

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Missiology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: CONTEXTUALIZING MISSION STRATEGY: UNDERSTANDING JIHAD AMONG THE KOLE PEOPLE IN GOUNA, CAMEROON, FOR EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM.

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This research investigated the contextual understanding of jihad among the Kole people in Gouna, Cameroon, with the goal of informing and enhancing Christian mission strategies that are both effective and culturally sensitive. In an era where misunderstandings of Islamic concepts often lead to tension and miscommunication, particularly in religiously pluralistic societies, it becomes imperative for Christian mission efforts to approach evangelism through informed, respectful, and contextually grounded methods. The term jihad is frequently misunderstood in global discourse, often being narrowly associated with violence or holy war. However, this study revealed that, within the Kole Muslim community, it is primarily perceived as a personal spiritual struggle, a commitment to moral integrity, communal harmony, and the pursuit of justice and peace.

Employing a qualitative research design, the study utilized semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with local Muslims and Christian leaders, youth, and community members. The findings illuminated how the community's understanding of this concept is deeply intertwined with their socio-cultural realities, religious traditions, and historical experiences. These insights not only challenged prevalent stereotypes but also create space for interfaith cooperation and mutual learning. Drawing on models of contextual theology, the study proposed mission strategies that could engage the local people in ways that would affirm their dignity, values, and religious identity, while clearly presenting the Christian message of love, reconciliation, and salvation in Christ.

By emphasizing relational evangelism, intercultural dialogue, and theological reflection rooted in the local context, this research contributes to a broader missiological discourse that seeks to reconcile faithfulness to the gospel with cultural relevance. The study concludes that understanding the indigenous interpretations of key religious concepts like this one is essential for building trust, reducing religious tension, and fostering a more effective and compassionate Christian witness in Muslim-majority settings like Gouna.

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A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
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by

Sali Salomon

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Dedicated to the Almighty God, and my family: my mother,
Asta Pauline; my wife, Habaga Sali; and my daughters,
Feva Dabono Brightness Sali and Amma Nikema
Happiness Sali: for their unwavering
love, sacrifice, and support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| AMBBs: | Adventist Muslim-Background Believers |
| AUA: | Adventist University of Africa |
| BFM: | Benoue-Faro Mission |
| FGD: | Focus Group Discussion |
| FIQH: | Islamic Jurisprudence |
| HAD: | Hadith |
| JIH: | Jihad |
| KP: | Kole Participant |
| KPF: | Kole participant in focus group N-1 |
| KPI: | Kole participant in interview N-1 |
| MAXQDA: | Max Qualitative Data Analysis |
| MBBs: | Muslim-Background Believers |
| QUR: | Quran |
| RQ: | Research Question |
| SDA: | Seventh - day Adventist |
| SHARI'AH: | Islamic law |

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Before Jesus' ascension to heaven, He gave the great commission to his disciples, written in Matthew 28: 19-20, and Mark 16:15-16. The clear command is to make disciples of all nations; this echoes the first message of the three Angels' in Revelation 14: 6 where the duty is to preach the everlasting gospel to all earth dwellers. However, reaching out to Muslims to lead them to Jesus has always been a big challenge. Christians find it often challenging to reach out to Muslims with affection.¹ "Many people do not want to respond to Muslims with grace because of fear".² This fear may be a result of the practice of Jihad by Muslims since Jihad is understood to mean armed action.³

The fundamental theological disagreements, such as the divinity of Jesus, the role of Prophet Muhammad, and differing perceptions about salvation, continue to be points of contention. Misinterpretations or rigid exclusivism in religious doctrines can lead to intolerance and mutual misunderstanding which fuel the tension between Muslims and Christians. Singh argues that Christian-Muslim relation is affected by

¹ Andrew van der Bijl and Steve Bell, *Grace for Muslims? The Journey from Fear to Faith* (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica, 2007), 123.

² Ibid.

³ Cynthia E. Ayers, "Iraqi Resistance to Freedom: A Frommian Perspective," *Parameters: Journal of the US Army War College* 33, no. 3 (2003): 68-84.

the local and non-local factors including the conflict of values.⁴ Hence, Christian in general, and particularly the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Gouna is not exempted from the perpetual conflict between Muslims and Christians which lead to fear, doubt, and negligence of reaching Muslims.

The concept of Jihad, often misunderstood in various global contexts, plays a significant role in Islamic theology and practice. Traditionally, Jihad encompasses both the internal struggle for personal spiritual improvement (Greater Jihad) and the external struggle to defend or promote the faith (Lesser Jihad).⁵ However, interpretations of Jihad can vary widely across different cultures and communities. The Kole people in Gouna represent a distinct cultural and religious group with their own unique practices and beliefs. As a region with its own socio-political and historical dynamics, it may have its own unique understanding of the concept of Jihad. Understanding these localized interpretations is essential for anyone engaging with the community, particularly in the context of mission work.

In Christianity, a concept comparable to the Greater Jihad is the spiritual struggle against sin, often described as spiritual warfare or the battle against the “flesh.” This struggle involves resisting temptation, growing in faith, and striving to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul speaks of this inner battle, saying, “For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh” (Gal 5:17), and “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7). Christians are also called to “take up their cross” daily (Luke 9:23), symbolizing a life of self-denial, sacrifice, and

⁴ David Emmanuel Singh, “Christian Relations with Muslims: Review of Selected Issues and Approaches,” *Transformation* 22, no. 1 (2005): 48–62, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026537880502200106>.

⁵ Matthew Aaron Bennett, *The Qur'an and the Christian: An In-Depth Look at Islam for Followers of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2022), 25.

transformation closely paralleling the inner purification emphasized in the Greater Jihad.

In contrast, the lesser Jihad in Christianity, particularly as taught by Jesus and emphasized in the New Testament, does not prescribe armed struggle as a means of defending the faith. Instead, Christians are called to respond to hostility with love, forgiveness, and nonviolence. Jesus taught, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt 5:44), and he rebuked the use of violence, telling Peter, “Put your sword back in its place... for all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Matt 26:52).

While the Church has historically engaged in wars (e.g., the Crusades), these were political and often controversial departures from Christ’s teachings. Mainstream Christian theology today largely supports peaceful resistance, martyrdom, and advocacy for justice as faithful responses to persecution or injustice.⁶ The Christian equivalent of the Lesser Jihad, then, is not military engagement, but rather a commitment to speaking the truth, serving the oppressed, and advancing the kingdom of God through nonviolent means.

Missionary activities, often involving efforts to share or promote religious beliefs, require a nuanced understanding of local contexts to avoid misunderstandings and ensure respectful interactions. In a dominated Muslim country like Nigeria, establishing the SDA Church was not easy. Many Muslim communities feared that the presence of Christian missionaries would erode Islamic dominance in the region. For many Muslims in northern Nigeria, religion was not just a personal belief but a cultural identity. Converting to Christianity was seen as abandoning one’s heritage

⁶ Gerald W. Schlabach, “Christian Peace Theology and Nonviolence toward the Truth: Internal Critique amid Interfaith Dialogue,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 53, no. 4 (2018): 541–68.

and community. Converts to Adventism often faced ostracism, hostility, and even persecution from their families and communities.⁷ As a result, they resisted the establishment of Christian schools, churches, and hospitals. In the same vein, in a locality like Gouna where the Kole people share a similar mindset with those in Nigeria due to their origins, the local interpretations of religious concepts such as Jihad may differ from mainstream or other regional understandings. Therefore, it is crucial to grasp these nuances in order to develop mission strategies that are both effective and respectful.

The challenge of understanding the deep concept of Jihad practiced by Muslims as prescribed in the Qur'an as well as Shari'ah in Islamic Schools instigates the fear of approaching the Muslims. This reality becomes much more difficult in Gouna district, located in the Northern part of Cameroon where there is no proper strategy to reach the Muslims, and no Adventist Muslims relation department (AMR).⁸ As a result, the Muslim Umma (community) is not adequately reached as members from the Muslim background are quite few. Oftentimes, it is the case that those serving in Muslim dominated areas work five to ten years without leading a single Muslim to Christ as proselyte.⁹

Personal observation reveals that; the few Muslims who came to accept the gospel of Jesus in the SDA Church in Gouna District came by themselves. Some heard the evangelistic campaigns which had nothing to do with Islam and accepted to be baptized, others because they were relations or friends to members of the Church.

⁷ Emmanuel Orihantare Eregare, "Seventh-day Adventist Missionary Enterprise in Africa (1914–1940): A Nigerian Narrative," *Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary* 21, no. 1–2 (2018): 88.

⁸ Margarita S. Neyra, "2023 Seventh-Day Adventist Yearbook," n.d., 425.

⁹ Abner P. Dizon, "Issues in Adventist Muslim Ministry," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 8, no. 2 (2012): 5-17, <https://doi.org/10.32597/jams/vol8/iss2/2/>.

Some others have come into the Church through marriage to members; this is especially true of Muslims who had backslidden from the Islamic faith and did not have anything to do with Islam anymore. This reality has initiated the need to delve deeper into understanding the concept of Jihad among Kole people in Gouna and by extension, among the Islamic community and establish the implications for the mission.

Some Scholars have conducted studies and investigations to establish the impact of Jihad on missions Worldwide.¹⁰ While many other scholars have conducted similar research, some in continents such as Europe¹¹, Asia¹² and Africa,¹³ others have tried to understand the practice of Jihad in specific countries such as Kenya.¹⁴, Nigeria,¹⁵ and Cameroon.¹⁶ Thus, from a global perspective, and specifically within the African continent and Cameroon, the concept of Jihad as practiced in Islam pose a challenge to the spread of the gospel of Jesus if careful and considerate approaches are not employed. Gouna district faces a significant challenge in effectively spreading the gospel of Jesus, particularly among the Kole people and the broader Muslim

¹⁰ Ayers, "Iraqi Resistance to Freedom," 69.

¹¹ Olivier Roy, "EuroIslam: The Jihad Within?" *The National Interest* 71 (2003): 63–73.

¹² Barry Desker, "Islam in Southeast Asia: The Challenge of Radical Interpretations," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 16, no. 3 (2003): 415–428, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0955757032000132344>.

¹³ Alexander Thurston, "Jihadism in Africa," in *Routledge Handbook of Islam in Africa*, ed. Terje Østebø (New York: Routledge, 2021), 158–172.

¹⁴ Anne Speckhard and Ardian Shajkovci, "The Jihad in Kenya: Understanding Al-Shabaab Recruitment and Terrorist Activity inside Kenya—in Their Own Words," *African Security* 12, no. 1 (2019): 3–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2019.1587142>.

¹⁵ Peter Dogo Korosi, "Muslim Evangelism in Kano State of Nigeria: A Case Study of ECWA Churches" (DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2007), 45.

¹⁶ Tomas Sundnes Drønen, *Pentecostalism, Globalisation, and Islam in Northern Cameroon: Megachurches in the Making?* (New York: Brill, 2013), 96.

community. As a result, the Church has largely focused on its own members or, at best, other Christian communities, while outreach to Muslims has been neglected.

Statement of the Problem

Ideally, the Adventist Church in Gouna district would experience both biological and missional growth by reaching all communities, including the unreached Muslim-majority Kole people. Currently, while the district reports strong baptismal numbers, 250 in 2018 alone According to the office of Executive secretary of BFM¹⁷, these are mostly from grown-up children in Adventist families and a few converts from other Christian denominations. The Kole people remain largely unengaged. This lack of engagement is largely due to the lack of contextualized mission strategy suited to the Muslim context of the Kole community. This study sought to address this gap by developing an applicable contextualized mission strategy that promoted an effective and respectful outreach among the Kole people.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand the local interpretation of Jihad by investigating how the Kole people in Gouna defined and perceived the concept of Jihad within their religious and cultural context. With an informed understanding, the study aimed to develop culturally sensitive, biblically grounded strategy for Seventh-day Adventist mission work that is capable of fostering trust, mutual understanding, and effective evangelism among the Kole people in Gouna District.

¹⁷ Executive secretary of BFM "As the long-serving Executive Secretary of BFM, he offers valuable firsthand observations regarding the Gouna district."

Research Questions

- 1- What is the understanding of the concept of Jihad among the Kole people in Gouna?
- 2- What biblical principles offer guidance for reaching forceful individuals?
- 3- How do the lived experiences of the Kole people affect their perception of Christian evangelism and Mission?
- 4- What missiological strategy can the SDA Church implement to effectively guide the Kole people, especially the Muslims in Gouna, to Christ?

Significance of the Study

Insights from this research helped pave the way for genuine interfaith dialogue, contextual theology and guided the development of culturally sensitive and effective approaches to sharing the message of Christ with the Kole people through effective evangelistic strategies. By extension, these strategies reached Muslims across Gouna district and potentially throughout the country. This approach enabled the SDA Church in Gouna to move beyond a focus on biological growth, but on an all-round growth by actively engaging in sharing the gospel with the Kole people and the wider Muslim community without exception.

Limitation

Working among Muslims as a Christian was a difficult task due to cultural barriers and limited access to data. Cultural barriers arose from differences in culture and worldview, which affected the depth of understanding. Limited access to the community and reluctance to openly discuss sensitive topics like Jihad constrained the depth of the study. In addition, there was little or no documented research about the

Kole people's specific interpretation of Jihad, which resulted to a greater reliance on oral history or direct interviews, limiting the scope of sources thereby.

Delimitation

This study did not consider the entire country or the entire Northern part of Cameroon but the study was limited to Kole people residing in Gouna. It did not attempt to explore the understanding of Jihad among other Muslim communities in the border region or country. This allowed for a focused analysis of the specific context in Gouna. The research primarily focused on the concept of Jihad as understood by the Kole people within the context of their Islamic beliefs. The study did not delve into other aspects of Kole religious life or beliefs unless they were directly related to their interpretation of Jihad. The study concentrated on understanding the religious and cultural interpretations of Jihad and how these interpretations influenced or interacted with missionary efforts. Broader discussions of other Islamic concepts were not explored in-depth unless relevant to the topic of Jihad.

The research included only adult Kole Muslims who were willing to participate and have a deep understanding of their religious practices. This means that the study did not include children or individuals who did not actively practice or understand the religious concept of Jihad. The selection of participants also excluded outsiders or non-Muslim Kole individuals who did not have direct knowledge or experience with the concept of Jihad in the community.

Reflexivity

Right from my childhood, I wondered why almost all Christians in Northern Cameroon bear Muslim names. I am a living example, I am called SALI Salomon.

