of C3 is contextualized. For the purpose of logical presentation, this study adopts only two groupings: Extractions C1 –C3; Contextualized C4 –C5. The C6 is not a contextualization model; rather, is a survival strategy,¹⁰⁶ and Syncretism can occur on either side of the spectrum.

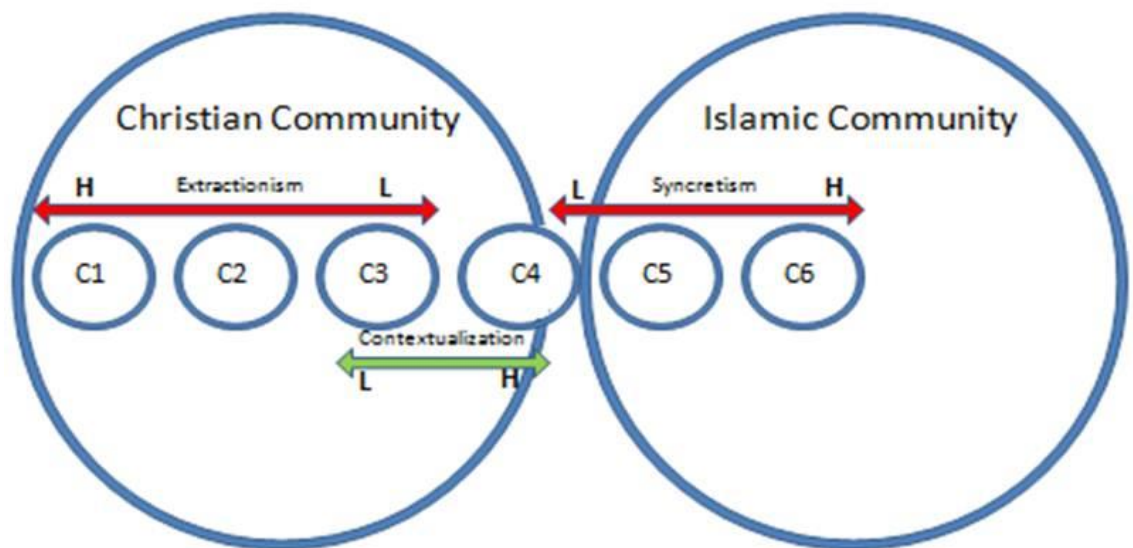


Figure 1. Contextualization Spectrum

Extractionism (C1 –C3 Spectrum))

Up to level C3 in the scale represents the Extractionism approach. In discipling MBBs, this approach is not really considered contextual; hence other called it traditional method. One of the reasons is that there is no difference from the approach to other religions.

¹⁰⁶ Massey, “God’s Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ.” 6.

Extractionism is also referred to in other literature as the traditional approach. This is a situation whereby a convert from Islam is "extracted" from his very community and relocated to supposedly; a more convenient place that is thought could provide security for the converts and the church. This is because of the religious beliefs and intolerance exhibited by Muslim fundamentalists that put both converts and agents at risk.

Another reason that necessitates extraction is that converts from Islam, in most cases, lose their source of support and ought to be cared for, hence they are taken to churches or places that they can be provided for. In some cases, the resultant effect of the approach on both the converts and the church is not desired.

The opponents of this approach have raised the concern that the extraction approach is insensitive to Muslims context and that it fails to properly address cultural issues, which they claimed is the cause for persecutions.¹⁰⁷ This approach is seen as an intentional way of imposing missionary (foreign) culture of the new believers. The opponents also state further that extraction is the cause for a "double conversion"- a situation that necessitates a convert to forsake his/her culture entirely in order to be Christian.¹⁰⁸

The above claim that extractionist are insensitive to Muslims context can hardly be substantiated. Jesus had clearly said that following him can occasion persecution and his follower must be willing to take his cross. It is rather their sensitivity to Muslim context that necessitate the relocation of the converts to a safer environment.

¹⁰⁷ George Houssny, "Distinctive Religious Barriers to Outside Penetration: Demonstration of the Problem," in *Media In Islamic Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974), 81-82.

¹⁰⁸ Wolfe, "The Development of the Insider Movement Paradigm," 2.

The Contextualized approach (C4-C5)

What distinguishes this approach from that of Extractionist is the emphasis placed on discipling converts within their context, against taking them away from their community into an existing church structure that is often foreign to them. Worship is contextualized to include familiar forms of Muslim worship such as praying prostrate. Moreover, the approach supports the adoption and use of culturally acceptable way of life: language, dressing, diets, etc.

In the Travis Spectrum, the believers are referred to as "Messianic Muslim follower of Isa," however; various ministries have used different terms to refer to those MBBs. In the Seventh-day Adventist circle, the term Faith Development in Context is used to describe the C4- C5 Approaches.

Almost any book or article on contextualization in the context of Muslims is either supporting or critiquing various adaptations of C4 and C5 level of contextualization. The two levels held opposing views to extractionism, employed the same strategy in reaching to Muslim. However, they differ significantly on self-identity of the MBBs. For C4 practitioners, MBBs are "followers of Isa," while in C5 they are called "Muslim followers of Isa."

Parshall, a onetime advocate of C5, eventually renounced it as being syncretic. He articulated his concern in an article titled "Danger,"¹⁰⁹ His conclusion resulted from a reaction to his understanding of C5 to mean

"It is okay to affirm Muhammad as a genuine prophet of God; that Muslim background believers should attend the mosque perpetually, and that Christians should consider legally converting to Islam to win Muslims as Muslims."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Massey, "God's Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ," 8.

¹¹⁰ Joshua Massey, "Muslim Contextualization I," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (Spring 2000): 2.

However, Massey sees Parshall's conclusion as being "unfortunately based on erroneous descriptions from alleged 'C5 advocates,'"¹¹¹

The issue raised by Parshal was considered significant to warrant the editors of *International Journal of Frontier Missions* to devote a whole journal to the discussion of the issue. The editor of the journal clearly set the goal of the journal thus; "The articles in this feature edition do not attempt to merely save the 'C5' term from disrepute, but rather the people, whom the term attempts to describe, who love the Lord Jesus with all their heart."¹¹² There appears to a careful selection and arrangement of articles to address the intended goal.¹¹³

Among Adventist Missiologist (not included in the journal), Carlos Martin¹¹⁴ seems to be heavily influenced by and is totally supportive of Phil Parshall view. He has written extensively against FDIC ministries. He did not only equate FDIC to C5

¹¹¹ Joshua Massey, "Muslim Contextualization I," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (Spring 2000): 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹¹³The focuses of the different articles are as follows. Joshua Massey gave an overview of the Travis' C Spectrum. His article identified and responded to the criticism of C5 Messianic Muslim movement. As for Bernard Dutch, he responded to Parshall concern about the identity of C5 believers, wrote: on the highly complex issue of self-identity among Muslim background believers (MBBs). Then Stuart Caldwell draws principles from Jesus' contextualized approach to the Samaritan woman; on that basis of which he substantiates C5 Messianic Muslim communities. Likewise, Jameson and Scalevich did a comparative analysis of Messianic Muslims and Jews followers of Isa. The goal was to prove that the C5 Messianic Muslim communities approach in normal. Furthermore, John Travis and Andrew Workman discussed some case studies with the aim of clarifying what C5 is, and what it is not. Finally, Jonathan Culver ended the series with a study on the contextual implications of God's promise to Abraham for the worldwide Muslim community, both now and in the eschatological age to come. Massey, "God's Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ," 5–6; Culver, "The Ishmael Promise and Contextualization Among Muslims," 60–65; Bernard Dutch, "Should Muslims Become 'Christians'?", *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (Spring 2000): 12–25; Robert Johnson, "Toward a Greater Unity in Muslim Ministry," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 47 (2011): 50–59; Travis and Workman, "Messianic Muslim Followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations," 53–59.

¹¹⁴ Martin, "C-5 Muslims, C-5 Missionaries, or C-5 Strategies?"; Carlos G. Martin, "Questions on C-5," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 1 (2005): 34–41.

but has interpreted its activities as syncretic. On the other hand, Jerald Whitehouse¹¹⁵ is an advocate of both C4 and C5 ministries. However, he held the belief that "in most places in the Muslim world a C4 ministry will not be able to "seed itself" into surrounding Muslim areas which might be stricter, unless it adopts a C5 identity and strategy."¹¹⁶ Therefore, Whitehouse shares view with Tarvis, Messey and others who argue in favor of C5.

This study has not undertaken the task of an in-depth analysis of the argument for and against the C5 strategy, but it shall suffice to point what is understood to be the major cause of the debate. In Parshall understanding as pointed by Whitehouse is:

This strategy centers on the Christian evangelist declaring himself to be a Muslim. He then participates in the *Salat* or official Islamic prayers within the mosque. Actually taking on a Muslim identity and praying in the mosque is not a new strategy. But legally becoming a Muslim definitely, moves the missionary enterprise into uncharted territory.¹¹⁷

The implication of this concern is the belief that:

The mosque is pregnant with Islamic theology. There, Muhammad is affirmed as a prophet of God and the divinity of Christ is consistently denied. Uniquely Muslim prayers (*Salat*) are ritually performed as in no other religion. These prayers are as sacramental to Muslims as partaking of the Lord's supper for Christians.¹¹⁸

The main concern of the opponents is, "How could anyone who identifies himself as any kind of Muslim be a genuine follower of Jesus? To call oneself

¹¹⁵ Jerald Whitehouse, "Answers to 'Questions on C-5,'" *Journal of Adventist Mission*, no. Studies 2 (Fall 2005): 42–44; Jerald Whitehouse, "Issues of Identity," in *Faith Development in Context: Presenting Christ in Creative Ways* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2005), 97–127.

¹¹⁶ Whitehouse, "Issues of Identity," 113.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 119.

‘Muslim’ means they adhere to certain Islamic beliefs that flatly contradict Scripture!”¹¹⁹

In response to the above concern posed by Parshall and other, Travis, Messey and Whitehouse disclaimed the meaning associated to C5 strategies. The originator of the “C” Spectrum, John Travis said in response:

“What makes a particular Muslim ‘C5’ is that he has received Isa (Jesus) as Lord and Savior, meets regularly with other such believers, and yet is still seen as ‘Muslim’ through his or her own eyes, as well as the eyes of fellow Muslims. A C5 believer will certainly have different beliefs from other Muslims (e.g., Isa did die on the cross, Muhammad is not a prophet in the biblical sense, and salvation is in Isa al-Masih and not in works). However, C5 believers remain in the Muslim community (i.e., they do not officially become members of a traditional church), and they still participate in Muslim cultural and religious practices—except for those contrary to Scripture. The simple fact is, I know individuals who are truly born again and living for Jesus, yet because of their upbringing, ethnicity, or community, simply see themselves as Muslims who have found salvation in Jesus. I would be hard pressed to say by biblical definitions that they are not part of God’s Kingdom.”¹²⁰

Referring to the Parshall charge against the C5 ministries, Whitehouse said “In the SDA ministries ... [it] simply does not hold.”¹²¹ He argued that syncretic elements “are simply not present in the SDA “C5” ministries.”¹²² In order to fully refute the charge that C5 approach employed by Adventist is syncretic, Whitehouse proposed a “C1-7 categorization.” In his scale, the C6 is where syncretism begins and C7 could refer to "Secret/Underground Believers"

It appears Whitehouse C1-7 scale did not materialize, however, he did "dropped the C1-6 designation... and adopted an A1-6 designation." In his adopted

¹¹⁹ Massey, “God’s Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ,” 9.

¹²⁰ Massey, “Muslim Contextualization I,” 2.

¹²¹ Whitehouse, “Answers to ‘Questions on C-5,’” 41.

¹²² Whitehouse, “Issues of Identity,” 121. To the end of this sub-section, all quotations are taken from this source.

Scale, “A” stands for Adventist. In the A1-6 scale, there is not C5 equivalent. Below is how Whitehouse characterized A5.

A5 members have a clear identity as God's end-time people (remnant) within the Muslim context. They have a clear sense of mission as bearers of God's last message of revival and reform to their Muslim communities. They have regular spiritual instruction (weekly in their house fellowships, and in regular training from the "change agents" or spiritual leaders, and annually in convocation). They have strong spiritual leadership—it is understood to be a spiritual movement. They possess a clear understanding of the difference of when they were a "traditional Muslim" or "secular Muslim" and now that they are an MB that includes an understanding of the assurance of salvation in Jesus and the worship of the creator God on the seventh-day Sabbath. Faith is built in context, beginning with what they have, leaving off those things that the evil one has infiltrated into Islam (folk beliefs, belief in the power of the saints, salvation by works, to name some), and leading them on a growth path to saving faith.

It appears that both the proponents and opponents of C5 approach held a different view and understanding of what it really is. As it has been identified earlier, C4 and C5 differ significantly only in identity. As study and experimentation continue, perhaps common ground will be attained.

Faith Development in Context (FDIC)

The development of Adventist Muslim relations from the late nineteenth century is contained in an unpublished paper by Jerald Whitehouse, entitled “How Did We Get to Where We Are?” Whitehouse notes how parallel the scope of the Adventist mission ran to that of other Christians for most of the 1900s, with a focus on “unneutered territories.”¹²³ When, in 1989, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist established the Global Center for Islamic Studies at Newbolt College in

¹²³ At the time of the First World Consultation on Frontier Missions held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910, Christian mission had entered the more receptive areas of countries classified as “unentered.” The 1910 consultation extended the focus of “unentered territories” into new hinterlands as yet untouched by mission; however, the focus was still on “unentered or unoccupied territories.”

England with Børge Schantz as the first director, Whitehouse was invited to develop a proposal for the new initiative.¹²⁴

Two Muslim Background Believers who were Adventist pastors were involved in the ministry from its beginning. At the end of three years, the evaluation concluded that the ministry had exceeded its objectives. The Global Center for Islamic Studies was renamed the Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations (GC-AMR) soon after Whitehouse was made the director in 1995. The focus of the Ministry remains the same: experimentation, developing new methods, and starting new field initiatives.

Principles upon which FDIC ministry is said to be based are:

1. God is at work in all people groups and has not left any group without a witness. As such, efforts should be made to identify and understand how and where God has been working in the past, where he is working at the present time, and endeavor to see where he will work in the future.

2. Incarnational witness brings truth into the life of a community. Those working with the FDIC approach take on the identity of those being reached. FDIC witnesses, take on the identity of the Muslim community.

¹²⁴ “In brief, the proposal envisioned a three-year pilot project of planting 12 MBB couples in local villages to live and communicate the life of Jesus in Muslim dress and language. There were to be no obvious linkages to a Christian organization. The objective was to develop a truly ‘in context’ group of Muslim believers professing Adventist beliefs and possessing a saving faith experience as followers of Isa while maintaining a culturally acceptable Muslim identity. This was seen as establishing God’s remnant, an end time spiritual movement, in the Muslim community. A six-phase spiritual growth path was outlined with indicators for reaching each level. It was envisioned that level three would be achieved by the end of the three-year pilot program time period. An evaluation was planned at the end of the three years based on the indicators for level three.” Peter Roennfeldt, “Faith Development in Context: An Overview,” in *Faith Development in Context: Presenting Christ in Creative Ways* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2005), 34.

