

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Missiology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A CONTEXTUAL STUDY ON LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NEW ADVENTIST ISLAM CONVERTS IN DODOMA CENTRAL CHURCH DISTRICT, TANZANIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION

Researcher: Richard Khaniki

Faculty Advisor: Olaotse Obed Gabasiane, PhD

Primary Advisor: Prof. Olaotse Obed Gabasiane

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This study explores the lived experience of new Adventist converts from Islam in the Dodoma Central Church District, Tanzania, with the aim of identifying contextual implications for mission work. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research captures the voices and perspectives of recent converts who embraced the Seventh-day Adventist faith between 2015 and 2024. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the study uncovers key factors influencing their conversion journey, including spiritual convictions, personal encounters, social dynamics, and doctrinal challenges. The findings reveal that both the opportunities and barriers faced in the conversion process, highlighting issues such as familial rejection, identity negotiation, and the need for culturally sensitive discipleship. Based

on these insights, the study proposes mission strategies that respect Islamic backgrounds, promote inclusive faith communities, and strengthen pastoral care for new converts. The result offer valuable guidance for Adventist mission planners, evangelists, and church leaders engaged in Muslim-majority or mixed-faith contexts.

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IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION

A project

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Missiology

by

Richard G. Khaniki

May 2025

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE



Primary Advisor
Olaotse Obed Gabasiane, PhD



Secondary Advisor
Baraka Manjale Ngussa, PhD



Program Coordinator, MAMiss
Olaotse Obed Gabasiane, PhD

Dean, Theological Seminary
Feliks Ponyatovskiy, PhD

AUA Main Campus

Date: May 2025

Dedicated to my wife, Wema Richard Khaniki and
my children, Godfrey, Rehema and
Gabriel Richard Khaniki

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study, discussing its background, significance, and primary issues under investigation. It outlines the research purpose in detail, clearly stating the specific problem being examined. Additionally, the chapter presents the research questions that will guide the inquiry, ensuring a focused approach. It establishes the study's boundaries through delimitation and defines key terms to ensure clarity and understanding for the reader.

By establishing this foundational understanding, the chapter effectively sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of various factors influencing the conversion process from Islam to Christianity within the specific context of the Adventist community.¹ Particular attention is given to the Dodoma Central Church in Tanzania, which serves as a key site for this investigation.

The selection of the Dodoma Central Church as the focus of this study is justified for several key reasons:

1. Notable Number of Converts:

Dodoma Central SDA Church has witnessed a significant number of conversions from Islam to Christianity over recent years.² This makes it a valuable case study for understanding the factors influencing these conversions and the

¹ Church Clerk, *Dodoma SDA Church, Statistical Report*, 4th Quarter, 2023.

² Ibid.

challenges faced by new converts within the Adventist community in Central Tanzania Field.

2. Significant in the Adventist Mission Context:

The Church has played a prominent role in Adventist mission efforts in the region, particularly in outreach to Muslim communities. Its activities and programs provide a rich context for examining the dynamics of conversion and the church's role in supporting new believers.

3. Supportive Infrastructure for Research:

The church's established leadership, resources, and documentation of members provide a structured environment for data collection. Access to records and the willingness of church leaders to facilitate research enhance the feasibility and reliability of the study.

4. Strategic Location and Influence:

The Dodoma Central SDA Church is located in Tanzania's capital city, making it a hub for diverse social, cultural, and religious interactions. Its central position allows it to serve as a meeting point for individuals from various backgrounds, including those converting from Islam to Christianity. This strategic location provides a unique opportunity to explore conversions in a setting where different influences converge. Furthermore, the chapter examines the implications of these conversions for developing effective mission strategies within the region.

Background of the Study

The conversions of 46 individuals from Islam to Adventism in Dodoma Central Church, Tanzania, present a significant phenomenon, given the region's predominant religious landscape and historical trends. As Simon S. William articulates in his study on religious conversion, the decision to convert is deeply

personal, involving a complex interplay of spiritual, emotional, and intellectual factors.³ These conversions have sparked interest in understanding the motivations and experiences of converts, as well as their implications for Adventist mission strategies. Therefore, this study seeks to examine these conversions to gain insight into their underlying motivations and their implications for future mission work.

Dodoma Central Church, located within the Central Tanzania Field of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, offers a compelling backdrop for a study of conversions from Islam to Adventism. This unique setting allows for a deeper examination of the dynamics involved in the conversion process. The willingness of individuals from Islamic faith to join the Adventist Church highlights the importance of understanding this significant spiritual transition. Exploring these conversions not only sheds light on personal faith journeys but also informs the broader implications for the Adventist community.

According to Adventist-Muslim Relations (AMR) report from the Central Tanzania Field (CTF), the number of baptisms from Islam to Adventism has consistently increased since the year 2015. This upward trend in conversion is noteworthy and reflects a significant shift within the local religious landscape. The local statistics indicate 9 conversions in 2015, followed by 11 in 2017, then 13 in 2020, 10 in 2021, and 12 in 2023⁴. These figures highlight the importance of this study in shedding light on the evolving trend and dynamics of these conversions.

³ Simon S. William, "Islamic Conversion and Social Change in Senegalese Village," *Ethnology* 18, no. 4 (1979): 303-23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3773245>.

⁴ David Mmbaga, *Adventist-Muslim Relations report*. Central Tanzania Field Executive Committee, Year-end Meeting, May 5-6, 2023.

Globally, research indicates that Muslims often convert to Christianity due to external appeals and persuasive influences.⁵ However, the trend observed in Dodoma Central Church stands out in this regard. While the 46 individuals in this study are not the only converts from Islam to Christianity, their conversions appear to be shaped primarily by deeply personal convictions, even as external factors may have played a supportive role.⁶

Conversions are typically influenced by a combination of spiritual, emotional, and social factors, these particular conversions in Dodoma Central Church seem to arise from a stronger sense of individual faith rather than from external pressures or compelling tactics. This distinction underscores the unique nature of these conversions.

Furthermore, the study's focus on Adventism conversions in this context provides in-depth insights into their motivations, which can inform strategies in similar Islamic context, making this research particularly valuable.⁷ This distinction highlights the importance of individual faith journey in this context.

While religious freedom and tolerance are generally upheld in some African countries, conversion from Islam to Christianity remains relatively uncommon. Miller⁸ emphasizes that such conversions are rare, particularly in societies where cultural or familial expectations reinforce adherence to Islam. The voluntary conversions observed at Dodoma Central Church in Tanzania, stand out, as they

⁵Daniel G. Hoskin, *Conversion Narratives in Context: Muslims Turning to Christianity in post-Soviet Central Asia* (Berlin, Germany: EMS Press, 2017).

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸D. A. Miller, "Believers in Christ from a Muslim Background: A Global Census," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 11 (2015): 1-19.

reflect individual choice rather than societal pressure. These conversions are unique, defying the conventional trends typically seen in the region.

At both national and regional levels, the Seventh day Adventist Church has made significant efforts to engage with followers of the Islamic faith. These efforts are evident through various initiatives that aim to foster dialogue and understanding between the two communities. Such initiatives include lectures, debates, social service programs designed to address community needs. Additionally, the Church provides medical and health services, literacy programs, and counselling and supportive services to support and uplift these individuals.

These activities took place in various locations, including Dar es Salaam in 2000, Morogoro in 2003, and Dodoma in 2013⁹; however, conversions remained limited during this time. Notably, from 2015 to 2024, a significant phenomenon began to emerge in the region.

While it is possible that previous initiatives, such as those in Dar es Salam, Morogoro, and Dodoma, may have had some influence over time, the conversion observed from 2015 to 2024 appear to be the result of a more gradual and independent process. The recent trend in Dodoma Central Church suggests that these individuals made the decision to convert not due to external pressure or immediate tactics, but rather through a deeply personal and spiritual conviction.

To support my position that these were voluntary conversion, evidence will be gathered through interviews and testimonies from the converts themselves, church records, and observations that will be made by local leaders. It is predicted that many of the converts will express their decision to convert to Christianity. Additionally, the

⁹ Rabson Ntambala Nkoko, "Southern Tanzania Union Mission," *Adventist Encyclopedia*, accessed May 11, 2024, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=9FJN>.

timing of their conversions independent of any organized outreach campaign during that period, will be expected to support the argument that these are voluntary decisions.

During this period, some individuals from Islam voluntarily converted to Christianity, doing so independently of any external influences.¹⁰ This unexpected trend has sparked compelling curiosity among researchers and community members, prompting a deeper investigation into the underlying causes and factors at play.

Statement of the Problem

From 2015 to 2024, there has been a notable increase in Muslims converting to Christianity, within Dodoma Central Church. While local Adventist outreach efforts target Muslim communities, the factors motivating these conversions- whether social, or theological, cultural, or relational remains unclear. This lack of understanding makes it challenging evaluate the effectiveness of current outreach strategies.

This study seeks to explore the motivating factors behind these conversions and assess the impact of outreach efforts. The findings will offer valuable insights into the reasons for conversion and suggest strategies to enhance engagement and foster meaningful dialogue between Adventist and Muslims.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the lived experiences of Muslim converts to Adventism in Dodoma Central Church District, Tanzania. Through qualitative inquiry, it investigated the motivations, challenges, and spiritual transformations that shaped their personal journey. By focusing on their personal narratives, the study provided a detailed understanding of how these individuals navigated their new faith while

¹⁰Nkoko, "Southern Tanzania Union Mission."

maintaining relationships with predominantly Muslim communities. The findings contributed to the broader conversation on mission strategies and pastoral care for converts in similar context.

Research Questions

This research sought to answer the following four questions:

1. What is the lived experience of Muslim converts to Adventism?
2. What is the biblical-theological foundation of Conversion?
3. What factors caused new believers to change their faith from Islam to Adventism?
4. What are the implications for mission strategy of the growing trend of voluntary Muslim conversions to Adventism?

Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for several reasons:

Academic Contribution: This study enriched the academic field by offering comprehensive analysis of Muslim conversions to Adventism. By investigating this specific aspect of religious transformation, it enhanced the researcher's understanding of the intricate factors influencing such conversions. Moreover, the study contributes to the broader body of scholarly knowledge on religious conversion dynamics, shedding light on both individual and communal experiences. Ultimately, these findings inform future studies and discussions, fostering a deeper understanding of the interplay between Islam and Adventism.

Practical Insight for Missionary Work: The study provides valuable insights for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and missionaries actively engage in outreach to Muslim communities. By exploring the motivations and personal experiences of

converts, the research helps in refining existing mission strategies. Furthermore, it guides the development of more effective and culturally sensitive engagement approaches that resonate with the unique needs of these communities. These insights ultimately enhance missionary efforts, fostering meaningful relationships and promoting a greater understanding between the Adventist Church and Muslim population.

Guidance for Pastoral Leadership: This study offers practical recommendations for pastoral leaders on effectively supporting new converts from Islam. It offers insights into fostering their spiritual growth, ensuring they feel welcomed and valued within the church community. Additionally, the study highlights strategies for facilitating integration into church activities, helping converts build meaningful relationships with existing members. These recommendations equip Pastoral leaders with the tools needed to nurture a supportive environment that encourage the continued spiritual development of new converts.

Limitations

Geographic Limitation: The study was restricted to the Dodoma District, limiting generalizability as conversion dynamics may have varied across different cultural, social, or economic contexts in Tanzania.

Sample size and Representation: With a purposive sample of 11 participants, the findings may not fully capture the diversity of conversion experiences among converts in Dodoma, potentially limiting their applicability to the broader population.

Temporal Scope: By focusing on conversion from 2015 to 2024 the study may overlooked long-term trends that could have provided historical context to outreach dynamics.

Researcher's subjectivity: As the researcher is a Pastor in the Adventist community, there was a risk of personal beliefs influencing interpretation, despite reflexivity measures taken to minimize bias.

Data Source and Access: Relying on the Church records and leadership recommendations may introduce selection bias, possibly excluding fewer active converts or those less engaged with the Church.

Financial and Time Constraints: Limited resources affected the study's depth, data collection range, and follow-up capacity, potentially impacting its comprehensiveness.

Access Limitations: Access to potential participants and data was restricted to the records available within the Dodoma District Adventist Church and willingness of leaders to recommend candidates. This limitation may have impacted the scope of the sample and diversity of perspectives included.

External Influences: Unaccounted factors such as political or economic pressures may have affected motivations for conversion or Church retention.

Confidentiality and Social Desirability: Due to the sensitive nature of religious conversion, participants may have shaped their responses to align with socially favorable narratives, potentially affecting the authenticity of data collected.

Delimitations

This study focused on individuals who had recently converted from Islam to Christianity within the Adventist Church, exploring their experiences, motivations, and challenges in adapting to a new faith. It specifically excluded lifelong Adventists and those who had converted from other religious backgrounds, as the goal was to understand factors influencing Muslim to Christian conversion in Dodoma.

Additionally, the study concentrated on recent converts from 2015 onward to provide insights relevant to current outreach efforts.

Reflexivity Statement

As both a pastor and a researcher, I recognized that my faith, beliefs and active role within the Adventist community significantly shaped my perspective on the conversion experience. This dual identity not only provided valuable insights into the process of conversion but also introduced potential biases that may have influenced my analysis. While my background equipped me to understand the spiritual journey of new Adventist converts from Islam in Dodoma, I remained vigilant about these biases. Acknowledging this complexity was essential for ensuring a balanced approach to my study.

My spiritual commitment to Adventism led me to approach this research with a belief in the profound value of faith transitions, especially when individuals embraced the Adventist tradition. I was aware that this perspective might have influence how I interpret the experiences of Muslim converts, subtly shaping my understanding of their motivations and the challenges they faced. This acknowledgment prompted me to with each story with a heightened awareness of my own biases. By doing so, I aimed to ensure a balanced view of their spiritual journey that respects their individual paths.

Mindful of this, I was committed to approaching each participant's story with openness, aiming to understand conversion from their unique perspective rather than imposing my own. I respectfully, captured the subtleties of their experience including cultural and personal challenges, and how these shaped their spiritual paths.

To minimize the influence of my pastoral role on the research, I fostered a trusting environment by framing questions to encourage honest, unfiltered responses.

Recognizing the power dynamics inherent in my role, I remained committed to creating a space where participants felt comfortable sharing struggles and perspectives that might have differed from Adventist teachings.

I acknowledged that my commitment to Adventist mission might have shaped my view of mission strategy implications. To balance this, I integrated insights from Adventist and interfaith scholars, aiming for a fair approach. This reflexive stance enabled me to honor each convert's unique journey while contributing to a comprehensive understanding of mission strategy within the Adventist context.

Methodology

Research Design

To explore the lived experiences of Muslim converts to Adventism, this study employed a phenomenological design within the qualitative research approach. This design was specifically chosen to capture the essence of participants' lived experiences, understanding their perceptions, motivations, and challenges in the context of their transitions.¹¹

A qualitative approach was chosen because it focuses on meaning, depth, and context rather than numerical measurements.¹² Unlike quantitative research, which seeks to test hypotheses through statistical analysis, qualitative research explores human experiences in their natural settings, making it ideal for studying religious conversion-a phenomenon deeply embedded in personal, cultural, and social

¹¹ Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 13.

¹² John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018), 6.

dimensions.¹³ Since conversion is not merely a cognitive or behavioral shift but often involves spiritual, emotional, and relational transformation, qualitative research enabled a rich, nuanced understanding of how individuals navigated this process.¹⁴

Within qualitative research, a phenomenological design was the most appropriate for this study because it sought to understand the lived experiences from the perspective of those who had undergone them.¹⁵ Phenomenology emphasized understanding human consciousness and experience from the first-person point of view.¹⁶ This aligned with the study's goal of capturing how Muslim converts to Adventism perceived and interpreted their journey, including their motivations, struggles, and newfound religious identity.

By employing phenomenology, the study aimed to:

Capture subjective realities- Each convert's experience was unique, shaped by personal history, cultural background, and religious context. Phenomenology allowed for a deep exploration of these subjective realities rather than imposing predefined categories.¹⁷

Focus on meaning-making-Religious conversion was not just about changing beliefs but also about reinterpreting one's identity, relationships, and worldview. This

¹³ Uwe Flick, "Setting the Agenda – Roles of Design(ing) in Qualitative Research," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Design*, ed. Uwe Flick (London: SAGE Publications, 2022), 12.

¹⁴ Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, *Qualitative Research: A guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey- Bass, 2016), 21.

¹⁵ Mark D. Vagle, *Crafting Phenomenological Research*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2025), 39.

¹⁶ Cheryl Tatano Beck, *Introduction to Phenomenology: Focus on Methodology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications 2020), 52.

¹⁷ Jonathan A. Smith, Paul Flowers, and Michael Larkin, *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method, and Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2009), 45.

approach helped uncover how converts made sense of their transition and found meaning in their new faith.¹⁸

Provide rich descriptions -Through in-depth interviews and narrative accounts, phenomenology facilitated detailed descriptions of the conversion experience, offering insights into the emotional, social, and spiritual dynamics at play.¹⁹

Acknowledge context and complexity -Muslim-to- Christianity conversion occurred within specific socio-religious context, often involving family pressures, communal expectations, and theological challenges. Phenomenology accounted for these complex layers by prioritizing contextual and holistic understanding.²⁰

Thus, by using a qualitative, phenomenological approach, this study illuminated the lived realities of Muslim converts to Adventism in a way that respected their voice, experiences, and meaning-making processes, contributing to richer understanding of conversion within this unique religious and cultural setting.

Semi – structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of recent converts from Islam to Adventism in the Dodoma Central Church District. The interview focused on capturing participant’s personal stories, including their motivations for conversion, the challenges they faced, and how their spiritual, social, and emotional lives have evolved post- conversion.

By employing a phenomenological design, the study delved into the essence of their experiences, ensuring their voices remained central to the analysis. This methodology allowed for a comprehensive exploration of how these converts

¹⁸ Amedeo Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A modified Husserlian Approach* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2009),32

¹⁹ Max Van Manen, *Phenomenology of Practice: Meaning -Giving Methods in Phenomenological Research and Writing* (Walnut Creek, CA: Routledge, 2016), 25.

²⁰ Uwe Flick, ed., *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Design* (London: SAGE Publications, 2022), 41.

made sense of their transitions and provided rich, contextual insights into their journeys of faith.²¹

Research Population and Sample

A population referred to the entire group or set of units to which the research findings were applied.²² A sample was a portion of the population that fully represented it. This meant the units selected as a sample had to reflect the diverse characteristics of all types of units within the population.²³ The population for this study was the 46 New Adventist Islam Converts (NAIC) in Dodoma district who were converted from 2015 to 2024.

The sampling method employed in identifying informants for this study was purposive sampling. Purposeful sampling consisted of choosing a restricted number of participants with the capacity to help the researcher understand the research problem and the study's central phenomenon.²⁴

The type of purposeful sampling used in this phenomenological study was homogenous sampling. Homogenous sampling consisted of choosing similar cases. This provided a focus in the research but encouraged individual participants to describe their experiences from their peculiar perspective to help understand the studied phenomenon.²⁵ Therefore, the study was conducted on 11 of the New

²¹ Stephen D Lapan, Marylynn T. Quartaroli, and Frances J. Riemer, *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Methods and Designs* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 243- 253.

²² Leroy R. Thacker II., "What Is the Big Deal About Populations in Research?" *Progress in Transplantation*, 2020;30(1):3-3. doi:10.1177/1526924819893795

²³ Shahid N Khan, "Qualitative Research Method - Phenomenology," *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 21 (2014): 298, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n21p298>.

²⁴ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 125.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 127.

Adventist Islam Converts in Dodoma district who were 18 years and above and remained members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. None of these 11 NAIC were physically challenged or pregnant.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), allowing participants to share their experiences, motivations, and challenges. This open-ended approach aimed to yield rich insights into their conversion experiences and factors that influenced their journeys. Semi-structured interviews were widely recognized as effective for capturing detailed personal narratives,²⁶ while focus groups provided a collaborative environment for exploring shared experiences.²⁷

The interview schedule included questions designed to explore indicators of voluntary conversion among the 11 participants. The interview questions, found in Appendix B, were administered in the English. These questions probed participants about their motivations, decision-making processes, and personal agency in the conversion journey. By addressing this aspect, the study sought to provide a detailed understanding of the participants' pathways to Adventism. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted with six different participants who were not among the 11 interviewees. The focus group discussion questions are in Appendix C.

To ensure credibility and comprehensive insights, data triangulation was employed by integrating multiple sources and methods of data collections. The

²⁶ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018), 141

²⁷ David L. Organ, *Focus Groups Qualitative Research* 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997), 12.

combination of interviews, FGDs, and church records allowed for cross-verification of findings, enhancing the reliability and depth of the study's result.

Data collection continued until the point of saturation was reached when no new themes, patterns, or insights emerged from additional interviews or discussions. This ensured that the study captured a comprehensive understanding of the participants' individual and collective journeys from Islam to Adventism. By creating a comfortable environment for open dialogue, these methods were designed to uncover subtle perspectives and foster a deeper understanding of the conversion experience.

Data Analysis

The collected data was transcribed and manually coded using Creswell's qualitative analysis framework which provided structured and systematic approach to qualitative data analysis.²⁸ A manual thematic analysis of the coded data was conducted to identify patterns and themes, focusing on motivations for conversion and participant's integration experiences. The emerged themes were then analyzed to highlight the missiological implications of the lived experiences of the NAIC in Dodoma district.

This manual approach ensured close engagement with the data, fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities of new Adventists' conversion experiences. It allowed for the identification of significant themes and insights emerging from the participants' narratives.

²⁸ Ibid.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards set forth by the Adventist University of Africa Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained, ensuring participants were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing data, and securely storing information, and using pseudonyms to protect identities. Only aggregated data and anonymized insights were included in publications and presentations, with an emphasis on broader themes and patterns rather than individual stories.

Cultural sensitivity guided all interactions, respecting participants' diverse backgrounds and experiences as converts from Islam to Adventism. Participation was voluntary, and individuals could withdraw at any time without consequences. Potential risks were minimized, and follow-up sessions were be offered to provide support and address any concerns following their involvement in the study.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following acronyms and terms are defined as follows for the purpose of this study:

Conversion through External Appeals: Refers to the process by which individuals convert to a new faith due to the influence of external factors such as a persuasive religious leaders, evangelistic campaigns, community or social pressures, or material incentives. The external appeals play a crucial role in shaping the individual's decision to convert.²⁹

²⁹ Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); David A. Snow and Richard Machalek, "The Sociology of Conversion," *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984): 167-190.

Conversion through Personal Conviction: Refers to the process by which individuals convert to a new faith primarily based on internal, personal experiences and reflections. This type of conversion is driven by a deep sense of personal beliefs, spiritual experiences, or a profound sense of calling, rather than external influences or pressures.³⁰

Conversion: “Encompasses a profound transformation, leading from a life of sin to one of righteousness. It involves a spiritual turning away from sin in repentance, embracing Christ for forgiveness and renewal. Alternatively, it can denote a departure from one religious faith to pursue an entirely new spiritual path.”³¹

S.D.A: Stands for Seventh-day Adventist, a Christian denomination that observes the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week, Saturday. “Followers of the Seventh -day Adventist faith, emphasize beliefs in the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ, healthful living, and adherence to biblical teachings.”³²

³⁰ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1902); John Lofland and Rodney Stark, “Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective,” *American Sociological Review* 30, no. 6 (1965): 862-875.

³¹ Bloesch, Donald. “The Meaning of Conversion,” accessed July 5, 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2968/may-24/meaning-of-conversion.html>.

³² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church. *Seventh-day Adventist Believe: A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, 2005), 249-266

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF CONVERSION IN THE CONTEXT OF ISLAM

The Biblical foundation of conversion involves understanding the process of spiritual transformation as described in scripture. For Muslim considering conversion to Christianity, this foundation must be articulated with sensitivity to the theological and cultural shifts involved. This section outlines the biblical understanding of conversion, emphasizing key theological themes, scriptural narratives, and practical implications for those transitioning from Islam to Christianity.

Biblical Definitions and Concepts

Repentance and Faith

Repentance. Conversion in the Bible is closely linked with the concepts of repentance and faith. The Greek word *metanoia*, often translated as “repentance” literally means a “change of mind,” signifying a radical turning away from sin and toward God (Mark 1:15).¹ For Muslims, this means a shift from the principles of Islamic faith (Tawbah: Surah at Tawbah (9:104)) to a Christian understanding of repentance and forgiveness.

Faith (Pists). Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior (Ephesians 2:8-9) is central to conversion. It involves trusting in the redemptive work of Christ and acknowledging Him as the pathway to salvation.

¹ James Strong, *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 1461, 1595.

Rebirth or Regeneration (Greek: Anagennao)

John 3:3: Jesus speaks of spiritual rebirth, indicating a transformative experience brought about by the Holy Spirit. This concept is crucial for Muslims who are moving from a belief in a different understanding of spiritual rebirth to embracing the Christian view of regeneration.

Scriptural Examples of Conversion

Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-19)

The Bible provides numerous examples of conversion, each highlighting different aspects of the process. Saul's dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19) represents a profound transformation from a persecutor of Christians to an influential apostle. This narrative can provide encouragement and context for Muslim experiencing significant life change due to their faith transition.

Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40):

The Ethiopian eunuch's conversion highlights the role of divine guidance and the importance of understanding Scripture. This example can resonate with Muslims seeking a deeper understanding of the Christian faith through scripture and personal inquiry.