SALI is a Muslim name. I have two sisters and one brother who bear equally Muslim names; Asta Sali, Kelou Sali, and Abdoulaye Sali, and all became Muslims. The reason for bearing Muslim names is to be socially accepted and expect to get a job. In Northern Cameroon in those days you must bear a Muslim name, and change your culture and even your religion to be accepted. These were the social conditions to integrate the professional career led by Muslim leaders almost in every office. All these became worse when Ahmadou Ahidjo, a Muslim, became the first President of the Republic of Cameroon and reigned from 1960 to 1982. During his reign, Christians were abused in many ways at some points, some deny their religion. People were forced out of their homes, houses were torn down.¹⁸

Being a Muslim by that time in Cameroon and, especially in the Northern part, was like having all rights over the Christians. Christians' houses were burned without complaint, women were raped, lands were taken over, and churches were burned. Christian freedom was trampled upon. The only right Christians had was to endure injustice without complaint. Christian men and women had to remove their shoes before crossing any place where Muslims were gathered. In the North, Ahmadou Ahidjo contributed to the re-Islamization and the reaffirmation of Fulani hegemony to the point of establishing an atmosphere of religious intolerance.¹⁹

Bearing a Muslim name was a must for those who want to succeed in their professional lives. You may have all the certificates and the degrees but if you are a Christian and does not bear a Muslim name you may forfeit all your rights and privileges as well as your future benefits. The Islamic religion has done more harm

¹⁸ Nehemia Levtzion, ed., *Rural and Urban Islam in West Africa* (Boulder, CO: Rienner, 1987).

¹⁹ Ndiva Kofele-Kale, "Cameroon and Its Foreign Relations," *African Affairs* 80, no. 319 (1981): 197–217.

than good to the people, especially the Christians. To date, even though the influence of Islam has been drastically reduced, the presence of Islam in Northern Cameroon remains a threat to the Christians.

Methodology

This section discusses the methodology of this research. It emphasizes: Research Approach and Design, Population and Sampling, Data collection, procedure and analysis, and ethical consideration. This research used the qualitative method, with an emphasis on the phenomenological approach. This helped to address and understand the practice of the Jihad in Gouna among Kole People and delved as well into the implications for mission. The purpose of the phenomenological design was to illuminate the specific, and to identify phenomena through how the actors perceived them in a situation.²⁰ Phenomenology is a school of thought that generally emphasizes people's subjective interpretations and experiences of the world.²¹

Research Approach Design

Research designs by definition are the features that can be used to collect, analyze, and interpret data using quantitative and qualitative research.²² The qualitative research method was employed because for the Jihad concept to be understood deeply in the context of Islamic culture or worldview and specific interpretation of Jihad, a qualitative approach is most appropriate. This method allows

²⁰ Stan Lester, "An Introduction to Phenomenological Research," accessed 12 January 2025, <https://www.rgs.org/media/tx1a3gji/seaweedfarminglesson2phenomenologicalresearchdocument.pdf>.

²¹ Josephine Oranga and Audrey Matere, "Qualitative Research: Essence, Types and Advantages," *Open Access Library Journal* 10, no. 12 (2023):1-9.

²² John W Creswell and Timothy C. Guetterman, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (New York: Pearson, 2019), 293.

for in-depth exploration of how religious concepts are understood and lived within a particular community. It emphasized the subjective experiences, meanings, and interpretations of the Kole people, making it ideal for the study of religious and cultural phenomena.

Qualitative research by definition is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. Uwe Flick declares that: Qualitative research is no longer just simply ‘not quantitative research’, but has developed an identity.²³ Moreover, this study focused on the phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is an intellectual engagement in interpretations and meaning.²⁴ There are two types of phenomenology in qualitative research: hermeneutics phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. The hermeneutics phenomenology is the study of experience together with its meanings.²⁵ While transcendental phenomenology consists of identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one’s experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomena.²⁶

This study employed the transcendental phenomenology, because here the researcher is oriented towards lived experiences and interpreting the texts of life.²⁷

²³ Uwe Flick, “Qualitative Research in Sociology in Germany and the US —State of the Art, Differences and Developments,” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 6, no. 3 (2005): 1-21.

²⁴ Sadruddin Bahadur Qutoshi, “Phenomenology: A Philosophy and Method of Inquiry,” *Journal of Education and Educational Development* 5, no. 1 (2018): 215, <https://doi.org/10.22555/joed.v5i1.2154>.

²⁵ Norm Friesen, Carina Henriksson, and Tone Saevi, eds., *Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Education* (Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-834-6>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Norman Makunika, “Phenomenology Approach in Qualitative Research,” accessed 28 January 2025, https://www.academia.edu/42918525/Phenomenology_Approach_in_Qualitative_Research.

Therefore, this research design is best suited to understand the concept of Jihad among people in Gouna District, Cameroon.

Population and Sampling

This research was conducted in Cameroon, particularly in the Gouna District in Benoue-faro Mission (BFM). BFM is in the Northern part of the country comprising thirteen districts, Gouna is one of them with a population of 7382 in 2015.²⁸ Acknowledging the sensitivity of this research, the researcher had first build a strong relationship with the Kole leader to ensure that, under his careful guidance, informants participated willingly, thereby minimizing the risk of refusal or opposition.

A minimum of 6 to 12 participants was included until data saturation was achieved. For this reason, a sample size of four Kole (men) Muslims above sixty years old, who have practiced Islam for at least forty years and have deep experience and knowledge about the Qur'an, the ahadith, the shari'ah, Islamic beliefs and practices, and Jihad concept were interviewed. This criteria of selecting men, age, and good knowledge of Qur'an, and Ahadith is based on the fact that men are more concerned with Jihad than women, the age factor is to justify the maturity, while good knowledge of the Qur'an and Ahadith is to justify the fact that Islamic teachings are founded upon these two sources.

Moreover, two young Kole Muslims, aged between twenty five to thirty years, who have practiced Islam for at least twenty years and possess a deep Islamic worldview along with a solid understanding of the concept of Jihad, were interviewed. The inclusion of young men aims to provide a balanced perspective on Jihad by

²⁸https://archive.wikiwix.com/cache/index2.php?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pndp.org%2Fdocuments%2FPCD_LAGDO.pdf%2Findex.html#. Lagdo Municipal development plan, Translated French "Plan communal de developpement de Lagdo"

comparing how it is perceived by younger individuals versus older generations. Furthermore, two AMBBs were interviewed to provide a more balanced perspective on the concept of Jihad, particularly from the viewpoint of individuals who have left Islam and embraced Christianity.

The greater number of older men reflects the reality that, in Islam, mature men are primarily responsible for making key decisions, particularly regarding matters such as lesser Jihad, while younger men are typically tasked with carrying out these decisions.²⁹ Including two AMBBs is intended to provide valuable insights from those who have transitioned from Islam to Christianity.

Data Collection and Procedure

Data collection is the process of collecting data aiming to gain insights regarding the research topic.³⁰ Data collection was done based on the question research to be answered, data collection helps to gather data from different individuals, groups, and companies easily.³¹ To achieve the goal of data collection, interviews was conducted. Information gathered from Kole's experience about the concept of Jihad answered the first question. Secondly, the data collected about the principles found in the Bible to reach forceful individuals answered the second question. Thirdly, the data gathered about the challenges the SDA Church faces in reaching the Muslim Ummah answered the third question. Lastly, the fourth question addressed whether the SDA Church can contextualize its strategies to reach Muslims.

²⁹ Niall Christie, *The Book of the Jihad of 'Ali Ibn Tahir al-Sulami (d. 1106): Text, Translation and Commentary* (London: Routledge, 2015), 353.

³⁰ Hamed Taherdoost, "Data Collection Methods and Tools for Research; A Step-by-Step Guide to Choose Data Collection Technique for Academic and Business Research Projects," *International Journal of Academic Research in Management* 10, no. 1 (2021): 10–38.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10–38.

The data collection is the process of collecting data aiming to gain insights regarding the research topic.³² The data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, allowing participants to share their personal insights and experiences. By in-depth qualitative interviewing, we refer to multiple face-to-face interactions between the researcher and participants. The in-depth interview is flexible and free-flowing interaction in which the interviewer allow the interviewee a good deal of leeway.³³ Moreover, since in-depth interviews combine the three types of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, this research employed the semi-structure interviews. The semi-structure interviews were used in qualitative, exploratory research, research interested in lived experiences.³⁴ The lived experiences were important for this study.

The data collection was done through the means of in-depth semi-structure interviews and focus group. The coding. Code can be defined as a set of rules or constraints for transmission one group of signifying units into another.³⁵ Two coding process were employed in this research: first cycle coding processes and second cycle coding processes.

³² Ibid., 15.

³³ Alan Morris, *A Practical Introduction to In-Depth Interviewing* (London: SAGE, 2015), 23.

³⁴ Natalie Osborne and Deanna Grant-Smith, "In-Depth Interviewing," in *Methods in Urban Analysis*, ed. Scott Baum, Cities Research Series (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2021), 105–25, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-1677-8_7.

³⁵ Michael R. Jackson, "Categories of Codes," *Semiotica* 85, no. 1–2 (1991): 41-72, <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.1991.85.1-2.41>.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as a process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to discover useful information.³⁶ The data collected from interviews from Kole people was analyzed and, synthesized using the research questions as a guideline to provide thematic sections of the analysis. The analyzed and synthesized data was used to enhance the effectiveness of missionaries in carrying the gospel to Kole people in Gouna, and by extension to all Muslims. All collected digital data, including audio recordings and transcripts, were stored on password-protected and encrypted devices. Physical documents such as consent forms were kept in a locked cabinet. Only authorized individuals had access to the data during the research process.

The data was securely retained for a limited period according to ethical guidelines and was then be permanently deleted or destroyed. Throughout the reporting and publication of findings, all information was anonymized to ensure participants' privacy and comply with institutional research ethics

Ethical Consideration

Before beginning data collection, the researcher sought ethical approval from Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC) by submitting its consent form and data collection instruments to them for review and approval. Official authorization was also obtained from local authorities in Gouna District and community leaders among the Kole people, ensuring respect for cultural norms and local governance. Participants were fully informed

³⁶ Mohaiminul Islam, "Data Analysis: Types, Process, Methods, Techniques and Tools," *International Journal on Data Science and Technology* 6, no. 1 (2020): 10, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijdst.20200601.12>.

about the study's purpose, methods, and their rights, and written informed consent was secured from all individuals involved in interviews and focus groups.

Definition of Terms

Adventist: The word “Adventist,” describes a believer who awaits the second advent of Christ.³⁷

Christian: a follower of the religion of Christ.³⁸ This word was used for the first time in Antioch Acts 11:26.

Christianity: the religion of Christians.³⁹

Conversion: a shift in membership from one community of faith to another, Conversion is not only an endorsement of the religion joined, it is also in varying degrees of explicitness.⁴⁰⁻⁴¹

Greater jihad: The Sufis (a mystical sect of Islam) understand the greater jihad as an inner struggle against the base instincts of the body but also against the corruption of the soul.⁴²

Hadith: is anything, said by the prophet (SAW) or did by him or approved by him.⁴³

³⁷ Ibid., 10.

³⁸ Richard Watson, “Christianity,” *Biblical and Theological Dictionary* (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1832), 696.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ira Katznelson, Miri Rubin, and Ora Limor, eds., *Religious Conversion: History, Experience and Meaning* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² IslamOnline, “Classifications of Hadith,” accessed 12 December 2024, <https://islamonline.net/14963>

⁴³ Ibid.

Islam: the act of resignation to God or submission to God.⁴⁴

Jihad: in its meaning Jihad means al-Qital which means physical fighting or muqayyid meaning spiritual fight.⁴⁵

Lesser Jihad: is the physical actions taken in defense of the realm.⁴⁶

Muslim: an adherent of Islam who submits to Allah's commands.⁴⁷

Qur'an: the Arabic word 'qur'an' is derived from the root qara'a, which has various meanings, such as to read, which being interpreted may mean read or proclaim, or recite.⁴⁸ Also these surah confirm: (Sura 17: 93.) to recite, (Sura 75:18:17: 46.)

Seventh day Adventist: The name "Seventh -day Adventist" points to the future as well as the past.⁴⁹

Spirit of Prophecy: the manifestation of the spirit of God.⁵⁰

Chapter Outline

This study began with Chapter 1 which was the introduction. Chapter 2 discussed the Biblical Foundation. Chapter 3 dealt with the literature review while Chapter 4 presented the methodology of this study. Chapter 5 focused on data analysis

⁴⁴ John Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran: With Copious Grammatical References and Explanations of the Text* (New York: Cosimo, 2011).

⁴⁵ Jarret M. Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2008), 50.

⁴⁶ Michael G. Knapp, "The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam," *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 33, no. 1 (2003): 82-94, <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.2132>.

⁴⁷ Ludwig W. Adamec, *The A to Z of Islam* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 199.

⁴⁸ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an: Complete Translation with Selected Notes* (Leicestershire, UK: Kube Publishing Ltd, 2015), 11.

⁴⁹ Marco T. Terreros, "What Is an Adventist? Someone Who Upholds Creation," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 7, no. 2 (1996): 142-167.

⁵⁰ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, Vol. 1* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2006), 150.

to provide a helpful understanding of the concept of Jihad among the Kole people in Gouna. At the end, Chapter 6 provided a Summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR REACHING FORCEFUL PEOPLE IN MISSION

The concept of Jihad has a broad and nuanced meaning. It can refer to an inner struggle, known as the greater jihad, which is the internal battle against forces that hinder a person from living according to divine principles and aligning with the theomorphic ideal.¹ This is known as greater jihad while the outward struggle is known as the lesser struggle. In its most outward sense jihad came to mean the defense of Dar al Islam.² In this context, jihad refers to a physical struggle or warfare. This study explored the concept of jihad as reflected in the Bible, examining both the Old and New Testaments, as well as the writings of Ellen White.

Biblical Foundation

This section explored the various forms of war described in the Bible, examining accounts from both the Old and New Testaments. It also considered perspectives on warfare found in the Spirit of Prophecy, analyzing their theological significance and implications.

¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Spiritual Significance of Jihad," accessed 23 December 2024, <https://eweb.furman.edu/~ateipen/islam/protected/jihad-nasr.htm>.

² Ibid.

The Wars in the Old Testament

There are many wars fought in the Old Testament. Arnold argues that, War in the OT is a battle in which Yahweh is the prime actors and humans are sometimes called on to assist.³ The Hebrew Scriptures record elements of the classical positions of holy war, pacifism, and just war; these three understandings of war, of course, have persisted in the biblical religious traditions for centuries.⁴ The Old Testament is rich with accounts of wars and battles, vividly portraying the history of Israel as God's chosen nation. These narratives reflect the frequent conflicts that shaped the experience of the ancient Israelites.⁵ Furthermore, in his analysis, Adeboye observes that this is because there was what can be called 'the spirit of territorial dominion cum nationalistic expressions.'⁶ This means that many of these wars were fought for Israel to survive against its surrounding enemies. God permitted those wars to show his disapproval regarding the sinful behavior of nations surrounding Israel people.

The wars in the Old Testament often served as instruments of God's judgment against disobedience. While divine commands frequently emphasize judgment for the sins of the Canaanites, a primary reason cited is the threat they posed to Israel, both physically and spiritually. Physically, the Canaanites frequently waged war against Israel (e.g., 2 Samuel 21:15). Spiritually, they enticed the Israelites into various forms of sin.

³ Bill T. Arnold, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 192.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Godwin O. Adeboye, *Can a Christian Be Cursed?: An African Evangelical Response to the Problem of Curses* (London: Langham Publishing, 2023), 25.

⁶ Ibid.