3. A living experience with God attracts interest and a desire for spiritual growth. FDIC demands an experiential relationship with God for one cannot share what one does not have! The FDIC witness establishes credibility by being a fellow believer in the Muslim community, by participation in community and family events, by engaging in spiritual discussions, and by being recognized as a caring, godly person. Such a person depends on fewer techniques and methods and more upon prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

4. Scriptural contact points are explored and affirmed as bridges. “The Koran and the Bible convey essentially the same message as regards God, creation, prophethood, sin, ethics, eschatology, etc. The FDIC witness has two goals in knowing and studying Muslim holy writings: (1) to search for contact points that can be explored with Muslims in the community, and (2) to provide a basis for a Muslim believer to defend his new faith by appealing to the glimpses of those truths in Islamic sources.

5. Spiritual growth is God’s progressive plan for all true believers. Because spiritual growth is God’s progressive plan for all, it is possible to (1) walk together in mutual trust, and (2) be more relaxed about God’s timetable. FDIC ministries seek to cultivate this paradigm shift by recognizing that:

- a) The Holy Spirit speaks equally to the Muslim and the FDIC witness
- b) Muslims can be empowered to discover truth for themselves
- c) Muslims can come to saving faith
- d) Spiritual gifts are expected to develop within the Muslim community
- e) Local spiritual leadership can be mentored from the outset

Building upon these principles, five progressive steps¹²⁵ are used to provide the FDIC witness with a framework to understand the spiritual development of both the witness and the Muslim. These principles map out a relationship between the FDIC witness and the Muslim community and may involve a timetable covering many years.

6. God is calling a faithful remnant movement to witness to him and the truth. Whitehouse urges Adventists to recapture the “Advent movement motif” that stresses being a worldwide movement that calls people to rediscover lost truths, be ready for the coming of Jesus, and prepare for the day of judgment.¹²⁶

The FDIC is not in favor of extractions. The approach argues that when a Muslim believer declares his or her conversion to Christianity, joining a traditional Adventist Church group typically provides neither the nurture nor the security needed. It is believed that “Sometimes the attempt to join a local body of believers results in outright rejection by the church members who are often fearful of repercussions from the local Muslim community or who are suspicious of the person’s motivation for wanting to join.”¹²⁷ The FDIC then seeks to provide an alternative for both the Adventist witness and the Muslim believer by allowing the converts to remain “legally, culturally, and religiously within the Muslim Ummah.”¹²⁸ This is believed to enable the MBBs to find a spiritual identity as in-context believers.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Ibid., 76. For a summary of the five progressive steps and additional information see Appendix A

¹²⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 45.

¹²⁸ Whitehouse, “Issues of Identity,” 99.

¹²⁹ Developing an in-context Adventist theology is an ongoing work that cannot simply be done by Seventh-day Adventists. Albert Walters and Douglas Elwood advocate a “living theology” that is developed from an ongoing interaction between life experiences,

Concerns about the FDIC Approach

While it is possible that some MBBs might be rejected by some churches for fear of persecution, the researcher disagrees with the generalization that Adventist Church does not provide nurture to such converts. Going by discipleship model of both Moses and Jesus discussed in the previous chapter, the converts can be better nurtured when they are in association with and within the body of believers, the church members. There are many MBBs that have been nurtured within the Adventist Church and some of them have become clergymen.

On the claim that new structures are required to provide nurture and allow for new growth among the new believers, who for various reasons cannot integrate into the existing local church, the FDIC proponents need to consider the scriptural teaching of the church as a body (Eph 1:22; 4:15,16; Col 1:18). If C-5 believers cannot be linked to the local church, then FDIC approach should be reconsidered¹³⁰

Again, the researcher like Martin, does not understand how an MBB could be disciplined when he only fellowship with Muslims and “attends the mosque on a regular basis, where the divinity of Christ is consistently denied.”¹³¹ It is likely such approach could lead to syncretism.¹³²

culture, witness and the inspired records. Elwood notes, “Theology is a living experience, having to do with our very existence as Christians and as churches.” Whitehouse, “Issues of Identity,” 99

¹³⁰ Martin, “C-5 Muslims, C-5 Missionaries, or C-5 Strategies?,” 122.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Larry Poston, “‘You Must Not Worship in Their Way’: When Contextualization Becomes Syncretism,” in *In Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rhee (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006), 243–63.

Responding to the claim by the FDIC that theology should be forged according to “the situational realities in the Muslim world,”¹³³ Carlos emphasized that “doctrines are supra-cultural and that any attempt to contextualize must preserve their integrity.... doctrines are divine truths that should not be confused with theology”¹³⁴ This therefore means that, for contextualization to be acceptable, doctrines must remain unchanged.

Summarily, the two main approaches to discipling MBBs are the extractionism and the FDIC (Insider) approaches. However appealing the FDIC approach may be, there are many unanswered questions about its requiring the MBBs to remain “legally and culturally” within Islam. What are considered the demerits of extractionism probably part of discipling process that, when overcome, can establish the converts in the faith, and strengthen the disciplers (church members).

A historical review of MBBs Discipleship in Northern Nigeria

As convert from Islam joined the Church, and as leaders sought to create awareness and help the church's response to the need of such converts, some models developed. The two experimented approaches are the *Christian-Muslim Understanding*, and the *Other-sheep*. An attempt was made to adapt the FDIC approach; however, it was unsuccessful.¹³⁵

¹³³ Jerald Whitehouse, “Answers to ‘Questions on C-5,’” *Journal of Adventist Mission, Studies 2* (Fall 2005): 42,44.

¹³⁴ Martin, “C-5 Muslims, C-5 Missionaries, or C-5 Strategies?,” 123.

¹³⁵ The reasons for the lack of success is presented in the subsequent pages under the subtitle challenges of discipleship in northern Nigeria.

The Christian-Muslim Understanding Approach

Some pastors have always had a desire to see the spread of Adventism among our Muslim neighbors. It was not until the early 1980s that Pastor Luka T. Daniel took the giant step of devoting time to studying the religion of Islam with the aim of finding a better way to witness to the Muslim community. Pastor Daniel laid the foundation of Muslim outreach through awareness-creating seminars and the publication of study lessons. The most famous of his lessons were the *Understanding* series, that center on Christian-Muslim understanding. Beginning from the late 1980s, the Seventh-day Adventist Church had some converts from Islam, mostly via other denominations, especially the Evangelical Church of West Africa.

The program, though very promising, has not yet achieved its desired goal. It was not fully embraced by the Adventist laity, possibly because of the level of negative perceptions, misunderstandings, mischaracterizations, hatred and prevalent tensions that have always existed between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. Other reasons for its lack of success could also be ignorance, and the lack of an effective structure for proper implementation, evaluation and sustainability.

The Other Sheep Outreach (OSO) Approach

In the early 1990s, Pastor Ayuba Gimba Mavalla, building on the previous foundations, concentrated the church's effort to the least resistant Maguzawa people of northern Kano and part of Kastina. That resulted in a significant breakthrough in areas like Sitti, Jigawa, and Kastina. However, not long after the recorded successes, the enterprise dwindled into oblivion.

For over ten years, during which little or nothing had been done towards reaching the Muslim--even though a few were coming from here and there--, Pastor

Mavalla was nursing a more structured strategy that came to be known as the “*Other Sheep Outreach*” program.

The OSO program was initiated with the goal of developing a careful, strategic approach that, it is hoped, will address the prevalent predicament (caused by the Islamic fundamentalists who are a great threat to the expansion of Adventism in this area), thereby providing an opportunity for effective witnessing. The program was also aimed at developing an understanding and less confrontational way of reaching out to Muslim neighbors. Among other means, the program sought to achieve its aims by sharing the Adventist faith through the Adventist World Radio (AWR). It included a purposeful follow-up (responding to listeners), and the holding of seminars and workshops to train and mobilize volunteers for outreach; and to help the converts develop into mature followers of Jesus.

In order to make the initiative sustainable, a Rehabilitation Center, or transit camp, was proposed. It was hoped that the converts would there “fit into various programs depending on their aptitudes, basic education, age, and backgrounds. After an adequate period of training and reorientation, they would be relocated to places far removed from their original homes as self-sustaining Islamists to evangelize among the ‘other sheep’.” This was hoped to be achieved by “a deliberate sourcing of financial and other material resources, which should be very judiciously applied, with a keen sense of cost effectiveness.”¹³⁶

Unfortunately, however, because the program was totally funded by external donors, and also because the emphasis was placed too strongly on *numbers*, it

¹³⁶ Pastor A. G. Mavalla, “*Open Proposal to the Work of Other-Sheep.*” A working paper for a pilot project, March, 2006.

gradually came to a halt by December 2006, when the donors informed the conference about their inability to continue funding the program.

The Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations

Just at the time when the OSO program came to a halt, the GCAMR director at that time, Jerald Whitehouse and his associate, Oscar Osindo, came to offer other insights on how to be effective by improving what the field had been doing. The GCAMR is a General Conference-approved center that “focuses on the difficult task of raising awareness about Islam, cultivating an understanding of Muslims within Adventism, suggesting ways of relating to Muslims, and preparing materials to assist the church in its Muslim relations.”¹³⁷

The whole week workshop they conducted from May 13-20, 2007 was revolutionary. Of the seven-day program, the GCAMR facilitators took two days to hear about the challenges and successes in Muslim outreach from the participants (both pastors and lay people). The remaining days were spent in addressing the above-mentioned challenges. The facilitators emphasized that objective answers to five key questions will go a long way in providing solutions to most of the fears and questions raised. The questions are:

1. Who are we? How should we be identified in the face of Muslims
2. Who are they? How do we understand Islam?
3. Do we have any evidence of God’s activities among them?
4. What do I have to offer the Muslim?

¹³⁷ Bruce L. Bauer, ed., *Faith Development in Context* (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2005), 34.

5. When a Muslim becomes a believer in Jesus, how should he/she look like?

Should the believer look like us or like them?

By the time the five questions were discussed, Faith Development in Context (FDIC) was somehow understood, and it was agreed to give it a trial, especially in places like Kano and Zanfara. Participants, together with the conference officers, expressed a desire to experiment with the *new* insight--***dialogue and faith development in context***--in addition to the already existing *traditional* means.¹³⁸

Challenges for Discipling MBBs in Northern Nigeria

There are two main barriers militating against discipling MBBs in Northern Nigeria: attitudinal and methodological. The attitude of Adventists towards Muslims, shaped by a long history of a love-hate relationship, has not been cordial. The incessant religious conflict in the region has a discouraging effect and a demotivating influence on relating with the people of Islam.

Moreover, the personal experiences of many Adventists who have accommodated MBBs in their homes are disheartening. Some of the families and even churches are robbed by some converts. These kinds of experiences dispirited many and consequently impede the discipleship of MBBs.

The methodological barriers have to do with what is considered as biblically acceptable or unacceptable in working among Muslims. After the GCAMR workshop, one of the participants wrote a seven-page critique. This was given a wide circulation. Many responded to the emails. The arguments and responses were geared towards

¹³⁸ At the end of that workshop, the writer was appointed as AMR Director of the Conference. What comes under this subheading is a modification of the progress report presented at the Division during the very first special Council on Adventist Relations to Muslims (ARM).

supporting the claim that the FDIC cannot be implemented in the Northern part of Nigeria. According to the writer of the critique, “whatever may be the merits or demerits of contextualization (FDIC), it cannot, repeat cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be operated in Nigeria without causing serious harm to the work of Christian evangelism in Northern Nigeria.”

The facilitators were accused of marginalizing other existing methods.

“I think --wrote the critique--“Dr. Whitehouse is very wrong to refuse us any form of support simply because we wish to use a different approach from the one he is used to. After all, we are operating in a different setting from his. . . . Why the discrimination in the methodology to be supported by the General Conference of the world church? Are those of us who believe in and are successfully using the extraction method not members of the world church? Are we not helping to fulfill the great commission? Maybe the GC needs a rethink!”

Leaders were called upon to do something, least this could result in the closing of our work in the north.

The widely circulated, heated debate over methods of witnessing to Muslims does nothing but kill the spirit of the leaders, pastors and members towards Muslim evangelism.

Conclusion

Islam, one of Abrahamic faith, constitutes one of the world’s unreached people group. They are majorly situated within the 10/40 Window, and Northern Nigeria is included. Due to the intolerant nature of the religion, it poses challenges to discipleship. Missiologists have found contextualization indispensable in working among Muslims. However, the form nature an extent to which this contextualization is to be done has remained a point of debate. Bevans, Hiebert, and Travis models are studied. The two outstanding approaches to discipling MBBs are Extractionism and Contextual. The most debate approach is contextual often represented by Travis scale

as C4 –C5. FDIC approach operated by the Adventist fit into C5 scale. But due to some interpretation that led others to conclude that is a C5 approach is syncretic, FDIC modified the C-scale to A-scale. Then a concern about FDIC approach is underlined. Finally, an overview of the discipleship activities in northern Nigeria is provided, with some highlights on the challenges.

The next chapter shall focus on the description of the study context, and research conducted in order to determine suitable responses to the challenges of discipling MBBs in northern Nigeria.

CHAPTER 4

FIELD RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DESIGN

In the previous chapter the, views of scholars, practitioners, and missiologists on contextual discipleship strategies for MBBS were examined. This chapter focuses on designing a discipleship model to address the theological, spiritual and social plight of MBBS. The first section of this chapter provides a concise historical-religious background of northern Nigeria muslims. Based on research into literature, including biblical studies, an intervention is designed. Finally, an outline is provided for the implementation of the proposed intervention program.

A brief historical-religious background of Northern Nigeria

The ministry context for this study is the Hausa-Fulani people of northern Nigeria. This section shall give a brief overview of the origin, political structure, and religion of this people group.

History of the Hausa-Fulani

Northern Nigeria consists of many ethnic and religious people groups. The Hausa and Fulani are the two major ethnic groups and are often categorized as a single entity; Hausa-Fulani. Nevertheless, the Hausa and Fulani are different in many respects. “While nearly all Fulani in the region speak Hausa, not all Hausa speak

Fulani.”¹ The Hausa people² originated from Nubia, between 500 CE and 700 CE.³

While the Fulani people are said to have emerged from the Songhai empires in Senegal, in the thirteenth century.⁴

Political Structure

Before the arrival of the colonialists, the Hausa people of Northern Nigeria were organized around a traditional ruler, often called *Sarki* (plural, *Sarakuna*). All social, political, economic and religious activities revolved around the *Sarakuna*. The *Sarki* himself seems also to have been a leader of public ritual.⁵ They were highly respected almost to the point of being worshiped, and they were feared by the people.

The *Sarakuna* were surrounded by a number of royal counselors and advisers, among which were the *bokaye* (priests). When the *Sarakuna* were faced with a difficult issue, they enquired from the *bokaye*, who were considered specialists in magic and foretelling. The *bokaye* also were believed to provide protection to the kings against evil spirits, and also good luck.

When the colonialist arrived, they met the traditional governance strongly interwoven with Islam and the slave trade. That presented them with the great challenge of how best to govern the north. Their best answer was through *indirect*

¹ Louis Brenner, ed., *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

² J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 292.

³ J. F. A. Ajayi and Crowder, eds., *History of West Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 295.

⁴ Frank Salamone, “Fulani Facts, Information, Pictures | Encyclopedia.com Articles about Fulani,” accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Fulani.aspx>

⁵ Ajaye and Crowder, 196.

rule. In the indirect rule system, local government was left in the hands of the traditional chiefs.