Cornelius and His Household (Acts 10:1-48):

The conversion of Cornelius, a Gentile, and his household (Acts 10:1-48) demonstrates the inclusivity of the gospel and the breaking down of ethnic and religious barriers. This narrative is relevant for Muslims as it illustrates the universality of Christian salvation.

Theological Themes

Several key theological themes emerge from a biblical study of conversion.

Justification by Faith

Romans 3:28: Conversion is understood as a gift of God's grace, not earned by works but received through faith in Jesus. This contrasts with Islamic teachings on salvation (which highlight a combination of faith, deeds, repentance, and individual's responsibility) and emphasizes the transformative nature of Christian conversion.

Regeneration and Sanctification

Titus 3:5: Regeneration by the Holy Spirit signifies a new spiritual beginning. For converts, this involves a process of sanctification, growing in holiness and alignment with Christ's teachings (Romans 6:22)

Biblical Mandates and Commands

Jesus' Call To Repentance (Mathew 4:17)

Jesus' call to repentance is a foundational command that invites individuals to turn away from sin and embrace the Gospel. This call is applicable to those transitioning from Islam to Christianity.

The Great Commission (Mathew 28:19-20)

The command to make disciples of all nations underscores the necessity of conversion and discipleship. It includes baptizing new believers and teaching them to follow Christ's commands.

Eschatological Perspectives

Participation in God's Kingdom (John 3:5)

Conversion is seen as a gateway to eternal life and participation in God's future reign. This perspective provides hope and broader context for the transformative journey of those converting from Islam to Christianity.

Parables and Outcomes (Mathew 13:1-23)

Jesus' parables about different responses to the gospel illustrate the various outcomes of accepting or rejecting the message, which can provide insights into conversion experience.

Missiological Considerations

Cultural Sensitivity

Understanding and respecting cultural and religious background of Muslim converts is crucial.² Engaging with the process of conversion requires acknowledging their previous faith's values while guiding them towards a Christian understanding.

Contextualization of the Gospel

The gospel must be communicated in ways that resonate with the converts' cultural and spiritual context. This involves using culturally relevant approaches while maintaining theological integrity.

Concepts Terminology

The term "conversion" may not appear prominently in the Old and New Testaments, but related terms like "regeneration and new Birth" are used in the theological discussions.³ Regeneration, as described by Berkhof is a divine process where new life is implanted within individuals, transforming their disposition towards God. This process, often referred to as "the new birth," signifies a profound spiritual

² David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

³ Donald K. McKim, "The Mainline Protestant Understanding of Conversion," in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. Harold N. Malony and S. Southard (Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1992), 124-125.

rebirth and renewal beyond mere behavioral changes.⁴ In this case Conversion involves a Spiritual rebirth, where an individual becomes a new creation in Christ (John 3:3-5, 2 Cor 5:17).

Through his exploration of the theological complexities of conversion, Berchhof illuminates the profound implications of spiritual transformation.⁵ His insights, will deepen our understanding of conversion not as a superficial alteration of behavior but a profound existential shift rooted in divine grace and human response.

This might find application to the conversion of Muslims in Dodoma Central District. Berchhof emphasizes how regeneration signifies a fundamental change in one's spiritual state, highlighting the role of divine intervention and the individual's reorientation towards God's will.⁶ These perspectives provide a comprehensive view of conversion, emphasizing its significance in the broader context of theological study.⁷

Theological Perspectives

Three fundamentally different views on the concept of conversion merit consideration:

⁴ Louis Berchhof, *The Summary of Christian Doctrine*, 4th ed. (Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth, 1997), 76

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Berchhof, *The Summary of Christian Doctrine*.

Pelagian Viewpoint: Regeneration

The Pelagian viewpoint sees regeneration as an act stemming from human will, similarly to self-reformation.⁸ However, this view contradicts with the belief that regeneration and salvation are entirely the work of God's grace, not human effort (Ephesians 2:8). Human will be naturally contaminated by sin and cannot initiate conversion without divine intervention.

Arminian Perspective

The Arminian perspective posits that regeneration involves a collaboration between human agency and divine influence through the truth.⁹ This view sometimes blurs the line between the persuasive strategies employed by preachers and the transformative work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

Reformed Understanding

The Reformed understanding places the Holy Spirit as the primary agent, effecting spiritual change without direct cooperation from the individual.

Regeneration is viewed as “an exclusive act of God, enabling the newly transformed human will to align with the divine will.”¹¹

Calvinist theologians assert that human will is enslaved by sin and cannot initiate a relationship with God on its own (John 15:5). They claim that God alone is the author of regeneration (Hebr. 12:2) and, therefore, of conversion.¹² Berkhof

⁸Lois Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 490.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹Harold N. Malony and S. Southard, eds., *Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Alabama: Religious Education Press Inc., 1992), 127.

¹² Ibid., 10.

acknowledges some cooperation from individuals in conversion, following God's initial work, but he emphasizes that God alone initiates regeneration.¹³

Theological Perspective on "Calling"

The concept of "calling," is also prominent in reformed theology. Conversion is seen as a response to God's call for salvation, defined as "the gracious act of God, whereby He invites sinners to accept the salvation freely offered in Jesus Christ."¹⁴

This calling includes both internal and external aspects:¹⁵

External calling. Berkhof describes this as presenting the offer of salvation and urging sinners to accept Christ by faith (Ephesians 2:8).¹⁶ It involves proclaiming of the Gospel (Matt 28:18-), Inviting repent and faith in Jesus Christ (1John. 1:9), and Promising forgiveness and salvation conditional upon genuine faith and repentance. (Hosea 4:14).

The external call is universal, reaching everyone who hears the Gospel (John. 3:16; Matt. 28:19-20)¹⁷ including the reprobate who still bear the responsibility of their response.

Internal calling. This aspect is effective and leads to salvation through the work of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the eternal call, it is powerful, irrevocable, and aimed at specific purposes, such as fellowship with Christ and receiving eternal life,¹⁸ (1Cor.

¹³ Ibid., 501.

¹⁴ David A. Miller, "Believers in Christ from a Muslim Background: A Global Census." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 11 (2015): Art 10, 97.

¹⁵ A.R. Tippet, "Conversion as a Dynamic Process in Christian Mission." *Missiology* 5, no. 2 (1977): 203-221, <https://doi.org/10.1177/009182967700500207>.

¹⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Summary of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1957).

¹⁷ Berkhof, *Summary of Christian Doctrine*.

¹⁸ Ibid., 77

1:9) and receiving eternal life (1Tim 6:23). The internal call engages the understanding, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, making individuals aware of God's voice.

The Concept of Conversion

The third concept of the theological perspective is "conversion." According to Berhe, conversion encompasses two aspects: the divine and the human dimensions.¹⁹ It signifies the infusion of divine grace into human existence, facilitating the transition from spiritual death to eternal life.

While humans actively engage in the process of conversion, their role in regeneration is passive. Berhe emphasizes the transformative power of grace, which enables individuals to respond to God's call despite their inherent inability to save themselves. Berhe insists that salvation and justification are exclusively attributed to grace, a truth exemplified in the phenomenon of conversion. Furthermore, he underscores the importance of examining the interplay between human agency and divine intervention in the process.²⁰

Despite varying interpretations, there is widespread consensus on the necessity of responding to God's redemptive work by forsaking sinful ways.²¹ Conversion involves both repentance from sin and faith as its positive aspect.

¹⁹ A.M. Berhe, "Conversion from Islam to Christianity among the Arsi Oromo: Missiological implications from Christian witness." (MA thesis, Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya, 2013). <https://dlibrary.aiu.ac.ke/xmlui/handle/12345678/156>

²⁰ Berhe, "Conversion from Islam to Christianity among the Arsi Oromo."

²¹ A.F. Walls, "Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (2004): 2-4. <https://doi.10.1177/239693930402800101>

Repentance

Repentance, a concept closely linked to the process of conversion within the New Testament, encompasses a range of interpretations. Erikson defines it as “the abandonment of sin, stemming from a profound sense of godly sorrow for wrongdoing”.²² White characterizes repentance as a “transformative process involving sorrow for sin, a turning away from it, and a turning towards God.”²³ This pivotal moment in one’s life signifies a surrender to God, embracing His forgiveness and cleansing power.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of repentance as “a transformative process involving sorrow for sin, a turning away from it, and a turning towards God” will be adopted. This definition provides a holistic view of repentance, capturing both the internal emotional experiences and the external actions that characterize genuine conversion. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew term “*Shuv*” signifies “repentance” meaning “to return” or “to turn.”²⁴ This term denotes genuine repentance, forgiveness, restoration, and establishment of authentic communion with God.²⁵

In contrast, the New Testament (NT) employs three Greek terms to delineate repentance in the context of conversion:

²²M.J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*. (Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 1983), 936.

²³ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*. Chapter 5

²⁴ Henry Gooren, *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation; Tracing Pattern of Change in Faith Practices*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 10.

²⁵ Ibid.

Metamelomai. This term denotes a feeling of care, concern, or regret and encompasses a holistic transformation of the heart, mind, and life.²⁶ Brown²⁷ correlates it with repentance for error, debt, failure, and sins.

Epistrepho. As described by Malony,²⁸ this term refers to a spiritual turning or conversion wherein individuals experience a profound transformation in their beliefs, values, and behavior patterns, ultimately leading to a renewed relationship with God.

Metanoia. According to Walls²⁹ it signifies a profound change of mind and heart, resulting in turning away from sin and toward God. It involves a deliberate decision to forsake a life of wrongdoing to align oneself with God's will. This transformative process reshapes one's entire being and redirects their life's course. In the context of the New Testament "Metanoia" indicates a sincere turning from sin to embrace God, as well as recognizing wrongdoing, experiencing remorse, and actively choosing to realign one's life according to God's principles.

Wells argues that, according to the New Testament, conversion is not merely an inward experience but also necessitates outward manifestations of restitution, moral uprightness, and love for one another.³⁰ This perspective underscore the holistic

²⁶ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985, 936.

²⁷ Colin Brown, ed. and trans. *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology*. Vol.1. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986).

²⁸ H. N. Malony and S. Southard, eds. *Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Alabama: Religious Educational Press, 1992), 94

²⁹ A.F Walls, "Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (2004): 2-4. doi:10.1177/23969393002800101.

³⁰ D.F. Wells, *Turning to God: Reclaiming Christian Conversion as Unique, Necessary, and Supernatural*. Michigan: Baker Books, 2012, 48

nature of conversion, encompassing both internal transformation and outward actions that reflect one's commitment to God and others.

Faith

In the Bible, faith holds a central position as a foundational aspect of conversion. According to Berkhof, the most common Hebrew idea of faith is conveyed in the verb “*Aman*,” which encompasses concepts of trust, loyalty, fidelity, and steadfastness in one's relationship with God. This faith involves a deep-seated conviction in the reliability and faithfulness of God's promises even in the face of uncertainty or adversity.³¹

In addition to “*Aman*”, another Hebrew word describing faith is “*Batach*,” which means to confide in, ‘to lean upon,’ or ‘to trust’. Unlike mere intellectual belief, “*Batach*” suggests trust and confident reliance on God.³² Conversely, the New Testament employs different words to convey the concept of faith, including “*Pisteuo*” meaning to “believe” and “*Pistis*” meaning faith. “*Pisteuein*” expresses the concept of faith as agreement with God's word and trust in Him.³³ Berkhof utilizes a variety of terms to identify three stages of faith: the initial stage involves a general trust in God and Christ; the second stage entails accepting God's and Christ's testimony as the foundation for that trust; and the third stage involves surrendering to Christ and entrusting one's soul into His hands.³⁴

³¹ Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing, 1996, 493.

³² Erickson, M. J. *Christian Theology*. Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 1983, 393.

³³ *Ibid.*,

³⁴ Berchhof, Louis. *The Summary of Christian Doctrine*. 4th ed. (Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth, 1997), 494.

Ellen G. White's Views of Conversion

Ellen White's views on conversion are characterized by profound insights into the transformative power of divine grace. In her writings, she places significant emphasis on the spiritual and practical aspects of conversion, drawing from both her theological understanding and experiential knowledge. This section will delve into her views, shedding light on her theological perspectives and the practical implications of conversion within the Christian faith.

Components of Conversion

White identifies various components of conversion such as repentance, consecration, faith, confession, reconciliation, transformation, and obedience. She underscores the significance of these elements in the holistic process of conversion, portraying them as guiding principles that lead individuals towards spiritual renewal, growth, and alignment with God's purpose.³⁵

Obedience. White emphasizes the importance of obedience to God's commandments as a tangible expression of genuine conversion. This emphasis provides as invaluable guidance for believers seeking not only spiritual enlightenment but also personal transformation. By adhering to God's commandments, individuals embark on a path of alignment with the divine will, fostering a deeper sense of spiritual growth enlightenment. White highlights the pivotal role of obedience in the conversion journey, urging believers to integrate it as a fundamental aspect of their spiritual lives.³⁶ This integration not only reflects a commitment to God's will but also

³⁵ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Chris* (Silver Springs, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., 1892-3), 23-34

³⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*. (Silver Springs, MD: Ellen Estate, 1900), 243.

serves a practical manifestation of faith, underscoring the transformative power of true conversion.

Conversion as a Transformative Process. White portrays conversion as a transformative journey facilitated by divine love and grace. She emphasizes the significance of a personal encounter with Jesus as well as repentance, humility and surrendering to God's will. Through Her insights, She guides readers towards a deeper understanding of the blessings associated with true conversion.³⁷

Key Works on Conversion

In Christ's object Lessons, White highlights the transformative power of conversion and its significant role in personal growth and sanctification.³⁸ In the Desire of Age³⁹ and Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing⁴⁰, she explores the life and teachings of Jesus with a focus on conversion.⁴¹ She emphasizes the transformative power of divine love, and grace, as well as the importance of repentance, humility, and surrendering to God's will in the journey of conversion.⁴²

³⁷ Ellen G. White, *Thought from the Mount of Blessing*. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1928).

³⁸ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*. (Silver Springs, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1900), 243.

³⁹ Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*. (Silver Springs, MD: Ellen G. White Estate,) 1711-177, 183-190, 662-668.

⁴⁰ Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mountain of Blessing* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1896), 6-22,102-109.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 43.

Conversion Narratives

White depicts conversion as a transformative journey, using the narrative of Saul of Tarsus (Acts. 9:1-43) as an example. She emphasizes the importance of repentance, faith, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Through Saul's transformation from a zealous persecutor to a devoted disciple, White vividly portrays the transformative power of faith in Christ.⁴³

In *The Great Controversy*, White presents conversion as pivotal in the conflict between good and evil. She emphasizes the necessity of genuine repentance and complete surrender to God, stressing the importance of turning away from sin and embracing righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. She portrays conversion as a crucial choice individuals face: to align with Christ and righteousness or to yield to deceptive influence of Satan. Her narrative highlights the spiritual warfare inherent in the conversion process and the pivotal role of the gospel message and Holy Spirit, portraying conversion as an ongoing journey of growth and steadfastness in Christ rather than a one-time event.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), Chapters 1-58.

⁴⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2013).

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conversion from Islam to Christianity, especially to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, is a complex and multifaceted process shaped by a variety of spiritual, social, and psychological factors. Recent studies indicate that 55 percent of converts attribute their decision primarily to spiritual enlightenment, while 25 percent cite social pressures and support networks as significant influence.¹

In Tanzania, where Islam and Christianity are the dominant religions, understanding the distinctions of religious conversions is crucial for developing effective mission strategies. Research also highlights that 20 percent of converts face considerable psychological challenges as they adjust to their new faith.²

This literature review evaluates existing studies and theoretical frameworks on religious conversion, focusing specifically on Muslim converts to Adventism in the Dodoma Central Church District, Tanzania. It also explores mission strategies that respect the cultural and religious backgrounds of Muslim communities, emphasizing the Adventist Church's role in facilitating and supporting these conversions by identifying in current research and contextualizing findings within Tanzania setting, this review lays foundation for understanding the lived experiences of converts and developing culturally sensitive approaches to mission work.

¹ B. J. Kazura, "Conversion from Islam to Christianity in Senegal: Missiological Implications for Church Planting," (MA thesis, Noth-West University, 2022).

² Ibid.

Theoretical Foundation of Religious Conversion

General Conversion Theories

The scholarly study of religious conversion has been approached through various theoretical frameworks, shedding light on the motivations, processes, and outcomes of changing one's faith. According to Rambo, conversion is influenced by multiple dimensions, including individual, social, and contextual factors.³

Rambo's theory of conversion describes the process as complex, involving several stages:

Context. This refers to the cultural, social, political and religious environment influencing a person's openness to conversion. In Tanzania, where Islam and Christianity are the predominant religions, local norms and family beliefs might affect an individual's receptivity to new faiths.

Crisis. A significant life event or conflict, such as economic hardship or personal loss, can create dissatisfaction or spiritual unrest, prompting individuals to seek alternative spiritual paths.

Quest. At this stage, individuals actively search for new meaning or religious understanding. Tanzanians seeking spiritual answers may attend Church gatherings, study Christian texts, or engage with Christian communities.

Encounter. This stage involves impactful interactions with people or groups that introduce the new faith. For instance, Adventist missionaries or Christian friends may offer insights into Christianity, sparking deeper interest in the faith.

Interaction. In this stage, the individual engages with the new faith community, participating in its practices and experiencing its values. For example,

³ Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*: (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

involvement with an Adventist community provides both social and spiritual support, fostering a sense of belonging.

By applying Rambo's model to the Tanzania context, we can better understand how conversion support can be tailored to specific cultural dynamics. This includes offering resources during times of crisis and fostering meaningful connections that create culturally sensitive outreach and mission work.

In their 1981 study on religious conversion, Lofland and Skonovd identified six distinct conversion Motifs, each presenting different pathways and motivations that individuals follow when transitioning to a new faith. These motifs offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the diverse psychological, social, and emotional factors involved in religious conversion.

Notably, the *intellectual motifs*, shed light on the emotional connections and cognitive reasoning that influence an individual's decision to embrace a new belief system. Through these motifs, Lofland and Skonovd provide valuable insight into the complex, multidimensional nature of religious conversion.⁴

Affectional Motifs: This centers on emotional and relational connections. Individuals are often motivated to convert based on their close relationships with others, such as family, friends or individuals already part of the new faith. People who convert for affectional motives typically do so to maintain or strengthen their desire relationships. For example, an individual might convert to Christianity after marrying a devout Christian or because they find a sense of belonging and warmth within a religious community of friends.

⁴ Lofland, John, and Norman Skonovd. "Conversion Motif." *The Theological Quarterly* 22 no.2 (1981):199-231.

Rambo's theory of conversion aligns with the affectional motif in his interaction stage. In Rambo's model, conversion is influenced by interactions with the faith community, which can provide emotional and relational support. These interactions play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging, reinforcing the idea that affectional motivations such as strengthening relationships or finding emotional support are a central part of the conversion process. This aligns with the Tanzanian context, where many Muslims who convert to Christianity report that personal relationships and social networks significantly impact their decision to adopt a new faith.

Intellectual motif: This refers to a conversion process driven by rational inquiry, critically thinking, and the pursuit of truth. People motivated by intellectual reasons are typically engaged in a period of study, reflection, or intellectual dialogue, seeking clarity or theological and existential questions. A person might convert to Christianity after studying the Bible, engaging with Christian apologetics, and concluding that the Christian worldview provides satisfying answers about morality, purpose, and the nature of God.

Rambo's theory can also shed light on the intellectual motif, particularly in the "quest" and encounter stages. In this stage, individuals search for answers to existential questions and engage with religious teaching to find intellectual clarity. Converts following an intellectual motif might read religious text, attend debates, or participate in discussions that challenge their previous beliefs. For example, Muslim converts in Dodoma may engage in theological discussions, study Christian scriptures, or attend church meetings in search of intellectual clarity, leading them to adopt Christianity. These intellectual engagements reflect Rambo's model, where a

quest for truth and encounters with new religious perspectives play a pivotal role in the conversion process.

By applying Rambo's model to the context of Muslim conversion in Dodoma, we can see how both affectional and intellectual motives align with the stages of conversion he describes. Rambo's framework helps contextualize the individual's emotional connections (affectional) and intellectual journey (intellectual), illustrating multifaceted nature of conversion in the Tanzania setting.

Additionally, William James's varieties of religious experience describe conversion as a psychological event that involves a profound emotional and spiritual transformation.⁵ This is applicable to Muslim converts in Dodoma as it can help explore the deep emotional and existential aspect of conversion, such as the quest for salvation.

Religious Conversion in the African Context

Several scholars have contributed to a deeper understanding of religious conversion in the African context, exploring the complex interplay between spirituality, culture and social. Bagaramba Jules Kazura's research on conversion from Islam to Christianity in Senegal highlights a multi-stage process involving social, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. His work underscores the significant challenges, converts face such as persecution, while offering insights into how evangelical churches can effectively reach Muslim communities.⁶

⁵ James William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902).

⁶ Bagaramba Jules Kazura, *Dissertation Accepted in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree Master of Theology in Missiology at the North-West University* (Master's thesis, North-West University, 2022)

Similarly, John Mbiti's work offers a foundational framework for understanding of African Traditional Religions (ATR) and their influence on religious conversion process. Mbiti emphasizes that African traditional beliefs and practices are deeply embedded in daily life.

He views ATR not merely as a set of religious practices but as an integrated worldview that shapes how individuals understand life, relationships, and spirituality. This comprehensive cultural and religious background plays a central role in how conversion is experienced in African context.⁷

When African encounter new religions, such as Christianity or Islam, the existing beliefs do not vanish; instead, they interact with and often reshape the adopted faith. Mbiti highlights that conversion to Christianity or Islam does not always mean a complete rejection of African beliefs but rather a complex adaptation process where elements of ATR are retained or reinterpreted within the new religious framework. For example, concepts like the importance of ancestors, communal decision-making, and rites of passage can be integrated into Christian or Islamic practices in ways that resonate with traditional African values.

Through his research, Mbiti demonstrate that African conversion pathways are unique in their communal and cultural dimensions. Conversion is rarely an individual event; it often involves family and community participation, reflecting the collectivist nature of African societies. This communal focus influences not only the decision to convert but also the subsequent incorporation of the new religion into the community's shared life and values.

⁷ John S. Mbiti. *African Religion and Philosophy*/ Anchor Books. 1970.

In essence, Mbiti's work suggests that understanding African conversion requires an appreciation of the traditional African worldview. It underscores that religious conversion in African is not merely about adopting a new belief system but involves a nuanced and culturally embedded transformation that honors existing traditions while embracing new spiritual insights.

Building upon these perspectives, Kwame Bediako argues that conversion in African context involves not only spiritual transformation but also a cultural reorientation. He posits that African converts retain elements of their traditional worldview while embracing Christianity, thus reflecting a dynamic relationship between cultural identity and religious change.⁸

David Shenk's insight about conversion in African communities align closely with the role of syncretism and communal identity in the conversion process. Shenk emphasizes that conversion in Africa is often a collective experience rather than solely an individual one.⁹ Community and family play a significant role, meaning that an individual's decision to convert affects their relationships and standing within their social group. Shenk also highlights syncretism's impact, where converts may merge new religious beliefs with traditional practices to ease the transition and minimize friction with their cultural roots.¹⁰

To explore these dynamics, this study will collect qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion with recent Muslim converts to

⁸ Kwame Bediako, *Theology and identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 46

⁹ Shenk, David "The Mainline Protestant Understanding of Conversion," in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, edited by H, Newton Malony and Samuel Southard (Birmingham, AL: Religious Conversion Education Press, 1992), 124-135

¹⁰ Ibid.

Adventism in the Dodoma Central Church District. The interview questions will focus on how converts have navigated the tension between their new religious beliefs and traditional practices, assessing whether syncretism has played a role in their faith journey. Questions will explore whether converts have maintained certain cultural practices, how their families and communities have responded, and how these experiences may align with or diverge from Shenk's observations about conversion being influenced by communal identity. By analyzing these interviews and focus groups, the study will gather insights into the role of syncretism in the conversion process, providing empirical data that can either support or challenge Shenk's theoretical framework in the Tanzanian context.

This understanding aligns well with how syncretism facilitates a smoother conversion, allowing individuals to adopt aspects of Christianity or Islam without complete severing ties to their indigenous beliefs. Shenk's focus on syncretism as a bridge between new and traditional faiths echoes Rambo's context and interaction stages, which frame the conversion process as one that is contextually and relationally shaped.

By acknowledging syncretism, converts may maintain cultural practices while integrating elements of their new religion, thus supporting Shenk's point about community acceptance. Shenk also discusses the social risks and challenges, such as ostracism, that new convert face. Especially when traditional beliefs are odds with the new faith.

Together, these scholars provide a comprehensive view of religious conversion in Africa, illustrating how spiritual transformation is deeply intertwined with cultural continuity, community dynamics, and social challenges. These perspectives offer a

comprehensive understanding of conversion as a process that transcends the individual, affecting wide social and cultural structures.

Mission Implication of Conversion Theories in Africa

Theories on religious conversion offer important insights into how individuals transition between faiths, which is particularly relevant for mission strategies in Africa. Below is a discussion of key conversion theories and their mission implication.

John Mbit's African Worldview and Conversion

Theory. Mbiti emphasizes that African Traditional Religion (ATR) are deeply embedded in daily life and influence how people understand life, relationships, and spirituality. Conversion to Christianity or Islam in Africa is not merely a rejection of traditional beliefs but rather involves a complex adaptation process where elements of ATR are integrated into the new faith.¹¹

Mission implication. Cultural Sensitivity: Missionaries must respect the cultural and religious background of African communities. Conversion may involve reinterpretation rather than rejection of ATR beliefs.