Additionally, there are instances where God directly administered judgment for disobedience, such as in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24) and the death of Egypt's firstborn (Exodus 12:29). However, God also showed mercy to cities that repented; for example, Nineveh was spared from destruction because its people repented (Jonah 3:5-10). This demonstrates that divine judgment was directed against unrepentant sin, as seen in cities that did not turn from their ways and faced destruction. Lockhart suggests that understanding the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, often depicted in the prophets as punishment for blasphemy and idol worship, sheds light on the nature of divine judgment on these cities.⁷ Thus, in the Old Testament, whether God used the Israelites as instruments of judgment or acted directly, the purpose was consistently to address sin and disobedience.

Destruction of Jericho as a Form of “Jihad”

In order for Israelites to conquer the Promised Land Canaan, God ordered them to destroyed Jericho. The Lord declared to Joshua “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. (Jos 6:2 NKJ). Gevirtz argues that Joshua was commanded by God to take Jericho, invests the city, consecrates it to YHWH, burns it with fire, and lays a curse upon its future builder.⁸ What made the destruction of Jericho particular is the curse pronounced by Joshua following his destruction.⁹ Thus the destruction of Jericho was ordered by God. Jericho was a

⁷ Ralferd Freytag, “The Hebrew Prophets and Sodom and Gomorrah,” *Consensus* 32, no. 2 (2008): 55-69. <https://doi.org/10.51644/BXSE4117>.

⁸ Stanley Gevirtz, “Jericho and Shechem: A Religio-Literary Aspect of City Destruction,” *Vetus Testamentum* 13, no. 1 (1963): 52–62, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1516752>.

⁹ Ibid

Canaanites city and the Canaanites were descendants of Ham. Zuck argues that the Canaanites were the most natural embodiment of Ham.¹⁰

The Canaanites, as descendants of Ham, continued in a legacy of rebellion associated with their ancestor, who opposed God's will by constructing the Tower of Babel. The Canaanites engaged in numerous sins that aroused God's wrath, including idolatry (Deuteronomy 12:2-3), adultery (Genesis 19:30), homosexuality (Genesis 19:4-9), bestiality (Leviticus 18:23-25), and child sacrifice (Leviticus 18:21). Because of these transgressions, God commanded Joshua to destroy the Canaanite city of Jericho. Following divine instruction, the Israelites marched around Jericho for six days (Joshua 6:3), and on the seventh day, the priests blew their trumpets, and the people shouted (Joshua 6:16). The walls collapsed, and they destroyed everything within the city; men, women, young and old, and even animals (Joshua 6:20-21). Thus, Jericho, a Canaanite city, was completely destroyed in obedience to God's command.

However some scholars like, Niditch noticed that in the Old Testament, the Israelites were regarded as God's instrument of justice and the enemy less than the human monster who must be eradicated.¹¹ Moskala argued in contrary that according to biblical understanding, "to judge" means "to justify" which is a legal action with an awesome impact on our lives.¹² Meaning that the destruction of Canaanites was God's just judgement.

¹⁰ Roy B. Zuck, *Vital Biblical Issues: Examining Problem Passages of the Bible* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011), 21.

¹¹ Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹² Jiri Moskala, "The Gospel According to God's Judgment: Judgment as Salvation," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 22, no. 1 (2011): 28-49.

Holy Wars and Covenantal Struggles

The concept of “jihad”, understood as a struggle or striving for divine purposes in Islam, finds parallels in the Old Testament in the form of holy wars and covenantal struggles. One prominent example is the conquest of Canaan, where battles, such as the fall of Jericho (Joshua 6), were commanded by God to fulfill His promises to Israel. These wars were perceived as acts of divine judgment and covenantal obedience. Unlike the Islamic understanding of jihad, these struggles were specific to Israel’s historical context and tied to God’s covenant with His chosen people.

A second form of “jihad” in the Old Testament is the spiritual and moral struggle for faithfulness to God amidst adversity. Figures like Moses and Elijah exemplify this by striving to uphold the covenant and lead Israel away from idolatry and sin. Moses’ leadership through the wilderness and Elijah’s confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18) reflect a spiritual striving to restore Israel’s faithfulness to God. Similarly, the personal struggles of individuals, such as Jacob wrestling with God (Genesis 32:22–32) or David’s repentance in Psalm 51, illustrate a personal striving for righteousness and divine favor.

Finally, the prophetic call for justice and covenant faithfulness mirrors the broader dimension of “jihad” as a struggle for righteousness. Prophets like Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah rebuked Israel’s social injustices and idolatry, striving to realign the nation with God’s will. For example, Amos’ plea for justice to “roll on like a river” (Amos 5:24) reflects a moral and social struggle for divine purposes. These parallels between the Old Testament and Islamic jihad highlight shared themes of striving for divine justice and faithfulness, albeit within different theological and historical frameworks.

The Islamic Jihad and a Form of “Jihad” (Holy Wars) in the Old Testament

Christianity and Islam both trace their spiritual heritage back to Abraham, who is recognized in both traditions as a model of faith. According to Genesis 12:1–3, 15:6, and 17:5–6, God called Abraham to be the father of many nations and a covenantal witness of faith. While the concept of holy war in Christianity and Jihad in Islam share some surface similarities such as the idea of fighting under divine command they differ significantly in purpose, scope, and theological grounding.¹³

In the Bible, particularly in the Book of Judges, we observe episodes of divinely sanctioned warfare that resemble the Islamic idea of *lesser Jihad*, an armed struggle under God's authority. For example:

- **Judges 4–5 (Deborah):** Deborah, a prophetess and judge, leads Israel alongside Barak in victory over Canaanite oppressors, highlighting obedience to God's command.
- **Judges 6–7 (Gideon):** God calls Gideon to defeat the Midianites with a small, divinely chosen force, emphasizing reliance on God's power rather than human strength.
- **Judges 13–16 (Samson):** Samson is raised up by God to confront the Philistines, and his feats demonstrate divine empowerment for Israel's deliverance.

The Biblical Holy Wars were aimed at eradicating evil and sin, executing divine judgment on unrepentant people, and offering redemption to repenting sinners. These wars were seen as part of God's plan to purify and protect His chosen people, the Israelites, and uphold His covenant with them. Significant emphasis has been

¹³ Antony Black, *Church, State and Community: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2024).

placed on associating Yahweh with preserving the holiness of Israel as a distinct people, chosen by God to reflect His character and carry out His plan for the salvation of the world.¹⁴ This implies that the goal of Holy wars was not to spread the faith, but rather to protect the people of God from being corrupted. Israel was called to remain pure, and uplift God's standard.

Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God. (Deu 20:15-18 NKJ)

In contrast, the aim of Jihad in Islam is multifaceted. It seeks to promote and spread the Islamic faith, invite non-believers to Islam, protect the Islamic *Ummah* (community), and establish justice. Cook argues that Conquest and Jihad created the pre-condition for conversion, and conversion and proclamation was one of the goal of Jihad.¹⁵ Thus, Jihad serves as a means to spread, strengthen, and firmly establish the Islamic faith across the world. While the Biblical Holy Wars were specific to a particular time and people, Jihad remains a broader, ongoing concept in Islam, encompassing not only spiritual struggle but also physical.

The Regulations of Holy Wars and Its Consequences

In the Bible, Holy Wars were divinely commanded and meant to fulfill God's covenant with the Israelites. They were intended to establish Israel as a holy nation,

¹⁴ Sohail H. Hashmi, *Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁵ David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015).

free from idolatry and sin, and to reflect God's justice and sovereignty. However, when these wars were not carried out properly, there were serious consequences.

Rejection by God. To remind the Israelites that Holy Wars were not their own battles but divinely ordained missions, God emphasized the importance of following His instructions meticulously. These wars were meant to fulfill His purposes, not human ambitions. To ensure obedience, God clearly outlined the consequences of disobedience. Reitsma argues that in Joshua 6, God commands Joshua to apply the ban on Jericho, to kill all living beings and destroy the rest.¹⁶ If the Israelites failed to carry out His commands properly, they would face His judgment, including military defeats, loss of divine favor, and prolonged struggles with their enemies. Trimm observes that the punishment of herem is also applied to an Israelite, Achan who takes plunder from Jericho that has been declared herem and is killed.¹⁷ This served as a warning that success depended entirely on their faithfulness to God's instructions and acknowledgment of His sovereignty.

In 1 Samuel 15, Saul was explicitly commanded to completely destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions as an act of obedience to God. However, he disobeyed by sparing King Agag and keeping the best of the livestock under the pretext of offering sacrifices to God with them. This act of selective obedience led to God rejecting Saul as king, underscoring the principle that partial obedience is still disobedience in God's eyes. Bema underlines that this rejection was God's judgement

¹⁶ Bernhard Reitsma, "Who Is Our God? The Theological Challenges of the State of Israel for Christian Arabs – Faith and Ethnicity in the Middle East" in *Ethnicity in the Middle East*, eds. Van der Borgh, Dirk van Keulen, and Martien Brinkman (New York: Brill, 2002), 180-202, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004389137_010.

¹⁷ Charlie Trimm, *The Destruction of the Canaanites: God, Genocide, and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2022).

on Saul for his disobedience.¹⁸ This means that God is the one in charge of the war, and no one could decide to execute it according to his own pleasure. Improper execution of Holy Wars demonstrated a lack of faith and obedience to God's will.

Defeat and Suffering. When Israel failed to fully obey God's commands in holy wars, they often faced military defeats (e.g., the defeat at Ai in Joshua 7). These defeats served as a reminder of the importance of total reliance on God's instructions and it could also lead to loss of divine favor. Disobedience in holy wars often resulted in God withdrawing His protection and blessings. For instance, King Saul's failure in carrying out God's command led to his rejection as king and the eventual downfall of his dynasty.

Form of "Jihad" in the New Testament

The concept of Jihad in the New Testament can be explored through themes of spiritual struggle, the pursuit of righteousness, and the mission to spread the gospel. While the term "Jihad" is not used in the New Testament, its broader meanings in Islam, particularly as an inner struggle and striving for good, find parallels in Christian teachings. Just like the greater Jihad for Muslims which concern more of personal struggle, fighting against sin rather than outward fight, the 'greater war' is the war against one's own desires.¹⁹ The teachings of Jesus and his Apostle throughout the New Testament is to avoid any kind of violence, to promote peace and endure injustice.

¹⁸ Dag Heward-Mills, *Bema: Judgment and Justice* (Parchment House, 2022), 5.

¹⁹ Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Masnavi, Book One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 259.

The Instructions of Jesus to his Disciples

When Jesus was to send his disciples for mission he declared to them "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" Mat 10:16. The instructions of Jesus to his disciples was clear enough, without ambiguity. Jesus called upon his disciples to be harmless, like sheep amid wolves, and like doves. All the imagery here implies non-violence, but they would rather be exposed to danger such as wolves. They will be persecuted but the Spirit of the Father will teach them how to defend themselves and their message.²⁰ Thus the disciples of Jesus are not militant, but they are spiritual, and as a result of their spirituality, they will perform miracles through the work of the Holy Spirit in their ministry: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" Mat 10:8. The apostles are agents of peace or peacemakers.

Jesus rebuked his disciples for using a sword. When Jesus was arrested, Peter removed his sword and struck one of the soldiers sent to arrest Jesus. "But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" Mat 26:52. And Jesus said further in verse 53 that if he wanted he would have asked his father to send twelve legions of angels but there is no need. The understanding of this passage is clear, Jesus forbade his disciples to use violence to resolve their problem but to submit to the will of the Father.

Moreover Jesus taught his disciples that when they will hear about wars and rumors of wars, they should know that the end time is at hand: Mark 13:7, Math 24:6, Luke 21:9. The wars in the New Testament are signs of end time and the followers of

²⁰ Marius Nel, "'Not Peace but a Sword': Jesus and the Sword in Matthew," *Neotestamentica* 49, no. 2 (2015): 235–59.

Jesus will be victims of violence brought by these wars but it is never mentioned where they will be involved in taking arms to fight for themselves; they would rather be oppressed than they oppressing.

The Teachings of Apostles

The teachings of the disciples follow the pattern of the master Jesus Christ. Apart from the four gospels, the remaining writings of the New Testament are about the life of the apostles and their teachings. The general position of the Apostles in regard of “Jihad” is the “greater Jihad,” the personal struggle rather than the “lesser Jihad.” Apostle Paul admonished the believers to gird on their spiritual armors, Ephesians 6: 10-18, after acknowledging that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age (Eph 6:12 NKJ).

This means that the battle is spiritual, not physical. The armors described here by Paul are more spiritualistic than physical. Girding waist with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet with the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, prayer, and supplication is a testament that all the armors listed are not for a physical battle.

The Spirit of Prophecy and “Jihad”

The "spirit of prophecy" refers to the divinely given ability to receive revelations from God, often called the testimony of Jesus Christ. This gift enables prophets to guide, correct, and uplift fellow believers, as explained in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. Notably, the phrase "spirit of prophecy" appears only once in the New Testament, in Revelation 19:10, indicating that the prophetic gift was active during

the New Testament era and remains relevant for the Church in the latter days.²¹ This term implies that the Spirit of God has empowered his prophets and apostles to interpret significant events around them and to reveal future occurrences.

Though some believe that in Seventh day Adventist Church the Spirit of prophecy is all about Ellen White writing, a scholar like Gerhard Pfandl's comments on Ellen White are relevant: "Her writings are not another Bible, nor do they carry the kind of authority found in the Bible. In the end, the Bible and the Bible alone is our ultimate authority."²² Arguing about the Spirit of prophecy Ellen White declares; "the manifestation of the spirit of prophecy was designed for all dispensations. The sacred record nowhere restricts it to any particular period of time, from the fall to the final restitution."²³

In a broader sense, the concept of prophecy also aligns with Islamic teachings on Jihad, which encompasses both the "greater Jihad" (personal spiritual struggle) and the "lesser Jihad" (defensive struggle for justice). The spirit of prophecy, as the testimony of Jesus, underscores the ongoing great controversy: the cosmic struggle between good and evil, represented by the conflict between Jesus Christ and Satan. As Revelation 19:10 states: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'see that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy'" Thus, the spirit of prophecy not only signifies divine revelation but also frames the cosmic battle between good and evil.

²¹ Davidson Razafiarivony, "The 'Spirit of Prophecy' (Rev 19:10) in the Light of Second Temple Jewish Usage," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 31, no. 1-2 (2020): 217-229.

²² J David Newman et al., "Is Ellen White REALLY a Lesser Light?." .

²³ Ellen G White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1 (Washington DC: Review and Herald, 1870)," 63.

The War in Heaven

In Christian theology, the War in Heaven is prominently mentioned in the Book of Revelation 12:7-9, Isaiah 14: 1-23. It describes a battle where Michael the Archangel and his angels fight against the dragon, representing Satan, and his fallen angels. The conflict results in Satan and his followers being cast out of heaven to Earth. This event symbolizes the ultimate triumph of God's forces over evil. This war that took place in heaven is the root of all wars that is happening today, either physical or spiritual. Finley calls that war “the War behind all Wars”²⁴ This suggests that the origin of all wars can be traced back to the conflict in heaven, where Michael confronted the Dragon, symbolizing Satan himself. John declares he “laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan” (Rev 20:2 NKJ).

The War in the Garden of Eden

The celestial conflict that erupted in heaven between Archangel Michael and the Dragon did not conclude there. Cast down to earth, the Dragon turned his attention to humanity, seducing Adam and Eve into his rebellion. This struggle between humankind and the Dragon transcends physical warfare, manifesting instead as a profound spiritual battle.