It is reported that Sir Frederick Lugard, in one of his official addresses, made a promise that was later used to prevent Christian missions among the Muslim. He said that “Government will in no way interfere with the Mohammedan religion. All men will be treated with respect by us.”⁶

Religion of the Hausa-Fulani People

Before the advent of Islam, the Hausa-Fulani people of northern Nigeria practiced the widespread group of religions of tropical Africa which involved belief in a high and distant god. This god is believed to be distanced from the everyday life of men. But nearer to men are the spirits (*isokoki*). The maintenance of correct relations with the spirit was the object of ritual. Communion with the spirits was partly achieved by sacrificial procedures carried out by family heads and also by “possession” spirits (in possession of human beings), called *bori*. The “*bori cult*” continues to be widely practiced in Hausa land for very long time; now limited to divination. The system supported a priestly class (the *bokaye*) especially skilled in the mysteries of the spirits and playing an important political role in the Hausa states.

Islam came to Northern Nigeria as early as the eleventh century, through trade routes connecting the Arab countries. A professor of International Studies whose specialty is on relations between Muslim sub-culture in Nigeria, John Paden states that, Islam “was introduced largely peacefully, by clerics and merchants from North

⁶ Jan H. Boer, *Christianity and Islam under Colonialism in Northern Nigeria* (Jos: Institute of Church and Society, 1988), 11.

Africa and the Arab world, and from across West Africa.”⁷ One of the factors that can account for the spread of Islam in Nigeria, as well as in other areas of West Africa, is its adaptability and flexibility. The spread of Islam in Hausa land appears to have taken the form of a gradual modification of the old beliefs and practices in which the *gods* were replaced with *Allah*, who became progressively of greater significance in the affairs of men, while the *isokoki* became progressively relegated to the essentially subordinate and harmless position of *jinn*.

Sokoto Jihad. The well-known jihad of Uthman Shehu Dan Fodio, the man who gave a foothold to Muslims in Nigeria, happened during the first decade of the nineteenth century. All efforts to propagate Islam are referred to as “Jihad.” The common usage of the word is in reference to a “holy war” against non-Muslim who they stigmatized as “infidels.”⁸ The jihad swept away the Hausa states and their kings. In his early years, the Shehu studied Islamic Sciences under his father and his uncles. Soon afterward he began to go on preaching tours, one of which was to Kebbi. He also spent five years in Zanfara teaching and preaching, and by the late 1780s he had built a considerable following. “In addition to being a scholar and teacher, he was also a mystic, belonging to the brotherhood called the Qadiriyya, named after its founder Ahd Al-Qadir, a twelfth-century saint of Baghdad.”⁹

Shehu’s teachings gave rise to a revolution in the Hausa land. Tradition has it that, all the town and cities that were conquered during the jihad, were given the

⁷ John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (ACLS History E-Book Project, 2008), 8.

⁸ Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (London, UK: I.B.Tauris, 2006), 69.

⁹ Joseph C. Anene and Godfrey N. Brown, eds., *Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press; 1966), 295.

option of either become Muslims or be taken into slavery. Immediately, the opportunity was opened for what later came to be known as the trans-Saharan slave trade. There was a radical restructuring of the existing traditional governance. One must not only be a Muslim to be made a traditional chief, but must prove able to defend and expand the course of Islam.

Types of Islam Practiced. The Muslims in Nigerian are predominantly *Sunni*. The *Shiite* and *Sufi brotherhoods* form a considerable percentage of Muslims in northern Nigeria and are present in the major cities. There are two predominant groups of the Sufi brotherhood: Qadiriyyah and Tijaniyyah. The brotherhoods played a major role in the spread of Islam in the northern area and the middle belt. The Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI)¹⁰ is today the largest Islamic organization in the north. It was founded in 1961 in Kaduna; it has today developed a strong network, and is the major supporter of activism in the region.

Religious Intolerance

Northern Nigeria is pan-Islamic due to its strong connection with other Muslims nations. "Most Muslims in the region have a strong sense of solidarity with co-religionists' causes, from Iraq to Afghanistan."¹¹ Northern Nigerian Muslims are in support of Palestinians over the Israeli occupation of some territory.¹² It is reported that "during the Israeli blockade and bombardment of Gaza city in December 2008,

¹⁰ John N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano* (New York: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2008), 18.

¹¹ Crisis Group interviews of several common people in Kaduna, Kano, Zaria and Maiduguri, June and July 2009. Cited by Brussels in "Northern Nigeria Background to Conflict". Ibid.

¹² Bola Badmus, "Government and Palestinian Cause," *Nigerian Tribune*, December 26, 2000, 58.

hundreds of protesters marched through Kano, calling on the Nigerian government to sever ties with the Jewish state.”¹³ Most of this religious propaganda is perpetuated by JNI.

In 1976, the Christians in the country formed the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). It was established “to represent the common concerns of all churches nationwide.”¹⁴ The CAN invited Reinhard Bonnke in October 1991, to conduct a “crusade” in Kano. “Rioting Muslims killed more than 200 mostly southern Christians and burnt over twenty churches.”¹⁵ Such frequent and incessant assault of Christians by the Muslims, made CAN become somewhat militant and political. Because of the general notion by Christians that they are under the threat of militant Islam, CAN “portrays itself as the defender of a besieged Christian community against an increasingly dominant Islam.”¹⁶ This situation further polarized the adherence of the two religions.

Proselytizing in this area is extremely dangerous, as both preacher and convert are at risk of being killed. The danger to the preacher is very real, as any Muslim (child, youth or adult) needs only to point a finger at him and accuse him of insulting either the Qur’an or the prophet, to have him instantly lynched. For the Muslim converting to Christianity, the danger is no less real. The law requires that the individual is warned three times. After the third warning, if he does not renounce his intention of denouncing the Islamic faith, he should be killed. Muslims are informed

¹³ Jaafar Jaafar, “Shiites in Kano Protest Gaza Blockade,” *Daily Trust*, December 16, 2008, 2.

¹⁴ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 78.

¹⁵ Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 81.

that after the third warning, Allah changes the soul of the intended convert into that of a beast. Thus, Allah bestows his blessings on all who kill such a one. There is an instance (in Borno), where the “Muslim umma” carved up a lady who was on the verge of converting to Christ, cut her up into small pieces and dumped her remains at the door of a church in a sack.¹⁷ The church pastor is reported to have nearly become demented.

Unlike Christianity, in which those most devoted to the Master’s teaching are the most loving and the least to be feared, “those most zealously devoted to the teaching of Qur’an and the Hadith are overwhelmingly the most violent and unmerciful.”¹⁸ Thus, in towns where the Koranic teachings are more seriously taken, there is less social freedom/tolerance when it comes to religious matters.

Summarizing, the attitude of Muslims towards Christians has a long history. Having been established before Christianity, Islam in Northern Nigeria has relentlessly been struggling to maintain relevance and dominance in the political, social and even the religious spheres. This has contributed to a negative response from the Christians, thus raising a barrier towards discipling convert therefrom.

Seventh-day Adventist Church, Kaduna

The earliest Seventh-day Adventists missionaries were David C. Babcock (an American), and two Sierra Leonean ministers, Dauphin and S. Morgue. They came to Nigeria in March, 1914, from Freedom, Sierra Leone. They first settled in the west. It is reported that William McClement, one of the first Adventist missionaries to

¹⁷ This was a testimony from one of the Muslim converts during a special program organized for the Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) in Jos, 21 August 2007.

¹⁸ Gary Corwin, “A Second Look: Ten Things Worth Knowing about Islam,” *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* 40 (October 2004): 416-417.

Northern Nigeria, had attested to the difficulties in reaching the northern population. He said: “this is Northern Nigeria, and so far it has been very difficult to get permission to build schools or churches.”¹⁹

It took about 24 years, after the coming of D. C. Babcock, for Adventists to reach the Northern part of Nigeria. The first Adventist missionaries to the north were William McClement and John Jacob Hyde. Reaching Northern Nigeria in April 1930, they wanted to settle around Zangon Kataf, in Kaduna State. But they were opposed by the Sudan Interior Missionaries (SIM), who were already established in the area. As a result of that opposition they proceeded to Jos, and after two years of missionary activities, Adventism was successfully established at Jengre, in 1932. From there it now spread to Kaduna and almost all the northern parts of the country.

Kaduna later became headquarters of the North West Nigeria Conference. The Conference Church, Ilorin District Church, has being the church where MBBs that got converted in rural areas or in places like Kano and far north, are taken to. The church currently has a membership of 376 members. The study is situated here due to the congregation’s long time experience with the MBBs.

Research Design

Research design is a major essential component of research. According to Paul Vogt, “everything unlimitedly flows from the design choice.”²⁰ Mathew Lee said that “Research design involves determining how your chosen method will be applied to

¹⁹ Gary Corwin, “A Second Look: Ten Things Worth Knowing about Islam,” *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* 40 (October 2004): 416-417.

²⁰ W. Paul Vogt, Dianne C. Gardner, and Lynne M. Haeffele, *When to Use What Research Design* (New York: Guilford Press, 2012), 3.

answer your research question.”²¹ As part of research design, Lee shows the main features to comprise: “research methodology; participant/sample collection and assignment (if different conditions are being explored); and data collection procedures and instruments.”²² That is precisely what this section is, to identify the research method, participants, and instruments for data collection.

Research Methodology

According to John W. Creswell, “Research methods are generalized and established ways of approaching research.”²³ These methods are qualitative, quantitative, or the combination of the two often referred to as the mixed research method. Quantitative research method enables the research to count and measure things, and to determine the extent and distribution of the subject matter.²⁴ In the other hand, qualitative method helps the researcher to understand “the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world.”²⁵ To achieve the objectives of this study, a qualitative research method was employed.

²¹ Matthew Lee and Matthew Lee, “The Difference Between Research Design & Research Method,” *eHow*, accessed July 21, 2016, http://www.ehow.com/facts_7329595_difference-research-design-research-method.html.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Washington D. C.: Sage Publications, 2014).

²⁴ Bruce L. Berg and Howard Lune, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 8th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Person Education, Inc., 2012), 3.

²⁵ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Inc., 1998), 6.

Rationale for Selection

The reason behind the choice of qualitative methods is due to its effectiveness in “obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.”²⁶ Steinar Kvale explains that qualitative research enables the researcher to “understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena from the inside in a number of different ways: by analyzing experiences of individuals or groups; by analyzing interactions and communications in the making; and by analyzing documents.”²⁷

Moreover, unlike the quantitative methods that require larger samples to survey, qualitative methods deal with few samples. Monique M. Hennink states that “Qualitative research typically includes a small number of study participants to achieve depth of information and variation of perspectives.”²⁸ This is probably because the methods use open questions that are designed to allow the participants to use their own words to give answers.

Qualitative methods are suitable for this study for two reasons: (1) there are few MBBs in northern Nigeria; (2) the approach enables the participants to be more explanatory in their responses and the data is open to interpretation by the researcher. Furthermore, because the MBBs conversion experiences are often associated with psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual challenges; qualitative research method enable the researcher gain valuable information necessary for addressing the objective of the study.

²⁶ Stephen Gorard, *Research Design: Creating Robust Approaches for the Social Sciences* (London: Sage Publication, 2013), 34.

²⁷ Steinar Kvale, *Doing Interviews* (London: Sage Publication, 2008), x.

²⁸ Monique M. Hennink, *Understanding Focus Group Discussions* (New York: OUP USA, 2014), 43.

Sampling

Two categories of participants formed the main units of analysis for this study: the MBBs and some selected Traditional²⁹ Adventist. The first group consisted of four MBBs; two of which are pastors; while the other two are church members. The second group was comprised of seven participants; three administrators, two district pastors, and two church elders.

Criteria for the Sampling

Both categories that are sampled were selected by the use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a criterion-based selection of participants or units of study based on the researcher's inclusion criteria. It is locating information-rich individuals who hopefully can provide valuable information necessary for addressing the research objective.³⁰ The focus group study mainly consisted of MBBs that are in the church for more than three years and are self-reliance. Accordingly, selected interviewee had some experiences and interest on MBBs. Four of the pastors interviewed have once accommodated an MBB. The elders selected have for many years interacted with converts that are often brought or come by themselves to the church for assistance.

Data collection

In qualitative research, there are four notable methods for collecting information for analysis: interviews, observation, indirect questioning, and focus

²⁹ "Traditional" Adventist is a term used in this study to refer to Adventist from all backgrounds except Islam who are also referred to in the study as Muslim Background Believers (MBBs).

³⁰ Burke Johnson and Larry Christensen, *Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 168.

group discussions.³¹ Data for this study were collected through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.

Focus group discussions. Focus group discussions are described as “an interactive discussion between ... pre-selected participants, led by a trained moderator and focusing on a specific set of issues.”³² The interactive participation in a group discussion can generate more information than in a quantitative survey. This is because “during the group discussion participants share their views, hear the views of others, and perhaps refine their own views in light of what they heard.”³³ Moreover, in the course of the discussions, “participants begin to ask questions or clarifications of others in the group, which may trigger them to raise additional issues or share similar experiences, thus increasing the clarity, depth, and detail of the discussion.”³⁴ Consequently, focus group discussion enables the researcher to gain in-depth insight on the subjects under consideration.³⁵ It is, for this reason, the researcher employed Focus group discussion with the MBBs.

Qualitative research interviews. Interviews are said to be the “most commonly used method of data collection in qualitative research.”³⁶ King and Horrocks argue that qualitative interview differs in important ways from other interviews. They compare qualitative interviews with Investigative journalistic

³¹ S. Wilkinson, “Focus Groups,” in *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, ed. Jonathan A. Smith (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication, 2015).

³² Hennink, *Understanding Focus Group Discussions*, 1.

³³ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Thomas L. Greebaum, *Moderating Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Group Facilitation* (London: Sage Publication, 2000).

³⁶ Nigel King and Christine Horrocks, *Interviews in Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publication, 2010), 2.

interview, Celebrity interview, and Job interview. The journalistic Interview is interrogative and confrontational; the celebrity interview is deferential and coaxing; job interview is may be challenging as it seek to elicits strength and efficiency; but the qualitative research interviews employed open-ended non-leading questions focus on personal experience.³⁷ The researcher conducted interviews with information-rich selected church individuals. These two methods are considered suitable to meet the objectives of this study.

Instrumentation

The goal of the study is to identify challenges for discipling MBBs in Northern Nigeria and to provide Biblical and Missiological responses. As a result, survey instruments are structured to enable the researcher to identify how discipleship of MBBs was done in the region. The semi-structured questions were designed to examine the participants' feelings, opinions, and suggestions. Two instruments were designed, one for the focus group and the other for the interviews.

Sample of Focus Groups Questions

1. How did you become a Christian (Adventist)?
2. How can you describe your initial experience after conversion?
3. Describe the church's respond to your experience at that time?
4. How will you want the church to response to someone with a similar experience to yours?

³⁷ King and Horrocks, *Interviews in Qualitative Research*, 2.

Table 4. Focus Group Discussion Guidelines

Questions	Objective
General Introduction?	To introduce the purpose and aim of the research To explain the rules governing the discussion
How did you become a Christian (Adventist)?	To understand the reason for their conversion To determine the motivating factors behind their conversion To see the process in relation to the Word of God
What was your initial experience?	To understand the nature and degree of their challenges To determine the cause(s) of those challenges To know how such experiences influence them
Describe the Church's response to your experience?	To determine the church's support or lack of it To discover how understanding was the church of their experiences To determine how the church influence their nurture
How would you want the church to respond to someone with your similar experience	To determine what the church is doing that is suitable To determine areas of improvement To determine practices that should be discontinued To elicit general recommendations

Sample Interviews Questions

1. How can you describe your experience (or the experience of someone you know) with converts (genuine or otherwise) from Islam?
2. Evaluate the church's response to converts from Islam?
3. What are the church programs/activities/Bible studies you know that are focused on discipling converts from Islam, in Northern Nigeria

4. What will be your general recommendation about discipling Muslim converts in Northern Nigeria?

Data Analysis

The careful analysis began with grouping and summarizing the respondents' answers to each question. What each group of answers described was labeled according to how the information answered the research objectives. Finally, these categories or key findings were grouped into major themes.