Community involvement. Mission strategies should engage families and communities as conversion is typically a communal event.

Adaptation of Practices. Christianity or Islam should be adaptable to local customs, allowing for integration of aspects of African traditions, such as ancestors veneration and communal decision-making, within the new faith.

¹¹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (London: Heineman, 1996).

Lofland and Skonovd's Conversion Motifs

Theory. Lofland and Skonovd identify various motifs that motivate conversion: affectional, intellectual, coercive, and experimental. These motifs highlight that people convert to different reasons, whether emotional (affectional), or intellectual (Intellectual), external pressure (coercive), or seeking new experiences (experimental).¹²

Mission Implications. Targeting Different Motives: Mission strategies should address these different conversion motives. For those with affectional motives, building relationships is key. For intellectual convert, providing intellectual resources (apologetics, theological discussion) is crucial.

Holistic Approach. A balanced mission should focus on emotional, intellectual, and relational needs, offering both theological education and a strong community support system.

Rambo's Model of Conversion

Theory. Rambo presents a dynamic model of conversion that includes five stages: context, crisis, quest, encounter, and interaction. The theory suggests that conversion is influenced by various individual, social, and contextual factors.¹³

Mission implications. Understanding Context: Missionaries need to understand the social, political, and cultural context of conversion. In Africa, family and community dynamics are critical to conversion decisions

¹² J. Lofland and N. Skonovd, "Conversion Motifs in Religious Movements," *Social Forces* 60, no.1 (1981): 22-42.

¹³ Rambo, Lewis R. *Understanding Religious Conversion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Crisis and Quest. Many converts experience a crisis (such as dissatisfaction with their current faith) that prompt them to seek new spiritual paths. Mission strategies should address these crises and provide answers or support.

Fostering Meaningful Encounter. Missionaries should facilitate personal encounters with the faith- through scripture, community, and relationship-building that can lead to meaningful conversion experiences.

Cultural and Social Integration Theory

Theory. Cultural and Social Integration theories argue that conversion is not just about adopting a new belief system but about integrating into a new community and culture. In Africa, conversion often involves adopting new social norms while maintaining traditional cultural practices.¹⁴

Mission Implications. Integration into the Faith community: Mission strategies should focus not only on religious teaching but also on the social integration of converts. This means ensuring that converts feel a part of the broader church community.

Creating New Cultural Norms. Missionaries should help create a culturally relevant expressions of the faith that resonates with African traditions while maintaining doctrinal integrity.

¹⁴ Joel Robbins, "The Globalization on Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004):117-143.

Communal Conversion and Collectivism

Theory. African societies emphasize communal decision-making, which impact the conversion process. Conversion is seen not as an individual act but as a communal event that often involves family and community members.¹⁵

Mission Implications. Family and Community -Centered Conversion: Mission strategies should involve families and communities, as conversion is often a shared experience, baptisms and other conversion rituals should include communal participation.

Support Networks. Church structures should provide ongoing support, ensuring that converts remain connected to their families and community after conversion.

Conclusion

Theories on religious conversion in Africa provide invaluable insights into how missionaries can approach conversion in culturally sensitive ways. By understanding the spiritual, social, and psychological factors involved, mission strategies can be tailored to meet the unique needs of converts. Incorporating these theories can help designing mission initiatives that respect African traditions while fostering meaningful religious experiences for converts.

Adventist Perspectives on Conversion: A Theological Framework

Within Adventist theology, the concept of conversion is anchored in biblical principles, emphasizing the transformative experience of accepting Christ as Savior. This leads to a life marked by faith, obedience, and sanctification. The Adventists

¹⁵ John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (London: SPCK, 1970).

views conversion as both an event and a process- initiated by personal decision to follow Jesus, a renunciation of sin, and ongoing spiritual growth.¹⁶

This theological understanding has significant relevance to the experience of Muslim converts to Adventism in various ways:

Personal decision to follow Jesus

Like all converts, Muslim who convert to Adventism must make a conscious and personal decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, reflecting the Adventist view of conversion as a voluntary and deliberate choice.¹⁷ However, for Muslims, this decision can be a profound challenge, given the need to turn away from their Islamic faith. Islam holds deeply rooted beliefs about God (Allah) and views Jesus primarily as a prophet, rather than as a Savior.

This theological shift is complex, as Islam's emphasis on strict monotheism and the role of Jesus as a revered prophet contrasts sharply with Adventist belief in Jesus as the central figure of salvation. Furthermore, conversion often affects not only one's personal faith but also community and familial relationships. For many Muslims, leaving their faith can mean distancing from a close-knit community and cultural identity, adding a layer of emotional and social difficulty to this spiritual transformation.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, *A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1988), 11

¹⁷ Seventh -day Adventist Church Manual, Swahili Version, 19th ed, (2015), 46-48.

¹⁸ Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, *A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, (Review and Herald, 1988), 11

Turning Away from Sin

In Islam, sin is understood differently from Christianity, with a focus on obedience to Allah's will and adhere to the five pillars of Islam (surah 3:135; 4:110; 33:21). For Muslim converts to Adventism, the concept of turning away from sin involves embracing a new understanding of salvation and grace. They must realize that salvation is not earned through works, but through faith in Jesus Christ, aligning with the Adventist doctrine of justification by faith (Ephesians 2:8).¹⁹

Faith and Obedience

Muslim converts often come from background of strict religious observance, where obedience to religious laws is not only central but also mandatory (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah 2:285). In Adventist theology, obedience, is essential but framed within a faith -based relationship with Jesus.

Obedience is not seen as a means to earn salvation, but rather as a response to God's grace (John 14:15).²⁰ This understanding may help Muslim converts transition to a faith where obedience remains important but as part of a large process of justification²¹, sanctification²² and spiritual growth.²³

¹⁹Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, *A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Review and Herald, 1988), 119

²⁰Ibid.

²¹ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 39.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2000), 23.

Conversion as Both an Event and a Process

The Adventist view on conversion, which sees it as both a singular event and a continuous process, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the experience of Muslim converts. Conversion is viewed as a life-changing decision which begins with a personal choice to accept Jesus Christ as Savior but continues with a long-term process of spiritual transformation and integration into the community of faith.

This approach resonates with the notion that conversion is not just a one-time event but an ongoing journey of deepening faith and identity, which can be especially relevant for those transitioning from Islam to Adventism.²⁴ This framework underscores the theological and practical complexities of conversion for Muslim individuals within an Adventist context.

Contextual Factors Influencing Conversion in Tanzania

To understand the factors influencing religious conversion in Tanzania, it is crucial to first examine the historical development of Christianity and Islam in the region. These two major religions have played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural and religious landscapes of Tanzania.

Historical Background of Christianity and Islam in Tanzania

Tanzania, located on the eastern coast of Africa, has a complex and diverse religious landscape, where Christianity and Islam are the two predominant faiths. The country's religious history is deeply intertwined with its colonial, trade, and

²⁴White, *Steps to Christ*.

missionary experiences shaping the current dynamics of conversion between these two major religions.²⁵

Islam in Tanzania. Islam was introduced to Tanzania between the 8th and 12th centuries primarily through Arabs and Persian traders along the East Africa coast. Zanzibar, in particular, became a key center of Islamic influence. The Swahili people, who inhabit the coastal regions, adopted Islam, leading to a unique blending of African and Islamic culture. From the 12th to 19th centuries, Islamic sultanates such as Zanzibar and Kilwa expanded their influence inland, with the Arab-controlled slave trade playing a significant role in spreading Islam further into the interior²⁶

During the German (1885-1919)²⁷ and British (1919-1961)²⁸ colonial rules, Islamic practices remained strong, particularly in coastal regions where madrasas (Islamic religious school) played a central role in preserving Islamic identity and education.²⁹ After Tanzania's independence in 1961, the country maintained a policy of religious tolerance. Nevertheless, Islam continued to hold a central place in Zanzibar's culture and politics, influenced by its historical role as a hub in the India Ocean trade network.³⁰

Christianity in Tanzania. Christianity's presence in Tanzania began in the 16th century with Portuguese explorers and Roman Catholic missionaries, although

²⁵Isaria N Kimambo, A.J. Temu, *A History of Tanzania*, ed. I.N. Kimambo and A.J Temu (Nairobi, Kenya: Historical Association of Tanzania, 1969), 72.

²⁶ Ibid, 95.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

their influence was largely confined to coastal regions during this early period.³¹ Significant Christian growth occurred in the 19th century, led by European missionary societies such as the London Missionary Society and the Church Missionary Society. These missionaries established schools, churches, and healthcare institutions, contributing to the spread of Christianity into the interior of the country.³²

During the German and British colonial period, Christian missionary efforts were expanded by the colonial government, leading to the expansion of Christian influence. After independence, Tanzania adopted a secular stance while maintaining religious tolerance. This environment allowed Christianity, particularly denominations such as Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and Pentecostalism, to continue growing. Christian churches have played a significant role in education, healthcare, and social services across the country.³³

This historical backdrop provides insight into the contextual factors influencing conversion patterns in Tanzania, where the long-standing presence and interactions between Christianity and Islam continue to shape religious identity and conversion dynamics.

Social and Cultural Factors Influencing Religious Conversion in Dodoma, Tanzania

Historical and Cultural Background

As the capital city of Tanzania, Dodoma possesses a diverse cultural and religious history, shaped by the interaction of various ethnic groups and their

³¹ Jan-Georg Deutsch, *Emancipation with Abolition in German East African. 1884-1914* (Oxford: James Curry, 2006) 101.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

traditional practices. These dynamics significantly influence individual's religious identities and the process of conversion. Traditional beliefs and practices, particularly those rooted in indigenous religious, as Mbiti and Hiebert put it, can either facilitate or hinder the conversion to Christianity, depending on the extent to which new religious doctrines align with existing cultural norms.³⁴

Ethnic and Community Dynamics:

Tanzania's ethnic diversity is a key factor in the religious conversion, particularly in Dodoma, where local ethnic groups exhibit distinct cultural and social practices that impact religious affiliations. In such a communal society, religious decisions are often closely tied to family and community expectations, creating a complex environment for a potential convert. Individuals seeking to convert may face significant pressure or resistance from their communities, which can influence their decision to transition to Christianity.³⁵

Education and Economic Factors:

Educational attainment and economic conditions are significant factors influencing religious conversion in Dodoma. Access to educational opportunities exposes individuals to new religious ideas, often through missionary activities that utilize educational institutions, such as schools and vocational training centers, as platforms for introducing Christian teachings.³⁶

³⁴ P. G. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," *International Journal Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no 3 (1987): 104-112; Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 45.

³⁵ John Illiffe, "The organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion." *The Journal of African History* 8, no.3 (1967): 495-512

³⁶ Frieder Ludwin, "Christian- Muslim Relations in Tanzania: The Role of Education and Economic Factors in Religious Conversion," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no.2 (2003):171-199.

Additionally, economic factors, such empowerment opportunities and financial assistance provided by religious organizations, can act as incentives for individuals to convert. Economic stability is crucial in helping converts to navigate the social and financial challenges that come with changing their religious identities, including potential loss of community support and financial security.³⁷

Family and Social Networks

Family dynamic and social networks play a central role in the conversion process. In Dodoma, individuals considering conversion to Christianity often navigate complex interpersonal relationships with family members who adhere to Islam or traditional African beliefs. Support or opposition from family members and close social networks can significantly influence the conversion experience, either facilitating or impeding the individual's transition to Christianity.³⁸ Social pressure, both in favor of or against conversion, is a decisive factor in the convert's journey.³⁹

Religious Leadership and Community Support

Leadership plays a significant role in shaping conversion experience of followers. Studies have shown that effective leadership is highly dependent on the relationship with followers.⁴⁰ Religious leadership and support of local Church communities are critical fostering in supporting saucersful conversions. In Dodoma, prominent leaders and supportive Adventist congregation play a significant role in

³⁷Ludwin, "Christian- Muslim Relations in Tanzania," 171-199.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰ Don Grayson and Ryan Speckhart, "The Leader-Follower Relationship: Practitioner Observations," *Leadership Advance Online* 6 (2006), <https://www.regent.edu/journal/leadership-advance-online/leader-follower-relationship-role-of-followers-in-leadership/> .

guiding and monitoring potential converts.⁴¹ Leaders can inspire and guide individuals, but it is the follower's engagement, feedback, and contributions that help drive the success of any mission or transformation.

When followers feel included, empowered, and able to influence decision-making, their journey- such as religious conversion, becomes more collaborative and impactful.⁴² Moreover, engaged followers tend to feel more connected to their leaders, which fosters a stronger sense of community and purpose.⁴³

In the context of religious conversion, particularly among new Adventist converts, the leadership approach can either or hinder the experience, depending on how much followers feel valued and supported. A church leader's ability to recognize the importance of followers and actively engage them can deeply influence the conversion process, making it more meaningful and sustainable.

Cultural Practices and Rituals

The interplay of Cultural practices and ritual within both Islam and Christianity significantly influence religious conversion in various ways:

Daily Ritual Prayer (Salah): Salah, the practice of praying five times daily, is deeply ingrained in Islamic culture⁴⁴ as a way to connect with Allah and the community. For a Muslim converting to Christianity, relinquishing this structured prayer life can be challenging, as it is tied to identity and spiritual discipline. It also emphasizes unity with Muslim community, making it emotionally challenging for

⁴¹ Speckhart, "The Leader-Follower Relationship: Practitioner Observations."

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ John L. Mustaf, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 67

those who convert and no longer practice in it, potentially facing social isolation from their community.

Dietary Practice (Halal): Many Muslims follow halal dietary laws, which restrict the consumption of pork and ensure that meat is slaughtered according to Islamic guidelines. Converts may struggle with adopting to dietary changes, especially if their new faith community does not emphasize or accommodate these practices. Navigating the changes can be a practical and cultural challenge, as food is often a communal aspect of Muslim culture.⁴⁵

Festivals and Celebration (Eid): Islamic celebrations such Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are important cultural and religious event. Converts to Christianity may experience a sense of loss or estrangement during these times, as these festivals are central to the Muslim experience. These absence of similar celebrations in Christianity or lack of community during these times can be isolating and emotionally challenging for new converts.⁴⁶

For individuals transitioning from Islam to Christianity, adapting to new religious practices and leaving behind deeply ingrained Islamic customs is a critical aspect of the conversion process. Mission strategies that respect and accommodate existing cultural traditions while gradually introducing Christian practices tend to be more effective in facilitating a smooth and lasting transition.⁴⁷

Addressing and respecting these cultural practices while introducing new religious practice is crucial for creating a supportive environment for converts mission

⁴⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an intellectual Traditions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 101

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

strategies that accommodates cultural traditions and other a seamless tradition can enhance the effectiveness of conversion efforts.⁴⁸

Challenges Faced by Muslim Converts in Tanzania

Social Stigma and Persecution

Muslim converts to Christianity often face significant social stigma and persecution, both of which significantly hinder their integration into the Christian faith.⁴⁹ In particular, social stigma arises as converts are frequently viewed by their Muslim families and communities as apostates or traitor to their former faith. As a result, this societal alienation manifests in various form, including:

Social Isolation: Converts may face estrangement from familial and social networks leading to psychological distress and diminished social capital.⁵⁰

Persecution: Beyond social alienation, converts may experience direct persecution, ranging from verbal harassment to physical violence. In certain context, this persecution is institutionalized; community leaders or local authorities may either participate in or condone acts of hostility toward converts, making integration into the new faith especially challenging.⁵¹ Such persecution can include restrictions on religious expression, denial of services, or exclusion from communal activities, further deepening the convert's isolation.

⁴⁸John Karanja, "Conversion and Identity: The Case of Muslim Converts to Christianity in Kenya and Tanzania," *African Journal of Religious Studies* 14, no. 1(2020):45-62); Oscar Osindo, "The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Addressing Social Stigma: Insight from Tanzania." *Journal of Interfaith Studies* 10, no. 1 (2021): 12-29.

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, "2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Tanzania," accessed November 12, 2024. <https://www.state.gov/report/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/Tanzania>

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

Economic Marginalization: The loss of social networks and familial support can result in economic deprivation, as converts may lose access to employment opportunities or financial resources previously provided by their community or family.⁵² Therefore, this may discourage converts from fully embracing their new faith, as they are faced with the harsh reality of financial instability and social exclusion.

The economic strain can create a sense of vulnerability, causing some individuals to reconsider their decision to convert in order to restore their previous livelihood and avoid further alienation. In extreme cases, converts might be forced to return to their former religion to regain their economic stability and community acceptance.

Religious Identity Crisis

The conversion process often causes a religious identity crisis, as Muslim-background believers struggle with the cognitive dissonance of abandoning their former religious identity in favor of a new one.⁵³ This identity crisis is marked by several psychological and spiritual challenges, including:

Internal Conflict: Converts often experience deep psychological tension as they attempt to reconcile their previous Muslim identity with their new Christian faith. The cultural and religious frameworks that once defined their worldview may continue to exert a strong influence, leading to inner turmoil and doubt.⁵⁴

⁵²U.S. Department of State, “2022 Report on International Religious Freedom.”

⁵³ Brendan G. Carr, *Religious Identity and Social Change: Explaining Cristian Conversion in a Muslim World* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

⁵⁴Ibid.

Spiritual Disorientation: The shift from Islam to Christian theology introduces converts to a radically different doctrinal and eschatological perspective. This often leads to spiritual confusion, as converts must unlearn previously held beliefs while adopting new practices and interpretations of sacred texts.⁵⁵

Pressure to Revert: Social pressure from family and community, combined with the emotional and psychological weight of isolation, can lead to significant pressure on converts to revert to Islam. This can manifest as a direct threats or more subtle forms of coercion exacerbating the identity crisis.⁵⁶

Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

Discipleship and spiritual growth present additional challenges for Muslim converts, as their journey of faith formation is often hindered by a lack of adequate support structures. Specific obstacles include:

Insufficient Support Systems: Many converts struggle to find acceptance and belonging within Christian communities, particularly if the cultural and theological framework of these communities do not align with their experiences as former Muslims.⁵⁷ The absence of strong social support can lead to stagnation or regress in their spiritual development and sense of belonging.

Limited Mentorship: The process of discipleship for new converts is often hampered by a lack of trained mentors who are equipped to guide them through the complexities of integrating Christian doctrines into their lives. Without effective

⁵⁵ Edward Kibiro. "Navigating Faith: The Psychology Impact of Religious Conversion on Muslim Converts in Tanzania." *Tanzanian Journal of Religious Studies* 5, no. 1 (2022):23-40

⁵⁶Ibid

⁵⁷ Peter Chibole, "Spiritual Growth Among Converts: Challenges and Opportunities in Tanzanian Churches," *Tanzania Journal of Theology* 12, no. 3 (2023):45-58

mentorship, many converts experience spiritual stagnation or regress in their faith journey.⁵⁸

Restricted Access to Educational Resource: The availability of Christian education resources, such as Bible study materials or theological training programs, is often limited, particularly in areas where Christianity is a minority religion. This restricts converts' ability to deepen their understanding of Christian doctrines and practices, ultimately inhibiting their spiritual maturation.⁵⁹

Cultural Sensitivity in Discipleship: discipleship programs that fail to account for the cultural and religious backgrounds of Muslim converts may alienate them, thus reducing the effectiveness of spiritual growth efforts. Culturally insensitive approaches may result in a superficial understanding of Christianity and hinder the transformative impact of discipleship on the converts' lives.⁶⁰

Addressing these challenges require a comprehensive and contextualized approach to mission work, focusing on providing holistic support -social, spiritual, and educational-to Muslim converts in Tanzania.

Implications for Mission Work

Strategic Consideration

The literature suggests that mission strategies in Muslim contexts should emphasize long-term engagement, relationship-building and the use of culturally sensitive approaches to evangelism. This is particularly important in Tanzania, where

⁵⁸ Oscar, "The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Addressing Social Stigma: Insight from Tanzania." *Journal of interfaith Studies* 10, no. 1 (2021): 12-29.

⁵⁹Theodora Ayot Ndaluka, *Religious Discourse, Social Cohesion, and Conflict: Muslim-Christian Relations in Tanzania* (Gottingen, Germany: Gottingen University Press, 2012)

⁶⁰ Darrell L. Whiteman, "Contextualization: The Theory, The Gap, the Challenge." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21, no. (1997:2-7.

religious identity is deeply entrenched within both family and community structures. Missionaries must be prepared to address the intellectual, emotional, and social aspects of conversion, offering holistic support to new converts.⁶¹

Lessons for the Adventist Church in Dodoma

For the Adventist Church in Dodoma, the key to successful mission work among Muslims lies in its ability to contextualize the gospel message while providing ongoing support to new converts. By fostering an environment of acceptance and understanding, the Church can help Muslim converts navigate the challenges of their new faith, ensuring their long-term spiritual and social integration.⁶²

Conversion from Islam to Christianity

Motivations for Conversion

Global perspective. Rambo and Lofland and Skonovd highlight “motifs” or “catalysts” as factors that drive individuals toward conversion. These include intellectual, experimental, and affective motives, which can influence how and why a person decides to change their religious beliefs. For Muslims converts to Christianity, these catalysts often include a search for deeper truth, spiritual fulfillment, and the desire for personal peace.⁶³

Research by Richard Maurer and Straehler highlights several key motivations behind the conversion of Muslim to Christianity. These motivations often fall into intellectual, spiritual, and relational categories:

⁶¹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldview: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 45-72; Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 86-102.

⁶² Silas Madame, interview by Pastor Khaniki, July 22, 2024

⁶³ Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press) 45.

Intellectual Dissatisfaction with Islam: Noted that many converts express a sense of intellectual discontent with Islamic teachings. They struggle with theological concepts or felt that certain aspect of Islamic doctrine are not sufficiently fulfilling or convincing.⁶⁴ Intellectual dissatisfaction often leads them to explore other faiths, including Christianity.

Spiritual longing for fulfillment: A desire for deeper spiritual fulfillment is a common theme. Converts often report the feeling that Christianity, and specifically the message of Jesus, offers a more personal and satisfying relationship with God. this spiritual yearning often contrasts with what they percise as a lack of connection in their previous faith.⁶⁵

Attraction to the Message of Jesus: many converts are draw to the person of Jesus Christ, whose teaching of love, forgiveness, and salvation resonate deeply with them. The message of grace and personal redemption, which is central to Christian doctrine, frequently serves as a strong pull factor in their conversion journey.⁶⁶

Disillusionment with Cultural or Societal Expectations: In some cases, individuals may feel constrained by the cultural and societal norms tied to Islam. The pressure to conform to traditional roles or practices may lead to feeling of alienation or a desire to seek a different religious affiliation.

Search for personal Peace and Assurance of Salvation: Converts often seek personal peace and sense of assurance regarding their spiritual destiny. Christianity's

⁶⁴ Maurer, *Religious Conversion in Islam*, 34.

⁶⁵ Straehler, *Conversion Narratives in Muslim Societes*, 48.

⁶⁶ Bill A. Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with ordinary Muslims* (Overland Park, KS: Monarch Books, 2004), 152-156.

emphasis on eternal salvation and personal peace through faith in Christ can be a powerful motivation for conversion.⁶⁷

Social and relational Influence: Relationships with Christians, whether friends, family, or missionaries, can play a significant role in influencing conversion. These connections often provide personal example and support networks, essential for those considering conversion.

Maurer and Strahler's research highlights that these motivations are complex and often interconnected, reflecting both personal and contextual factors in the lives of Muslim converts.⁶⁸ While spiritual dissatisfaction and the attraction to Jesus are common motivations globally, they may manifest differently in various contexts. For example, in region where religious identity is closely linked with community life, as in parts of Tanzania, these conversions may carry additional social implications.⁶⁹

Tanzanian perspective. In Tanzania, Islam and Christianity have coexisted for centuries; however, conversion between these two faiths is often regarded with suspicion and can lead to social ostracism.⁷⁰ From this perspective, the decision to convert, is rarely made lightly. For many, it is preceded by years of contemplation and spiritual searching, as illustrated by the experience of six Senegalese Muslims who converted to Christianity only after long periods of internal exploration.⁷¹ Similarly, Tanzanian converts frequently face the challenge of reconciling their new faith with

⁶⁷ Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam*, 152-156.

⁶⁸ J. Dudley Woodberry, "Conversion in Islam and Christianity: A comparative Analysis." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (2004): 10-15.

⁶⁹Mark Horton, "Christianity and Islam in Coastal East Africa: The Tanzania Context," *Journal of African Religious History* 17, no. 2 (2015): 112-128.

⁷⁰ Van Butselaar, *Islam and Christianity in East Africa*, 120.

⁷¹ Straehler, *Conversion Narratives in West Africa*, 65.

longstanding social obligations and expectations, highlighting the complex and deeply personal nature of the conversion journey in this cultural setting.

Relevant Studies on Conversion in Africa and Global

Conversion Studies in Africa

Several studies across African countries with socio-political and religious landscapes similar to Tanzania have provided valuable insights into Muslim conversions to Christianity. Countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Nigeria serve as relevant context for exploring conversion trend.

Kenya. Research conducted by Karanja, John Chesworth and Westerlund on Muslim conversions to Christianity in Kenya reveals patterns of religious tension specifically in regions like the coastal areas where Islam is historically entrenched. Conversion often faces significant familial and societal ostracism, as well as pressure from local Muslim communities to revert to Islam, family dynamics and the potential for disownment are frequently reported challenges for Kenya converts.⁷²

Uganda. In Uganda, conversion studies have indicated that personal spiritual experiences and encounter with Christian missionaries as key motivators for conversion. Converts often recount dreams, visions, or other personal experiences with Jesus as critical moments in their conversion journey. Although social repercussions, such as isolation from family or community, are common, Uganda's relatively diverse religious landscapes provide some level of tolerance.⁷³

⁷² J. K. Karanja, "Conversion in Coastal Kenya: A case study of Muslim Converts to Christianity," *African studies Quarterly*, 11, no 2 (2009): 45-63.