The "War in the Garden of Eden," as described in Genesis 3, marks the beginning of humanity's spiritual struggle with evil. Adam and Eve's fall through disobedience represents the battle for human will and integrity, as they were tempted by the serpent (Satan) to rebel against God. This internal conflict aligns with the concept of greater Jihad (al-Jihad al-Akbar) in Islam, where believers engage in a

²⁴ Ibid.

personal, spiritual struggle to resist sin and temptation, striving to live in accordance with God's will.

Both the Edenic fall and the concept of Jihad highlight an ongoing battle against evil, where victory requires moral and spiritual perseverance. In Genesis 3:15, the promise of redemption through the "seed of the woman" symbolizes the eventual triumph of good over evil, much like Jihad's goal of overcoming internal and external forces of injustice. Thus, both traditions recognize the need for resistance to sin and evil, making the struggle in Eden a precursor to the broader, spiritual Jihad that seeks ultimate victory through divine guidance. The war is all about control for dominion, and which kingdom humans choose to belong to.²⁵

The Dragon and the Woman Rev 12:17

Revelation 12:17 describes the dragon waging war against the woman and her offspring, symbolizing Satan's attack on God's faithful people. This cosmic struggle mirrors the concept of greater jihad (al-jihad al-akbar) in Islam, which emphasizes resisting sin and striving for moral and spiritual faithfulness. Both highlight the believer's journey of overcoming internal and external challenges through reliance on God. The woman represents the faithful church, protected by God yet facing relentless opposition, akin to the trials faced by believers engaged in Jihad. The spiritual war in Revelation aligns with the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Jihad, calling believers to stand firm against evil and remain true to divine principles.

The dragon's war also reflects the broader conflict between justice and injustice, resonating with lesser Jihad (al-Jihad al-Asghar), which involves striving for justice under ethical boundaries. Both traditions emphasize endurance, righteousness,

²⁵ Riaan Engelbrecht, *The Spiritual War* (Riaan Engelbrecht, 2023).

and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. These shared themes of spiritual struggle and faithfulness can foster interfaith dialogue. Linking Revelation's cosmic battle with Jihad's principles underscores common values like perseverance, moral integrity, and the hope of victory through God's power.

The Second Coming of Jesus and War

The Bible connects the second coming of Jesus with both the escalation of wars and their ultimate cessation. Jesus warned that in the last days, there would be “wars and rumors of wars” as signs of His imminent return (Matthew 24:6-7). These conflicts reflect the turmoil of a world groaning under sin. In Revelation 16:14-16, the “Battle of Armageddon” is described as the final conflict where earthly powers, influenced by demonic forces, rise against God. This climactic moment symbolizes humanity's rebellion against God and the ultimate confrontation between good and evil, which will be resolved at Christ's return. The reappearance of Jesus Christ is considered a significant event that will mark the culmination of history and the ultimate triumph of God's purposes.²⁶

At His second coming, Jesus is portrayed as a conquering King who will bring an end to all wars and establish eternal peace. Revelation 19:11-16 depicts Him as a victorious warrior who judges righteously and defeats the nations opposing Him. Prophecies such as Micah 4:3 and Isaiah 2:4 envision a future where weapons of war will be transformed into tools of peace, and nations will no longer engage in conflict. This highlights the promise of a renewed world where Christ reigns, delivering humanity from violence and inaugurating His eternal kingdom of peace and justice.

²⁶ Caleb Sterns, *The Battle For Reappearance* (Caleb Sterns, 2023), 195.

Protestant Writings

Protestant writings emphasize Scripture, faith, and mission, often engaging with global issues from a biblical perspective. This work explores how Protestant thought approaches the concept of Jihad, seeking to understand it in dialogue with Christian theology and promote peaceful, contextual engagement in mission.

General View of Protestants on “Jihad”

The Protestant understanding of Jihad varies, often influenced by historical, theological, and media narratives. To a protestant church like the Evangelical Free Church of America, Jihad is primarily associated with holy war, shaped by historical encounters like the Crusades or modern conflicts involving Islamic extremists. This perspective emphasizes the physical, militant dimension of Jihad, which is often viewed as a threat to religious freedom or global peace.²⁷

More nuanced Protestant perspectives, however, recognize that Jihad encompasses more than warfare. Other Protestants represented by the Assemblies of God and Southern Baptist Convention understand it as a spiritual struggle within Islam, akin to the Christian concept of spiritual warfare. The theory for declaration of just, holy war and Jihad was frequently confused.²⁸ This interpretation sees Jihad as a commitment to resisting sin, striving for personal righteousness, and pursuing justice, values that align with the Protestant emphasis on personal sanctification and ethical living. Such a view promotes respect and common ground, especially among Protestants engaged in interfaith dialogue.

²⁷ John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

²⁸ Sohail H. Hashmi, *Just Wars, Holy Wars, and Jihads: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 17.

Historically, Protestants' encounters with Islam have shaped their perceptions of Jihad. During the Reformation and subsequent missionary movements, Protestants often viewed Islam through a polemical lens, emphasizing its differences from Christianity.²⁹ However, in recent years, scholars and theologians within Protestant traditions have sought a more balanced understanding, acknowledging the complexity of Jihad in Islamic theology and practice.³⁰ This shift reflects a broader effort to foster mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Protestants in a pluralistic world.

Adventist Views on the Concept of Jihad

The Seventh-day Adventists' (SDA) understanding of Jihad is rooted in the denomination's commitment to interfaith dialogue, religious liberty, and its mission of sharing the gospel. McEdward argues that the Seventh-day Adventist Church encourages a cordial witness to Muslims.³¹ Adventist scholars generally approach Jihad with a nuanced perspective, acknowledging its spiritual dimensions while critically engaging its sociopolitical implications. SDAs emphasize building bridges with Muslims by finding common ground, particularly in spiritual themes like submission to God, moral struggle, and the pursuit of justice. This understanding aligns with Adventist principles of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. Dialogue, declares Johnsson, develops mutual trust that may open the door to the next level.³²

²⁹ Jacques Ellul, *Islam and Judeo-Christianity: A Critique of Their Commonality* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015).

³⁰ Mehmet Karabela, *Islamic Thought Through Protestant Eyes* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2021), 12.

³¹ Rick McEdward, "A Brief Overview Of Adventist Witness Among Muslims," n.d.

³² William G Johnsson, "Dialogue With Muslims: A Personal Journey," n.d.

Adventist scholars like William G. Johnsson highlight the concept of Jihad al-Nafs (inner spiritual struggle) as a key element of Jihad. In his book, “Jesus and Islam,” Johnsson discusses how Jihad’s spiritual focus on resisting evil and striving for righteousness resonates with the Christian idea of sanctification and spiritual growth. He encourages Adventists to engage with Muslims by emphasizing shared values, such as personal devotion to God and ethical living, which can foster mutual respect and understanding in interfaith interactions.³³

In contrast, Adventists also acknowledge the challenges posed by the politicized and militant interpretations of Jihad seen in some contexts. A scholar like Gerhard Pfandl, in their discussions on Adventist eschatology and mission, have noted how misunderstandings of Jihad can contribute to tensions between Muslims and Christians. Pfandl emphasizes that Adventists should prioritize Christ-centered dialogue and eschatological hope, avoiding polemics while focusing on the ultimate resolution of human struggles through the second coming of Christ.³⁴ This approach underscores the Adventist commitment to being peacemakers in a diverse and often divided world.

Missiological Implications of Jihad

Jihad, often understood as a struggle or striving in the way of God, carries significant implications for Christian mission (missiology), especially in Muslim-majority contexts. Understanding Jihad beyond its militant connotations and recognizing its spiritual and social dimensions helps missionaries engage respectfully and effectively with Muslim communities. Missiologically, it calls for:

³³ William G. Johnsson, *Jesus of Nazareth: His Life, His Message, His Passion* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018).

³⁴ McEdward, “A Brief Overview Of Adventist Witness Among Muslims.”

- **Contextualization:** Mission strategies must consider how local Muslim populations interpret Jihad, which can vary widely, to avoid misunderstanding and foster genuine dialogue. Missionaries may need to teach the Church about the parallels that relate to the “Greater Jihad” from the Bible in order to promote peaceful co-existence between the Christians and the Muslims, and encourage missions as well.
- **Peace-building:** Since some interpretations of Jihad involve conflict, Christian mission must emphasize reconciliation, peace, and nonviolence as core gospel values.
- **Addressing worldviews:** Missionaries need to understand the religious motivations and fears behind Jihad in order to communicate the gospel in ways that resonate meaningfully.
- **Promoting interfaith respect:** Recognizing the complexity of Jihad encourages humility and respect in mission work, reducing hostility and building bridges.

In sum, Jihad challenges missionaries to move beyond simplistic stereotypes, urging a theologically informed, culturally sensitive, and relational approach to mission.

Summary of Chapter

This Chapter expands on the Biblical foundation by tracing the concept of Jihad through historical and theological contexts, beginning with the Old Testament. It examines the various forms of warfare waged by the Jewish nation, often under divine guidance or as a form of divine punishment against rebellious people groups. The study then explores the manifestation of Jihad in the New Testament era, focusing on the teachings of Jesus to His disciples and the subsequent teachings

passed down by the disciples themselves. Additionally, the study considers the Spirit of Prophecy's perspective on Jihad, tracing its origins back to the nature of war in biblical history. The analysis also includes an exploration of Protestant and Seventh-day Adventist views on Jihad, particularly in relation to Islamic understandings of the term. This comparative approach provides a broader view of how Jihad is understood across different religious traditions and historical periods.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Background of Jihad and Its Impact on Mission

The Kole people in Cameroon originated from Nigeria where they have their largest population in Nigeria's northeast (Borno and surrounding states) and they became mostly Sunni Muslims and follow Maliki school.¹ The real name of Kole is Kanuri. Abubakar, a Kole scholar, argues that the Kanuri people are known by various names; BareBari, Baggara, and the Fulani call them "Kolejo/Kole."²

Moreover, this name "Kole" adopted in Cameroon is a changed identity. It is also known both in Cameroon and in Nigeria that Boko haram originated from Kanuri people (Kole). Abubakar Shekau, a kanuri was the deputy of Boko Haram leader.³ Also U.S. Chargé d'Affaires; Vernelle Trim Fitz Patrick stated, "The stigmatization of Kanuri people as Boko Haram supporters poses a major obstacle for their effective integration into Cameroonian society."⁴ This implies that the Kanuri people in

¹ Zacharias P. Pieri and Jacob Zenn, "The Boko Haram Paradox: Ethnicity, Religion and Historical Memory in Pursuit of a Caliphate," in *Understanding Boko Haram* (London: Routledge, 2017).

² Babagana Abubakar, *kanuri Complete* (Borno State, Nigeria: Babagana Abubakar, 2017), 45.

³ Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "A Sectarian Jihad in Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram," in *Jihadist Insurgent Movements* (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁴ U. S. Embassy in Cameroon, "U.S. Participates at the 'Kanuri but Not Boko Haram' Event Organized by the Voices for Peace Project," U.S. Embassy in Cameroon, April 22, 2021, <https://cm.usembassy.gov/u-s-participates-at-the-kanuri-but-not-boko-haram-event-organized-by-the-voices-for-peace-project/>.

Cameroon are stigmatized because of Boko haram's origin. In this research, the only name that was employed is "Kole" rather than "Kanuri" to avoid any kind of stigmatization.

Ideology of Jihad: An Overview

Going back to the foundational meaning of Jihad, Al-Qurtubi (d. 1273 CE), a prominent Andalusian Qur'anic scholar and jurist of the Maliki school, addressed the concept of Jihad extensively in his renowned exegesis, *Tafsir al-Qurtubi*. He viewed Jihad as both a spiritual struggle and a military obligation.⁵ Spiritually, Jihad involves striving against one's own sinful inclinations in obedience to God. Militarily, it becomes a legitimate means of defending the Muslim community or, when necessary, promoting the faith, especially after peaceful efforts such as *da'wah* (invitation to Islam) have failed. For Al-Qurtubi, Jihad was primarily a collective obligation (*fard kifayah*), but it could become an individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) under specific conditions such as when a Muslim land is under attack.⁶

Al-Qurtubi emphasized that Jihad must be conducted under strict ethical and legal guidelines, rooted in the Qur'an and Sunnah. He upheld the protection of non-combatants, respect for treaties, and the principle of justice in warfare. Although he acknowledged Jihad as a means to expand Islamic influence, he did not advocate for unrestricted violence; rather, he stressed the importance of legitimate authority and just cause.⁷ His interpretation reflects the classical Sunni tradition, where Jihad is not

⁵ Ismail Lala, "An Analysis of the Sources of Interpretation in the Commentaries of Al-Tabari, al-Zamakhshari, Al-Razi, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Katthir," *QURANICA - International Journal of Quranic Research* 2, no. 1 (2012): 17–48.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid.

only about physical combat but also about moral discipline and the responsible use of force within a divine framework.

In the same vein, Maududi's Ideology of Jihad support the view of Al-Qurtubi. Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi who lived between 1903 and 1979, was a prominent Islamic scholar and founder of Jamaat-e-Islami in South Asia. He developed a comprehensive and influential ideology of Jihad that deeply impacted modern Islamic thought. For Maududi, Jihad was not merely a personal spiritual struggle but a revolutionary struggle to establish an Islamic state governed by Shar'ia (Islamic law). He believed that Islam is a complete system encompassing religion, politics, economics, and law, and Jihad was the means through which this system could be realized in society.⁸

Maududi viewed Jihad as a collective obligation to resist systems of injustice and disbelief (*kufur*) and to replace them with a just Islamic order.⁹ While he acknowledged peaceful methods such as preaching (*da'wah*), he argued that armed Jihad was a legitimate and sometimes necessary tool to combat oppression and bring about Islamic governance. In his writings particularly in *Towards Understanding Islam* and *The Four Basic Concepts of Islam*, he presented Jihad as a proactive effort to implement divine sovereignty (*Hakimiyyah*). His interpretation has influenced many Islamist movements, although critics argue that his political framing of Jihad departs from traditional spiritual understandings.¹⁰

⁸ Syed Abul 'Ala Maudoodi, *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honour of Mawlānā Sayyid Abul A 'lā Mawdūdī* (Islamic Foundation, 1979).

⁹ Fohle Lygunda li-M, *Transforming Missiology: An Alternative Approach to Missiological Education* (Langham Publishing, 2018).

¹⁰ Maudoodi, *Islamic Perspectives*.