Data Collection Procedures

The data was collected through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews the focus group discussion was conducted in the researches village when the four participants came to pay him condolence for the dead of his uncle. With only four questions and four participants, data collection reach saturation point in about an hour. Saturation point is reached when information begins to be repeated; at that point “any additional data collection becomes redundant, because the purpose of qualitative research is to uncover diversity and context, rather than a large number of participants with the same type of experience.”³⁸ The researcher took notes of the discussion.

There are several ways of gathering interviews data. Data can be obtained by: a face-to-face interview, a telephone interview, postal questionnaires, an E-mail interview or a combination of two or several of the above mentioned.³⁹ Due to time constrained in the one hand, and the advantages of E-mail interviewing on the other hand, the researcher emailed to the selected interviewee the five interview questions.

³⁸ Hennink, *Understanding Focus Group Discussions*, 43.

³⁹ Roger Sapsford and Victor Jupp, *Data Collection and Analysis* (London: Sage, 2006), 94.

Among the many advantages of the E-mail interviewing, Hays and Singh highlighted that it is “an inexpensive way to reach many people, rather than using the traditional audio-recorded interview. E-mail interviews can also be more convenient and comfortable for the participants because they can respond in a time frame that works for them and in an environment that may be less anxiety-producing than a face to face interview.”⁴⁰ Another advantage to the researcher is that e-mail interviews are “essentially immediately available participants’ transcripts,” they tend to be “less cumbersome for the researchers.”⁴¹ Moreover this type of interview do increase accuracy of participants and increase the involvement of the participants in the interpretation of data.

The researcher open-coded both the focus group discussion and the interview data. The process of open coding eliminates irrelevant materials, repeated materials and provides the important points relevant to the theme under discussion. Therefore, the qualitative report is written from the organized dataset not the original transcription. It should be noted that direct quotes are occasionally drawn from the transcript and included in the presentation.

Presentations and Description of Findings

The presentation of the research findings are categorized according to the two units studied: the MBBs focus group discussions and the traditional Adventists interviewed. For confidentiality the MBBs are referred to as MBB1, MBB2....MBB4; while the interviewees are designated Participant A, Participant B...Participant H. Also complete references of the interviewee are not provided.

⁴⁰ Danica G. Hays and Anneliese A. Singh, *Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Settings* (New York: Guilford Press, 2011), 270.

⁴¹ Hays and Singh, *Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Settings*.

Findings from the Focus group Discussion

The findings from the Focus group discussions are summarized under four questions discussed. A brief summary and analysis of findings is provided in Table 2 next page.

Table 5. Analysis of Findings from the Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Question	Objective	Findings	
Question 1. How did you become a Christian (Adventist)?	Conversion Motif	MBB1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration from Koranic school • Influenced by a Christian godly lifestyle • Invited by a friend to attend Evangelism program
		MBB 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faked conversion for ulterior motive • Expectation of material benefit • Truly converted by an Evangelist's prayer
		MBB 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenced by a friend he admire • Attends church programs
		MBB 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sign of the Cross in the dream • Study Koran alongside the Bible
Question 2. What was your initial experience?	The nature and causes of MBBs Challenges	MBB1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I face dead threat • Ostracized by my family and lost everything
		MBB 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was thrown out of the house • Lost my job • Things were very tough
		MBB 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was beaten mercilessly • Was withdrawn from government school and after one year, sent to Islamic school
		MBB 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I narrowly escaped assassination • My father was killed because of me
Question 3. Describe the Church's response to your experience?	To determine the church attitude to MBBs	MBB1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church took me to Jos and carter for my needs • An elder took me through a bible study every Sunday for about two months
		MBB 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially felt abandoned by the church • Contemplated going back • Was encouraged when employed by the church as a pioneer.
		MBB 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When he finally return to the church, the church was skeptical to accept him • He was given as an accommodation, a car garage of one elder's house. • Survival became unbearable, so he ran away to another town, where he located another church
		MBB 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I lived with an Adventist pastor • The Church sponsored my wedding
4. How would you want the church to respond to someone with your similar experience	To determine areas that the church needs improvement	MBB1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devote time to have Bible study with the person • Provide for his/her needs
		MBB 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even when it is obvious that the person has some ulterior motive, the church should accept and be praying for, and with him him/her
		MBB 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church should care more for the MBBs
		MBB 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The church should pray for discernment to be able to distinguish the fake from genuine converts.

The reason for conversion to Christianity. The first question for the group discussion was “How did you become a Christian (Adventist)?” The objective of the question was to determine the underlying motive and the means through which they became converted. Of the four participants in the study, three got converted to Christianity in denominations other than the Adventist Church. Likewise three of them were influenced by a godly lifestyle. The other one was a zealot who was actively persecuting and killing Christians. One day he killed a pastor, and was traumatized by that experience. In answer to his prayer, the MBB said he encountered God in the dream and was shown a sign of the cross thrice.

The motivating experience of MBB 1 was a dissatisfaction and discontentment with the Koranic school. It was in search for a better life that providence led him to a devoted Methodist Christian in Porthcort who had a saving influence over him. Similarly, MBB 2 was looking for financial and material breakthrough. So he faked conversion with the hope of obtaining money, just as he saw his friends had done successfully. That brought him to the man that God used to lead him to Christ.

It could be observed from the responses that the MBBs did not have a solid understanding of the gospel at the initial stage. However, that is not peculiar to converts from that background, even many that are baptized from other denominations started with very little knowledge of Adventist teachings. Perhaps Jesus was alluding to this when he said:” Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father ... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Conversion should mark the beginning of learning about the Christian teachings, an never should it be the end of the study.

The MBBs initial conversion experiences. The second question was “How can you describe your initial experience after conversion?” The information this question was aimed at soliciting was to determine the nature and causes of MBBs Challenges. Among all the group members, the following experiences were common in varying degrees: rejection by their families, persecution from fellow Muslims, struggles for making a livelihood, and suspicion of their conversion by churches.

It is worth pointing out that MBB 4, it was his father that sent the assassins almost killed him. But years later his father visited him and they had reconciliation. The MBB said “We spent a whole night discussing the issue. My father told me that this new faith I have found, I should not disappoint the church, I should hold on to it firmly.” The sad event happened when his father returned to his hometown. What is notable in this experience is that, at the time of conversion, parents are often very angry and aggressive and can do anything, even killing their own child. But with time, the aggression subsides, and in a few instances, reconciliation is eventually made. This is the experience of many converts from other denominations. Hence it is good to temporarily separate an MBB from his immediate community if his Christian identity will be discovered by his parents, especially in predominantly Muslim towns.

The Church’s response to the initial experiences of the MBBs. the third question was “Describe the church’s respond to your experience at that time?” This question was aimed at determining the church members’ attitude towards the MBBs and to what extent the church has responded to their peculiar challenges. Three of the participants acknowledged that there exists some elements of suspicion and distrust regarding the genuineness of their conversion. However, that was not a hindrance to the receptivity and hospitality some of them enjoyed. The physical needs of three

participants were provided to a large extent by the church, it is only MBB3 that had difficulties at long run.

Recommendations by the MBBs to the Church. The final question for the discussion group was “How will you want the church to respond to someone with a similar experience to yours?” This question meant to determine areas that the church needs improvement upon. Based on their responses on their peculiar experiences, the participants gave suggestions for a better response to some others that may have similar experiences to theirs. The following are deduced from their recommendations: the church members should befriend the MBBs so that they can feel at home; someone should have a personal bible study with the converts; the church should not relent in her welfare to MBBs until they have something doing; the church should pray for the spirit of discernment in identifying the genuine converts from the fake ones, and finally the church should be more patient and tolerant towards the MBBs.

Next the study presents the findings from the interview discussion. The same pattern is observed.

Findings from the Personal Interviews

There were eight people who were interviewed; however, only information relevant to the research is included. This section presents the summary of interview findings in five organized subheadings corresponding to interview questions. Table 6 below provides a succinct analysis of the key findings.

The experiences of the interviewee with the MBBs. The first interview question was “Can you describe your experience (or the experience of someone you know) with converts from Islam? The aim for the questions was to determine the attitude and perception the interviewee had about the MBBs. It was discovered that the individuals interviewed had either favorable and/or unfavorable experiences with the

MBBs. Some viewed the issue from their own perspectives, others from the perspective of the converts, still others from both sides.

From a personal perspective, Participant A described the experience as not pleasant. He seemed to be alluding to the unrealistic expectation of the converts who eventually left when his financial demands were not met.

Table 6. Analysis of Findings from the Interview Responses

Interview Question	Objective	Findings
Question 1. Can you describe your experience (or the experience of someone you know) with converts from Islam?	Church members' perception of the MBBs	Participant A The MBB was demanding too much from the church When his materialistic expectations were not met, he simply left.
		Participant B The Church provided him with a furnished apartment.
		Participant C But for reasons unknown to us he left
		Participant D They tend to be more dedicated to the church
		Participant E They came in search of meaningful life
		Participant F The genuine one are always zealous and committed Others come with ulterior motives of either dubbing the church or individuals in the church
		Participant G A Muslim loves and like to be prayed for It is difficult to determine genuine convert, hence the tendency to mistrust them
Question 2 Evaluate the church's response to converts from Islam?		Participant A The response is encouraging at the beginning, but later the demand seems to over weigh the church
		Participant B The church is trying, only that sometimes the sustainability is the issue
		Participant C The response is discouraging. They are not nurtured but left on their own
		Participant H The response is generally cold. Response is always with doubts and fear of the unknown
		Participant D The church has been too theoretical in her response to converts from Islam
		Participant E The response is positive, they are supported financially and materially However members are skeptical to accommodate them
		Participant F Participant G The Church does not have any good response plans towards accepting Muslim converts There is a risk and security threat associated with the MBBs, hence the reluctance from church members

(table continues)

Table 6 (continued). Analysis of Findings from the Interview Responses

<p>Question 3</p> <p>What are the church programs/activities/ Bible studies you know that are focused on discipling converts from Islam, in Northern Nigeria?</p>	<p>Ongoing MBBs Discipleship in northern Nigeria</p>	<p>Participant A</p>	<p>The Church has no tangible focused program for MBBs</p>
		<p>Participant B</p>	<p>Presently I have no idea</p>
		<p>Participant E</p>	<p>As for program and activities for the Muslim converts in northern Nigeria, I am not aware of any for now</p>
		<p>Participant F</p>	<p>As for program and activities for the Muslim converts in northern Nigeria, I am not aware of any for now</p>
		<p>Participant G</p>	<p>The Church does not have any set of laid down programs or activities for our Muslims Converts</p> <p>I must confess that in the area of programs, or activities that are geared at discipling Muslim converts, the church in Northern Nigeria has not done well. That is one of the hurdles that the church needs to jump across.</p>
<p>Question 4</p> <p>What will be your recommendation about discipling Muslim converts in Northern Nigeria?</p>	<p>To determine areas that the church needs improvement upon</p>	<p>Participant A</p>	<p>The church should have continued training of members on discipling MBBs</p> <p>Study materials should be developed and made available for churches.</p>
		<p>Participant B</p>	<p>People who are interested and qualify should be appointed and be given such a responsibility.</p> <p>The Union/ Conferences should make budget provision for discipling the MBBs.</p> <p>Materials should be made available and translated into Hausa to meet the need of our territory.</p>
		<p>Participant E</p>	<p>There is need for a deliberate plan, not only in discipling but also empowering the MBBs</p> <p>The issue of “Wisdom House” at Jos should be revisited for completion and equipping.</p>
		<p>Participant G</p>	<p>Exploit the use of small group Bible studies</p> <p>Develop centers where the MBBs can be taught skills in order to earn a living rather than being dependent</p> <p>Be patient with them because change is really challenging.</p> <p>The church should accept them for what they are; and Provide Bible studies materials.</p>

But in the experience of Pastor Cartier, the church did provide the necessary comfort for the converts, yet he left. He stated that “such an encounter may likely be a stumbling block for members to trust converts from Islam and render a good care as it should be.”⁴² However, he acknowledged that some MBBs have proven to be exceptions.

Speaking from the converts’ perspective, Participant C describes them as so dedicated to the church. He probably was referring to the few exceptions. In the same vein, Participant E reckons that the genuine converts are always zealous and committed.⁴³

Participant F’s experience as a chaplain of the Adventist hospital in Jengre, afforded him the opportunity to understand how much Muslims desire prayers. He seemed to argue that Adventists (especially in Jengre hospital) perception of MBBs may be totally incorrect in some cases. But then Participant F further explained that often the Muslims (MBBs as well) suspect one another. This explains why sometimes the MBBs will not want exposure to each other at the initial stage.⁴⁴

Participant G narrated his personal experience that clearly balanced the two perspectives. He said:

Murtala Bala (pseudonym) a Muslim convert lived with me for over six months when I was in the field. He was hardworking, and never wanted to eat the food of idleness, but believed in Pauline injunction that he who does not work, should not eat. Personally, his actions did not create any doubt or suspicion whether his conversion was genuine or otherwise, but within me, I took him with a pinch of salt, the reason being that some of them have come in the name of proselytization but have ended up being mischievous and a security threat to those who kept them.

⁴² Participant B, interview by the author, Abuja, July 27, 2015.

⁴³ Participant E, North West Nigeria Conference, Kaduna, Interview by the author, May 16, 2015.

⁴⁴ Participant F, North Nigeria Union Conference, interview by the author, Abuja, July 27, 2015.

Participant G said it so well that it cannot be any better. The inability to read human hearts and to discern their motive, coupled with several unfavorable encounters with the MBBs is the cause of suspicion and fear from church members. This probably explains why another pastor did not accept Bala even with the recommendation from Participant G. Unfortunately, at the moment Bala is no longer in the Church.⁴⁵

Participant G explained the cause of the suspicion and fear of the church members. In northern Nigeria, a convert to Christianity (from Islamic background) is seen as an infidel who is denounced by his parents and relations, and deserves to die. So, both the convert and the religion into which he or she was converted are at serious risk. It makes headline news if someone from Christianity is converted to Islam, but it is never the case if it is the opposite.⁴⁶

What stands out in all the responses to this question is the concern to provide effective discipleship to MBBs. However, associated with this concern is the difficulty of ascertaining the right and safe course of actions to take, judging by the realities surrounded such. In general, the experiences do not encourage active involvement or the participation of the church in discipling process for the converts.

The interviewee evaluation of Church's response to MBBs. The second question was "Evaluate the church's response to converts from Islam?" The question required the interviewees to evaluate how the MBBs are responded to by the

⁴⁵ Participant G, West Central Africa Division, interview by the author, Abuja, Kaduna, Interview by the author, December 28, 2015.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Adventist Church. Just like the previous responses, the interviewees have varied evaluations; however, the common opinion is that the church is not yet doing as she ought.

For Participant D “the Church has been too theoretical in her response to converts from Islam.”⁴⁷ In other words, there is much talk about discipling MBBs and no substantial reality on the ground. Similarly, Participant C bluntly stated that the church’s response to Islamic converts is discouraging. While this submission might be true in some cases, it does not appear to be the case all over.

Participant A, B and E commend the church’s initial response, and at the same time noted that sustainability is lacking.⁴⁸ Participant E and Participant A agree that accommodation is always the big issue. Participant F is also of the opinion that the church has not made concerted effort in this respect.