⁷³ D. Mugawe, "Religious Conversion in Uganda: Case studies of Muslim Converts to Christianity," *Journal of African Religion and Philosophy*, 4, no 1 (2012): 79-94

In Tanzania, similar factors influence conversion among Muslims. Tanzanian converts, too, frequently report personal encounters, dreams, or visions that they interpret as divine guide leading them to Christianity.⁷⁴ Encounters with missionaries play a vital role, introducing converts to Christian teachings and nurturing their spiritual transformation.

However, in Tanzania, social challenges tend to be more pronounced. The strong community structure and the deep-rooted intertwining of religious and social identity means that converts often face severe social ostracism, with family and community support systems frequently withdrawn.⁷⁵ Unlike Uganda, where religious diversity offers some buffer,⁷⁶ Tanzania's more rigid religious landscape intensifies the social repercussions of conversion.

Nigeria. Nigeria's religious landscape is marked by interfaith dynamics, especially in regions where Islam and Christianity vie for influence, such as the northern and middle-belt states. According to Adogame and Shankar converts often face harsh repercussions, including violence, legal challenges, and exclusion from their communities to offer mutual support, reflecting the need for safe spaces within hostile environment.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Sama Martyn, "The Role of Pre-Conversion Dreams and Visions in Islam Contexts: An Examination of the Evidence," *Southeastern Theological Review* 9, no. 2 (2018): 12.

⁷⁵ Musa Saaid Muhoja, "Dynamics of Proselytization and Conversion in the Pentecostal's Healthcare Intervention in Urban Tanzania." *Journal of Policy and Development Studies* 15, no.1 (2024): 202, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jpds.v.15i1.13>.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 132.

⁷⁷ Afe Adogame and Shushil Shankar, "Religious Conversion in Nigeria: The Dynamics of Faith and Power in Northern Nigeria," in *Conversion in Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 112-135.

Global Perspectives on Islamic Conversion to Christianity

Muslims conversion to Christianity occurs under a wide range of social, political, and religious conditions globally. This section examines conversions from regions such as Egypt, Iran, and Indonesia, highlighting key trends and challenges while offering comparative insights into how conversion narratives differ across these regions.

Egypt: Conversion in the shadow of Islamic Law and Cultural Pressure.

Sharkey Heather's work indicates that conversion from Islam to Christianity is highly sensitive issue,

In Egypt conversion from to Christianity is a highly sensitive issue, often seen as both a religious and political act. The country is predominantly Muslim, and Islamic law (Sharia) plays a significant role in social, and legal matters. While Egypt's constitution theoretically guarantees freedom of religion, in practice, apostasy-leaving Islam is socially and sometimes legally prohibited.⁷⁸

Challenges faced by Converts: According to Raymond, converts in Egypt face severe ostracism, including rejection from family, loss of employment, and in some cases physical violence. Legally, it is nearly impossible for Muslim-Background believers (MMBs) to officially change their religious status. Many converts must lie as "hidden Christians", practicing their faith in secret to avoid persecution.

Commotion Motivations for conversion: Sharkey reports theological dissatisfaction with Islamic teaching, personal spiritual experiences such as visions or dreams of Jesus, and the desire to personal relationship with God are key motivations.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Heather J Sharkey, *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East* (New York: Cambridge university Press, 2017), 105.

⁷⁹ Raymond Ibrahim, *Crucified Again: Exposition Islam's New War on Christian* (Regney Publishing, 2013).

Iran: Conversion in a Strictly Theocratic Society.

Conversion from Islam to Christianity is officially considered apostasy and punished by death under the country's strict interpretation of sharia law. Despite this, there has been significant growth in underground house Churches, with many Muslims secretly converting to Christianity. The authoritarian nature of Iran's regime adds a layer of danger for those who choose to leave Islam.⁸⁰

Challenge faced by converts: According to Afshari converts in Iran endure intensive scrutiny risk arrest, imprisonment, and torture if their faith is discovered. Converts must often practice their faith clandestinely to avoid government crackdowns, as Christian gatherings are viewed as a political threat to the state.⁸¹

Common motivations for conversion: Deep dissatisfaction with the theocratic rule of the Islamic regime, feeling that Islam has become entangled with political oppression, personal encounters with Christian missionaries, access to Christian media (including satellite broadcasts), profound spiritual experiences play key role to conversion.⁸²

Indonesia: Conversion in a Pluralistic yet Predominantly Muslim Society.

According to Hefner, although Indonesia is the World's most populous Muslim-majority country and constitutionally guarantees freedom of religion, societal and familial pressures make conversion from Islam to Christianity a challenging path.⁸³ Converts often face severe challenges, including family rejection, community ostracism, and in some cases violence. Nonetheless, motivations for conversion

⁸⁰ Reza Afshari, *Human Right in Iran: The Abuse of Cultural Relativism* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 201).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁸² Haggai Ram, *Iran phobia; The Logic of an Israel Obsession* (Stanford University Press, 2009).

⁸³ Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 78.

frequently include personal spiritual encounters, such as dreams and vision of Jesus, which serve as powerful driving factors in the conversion process.

Challenge faced by Converts: Include family rejection, ostracism from their communities, and in some cases, violence. On the other hand, motivations for conversion includes personal spiritual encounters, such dreams and visions of Jesus, are driving factors in the conversion process.⁸⁴

Insights from Interfaith Dialogue and Engagement

Insights from interfaith and engagement reveal its significance role in promoting mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims. Literature indicates that constructive interfaith dialogue fosters respect and empathy, which can pave the way for positive conversion experiences. For example, studies conducted in Lebanon and Jordan illustrate how respectful engagement between Islamic and Christian communities has led to increased awareness of shared values and beliefs, reducing stereotypes and misconceptions.⁸⁵

Such dialogues often create safe space for individuals to explore faith questions without fear of judgment, facilitating an environment conducive to spiritual exploration and, in some case conversion.⁸⁶ As noted by Rinaldo, “The effectiveness of interface initiatives hinges on the genuine willingness of participants to engage with one another’s beliefs and practices, thus breaking down barriers that typically hinder conversion.”⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, 89.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ David Greenleen, “Christian Conversion from Islam: Social, Cultural, Communication, and Supernatural Factors in the Process of Conversion and Faithful Church Participation” (PhD diss., Trinity International University, 1996).

Additionally, in his exploration of interfaith dialogue, Oscar Osido underscores its critical role in fostering mutual understanding and respect among diverse religious communities. He posits that meaningful dialogue can dismantle deep-seated prejudices and promote peaceful coexistence by encouraging individuals to appreciate differing perspectives and shared values. Osido advocates for practical approaches to interfaith engagement, emphasizing collaboration in the addressing common social issues, which can lead to more harmonious society. His insights resonate with the broader literature on interfaith efforts, particularly in regions where tensions are prevalent.⁸⁸

Conclusion

There is a notable scarcity of focused research on Muslim converting to Adventism in Tanzania, with existing literature primarily concentrating on mainstream Christianity. This oversight highlights a significance gap in understanding the unique dynamics associated with specific denominations, particularly the Adventist tradition.

Research on Adventist converts could provide valuable insights into their motivations, experiences and specific challenges they face. Additionally, the literature reveals a limited documentation of post-conversion experience, as many studies primarily address the initial conversion process.

There is insufficient exploration of how converts navigate their new faith amid former religious identities and community expectations. Understanding the long-term effects of conversion, including spiritual growth, integration in to Church

⁸⁸Greenleen, "Christian Conversion from Islam," 38.

communities, and ongoing challenges, is essential for developing effective support systems for new converts.

Since Muslims around the world share the same theological teachings, even though they differ culturally, the suggestions by Maurer and Straehler and other researchers in conversion may or may not hold true for Muslims in Tanzania who convert from Islam to Christianity. Therefore, the data analysis conducted after collection will yield a more accurate understanding of the motivations and reasons for the conversion in Dodoma Central Church.

In the context of Dodoma, Tanzania, a combination of social and economic factors plays a vital role in shaping religious conversion processes. These factors include the historical and cultural background, the influence of ethnic and community dynamics, educational and economic conditions, family and social networks, religious leadership, and the role of cultural practices and rituals. A nuanced understanding of these elements is essential for developing mission strategies that not only facilitate conversions but also provide sustained support for individuals undergoing the process of religious transition.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outline the research setting, participants' selection, data collection, and analysis methods to be used to investigate the experiences of new Adventist converts from Islam within the Dodoma Central Church District. Key areas include the study design, population and sampling, ethical consideration, and data handling.

Description of Research Area

The study was conducted in Dodoma, Tanzania's capital and administrative center, known for its socio-cultural diversity. This region, approximately 41,311 square kilometers, serves as government hub and hosts numerous diplomatic missions.¹ Dodoma's unique blend of urban and rural settings offers opportunities to explore socio-economic development, cultural dynamics, and environmental challenges.

According to the 2022 National Population and Housing Census, Dodoma has a population of approximately 1,698,966 inhabitants, making it a significant urban center. The local economy primarily relies on agriculture, with key crops including maize, millet, and grapes, alongside livestock farming. Additionally, the presence of

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. "Dodoma," Accessed May 2, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Dodoma>.

government institutions bolsters local employment opportunities and services, shaping the region's socio-cultural dynamics.²

Dodoma is home to various ethnic groups, including the Wagogo, Rangi, and Taturu, as well as minorities like the Sandawe, Barbaig and Hadzabe.³ Educational institutions such as the University of Dodoma (UDOM), contribute to the region's intellectual development. While not a major tourist destination, Dodoma offers attractions that reflect its rich heritage.⁴

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research method, specifically a phenomenological research design, to explore participants' lived experiences of religious conversion. A qualitative approach is most suitable for this study as it focuses on understanding meaning, context, and personal interpretation, essential aspects of examining religious transformation. Unlike quantitative methods, which rely on numerical measurements, qualitative research allows for an in-depth, holistic exploration of personal experiences.

Phenomenology is chosen because it seeks to uncover the essence of individuals' experiences and the meanings they attach to them.⁵ Since religious conversion is a deeply personal and subjective process, phenomenology provides a structured yet flexible framework for capturing participants' perspectives without imposing predefined categories. Other qualitative approaches, such as narrative

²Tanzania, National Bureau of Statistics. "Regional Administration and Local Government," accessed 12 June 2023, <https://www.nbs.go.tz/takwimu/agriculture>.

³ Ibid., 54.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Stephen D Lapan et al., *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Methods and Designs*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 243-253.

inquiry or ethnography, could be considered. However, phenomenology is preferred because it focuses on shared lived experiences rather than simply recounting life stories or analyzing cultural settings.

By utilizing in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, this approach facilitated a rich understanding of the conversion experiences of new Adventists, allowing for an exploration of their personal narratives and the significance of their faith transitions. This methodological choice aligns with previous research in religious studies, which emphasized the importance of firsthand accounts in understanding spiritual transformation.⁶

Population

A population refers to the entire group or set of units to which the research findings will be applied.⁷ A sample is a portion of the population that fully represents it. This means the units selected as a sample must reflect the diverse characteristics of all types of units within the population.⁸ The population for this study was the 46 New Adventist Islam Converts (NAIC) in Dodoma district who were converted from 2015 to 2024. They were between the ages of 18 and 65 years and comprised males and females.

The sampling method employed in identifying informants for this study was purposive sampling. Purposeful sampling consisted of choosing a restricted number of

⁶ John W. Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 26.

⁷ Leroy R. Thacker II., "What Is the Big Deal About Populations in Research?" *Progress in Transplantation*, 2020; 30(1):3-3. doi:10.1177/1526924819893795

⁸ Shahid N Khan, "Qualitative Research Method - Phenomenology," *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 21 (2014): 298, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n21p298>.

participants with the capacity to help the researcher understand the research problem and the study's central phenomenon.⁹

The type of purposeful sampling used in this phenomenological study is homogeneous sampling. Homogeneous sampling consists of choosing similar cases. This provides a focus in the research but encourages individual participants to describe their experiences from their peculiar perspective to help understand the studied phenomenon.¹⁰ Therefore, the study was conducted on 11 of the New Adventist Islam Converts in Dodoma Central district who are 18 years and above and are still members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. None of these 11 NAIC was physically challenged or pregnant.

Sampling Criteria

To ensure fairness and alignment with the study's objectives, this research used purposive sampling to select 11 participants based on the following selection criteria:

1. Gender representation: 6 men and 5 women.
2. Age diversity: Participants were chosen from three age groups, 18-30, 31-40 and 41+.

Participants were identified through church records and leadership recommendations to ensure relevance to the research. To enhance fairness and minimize bias, church leadership was advised to recommend individuals from different perspectives rather than a single dominant group.

⁹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 125.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 127.

This selection approach followed Lapan's guidance on phenomenological research, which emphasizes selecting individuals with direct, lived experience of the phenomenon under study.¹¹ The process ensures that they represent a balanced, inclusive, and comprehensive understanding of the conversion experience among Muslim converts to Adventism in Dodoma Central Church.

Data Collection and Research Instruments

Data was gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conversion experiences of new Adventists. These interviews allowed participants to freely express their thoughts while guiding the conversation toward key themes of the study.¹² The interviews were audio recorded, and each interview lasted for an hour. The study considered the environment and the circumstances in which interviews were conducted to inform the organization of the interview.¹³ A recoding notebook and electronic recording device was used to ensure accurate data collection.

The study contacted Adventist Islam converts to be interviewed through personal contacts and social networking.¹⁴ The interview guides for the individual participants' interviews are in Appendix B. This one-to-one interview offered an opportunity for personal exploration of their motivations, struggles, and the emotional

¹¹ Stephen D. Lapan, et al., *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Methods and Designs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 243-253

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jerry W. Willis, *Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretive and Critical Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), accessed November 14, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230108>

¹⁴ D. Weaks, "Unlocking the Secrets of 'Good Supervision:': a Phenomenological Exploration of Experienced Counsellors' Perceptions of Good Supervision," *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* 2, no. 1 (2000): 33-39.

and cognitive aspects of their conversion. This method allowed for a deep dive into each participant's journey, shedding light on the complexities of religious conversion in a personal and meaningful way.¹⁵ The selection of 11 participants ensured a manageable sample size that allowed for in-depth exploration of individual experiences while maintaining the quality and depth of data.

The semi-structured interview format ensured that key areas are covered while allowing flexibility in participants' responses. This approach captured a holistic view of their perspectives, motivations, and challenges. Given the sensitive nature of religious conversion, the personal setting of the interviews ensured that participants felt comfortable sharing their thoughts without social pressure or influence from others. Following data collection, thematic analysis was employed using an inductive method to identify and interpret patterns within the responses, providing rich insights into the conversion experiences.¹⁶

Interview Protocol

An interview guide (see Appendix B) was developed with open-ended items to explore participants' motivations for converting, their experiences during the process, challenges faced, and support received from the church community.¹⁷

¹⁵ Weaks, "Unlocking the Secrets of 'Good Supervision,'" 33-39.

¹⁶ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2013), 56.

¹⁷ Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Science*, 8th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2018).

Data Transportation and Storage

Data was safely transported to the Voice of Prophecy (VOP) office, in East-Central Tanzania Conference office in Morogoro, Tanzania for secure storage. This process ensured data integrity and confidentiality.¹⁸

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, a widely used method in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data. The process began with transcribing the interview verbatim, ensuring the preservation of participant's exact words and expressions. Once transcribed, the data underwent multiple readings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content and context.¹⁹

Coding was employed as first step in identifying significant statements, phrases, and words related to key areas such as motivations for conversion, integration experiences, challenges faced, and the role of the church community. These initial codes were categorized and organized into thematic clusters, ensuring the data was grouped around emerging patterns. To ensure reliability and consistency, I applied a self-coding method, carefully reviewing and analyzing the data for emerging patterns. Any discrepancies or uncertainties were addressed through a reflective process and further data review.²⁰

The Creswell method of data analysis, as outlined in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, guided the process of identifying both commonalities and unique

¹⁸ American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of American Psychological Association*, 7th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

¹⁹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no 2 (2006): 77-101

²⁰ Virginia Brau and Victoria Clarke, *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners* (London: SAGE Publications, 2013), 77-93.

experiences among participants. This approach emphasizes a structured coding system to highlight significant themes, such as reasons for conversion and challenges encountered during the integration process. As part of the Creswell's constant comparative technique, I continually compared data within each theme and across themes, refining the codes as more data were examined.²¹

The findings derived from this analysis were used to develop insights into the conversion experiences of Muslim-background Adventists, inform mission strategies, and provide practical recommendations for church leaders on integration and discipleship approaches within the context of the Dodoma Central Church District.

Ensuring Trustworthiness in the Study

To enhance the rigor of this study, trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, as outlined below:

Credibility

Credibility ensures that the study accurately captures and presents the lived experiences of participants. This will be achieved through:

Member Checking. The participants had the opportunity to review the themes and interpretations drawn from their interviews. This feedback helped ensure that analysis accurately reflects their lived experiences, providing deep insights into the underlying motivations for conversion, the role of church community, and the challenges faced during the transition. The findings from this analysis contributed to a better understanding of the conversion journey and the factors that influenced it.²²

²¹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013), 103.

²² Jane Smith, "Member Checking in Qualitative Research: A validation Strategy," *Journal of Research Methods* 15, no 2 (2020): 45-62.

Triangulation. Multiple data source-such as in-depth interview, field observations, and church records were be cross-checked to strengthen the study’ findings.

Prolonged Engagement. Spending sufficient time with participants allowed the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of their experiences.

Transferability

Transferability ensured that the findings had relevance beyond the immediate study context. This was supported by:

Reporting and Discussion

Ones the data analysis was completed, the findings were presented in a structured manner, contextualizing them within the broader body of existing literature. This presentation was done in chapter 5, where the findings were discussed in relation to prior research on Muslim conversion experiences, focusing on themes such as motivations, integration into the church community, and the challenges faced during the transition process. The aim was to highlight both similarities and differences in the findings when compared to previous studies, offering a deeper understanding of the factors that shape conversion experiences.

In Chapter 6, a summary of the research was provided, along with the key conclusions drawn from the data analysis. This chapter also included recommendations for church leaders, policymakers, and future research, based on the insights gained through the study. The implications for these findings were discussed,

particularly in how they may inform future strategies for supporting Muslim converts within the Adventist community.²³

Ethical Consideration

The recruitment process for this study followed ethical guidelines to ensure fairness, transparency, and voluntary participation. Participants were identified through church records and leadership recommendations, but their participation was entirely voluntary, with no pressure or expectation to take part.

To minimize undue influence or coercion, potential participants received a detailed explanation of the study's purpose, their rights as participants, and the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. Recruitment material and verbal invitations emphasized that participation is a personal choice and would not affect their standing in the church or community.

Additionally, informed consent was obtained before data collection began to ensure that participants fully understood their involvement. The study adhered to ethical research principles, including confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for participant's autonomy. The researcher also obtained permission from the Adventist University of Africa Research Ethics Committee before commencing the study.

The study has been designed with minimal risk to participants. Since it focuses on personal narrative and religious experiences, the primary risks are emotional or psychological, which are expected to be minimal. Informed consent was obtained to ensure participants are aware of any potential discomfort or distress that might arise from discussing personal topics. However, participants had option to withdraw from the study any time if they felt uncomfortable. Cultural sensitivity was prioritized, with

²³John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014).

a focus on respecting participants' religious and cultural context, and all data was anonymized to maintain confidentiality.

Managing Emotional and Psychological Distress

While minimal psychological risks are anticipated, some participants may experience emotional distress when discussing sensitive personal experience related to their conversion. To address this:

1. **Pastoral Support:** Participants who exhibit emotional distress offered guidance from a qualified pastoral counselor.
2. **Referral to professional Help:** In case of severe distress, participants were advised to seek professional psychological support from trusted counselors.
3. **Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:** Participants were reminded that they can stop their interview at any time if they feel uncomfortable.
4. **Follow-up Support:** Where necessary, a follow-up check-in was conducted to ensure the well-being of affected participants.

Mobilizing Church Leadership

The researcher engaged the Dodoma Central Church leadership to explain the research objectives and seek permission to conduct the study. Leadership assistance will also be requested to help recruit participants and ethically facilitate demographic and data collection, ensuring privacy and confidentiality, participants and gather demographic information.

Conclusion

In summary, this study is committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and respect for

participants' confidentiality and autonomy. By adhering to these principles and obtaining ethical clearance from the Adventist University of Africa Research Ethic Committee, the study will create a safe and respectful environment for participants while contributing valuable insights to the research field.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents an analysis of the data and discusses the findings of the study. The analysis centers on lived experiences of New Adventist Islam Converts (NAIC) in Dodoma Central Church District, with a focus on their transition from Islam to Adventism. The findings aim to enhance the understanding of religious conversion in this context and offer insights for shaping effective mission strategies and integration approaches within the Adventist church.

As outlined in chapter one, data collection was guided by a semi-structured set of interview questions developed in English (See Appendix B). A separate question guide was used for the focus group discussions (FGDs) which is included in Appendix C. These guides were utilized during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to ensure a comprehensive exploration of participants' experiences.

This chapter begins with the description of the study participants, followed by a detailed presentation and discussion of the findings, structured around the research questions. It concludes with a summary of the key insights drawn from the analysis.

Description of the Participants

Data was obtained through in-depth, semi-structured interviews to ensure accuracy. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with shared characteristics relevant to the study. This sampling method helps focus on individuals with similar experiences related to the research phenomenon.

Following a phenomenological approach, this study explored the lived experiences of Muslim converts to Adventism in Dodoma Central District Church. Data was manually processed and analyzed using a thematic analysis model¹ to identify emerging themes.

A total of 11 participants were interviewed, all of whom are NAICs who have been Adventists for up to nine years (2015-2024). The participants, both male and female ranged in age from 18 to 65 years. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms (P1-P11) were assigned to each participant. Additionally, data from focus group discussions (FGDs) is presented using the abbreviation FGD.

Findings and Discussions

The first Research Question

The first research question was, what is the lived experience of the new Adventist Islam converts before and after conversion to Adventism? To answer this question the researcher examined their lived experiences before their conversion when they were Muslims and their experiences after conversion when they became Seventh-day Adventists. This analysis also considers the role of the church community in supporting their integration.

Religious Experiences before Conversion.

Worship Practices. Before converting to Adventism, NAICs performed daily prayers (Salah). Five daily prayers were central practice in their faith, fostering discipline, devotion, and a connection with God (Allah). Many converts recalled the

¹ J. Attride-Stirling, "Thematic Networks: An Analytic Tool for Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Research* 1, no 3 (2001):385-405.

structured nature of this practices and how it influenced their perception of spirituality. P1 shared:

“Before I became an Adventist, I used to pray five times a day as part of my Islamic faith. These prayers were central to my daily routine, instilling discipline and a deep sense of devotion. The structured nature of salah shaped my understanding of spirituality, making me feel connected to God in a very specific way.”

Fasting During Ramadan. Observing the month of Ramadan was a significant spiritual experience for NAICs, emphasizing self-discipline, communal unity, and seeking Allah’s mercy. Some converts expressed how fasting shaped their spiritual awareness before encountering Adventism. Explaining their past belief about fasting during Ramadan, P2 reported:

We were firmly taught that deliberately skipping fasting during Ramadan without a valid reason was not just a sin but an act of outright defiance against one of the fundamental pillars of Islam. Such an individual was considered a *kafir* (a disbeliever or pagan), risking severe divine punishment for rejecting a sacred obligation central to Islamic faith and identity.

According to P2, fasting during Ramadan was not just a religious duty but a deeply spiritual practice that fostered self-discipline, devotion to Allah, and a strong sense of community unity.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) revealed that participants viewed fasting as a way to seek Allah’s mercy and grow spiritually. They reflected on how fasting shaped their religious identity and social expectations surrounding it. As P3 mentioned, deliberately skipping fasting without a valid reason was considered a serious sin, often invoking fear of divine punishment.

Building on the above discussion, the FGD also allowed participants to explore how their perspectives on fasting had evolved after conversion, comparing their previous Islamic practices with their current Adventist understanding. Through sharing personal experiences and engaging in collective reflection, participants

highlighted changes in their motivations, spiritual significance, and personal discipline related to fasting. This discussion provided deeper insight into how their conversion reshaped their emotional connection to fasting and their theological interpretation of its role in their spiritual journey.

Quranic study and Recitation. Memorizing and reciting the Quran in Arabic, believed to be the literal word of God was a daily routine. According to P3, while Muslims who do not memorize or recite the Quran in Arabic may not be considered sinful, they might miss out on spiritual rewards. Reciting the Quran in Arabic is believed to bring blessings, and many Muslims strive to learn at least portion of it for prayer. P4 commented on the importance of memorizing and reciting the Quran, stating:

“It was not just an act of devotion but a means of spiritual protection and guidance. Those who struggled with memorization or recitation were sometimes perceived as lacking commitment to their faith. This could lead to social pressure from family and religious leaders, who strongly emphasized its importance.”

Belief in Divine Judgement. One participant (P5), believed that after death, every person would face divine judgement based on their deeds. This belief was also shared by P6, who added that all actions, both good and bad, were recorded by angles and would be weighed on the Day of Judgment.