How Islam Came to the Kole People in Cameroon

The spread of Islam among the Kole people of northern Cameroon was a gradual process influenced by trade, migration, and the political-religious expansion of the Fulani (Peul) during the 18th and 19th centuries. Islam did not arrive through military conquest but through indirect cultural contact, particularly with Muslim merchants and nomadic herders who interacted with local populations over time. One major factor in the Islamization of the region was the Fulani Jihad led by Usman dan Fodio in the early 1800s.¹¹

This movement, which aimed to purify and expand Islam across West Africa, reached parts of northern Cameroon through the establishment of the Adamawa Emirate. As Fulani rulers took control of key areas, they encouraged the spread of Islam through Islamic education, judicial systems based on Sharia, and the building of mosques. The Kole people, living near these centers of influence, came into contact with Islamic teachings via itinerant teachers (mallams), marabouts (Islamic mystics), and Fulani settlers.¹²

In addition, trade routes connecting the Lake Chad Basin with other parts of West Africa passed near or through Kole territory. Muslim traders introduced Islamic customs, greetings, dress codes, and rituals. Over time, conversion often took place through social integration including intermarriage, political alliances, and the desire to participate in the Islamic socio-political order, which provided access to education, status, and regional networks. Though many Kole people eventually accepted Islam, in some cases they blended Islamic practices with their indigenous beliefs. Only later,

¹¹ Mark DeLancey, *Conquest and Construction: Palace Architecture in Northern Cameroon* (New York: Brill, 2016).

¹² Ibid

with increased religious instruction and pressure from reformist Muslim movements, did more orthodox practices become established.¹³

The Impact of Boko Haram in Cameroon

Boko Haram's origin in Cameroon is linked to its spillover from Nigeria, where the group was founded in the early 2000s. Boko Haram, officially known as *Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād*, began in northeastern Nigeria under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf. The group's ideology strongly opposed Western education and secular governance, advocating instead for the imposition of strict Shar'ia law. Since 2013, Cameroon's border areas Banki, Limani, Amchide, and Fotokol-Gambaru have seen fierce clashes between Boko Haram and the militaries of Cameroon, Nigeria, and Chad.¹⁴

Boko Haram's insurgency in northern Cameroon has deeply affected Christian communities, including the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. Since expanding into Cameroon around 2013, the group has attacked, looted, and destroyed several SDA Churches in the Far North Region, especially in towns like Amchide, Limani, and Kolofata. These attacks, aimed at opposing Western-style religion and education, forced many Adventists to flee, scattering congregations and disrupting church activities.¹⁵ Similarly, Firdausi states that the right to propagate the religion is enjoyed

¹³ John L. Esposito, *The Oxford History of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 475.

¹⁴ Scott MacEachern, *Searching for Boko Haram: A History of Violence in Central Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 171.

¹⁵ "Policing Christianity in Cameroon, Nigeria, and Angola: Spiritual Incorporation as Therapy and Threat in Africa | Journal of Africana Religions | Scholarly Publishing Collective," accessed May 17, 2025, <https://scholarlypublishingcollective.org/psup/africana-religions/article-abstract/11/1/27/351192/Policing-Christianity-in-Cameroon-Nigeria-and>.

exclusively by Muslims.¹⁶ This suggests that, in the pursuit of spreading Islam, any means may be considered acceptable.

In response, the SDA Church in Cameroon, especially through the North Cameroon Conference, has focused on supporting displaced members, relocating congregations, and continuing ministry in safer areas. Humanitarian efforts, including food aid and trauma support, have also been extended to affected communities. Despite the violence, the Church remains resilient, working to rebuild both its physical structures and the spiritual lives of its members. The ongoing security efforts by the Cameroonian military and regional allies have helped reduce attacks, though challenges to full recovery remain.

Defining the Concept of Jihad

The word Jihad takes its root from the Arabic word Jahada meaning to exert strength and effort to accomplish a task.¹⁷ Ramlan et Al argue that etymologically, the word jihad is derived from the Arabic, the second form of isimmasdar of jaahada, yujaahidu, mujaahadatan and hihaadan which means "Work wholeheartedly".¹⁸ This implies that Jihad has to do with work, effort, exercise to achieve a goal set before one's.¹⁹ Furthermore Ramlan et Al declare that the meaning of the concept of jihad in Islamic law is made based on the Qur'an and the hadith.²⁰ This means that the word

¹⁶ mohd Zakirullah Firdausi, *Political Ideology of Abul Ala Maududi* (Lulu.com, 2014), 191.

¹⁷ K. Hussain, "The Tradition of 'Jihad' in the Evolution of Anti-Colonial Struggles in Malabar," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 60 (1999): 709-714., <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44144141>.

¹⁸ Ramlan Ramlan, Tengku Erwinsyahbana, and Nurul Hakim, "The Concept of Jihad In Islam," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 21, no. 09 (September 2016): 35-42, <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2109073542>.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid., 35-42.

Jihad cannot be understood only from the Arabic perspective, unless it is defined in the context of Qur'an 'and Ahadith.

Hence, the word Jihad carries two meanings: the greater Jihad and the lesser Jihad.²¹ Nasr states that greater Jihad is the inner battle against forces that prevent a person from living according to their God-given, primordial nature.²² While the lesser Jihad is the physical actions taken in defense of the realm.²³ The lesser Jihad takes place when there is need to protect, defend or expand Islamic deen (religion).²⁴

The purpose of this literature review was to explore the comprehensive concept of Jihad as presented in Islamic teachings, with a focus on the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Ahadith) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This review will draw on scholarly journals, articles, and books that examined the understanding of Jihad within the Muslim community

The Islamic Worldview of Jihad

A worldview is a comprehensive, integrated set of attitudes, values, and experiences that shapes how we understand and interpret the world.²⁵ Vidal defines worldview as a set of beliefs and assumptions describing the language and symbols to understand the world, express moral values, and provide answers.²⁶ It provides a

²¹ Aqab M. Malik, "Jihad: Conflict-Resolution or Its Antithesis?," *Strategic Studies* 32, no. 2/3 (2012): 206.

²² Nasr, "The Spiritual Significance of Jihad," n.d.

²³ Knapp, "The Concept and Practice of Jihad in Islam."

²⁴ Etim E. Okon, "Jihad: Warfare and Territorial Expansion in Islam," *Asian Social Science* 9, no. 5 (April 27, 2013): p171, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v9n5p171>.

²⁵ Jacomijn C. van der Kooij, Doret J. de Ruyter, and Siebren Miedema, "'Worldview': The Meaning of the Concept and the Impact on Religious Education," *Religious Education* 108, no. 2 (March 2013): 210–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2013.767685>.

²⁶ Ibid.

coherent framework, a “global image” through which we seek to make sense of as many aspects of our experience as possible. In essence, a worldview acts as a lens through which we perceive reality. Here, we focused on the Islamic worldview regarding Jihad, which was grounded in the teachings of the Qur’an, the Ahadith, the Maliki school of thought, and the early Islamic theology.

The Qur’an, Ahadith, and the Concept of Jihad

The Qur’an is considered the revealed word of Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It began to be revealed on the Night of Power (*Laylatul Qadr*), traditionally observed on the 27th night of Ramadan.²⁷ As stated in Surah Al-Qadr (97:1), “Indeed, We sent it [the Qur’an] down on the Night of Decree.” The revelation continued progressively over 22 years, from 610 to 632.²⁸ Before being revealed to Muhammad, the Qur’an was with Allah in the seventh heaven and was first lowered to a place called Bayt al-Izza (the House of Honor) in the lower heavens.²⁹

Islam is built upon five pillars: *Iman* (unshakable faith in God), *Salat* (prayer, five times daily), *Zakat* (giving alms to those in need), *Sawm* (fasting during the month of Ramadan) and *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca).³⁰ Although Jihad is not listed among these pillars, it is recognized as an important and valued practice within Islam. Islam is a comprehensive way of life, and Muslims are encouraged to follow the

²⁷ Kulsoom Farhat, “The Night of Power - Al-Qadr,” SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, November 23, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3289399>.

²⁸ “Revelation and Compilation of the Holy Quran,” accessed 12 June 2025, <https://quranicresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Revelation-compilation-and-preservation-of-Quran.pdf>.

²⁹ Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, “The Revelations of the Quran,” accessed 12 June 2025, https://browse.islamenc.com/lite/index.php/pdf?lang=en&url=https%3A%2F%2Fih-download.islamenc.com%2Fdata%2Fen%2Fih_articles%2Fsingle%2Fen_Revelations_Quran.pdf.

³⁰ “The Five Pillars of Islam,” accessed 12 June 2025, <https://www.metmuseum.org/learn/educators/curriculum-resources/art-of-the-islamic-world/unit-one/the-five-pillars-of-islam>.

Sunnah. The practices and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Alavi states that, during the 9 years of the holy Prophet's life after Hijrah, depending on the definition of battle, between 80 to 100 counts of Battle between Muslims and non-Muslims are recorded in history.³¹ This implies the fact that Prophet Muhammad spent almost his whole life fighting against the non-Muslims and that was a Sunnah regarding Jihad.

The Greater or Spiritual Jihad

Throughout the Qur'an, the concept of Jihad is displayed. The greater Jihad is seen in the revelation of Allah to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in various ways. Many Surahs highlight the concept of greater Jihad, which is the inward Jihad or spiritual Jihad. Nasr argued that, from the spiritual point of view all the 'pillars' of Islam can be seen as being related to jihad.³² He said further that, all of those external forms of Jihad would remain incomplete and in fact contribute to an excessive externalization of human being, if they were not complemented by the greater or inner jihad.³³ The point here is that a lesser Jihad without the greater Jihad is useless, the emphasis is upon the greater or inner Jihad. Many Qur'anic verses point out the inner Jihad. These are some Ayahs expanding on greater Jihad: Surah 2:218, 8:72, 9:20, 49:15, 22: 78, and 2:177.

Surah 49:15 says that, "the believers are only the ones who have believed in Allāh and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allāh. It is those who are the truthful," while Surah 8:72 adds

³¹ "Think About Eternity - The Bloody Legacy of Islam," accessed October 2, 2024, <http://thinkabouteternity.com/ISLAM/BloodyLegacyWeb.htm>.

³² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Spiritual Significance of Jihad," n.d.

³³ Ibid

that, “the ones who have believed, emigrated and striven in the cause of Allāh with their wealth and their lives are greater in rank in the sight of Allāh. And it is those who are the attainers (of success).” This Surah asserts that he who strives because of Allah is in greater rank in the sight of Allah.

The following Suras attest further to the significance of Jihad.

Surah 22: 78 and strive for Allāh with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. He [i.e., Allāh] named you "Muslims" before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So establish prayer and give zakāh and hold fast to Allāh. He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper.

Surah 2:177. Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakāh; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.

All these above ayahs deal with the greater Jihad, the inner Jihad. The inner Jihad is striving, fighting oneself. However the word Jihad is not just limited to the greater Jihad but also includes the lesser Jihad, the outward or physical fight.

The Lesser or Armed Jihad

Unlike the greater Jihad that focuses on the spirituality, the lesser Jihad does not have any relationship with the spiritual life but with the physical battle. Its aims are to spread Islam all over the world, to protect Islam against its enemies, and to defend the faith from threat. Mirbagheri argues that the lesser jihad is defined by the Prophet himself, it reports on the material and physical activities that are directed

towards a Godly cause.³⁴ The principle for lesser Jihad was laid down by the prophet himself; it is a closed matter (Surah 33:36). Purnomo et Al argue that “those that succeed in their greater jihad will succeed in their lesser jihad, and those that fail in their greater jihad will fail in their lesser jihad.”³⁵ Hence, there is a strong relationship between greater and lesser Jihad. In the Qur’an, there are several ayahs that highlight the concept of Lesser Jihad, its purpose and goal.

Thus, we have some medinan ayahs which say, “Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not (Qur’an 2.216). Qur’an 2.244 also says, “then fight in the cause of Allah, and know that Allah heareth and knoweth all things,” while Qur’an 4.74 also says, “let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the hereafter. To him who fighteth in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or gets victory Soon shall we give him a reward of great value”

Similarly, Qur’an 4.76 adds that, “those who believe fight in the cause of Allah, and those who reject Faith Fight in the cause of Evil: So fight ye against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan. Qur’an 8.65 says, “O Prophet! rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding; and Qur’an

³⁴ S. M. Farid Mirbagheri, “The Question of Jihad,” in *War and Peace in Islam: A Critique of Islamic/Ist Political Discourses*, ed. S. M. Farid Mirbagheri (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), 115–38, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137001313_5.

³⁵ Sutrimo Purnomo et al., “Integration of Fethullah Gulen’s Thought for The Development of Multicultural Islamic Education in Indonesia,” *International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education* 2, no. 2 (July 30, 2023): 113–33, <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v2i2.121>.

21.11: How many were the populations we utterly destroyed because of their iniquities, setting up in their place other peoples.

In conclusion, Qur'an 47:3-4 explains why the fight against non-Muslims is inevitable thus:

This is because those who reject Allah follow vanities, while those who believe follow the Truth from their Lord: Thus does Allah set forth for men their lessons by similitudes. Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them) [i.e., "take them as captives"]. There is no single doubt, the lesser Jihad is prescription both from Islamic prophet Muhammad and from Allah.

From the ayahs above, it is Allah himself and his Prophet who prescribes fighting. Moreover, those who choose not to fight are not considered with the same value like those who fight. Hence, Qur'an 4.95-96 says,

Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of Allah with their goods and their persons. Allah hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home). Unto all (in Faith) Hath Allah promised good: But those who strive and fight Hath He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward, Ranks specially bestowed by Him, and Forgiveness and Mercy. For Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

The Concept of Jihad in the Ahadith

The Ahadith is the plural form of hadith, meaning the Sunnah of the prophet, his sayings and deeds. The Ahadith are narrated from the Swahabahs of the prophets or the tabeen or the tabi tabeen. The Ahadith are either from the Sunnis perspective or the Shi'ah perspective.³⁶ The Sunnis have six books called Al- kutub al- sittah.³⁷

These Ahadith are collected by many hadith collectors:

³⁶ Muhammad Daniyal Khan, Salman Bangash, and Syed Waqar Ali Shah, "Historiography of Shia Ahadith Compilations: Unveiling the Pillars of Practice," *Al-Afāq Islamic Research Journal* 3, no. 2 (2023): 38–51.

³⁷ Christopher Melchert, "Apocalypticism In Sunni Hadith," n.d.

Sunni Ahadith collectors.³⁸

- 1- Sahih al-Bukhari by Imam al-Bukhari (810–870 CE)
- 2- Sahih Muslim by Imam Muslim (815–875 CE)
- 3- Sunan Abu Dawood by Abu Dawood (817–889 CE)
- 4- Sunan al-Tirmidhi by al-Tirmidhi (829–915 CE)
- 5- Sunan al-Nasa'i by al-Nasa'I (824–892 CE)
- 6- Sunan Ibn Majah by Ibn Majah (824–887 CE)

The Shi'ah Ahadith Collectors.³⁹

- 1- Kitab al-Kafi: Compiled by *Shaykh al-Kulayni* (864–941 CE)
- 2- Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih: Compiled by *Shaykh al-Saduq* (918–991 CE)
- 3- Tahdhib al-Ahkam: Compiled by *Shaykh al-Tusi* (995–1067 CE),
- 4- Al-Istibsar: compiled by *Shaykh al-Tusi*.

All of the Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah is preserved in these ten Hadith collections; six from Sunni and four from Shia sources. Each Islamic tradition applies different principles for validating Hadith. In early Shia scholarship, the authenticity of a Hadith does not solely rely on the personal righteousness (*'adālah*) of its narrator; instead, a Hadith is considered authentic if it is reliably transmitted.⁴⁰ In Sunni Islam, however, an authentic Hadith (known as *Sahih*) must have an unbroken chain of trustworthy narrators that can be traced back to the Prophet. This chain typically

³⁸ Mansur Ali, "Hadith," in *Routledge Handbook of Islamic Ritual and Practice* (Routledge, 2022).