Participant G’s response provides a synthesis of what the other respondents have said. His view is “The church’s response to converts from Islam is never divorced from my [individual] personal opinion.” What is done or not done in response to MBBs is basically as a result of “the inability of the church to recognize whether they are genuine or not.”⁴⁹ Participant G also emphasized the risk and threat, within and without, associated with accepting the MBBs

This section summarizes the interview responses of selected members of the church in northern Nigeria. The group expressed concern over the many perceived

⁴⁷ Participant D, District Pastor, North East Nigeria Conference, interview by the author, Jos, July 25, 2015.

⁴⁸ Participant B, interview by the author, Abuja; Participant A, District Pastor, North West Nigeria Conference, interview by the author, Kaduna, July 19, 2015; Istifanus, President North West Nigeria Conference.

⁴⁹ Participant G, West Central Africa Division, interview by the author, Abuja.

ulterior motives of some Muslims who come claiming conversion. Many churches and individuals have taken the seemingly endless financial burdens of the converts until they finally get exhausted. It was a common consensus that individual members and churches normally do their best but this sometimes gets abused by the converts.

The ongoing discipleship program for MBBs in northern Nigeria. In order to determine whether there is any ongoing discipleship program for Muslim converts in the region, the following question was asked: “What are the church programs/activities/Bible studies you know that are focused on discipling converts from Islam, in Northern Nigeria?” This was the main question which directly addressed the project’s objective. Without mincing words, all the Church leaders interviewed agreed that there is no ongoing structured program geared towards discipling converts from the religion of Islam.

However, as pointed out by Participant A and Participant E, “there are materials by Pastor Luka Daniel Tambaya known as ‘Understanding.’” The author is familiar with the said materials, but whether those materials are suitable for discipling MBBs is another issue. Mentioned is also made of Daniel Chiroma’s recently written study materials, titled *Gari ya Waye*. While this is a commendable effort, however discipling MBBs in northern Nigeria has to do with much more than having materials. Discipleship in the sense that is referred to in this paper is a sustainable program that results in the spiritual maturity of MBBs to the point that they become effective witnesses.

The interviewees’ general recommendations about discipling MBBs. The final question was “What will be your recommendation about discipling Muslim converts in Northern Nigeria?” The recommendations given by the interviewed bordered on: continues training of members, appointing qualified and interested

individual as AMR coordinators, developing relevant materials for discipleship, empowering the MBBs to become self-reliant, etc. It is also recommended that the Wisdom House⁵⁰ be revisited for completion. That is importance as it will provide solution to the need for empowering the MBBs.

Analysis of both the Focus Group and Interviews Findings

Whittaker says, “Data analysis is the process of making sense of the information a person has collected and searching for what lies below the surface content.” He adds that this “involves seeing patterns and meaning in the accounts and it is inevitable that this involves you exercising your judgment.”⁵¹ To Bryman, this means that data are examined to “extract core themes that could be distinguished both between and within transcripts.”⁵² This was precisely what the researcher sought to accomplish in the data analysis. Owing to this fact, the researcher organized the data thematically; and from both the focus group discussions and the interviews six all-encompassing themes emerged. The themes are: the challenges of MBBs; the nurture environment for MBBs; the need for the MBBs discipleship Ministry; the need for relevant discipleship materials; and an empowerment plan that can help the MBBs become self-dependent.

⁵⁰ Wisdom House a multipurpose center consisting of hostels, offices, classes, worship hall, and workshops. This is intended to be both a rehabilitation and skill acquisition center for MBBs.

⁵¹Andrew Whittaker, *Research Skills for Social Work* (Glasgow, Great Britain: Bell and Bain, 2009), 88-89.

⁵²Bryman, 13.

The challenges of MBBs

Associated with their conversion, MBBs face different kinds of challenges of varying degrees. The trials either come from their former Muslim faith community, or from among the church members. The nature of the challenges range from physical assault, economic losses, disownment, and sometimes death threat. The social life of typical Muslims in Northern Nigeria is that of a communal. Muslims converting to Christianity upset their families and communities, and they get ostracized, if not killed. On the other hand, the Christian community is always fearful and distrustful of the MBBs motives. That kind of attitude greatly influences the church's response to the challenges of the converts. The inability of the church to be sensitive to individual peculiar needs and to adequately fill the vacuum created in the life of the converts as a result of their conversion, greatly discourages MBBs.

The nurturing environment for the MBBs

The findings reveal that the initial motivation for all the converts was anything other than the desire for salvation. However, in spite of whatever those motives were, God overturned it for his good pleasure. The MBBs are like many other converts to the Adventist Church, who usually do not have adequate knowledge of the fundamental teachings of the Scriptures. Perhaps Jesus, who is all-knowing, was alluding to this when he commanded that those baptized are to be taught "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19-20).

How will the MBBs be taught to observe all the things whatsoever that Jesus has commanded? In the interview, Participant F noted how suspicious the Muslims are of one another when it comes to accepting the Christian faith. Even after conversion, the MBBs are still skeptical of each other. The reason is not farfetched; they are conscious of the possibility the other might be a spy. Hence a preferable

discipling process should be a personal bible study or in a small group of not more than five with MBBs not exceeding two.

Though none of them said so directly, it could be observed that the MBBs were better helped in understanding the Christian faith by a personal bible study. This kind of approach helps in addressing the convert's peculiar theological questions, and it affords more understanding about practical Christian life experiences.

The need for the MBBs Discipleship program

The survey responses and the evidence from the brief report of MBBs discipling activities in northern Nigeria, all attest to the fact that there is no ongoing sustainable, well-structured program, for such converts. Again, quoting Pastor Bindas, he lamented that “in the area of programs, or activities that are geared at discipling Muslim converts, the church in Northern Nigeria has not done well. That is one of the hurdles that the church needs to jump across.” It is however observed from some responses, and the report of activities, that the church is making noticeable efforts. The main issue remains that, the church is capable of doing better.

Furthermore, the study on discipleship in the second chapter of this study noted that discipleship is not just a program or event. It is not limited to time or to new converts only. Sometimes discipleship is dwarfed by focusing too much on programs to the expense of having a personal, intimate and committed relationship with Jesus. The occasional seminars and workshops, though very good, do not constitute discipleship.

One may ask, what constitutes a sustainable well-structured discipleship program? To answer this question, the instance will be made of Adventist Youth Ministries and Women's Ministries, which are sustainable functional ministries in the church. Among many things that make them so are the following: a team of

leadership, well-articulated and define roles and responsibilities, continues source of funding, on-going training, consistent focus on the mission, balance between theory and practice, etc. What this study advocates is that, discipling MBBs should be approached like a ministry, not a program. The ministry should have similar features as those outlined above.

The need for Relevant MBBs discipleship Materials

God has given humanity the Bible to be “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Were man able to understand it, lesson study would have been unnecessary? However, lesson studies are essential owing to human limited understanding occasioned by sin. If all believers need bible studies, certainly believers from Muslim background need it most.

Pastor Participant D emphasized in his interview that “They [MBBs] came with questions which Islam can't answer, hence the need for the Church to provide such answers...most of them came in search of a meaningful life.”⁵³ Islam is a religion that denies the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the trinity. It denies the atonement and teaches salvation by works. Therefore a carefully developed Bible study that will address these key doctrines of the Christian faith is essential for any meaningful discipleship of MBBs to flourish. This study aims at developing a discipleship manual for MBBs.

⁵³ Participant D, District Pastor, North East Nigeria Conference, interview by the author, Jos.

There is a need for MBBs Empowerment

It has been identified by this study that MBBs need financial empowerment and the church should be responsible for this. In addition to approaching the MBBs discipleship as a ministry, it should also be considered a project. As such, there should be an intentional sourcing of funds, and judicious application of the same towards enabling the MBBs to be self-sustaining believers who do not depend on the church perpetually. The church in northern Nigeria discovered this sometime ago and has written a proposal to that effect. The General Conference of the Adventist Church sponsored the building of a multipurpose center consisting of hostels, offices, classes, worship hall, and workshops. This is intended to be both a rehabilitation and skill acquisition center for MBBs. The building is referred to as the Wisdom House.

Participant E made reference to this in his response to an interview question, by saying “The issue of ‘Wisdom House’ at Jos should be revisited for completion and equipping. When that is done, then you can have a place for them for empowerment and discipling.”⁵⁴ From this comment it is obvious that the project is yet to be completed. What is required to bring this project to completion is less than 25% of the total amount so far spent, all of which came from the GC. This is another area that the church can improve upon. The house is completed, what is left is to equip the place and make it functional. However, while waiting for that to be done, are there no other avenues for empowering MBBs? This study shall attempt to demonstrate the availability of other means to the same effect.

⁵⁴ Participant E, North West Nigeria Conference.

Intervention Design

In the analysis of the research findings presented above a program with several activities emerged as possible, viable, and suitable interventions to the identified challenges of discipling MBBs in northern Nigeria. Thus this study advocates and seeks to demonstrate the following four-phase program as being a biblical and Missiological response to the subject under consideration. The proposed intervention shall be done in four phases.

Program Phase One

The first phase of the program will focus on conducting awareness-creating and motivational seminars. The goal for this will be to reorient the attitudes of members, encourage and at the same time empower them towards MBB discipleship.

Program Phase Two

The second phase shall focus on constituting AMR leadership and initiating an MBBs discipleship ministry in the local church. The membership of this ministry shall be trained and equipped on how to provide spiritual nurture to MBBs. They will also be responsible for sustaining interest and momentum of church towards the discipling of the same.

Program Phase Three

The third phase will be preparing the church to make provision of empowerment scheme for helping the convert from Islam to become self-dependent. The aim is to address the social and physiological needs of the converts thereby enabling them overcome the materials and financial challenges attending their conversion.

Program Phase Four

The fourth stage of the intervention program will be the development of the discipleship manual. This manual is intended to serve as discipleship materials for the MBBs, and at the same time information source materials for church members on discipling the same. The MBBs discipleship ministry members shall be trained on how to use the materials.

The implementation of the above-identified interventions shall be in this order. First, the researcher shall secure the permission of the church, through its board, to conduct the study. Second, he will work with the Church Board in selecting AMR leaders in the church, and the formation of an AMR council that will result in ministry to MBBs. Third, developed materials shall be used in the training of the AMR council. Fourth, the trained AMR leaders shall lead in weekly small group discussion on topics relating to MBBs discipleship within a whole quarter. Finally, conclusion shall be made highlighting lessons learned and challenges encountered, with a suggestion for further study.

Limitations

The intervention designed take into consideration the Popular Islamic worldview only. Moreover, because of the sensitive nature of the subject, from the Muslim standpoint; some sources of information could not be named in this paper. For instance, the MBBs interviewed and the names of the towns and villages associated with their stories are not included. The researcher desires that this project be subject to stringent confidentiality processes. If it falls in the wrong hands, it could trigger a serious crisis, even blocking the way for further initiatives.

Conclusion

This chapter has, on the basis of the previous chapters, and the contextual realities designed survey instruments and gathered information from well informed individuals. The outstanding revelations are the following: the MBBs face challenges that required special considerations; that MBBs are better nurtured individually; the church lacks a strategized approach to MBBs discipleship; the church lacks a sustainable well-structured program geared towards discipling them; the church needs to be intentional towards discipling MBBs by training and providing relevant literature for nurturing them; and, the MBBs should be empowered to be entirely dependent on the church.

On the basis of foregoing findings, an intervention for discipling MBBs was design. The next chapter shall narrate the implementation process and evaluate the result of the project designed.

CHAPTER 5

INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION

In the preceding chapter, the factors that are militating against discipleship of converts from Muslim background are identified. An intervention program to address the challenges was proposed. The purpose of this chapter is to narrate the implementation process, from planning to evaluation.

Anticipated Outcome of This Project

The most desired outcome of any discipleship activity is the nurturing to maturity believer, who in turn will nurture other believers. It is a fact that no one can predict the future. God is in control and, ultimately, his will shall be done. Yet, God expects us to think about the outcome of whatever we do.

Many discipleship efforts are abandoned because they are considered unsuccessful by churches and Missiologist. In most cases this was based on the expectations they placed on themselves and on the desired outcome from their efforts. The Adventist Church in Northern Nigeria, having begun some MBBs discipleship efforts, has discontinued as a result of lack desirable outcome. This project seeks to awaken, motivate and encourage the church to assume discipling of MBBs in a plan and structure way.

The project should be evaluated by how well it response to the identified challenges of nurturing the MBBs into self-sustaining believers. The potential strength of the project lies not on the number of converts discipled. It is rather based on how successful it becomes in: changing the negative perceptions of Adventists

about the MBBs; motivating the church to initiate a special discipleship ministry for MBBs; making provision for empowering the converts to be financially independent of the church; providing suitable study materials for discipling the MBBs; and putting structure that will make the approach sustainable.

Preliminary Preparation

As a way of providing a biblical and Missiological response to the identified challenges of discipling MBBs in northern Nigeria, the study proposes the following programs and activates: seminar and workshops to orient and educate members; an empowerment scheme for helping the convert to become self-reliance; formation of special ministry for MBBs; and developing discipleship materials. In order to implement these intervention measures, the following initial plans were necessary

In recognition of the significant role the district pastor of the Adventist Church Kaduna has in determining the effectiveness and success of the proposed programs, the researcher had a meeting with him, on Sunday, September 13, 2015 in Kaduna. The meeting took place as planned in Kaduna. The purpose and aim of the research was explained the entire process and the necessary actions the church should make to guarantee the success of the program. The expectation from the Church pastor and the church board were spelled out. The roles of both the pastor and the church board, for actualization of the intended outcome are shown below.

The Role of the District Pastor

The pastor should demonstrate by words and action that he is interested in discipling the MBBs. He is to own and cast the vision in the congregations. When he own the program, it will be easy to encourage the church members into participation. The pastor is the one to convince the church board into accepting and supporting the

program. So the specific roles of the pastor in this project are: to persuade the board into seeing the necessity of such a program; and to incorporate the proposed activities into the church calendar of activities.

The role of the Church Board

The church board, as the highest decision body of the church, is to approve the program. The board is also to appoint the local church AMR leadership personnel and to constitute an MBBs discipleship ministry. About AMR and the MBBs discipleship ministry, it is explained below.

The Local church AMR leadership personnel

The AMR Personnel of the local church to be appointed are

1. AMR: leader,
2. AMR Secretary,
3. AMR fellowship and prayer Coordinator,
4. AMR leader for promotions and training, and
5. AMR leader for special project.

All these individuals must be church members in good and regular standing who have demonstrated high interest in, or concern about MBBs. In addition to being in good standing, these individuals should have good interpersonal relationships and have the ability of working well with church leadership. Moreover, they should possess the ability to coordinate, promote and conduct training.

The AMR leaders will serve as the AMR Local Church Committee Chairperson. His main goal is to facilitate mutual relationships between the Church members and the MBBs' and by extension, the Muslim Community within the

locality. The leader is the chief promoter and coordinator of AMR activities in the local Church. He shall be a member of the Local Church Board.

The MBBs discipleship ministry

The MBBs discipleship ministry should consist of, in addition to the AMR personnel identified above, the following:

1. Elder in charge of AMR Ministry-Assistant chairperson,
2. Personal Ministries Leader
3. Sabbath School Leader,
4. Youth Leader, and
5. Women Ministries Leader.

The main focus of this ministry is to ensure that AMR ministry is promoted regularly among members, it also ensure that the church has a positive relationship with the Muslim Community. Other roles of the ministry committee are: to identify mission challenges and opportunities; to develop an outreach plan for the department; to ensure that members are enrolled in different discipling activities; to mobilize resources for MBBs discipleship and outreach; and to identify and promote activities that will enhance mutual relationship between the church and the Muslims.