Muslims believe that those whose good deeds outweighed their bad ones would enter paradise, while those whose sins were greater would face punishment in hell. Moreover, data from FGD indicated that punishment in the grave was also a concern, as it was believed that questioning by angels and suffering would begin immediately after burial for those who failed to live righteously.

Emphasizing the belief in divine judgment, P7 explained her understanding as follows:

Judgment is based not only on outward actions but also on intentions (Niyyah), as stated in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:284), emphasizing sincerity in worship and righteousness. We also believed in the intercession (Shafa'ah), as mentioned in Surah An-Najm (53:26), where Prophet Muhammad may plead for mercy on behalf of believers. Additionally, we held faith in the concept of the Sirat bridge (Surah Maryam 19-71-72), described as thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword, which believers must cross to reach paradise- where the righteous pass swiftly while sinners fall into the fire below. However, we also trusted in Allah's mercy and the opportunity for forgiveness through sincere repentance (Tawba), as mentioned in Surah Az-Zumar (39:53).

Communal and cultural experiences. Through an FGD, it became clear that NAICs experienced a strong sense of community (Ummah) before their conversion. Many described the challenge of leaving behind a deeply connected faith community that shaped their identity and daily life. This was reinforced by P8, who narrated how Friday prayers and religious gatherings played a crucial role in reinforcing their community of faith before conversion. These gatherings were not just acts of worship but also spaces for social bonding, learning, and support.

Her narration aligns with Islamic tradition, which emphasizes the communal aspect of faith. Muslims are encouraged to pray together, strengthen brotherhood, and uphold their cultural and religious identity. The dress code and modesty standards were also central to their communal experiences. Some converts described challenges in adjusting to the Adventist view on modesty and personal expression, which differed from Islamic teachings on attire. For instance, women were expected to wear the hijab as a symbol of religious identity. P9 explained the significance of these dress codes:

“Modesty in dressing was part of our faith. As a woman, you couldn't go out without covering yourself properly, and as a man, wearing Islamic attire was a sign of respect and commitment to the faith. It was not just clothing; it was about obedience and identity”

These communal and cultural experience formed a significant part of NAICs' religious identity before their conversion, making the transition to Adventism both spiritually and socially complex.

Theological and Doctrinal Beliefs.

Belief in One God (Tawhid). Although NAICs believed in one God before their conversion, they made it clear through the FGD that their understanding of God's oneness differed from the Christian view. According to the FGD, they believed that Christians worshipped three gods- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They also believed Jesus was not God but merely a messenger of God. As Muslims, they strongly affirmed that God (Allah) is one, with no partners or equals. The concept of the trinity was often a difficulty for Muslim-background converts to accept initially.

Prophethood of Muhammad. Before their conversion, NAICs regarded Muhammad as the final prophet, believing that Islam was the completion of previous revelations. They initially viewed him as the ultimate messenger of God, with Jesus merely a forerunner. Many participants recalled experiencing an internal struggle when they first began questioning Muhammad's role in relation to Jesus Christ, as this challenged the foundational beliefs, they had held since childhood.

Supernatural Beings (Angles and Jinn). Before their conversion, NAICs believed in angels and jinn (spiritual beings), which shaped their understanding of spiritual forces. Many recalled fearing jinn possession and attributing certain life experiences to their influence. These fears often played a significant role in their spiritual outlook, influencing daily practices and protective rituals. It was only after converting to Christianity that their understanding of spiritual warfare shifted, leading them to see God's power as greater than the influence of jinn.

P10 emphasized the significance of supernatural beings, particularly jinn, in shaping their worldview before conversion. She shared:

Jinn were powerful and ever-present beings capable of influencing human lives in many ways. Before my conversion, I believed that jinn could cause misfortune, illness, and even possess individuals, making them a constant source of fear. Their presence shaped my daily life, influencing my decision

and spiritual practices. I often attributed unexplained events- such as sudden sickness, strange noises at night, or unexpected failures to their influence. To protect myself, I followed strict rituals, recited specific prayers, and avoided places believed to be inhabited by jinn.

She added,

Jinn were not just mythical beings but real supernatural forces that dictated many aspects of life. The fear of encountering or being harmed by jinn led to a deep reliance on protective measures, including amulets and seeking spiritual guidance from religious leaders. Jinn were seen as unpredictable and potentially dangerous, making their influence a serious concern.

Religious Experiences of NAICs after Conversion to Adventism.

After embracing Adventism, NAICs underwent a significant transformation in their spiritual practices, communal identity, and theological understanding. While the transition was challenging, many found a deeper sense of faith, peace, and belonging in their new Christian journey. For example, P10 shared:

After converting to Christianity, I realized that God's power was far greater than that of any supernatural being, including jinn. This shift in belief removed the fear that had once governed my life, replacing it with faith in divine protection.

She continued:

“Through biblical teachings, I came to understand the spiritual warfare in a new way, seeing God as the ultimate authority over all spiritual forces. This newfound confidence allowed me to overcome the anxiety that had previously controlled my daily life.”

Spiritual and Worship Experience.

New understanding of Prayer. After conversion, the converts reported a shift in their approach to prayer. Formerly accustomed to the structured ritual of daily Salah, they began to experience prayer as a personal and spontaneous communication with God. As P5, Male, age 35 shared during an interview:

“Before, I prayed in Arabic because I had to. Now, I pray in Swahili, even when I'm at work, walking, driving, or doing anything. I feel like I'm really talking to God, not just reciting.”

Another participant in the FGD reflected on this transition:

“In my former religion (Islam), prayer felt like a duty. Now I find myself communicating (praying) with Jesus, talking to Him about my day, my fears, and my hopes.” (FGD2).

This sentiment was echoed by several others, who described their prayers as “free”, “from the heart”, and “more like conversations than rituals.” The shift was not merely linguistic, but deeply relational. For many, praying in Swahili, the native language of Tanzania, or even in their vernaculars created a sense of closeness and authenticity. One female participant explained:

“I used to think God only heard Arabic. Now I know He understands me fully. Especially one when I read Isaiah 41:21- ‘Present your case’, says the Lord. ‘Set forth your arguments.’ Says the King of Jacob. That’s when I realized that God actually loves friendly conversations with His people. That changed everything.”

Fasting as Spiritual Choice. Unlike the obligatory fasting during Ramadan, converts came to see fasting as a voluntary spiritual discipline rather than a religious duty. Participants still valued fasting but now viewed it as a time for personal reflection, spiritual renewal, and seeking God’s guidance rather than a requirement for divine acceptance. P8 explained:

“Before, I fasted because it was a must in Ramadan. If you missed it, you were seen as a sinner. But now, I can fast any time when I feel led by the Holy Spirit-to get closer to God or when I’m making a big decision.”
P6 described how fasting had become more meaningful:

“Now I fast not because it is a command, but because I want to grow spiritually. It helps me focus on prayer and understand God’s will better”

This personal shift was also evident in one of the FGDs, where a participant shared:
“During Ramadan, fasting felt like a rule. But now for me it’s a joy. I don’t fast for people to see or because everyone else is doing it, I do it to spend quality time with my God.” (FDG3).

Bible study replacing Quranic Recitation. Before conversion, memorizing and reciting the Quran in Arabic was seen as essential for spiritual rewards. However, after conversion many discovered the Bible as a source of deeper understanding and

personal transformation. They appreciated the ability to study the scriptures in their own language, which allowed them to engage with God's word in a more meaningful and insightful way. P11 reflected:

“I used to recite the Qur'an in Arabic without really understanding it. But now when I read the Bible in Kiswahili, it speaks directly to my heart. I understand what God is saying to me. My heart is filled with joy when I read in Kiswahili that has promised blessings to those who read and those who hear the words of the Bible, and keep the things written in it; for the time is near” (Revelation 1:3).

During one focus group discussion, FGD4 noted:

“In Islam, we were taught to memorize the Qur'an even if we didn't understand the language. But now, bible study helps me grow spiritually because I can ask questions, reflect, and apply it to my life.”

FGD 5 added:

“The Qur'an was beautiful to recite, but the Bible teaches me how to live to live. It explains things clearly about forgiveness, love, and eternal life.”

Communal and Cultural Shifts.

Finding a New Faith Community. Leaving behind the Muslim Ummah was difficult, but after conversion, the converts found a new sense of belonging in the Adventist Church. While some faced rejection from their families and former community, they were welcomed into a new spiritual family that supported their faith journey. Overtime, they built new relationships, participated in communal worship, and engaged in Christian fellowship, which helped them navigate the emotional challenges of their transition.

One Participant shared:

“When I accepted Christ, I lost my family. But in the church, I found brothers and sisters who prayed for me, visited me, and encouraged me. I am no longer alone.” (P 9, Female, age 31).

Another reflected on the comfort they received:

It was painful to be cut off by my relatives, but the Adventist community embraced me with love. They even assisted me when I was sick and had no one else.” (P 3).

During an FGD, a participant noted:

“The ummah was like a big family, and leaving it felt like losing my identity. But the church has become my new family. We worship together, eat together, and even cry together.” (FGD 5).

Another added:

At first, I felt like a plucked chicken when I lost those, I had been so close to in the faith-those I used to share my spiritual experiences with in Islam. I felt like a stranger, but gradually, the church members drew me in. now I help with youth activities and feel like I truly belong.” (FGD 4).

Adapting to New Worship Practices. While they initially missed the structured nature of Islamic prayers and gatherings, many converts gradually embraced the interactive and personal aspect of Christian worship. Participating in Sabbath service, Bible study groups and singing hymns became source of encouragement and joy.

Redefining Modesty and Identity. For many women, removing the hijab or adjusting to different dress norms was a significant struggle. However, after conversion, they came to understand modesty as an expression of inner character rather than just outward appearance. Over time, they felt more comfortable embracing their new faith identity while still maintaining their commitment to modesty in a way that aligned with their Christian beliefs.

One woman shared her in her personal interview:

Taking off the hijab felt like I was betraying everything I had known. But as I studied the Bible, I realized that true modesty begins in the heart. Now I still dress decently, but it’s because I want to honor God-not because I’m forced.” (P 10, age 25).

Another reflected”

At first, I was afraid of judgement, both from Muslims and Christians. But the church never pressured me. They taught me that God looks at the heart, and I am slowly building my identity around Christ, not clothing. (P 7).

In one focus group discussion, a participant explained:

“The hijab was part of who I was. Removing it was not just about clothing- it was letting go of a past identity. But I have come to see that modesty is not just about covering the body. It’s about how you carry yourself and reflect Christ.” (FGD 3).

Another added:

“I chose to dress modestly, but now it’s from a place of love and freedom. The church respects that. I have not been judged for choosing what modesty looks like for me.” (FGD 1).

These testimonies reveal the deep emotional and spiritual journey many converts experience as they redefine modesty and identity- not by abandoning their values, but by reinterpreting them through the lens of their Christian faith.

Theological and Doctrinal Transformation.

Embracing the Trinity. One of the most profound theological shifts after conversion was understanding the doctrine of Trinity. While they had previously believed that Christianity worshipped three gods, they later came to grasp the concept of one God in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This realization deepened their understanding of Jesus’ divinity and His role as Lord and Savior.

An interviewee shared:

“At first, I thought Christians were confused-how can God be three? But when I studied the bible carefully, I saw it clearly. The father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work together as one. It’s not three gods; it’s one God showing His love in three ways.” (P 3, Male, age 36).

A female convert added in an FGD:

“Understanding the Trinity helped me realize how deeply God loves us-He sent His Son, and His Spirit is still with us. It’s no longer a mystery but a beautiful truth I now believe.” (FGD 6)

Accepting Jesus as More than a Prophet. Initially, converts struggled with letting go of their belief in Muhammad as the final prophet. However, through an in-depth study of the bible, many came to recognize Jesus not merely as a messenger but as the son of God and the only way to salvation (Acts of Apostle 4:12). This

understanding was transformative, providing them with assurance of forgiveness, grace, and eternal life.

One participant testified:

“I used to honor Jesus but only as a prophet as many Muslims do. Then I read the gospels and the book of Acts. When I saw that He rose from the dead and offer salvation, I knew He is more than a prophet- He is my savior.” (P 1, Male, 37).

In focus group, a woman shared:

“It took time, but eventually I accepted that Muhammad cannot save me. Only Jesus died for my sins and rose again. Now I pray in His name with confidence because according to Acts 4:12 neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (FGD 7)

Overcoming fear of jinn and Spiritual Forces. Before conversion, many lived in fear of jinn possession and supernatural forces, believing these entities had power over human lives. However, after, accepting Jesus, they developed confidence in Christ’s authority over all spiritual forces. Through prayer and a biblical understanding of spiritual warfare, they no longer lived in fear but instead trusted in God’s protection and power.

P 5 explained:

“I grew up fearing Jinni. We were taught that they could harm us anytime. But after knowing that Jesus, I realized He has authority over all spirits. Now I don’t’ live in fear- I pray, and I feel safe.”

In an FGD, another participant shared:

“I had a nightmare and believed that jinni was attacking me. But when I began praying in the name of Jesus, they stopped. I have experienced real from.” (FGD 2).

Implications for Mission. Firstly, the lived experience of Muslim converts to Adventism demonstrates that transitioning from an Islamic to an Adventist worldview is both possible and spiritually enriching. This reinforces the necessity of relying on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit in mission work. The spiritual

transformation witnessed in these converts indicates that the Holy Spirit is actively working in the hearts of Muslims, and missionaries should engage in their work with this divine confidence.

Secondly, the shift in personal spiritual practices among converts—such as moving from structured salah, to spontaneous prayer—underscores the need to teach prayer not as an obligation, but as a personal conversation with God. Likewise transitioning from Ramadan fasting to voluntary Christian fasting demands contextualized biblical teaching that emphasizes devotion over duty. Structured Bible study, presented as a meaningful growth in believers. These adjustments highlight the importance of spiritually contextualized discipleship that connects biblical truths with familiar Islamic discipleship.

Thirdly, converts often face significant cultural and communal dislocation after embracing Christianity. The loss of Islamic Ummah can create a deep sense of loneliness. Therefore, Adventist churches must be equipped to offer inclusive, supportive, and nurturing faith communities. Culturally sensitive approaches are also needed to address concerns around identity, including dress codes and lifestyle norms. Furthermore, intentional counselling and support mechanisms should be in place for those dealing with family rejection or societal alienation. These strategies reflect Christ's model of inclusive and holistic ministry.

Fourthly, theological realignment is one of the most profound challenges faced by new converts. Concepts such as the Trinity and divinity of Jesus Christ can be initially difficult to accept due to the deeply embedded doctrine of Tawhid (the oneness of God) in Islam. Missiologists must therefore use clear, biblically grounded teachings, along with relatable analogies and progressive instruction, to guide

converts gently through these theological transitions. The use of Old Testament prophecies and teachings about Jesus' divine mission can help bridge understanding.

Finally, spiritual fears, particularly surrounding jinn and unseen forces, remain pressing concern for many converts. A robust teaching on Christ's authority over all spiritual powers is essential to alleviate these fears. Testimonies of other converts, deliverance prayers, and spiritual warfare teachings can fortify new believers and deepen their trust in Christ's protection.

In Conclusion, the journey of Muslim converts to Adventism is marked by profound spiritual, cultural, and theological shifts. Effective mission strategies must therefore be Spirit-led, patient, and holistic-addressing not only doctrinal instruction but also emotional, cultural, and communal integration.

Findings from Church leadership (Pastors and Elders). Church leaders who work closely with Muslim-background Adventist converts observe significant spiritual, emotional, and theological transitions. These shifts often require intentional spiritual guidance and Pastoral sensitivity.

Spiritual Authority and Freedom from Fear. A Pastor (P1) highlighted the transformative journey of new converts who moved from a worldview dominated by fear - particularly of supernatural beings like jinn-to one centered on divine authority and peace. He stated:

“The transition that new converts experience is both powerful and challenging. We see a shift from fear and uncertainty to a deep trust in God's power. They no longer need to fear supernatural beings like jinn because God is the ultimate authority.”

The quotation above reveals that conversion is not merely a doctrinal change, but a deep restructuring of spiritual worldview. Many Muslim-background individuals grow up with a strong belief in jinn and spiritual vulnerability. The transition to trusting in Jesus as Lord over all powers reflects a critical transformation in spiritual

confidence. This aligns with findings from previous research which suggests that ‘deliverance from fear is one of the most commonly reported spiritual benefits of conversion from Islam.’²

On Communal identity and Belonging. An Elder (E2) pointed to emotional toll of leaving the Muslim ummah. A deeply bonded community. And emphasized the church’s role in fostering new belonging:

“Our church must provide a new sense of belonging and be a space where they feel supported... This transition is not just about religious belonging-, it is also deeply social.”

This insight highlights the communal nature of faith in Islam, where identity is closely tied to group belonging. The challenges of replacing that with meaningful church relationships suggests that conversion is not an isolated spiritual act, but one with relational and emotional costs. As elder E2 suggests, congregations must become intentional in fostering new relationships and providing emotionally safe spaces for converts.

Theological Reorientation and Doctrinal Clarity. A Pastor (P3) acknowledged the cognitive and spiritual efforts required for converts to embrace Christian thought theology:

“The doctrinal shift from Islam to Christianity can be overwhelming...moving from a strict monotheistic view to understanding the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit requires time, teaching, and prayer”

The statement underscores the complexity of theological transformation. The concern of the trinity, often misunderstood by Muslims as tritheism requires careful and patient instruction. The data here show that pastoral discipleship plays a vital role in correcting misunderstanding and nurturing sound doctrine. This need is echoed in

² Dudley Woodberry, “Faith and Fear: Islam and the Gospel in the Muslim World Today,” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 40, no 1 (2023): 22.

conversion studies emphasize the importance of theological mentoring post-conversion. Phil Parshall highlights that “many Muslim-background believers struggle with the concept of the Trinity and require thoughtful discipleship to grasp its biblical foundation.”³

Transitioning Practices and Rituals. An Elder (E4) brought attention to the way former Islamic rituals are reinterpreted or replaced in Christian practices:

“It’s crucial that we respect their past experiences while gently guiding them toward biblical practices...”

This shows that conversion does not involve immediate abandonment of previous habits. Many converts maintain Islamic patterns such as fasting or ritual prayers, initially out of habit or spiritual need. However, E4’s approach reflects a contextually sensitive pastoral strategy- acknowledging the importance of continuity while redirecting spiritual focus toward personal relationship with Christ through Scripture, prayer, and community worship.

Freedom from Anxiety and Supernatural Fear. A Pastor (P2) emphasized the emotional relief and confidence that many converts experience in Christ:

“Once they embrace the truth that God is greater than any fear, they experience true freedom.”

This reinforces the theme noted by P1, suggesting that emotional liberation is a common fruit of conversion. The findings suggest that converts experience Christianity not only as a new belief system, but as a source of deep peace and spiritual empowerment, freeing them from longstanding anxieties.

Summary. Together, these perspectives reflect a holistic view of conversion- one that encompasses theological, social belonging, emotional healing, and new

³ Phil Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization* (Wheaton, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 89.

spiritual practices. The church leaders' experiences affirm that conversion is not just doctrinal assent but a journey, churches must provide intentional teaching, relational support, and spiritual mentoring tailored to the unique background of Muslim convert.

Table 1. Religious experiences of Muslim convert before and after their conversion to Adventism

Aspect	Before Conversion (Islamic Experience)	After Conversion (Adventist Experience)
Prayer	Structured five daily prayers (Salah), ritualistic	Spontaneous, personal communication with God, in native language (Swahili)
Fasting	Obligatory fasting during Ramadan, seen as a religious duty	Voluntary fasting for spiritual growth and reflection
Scripture engagement	Memorizing and reciting the Quran in Arabic for spiritual merit	Studying the Bible in their own language for deeper understanding.
Belief in God	Strict monotheism (Tawhid), rejection of Trinity	Belief in the Trinity-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
View of Jesus	Jesus as a Prophet, not divine	Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of humanity
View of Muhammad	Muhammad as the final prophet and seal of salvation	Re-evaluation of Muhammad's role: Jesus as the ultimate revelation
Supernatural Beings	Fear of jinn(spirits), belief in angles recording deeds.	Confidence in Christ's power over all spiritual forces.
Judgement and afterlife	Salvation based on good deeds outweighing bad ones	Salvation through grace and faith in Jesus Christ
Religious community	Strong sense of belonging (Ummah), Friday prayer, and gatherings.	New spiritual family in the church, communal worship on Sabbath
Dress and modesty	Strict dress codes, hijab for women, Islamic attire (kanzu) for men.	Modesty as a personal expression to faith, varying dress norms.
Family and Social Ties	Ritualistic acts of worship, emphasis on external devotion	Worship as a heartfelt expression of faith and personal connection with God.

The Second Research Question

The second research question is: What is the biblical-theological foundation of Conversion?

This question is addressed in chapter 2 of this study. Based on the discussion in that chapter, the following insights were drawn: Biblically, conversion refers to a person's turning away from false belief or sinful practices and returning to God in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament (OT), individuals got converted to worship the God of Israel for various reasons: Ruth followed the path of a close relative (Ruth 1:16-17), Naaman sought healing and acknowledged God's power (2Kings 5:14-17), Abraham responded in obedience to God's call (Genesis 12:1-4), and Rahab embraced faith in God to escape the destruction of her homeland (Joshua2:9-11).

In the New Testament (NT), individuals believed in Jesus Christ for various reasons, including, witnessing miracles in their lives, as seen in the conversion of Peter; experiencing Jesus reveal their innermost secrets, as in the case of the Samaritan woman; and undergoing divine encounters, such as Saul's transformation into Paul, which demonstrates how such experiences can lead to radical conversion- a concept particularly relevant for Muslim converts.

The factors that led to the conversion of people in both the OT and NT are:

1. Divine revelations through dreams and/or visions- examples include Abraham's calling (Genesis 12:1-4) and Paul's vision of Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19).
2. Hearing of the miraculous works God performed- Many in the Old Testament turned to God after witnessing His power in Israel's history,

such as the people of Nineveh repenting at Jonah's preaching (Jonah 3:5-10).

3. The exemplary lifestyle of close relations-Ruth followed Naomi's faith in the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16), and many in the NT were influenced by the lives of early Christians.
4. The proclamation of the Word of God by prophets and Apostles- The preaching of Jesus and His disciples led to many conversions, as seen in Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:37-41)
5. Personal encounter with Jesus Christ-The Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:29) and the conversion of Saul (Acts 9:3-6) highlight how encountering Jesus can transform lives.

The challenges convert faced after conversion include:

1. Delay in deliverance from personal struggles- Some converts experienced ongoing personal struggles even after accepting the Christian faith. This mirrors the biblical stories of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, and Hannah, the mother of Samuel. Despite their strong faith, both women endured years of childlessness before God answered their prayers (Genesis 18:10-12; 1 Samuel 1:6-7). Their stories serve as reminders that faith does not always lead to immediate deliverance, but God's timing and faithfulness remain sure.
2. The challenge of adapting to a new culture: The converts in history faced difficulty in adjusting to a new religious and cultural environment after conversion. A biblical example is Rahab who, after aligning herself with the Israelites, had to adopt to their customs and faith practices (Joshua 6:25; Ruth 1:16-17). Similarly, Ruth, a Moabite, chose to follow Naomi

and embraced the God of Israel, declaring, “Your people will be my people and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16-17). Their journeys reflect the cultural transitions modern converts may face as they embrace a new spiritual identity.

3. Persecution from previous religious communities- Early Christians, including Paul, faced opposition from Jewish and Gentile leaders (Acts 9:23-25; 2Corinthians 11:24-26).

It can be concluded, therefore that conversion does not occur intravenously in a person’s life but takes time. The process varies from person to person, and individuals experience conversion differently. In the context of Islam, these biblical patterns are significant as Muslim converts often undergo similar transformation journeys, influenced by divine encounters, personal experiences, and the witness of believers.

The Third Research Question

The third research question asks: What factors caused new believers to change their faith from Islam to Adventism?

Several key influences emerged, including:

Devine encounters and personal Revelations. Some converts reported experiencing visions, dreams, or strong personal conviction that led them to seek Christ. P6 shared the following experience:

“A bright light shone on my face at midnight while I was sleeping. Then Jesus appeared to me, and asked, ‘So, you have refused to obey what I told you many times? What are you waiting for? Today, I want you to go where I have commanded you. Remove your white attire and head coverings, and come to my eternal joy, which is found through faith in Me. Hurry, depart!’ I asked, ‘What joy are you talking about? He then lifted up a very large poster with both hands, and on it was written Exodus 20: 8-11. I asked, ‘What is that?’ He said, ‘That’s my message to you read it.’

At that moment, I felt like something heavy had been placed on my head, and I could not walk. I stretched out my hand and grabbed a Bible, which I had never read before. I read that verse in a very soft voice because I could not speak loudly. When I finished reading, I accepted the command to leave. It was then that I felt released from that heavy object on my head and experienced a sense of relief and joy like never before in my life!

Two days later, I met a Christian friend who was holding a Bible -something I had always feared to touch. I asked him to read that verse for me. He read it, then asked if I understood it. I said no, so he began to explain Exodus 20:8-11 to me. I was completely shocked. He then invited me to attend church with him the following Sabbath, so we went together.”

Influence of Close family members or friends. Some converts reported that their journey to Adventism began through the influence of close family members or trusted friends. These individuals played a pivotal role in shaping the convert’s openness and the Adventist faith.