³⁹ Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *The Qur'ān and Hadīth* (Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, n.d.).

⁴⁰ Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *The Qur'ān and Hadīth* (Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, n.d.).

includes the Prophet's Companions (*Sahabah*), their followers (*Tabi'in*), and the followers of those followers (*Tabi' al-Tabi'in*).⁴¹

The Sunnis Ahadith and Jihad

As we have seen in several places, the Jihad is one of the practices of Islam, not only prescribed in the Qur'an but also in the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad as related in the Ahadith. There are many Sunnis's Ahadith that expand on the practice of Jihad.

Sahih al-Bukhari Vol. 9, Book 93, Hadith 555 argued that: Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Messenger said, "Allah guarantees (the person who carries out Jihad in His Cause and nothing compelled him to go out but Jihad in His Cause and the belief in His Word) that He will either admit him into Paradise (Martyrdom) or return him with reward or booty he has earned to his residence from where he went out."

From this hadith, Jihad is strongly related to making it to paradise as an inheritance if someone dies in the process of fighting for the sake of Allah and there are many rewards here on earth as well. Moreover the practice of Jihad is showing one's love to Allah as Lord, to Islam as religion, and to Muhammad as messenger of Allah.

Another hadith, describing the value of Jihad. Abu Sa'id reported God's Messenger as saying, "If anyone is pleased with God as Lord, with Islam as religion and with Muhammad as Messenger, paradise will be assured to him." Abu Sa'id was delighted with this and asked him to repeat it. He did so and then said, "There is also something else for which God will raise a servant in paradise a hundred degrees between each two of which there is a distance like that between heaven and earth." He asked God's Messenger what it was and he replied, "Jihad in God's path; jihad in God's path; jihad in God's path."⁴²

⁴¹ Irwan Ahmad Akbar, "Capital Punishment for Blasphemy in the Hadith of the Prophet: A Perspective through the Common Link Theory" 10 (2024).

⁴² Sunnah.com, "Jihad," <https://sunnah.com/mishkat:3851>.

Hence, this hadith explains clearly the reason why a Muslim has to practice Jihad; it is proving his loyalty to Allah, Islamic religion and paying allegiance to the Messenger. Furthermore, waging war in Jihad has the same value like fasting and praying.⁴³

He reported God's Messenger as saying, "He who engages in jihad in God's path is like him who fasts and spends the night in prayer, who assiduously recites God's verses and does not slacken from fasting and prayer until he who is engaged in jihad in God's path returns."⁴⁴

Likewise in the hadith concerning equipping the warriors and keeping their houses. Khalid Al-Juhani (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "He who equips a warrior in the way of Allah (will get the reward of the one who has actually gone for Jihad); and he who looks after the family of a warrior in the way of Allah will get the reward of the one who has gone for Jihad".⁴⁵

It is important to remember that fasting in Islam it is thirty days and spending the whole night in prayer and reciting the Qur'an is not a small exercise. Yet going to Jihad is far better for anyone doing all those acts of righteousness yet fail to practice Jihad. Additionally those who refuse to take part in Jihad are considered as coward and weak.

It was narrated from Umm Salamah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Hajj is the Jihad of every weak person."⁴⁶

⁴³ Mishkat al-Masabih 3788, Book 19, Hadith 2

⁴⁴ Sunnah.com, "Jihad," <https://sunnah.com/mishkat:3851>.

⁴⁵ Riyad as-Salihin 177, Introduction, Hadith 177

⁴⁶ Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol. 4, Book 25, Hadith 2902.

Hence relying on Hajj only at the expense of Jihad is regarded as being weak.

The Shi'ah Ahadith and Jihad

The concept of Jihad, both in Sunni and Shia traditions, points to the same principle. Generally, the greater Jihad is understood as the inner struggle, while the lesser Jihad refers to physical battles in the cause of Allah. Some Shia ahadith about the concept of Jihad. *Nahj al-Balagha*. Book 2, Chapter 47, 24 hadith. Last will for Hasan and Husayn “(Fear) Allāh (and) keep Allāh in view in the matter of jihād with the help of your property, lives and tongues in the way of Allāh”.

Hence, fearing Allah is essential in the context of Jihad, as neglecting Jihad amounts to neglecting Allah as well. Muslims must always remember the concept of Jihad to cultivate their fear of Allah. Furthermore, the concept of Jihad is conceived to be like the gate of paradise.

Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), Sermon 27. Imam Ali (AS) addresses the people, saying, "O people! Surely, Jihad is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has opened for His closest friends. It is the dress of piety, and Allah's trusted shield. Whoever abandons it, Allah will disgrace him."⁴⁷

From this perspective, the refusal of taking part in Jihad is denying of oneself paradise, because through Jihad, paradise is more assured than any other possible way Imam Ali (AS) narrated: "The Prophet (SAW) said upon returning from a battle: 'We have returned from the lesser Jihad to the greater Jihad.' When asked what the greater Jihad was, he responded, 'It is the Jihad of the self.'⁴⁸ This hadith highlights the

⁴⁷ “Sermon 27: Indeed, Surely Jihad Is One of the Doors of Paradise ...,” December 27, 2017, <https://www.al-islam.org/nahjul-balagha-part-1-sermons/sermon-27-indeed-surely-jihad-one-doors-paradise>.

⁴⁸ *Al-Kafi* by Shaykh al-Kulayni, Volume 5, Hadith 6.

urgency of lesser Jihad comparing to the greater Jihad. The greater Jihad is practiced only during the time of peace, when war breaks; the attention should be on the lesser Jihad than the greater because this Jihad leads to paradise.

Missiological Implications of Greater and Lesser Jihad

Both the greater and lesser Jihad carry important missiological implications. Greater Jihad, understood as the inner struggle for self-discipline, purification, and spiritual growth, offers a meaningful point of connection for Christian mission. It invites approaches that engage the heart, emphasize personal transformation, and affirm shared spiritual values such as humility, moral integrity, and reliance on God.

Lesser Jihad, viewed as the external effort to protect and expand or grow the Muslim community and promote justice, challenges missionaries to adopt respectful, peace-building, and service-driven methods. By engaging in social development, addressing practical needs, and fostering genuine dialogue, mission can build trust and avoid confrontation, creating space for witness through compassionate presence and mutual understanding.

Early Islamic Theology

Islam, as a comprehensive way of life, basis all its teachings in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. Following the Prophet's passing in 8 June 632 AD, his followers encountered new challenges and complex issues for which there were no direct answers in the Qur'an.⁴⁹ Altine and Adam argue about the controversy among the various schools of theology over the question whether the Qur'an is

⁴⁹ *Al-Kafi* by Shaykh al-Kulayni, Volume 5, Hadith 6.

created or uncreated.⁵⁰ This prompted Muhammad's successors to seek alternative approaches to address the new arising issues in regard Qur'an and Islamic theology. These efforts ultimately contributed to the emergence of early Islamic theology.

Mu'taziltes Theology and Jihad

The Mu'tazilites are the followers of the Islamic theology known as Mu'tazila. It is an Islamic theological school that began in the eighth century Hijri, founded by Wasil bin Ata after he disagreed with his teacher, Al-Hassan Al-Basri, on specific issues.⁵¹ This led to significant disagreements within Islamic teachings, particularly on issues such as the nature of the Qur'an, the debate between predestination (Qadar) and free-will, and the guidelines surrounding Jihad.⁵² Early Islamic theology developed as a response to these doctrinal conflicts and the resulting turmoil within the faith. Regarding Jihad, the Mu'tazilites offered fresh insights, shaping new interpretations of its principles and applications.

The theory of Just War. For Mu'tazilites a war can be justified if initiated to defend against aggression, protect innocent lives, or restore justice. Childress argues that, the first criterion of a just war is right or legitimate authority, which is really a presupposition for the rest of the criteria.⁵³ Furthermore, he declares not to fight if the war is manifestly unjust. Thus waging a war according to the Mu'tazilites demand the fulfillment of these criteria that it has to be just, because war involves sharing blood,

⁵⁰ Roberto Tottoli, *The Qur'an: A Guidebook* (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2023), 197.

⁵¹ Zayyanu Altine and Adam Yusuf Adam, "An Analysis of the Emergence, Development and Doctrines of the Mu'tazilites in The Light of Islamic Perspectives" 1 (2019).

⁵² Suleiman Ali Mourad, "Theology: Freewill and Predestination," in *The Islamic World* (Routledge, 2008).

⁵³ "Childress - 1978 - Just-War Theories The Bases, Interrelations, Prio.Pdf," n.d.

taking lives or killing. Thus, war should be considered only as a last resort, pursued only when all other options have been exhausted.⁵⁴

Moreover, Mu'talizites admit the concept of proportionality in the war. Sullivan states that the overarching principle behind the Just War doctrine is proportionality.⁵⁵ This doctrine holds that, first a sovereign's war response should be proportionate to the claimed wrong, and second, the means used should align with the desired goal. Hence, before starting any war care should be taken that it would be proportionate to the desired goal.⁵⁶

Moreover, for Mu'tazilites, it is not lawful to decline going for Jihad. Ahmed argues that the revolt against the existing Sultan was not lawful, and to go into Jihad under his direction was obligatory, except when he committed an act of kufr (unbelief).⁵⁷ He declares further that for Mu'tazilites, an action constitute a part of Iman (to express faith). This means that taking part in Jihad is not a matter of choice, it is obligatory and failing to do so means one has lost his faith. However, Nygard argues that in Mu'tazilites teachings, God did not coerce, but had given the freedom to humankind to act or not to act in a given situation.⁵⁸ This implies that, despite the fact that the Jihad is obligatory, human choice is key.

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ E Thomas Sullivan, "The Doctrine of Proportionality in a Time of War" accessed 21 March 2024, https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?params=/context/mjil/article/1134/&path_info=uc.pdf.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ziauddin Ahmed, "A Survey of the Development of Theology in Islam," *Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (1972): 93–111.

⁵⁸ Mark Nygard, "The Muslim Concept of Surrender to God" 13 (1996).

Asharites Theology and Jihad

Ash'arites is the second early Islamic theology, founded by Imam Abu Hasan Al-Ash'ari in the 11th century. Nygard states that Ash'arite theology is recognized as the most widely accepted school of Sunni theology.⁵⁹ This theology is the opposite of the Mu'tazilites' theology held by Shi'ah. The premise of Ash'arites theology is defending the idea of uncreateness of the Qur'an, for them Qur'an has ever existed with God. Porter states that a portion of Shia theology, meanwhile, can be seen as in strong opposition to Sunni theology.⁶⁰

Concerning the Jihad and Ash'arites theology. Ghazi argues that, the consensus held by three of the main Sunni schools of traditional Islamic law (Asha'iri usuli; Shafi'i, Hanafi and Maliki schools) is that there are two main classes of jihad, the greater Jihad and lesser Jihad.⁶¹

Muzakki declares that the Sufism experts are preoccupied with war with their carnality.⁶² Meaning that the accent is on the inward Jihad, battle with oneself, rather than Jihad, physical battle. Further he declares that Jihad Nafs (greater) is also called jihad al-Akbar while fighting against the enemies of Islam is Jihad al-Asghar.⁶³ This implies that as religious obligation Muslims have to practice both the Jihad Asghar and the Jihad Al-Akbar even though the Sufis lay more emphasize on Jihad Nafs.

⁵⁹ Sabine Schmidtke, *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 494.

⁶⁰ "Different Branches of the Same Tree: A Comparative Analysis of Sunni a' by Alexander Porter," accessed January 8, 2025, <https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses/883/>.

⁶¹ Minoo Mirshahvalad, *Crises and Conversions: The Unlikely Avenues of "Italian Shiism"* (Springer Nature, 2024), 46.

⁶² M Harir Muzakki, "Implementing The Spirit Of Jihad In Sufis," *Jurnal Theologia* 31 (2020).

⁶³ Ibid

Moreover, Ash'arites consider Jihad as a divine will. In that regard, Fisher et al declare:

this writing exemplifies how jihadi groups utilize historical theological texts to assert that they are the only Sunni Muslims genuinely adhering to divine will.⁶⁴ Hence, practicing Jihad is just fulfilling the divine will, it will be rather unfair not to accomplish the divine will of Allah. Arguing about Jihad as the divine will, Makdisi declares if you succeed in Jihad against carnality then another jihad will be more comfortable which is fighting the enemy; if you are killed in that Jihad, you will become martyrs will continue to live by Allah and are given sustenance.⁶⁵ For Ash'arites, if a Muslim dies fulfilling the divine will, he will enter paradise and will be with Allah as his reward.

Furthermore, Ash'arites consider Jihad as a means of spreading Islamic deen (religion). Quoting Abukr the first caliph, Shah declares Abukr provided the following instructions to Commander Muhajir before sending him as reinforcements for the expedition to Kindah: "If this letter reaches you before you have secured victory, then, should you conquer the enemy, kill the fighting men and take the offspring captive, but only if you captured them by force."⁶⁶ This is a clear indication that the goal of Jihad is to conquer, to expand Islam through Jihad.

In the same line of thought Pope Benedict XVI during his lecture at Regensburg University, quoted Manuel II Palaeologus, Byzantine's emperor who argues that "show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will

⁶⁴ Ali Fisher, Nico Prucha, and Pavel Tupek, "The Salafi-Jihadi Nexus: An Evidence-Based Approach Of The Caliphate Library."

⁶⁵ "Ash'arī and the Ash'arites in Islamic Religious History I," 2024.

⁶⁶ N. A. Shah, "The Use of Force under Islamic Law," *European Journal of International Law* 24, no. 1 (February 1, 2013): 343–65, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/cht013>.

find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.”⁶⁷This implies the strategy adopted by Muhammad to spread Islam. Since the Sunni and especially the Ash’arites’s theology follows without questioning the Sunnah of the Prophet and Qur’an teachings, this way of spreading the Islamic deen is well shared among them.

Modern Islamic Schools

Islamic jurisprudence is traditionally divided into five major schools of thought: Hanbali, Hanafi, Shafi’i, Maliki, and Ja’farī. Four of these: Hanbali, Hanafi, Shafi’i, and Maliki, belong to the Sunni tradition, while Ja’farī represents the primary Shi’a school. This discussion focused on the Maliki School, with particular attention to its perspectives on Jihad.

Maliki School and Jihad Concept

The Maliki School, one of the four major Sunni legal traditions, was established in 8th century in Medina by Imam Malik Ibn Anas (711-795 CE). As a distinguished scholar, Imam Malik compiled the Muttawa, one of the earliest hadith and legal ruling collections, reflecting the practices of Prophet Muhammad’s community. The School’s teachings are deeply rooted in the customs of Medina, which Imam Malik believed closely adhered to the prophet’s traditions. Zeeb and Arbor observe that Malikism is dominated in North and West Africa.⁶⁸ Thus these areas where Maliki School are implanted rule the Umma through the Madinan Sunnah in terms of Jihad.

⁶⁷ Alynna J. Lyon, Christine A. Gustafson, and Paul Christopher Manuel, *Pope Francis as a Global Actor: Where Politics and Theology Meet* (Springer, 2018), 178.