Because the leaders of other ministry departments of the Church (AYM, AWM, and SS) are members of the MBBs discipleship ministry committee, that way the AMR is promoted at all levels. These MBBs discipleship Ministry members will be trained on how to give personal bible study to the MBBs. After the training, they are expected to trained others and also model same with the MBBs. Some of their activities are: fellowship, intercessory prayer, promotions, and empowerment programs.

Fellowship meetings. At this forum, the ministry members identify all possible discipleship activities such as Bible study, prayer sessions, consultation meeting, organizing for the AMR day, and organizing of symposiums, etc. Such activities are well planned for alongside organizing and running fellowship meetings with new converts.

Intercessory Prayer. The ministry identifies, recruit and form intercessory prayer teams. After acquiring and developing prayer requests, intercessory prayers programs are conducted at group levels and church levels. Where necessary, fasting is declared either among the ministry members or for the entire church.

Promotions and training. The ministry identifies training needs for the members and organizes and conducts AMR awareness seminars to the members. It also ensures the availability of study materials for discipling MBBs.

Empowerment and Special Project. It is the role of the ministry to identify special income generating projects that can be used as a spring board for the new converts who have been thrown out of their families. With the support of the pastor, the ministry leader promotes and collect special offering from time to time for this purpose. The ministry also promotes self-reliance among the new converts by helping them to identify and establish an income greeting business. People who can help in skill acquisition are identified and assigned converts with inclination to given trades or handwork.

At the end of the deliberation, the pastor showed willingness to cooperate and support the program. He was given the documents about the AMR Leadership, MBBs discipleship ministry and the calendar of events. And he promised to pursue the plan as scheduled.

The Calendar of Activities

The above mentioned activities are given specific times in order to enable the pastor and the church board to include the program into their plans. The table below shows the programs, time and objectives. At the end of the deliberation, the pastor showed willingness to cooperate and support the program. He was given the documents about the AMR Leadership, MBBs discipleship ministry and the calendar of events. And he promised to pursue the plan as scheduled.

The First Church Board Meeting

On Sunday, September 20, 2015 the district Pastor held church board meeting. During the meeting, the church board voted to permit the implementation of the program in their church and to support where necessary. The church also resolved that the appointment of the AMR personnel and the constitution of the ministry community be done after the workshop. They hope by that they will have sufficient knowledge and understanding on how to go about with the selection.

Program Implementation

This section narrates the chronological implementation of the proposed intervention program. The program has four phases of focus: Seminars, formation of MBBs discipleship ministry, empowerment scheme, and development of Biblical lesson for specifically for the said converts.

Table 7. Program Implementation Calendar

Date	Activities	Facilitator(s)	Objectives
September 25-26, 2015	AMR Awareness Workshop	I.D.Maviah D. F. Chiroma Participant F	To motivate and generate interest for AMR Focus
			To Show the Biblical Mandate for discipling MBBs
			To reveal the Church's overall performance in discipling MBBs
			To share the dream and Way forward in MBBs discipleship
September 27, 2015	Meeting with the Church Board	District Pastor I.D.Maviah	To discuss the implementation process of the project
			To appoint AMR Coordinator and Secretary
			To constitute AMR Council
	Meeting with the AMR Council	District Pastor I.D.Maviah	To educate the Council members on their roles and responsibilities
			To discuss the project details and step-by implementation process
Oct. – Dec.	Implementation	AMR Coordinator	Give 10 Minute introductions of the lesson after Sabbath School Lesson
			Discuss in small groups every Sabbath Afternoon

Program Phase One

The first phase of the program was orientation and motivational seminar. The seminar was held on September 25-26, 2016. Due to other church engagements, the two other facilitators that were to co-present in the seminar had notified the researcher four days earlier of their inability to attend. The researcher was the main speaker for the event. Four presentations were made, each ending with time for question and

discussions. The first presentation was on Friday evening. The divines service sermon was another presentations and the last two were done Sabbath afternoon.

First Presentation: Why AMR? The first presentation was titled “Why AMR?” The goal of the presentation was to educate the church members about what AMR is and how the ministry runs. The presentation focused on the possible reasons AMR is not functioning in the Adventist Churches in Northern Nigeria. Then the challenges facing AMR ministry in the local church/territory is highlighted. Among the reasons is the misconception about the ministry. The general notion has been that: it is for Arabic speaking people; it is an argumentative business; Muslims are violent people who cannot be reached; it is for a few interested individuals; it is for Muslims background believers only; it is a difficult ministry; and it is time wasting and unproductive in terms of numbers.

It was emphasized in the seminar that AMR is: a service entity under Mission office; about building bridges of understanding with Muslims communities; an interdepartmental venture. AMR should be integrated to as many outreach approaches as possible, and it is for all believers who have established contacts with Muslim in their walk of life.

Among the reasons churches shy away from actively involving in AMR are: Fear factor-Islamophobia towards Muslim due to their militant spirit; limited understanding of the AMR functions- Thinking its only about studying scriptures; leadership do not sensitized the members and promote it; cultural barriers; theological reasons; negative attitude among the adherence of Islam and Christianity; MBBs are not a priority to many churches because of other pressing needs; and the many challenges associated with nurturing the new converts from Islam.

The Second Presentation: The Ishmael Blessing. The second presentation was in during the divine service. The topic was “The Great Commission in the Context of Islam.” Prophet Muhammad, who originated the religion of Islam, is claimed by Muslim to be the descendant of Ismael the son of Abraham. On the basis of this, the preacher demonstrated some evidences of God’s work among the Ishmaelites.

Both Christianity and Islam held the belief that Abraham was the friend of God. Abraham is not only held in high regard by Muslims, but they claim to emulate him, in serving one true God in total submission to His Will. This has being identified as a common ground which has strong implications for discipling Muslim background believers. Then the negative notion about Islam is explained.²⁵²

The key text in the presentation was Isaiah 60: 6-7 which state “All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my alter, and I will glorify my glorious house.” (Isa. 60:6, 7 Emphasis supplied). Here the prophet points clearly that Ishmaelites will submit “unto the name of the Lord thy God (God Almighty), and to the Holy One of Israel (Jesus Christ).” Isaiah 60:9 (emphasis added).The preacher dwelt on the common understanding of the passage among Missiologist that an eschatological fulfillment is the conversion of Muslim to Christianity. The church members were encouraged to be involved in actualizing the great commission among the people of Islam.

²⁵² See Chapter 2 under the subtitle “Negative notions about Ishmael”

The Third presentation: Discipling MBBs. This presentation discussed on: Who is a disciple? What is discipleship?²⁵³ What are the existing and experimented approaches of discipling MBBs?²⁵⁴ Which approach is suitable to northern Nigeria context?

The earlier reluctance of the disciples to engage in gentile mission was made a case study. Contrasts were made between their attitudes to the gentiles' mission and the Adventist attitudes to Muslim discipleship.

The main focus of the presentation was on the merit and demerit of both Extraction and Insider approach to MBBs discipleship. In view of the apparent risk from Muslim extremist, Extraction approach is considered suitable in the northern Nigeria for now.

The Final presentation: Way forward. A brief historical review of MBBs discipleship in Northern Nigeria was highlighted. Beginning from the efforts of Pastor Luka Daniel, to Mavalla, and to the coming of GCAMR, attended challenges to MBBs discipleship were discussed.²⁵⁵ Then the discipleship approach proposed by this study was presented and discussed. The MBBs discipleship ministry was explained. The roles of the ministry members were highlighted. Issues of accommodation and empowering the MBBs were deliberated upon. Promotion for volunteer craftsmen and women who can assist willing MBBs acquire trade was made. There were four volunteers; the detail is presented under the section on MBBs empowerment.

²⁵³ Lesson materials for the discussion on disciple and discipleship are taken from Chapter 2 of this project.

²⁵⁴ Lessons are developed from the "Biblical Principles for Contextual Discipleship of MBBs" in chapter 2; and also from "Approaches to Discipleship of MBBs" in chapter 3.

²⁵⁵ See detail discussion in chapter 3

Program Phase Two

Formation of MBBs Discipleship Ministry is the second phase of the program. After the workshop, a second Church Board meeting was held the following day, Sunday September 27, 2016. During the meeting, the AMR leaders for the local church were appointed. Also, the board constituted the MBBs discipleship Ministry to include the AMR and the departmental leaders identified above. The church board also decided that a special offering be collected every last Sabbath of the month for MBBs discipleship-related expenses.

The district pastor inaugurated the AMR leadership and the MBBs discipleship Ministry committee on Saturday, October 3, 2016. On the following day, Sunday, September 4, the district pastor held an orientation with the Discipleship ministry community members. During the meeting, the roles and functions of the committee were discussed. After deliberating on the functions, the materials intended for the program was presented.

Two set of materials were given. One set of materials was for small group studies among the members. The first material was intended at further motivating and encouraging the membership on the need and how to go about discipling the MBBs. The lesson has 12 topics designed for a small group discussion. That was to serve as a Sabbath afternoon discussion lesson for the fourth quarter of the year 2015.

The second set of materials was lessons study designed specifically for the MBBs. The lessons aimed at addressing theological questions that are typical of converts from Islamic background. The AMR leaders who were to be involved in a personal bible study with the converts are expected to study the materials to be prepared for the assignment.

Beginning from October 10, to the last Sabbath in December, the materials were studied every Sabbath afternoons. The attendance average 45 persons, this is because the last three weeks in December, many people had traveled.

The materials are structured for small group study. The size of each group was from seven to ten participants. Moderators of various groups summarize the points generated from the discussions in their units. After 30 minutes of group study, the congregation converges together, and each group leaders present the summary of their discussion.

After the studies were done, a special offering were collected. This offering is dedicated for the empowerment of the MBBs and is kept as a Trust fund. By the end of December 2015, the Sabbath afternoon offerings, together with the monthly Offering had amounted to ₦78, 000.00. As at June 2016, the church has contributed a total of ₦195, 000.00 for the MBBs discipleship-related expenses and empowerment.

Program Phase three

The third phase of the program is to prepare the church members to provide empowerment Scheme. The primary goal of the MBBs discipleship ministry is to provide physical and Spiritual nurture to the converts. It is evidenced by the research that converts from Islam are faced with physical and social challenges. They face dead threats, they lost most of their belongings, and they become fugitives in need of shelter, food, clothing and other necessities of life. They are ostracized by their former community, and they are rejected by friends and family. In most instances, the physical need for shelter and sustenance is very noticeable.

In view of the reality of the risk involved in living with a MBB, the church has resolved to set a budget for renting an accommodation for them. This is to protect

both the converts and the church members. This budget provision includes a minimum upkeep of the converts pending when they will become self-sustaining.

The MBBs ministry has identified some income generating businesses that are simple and less capital intensive in nature. The converts shall be introduced to these opportunities and be assisted to acquire the skill necessary to start something that can provide for their financial needs. Already in the church, there are three volunteers Craftsmen who are ready to train interested MBB into a self-sustaining income generating vocation.

Moreover, the Church through the MBBs discipleship ministry has identified three Vocational Skill Development Centers in Kaduna. Two of the centers are run by the government while the other one is operated by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The Vocational Centers provide technical and vocational training for the unemployed. Marketable skills that will enable individual to be self-employed and be self-reliance are taught. The training cut across gender and educational status. Persons with or without formal education and even individuals with special needs are fitted into one program or the other.

The three identified centers run two programs: Apprenticeship Scheme, and Skills Acquisition Training. In the Apprenticeship Scheme program, interested individuals are “recruited and posted to Master Craftsmen/women who are informal sector operators to acquire marketable Vocational skills for decent job opportunities. The Trainers impart skills to the trainees using training facilities in their workshops.”²⁵⁶ The Centers are also equipped with the necessary personnel and equipment for the training of prospective participants. The following are the areas of

²⁵⁶ “Vocational Skills Development Programme | National Directorate of Employment Official Website,” accessed August 22, 2016, <http://nde.org.ng/programme-depts/vocational-skills-development-programme/>.

concentration that one can train on. Fashion design, bricklaying, building, dry season irrigation farming, Automobile repairs, Phones repairs, Woodwork, Carpentry, dry-cleaning, Plumbing, Secretariat studies, etc. The registration into these programs is as low as ₦500 to ₦2000 depending on the program. At the completion of the program, government give grand to participants in the form of equipment related to their training. The church has resolved to sponsor any MBB who desire the acquisition of skills outside those provided by the three volunteered church members.

This arrangement is for the meantime. The church already has a structure to operate a Vocational training Center in Jos. It is what has been referred to in this project as the Wisdom House. Most of the above listed skills and vocational training will be part of the trainings in the center. The building has hostel for men and women, workshop and offices, and a worship center.

Program Phase Four

For the spiritual nurture of the MBBs, intercessory prayers and Bible study are identified and viable tools. In the constituting the MBBs discipleship ministry, there is a coordinator for Intercessory prayers. The ministry has set aside, in addition to regular prayers, the last Sabbath of every month to fast for and with the MBBs. The church has incorporated that in her programs; however the participation is below expectation.

A onetime GCAMR director, Jerald Whitehouse had developed a series of witnessing and discipleship lesson titled, “Barakat Allah.” The lessons are contained in six books: Book One is a teacher’s guide for the series and is focus on how to establishing credibility in working among the Muslim; Book two present a Spiritual progression for the inquirer - this is where study of the Bible and Koran begins and

continues to the last book.²⁵⁷ These lessons were a major source book for the researcher in developing a manual for discipling MBBs.

In addition to the Barakat Allah lesson, the researcher consulted the West Central African Director for AMR, Zakari Kasuole to assist in the development of the manual. Kasuole occupied a position of an Iman in his community before his conversion to Christianity. He has a deeper understanding of the Koranic teachings and he is experienced discipling the MBBs.

A twenty-one lesson manual was developed. The introductory sought to explain what it means to be a disciple. The presupposition is that, until an MBB understand, and is willing to deny all, he is not ready for discipleship. The topics covered in the Manual are shown in the table below.²⁵⁸

Program Evaluation

There is now a renew interest and commitment towards MBBs discipleship in the Adventist Church, Kaduna district. Members are motivated and encourage; consequently, they are donating generously and studying to know how to be effective in helping converts from Islam. The tangible results that proves the effectiveness of the intervention are the following:

1. The AMR coordinator for the church are appointed
2. There is now an ongoing MBBs discipleship Ministry in the Church
3. There is a trust fund account for meeting MBBs needs
4. There is an empowerment provision for interested MBBs.

²⁵⁷ The list of topics covered by the Barakat Allah lesson is shown in Appendix A

²⁵⁸ Sample Lesson from the Manual are presented in Appendix B

5. There are materials developed to help the members on how to approach the MBBs discipleship, and
6. There is a manual developed for MBBs discipleship

At the moment, the church does not have any recent MBB. As such, the discipleship material developed to help them grow in faith could not be evaluated in terms of its effectiveness. However, two pastors who are MBBs recommended that the materials are very good.

Summary

In this chapter, the chronological implementation process of the proposed intervention is narrated. With the cooperation of the church pastor, the church embraced the program. As a result, there is now a structured-discipleship program that provides biblical and Missiological response to the MBBs various challenges. Some implications of what is learned thus far, and what could be anticipated for the future, will be listed in the following, final chapter.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, LESSON LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

For decades, the Adventist Church in Northern Nigeria has gained very few converts from the adherents of Islamic faith. The volatile nature of Islamic fundamentalism which has given rise to incessant religious crisis is a contributing factor. The fear engendered by the Muslims' religious intolerance and bigotry that often result in the indiscriminate killings and burning of churches, has dispirited Adventist from actively engaging in meaningful discipleship efforts toward the Muslims.