Through consistent conversation, shared experiences, and acts of love and support, Family members or close companions provide a safe space for questions, doubts and exploration of for new beliefs. Their unwavering commitment to their faith, as observed in daily life, often served as a silent but powerful witness, leading others to consider the Adventist message seriously.

For some converts, the trust and respect they had for these individuals made them more receptive to attending church service, participating in Bible studies, or eventually making a personal decision to follow Christ within the Adventist tradition.

P 1 recounted,

“A significant turning point in my spiritual journey began with a simple act of invitation. I received a card inviting me to attend a well-organized quest Sabbath program. The event was thoughtfully planned, featuring an abundance of food, and a large turnout of visitors. A notable aspect of the experience was the respect shown to guests, including the opportunity to share a table with quests of honor who was scheduled to preach.

The speaker delivered a bold and confident sermon from the Bible, addressing topics I had never encountered in my lifelong experience with Islam. One key moment was when he posed a thought-provoking question: “Between Friday, Saturday, and Sunday which is the true day of worship? Using Biblical references, he explained the origins and significance of each day.

This clear and logical exposition left me deeply challenged. I began to reflect on what I had heard, asking questions and reevaluating my beliefs. Over the following months, this internal struggle led to gradual disconnection from mosque attendance. Eventually, influenced by the continued support of close friend, I began attending church services.

This testimony highlights the powerful impact that a single event- when combined with biblical clarity, hospitality, and relational support can have on a seeker's journey toward Adventism. It underscores the importance of creating welcoming spaces of exploration and dialogue, especially for those coming from different religious backgrounds.

Observing the lifestyle of Adventists. Witnessing the character, conduct, and faithfulness of Adventists played a significant role in their decision.

For example, P6 shared:

I had always been taught that Christians were misguided and lived in error, but when I interacted with Adventists, I saw something different. They treated me with kindness, even though I was a Muslim. I remember a time when I fell seriously ill, and none of my close relatives came to check on me. But an Adventist neighbor, whom I barely knew, visited me every day bringing food and praying for me. I was deeply touched by their love and concern.” What really struck me was how they lived according to biblical principles-not just in words but in actions. I saw honesty in their business dealings, humility in their speech, and sincerity in their worship. It made me start to question: If they were truly lost, as I had been told, why did they reflect such godly character? Overtime, this made me curious to learn more about their faith, and eventually, I began studying the Bible with them. That's when I realized that the peace they had come from a deep relationship with God.”

This growing curiosity and personal reflection led many converts to seek a deeper understanding of Adventist teachings, ultimately playing a significant role in their decision to embrace Christianity.

Miracles and answered Prayers. Personal experiences of healing, deliverance, or specific answers to prayers reinforced their belief in the power of God among converts. P7 shared his story:

“Three years my conversion, my son suffered from a mysterious illness. We tried everything- countless hospital visits, traditional healers, and even special prayers at the mosque, but nothing worked. My wife and I were desperate. One night, an Adventist friend visited us. After seeing our distress, he gently said, *‘have you ever prayed in the name of Jesus?’*

At first, I hesitated. As a Muslim, I had always believed that Jesus was just a prophet, not someone to pray to. But in my desperation, I decided to try. That night, with a trembling heart, I whispered, *‘Jesus, if you are truly, who they say you are, if you have power, please heal my son.’*

To my amazement, the next morning, my son woke up completely well! The fever was gone, and for the first time in years, he ate normally and played like a healthy child. I could not believe my eyes. This was not just a coincidence; it was an undeniable miracle. From that moment, I knew I had to learn more about Jesus.

If He could answer my prayer when nothing else had worked, then there had to be truth in His name. I began attending Bible studies, and as I learned more, I realized that Jesus is more than a prophet, He is the Son of God. that miraculous healing opened my heart, and I realized that Jesus, is more than a prophet- He is the son of God. That miraculous healing opened my heart, and eventually, I accepted Christ and was baptized.”

Similarly, P9 shared a miraculous experience:

“I witnessed the power of the name of Jesus. For many years during my life as a Muslim, I suffered a condition of bedwetting, I had no freedom to visit other people’s homes. At school, my roommates mocked me because my mattress would often be seen drying in the sun outside the dormitory. I also felt that I smelled of urine most of the time.

One day, one of my two Adventist friends-who, I believe were deeply concerned about my situation, suggested we commit to fasting and prayer for my healing. During the very first of prayer, I offered a simple plea: *‘God, if you are real, please heal me from this problem. I am tired of being a laughingstock. If you do this, I will believe in Your name and become an Adventist.’*

God heard and immediately answered my prayer. The next morning, I could hardly believe it- my bed and I were completely dry. I kept my promise to God. I began my journey of faith by attending worship services at the Adventist church. Later I was baptized. Although my family persecuted me severely through various forms of mistreatment, I have remained firm in my new faith to this day.”

Bible study and Theological Conviction. Many converts found biblical teachings compelling and appreciated the doctrinal clarity in Adventist beliefs. For example, Participant P3 noted, *“What moved me was how everything in the Bible was explained so clearly, especially the Sabbath and the nature of Jesus.”* Similarly, P5

described their conversion after comparing biblical texts with previous teachings, saying “When I read the Bible for myself. I realized many things I had believed were not actually written in the Qur’an or Bible.” P7 emphasized the uniqueness of Adventist teachings: “*The Adventist message is not just emotional- it is supported by Scripture. I was drawn by its logic and truth.*”

These responses highlight that Bible study was not just an academic exercise for these converts, it was a transformative experience that shaped their theological understanding and led them to make an informed spiritual decision.

Disillusionment with Islamic Teachings. Some converts struggled with doctrinal inconsistencies or unfulfilled spiritual needs within Islam.

For example, one convert, P7, shared how he wrestled with the Islamic concept of Salvation based on deeds:

“I was troubled by the uncertainty of whether my good works would be sufficient to earn Allah’s favor and secure a place in paradise. The fear of divine judgment without assurance of salvation left me in a constant state of anxiety. I prayed five times a day, fasting during Ramadan, and followed every rule, but I still felt uncertain.

However, when I encountered the Christian teaching that salvation is a gift of grace through faith Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9), it was like a burden was lifted from my shoulders. I no longer had to strive endlessly, hoping I had done enough. Instead, I found peace and assurance in knowing that He had already paid the price for my sins. That truth changed everything for me.”

Another convert, P5, expressed frustration with the role of women in Islamic society, feeling that strict regulations limited the spiritual and personal freedom of women:

“As a woman, I struggled with many aspects of my faith. I questioned why I had to cover myself completely and why men had more religious privileges than women. It felt like my voice and my spiritual experience didn’t matter as much. When I began studying the Bible, I was deeply moved by how Jesus interacted with women.

I read about the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 and about Mary Magdalene. Jesus did not treat them as inferior or unworthy- He spoke to them with dignity, love, and respect. That was something I had never experienced

before. I realized that in Christ, I was valued, seen, and heard. That realization gave me the courage to embrace Adventism.”

Others struggled with the concept of intercession in Islam, particularly the reliance on prayers through specific figures such as prophets or religious leaders. One convert, P3, described his journey of discovering a direct relationship with God:

“I always felt distance from God. I was taught that I needed an intermediary- a prophet, an Imam, or religious leader to approach Him. I memorized prays in Arabic that I barely understood, hoping they would be accepted. But when I studied the Bible, I found Hebrews 4:16, which says “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” That verse shook me. Could I really speak to God directly, without fear? Could I really be that close to Him? For the first time, I prayed in my own words, asking God to reveal Himself to me. That moment was life-changing. I felt His presence in a way I had never felt before. I knew then that I didn’t need an intermediary; Jesus had already opened the way for me to come to God freely”

Additionally, some converts questioned the use of force or compulsion in religious matters, particularly when family or community members pressured individuals to conform strictly to Islamic teachings. As P8 recounted:

“I started asking questions about my faith- why we did certain things, why women had to be treated differently, and why salvation felt so uncertain. Instead of receiving answers, I was met with anger. I was warned not to question, not to think for myself. I was even threatened when I showed interest in Christianity. That made me feel trapped. Religion should be about a relationship with God, not about fear and control. When I learned about Adventism, I was given the freedom to explore, to question, and to come to faith on my own terms. That’s when I knew I had found the truth.”

For many, this sense of disillusionment was not about rejecting Islam out of hostility but rather a response to deeply personal struggles with faith. The clarity, love, and assurance they found in Adventism provided answers that resonated with their spiritual needs, ultimately leading them to conversion.

Evangelistic Efforts and Discipleship- Structured outreach programs, one-on-one mentorship, and church discipleship initiatives played a crucial role in solidifying their faith transition. Evangelistic outreach played a significant role in

leading many converts to Adventism. Various methods, including public evangelistic meetings, and small- group Bible studies provided opportunities for seekers to hear and understand the message of Christ in a new light.

Significantly, many converts testified that these efforts introduced them to biblical truths they had never encountered before, deepened their understanding of God, and ultimately led them to embrace Adventism.

One convert, P9, shared how a simple invitation changed his life:

“A friend of mine invited me to attend a week-long spiritual emphasis seminar at their church. At first, I hesitated, fearing how my family would react, but out of curiosity, I decided to go. As I listened, I was particularly stuck by the teaching on the Sabbath, the second coming of Christ, and the plan of salvation by grace.

One sermon, based on Mathew 11:28, ‘Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest’-touched me deeply. I realized that the burden of earning salvation through works was unnecessary and that Jesus was offering me true rest through faith. By the end of the seminar, I knew I could no longer ignore the truth. I made the decision to leave my former beliefs and accepted the gospel message”

Another convert (P6), described how a dedicated Adventist evangelist regularly visited his village, engaging in open discussion about faith.

“At first, I was skeptical. I had been taught that Christianity was a foreign religion, distorted and unreliable. But this evangelist was different. He did not argue-he simply asked thought provoking questions and pointed me to the Bible. Over time, he built a relationship of trust with me and my family. One day, he shared John 8:32 with me: “*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” That verse stayed with me. It stirred something deep in my heart. For the first time. I questioned what I had always believed. Over the next several months, we continued studying the Bible together. I compared the teachings of my former faith with what I was discovering in scripture, and I could no longer deny the contradictions. Eventually, I surrendered my life to Christ and was baptized into the Adventist church.”

Personal Bible studies also played a crucial role in many conversions. One woman, P4 recalled how she had many unanswered questions about Jesus and the nature of God:

“I had always been curious about Jesus, but in my Islamic background, I never received clear answers. An Adventist friend offered to study the Bible with

me, and I agreed. As we studied the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, I was astonished by how the Bible accurately foretold history. I had never seen anything like it before. I realized that the Bible was not just another religious book, it was God's inspired word.

The more I studied, the more I felt drawn to Jesus. I had always viewed Him as just a prophet, but through Scripture, I came to understand that He is the Son of God, my Savior. After months of prayer and study, I decided to be baptized. It was the best decision of my life."

Additionally, discipleship played a key role in nurturing new converts. Many testified that after deciding to follow Christ, they were supported by Adventist mentors who helped them understand their new faith, guided them through challenges, and provided encouragement as they transitioned into their new spiritual journey. One convert, P10, explained how he feared reaction from his family after leaving Islam:

"When I decided to follow Jesus, I knew my family would reject me. I felt alone and scared. But they surrounded me with love. Members regularly visited me, and helped me through the hardest days."

Through evangelistic efforts and discipleship, many converts found not only biblical truth but also a loving Adventist community that supported them in their spiritual journey. These experiences reinforced their faith and helped them remain steadfast despite the challenge they faced.

Marriage. A few respondents were drawn to the Seventh-day Adventist Church through marriage to Adventist spouse. P11, shared how she eventually joined the Church after getting married to a young Adventist man. Her involvement began gradually, as she started attending church service and observing the faith practices of her husband. Over time, her interest grew, and she eventually made a personal decision to become an Adventist. Another respondent also cited marriage as the initial point of exposure to Adventist beliefs, which later led to full membership in the church.

Challenges faced After Conversion. For many Muslims converts to Adventism, the decision to embrace a new faith was not without challenges. While conversion brought spiritual fulfillment and renewed sense of purpose, it also introduced a range of substances that tested their resilience, and commitment. These challenges spanned the social, economic, psychological, and spiritual dimension of life. The following subsection outlines the major areas of struggle encountered by converts.

Social Rejection and Isolation. One of the most painful consequences of conversion was rejection by close family members and the wider Muslim community. Converts were often viewed as traitors, accused of abandoning their heritage and dishonoring their families. In many cases, this led strained or severed family ties.

P6 recounted how her family stopped speaking to her entirely after learning of her baptism, and she was no longer welcome in her childhood home. “From the day they found out, I was treated like a stranger. My mother cried and told me I had shamed the whole family,’ she said.

This rejection often created intense emotional pain, a sense loneliness, and in some instances, the need to find new housing or support systems entirely apart from family.

Economic Hardship. Economic difficulties were another significant challenge faced by many converts. Some converts lost their jobs due to their new religious identity, particularly if they were employed in Muslim-owned business or dependent on Muslim clients.

P9 shared that his small tailoring business collapsed when loyal clients stopped coming after word spread about his conversion.

For women who were financially dependent on their families or husbands, conversion sometimes meant being cut off from essential support, leading to

instability and hardship. The inability to find immediate alternative means of livelihood often made the transition even more difficult.

Spiritual and Psychological Struggles. The shift in belief systems also brought about internal conflict. Some converts struggled with guilt, spiritual uncertainty, or fear of divine judgement for abandoning Islam. Others battled with deep-seated theological questions as they sought to reconcile years of Islamic teaching with the new doctrines of Adventism. P3 admitted to experiencing months of confusion and doubt: “At night I would pray and wonder what if I’m wrong? What if I have left the truth instead of finding it?”

Integration challenges within the Adventist Church. Some converts found it challenging to fully integrate into Adventist church life, especially when they felt misunderstood or when congregations were not adequately equipped to offer them emotional and theological support.

For example, during FGD 2, one participant shared, *sometimes we feel like visitors in the church. People are kind, but they do not always understand where we are coming from or what we have gone through.*”

Similarly, FGD 5 participants expressed the need for intentional inclusion and support with, one stating, *“We left behind our families and community, but the church has not yet become that family we hoped for. We need more follow-up, more listening, not just sermons.”*

These reflections underscore the importance of pastoral care and community integration efforts that go beyond doctrinal instructions to include emotional support and cultural sensitivity.

Threats and Physical Danger. In a certain extreme case, conversion led threats of violence or even physical harm. A few respondents shared accounts of being attacked or having to relocate for their safety.

P2 reported receiving anonymous threats and eventually fleeing her home village to avoid being harmed. “They said I would disgrace the family and that death was better than apostasy,” she recounted tearfully.

While not all faced threats to this degree, the fear of potential retaliation remained a constant concern for many. From social and economic challenges, converts also faced psychological and spiritual battles. Many struggled with guilt, fear of rejection by God, or confusion arising concepts, adjusting to new worship within their new Adventist congregations added to their sense of alienation.

Coping Strategies and Source of Strength. Despite these obstacles, many converts demonstrated remarkable perseverance. Their strength often came from personal prayer, reading the Bible, and the supportive presence of the church or individual Adventist friends.

P5 testified, ‘Every time I felt like giving up, I remembered the peace I found in Jesus and the joy I felt first time I read the Bible for myself.’

Some found comfort in Adventist fellowship, while others benefited from being integrated into small groups or prayer circles that provided both emotional and spiritual encouragement.

Missiological Implications. The third research question- “What factors caused new believers to change their faith from Islam to Adventism? - yields rich multifaceted insights that carry significant missiological implications for Adventist mission work among Muslims. These implications can help shape future mission

strategies, improve outreach effectiveness, and foster deeper understanding and sensitivity.

Below is a detailed breakdown of the missiological implications drawn from each factor:

1. Divine encounters and Personal Revelations

- i. Be open to the supernatural. Adventist mission strategies should create space to recognize and affirm dreams, visions, and other spiritual experiences, which are deeply respected in Islamic spirituality.
- ii. Pastoral care and discipleship should include guiding new believers to discern and interpret such experiences biblically, helping them anchor their experiences in Scripture.
- iii. Churches and evangelists should document and share testimonies (with permission), as they can inspire and open hearts in similar contexts.

2. Influence of close Family members or friends

- a. Relational evangelism is vital. Adventist outreach should prioritize building genuine relationships through trust, friendship, and shared life experiences
- b. Empower Adventist family members or friends of Muslims with training in tactful witnessing, hospitality, and long-term friendship evangelism.
- c. Encourage the use of bridge event (for example, quest Sabbaths, social gatherings) that combine hospitality, biblical teaching, and respectful dialogues.

3. Observing the lifestyle of Adventists

- a. The witness of daily life can be more persuasive than verbal proclamation. Adventists should be taught and inspired to live their faith consistently in business, family, and neighborhood settings.
 - b. Community engagement and acts of kindness (for example, visiting the sick, helping during crises) serve as silent sermons that open the doors for spiritual dialogue.
 - c. Missiological training should include the importance of holiness, humility, and hospitality as evangelistic tools.
4. Miracles and Answered Prayers
- a. Muslims highly value signs of divine power. Adventists should boldly encourage prayer in the name of Jesus for healing and deliverance, while ensuring this is grounded in biblical theology rather than scandal.
 - b. Testimonies of answered prayers should be collected and shared respectfully, showing Jesus' compassion and power in real-life situations.
 - c. Teach new believers how to pray personally and corporately, trusting in Christ's intercession.
5. Biblical Study and Theological Conviction
- a. Scripture-based teaching is important. Muslims respect sacred texts; thus, well-structured Bible studies that highlight continuity with the Old Testament, the identity of Jesus, and salvation by grace are powerful tools

- b. Create Bible study material contextualized I for Muslims, addressing key Islamic questions (for example, the Sabbath, Jesus's divinity, assurance of Salvation).
 - c. Apologetic and comparative theology should be part of training for lay and professional evangelists engaging Muslims.
6. Disillusionment with Islamic Teachings
- a. Recognize and respond to inner struggles some Muslims face regarding salvation, gender roles, intercession, and obligation.
 - b. Provide safe, respectful platforms where seeker can ask questions without fear of judgement or punishment.
 - c. Emphasize the freedom, dignity, and assurance found in Christ, especially for women and those spiritually disillusioned.
 - d. Highlight themes of grace, direct access of God, and individual worth in both outreach materials and discipleship.

Summary. The journey from Islam to Adventism, is rarely smooth. For many converts, it involves profound personal cost- social rejection, economic suffering, spiritual conflicts, and in some cases, physical danger. Yet, the resilience that exhibited and the deep conviction that sustains them speaks to the powerful role of faith in transformation lives. These findings highlight the urgent need for Adventist churches and mission leaders to provide structured pastoral care, economic support, and ongoing discipleship to ensure that new converts are not only welcomed but also equipped to thrive in their new faith.

The Fourth Research Question

The fourth research question has a three- discussion: (1) what are the implications for mission strategies of the growing trend of voluntary Muslim

conversion to Adventism? (2) What challenges did New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) face prior to their conversion to Adventism? (3) What challenges did New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) face post their conversion?

Growing Trend of Voluntary Muslim Conversion. This section presents themes that emerged from key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) regarding the implications of voluntary Muslim conversion to Adventism for mission strategies. The themes discussed include challenges in mission, effective evangelistic approaches, and recommended strategic adjustments. Each theme is supported by insights and testimonies involved in church mission and evangelism.

Challenges identified in Mission Strategies

Social and Cultural Barriers. Participant highlighted that NAICs often experience rejection from family and community members, leading to isolation even danger. Participant KII 2 (Church Pastor) explained:

“Many converts are cut off from their families and even face death threats. If we do not create strong support systems, they may struggle to remain in faith”

FGD 1 echoed this challenge, with one elder stating:

“The emotional and social toll is heavy. Many live in fear, and that affects the ability to grow spiritually or participate in church life”

Security Risks and Protection. Respondents emphasized the need to approach mission with discretion due to safety concerns. Participant KII 5 (Church Elder-Evangelism Team) narrated:

“We had a young man secretly attending church. After his baptism his family discovered and beat him. He escaped in the middle of the night and now lives in hiding.”

FGD 2 added:

“We avoid public baptism for NAICs. Discipleship must happen in secure, confidential environments.”

Integration into the Church. There is a noted difficulty in assimilating new Adventist Converts (NAICs) into local Adventist congregations. Participants KII (Local Pastor) stated:

“New converts often say they feel like strangers in the church because members don’t understand their background. We need better training for church members on how to welcome them.”

FGD 3 shared similar feelings, noting that miscommunication and assumption sometimes hinder effective fellowship.”

Theological Barriers. Understanding and accepting key Adventist doctrines is often a gradual process. Participant KII 6 (church elder) shared:

“One convert told me he had believed Jesus was a prophet, but never the Son of God. It took many Bible studies and personal reflection before he embraced Christ’s divinity.”

Effective Evangelistic Approaches

Personal Testimonies and Relationship-Based Evangelism. Personal relationships and testimonies emerged as powerful evangelistic tools. Participant KII 3 (Mission Coordinator) noted:

“Personal relationships play a bigger role in conversion than public preaching. When Muslims see Adventist living with love and humility, they become curious.”

FGD 1 supported this, adding:

“One convert said he was drawn to the Adventist faith because of a neighbor’s consistent kindness and integrity.”

Bible study and Prophetic Teachings. Bible study, particularly from Daniel and Revelation, is effective in communicating Adventist beliefs.

Participant KII 2 (Pastor) said:

Muslims respect prophecy. When we show them how Daniel’s visions connect with history and Jesus’ return, many become more open to the gospel”

Contextualized Evangelism. A culturally sensitive mission approach avoiding confrontational language, has proven helpful.

Participant KII7 (Mission leader) shared:

“We don’t present it as ‘Christianity versus Islam,’ we focus on presenting Jesus’ teaching as a continuation of God’s message. This approach removes resistance and fosters dialogue.

Recommended Mission Strategic Adjustments. Based on insights from church leaders, several recommendations were proposed

Strengthening Discipleship and Support Systems. Participants recommended structured mentorship and safe spaces for NAICs.

KII 4 (Pastor) explained:

“New believers need a support network and dedicated mentors who can walk with them during the transition period.”

FGD 2 emphasized the importance of small-group fellowship and peer mentorship.

Training Church Members on Muslim Outreach. KII 6 (Church Elder) recommended:

“We must train church members to understand and relate to Muslim background converts, similar to how Paul trained early Christians on welcoming Gentiles into the faith (Acts 15:1-29; Gal.3:28; Ephesians 2:11-22).

Expanding Media and Literature Resources. KII 8 (Evangelist) highlighted:

“Many Muslims engage with Adventism beliefs first through media. We need more videos, books, and online content tailored to Muslim questions.”

FGD 3 noted:

“In Tanzania, platforms like Morning Star Radio and, Adventist World Radio (AWR) are already seeing results. We should invest more in these efforts.”

Ensuring Security Measures for Converts. Given the risks associated with conversion, KII 7 (Mission Strategist) emphasized:

“We must offer discreet baptism options and legal aid for convert in danger. We must be wise in how we disciple and protect them.”

Summary. The insight from church leaders and mission strategists reveal that effective mission strategies must consider culturally sensitivity, personalized evangelism, strong post- conversion support, and innovative use of media and technology. As voluntary conversion from Islam to Adventism grows, strategic adaptations rooted in compassion, discretion, and contextual awareness are essential for sustainable discipleship and church growth.

Missiological implications for the growing Trend of Muslim Conversion to Adventism

The increasing number of voluntary Muslim-background believers (NAICs) joining the Seventh-day Adventist church carries profound missiological implications that call for adaptive, sensitive, and biblical grounded mission strategies.

First, the findings reveal the urgent need for holistic discipleship models that go beyond baptism preparation to include long-term spiritual, emotional, and social support tailored to the unique needs of converts from Islam. This requires the church to invest in mentorship programs, safe fellowship spaces, and pastoral care.

Secondly, the risks associated with leaving Islam underscore the importance of security-aware evangelism, which must creatively integrate discreet Bible study groups, confidential baptisms, and legal support structures for persecuted believers.

Furthermore, the theological challenges identified by church leaders suggest that Adventist mission must engage in the development of contextualized theology- particularly in teaching about Jesus' divinity, salvation by grace, and the Sabbath in ways that resonates with the Muslim worldwide. This approach helps bridge doctrinal gapes while maintaining the integrity of Adventist beliefs. Another key implication is the growing role of medial ministry as a frontline evangelism tool. Since many seekers first encounter the gospel through radio, You Tube, and social media,

Adventist media platforms must prioritize the production of culturally sensitive content that answers Muslim theological concerns and testifies to transformed lives.

Additionally, successful integration of NAICs into church communities requires equipping congregations through -cross-cultural training, fostering empathy, and cultivating an atmosphere of acceptance. The church must become a spiritual home where former Muslims feel understood and embrace. Missiologically, this also calls for a paradigm shift from extraction-based method to incarnational model of mission, encouraging believers to witness within their communities through relational and context-appropriate expressions of faith.

Finally, there is a growing need for synergy between pastoral care and missiological strategy, where local pastors, evangelists, and theologians work together to respond to this growing movement with theological clarity and missional compassion.

Challenges Prior Conversion

The second part of the fourth research question discusses the challenges that New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) faced prior conversion to Adventism. This answered by examining both internal and external challenges NAICs encountered before embracing Adventism. Through in-depth interviews several key themes emerged, revealing the complexities of their conversion journey.

Personal Struggles. Many converts experienced intense internal conflict during their deciding-making process. Doubts, fears, and emotional chaos were common as they considered leaving Islam to follow Christ.