⁶⁸ N Zeeb and Ann Arbor, “University Microfilms International,” n.d.

The Maliki School lay emphasis on defensive Jihad. Ammi argues that; the Sunni scholars have a common view on the concept of Jihad with slight differences within their schools of thought.⁶⁹ Hence the Maliki definition of Jihad or specifically defensive Jihad may not be too different from the one of Hanbali, Shafi'i and Hanafi. However, Ammi defines defensive Jihad as a Jihad in which Muslims confront those who want to harm them and stop them from practicing their religion.⁷⁰

Thus the defensive Jihad has to do with protecting Muslims from their enemies. According to Ibn Rushd, one of the biggest Maliki Jurists, he divided Jihad into four sections: Jihad with the heart, Jihad with the tongue, Jihad with the hand, and Jihad with the sword.⁷¹ Hence the defensive Jihad is rooted in the latter, Jihad with sword. Taking a sword against the enemies of Islam is lawful, it is halal; both the Qur'an and hadith encourage such initiative.

Surah An-Nisa 135 "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allāh, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allāh is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allāh is ever, of what you do, Aware"

This suggests that opposition to Islam may be met with defensive Jihad, as outlined in the Qur'an and emphasized within the Maliki School. This form of Jihad is considered as a response to aggression. Moreover Maliki School teaches offensive Jihad. The offensive Jihad can be defined as, When Muslims actively spread Islam to other tribes, societies and nations with the aim of making them join the religion, especially after their rulers prevent them from conveying the word of truth to the

⁶⁹ Iliass Ammi, "Vytautas Magnus University."

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid

people's hearing.⁷² The goal of this Jihad is to expand Islam, to occupy territories and conquer people in the name of Allah. It is the means by which Islam grows even though Qur'an Surah 2:256 declares that there is no compulsion in religion. In the same vein, comment on Surah 8:60,

Both al-Razi and al-Tabari who are Maliki scholars interpret the concept of quwwah (power) broadly, agreeing that Allah command believers to ready themselves for Jihad against their foes utilizing all resources that could lead to their triumph.⁷³ Thus, Maliki School permits the concept of expanding Islam through offensive Jihad under specific circumstances. However, this is governed by strict ethical guidelines that dictate the conduct of warfare

The ethics and rules of Jihad in Maliki School of thought: The Maliki school of thought provides a structured ethical framework for conducting Jihad, emphasizing that it must adhere to specific moral guidelines and communal governance. According to Maliki principles,

1. **Legitimate Authority:** Jihad must be declared by a legitimate authority within the Islamic Ummah. Individuals or non-state actors do not have the right to unilaterally declare Jihad.⁷⁴
2. **Protection of Non-Combatants:** Non-combatants, including women, children, the elderly, and religious clergy, must not be harmed. This reflects the commitment to preserving innocent life during conflict.⁷⁵

⁷² Iliass Ammi, "Vytautas Magnus University."

⁷³ "Amin - 2015 - Reclaiming Jihad A Qur'anic Critique of Terrorism.Pdf," n.d.

⁷⁴ Rashad Ali and Hannah Stuart, "A Guide To Refuting Jihadism," n.d.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

3. **Respect for Property and Infrastructure:** Civilian property and infrastructure should be spared, underscoring the importance of minimizing harm to society.⁷⁶
4. **Avoidance of Excessive Force and Cruelty:** Excessive force and cruelty are prohibited. Prisoners of war must be treated humanely, with torture and mistreatment strictly forbidden.⁷⁷
5. **Cease Hostilities Upon Objective Completion:** Once the objectives of Jihad are achieved, hostilities should cease, demonstrating the goal-oriented nature of Jihad.⁷⁸

These guidelines reflect that Jihad is not an individual endeavor but rather a matter of communal responsibility, governed by clear rules and ethical considerations that safeguard human dignity and life.

Missiological Insights: Early Islam and Maliki Jihad

The missiological implications of early Islamic theology and modern schools like Maliki regarding Jihad reflect both historical foundations and contemporary interpretations that influence Christian engagement with Muslim communities. In early Islamic theology, Jihad was understood as both a spiritual and physical struggle, particularly in the context of the Prophet Muhammad's era and the expansion of Islam. Cook declares that, Jihad has always been portrayed as an Islamic war against unbelievers.⁷⁹ It was seen as a way to defend the Muslim community and

⁷⁶ Rashad Ali and Hannah Stuart, "A Guide To Refuting Jihadism."

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (University of California Press, 2015), 40.

establish justice, with both defensive and offensive aspects. Christian mission in early Islamic contexts must be aware of the cultural and theological significance of Jihad, engaging with Muslims respectfully by focusing on shared values such as justice, peace, and righteousness. Mission efforts should emphasize the gospel's message of reconciliation and peace, carefully addressing the concept of Jihad to avoid misunderstandings of militant interpretations.

In modern schools like the Maliki school of thought, Jihad is understood in a broader sense, encompassing both the inner spiritual struggle (greater Jihad) and the external defense of the faith (lesser Jihad). The Maliki School places significant importance on the legal and communal aspects of Jihad, particularly in relation to justice, governance, and maintaining social order. For Christian mission, this means engaging with Muslims from a perspective that respects the communal and ethical dimensions of Jihad, such as social justice and ethical responsibility. Mission work should focus on social engagement and addressing issues of justice and mercy, allowing for peaceful dialogue that highlights shared concerns and fosters understanding. Additionally, recognizing the Maliki emphasis on social cohesion and ethical governance can open doors for mutual cooperation in community development and advocacy for justice.

Theological Contextualization in Mission

The concept of *contextualization* has become foundational in missiological discourse, particularly as the global church recognizes the importance of expressing the gospel within diverse cultural frameworks. At its core, contextualization involves interpreting and communicating biblical truths in a way that is both faithful to

Scripture and meaningful within a specific cultural context.⁸⁰ It seeks to bridge the gap between the eternal message of the gospel and the lived realities of particular communities, without compromising theological integrity.⁸¹ As Stephen Bevans argues, theology is always contextual; there is no such thing as a “pure” theology detached from cultural influences.⁸²

Contextualization becomes especially vital in settings where Christian mission engages communities with deeply rooted religious and cultural identities, such as Muslim-majority areas. Hiebert emphasizes the importance of translatability, suggesting that the gospel must be “at home” in every culture, allowing local people to encounter Christ in ways that affirm their language, worldview, and social structure.⁸³ For mission in rural African Muslim contexts like Gouna, Cameroon, this means understanding how key Islamic concepts such as *Jihad* are perceived locally, and engaging with them respectfully and insightfully.

This study contributes to that task by examining how the Kole people understand *Jihad*, not merely as a theological abstraction, but as a lived, ethical, and communal reality. By grounding mission strategies in the Kole’s own interpretive framework, this research models a contextual approach to theology and evangelism that is biblically faithful and culturally informed.⁵

⁸⁰ Michael Gunn, *Gospel and Culture: Finding Ways To Engage The Culture With God’s Enduring Message of Hope* (Lulu.com, 2018), 108.

⁸¹ Michael Gunn, *Gospel and Culture: Finding Ways To Engage The Culture With God’s Enduring Message of Hope* (Lulu.com, 2018), 108.

⁸² Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Orbis Books, 2002), 3–4.

⁸³ Paul G. Hiebert, *The Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (A&C Black, 1999), 110.

Expanded Missiological Models in Regard to Jihad

Traditional mission models often lack the cultural sensitivity needed to address the complexity of Jihad, especially in Muslim-majority contexts. Expanded missiological models seek to bridge this gap by incorporating contextual theology, interfaith dialogue, and peacebuilding strategies.⁸⁴ These models advocate for a deeper understanding of how local communities such as the Kole people interpret Jihad, whether as a personal spiritual struggle or as a militant expression of religious commitment. Recognizing these nuances allows missionaries to frame the Christian message more effectively.

Key features of these expanded models include incarnational ministry, where the missionary lives among the people and demonstrates the gospel through action; dialogical engagement, which fosters mutual respect and theological exchange; and relational evangelism, which focuses on building trust over time. By aligning Christian teachings with shared values like justice, self-discipline, and moral integrity (central to the Islamic concept of greater Jihad), these models promote mission that is both faithful to the gospel and sensitive to the host culture. Ultimately, they encourage a shift from confrontational methods to transformative engagement, where the goal is not merely conversion, but holistic witness to Christ's love and truth.

Theological Reflections on Jihad

Jihad in Islamic theology refers to both spiritual struggle and, at times, physical effort in defense of faith. This invites Christian reflection on similar themes such as spiritual warfare, as seen in Ephesians 6:10–18, and the call to resist sin and uphold justice. While differences exist, both traditions value moral discipline and

⁸⁴ li-M, *Transforming Missiology*.

devotion to God. For Christian mission, especially among Muslims, theological reflection on Jihad encourages respectful dialogue and contextual engagement. It also challenges Christians to respond to militant interpretations of Jihad with a gospel rooted in peace, reconciliation, and the love of Christ.

An Interaction of the Scholars

Scholarly discourse on *Jihad* reveals a broad spectrum of interpretations. Classical scholars such as John Ankerberg and Emir Caner emphasize the dual nature of Jihad as both an inner spiritual struggle (*jihad al-nafs*) and as armed struggle under specific religious conditions.⁸⁵ Elden, however, argues for a more contextual and peaceful interpretation, highlighting how many contemporary Muslims understand Jihad primarily as a moral and spiritual endeavor.⁸⁶ Knysh acknowledges both dimensions but critiques the reductionist tendency in Western scholarship to equate Jihad with violence or terrorism.⁸⁷

Yet, these interpretations are largely rooted in Middle Eastern or global discourses, often failing to account for how rural African Muslim communities interpret Jihad in their lived contexts. Scholars like Abubakar Gumi have contributed to understanding African Islamic thought, but do not examine how theological concepts like Jihad are reimagined in localized settings.⁸⁸ Daniel's classic work on

⁸⁵ John Ankerberg and Emir Caner, *The Truth About Islam and Jihad* (Harvest House Publishers, 2009), 67.

⁸⁶ Stuart Elden, *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (U of Minnesota Press, 2009), 112.

⁸⁷ Alexander Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (Taylor & Francis, 2024).

⁸⁸ Abubakar Gumi (Sheikh.) and Ismaila Abubakar Tsiga, *Where I Stand* (Spectrum Books, 1992).

Islam in West Africa identifies religious syncretism but does not delve into how communities apply theological concepts such as Jihad in daily life.⁸⁹

This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring how the Kole people of Gouna, Cameroon, understand and apply the concept of Jihad. Preliminary findings suggest that the Kole people do not primarily associate Jihad with militancy or political activism, but with personal moral striving, agricultural survival, and peaceful coexistence with Christian neighbors. These lived interpretations challenge the dominant Western scholarly frameworks and point toward the need for a more contextual theological reflection, one that considers how local religious knowledge shapes practice and interfaith engagement.

Consequently, effective Seventh-day Adventist mission strategies among the Kole must be grounded not only in biblical fidelity but also in cultural empathy, recognizing how Jihad is interpreted within the community. Such contextual awareness fosters trust, mutual understanding, and gospel witness that resonates within the socio-religious fabric of Gouna District.

Literature Review Excerpt with Data Positioning

The concept of *Jihad* has been widely examined in Islamic theology, often interpreted through classical lenses as either an inner spiritual struggle or as armed struggle for the faith.⁹⁰ Recent scholarship has increasingly highlighted peaceful and personal dimensions of Jihad, especially in urban and reformist contexts.⁹¹ However,

⁸⁹ Seblewengel Daniel, *Perception and Identity: A Study of the Relationship between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia* (Langham Publishing, 2019).

⁹⁰ John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 38–40.

⁹¹ Richard L. Rubenstein, *Jihad and Genocide* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023), 119–20.

there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding how rural Muslim communities in sub-Saharan Africa, such as the Kole people of Gouna, Cameroon, understand and live out this complex concept in their daily lives.

This study seeks to address that gap by exploring the local interpretation of Jihad among the Kole people. Specifically, it investigates how the Kole define and perceive Jihad within their religious and cultural context, including social, spiritual, and ethical dimensions. While the existing literature addresses doctrinal understandings and political implications of Jihad, it often overlooks the grassroots interpretations that shape real-life interactions between Muslims and Christians in rural African settings.

Preliminary insights emerging from this research suggest that among the Kole, Jihad is often conceptualized not as violence or militancy, but as personal discipline, economic struggle, and communal harmony. Such findings have significant implications for contextual theology and Christian mission strategy, especially in the light of the Seventh-day Adventist commitment to respectful, biblically grounded, and culturally sensitive evangelism.

Thus, the study contributes to both Islamic and missiological scholarship by offering grounded data from an under-researched community, aiming to develop mission strategy that foster trust, mutual understanding, and effective evangelism in the Gouna District.

Summary

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the historical background of the Kole people in the Gouna District, tracing their origins and the challenges they have faced in Cameroon. It also examines the concept of Jihad within Islamic teachings, exploring the relationship between the Qur'an and Jihad, as well as the

perspectives on Jihad found in the Ahadith. Additionally, this chapter discusses the views of the Mu'tazilites, the Ash'arites, and the Maliki School on the concept of Jihad.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the methodology used to conduct this study related to the chosen methodology. It explained how the methodology helped to achieve the goal of this research in understanding the concept of Jihad among Kole people: implications for mission in Gouna. Research methodology was a way to systematically solve the research problem. It was understood as a science of studying how research was done scientifically.¹ Research methodology was the theory of methods.² Thus through the research methodology, we gathered the needed information related to the research question. This was the goal of this chapter.

Research Setting

Geographical Location of Cameroon

Cameroon, officially the Republic of Cameroon, is located in West-central Africa. It shares boundaries with Nigeria to the west and north, Chad to the northeast, the Central Africa Republic to the east, and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the south. The Republic of Cameroon covers an area of c.475, 440 km².³ The actual population is 29,248,415. Cameroon is divided into ten

¹ Oranga and Matere, "Qualitative Research: Essence, Types and Advantages."

² "Chapter 4 Research Methodology," *Research Methodology*, n.d.

³ Roger Fotso et al., "Cameroon," Important Bird Areas in Africa and Associated Islands: Priority Sites for Conservation, n.d.

regions.⁴ Many languages are spoken in Cameroon (over 280 indigenous languages) apart from French and English, the nation languages.⁵

The Region of the Garoua

The North which is Garoua, is situated in the northern part of the Country, between the Far north region (Maroua) to the East and the region of Adamaoua (Ngaoundere) to the South. The North covers 635 160 km and a population of 1, 285, 000.⁶ Garoua is a dominated Christian city, According to the 2005 census, the most recent available 69.2 percent of the population are Christians, 20.9 percent Muslim, and 5.6 percent animist. Among Christians, 55.5 percent are Roman Catholic, 38 percent Protestant, and 6.5 percent other Christian denominations.⁷ The North is made up of four departments, and nineteen Sub-divisions. Garoua is the entry point of Islam in Cameroon. The city played an important role in the spread of Islam in Cameroon, as it was a center of Islamic education and scholarship.⁸ It was through the North that Islam spread throughout the country.