However, few converts from Muslim background have walked into the church over the years. It is noticeable that many of the few converts have backslidden. This study is motivated with the concern of finding means that can maximize the retention of such converts. Hence the purpose was to study the challenges of discipling converts from Muslim religious backgrounds with the aim to develop, implement and evaluate a process for their discipleship and to provide a viable strategy that will maximize their retention in the church.

The study first established a theological foundation for discipling the MBBs. Beginning from the last command of Jesus to his disciples that required them to make disciples of all nations, the study described who a disciple is and what is discipleship. Moreover, reaching all nations entails transcending cultural and language barriers,

contextualizing the message become inevitable. Hence the study defined and provided a biblical basis for contextualization.

The reluctance of the early church to engage in discipling the gentiles' nations is in part attributable to cultural boundaries and lack of a full understanding of the Will of God. Though in the Old Testament time, God set clear political, cultural and religious boundaries between the nation of Israel (Jews) and other nations (gentiles), he however enjoyed upon them religious obligation to the aliens among them. Also, the incarnation of Jesus in the NT provided a biblical model for contextualization that they needed to understand.

Then study research into literatures to glean what Missiologist and others have said and done in regard to MBBs discipleship. Bevans, Hiebert, and Travis models of contextualization are studied. The two outstanding approaches that are experimented by many in discipling MBBs are Extractionism and FDIC (Insider) methods. However, the form nature an extent to which these contextualization approaches are to be done has remained a point of debate. This study sided with the extractions approach because it is more biblical.

In order to increase the retention of the very few converts from Islam, it was necessary to discover the challenges that such converts are faced with and possible factors that give rise to backsliding among them. The study designed survey instruments and gathered information from well informed individuals. It was revealed by the surveys that: The MBBs faced real challenges; The MBBs are better nurtured Individually; The Church does not have ongoing Discipleship programs for MBBs; The church needs an MBBs discipleship Ministry; Relevant discipleship materials and frequent training are necessary, and there is a need for the MBBs Empowerment.

On the basis foregoing findings, the study designed and implements the following interventions. First, awareness-creating and motivational workshops and seminars were held. Second, a special MBBs discipleship ministry was formed, trained and equipped in the local church. Third, an empowerment scheme for helping the convert to become self-reliance was be put in place. Fourth, discipleship manual is developed and members are motivated and trained to disciple MBBs.

Conclusion

The Adventist Church in northern Nigeria has for the past twenty year being experimenting on discipling the converts from Muslim background. Series of seminar and workshops are conducted. Reports and proposals are written to outside donors and the church's higher body. However, the field is yet to witness zeal and passion towards this ministry. The challenges of witnessing to the people of Islam and discipling converts therefrom remain a matter that is begging for more prayerful attention of the church in northern Nigeria.

This project has started well, likewise the initiatives that preceded it. It will likely suffer neglect and abandonment, if close attention and supervision is not given to it. The researcher has indicted his desire to be redeployed to the northern Nigeria Union to enable him supervise the ministry to ensure its sustainability. When this ministry survives and is replicated in all the churches in northern Nigeria, it is potentially going to increase the overall retention of the MBBs.

Lesson Learnt

There are some lessons learned in the course of this study, they are as follows. The researcher learnt that there is deep-rooted resentment of Muslims by many Adventist in Kaduna district church and in most places in the north. Even though, as a

body and its building, the church has not suffer attack from Muslim fundamentalist, most members have lost properties, jobs, and love ones over the years. In addition to this, the attitude of some of the converts has dispirited many. Consequently, it was discovered that what the church has being doing for the MBBs, has not being out of love but due to a mere sense of obligation to God. This situation has a negative effect on members' motivation towards embracing the program.

There are certain Adventist Church leaders, who in the past have shown indifference regarding the Church's effort to the Muslim. During the study, the researcher interacted with two of them. It is remarkable how agreeable and concern they have become now are about the ministry. With time this burden will translate into demonstrable effort towards discipling the MBBs.

The researcher began the study with the presupposition that the main cause for a low retention of the MBBs is lack of study materials, and as such aimed at providing discipleship manual for the MBBs. In the course of the study it was learned that the reason for the low retention is so much to do with the church readiness and preparedness to disciple the converts.

During the study, it occurs to the researcher that, among the MBBs in northern Nigeria, there are three pastors in the church. One of the three Pastors is a Babcock graduate. The researcher learnt that these pastors are either afraid or reluctant to be engage in direct ministry to the Muslim. I then realized that the church leadership needs to know the reasons for that and work out a solution.

The researcher also learnt that most of the AMR programs from the General Conference down to the local Conference levels lie in the hands of director's and in their offices. These programs are neglected, or suffer poor implementation sometimes due to budgetary constraints.

Recommendation

The following recommendations have emerged as a result of this study. The leadership of the church in northern Nigeria should make it a requirement that every local church forms and operate AMR ministry. The MAR leadership should consist of persons who have demonstrated interest or concern for the Muslims, gifted with teachable spirit and a workable relationship with the church leadership. These individual should be trained equipped and empowered to function.

The study recommends that periodic special prayers and fasting be organized purposely for the Muslim. The prayers should focus, among other points, on God to open a door for the church to be effective in reaching out to Muslims, and for God lead the Muslims into saving relationship with him and enable the church to nurture same.

The study recommends that the MBBs discipleship ministry advocated and experimented by this study be replicated in all the church. The individual members of the Ministry should be trained on how to witness to and nurture converts from Islam.

It I also the recommendation of the study that the *Wisdom House* that was built to serve as a rehabilitation center for the Muslims background believers, be completed and put to use. The building should be made into skill acquisition center for all people so that it will not be seen as a collection point for only MBBs. If it is perceived as such, there is a tendency of the place becoming a target of the Muslims fundamentalist.

In the meantime, while the church is working towards making the Wisdom House functional, the church leadership should initiate a meeting with all the craftsmen and women in the region. The purpose of the meeting will be to identify and trained individual who will be willing to accept an MBB as an apprentice to their

craft. The various trades and crafts should be listed. Whenever there is an MBB that required skill acquisition, he or she should be assigned to any suitable master craftsman or woman. Out of AMR budget, financial assistance should be given to help in the process.

The church leadership from Union Conferences to the local church level should create annual budget for MBBs ministry related expenses. This budget should be at least 40% of the Evangelism budget of the entity. The Union and Local Conference leadership should make this obligatory to the local churches, and monitor compliance.

The study recommends that the church leadership periodically organized Union-wide AMR workshop and invites as many Adventist Missiologist who have, and /or are successfully working among the Muslims. These facilitators should be given the opportunity offer insights and share their experiences that can help in the MBBs discipleship Ministry in the region.

Finally, the researcher recommends that more studies be conducted on the following among many significant others: How to provide Biblical response to the Popular Islamic Worldview; How to witness to the northern Nigeria Muslims; How to start and maintain a Center of Influence in northern Nigeria; How to motivate and encourage the MBBs to witness among their former faith communities, etc.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

WHY AMR?

Why Adventists Engage in a Spiritual Discussion with the People of Islam.²⁵⁹

A. Islam's Spiritual Heritage

Bism Allahi al-rahman al-rahim, – In the name of God the merciful and compassionate The Bible identifies Arabic peoples, the adherence of Islam, who inhabited the “eastern country” as the descendants of a faithful Abraham. The history of the Muslim peoples, therefore, begins with the prophet Abraham and his descendants through Ishmael, his firstborn son by Hagar the Egyptian. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 16:15, RSV.**

Abraham was given a special promise that the descendants of Ishmael would become a great nation. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 17:20, RSV.**

His name (Ishmael) was given by God through the angel, and stands as a perpetual reminder of God's mercy. Ishmael means “God hears”—and thus understands, and will respond in your times of need. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 16:7–11, RSV.**

Again when Hagar and Ishmael were moving to Arabia the angel appeared to her. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 21:17–21, RSV.**

The descendants of Ishmael and the other sons of Abraham through Keturah were given the eastern country and are referred to as the children or people of the east. They are the progenitors of the Arabs. Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, traces his lineage back to Ishmael through his firstborn son, Nabaioth. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 25:6, 12–18**

There is evidence of a spiritual partnership between the sons of Abraham through Isaac (the Jews) and the sons of Abraham through Ishmael (the Arabs and the prophet of Islam, Muhammad). God's plan for these other children of Abraham was that:

- They also preserve truth;

²⁵⁹ This is adapted and modified with permission from the presenter. These were, initially, Sabbath Sermon notes, presented in *the Trans-European Division, Adventist-Muslim Relations Day, September 2, 2006*, by Dr. Jerald Whitehouse.

- They work in partnership with the children of Isaac in keeping the knowledge of God alive;
- As traders they could carry the light of the knowledge of the true God to distant places.

Ishmael and Isaac together buried their father Abraham. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 25:7–10, RSV.**

Ishmaelites (the descendants of Ishmael had become traders in spices) rescue Joseph (a son of Jacob, son of Isaac). **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 37:25, 28, RSV.**

This rescuing of Joseph by the Ishmaelites and taking him to Egypt was part of God's plan. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Genesis 45:5–7, RSV.**

Jethro (a Midianite, Arab, one of the “eastern” children of Abraham), provides refuge for Moses who is escaping for his life from Egypt. Jethro has kept alive the worship of the One true God and therefore teaches Moses, since the knowledge of God among the Hebrew people in Egypt was nearly lost, and Moses had received most of his education in the pagan religions of Egypt in the court of Pharaoh. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Exodus 2:15, 16, 21; 3:1, RSV.**

Job, an eastern man—an Arab—endures suffering, provides an example of patient submission to God and gives us the most complete picture of the Great Controversy between God and Satan in all of Scripture. **It's in the Bible, the Torah, Job 1:1–2:10, NEB.**

The sanctuary was dedicated with an anointing oil made of olive oil (from Palestine) and spices (which could only be obtained from the children of the east who were traders in spices (the other sons of Abraham).

Rechabites, eastern people, of the same lineage as Caleb, are commended as an example of steadfast faith by the prophet Jeremiah at a time when there was little evidence of faith among the Hebrew people. **It's in the Bible, Jeremiah 35:14, 18, 19.**

Wise men, from the east (from Persia?), brought gifts to the infant Jesus. **It's in the Bible, the Injil, Matthew 2:1, 2, 9–12.**

Following the time of Jesus (Isa), the line of Isaac is traced through the early followers of Jesus and then the Christian church. However, with the ascent of Christianity to the position of a political power, it began to persecute those who were attempting to hold on to a pure Biblical faith. Groups such as the Waldenses kept a knowledge of the Scriptures alive when the mainline Christian systems were limiting access to the Bible and killing those who were found in possession of it. These faithful followers of Biblical truth are referred to in the book of Revelation as the “church in the wilderness” (Revelation 12). There were also followers of the one God of Abraham out in the Eastern lands—the deserts of Arabia. Some of them were followers of Jesus.

During the dark ages, the church preserved copies of the Scriptures when mainline Christianity was forbidding possession of them and trying to destroy copies of manuscripts. In the eastern lands (Arabia) you have the Hunafa (Hanifs) who were preserving the knowledge of the one true God and a day of judgement. So God was working through the followers of the line of Isaac in the form of the followers of “the Way” of Jesus, and also through the descendants of the line of the other sons of Abraham (the eastern line) by preserving knowledge of the one true God of Abraham and of the coming Day of Judgment.

Note these two quotations, one from a Christian historian, and the other from a Muslim historian which note the presence of people of simple faith in the One God in the eastern lands of Arabia.

The Nestorian Christians of Hirta (on the Iran/Iraq border) formed a close community, calling themselves “servants of God” whose inner unity transcended traditional Arab tribal differences. (Samuel Moffett, Christian Historian.)

Both Jews and Christian immigrants to the desert found a ready welcome among those Arabs who upheld the Mesopotamian-Abrahamic tradition. Together, they consolidated that tradition in Peninsular Arabia which came to be known as Hanifiyyah. Its adherents, the hanif(s), resisted every association of other gods with God, refused to participate in pagan rituals, and maintained a life of ethical purity above reproach. . . . The hanifs always stood above tribal disputes and hostilities.” (Isma’il al Faruqi, Muslim historian.)

So, the question is: Since God seems to have, at various times, manifested Himself in and through both lines of the sons of Abraham, is it possible that we should search for ways of building on our commonalities and working together to prepare for the coming of Jesus? On the left you have the People of the Book (the Qur’anic term for followers of the Bible). On the right you have within Islam the concept of God’s last day special people also preparing for the end of time as they understand it.

B. The Implication of Islam’s Spiritual Heritage in Adventist Mission

As Seventh-day Adventists corporately and individually seek to fulfill this end-time spiritual mission, there is need to clarify an understanding of their role and relationships to the Islamic religion. The following, summarizes the relationship between Seventh-day Adventists and the faith of Islam.

1. Adventists affirm that Islam is one of the Monotheistic faiths that trace their heritage back to Abraham. That, in fact, the meaning of Islam (submission to God) is a desirable objective to be shared by all.
2. Adventists understand that God has been active in revealing truth through chosen messengers, some of them known to us through writings that have been preserved under the guidance of God’s Spirit and others unknown to us today. It is understood that the original intent that Islam has in God’s purpose contributed to the restoration of certain important truth, namely:

- The truth of One God at a time when this truth was being threatened by a variety of understandings of the Godhead in Christianity, the idolatry present in the Arab world at the time, and Zoroastrianism and other eastern religions present in the Arabian peninsula.
 - That a day of judgment is coming for everyone, which requires that we live righteous lives of accountability before a merciful and just God.
 - Social justice, which leads to respect of individual rights and right to life in the face of rampant revenge killing and other injustices such as female infanticide which were practiced at the time.
3. Adventists believe that, due to the work of the evil one, most religions have fallen victim to apostasy, that the original spiritual values of the religion have been gradually compromised in the majority of followers. Within Islam this may be manifested in such ways as certain folk beliefs, belief in power objects, places and people, and in militant intolerance and violence. God has through history preserved a people of authentic faith among various people groups and religious faiths in the face of apostasy, ridicule and persecution. We affirm that within Islam there are such people of authentic faith sincerely concerned about their submission to the One true God and their preparation for the Day of Judgment.
 4. Adventists have reason to recognize the contributions of Islam to knowledge in general, and in particular in the sciences, and perhaps more important, in the knowledge of the Greek language and the preservation of Greek and Hebrew literature and manuscripts which are key to our substantiation of the accuracy of the Biblical text which we have today.
 5. Adventists affirm a shared belief in the Oneness and unity of God. We do not agree with attempts of other religious bodies to partition God into various persons and see the manifestation of God through Jesus for forgiveness of sin and the Holy Spirit for the power of His presence as not contradictory of this basic notion of *tawhid* (unity, oneness).
 6. Adventists further affirm the strong common spiritual focus with Islam on preparation for the Last Day, the Day of Judgment and the coming of Jesus (Isa el Masih).
 7. Adventists share with Islam a common concern for avoiding anything that would destroy physical health or quality of life. Alcohol, tobacco, substance abuse, and unclean meats (for example, pork) are to be avoided. It is of interest to Adventists that in recent years a number of Muslim leaders have issued statements citing tobacco and substance abuse as forbidden equally with alcohol and pig meat.
 8. Adventists see themselves as part of God's last day movement to prepare a people to meet Him at His coming and affirm this concept as it is presented in the Qur'an in such concepts as *taqwah* (*mutaqeen* - those who have *taqwah* or inner righteousness), and *Hanif* (those who are uniquely faithful in their belief and practice in relation to God).
 9. Adventists do not accept the triumphalistic attitudes of those religious groups which would seek either to impose their beliefs on others or see their particular

belief system as conquering in earthly terms those of other beliefs. God is the ultimate judge and supreme ruler of the universe and will restore oneness and truth and the physical earth in His ordained time and manner. Therefore, Adventists affirm the position of Islam of no coercion in religion and respect for those of other faiths and for basic human rights.