P1 described the distress of abandoning his ancestral faith:

“For months, I struggled with guilt and fear. Choosing Adventism felt like betraying my family and dishonoring my ancestors. I feared being disowned, losing friends, and becoming an outcast. Some nights, I woke up in panic,

wondering if I was making a mistake. Yet, deep inside, I could not deny the peace I felt when reading the Bible and learning about Jesus. It was a battle between my heart and my heritage, and it tore me apart.”

Spiritual Struggles. Many NAICs described a deep sense of spiritual unrest prior to their conversion. Despite faithfully engaging in Islamic rituals, they experienced a deep persistent spiritual void.

P2 shared:

“I followed all the rituals- praying five times a day, fasting during Ramadan- but still felt distant from God. It was like I was doing everything right on the outside, but my heart was not at peace.”

This inner conflict led some to seek a more personal connection with God, which they later discovered through the teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in Adventism.

Doctrinal Doubts. Several participants expressed concerns about specific Islamic teachings that troubled them before their conversion. A recurring issue was the uncertainty of salvation,

P3 explained:

“I was never sure if my good deeds would be enough to earn Allah’s favor. There was always fear, ‘had I prayed correctly? Had I done enough? I longed for assurance that God accepted me.”

Others struggled with questions about the role of Jesus in Islam, wondering why He was highly respected as a prophet but not acknowledged as the Son of God. These doctrinal uncertainties motivated them to explore the Bible.

Unanswered Questions. For many, the journey toward Adventism began with theological questions that Islam did not fully address, questions about the nature of God, grace, and life’s purpose.

P4 recounted:

“I asked religious teachers about God’s love and forgiveness, but their answers always focused on rules and obligations. I wanted to understand God’s heart, not just His laws.”

To find answers, some engaged in personal study, conversation with Christian friends, or even secret Bible reading.

Religious Guilt and Fear. Questioning Islam often brought intense feelings of guilt and fear. Many feared dishonoring their families or being socially rejected. P5 shared:

“From childhood, I was taught that leaving Islam was the worst betrayal. Even just questioning my faith filled me with guilt and fear. I knew my family would never accept my decision.”

Some faced verbal threats, emotional manipulation, or physical dangers expressing doubts about Islam. Despite this, many found strength in biblical texts such as Mathew 10:37-39, which emphasizes prioritizing Christ above all else.

Social Pressures

Family Rejection. For many NAICs, rejection by family members was among the most painful experience. Some were met with anger and disappointment, or total estrangement.

P6 recalled:

The moment my parents found out I was attending Bible studies; they warned me never to return home if I decided to convert. I had to choose between my faith and my family.

Some families used emotional manipulation or arranged for religious interventions to bring the convert back to Islam.

Community Backlash. Beyond the family, broader community members also expressed hostility. Some converts lost lifelong friendships, or were ostracized from their social networks.

P7 described:

The people I grew up with suddenly treated me like a traitor. Some refused to greet me; others spread rumors about me. I felt like an outcast in my own neighborhood.”

In some extreme cases, some participants faced verbal abuse or were reported to local religious authorities for apostasy. The fear of public shame forced many to hide their new faith initially.

Loss of Social Identity. Leaving Islam often meant losing a deeply embedded cultural and social identity. Converts described a sense of being disconnected from their past.

P8 shared:

Islam was not just a religion; it was my entire identity-how I dressed, how I spoke, how I interacted with others. When I became an Adventist, I felt like I was starting over with no clear sense of belonging.”

While some found comfort in new church communities, others went through long periods of adjustment as they redefined their identity within their newfound faith.

Emotional and psychological Conflicts

Fear of betrayal. For many New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs), conversion was accompanied by deep feelings of guilt and inner conflict. Leaving Islam often felt like betraying their family, culture, and heritage. One convert expressed this struggle, saying “*I kept asking myself, ‘Am I dishonoring my parents/ Am I turning my back on everything I was raised to believe? The guilt was overwhelming at times.’*”

Some converts hesitated to fully embrace Adventism due to the fear of disappointing their beloved ones, while others secretly practiced their new faith for months before publicly acknowledging their decision.

Loneliness. The transition to Adventism often led to periods of isolation, as many converts lost close relationships with family and friends. Rejection from their former religious community created a deep sense of loneliness.

One convert shared, (P10)

“There were nights when I cried myself to sleep because I had no one to talk to. My old friends disappeared, and I felt like an outsider everywhere I went.”

While some found solace in their new church community, others struggled to build meaningful connections. Support from church members varied- some actively offered mentorship and encouragement, while others unintentionally left converts feeling like outsiders.

Identity Crisis. Adapting to a new religious identity was a profound challenge for many converts. The shift from Islamic worldview to an Adventist one required not just a change in belief but also lifestyle, practices, and even social interactions.

One convert described the struggle, saying:

“For so long, my faith shaped every part of my life- how I dressed, how I prayed, even how I greeted people. When I became an Adventist, I had to learn a new way of living while still trying to hold on to my cultural background.”

Some struggled with balancing their previous identity with their new beliefs, while others embraced their newfound faith wholeheartedly but still felt disconnected from both their past and present communities.

Theological and Intellectual Challenges

Struggles with Biblical Teachings. For many New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) transitioning from an Islamic to a Christian worldview presented significant theological challenges, some biblical teachings were difficult to accept initially, especially those that differed from their understanding of God and religious practices.

P9 admitted:

At first, I struggled with the idea of salvation by grace alone. In Islam, we believed that good deeds played a major role in earning God’s favor, but in Christianity, salvation is a gift from God. It took time for me to fully accept this truth.”

Over time, many converts found clarity through Bible study, mentorship from church leaders, and personal spiritual experiences that affirmed their faith.

The concept of Jesus as the son of God. One of the most significant theological challenges for converts was embracing the divinity of Jesus. In Islam, Jesus (Isa) is regarded as a prophet but not the Son of God. This distinction made the acceptance of His divine nature a particularly delicate and sensitive issue for many on their journey to Adventism.

One former Muslim (convert) explained:

“For years, I could not understand how God could have a Son. It felt like a contradiction to everything I had been taught. But through studying the Bible and comparing it with what Qur’an said about Jesus, I started seeing Him in a new light.”

Some converts described having personal revelations or experiences that convinced them of Christ’s divine nature, while others credited Adventist teachers and evangelists for helping them grasp the biblical perspective.

Understanding the Sabbath. The concept of the Sabbath, for many converts was both fascinating and challenging. While Islam designated Friday as a day of communal prayer, the idea of dedicating an entire day for rest and worship was unfamiliar. One convert shared,

At first, I thought Adventists were just following a Jewish custom. But as I studied the Bible, I saw how the Sabbath was established at creation and reaffirmed by Jesus. It became clear that this was God’s command for all believers, not just one group of people.

Over time, many converts came to appreciate the Sabbath, finding joy in its spiritual meaning and the sense of community it fostered.

Cultural Barriers

Adapting to a New Worship style. For many New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs), adjusting to Adventist worship services was a significant shift from Islamic

practices. In Islam, worship involved structured prayers (Salah) performed at specific times with prescribed physical movements, whereas Adventist worship often includes singing, open prayer, and interactive preaching. One convert shared,

At first, I found it strange that people prayed freely and sang loudly. In Islam, prayers are recited in a structured manner, and worship fosters with God.

While some converts found the transition liberating, others needed time to adjust to the less rigid structure of Christian worship.

Dietary Adjustments. Food laws were another cultural challenge for some converts. Islam strictly prohibits pork and requires halal slaughter methods, while Adventism promotes vegetarian lifestyle but does not enforce halal dietary laws. One convert described his struggle: *“I was shocked when I realized that not all Christians follow dietary restrictions like in Islam. Even though Adventists avoid unclean meats, adjusting to the idea that food is not as heavily regulated was difficult for me.”* Some converts chose to continue avoiding certain foods, while others gradually embraced the Adventist perspective on health and diet.

Gender Roles in Worship. Another adjustment for converts was the role of women in Adventist worship. In many traditions, men and women worship separately, and leadership roles for women are limited.

One female convert recalled, *“I was surprised to see women leading prayers and preaching. At first, I was uncomfortable, but then I realized that God values both men and women equally in ministry.”*

Male converts also experienced a shift in expectations, as some had been raised in a cultural setting where religious leadership was predominantly male. While some converts struggled with these changes initially, many found that the Adventist emphasis on equality deepened their understanding on biblical principles.

Practical and Economic Challenges. For many converts, choosing Adventism came at a high economic cost. Some lost their jobs due to discrimination, while others faced financial hardship as their families withdrew financial support.

Housing instability was another major issue, as some converts were forced to leave their homes due to family and community rejection. One convert recalled, *“The moment I embraced Adventism, I lost my everything-my job, my family, and my home. I had nowhere to go.”*

Rebuilding Economic stability and finding long-term support

Despite these challenges, many converts found ways to rebuild their lives through the support of the Adventist community and their own resilience. Some sought employment within Adventist-owned businesses, while others turned to self-employment, learning new skills to sustain themselves. One convert shared, *“After losing my job, an Adventist brother helped me find work at his shop. That was a turning point for me-I could work in peace without fear of discrimination”*

The church also played a vital role in offering financial assistance, temporary housing, and vocational training, helping new converts transition into a stable life. Through the generosity of church members and their faith in God’s provision, many converts were able to overcome their economic hardships and find renewed hope.

Fear of Persecution

For many New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs), the fear of persecution was also a significant challenge in their journey of faith. Leaving Islam for Christianity often led to threats, harassment, and pressure to reconvert, creating a deeply stressful and even dangerous experience. Some converts faced public humiliation, while others lived under the constant fear of retaliation from family or community members.

Threats and harassment. Some converts reported experiencing direct threats and intimidation after their decision to embrace Adventism. Some received verbal warnings, while others encountered physical aggression or social exclusion. One convert shared:

“The day my family discovered I had converted, my brother warned me never to return home. He said I had brought shame to our family and that others were watching me. I felt unsafe even walking in my neighborhood”

To cope with these treats, some converts relocated to new areas where they could practice their faith more freely. Others found safety within the Adventist community, which provided emotional and physical support during times of danger.

Pressure to Reconvert. Even after conversion, some NAICs (New Adventist Islam Converts) faced ongoing pressure from their families and communities to return to Islam. This pressure came in various forms, ranging from emotional extortion to financial incentives or outright coercion. One former Muslim described their experience:

“My father told me he would forgive me if I just went back to the mosque. My uncles offered me a business opportunity, but only if I agreed to say I was Muslim again. It was a difficult test, but I knew I could not turn back”

To stay committed to their faith, many converts relied on prayer, Bible study, and the encouragement of fellow believers. Church leaders and mentors played a crucial role in strengthening their resolve, reminding them of the importance of standing firm despite the challenges.

Lack of Knowledge or Misunderstanding about Adventism. Several converts reported that their initial understanding of Adventism was based on misconceptions and lack of information. They often perceived Adventism as another form of Christianity, which created confusion. Additionally, some participants initially

feared the religion due to cultural differences and misunderstanding about the faith.

One convert shared:

“I didn’t know much about Adventism and I had heard misconceptions from people who didn’t understand the faith. I feared that it was just another sect of Christianity and didn’t see why I should be involved.

Conclusion

The analysis of the challenges faced by new converts prior to their transition to Adventism reveals a complex and multifaceted journey. Personal struggles, religious and cultural barriers, fear of rejection, misunderstanding, social pressure, and lack of support were common themes that hindered the conversion process.

Understanding these challenges allows the church to develop more targeted, empathetic, and effective mission strategies to support Muslim-background converts. Addressing these obstacles through education, mentorship, and cultural sensitivity will be essential for fostering successful conversions and long-term integration into Adventism community.

Missiological Implications for the Fourth Research Question

The exploration on internal and external challenges faced by New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) before their conversion to Adventism offers significant missiological insights for shaping effective, empathetic, and context-sensitive mission strategies. The following implications are drawn from the findings:

Addressing Spiritual Emptiness and Doctrinal Doubts with a Christ-centered Approach. The accounts of spiritual unrest and doctrinal uncertainty reveal a deep longing for a personal loving and assuring relationship with God. Many NAICs questioned the absence of assurance of salvation in Islam and were drawn to the peace and relational aspect of Jesus’ teachings.

- **Missiological insight:** Mission strategies should emphasize the love, grace, and assurance found in Christ. Emphasizing Jesus as a personal Savior who offers both truth and peace can meet a felt need.
- **Example:** Adapt Bible studies that highlight God's grace and assurance of salvation, rather than beginning with doctrinal contrasts.

Safe Space for Honest Questions and Theological Dialogue. Many converts began their journey with difficult, unanswered theological questions. However, they were often afraid to ask these questions within their Islamic context due to fear of guilt and shame.

- **Missiological Insights:** create safe, non-judgmental spaces (both physical and relational) where seekers can explore spiritual questions without fear of rejection.
- **Example:** Develop discussion forums, small groups, or one-to-one friendship evangelism where seekers can ask tough questions about God, Jesus, salvation, and grace.

Emotional and Psychological Support through Transitions. The intense emotional struggles described—guilt, fear, identity crisis—highlight the need for pastoral care and psychological support in mission work.

- **Missiological Insight:** Equip church members and local church leaders with basic pastoral counseling skills and trauma-informed approaches to help converts process their spiritual and emotional transitions.
- **Example:** Partner with trained Adventist counselors or chaplains to provide mentorship or debriefing sessions for new converts.

Preparing Converts for Social and Family Rejection. The fear of family rejection and community backlash was a recurring theme. Some converts were disowned, isolated, or threatened.

- **Missiological Insights:** Missional outreach must prepare potential converts for these possible social costs and provide a strong spiritual and social support system.
- **Example:** Establish support groups within the church and connect converts with mentors who have navigated similar experiences

Culturally Sensitive Discipleship and identity Rebuilding. NAICs often struggled with the loss of identity after conversion. Leaving Islam felt like losing one's entire worldview, culture, and belonging.

- **Missiological Insights:** Discipleship should include helping converts reconstruct a new identity in Christ that honors aspect of their previous culture while embracing biblical truth.
- **Example:** Use contextualized discipleship materials that integrate cultural sensitivity- affirming aspects of dress, language, and values that are not in conflict with Scripture.

Discreet Evangelism and Security Awareness. Given the fear of persecution, many NAICs practiced their new faith in secret before publicly declaring the conversion.

- **Missiological Insight:** mission strategies should include models of discreet evangelism and digital discipleship that protect seekers and allow growth in private before public confession.
- **Example:** Use online Bible courses, WhatsApp studies, or encrypted communication platforms to engage seekers safely and discreetly.

Engaging families and communities in the Conversion Journey. In Islam, faith is communal and not just individual. The reaction of family and community plays a significant role in the convert's journey.

- **Missiological Insight:** Mission should not only focus on individual conversion but also explore ways to engage families, introduce bridge-building activities, and foster understanding between Adventist and Muslims.
- **Example:** Host interfaith dialogue events, cultural exchange meals, or community service projects that build trust and positive relationships between Adventists and Muslim communities.

Summary. The challenges faced by NAICs before their conversion are deeply personal, social, emotional, and spiritual. A thoughtful missiological approach must be holistic-ministering not just to the mind, but also the heart and community. The goal is not just conversion, but transformation that is sustainable, respectful, and rooted in love.

Challenges Post Converts

This is the third part of research question four. In this section I answer the issue of what challenges New Adventist Converts to Adventism, faced after conversion. These challenges are categorized into major areas faced after their conversion.

Spiritual Struggles. After conversion to Adventism, many new converts faced difficulties in full grasping and internalizing their new faith. Some struggled to reconcile Adventist teachings with their previous Islamic worldview.

P1 shared:

“At first, I found it difficult to pray differently from how I used to as a Muslim. The structured prayers in Islam were part of my daily routine, and I felt lost without them. Learning to pray freely and personally took me time.”

Others (P3, P4, P4 and P6), found it challenging to let go of previous beliefs, especially regarding salvation, the role of Jesus, and the concept of grace.

Social pressures. Integration into the Adventist community was not always smooth. While the church welcomed them, some converts felt misunderstood by members who had little experience interacting with former Muslims.

P2 explained,

“I felt like an outsider in my new church. People were kind, but they did not fully understand my background. I had to learn everything from scratch—worship, traditions, even how to participate in services.

Additionally, some (P5) faced social rejection from their previous Muslim community, making it harder to form new friendships and support networks.

Emotional and Psychological Conflicts. Converts often dealt with identity crises as they tried to balance their past cultural and religious identity with their new faith. The emotional toll of losing connections with family and friends led to deep feelings of loneliness.

P7 shared:

“There were nights I cried, feeling like I had abandoned my family and my past. I knew I had found the truth, but I felt the weight of isolation,”

The transition brought emotional stress, and while some found support within the church, others struggled to feel a sense of belonging.

Theological and intellectual challenges. Some converts faced difficulty in adjusting to Adventist doctrines, particularly concerning Jesus as the Son of God, salvation by grace, and the Sabbath.

P9 shared:

“For years, I believed that Jesus was just a prophet. Accepting Him as my Savior and understanding His divinity was my biggest struggle.”

Understanding biblical teachings from anon-Islamic perspective require time, guidance, and personal duty.

Cultural barriers. Adjusting to new church customs was another challenge. Many found Adventist worship services unfamiliar, especially the music style, the way they were conducted, and the role of men and women in worship.

P11 expressed:

“In Islam, men and women worship separately, sitting in church at first felt strange, and I struggled to get used to the difference in worship etiquette.”

Dietary changes also presented difficulties, especially when navigating food restrictions different from halal practices.

Practical and economic Challenges. Some new converts experienced financial hardship due to their decision to follow Adventism. A few were cut off from family support, lost their jobs, or had to leave their homes.

P10 shared:

“When my employer learned that I had become a Christian, I was dismissed from my job without warning. I had to start over completely.”

Others faced struggles in securing housing with some being forced to leave their homes due to family rejection.

Fear of Persecution. Beyond social and economic challenges, some converts encountered real threats to their safety. In families where religious conversion is heavily discouraged, some experienced harassment threats, or even violence. “*My own brother told me I was dead to the family. I had to move to another region for my own safety,*” one convert revealed. Others faced pressure from their ant and other relatives who sought to persuade them to return to Islam, sometimes through social isolation.

Missiological Implications

Understanding the challenges faced by new converts to Adventism- such as social rejection economic hardship, and housing insecurity highlights the urgent need for holistic support systems within mission strategies. Evangelism among Muslims in contexts like Dodoma must go beyond doctrinal teaching to include practical discipleship, emotional support, and socio-economic empowerment. This implies that churches and mission agencies should prepare to receive converts not only spiritually, but also materially and relationally.

Thus, mission efforts must anticipate and address potential consequences of conversion, such as family exclusion or job loss, by developing intentional program for integration, vocational training, counselling, and community-building. Doing so demonstrates the gospel's transformative power not only in belief but also in belonging and well-being. Table 2 below shows the differences between the challenges faced by the new Islam converts.

Table 2. Challenges Prior to Conversion and Post Conversion

Aspect	Challenges prior to Conversion	Challenges After Conversion
Spiritual struggle	Doubts about Islam, unanswered theological questions, feelings of guilt for questioning faith.	Struggles in full understanding Adventist beliefs, reconciling new doctrines with past religious teachings
Social Pressures	Fear of family rejection, community backlash, uncertainty about leaving Islam	Actual rejection from family/society, loss of previous support systems, difficulty in forming new relationship in church
Emotional & Psychological Conflicts	Fear of betraying heritage, internal guilt, loneliness while questioning faith.	Identity crisis, loneliness in new faith, emotional distress from being cut off from previous social networks.
Theological & intellectual challenges	Struggling with Islamic teachings, confusion over Christian community, hesitancy about cultural differences	Adjusting to different worship styles, gender roles, and dietary changes in Adventism
Practical Economic Challenges	Fear of losing employment, financial security, or housing if they leave Islam.	Actual job loss, financial instability, losing family-provided housing after conversion.
Fear of Persecution	Worrying about consequences of leaving Islam, fear of being discovered	Facing direct threats, harassment, legal issues, and pressure to return to Islam

Before conversion, challenges are mostly internal (doubts, fears, questioning, anticipation of consequences). After conversion, challenges become external and real (actual rejection, persecution, difficulties in adaptation).

Figure 1 is a summative representation of the missiological responses to the internal struggles as discussed above.

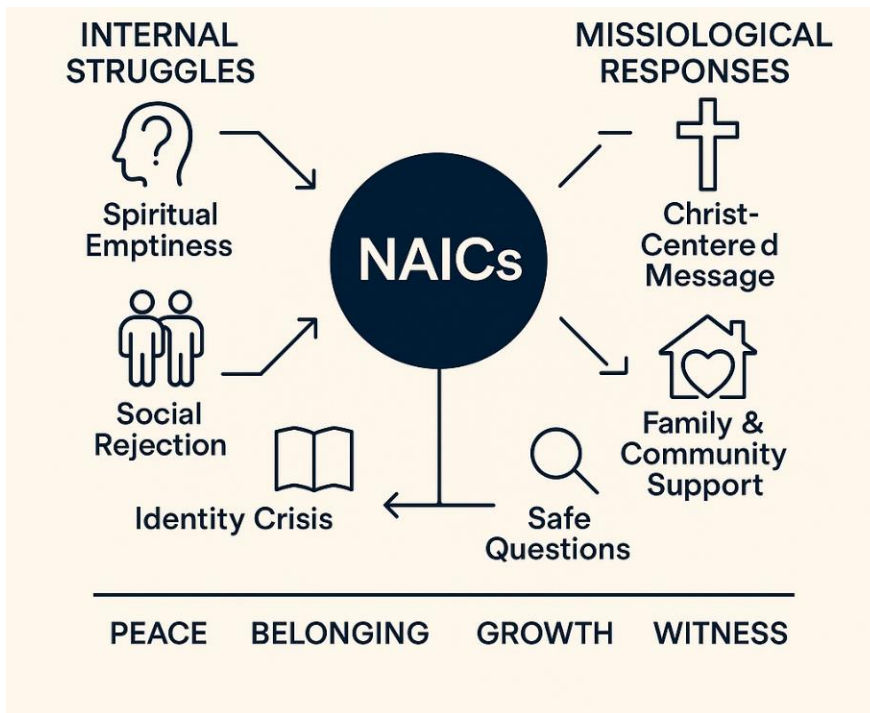


Figure 1. Missiological Responses to the Internal Struggles

Figure 1 anticipates that the missiological responses shown will bring a sense of peace, belonging, growth, and witness to the NAICS.

Proposed Mission Strategy For Nurturing New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICS)

From the findings and lived experiences of Muslim converts to Adventism, this study proposes a comprehensive mission strategy to nurture New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICS). The strategy recognizes the unique cultural, spiritual, and theological transitions that NAICS undergo, and therefore calls for a multi-dimensional to discipleship, community integration, and sustainable support. This proposed model includes eight key components:

First, contextual discipleship programs must be developed to align with the spiritual background of Muslim converts. These discipleship materials should address themes such as prayer, fasting, and Scripture study in a manner that resonates with their Islamic upbringings while introducing biblical foundations, storytelling,

testimonies, and real-life experiences from other converts can be powerful tools for teaching and reinforcement of biblical truths.

Second, worship and community integration must be culturally sensitive and welcoming. Worship style, music, and language should be inclusive and familiar to converts. The establishment of small groups or house fellowship will create a safe environment where NAICs can express themselves freely and grow spiritually, celebrating milestones of faith, such as baptism anniversaries or personal testimonies, will foster a sense of identity and belonging within the Christian community.

Third, mentorship and spiritual parenting are vital for the spiritual growth of new converts. Each convert should be paired with a mature Adventist believer, preferably someone experienced in Muslim outreach. These mentors must be equipped through training in cross-cultural discipleship, trauma-informed pastoral care, and spiritual guidance, enabling them to work alongside converts in their faith journey.

Fourth, family and social support systems should be intentionally developed. Many NAICs face rejection, stigma, or persecution from their families and communities. Therefore, churches must offer structured support groups, counselling services, and practical help. Members should adopt a family-like approach that provides emotional comfort, spiritual encouragement, and tangible assistance.

Fifth, theological clarification and apologetic training should be prioritized. Key doctrines such as the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the authority of Scripture must be taught clearly and simply. Training NAICs in basic apologetics will enable them to articulate and defend their faith when engaging with Muslim relatives or friends, reducing confusion and increasing confidence in their Christian beliefs.

Sixth, the spiritual concerns and fears of converts- especially regarding jinn and spiritual oppression should be addressed through biblical teaching. Lessons should emphasize Christ's authority over all power, using Scripture and testimonies of deliverance. Incorporating spiritual warfare prayers and promises from the Bible will help NAICs overcome fear and grow in trust toward God's protection.

Seventh, training programs for pastors and missionaries are essential, church leaders, evangelists, and Bible worker should regularly be trained in contextual theology, Islamic worldview, and intercultural communication. Modules should also include missiological principles and pastoral care teaching relevant to Muslim-background believers.

Finally, sustainable follow-up and retention mechanisms must be put in place. Long-term engagement with NAICs can be achieved through regular home visit, phone calls, and integration into local church ministries. Assigning leadership responsibilities to converts will, strength their faith and foster a deeper sense of ownership in their new community of faith.

In conclusion, eight-point strategy for nurturing NAICs emphasizes intentionality, contextualization, and compassion. By adopting this approach, the Adventist church can better support the spiritual, emotional, and social growth of Muslim converts, ensuring their transition is not only sustained but also fruitful in their journey with Christ.