10. Adventists understand that there are particular areas of disagreement in beliefs particularly in the area of God's handling of the sin problem, the details of His revelation of Himself, and other areas. But these are not to be made points of argument or attitudes of superiority but provide an opportunity for respectful exchange.
11. Adventists encourage active dialogue and sharing with Muslims particularly in those areas of common faith and practice which can mutually encourage spiritual growth of all. Areas of difference are seen as opportunity for mutually respectful dialogue for understanding and honest inquiry and evaluation.

C. Hence, the reasons we engage in dialogue with Islam are:

1. To contribute to peaceful co-existence in an increasingly hostile world. To be an influence against the militant rhetoric on all sides.
 - a. Mutual respect and understanding as fellow children of Allah and having common roots in the prophet Abraham. All carry the "breath of God" in them.
 - b. Clarifying misunderstandings of the other in our respective communities.
 - c. Able to see God's image in the other.
2. To explore common ground that we can build around in cooperative action.
 - a. The universal values, principles that are imbedded in all faith systems, that are essential to human dignity:
 - i. Right to life
 - ii. Freedom of religion
 - iii. Right to property
 - iv. Right to family
 - v. Right to mental well being
 - b. Mutual spiritual encouragement as we face an increasingly chaotic world.
 - c. Work together against the increasing godlessness, materialism, hedonism that is threatening the very core values of our respective faiths.
3. As we, with respect, define with each other our uniquenesses, we can learn from each other.
 - a. Develop a respect for the faith tradition that lies behind the differences.
 - b. Misunderstandings and differences can be an opportunity for learning.
 - c. Keep the differences in perspective in relation to the very important commonalities we share.
 - d. Requires that we engage with what people actually mean, and be more careful in how the language we use affects the other.

APPENDIX B

PUZZLES & PRINCIPLES

Have you ever tried to figure out God? Have you intentionally sat down and tried to wrap your human mind around the Infinite? Quite a task isn't it? In fact, as many authors far wiser than I have concluded, we will spend all eternity basking in, wrestling with, and being overcome by the immensity and love of our great God. Praise God! I look forward to that eternity of ever expanding worship (which has already begun here).

For our purposes, where do we start? How do we imagine a way to understand God? Let me suggest an idea to help us grasp our task: understanding God is like doing a grand puzzle. How do you do puzzles? Are you a border person or a color grouper? Or, do you categorize shapes and sizes first? Have you ever noticed how people do puzzles differently? Each person seems to have their own special technique and process, but have you noticed that the ultimate goal is the same? They want to finish the picture!

So it is with life and religion. People through the centuries have tried to finish the puzzle of God, but alas, humankind doesn't hold all the pieces. So God continues to send revelations of His "puzzle" and we endeavor to collect the pieces and arrange them into a coherent message of love, mercy, grace, and purpose. Quite a task isn't it? Especially when some pieces seem to be colored in such dark hues that they don't readily fit into our "picture" of God.

Have you wrestled with some of those darker pieces? You know, the ones that include natural disasters killing 300,000 people in a day; the death of young, innocent children; the presence of such intense evil; the ever-deepening injustices of humankind in the world; and even the seesaw struggle of day-to-day living.

It changes you doesn't it? When the pieces of life and God just don't fit into the boundaries that you have put on God, something breaks. What happens then? Either you deny the piece, maintain your boundaries on the Infinite God, and thus your understanding of God shrinks—not to mention your internal view of the world fails to correspond to reality. Or, you accept this piece, enlarge the previous boundaries, and your perception of God grows accordingly. If you choose the second option, then not only does your picture break and take on new beauty yet to be discovered, but you also experience another aspect of brokenness: humility!

Quite frankly, that is where our quest for God and our desire to share our pictures of Him with others must begin: broken humility. Maybe you are asking, so what is the importance of humility? We rarely see it today in the business world, and, rarer still in religious circles defined by labels, judgments, and comparisons.

Have you ever seen the ridiculous display of a proud person arguing about that which he/she feels so certain? They are so sure they are right and will fight (or argue) anyone thinking otherwise (or judge them as incompetent to the issues at hand). An easy example of this can be found on any elementary school playground where some all-knowing child is teaching other all-knowing children! Pride of what we think we know gets louder and louder in the face of

others who think they know as well. The end result: much more heat than light; and much more noise than learning! So, if our goal is to finish the picture, then we must acknowledge that we don't know it all. Again, that is humility.

Our journey begins with this radical acknowledgment: God and His Truth are bigger than we are. We are all beggars (often blind by genetics, culture, or choice) seeking the jewels of His character that we find in the world, in revelation, in each other, and in experience! Let's humbly begin this ultimate search for God's Truth by bringing all of our pieces of the puzzle together, instead of prideful arguing over our fragmented segments. Let's humbly share and help each other forward in our worship and understanding of God!

PRAYER FOCUS

Seeing the Picture of God

- Ask for humility, honesty, respect, and calmness as you are challenged by many new ideas in these meetings.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide you in seeing an ever more accurate and glorious picture of God.
- Pray that God will use these meetings to call each of us deeper to Himself.
- Spend some time meditating on the picture of God that you see now.

Small Group Activity 1.1

Let's take some time together to learn about some other important principles for this kind of a search. In your group, name some other principles that have helped you hear other people, learn from them, and grow closer together.

- What sort of attitudes help you to listen better?

- What sort of attitudes help others to feel that you are listening?

- What sort of attitudes must be present to help the conversation lead to a positive end?

- What sort of attitudes about the other person encourage healthy communication?

- Try to synthesize, as a group, a list of absolutely necessary principles for positive communication and interaction with people in this search for Truth—God’s Ultimate picture
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COMBINED CLASS

Now that we have established some basic principles for interacting with each other and being able to learn from each other, let’s take some time to gain glimpses from each other’s view of God. Here are some questions to get you thinking and working together.

- Is it possible for someone to have a different view of God than you do?
- What do you do when their picture is different?
- Do different cultures see God in a different way? Does that mean their pictures are contradictory or complementary?
- How would you describe God?
- Think of as many qualities or attributes of God that you can. For example: He is the All Knowing, the Savior, the Lifter-Up of those that have fallen, etc. (Again, keep in mind that not everyone’s picture will be the same and some of these attributes may be associated with a deeply personal and powerful story—like in the Old Testament stories of God’s names)
- Finally, are there any darker aspects of God that you might not like but know that the picture of God must include them? For example, the God of judgment, the God Who causes death (as well as to life—probably one you have already recognized), the One Who lowers the proud, etc. Take some time and add these aspects to your list as well.

Principles and Attributes

Hopefully, as we dialog and share these principles between the groups, we will be better armed for the task ahead. There are four foundational attitudes a Searcher for Truth/God should have. They are also needed in order to meet others, discuss ideas, and come to valid conclusions based on the evidence presented.

Humility – none of us can claim complete knowledge of God

or truth, therefore, we need to meet each other and the task of determining truth with a very real sense of humility.

Honesty – in our discussions, we need to be honest about

ourselves and about the information being discussed. The sort of honesty that acknowledges truth wherever it is found, even to the point of admitting when that truth undermines our previous conclusions!

Calmness – high-pressure emotions or loss of control rarely

if ever benefit the conversation, the relationship, or the search for truth. Stay calm!

Respect – each person has come to their conclusions because

of life experiences that we might not know anything about. We need to treat one another with respect as we dialog and learn from one another.

APPENDIX C

SPIRITUAL GROWTH PROGRESSION FOR THE MUSLIM END-TIME INQUIRER/BELIEVER

Jerald Whitehouse, Director
Global Center for Adventist Muslim Relations

STEP ONE (Barakat Allah Book 1 is a teacher's guide for this series) - Establishing Credibility

This is the foundation upon which all the rest builds. Unless the “change agent” is accepted in the understanding of the target group as a godly person, a person truly submitted to Allah and not a “*kafir*,” there is no basis for further work. This is not something one does as “pre-evangelism” in phase one and then moves on to other more important things. This must pervade the entire ministry at all times. This includes all the activities one engages in to establish this credibility. Please note that the purpose is not merely to establish a friendly relationship or to break down prejudice so we can move on to more important truth. This will be easily seen as a gimmick if this is the understanding. This establishing of credibility has several very specific components:

1. To be known as fellow believers, those followers of the Book and of Allah who are true, not of those that have apostatized, or are not seriously submitted to Allah.
2. To be known as godly, praying people--as Muslims perceive this.
3. To be known as “clean” people. Clean in our life style, in our not eating of forbidden things, and morally.
4. To be known as caring people.
5. People they can come to for answers to personal spiritual concerns.

STEP TWO (BARAKAT ALLAH BOOK 2) - Spiritual progression for the inquirer - this is where study of the Holy Books begins.

1. We are fellow believers
2. The true signs of righteousness as noted in the Qur'an and the Torah.
3. Trusting in all the Holy Books, including the Revelation that came before - the Torah, Zaboor, Injil.
4. Personal study of the Holy Books requires that I engage in a spiritual struggle to understand Allah's will for me (*ijtihad*).
5. I am not alone in that struggle, Allah will send His very presence (*sakinah*) into my heart to lead me to greater faith.
6. When man sinned, and when I sin, it is more than just forgetting or being misguided. It changes my mind and heart. My heart becomes broken and deceitful. I cannot change it myself.
7. The only remedy is to ask Allah to create a new heart within me, a heart open to obedience and submission to Him.
8. The prophets all had a personal, covenant relationship with Allah. That is what He desires of His Hanif today.

9. Allah is close to those who approach Him in personal supplication, prayer (*doa 'a*).

STEP THREE (BARAKAT ALLAH BOOK 3) - Spiritual progression for the serious inquirer.

1. Allah desires to give us blessing, power directly to protect us from evil forces. This power over evil forces is mediated through prophet Isa.
2. The Hanif will put their trust only in Allah, not in power objects, places or power people.
3. Facing the judgment is a fearful thing. Only the mediation that Allah appoints will be effective.
4. I need not fear the judgment if I trust in prophet Isa as the mediator appointed by Allah.
5. The end of time is marked by the return of Isa el Masih, and the resurrection.
6. In the last day there will be two groups of people--true believers (Hanif) and unbelievers. Believers can look forward to the blessing of the resurrection.
7. Death is as a sleep--the next thing we will know is the resurrection. There is no special power possessed by dead men.
8. As we live submitted to Allah in preparation for the day of judgment, it is encouraging to know that God's way of restoring honor in His family that has been shamed by my sin is that He forgives.
9. The believers --Hanif--can look forward to eternity in paradise.
10. There are among all religions a faithful few who are trying to follow a straight path in submission to Allah. The special message for this time is the call to be a part of Allah's special last day people--the Hanif.

STEP FOUR (BARAKAT ALLAH BOOK 4) -Progression of thought in the understanding of the Sacrifice:

1. The sacrifice was God's gift to man to cover his sin.
2. All the prophets offered a sacrifice regularly in memory of the gift of God to cover their sin.
3. Abraham's son was ransomed by a great sacrifice (don't argue over which son it was).
4. In trying to understand this tremendous sacrifice, a better sacrifice is accompanied by inner righteousness (taqwah).
5. The covering of taqwah is a gift from God. It also includes the gift of a new heart from God.
6. This practice of sacrifice was pointing to the greatest sacrifice--the gift of God Himself to man.
7. Isa the mediator came to give Himself in service and to give His life voluntarily as the great sacrifice--God's gift to cover man's sin.
8. Isa's specific mission was to deliver people from their sin.
9. Belief in Isa as our mediator and trusting Him to forgive our sin will put us right with God.
10. The Jews thought they killed Isa, but they did not.
11. Jesus gave his life voluntarily as the tremendous sacrifice.
12. God's way of restoring honor in the family after the shame of sin, is to accept the shame upon Himself and to sacrifice Himself.
13. The confession of the new believer is a confession of faith in Isa's great sacrifice, the gift of Allah Himself to cover our sin.
14. That confession is sealed by the observance of the communion meal.

STEP FIVE (BARAKAT ALLAH BOOK 5) - Spiritual progression for the believer.

1. As I begin this new life of a believer in Isa, Allah will continue to increase my faith with His presence in my heart--the *sakinah*.

2. We experience the forgiveness of Allah through Isa el Masih, and the power of his presence through the Comforter, the Holy Spirit (*sakinah*).
3. I show the blessing of Allah in the way I live--in abstaining from things that would harm my life, health, reason, or faith; and by exemplifying those life-giving qualities of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, patience, goodness, kindness.
4. Part of my living as a Hanif is acknowledging Allah's ownership of everything through returning a tithe to Him as well as the Zakat offerings.
5. Allah warns us specifically about not communicating with the spirits of dead men.
6. Allah has a special covenant with his Hanif or those who are *mutaqeen* (righteous). The sign of that covenant is the Seventh day Sabbath.
7. The Sabbath (sign of the *mutaqeen*) remembers that it is Allah who created the universe, who creates a new heart within me, and who will give to me eternal rest in paradise.
8. Most people do not observe this sign but follow other traditions. But the *sunnah* of Allah never changes.
9. Allah has gradually restored all the key truths beginning with the truth that there is only one God. The Hanif are His final people to restore a complete faith and be ready to meet Him at the end of time.

STEP SIX (BARAKAT ALLAH BOOK 6)--Spiritual growth in fellowship with God's Last Day People

1. My faith deepens as I understand the role of the Hanif in the Great Controversy between Allah and Iblis, particularly at the end of time.
 2. Allah has been at work in the Muslim peoples and in other peoples as he has faithfully worked to restore the truths for this time that have been lost.
 3. As I understand why Allah has taken so long in solving the problem of sin, in restoring honor in His family in response to the shame of sin, it deepens my trust in Him. The judgment is part of His way of answering all questions that might be asked about His government by even unbelievers. What a merciful God!
 4. Allah's mercy and compassion are further demonstrated after the judgment as He allows a period of 1000 years for even faithful believers to further understand His mercy in not allowing unbelievers into paradise.
 5. I understand that I am part of a body of believers around the world who are being prepared to meet Isa at His coming within all people groups and religions. We are united by our common beliefs. Although we may not be able to meet and work together at this time because of the political and religious walls that keep people apart, Allah will unite us completely in His time.
 6. The most important pilgrimage is the spiritual journey of knowing Allah better, trusting in Isa as my mediator and for forgiveness of my sins because of His great sacrifice, and know how to worship Him better. As a sign of that spiritual pilgrimage and of receiving the new heart, and of a commitment to continue to be one of Allah's truly submitted followers, His Hanif--Allah has provided the ceremony of baptism which is described as the "coloring of Allah."
 7. Allah has continued to send His Spirit of Inspiration to guide His people, including through special visions to selected messengers in these last days. This is to help us be ready for the coming of Isa and the day of judgment.
 8. Allah's blessing in this spiritual pilgrimage will continue forever as we fellowship with Him and other believers throughout eternity.
- Evaluating Receptivity and Spiritual Growth Status

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