Pictorial Model of Strategy

The figure below is pictorial model of the strategy discussed above.



Figure 2. Pictorial Model of Strategy

Table 3 below gives an explanation for Figure 2 on the Mission Strategy.

Table 3. Strategic Plan for Nurturing New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs)

Strategic Objective	Key Activities	Responsible Parties	Expected Outcomes
1. Contextual Discipleship	Develop contextual materials Conduct storytelling-based sessions	Discipleship Ministry, Theological Experts, Former Converts	Culturally relevant discipleship; biblical understanding deepens
2. Worship & Community Integration	Create inclusive worship models Form small groups/house fellowships Celebrate faith milestones	Worship Leaders, Church Elders	Sense of belonging and spiritual growth
3. Mentorship & Spiritual Parenting	Train spiritual mentors Pair NAICs with trained mentors	Pastors, Personal Ministries Team	Personalized spiritual support; improved retention
4. Family & Social Support	Establish support groups Offer counseling and practical help	Social Ministries, Counseling Teams	Reduced emotional/social isolation; improved welfare
5. Theological Clarification & Apologetics	Teach key doctrines simply Conduct apologetics training	Church Theologians, Apologetics Trainers	Doctrinal clarity and confidence in defending faith
6. Addressing Spiritual Concerns & Fears	Teach spiritual warfare and biblical protection Conduct prayer/deliverance sessions	Prayer Ministry, Pastoral Counselors	Increased peace; trust in God's power
7. Training for Pastors & Missionaries	Develop contextual theology curriculum Hold seminars and workshops	Union/Conference Education Departments, Seminaries	Enhanced contextual mission and pastoral care
8. Sustainable Follow-up & Retention	Home visits and phone follow-ups Involve converts in ministry roles	Church Board, Elders, Ministry Leaders	Stronger engagement and leadership development

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the entire study entitled “A Contextual Study of the Lived Experiences of New Adventist Islam Converts in Dodoma Central Church District, Tanzania: implications for mission. Each chapter is briefly reviewed. The findings from chapter 5 are then summarized under the challenges faced by new Adventist converts from Islam, the factors influencing their conversion, their experiences before and after conversion, the missiological implications, and the proposed mission strategies.

In addition, the chapter offers conclusions and practical recommendations for mission work among Muslims. The aim is to consolidate the insights gained from the lived experiences of these converts and to consider the implications for both local and broader Adventist mission strategies.

Summary

The study was introduced in chapter 1, presenting the problem the study intended to resolve. Besides, it phenomenologically explored the lived experience of Muslim converts to Adventism in Dodoma, Central District Church. Tanzania.

The study employed a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with purposively selected converts and church leaders, along with a review of church records and mission-related documents. Data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns and key themes.

Chapter one introduced the background and problem statement. Chapter Two reviewed biblical-theological, and contextual literature on conversion and mission among Muslims. Chapter Three presented a relevant literature that supported the study. It examined theoretical frameworks of religious conversion, particularly those that relate to Muslim-background believers, such as the NAICs (New Adventist Islam Converts) model. The review explored biblical foundation of conversion, sociological perspectives, and previous research on Muslim-Christian conversion dynamics.

It also highlighted the unique context of Tanzania, including cultural and religious factors that influence conversion from Islam to Adventism. The chapter identified key theme and gaps in existing literature, which helped to shape the research focus and questions.

Chapter 4, discussed in detail the methodology employed in this research. The study utilized phenomenological research, a type of qualitative approach that investigates the lived experience of people. Eleven purposively participants (NAICs) from the Dodoma Central Church District were interviewed through in-depth interviews. Additionally, a focus group discussion with five NAICs was conducted to gather data. The data were collected through audio recordings, which were then transcribed and coded for emerging themes. These emerging themes were used for data analysis in chapter 5.

Chapter 5 interprets the findings in the light of the research questions and existing literature.

Religious Experience of NAICs prior to Adventism

Before their conversion, New Adventist Islam Converts (MAICs) adhered to a structured and ritualistic form of Islam religious practices that emphasized discipline, communal identity, and external expression of devotion. Daily religious regulated by

the observance of salah, and five prescribed prayers performed in Arabic at specific times, reflecting a deep sense of duty and submission to divine command.

Fasting during the month of Ramadan as mandatory and perceived as a religious obligation reinforcing communal solidarity and spiritual disciplines. Engagement with Qur'an focused on memorization and recitation in Arabic-often without a full grasp of the language- primarily for the purpose of earning spiritual merit.

Theologically, NAICs maintained a firm commitment to Tawhid, the doctrine of God's absolutely oneness, and explicitly rejected any notion of the Trinity. They regarded Jesus (Isa) as a highly respected prophet, but not divine, while Muhammad was accepted as the final prophet and the seal of salvation. Their cosmology included a belief in supernatural beings such as God, angels and jinn.

They believed that judgement begins at death, with moral deeds being weighed as the basis for salvation, and heaven was envisioned as a reward inclusive of sensual pleasures, particularly for men. Furthermore, they held that Quran was the unaltered verbatim word of God revealed in Arabic. Ultimate guide.

Religious expression was largely external and ritualistic, often lacking personal spiritual intimacy. Dress and modesty codes were stringently observed- women wore the hijab and men the kanzu- as visible sign of piety. Religious identity was deeply intertwined with the collective consciousness of the Ummah, strengthened by communal prayers and religious gathering, especially Fridays.

Religious Experience of NAICs after Conversion to Adventism

Following their conversion, NAICs embraced a transformative spiritual paradigm characterized by personal relationship with God, grace-based salvation, and Christ-centered faith. They came to believe in the Triune God- Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit- and acknowledged Jesus Christ not merely as a prophet but as the divine Son of God and the Savior of humanity.

Prayer transitioned from structured rituals to spontaneous and heartfelt communication with God, often in the national language (Swahili). Fasting became a voluntary spiritual discipline for personal reflection and growth rather than a legal obligation. Scripture engagement shifted from mechanical recitation to intentional study of the Bible for understanding, guidance and application.

Their soteriology views changed significantly from a works-based model of salvation to faith-based understanding grounded in the grace of Jesus Christ. While they continued to believe in judgement after death, they now trusted in Christ's righteousness for justification rather than their own deeds. Belief in supernatural power persisted, but with the assurance of Christ's authority over all spiritual forces.

The communal experience also evolved: NAICs found a new spiritual family within the Adventist church, characterized by Sabbath worship, fellowship, and discipleship. Modesty remained valued, but dress norms became a personal response to inner transformation rather than strict religious regulations. Worship now involved heartfelt expression, joyful singing, and meaningful participation-signifying a deeper, more intimate relationship with God.

Challenges Faced by NAICs Before and After Conversion to Adventism

Before conversion, New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) wrestled with deep internal and external struggle. Spiritually, they grappled unanswered theological questions and doubts about certain Islamic teachings. Often accompanied by guilt and fear of being irreverent. Emotionally and psychologically, they faced intense anxiety-

fearing rejection by family, loss of community, and betrayal of cultural identity. These internal conflicts often led to profound loneliness and turmoil.

Socially, even the consideration of leaving Islam triggered fears of ostracism, family disownment, and alienation from the close-knit ummah. The looming threat of backlash created hesitation and emotional distress. Theologically, concepts like Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and grace-based salvation clashed with their former belief, presenting both intellectual and spiritual hurdles. Cultural differences in worship and communal life between Muslims and Christians added complexity.

Practical concerns intensified these fears. Many worried about losing employments, financial assistance, or housing tied to their Muslim families or networks. Underlying all these concerns was the risk of persecution-ranging from ridicule to physical harm or legal consequences in families where apostasy was strongly condemned.

After conversion these challenges often persisted or intensified. Spiritually, NAICs embarked on a journey of learning and internalizing Adventist doctrines such as the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the prophetic interpretation. The shift in belief required time, guidance, and patience. Social rejection became reality from many-they were disowned by families isolated from former friends, and faced difficulty building meaningful relationships within the church due to cultural gaps and lack of understanding.

Emotionally, many struggled with identity crises, persistent loneliness, and mental distress, especially in the absence of familiar support systems. Theologically and culturally, they had to adopt to new practices in worship, genders interaction, and diet- areas previously governed by rigid Islamic norms, now requiring emotional and cultural adjustment.

Economically, the impact of conversion became tangible. Several NAICs, experienced job loss, financial instability, and housing insecurity. In some cases, persecution escalated into actual threats and pressure to return to Islam.

Despite these hardships, many NAICs expressed profound peace, purpose, and fulfillment in their relationship with Christ. Their journey remains one marked by both sacrifice and resilience, testifying to the transformative power of faith amid adversity.

Factors that led to the Conversion of NAICs

The factors that led to the conversion of the NAICs are:

1. Divine Encounter and personal Revelations
2. Influence of close family members or friends
3. Observing of the lifestyle of Adventists
4. Miracles and Answered Prayers
5. Bible study and Theological Convictions
6. Disillusionment with Islamic Teachings
7. Evangelistic Efforts and discipleship
8. Marriages.

Implications for Mission

1. Prayer must be taught as a personal, relational conversation with God rather than a ritual, to help convert transition from Islamic salah to Christian prayer.
2. Biblical fasting should be introduced as voluntary spiritual discipline rather than an obligation, guiding converts toward deeper Christian devotion

3. Structured bible study must be encouraged to replace Quranic recitation, with access to Bibles in native languages and engaging stud method.
4. Tight-kit Christian communities should be built to replace the Islamic Ummah, offering emotional, spiritual, and social support to converts.
5. Contextual approaches to modesty and social norms must be promoted to help converts reconcile Christian values within their cultural identity.
6. Counselling and support systems should be developed to assist converts in handling family rejection and societal stigma, fostering resilience.
7. The doctrine of Trinity should be taught clearly with relatable analogies and step-by-step instruction, contrasting Islamic Tawhid.
8. The divinity and salvific role of Jesus must be emphasized, connecting His mission to familiar Islamic concepts and OT prophecies.
9. Christ's authority over spiritual forces must be taught using biblical texts, spiritual warfare prayers, and testimonies to overcome fear of jinn.

Proposed Mission Strategy to Nurture New Islam Converts

1. Contextual disciple ship programs. Tailor discipleship to Islamic background of converts.
2. Culturally Sensitive and Community integration. Adapt worship style and community life to be inclusive
3. Mentorship and Spiritual. Pair converts with trained mentors who can guide them in faith.
4. Family and social Support Systems. Provide emotional and practical support through church-based support groups.
5. Theological clarification and Apologetic Training. Tech foundational Christian doctrines clearly

6. Addressing fear and Spiritual Warfare.
7. Training for Pastors and Missionaries
8. Sustainable Follow-up and retention mechanics

Conclusions

The conversion journey of Muslim converts to Adventism in the Dodoma Central Church District involves significant spiritual, emotional, and cultural transformation. Many are drawn to Adventism seeking assurance of salvation, a dissatisfaction with Islamic teachings, and the peace found in Christ.

However, they face emotional, theological, and social challenges, including family rejection, spiritual confusion, and identity crises. Their conversion is both a spiritual awakening and the development of a personal relationship with Jesus, accompanied by peace and emotional tension.

While some support is offered by local Adventist churches, there is a lack of sufficient training and care. Effective mission among Muslims must be Christ-centered, culturally sensitive, and relational, creating safe spaces for questions, and emotional support while guiding converts to rebuild their identity in Christ.

Therefore, collaboration and education on Muslim mission strategies among pastors, elders, and church members is crucial for leading more Muslims in Dodoma to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. The proposed strategy for nurturing NAICs in this study should be considered for adoption across Adventist mission fields working among

Muslim communities, including within the Dodoma Central Church District and other similar context.

2. Further research should be conducted on the feasibility and implementation of the house church model for discipleship among New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) in the Dodoma region.
3. New Adventist Islam Converts (NAICs) should be trained and empowered to participate in mission to Muslims, leveraging their unique experience and understanding of Islamic culture and beliefs.
4. Adequate budgetary support should be allocated for specialized Adventist mission initiatives targeting Muslims, including resource development, mentorship, and training programs.
5. Training for church members and leaders should be intensified to foster cultural competence in relating to Muslim, and to help create safe, welcoming environments for converts.
6. The development of theological resources tailored to the unique needs of NAICs should be prioritized to address their doctrinal questions and spiritual growth.
7. Mission strategies must include provision for the protection and emotional support of NAICs, especially in light of social hostility from both their former communities and at times, the Adventist community itself.
8. Due to sensitive nature of the information documented in this study, measures should be taken to ensure the researcher's safety and confidentiality of participant's identity.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to participate in a research study entitled: A Contextual Study of New Adventist Islam Converts in Dodoma Central Church District, Dodoma, Republic of Tanzania: Implications for Mission.

The information below tells you about what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do, and the potential risks and benefits of participating in this study. You are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification about the nature of the study. Please note that choosing whether to participate in this research is voluntary and entirely your choice. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your participation at any time during the study.

The purpose of this study: is to ascertain the factors that led to the conversion of Muslims to Seventh-day Adventism in the Dodoma Central district from 2015-2024.

Your participation: You will be asked to participate in an interview. This means you will be asked to share your experience on how you were led from a Muslim Background to Seventh-day Adventism. The interview will take about one (1) hour to complete. You will be asked to answer questions on how you became an Adventist from a Muslim Background.

Benefits and Risks: If you participate, you will contribute to knowledge about the conversion of Muslims to the Seventh-day Adventist church, which will be used to develop a contextualized strategy for gospel ministry to Muslims in the Seventh-day Adventist church in the Dodoma Central district.

There are no identifiable risks in participation. However, you may experience emotional discomfort depending on how traumatic your experience in your conversion to the Adventist church is. You will be made to answer the next question when you become very emotional in answering the question relating to your challenges. If your emotions become too much, the interview will be rescheduled to another appropriate time.

Confidentiality: Your personal information will be kept confidential. Your interview responses will be anonymized so they will not be identified in any report or publication of this study.

Please carefully read and sign this Form if you are willing to participate in the study.

1. My participation in this research project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
2. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
3. I understand that if I feel uncomfortable during the interview, I have the right to decline to answer any question or end the interview or discussion.
4. I understand that the interview will be audio-recorded to accurately capture my own words, and a transcript will be produced for data analysis.
5. I understand the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information from this interview or discussion.

If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, contact the Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee, Adventist University of Africa: ethics@aua.ac.ke

I have read and fully understood the statements on this Form. All my questions were answered satisfactorily. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Contact the supervisor of the research if you need more information or have questions:

Obed Olaotse Gabasiane, PhD (gabasiano@aua.ac.ke)

Thank you.

Researcher:

Khaniki Richard G.

MA Missiology Program

Email: khanikir@aua.ac.ke

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(For The New Converts from Islam)

1. Could you share your personal journey and experiences that led to your conversion from Islam to Adventism?
2. What were the key factors that played a significantly role in your decision to make this transition?
3. What were your lived experiences before and after your conversion to Adventism?
4. How did these factors influence your path to faith?
5. How do you perceive the differences between Islam and Adventism, in terms of their core beliefs and practices?
6. What specific aspects of Adventism attracted you or resonated with you personally.
7. How did these aspects compare to what you practiced and believed in Islam?

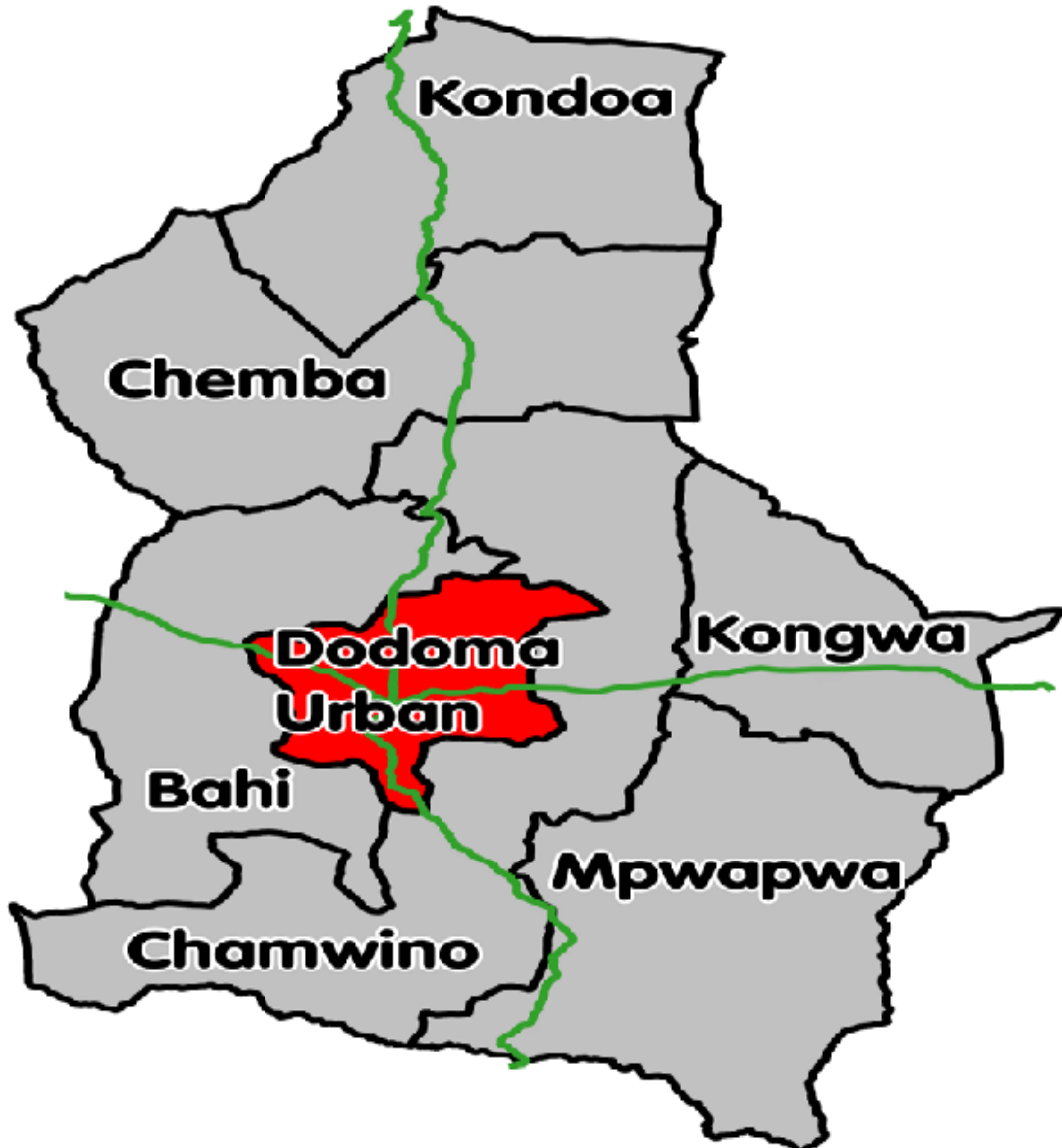
APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. Please share some challenges or difficulties you faced during your conversion process from Islam to Adventism?
2. How did you address and overcome these obstacles,
3. In what ways did your faith play a role in navigating these challenges?
4. How has your conversion impacted your relationship with family and friends who continue to follow Islam?
5. What strategies have you employed to manage these relationships and maintain harmony while staying true to your new faith?
6. Reflecting on your experience, how has the Dodoma Central church community supported you in your transition to Adventism?
7. What specific aspect of this community's support have been most impact or meaningful to you during your journey?
8. What do you see as the broader implications of your conversion for the mission of the Adventist church in Dodoma?
9. How can the church enhance its efforts to engage with and support individuals from different religious background more effectively?
10. Since your conversion, have you participated in any interfaith dialogue or activities?
11. How do you envision fostering mutual understanding and cooperation between different religious communities in Dodoma?
12. What role do you see yourself playing in these efforts?
13. Looking ahead, what advice or suggestions would you offer to the Adventist Church in Dodoma Central to better serve and engage with individuals from diverse religious backgrounds?
14. What practical steps can the church take to improve its outreach and support efforts?

APPENDIX D

MAP OF DODOMA CITY SHOWING THE STUDY AREA



Source: National Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved November 1, 2022.
<https://www.nbs.go.tz/takwimu>

APPENDIX E

KEY LITERATURE MAP AND GAPS

Author/Title	Design	Population/ Sample Size	Gap/Future
1. BJ Kazura Dissertation accepted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Theology in Missiology at the North-West University. Available at idorcid.or/0000-0002-5616-8908	Qualt.,	Muslims in Senegal	The conversion of Muslims to Christian through norm conversional ways
2. Amiruddin T. Kasnawi Dissertation accepted in fulfillment of requirements for the degree Phd. State University of Makassar Available at Doi:10.7813/2075-4124.2014/6-6/B.41	Qualt.,	Christian in Makassar	The conversion through marriage
3. Aftab Khan Christianity and Islam. Available at; Defence Journal, Karachi vol.22, Iss. 7(Feb2019):49-63.	Quant.,	Christianity and Islam	Conversion by force
4. Mohammad Hassan Khalili. Conversion out of Islam: University of Michigan; Available at https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/72141/j.1478-1913.2007?sequence=1 ; Defence Journal Preview publication details; Karachi Vol. 22, Iss. 7,(Feb 2019): 49-63.	Qualt.,	Chri	Voluntary conversion
5. Muslim, A.A & Bjorck J.P Reason for conversion to Islam among women in the United Staes.	Quant.,	Christian Women	Situational conversion

Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 1(2),97-111 https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015735			
6. Juliette Galonnier Moving in or moving toward? Reconceptualizing Conversion to Islam as a liminal Process https://doi.org/10.7560/317471-003	Qualt.,		Conversion by force
7. Barbara Watson Andaya Islam and Christianity in South-East Asia 1600-1700 https://brill.com/display/book/edcoll/9789004335585/B9789004335585_003.xml	Qualt.,		Conventional conversion
8. J.D.Y. PEEL Christianity, Islam, and Orisa Religion. University of California, 2015. https://doi.org/10.1353/book63408	Qualt.,	Christian, Islam, Orisa	

APPENDIX F

LETTERS

ERB Approval



Adventist University of Africa
Developing Leaders for Service

A Private Chartered University Accredited by Commission for University Education, Kenya



10th March 2025

Richard G. Khaniki
Theological Seminary
Adventist University of Africa
Kenya

Reference: AUA/ISERC/03/02/2025

Dear Richard G. Khaniki

RE: A Contextual Study on Lived Experiences of New Adventist Islam Converts in Dodoma Central Church District, Tanzania: Implications for Mission

This is to inform you that the Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC) has reviewed and approved your research proposal titled above. Your application approval number is AUA/ISERC/2025/0013. The approval period is 10th March 2025 – 9th March 2026.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents (including informed consent and study instruments) will be used.
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by AUA-ISERC.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to AUA-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others, or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to AUA-ISERC within 72 hours.
- v. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vi. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to AUA-ISERC.

Prior to commencing your study, you are expected to obtain permissions or any other clearances needed.

Yours Sincerely

Josephine Ganu, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Scientific Ethics Review C'ttee
ethics@aua.ac.ke

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF AFRICA
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE
PRIVATE BAG MBAGATHI - 00503,
NAIROBI - KENYA

Central Tanzania Field Approval

*Seventh-day Adventist Church
Central Tanzania Field
Headquarters*

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

P. O. Box 474, Dodoma, Tanzania
Tel: + 255 759 759 178
E-mail: centraltanzaniafield@gmail.com



March 20, 2025

Richard Godfrey Khaniki
P.O. Box 635
Morogoro

RE: APPROVAL FOR DATA COLLECTION AT DODOMA CENTRAL CHURCH

Dear Pastor,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

RE: "A CONTEXTUAL STUDY OF NEW ADVENTIST ISLAM CONVERTS IN DODOMA CENTRAL CHURCH DISTRICT, TANZANIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION."

On behalf of Central Tanzania Field (CTF) Administration, I acknowledge receipt of your letter requesting permission to conduct data collection at Dodoma Central Church related to your thesis at the Adventist University of Africa (AUA), titled:

After reviewing your request, I am pleased to inform you that permission is hereby granted for you to proceed with the data collection at Dodoma Central Church. We recognize the significance of your research and its potential contribution to mission strategies among new converts.

As you carry out this study, we encourage you to maintain the highest ethical standards, ensuring respect for participants' privacy, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of any information collected. Additionally, we request that you coordinate with the church leadership to facilitate a smooth process.

May God guide you in your research, and we look forward to the insights your study will provide. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you require any further assistance.

Yours in Christ,



Pr. Festo Eugene Mng'ong'o
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CENTRAL TANZANIA FIELD – CTF

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VITA

Personal Data

Name: Richard Godfrey Khaniki

Date of birth: 1st January, 1964

ID Number: S2019024

Marital Status: Married

Academic Achievements

1999 Bachelor of Arts in Theology Studies (BA Th)

Work Experience

January 2024 to Date: Manager, Voice of Prophecy, Southern Tanzania Union
Mission

December 2022-2023: President, Central Tanzania Field (STUM)

January 2014-2021: Executive Secretary, Southern Highlands Conference

December 2008-2013: Manager, Morning Star Radio, Tanzania

July 2006 -2007: Manager, Adventist World Radio (AWR), Tanzania

1999-2001: Church Pastor, Moshi District

1995-1999: Pastor and Student, University of Eastern Africa Baraton

1993-1994: Church Pastor, Bwambo District

1991-1992: Church Pastor, Katesh Distric

1990- 1991: Church Pastor, Usa-River District