Lagdo Subdivision and Gouna Location

Lagdo is one of the North Subdivisions, approximately 80 kilometers from Garoua to the East. Lagdo is a prominent subdivision located in the North Region of Cameroon. It is home to the expansive Lagdo Lake, a dam reservoir covering an area

⁴ Mark Dike DeLancey, Mark W. Delancey, and Rebecca Neh Mbuh, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cameroon* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 167.

⁵ Esther Phubon Chie, "Promotion of National Languages in Official Sectors in Cameroon: Myth or Reality?," n.d.

⁶ William Brass, *Demography of Tropical Africa* (Princeton University Press, 2015), xx.

⁷ Robert E. B. Lucas, *Crossing the Divide: Rural to Urban Migration in Developing Countries* (Oxford University Press, 2021), 148.

⁸ YouGuide Ltd, *The Regional Travel Guide for Northern Cameroon (Garoua, Maroua) (Cameroon)* (YouGuide Ltd, n.d.), 12.

of 586 km².⁹ It has a population of 28, 239. Among the 167 Towns of Lagdo, Gouna is one of them. Gouna is situated at 90 km to the southeast of Lagdo, along the national road linking Garoua to Ngaoundere. It is located 105 km to Garoua and 167 km to Ngaoundere. Gouna had a population of 7,382 in 2015.¹⁰

Research Approach and Design

Generally in research, there are three types of methods: Qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methods. The choice of research design is based on considering these three elements as well as the research problem in the study.¹¹ This study employed the qualitative research approach. The qualitative research method helps to understand concepts, opinions, and life experiences. A qualitative method involves a detailed exploration of a few cases or individuals.¹²

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative approach to explore the concept of Jihad among the Kole people in Gouna, examining the sources that shape their understanding and experiences, as well as the broader implications for mission and their worldview. Qualitative research has a rich tradition in the study of human social behavior and cultures.¹³ It provides information about the “human” side of an

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2009), 34.

¹² “Creswell.Pdf,” accessed September 3, 2024, https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_609332/objava_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf.

¹³ Steven J. Agius, “Qualitative Research: Its Value and Applicability,” *The Psychiatrist* 37, no. 6 (June 2013): 204–6, <https://doi.org/10.1192/pb.bp.113.042770>.

issue that is, the often contradictory behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals.¹⁴

This study focused on the phenomenological research design. Phenomenology is an intellectual engagement in interpretations and meaning.¹⁵ There are two types of phenomenology in qualitative research: hermeneutics phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. The hermeneutics phenomenology is the study of experience together with its meanings.¹⁶ The researcher is oriented towards lived experiences and interpreting the texts of life.¹⁷ Hermeneutic phenomenology offers tools for interpreting complex cultural or religious experiences, allowing researchers to appreciate the nuanced meanings behind people's beliefs, practices, and rituals.¹⁸

Transcendental phenomenology consists of identifying a phenomenon to study, bracketing out one's experiences, and collecting data from several persons who have experienced the phenomena.¹⁹ Transcendental phenomenology aims to uncover the universal essence of an experience, beyond cultural or personal interpretations. This would be essential in cross-cultural and interfaith contexts, where a missionary or researcher must suspend personal or societal interpretations of religious concepts to truly engage with the perspectives of the Kole people.

Regarding the nature of this research, this study employed transcendental phenomenology to achieve a clear and unbiased understanding of the concept of Jihad

¹⁴ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 220.

¹⁵ Qutoshi, "Phenomenology."

¹⁶ Friesen, Henriksson, and Saevi, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Education*.

¹⁷ Makunika, "Phenomenology Approach in Qualitative Research."

¹⁸ Friesen, Henriksson, and Saevi, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Education*.

¹⁹ Ibid

among the Kole people in the Gouna district. By applying transcendental phenomenology, this study sought to uncover the essential meaning of Jihad as perceived within the Kole worldview and culture, allowing for an authentic and nuanced grasp of their perspective.

Population and Sampling

The population is a set of all the units which possess variable characteristic under study and for which findings of research can be generalized.²⁰ It helps the researcher in selecting sample of proper size, which represents the entire population.²¹ There are three types of populations; general population, target population and accessible population. General population is the largest group of potential participants of a qualitative study.²² This kind of population is not specific and its inclusion in the study may be less helpful or even harmful. The target population is defined as the group of individuals or participants with the specific attributes of interest and relevance.²³ Accessible population is a qualitative study when the study population is large.²⁴

In this study, the target population is the Kole people an Islamic community in Gouna, located in Lagdo Subdivision, Benoue department, in the North region of Cameroon. From a religious perspective, Gouna is part of the Benoue-Faro Mission, a district that encompasses seventeen churches. The Kole people have been specifically

²⁰ Changbao Wu and Mary E. Thompson, *Sampling Theory and Practice* (Springer Nature, 2020), 5.

²¹ Changbao Wu and Mary E. Thompson, *Sampling Theory and Practice* (Springer Nature, 2020), 5.

²² “General Target and Accessible Population_ Demystifying the Conc.Pdf,” n.d.

²³ “General Target and Accessible Population_ Demystifying the Conc.Pdf,” n.d.

²⁴ Ibid

selected for their profound knowledge and experience regarding the concept of Jihad. Their understanding is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, informed by the Qur'an, the Hadith, and a comprehensive Islamic worldview.

Sampling is a method of obtaining information about an entire population through deduction from a small number of people from the population.²⁵ Sampling implies making decision about how the participants were chosen for a specific study. Generally there are two types of sampling; purposive sampling and random sampling. Purposive sampling represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques²⁶; the purposive sampling gives room to the researcher to select participants based on certain criteria, such as experience, knowledge and skill that will fit the goal of the research properly.²⁷

In this phenomenological study, two types of sampling were used. Criterion-based and homogeneous sampling both under purposive sampling. The criterion-based is a type of purposeful sampling.²⁸ The participants are selected in criterion-based only when they meet the requirement of participation. The homogeneous sampling is a purposive sampling technique that aims to achieve a homogeneous sample; that is, a sample whose units share the same characteristics or traits.²⁹

The study employed criterion-based and homogeneous sampling methods, as the research focused specifically on the Kole people in Gouna, who shared a common

²⁵ Shahid N Khan, "Qualitative Research Method - Phenomenology," *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 21 (October 30, 2014): p298, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n21p298>.

²⁶ YCT Expert Team, *Research & Teaching Aptitude Paper-I* (Youth Competition Times, n.d.), 86.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Michela Luciani et al., "How to Design a Qualitative Health Research Study. Part 1: Design and Purposeful Sampling Considerations," *Professioni Infermieristiche*, n.d.

²⁹ Ibid

religion (Islam), ethnic identity (Kole), and worldview (Islamic). Homogeneous sampling was used to narrow the participant pool to members of the Kole community who practiced Islam.

This sample included four older Kole men (aged 60 and above) who had practiced Islam for over 40 years and possess extensive knowledge of the Qur'an, Ahadith, and Shari'ah. Additionally, two young Kole men, aged between twenty five to thirty years were included. Women were excluded from the interviews due to their non-involvement in lesser Jihad that could constitute a barrier to the gospel. Lastly, two Kole persons who were AMBBs. The criterion-based approach ensured that only Kole individuals who met these specific qualifications were selected for the research.

Creswell recommend the range of sample size between 5 and 25 interviews for a phenomenological study and 20-30 for a grounded theory study.³⁰ Thus, this research employed eight participants among the Kole people living in Gouna, practicing Islam and had good knowledge about the concept of Jihad.

Research Instrument

A Research Instrument is a tool used to collect, measure, and analyze data related to your research interests.³¹ The selection and design of research instruments in qualitative studies were crucial as they directly influence the study's quality, validity, depth, and the insights derived. This qualitative study utilized interviews as the primary research method. A total of eight (8) individuals from the Kole community were interviewed. Additionally, a focus group comprising six (6) Kole

³⁰ Wasihun Bezabih Bekele and Fikire Yohanes Ago, "Sample Size for Interview in Qualitative Research in Social Sciences: A Guide to Novice Researchers," *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 4, no. 1 (September 18, 2022): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.46303/repam.2022.3>.

³¹ "Published_Study-Material-Examples.Pdf," n.d.

participants was formed. The focus group did not include the AMBBs to avoid any tension between Muslims and Adventist. A focus group is a group interview of approximately six to twelve people who share similar characteristics or common interests.³² This method was valuable because it allowed the researcher to engage with multiple participants simultaneously, fostering a dynamic discussion that helps balance diverse perspectives and generate rich, meaningful insights.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes.³³ As this research is phenomenological, the researcher engaged directly with the participants; the Kole people in Gouna, to gather data from individuals with lived experience. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, allowing participants to share their personal insights and experiences.

In-depth interview: By in-depth qualitative interviewing, we refer to multiple face-to-face interactions between the researcher and participants, focused on understanding participants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or circumstances as articulated in their own words.³⁴ There are three types of in-depth interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Structured interviews are a staple in

³² Benedicte Carlsen and Claire Glenton, "What about N? A Methodological Study of Sample-Size Reporting in Focus Group Studies," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 11, no. 1 (March 11, 2011): 26, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-26>.

³³ Syeda Ayeman Mazhar et al., "Methods of Data Collection: A Fundamental Tool of Research," *Journal of Integrated Community Health (ISSN 2319-9113)* 10, no. 1 (June 14, 2021): 6–10.

³⁴ Natalie Osborne and Deanna Grant-Smith, "In-Depth Interviewing," in *Methods in Urban Analysis*, ed. Scott Baum (Singapore: Springer, 2021), 105–25, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-1677-8_7.

positivist research due to the tendency to focus on consistency in data collection and measurement, and “objectivity” in analysis.³⁵ While Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are used in qualitative, exploratory research, research interested in lived experiences.³⁶

In this research, I employed in-depth interviews, specifically semi-structure interviews which is under in-depth interview. The semi-structure interviews were crucial for this research as they allow the researcher to engage directly with informants, hear their personal experiences firsthand, and obtain authentic information. This face-to-face interaction enhanced the depth and credibility of the findings, supporting the researcher in achieving the study's objectives with reliability and richness.

Before conducting the in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus group, informed consent was obtained from all participants, including their permission to record the interviews. Each interview with the Kole people in Gouna lasted approximately 15-30 minutes per participant, and the focus group lasted for 1H-1H30 minutes. After the interviews, and the focus group, the collected data was transcribed and translated from Fulfulde into English for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis it is a process of collecting, transforming, cleaning, and modeling data with the goal of discovering the required information.³⁷ Before analyzing the data collected, it was first transcribed, translated from Fulfulde into

³⁵ Osborne and Grant-Smith, “In-Depth Interviewing,” 2021.

³⁶ Osborne and Grant-Smith.

³⁷ Dawit Dibekulu Alem, “An Overview of Data Analysis and Interpretations in Research,” n.d.

English. The transcription was the action of providing a written account of spoken words. In qualitative research, transcription is done from individual or group interviews and generally written verbatim (exactly word-for-word).³⁸ Verbatim transcription ensured that every word recorded was transcribed exactly as spoken, capturing all details.

The edit transcription, is a type of transcription where the content is transcribed with modifications to improve clarity, readability, and conciseness. An edited transcription is a polished version where stammers, repetitions, and grammatical errors are removed to clarify the core message.³⁹ In contrast, intelligent transcription relies on the discretion of the transcriber, who uses their understanding and expertise to exclude irrelevant content while retaining information deemed useful. It is the transcription that removes fillers and grammatical errors with the goal of making the transcript more readable and concise.⁴⁰

This research employed intelligent transcription to process the recorded interview data, focusing on relevant content. After transcription, the transcripts was coded. Coding is one way of organizing dense data and making sense of it, for instance by identifying patterns.⁴¹ This, helps in organizing and matching the same

³⁸ A. Squires, "Language Barriers and Qualitative Nursing Research: Methodological Considerations," *International Nursing Review* 55, no. 3 (September 2008): 265–73, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2008.00652.x>.

³⁹ *Transcription Techniques for the Spoken Word*, 39, accessed January 22, 2025, https://books.google.com/books/about/Transcription_Techniques_for_the_Spoken.html?hl=fr&id=vcQzAAAAQBAJ.

⁴⁰ "Data Transcription in Qualitative Research: All You Need to Know," accessed November 5, 2024, <https://www.transcriptionwing.com/data-transcription-in-qualitative-research-all-you-need-to-know/>.

⁴¹ Valentine Berthet et al., "Coding the Data," in *Guide to Qualitative Research in Parliaments*, by Valentine Berthet et al. (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), 79–105, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-39808-7_5.

ideas together, for an easier understanding. A code can be defined as a set of rules or constraints for transmission one group of signifying units into another.⁴²

There were two categories of coding that were employed: first cycle coding processes and second cycle coding processes. The first cycle coding process ranged in magnitude from a single word to a full sentence to an entire page of text to a stream of moving images.⁴³ This phase was about breaking down the raw data into smaller, manageable pieces. It's often exploratory, seeking to identify general patterns or notable features. It involves open or descriptive coding, where the researcher assigns labels or "codes" to segments of the data.

In the second coding process, the coded portions can be the same units, longer text passages, or configurations of the codes themselves developed so far.⁴⁴ This phase was more analytical and synthesizing, as it seeks to refine, reduce, and organize the initial codes to develop deeper insights and identify broader themes. Here, the researcher groups similar codes, merging, modifying, or eliminating codes that don't fit into the emerging structure. This analysis helped to understand the concept of Jihad among the Kole people in Gouna, in a comprehensive way.

Ethical Consideration

It is a commitment to ensuring that strategies for collecting data are responsible; that at all times research attends to a professional code of conduct that ensures the safety of all the participants involved.⁴⁵ Here, the researcher had the

⁴² Jackson, "Categories of Codes."

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Jackson, "Categories of Codes."

⁴⁵ Marcelle Cacciattolo, "Ethical Considerations in Research," in *The Praxis of English Language Teaching and Learning (PELT)*, ed. Mark Vicars et al. (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2015), 61–79, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-112-0_4.

responsibility of protecting the informants in the professional way. The researcher ensured the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of participants.

To ensure participants' protection, given the sensitivity of the topic, special care was taken by the researcher to protect participants' safety, dignity, and privacy. Participation was fully voluntary, and informed consent was obtained, explaining the purpose of the study, the topics to be discussed, and the participants' right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Moreover, Interviews and focus groups was conducted in private, secure environments to ensure participants feel safe to express their views without fear of judgment or retaliation. No real names or identifying information was used in transcripts, notes, or final reports, and pseudonyms was assigned to all participants. The researcher obtained and adhered to the ethical approval from the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC).⁴⁶ To obtain the approval from AUA-ISERC, the researcher submitted the consent form (Appendix A) and data collection guidelines for approval. In the process of data collection, each participant was provided with the consent form, which they were required to read, understand, and sign before any interviews were conducted.

Additionally, participant's anonymity was strictly maintained. Interview audio recordings was securely stored, and any names mentioned was replaced with pseudonyms to protect participants' identities. Upon completion of the research, all audio recordings was systematically destroyed to prevent any possibility of unauthorized disclosure of confidential information obtained during the interviews.

⁴⁶ "Read-the-Research-Ethics-Guidelines.Pdf," n.d.

Issue of Trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness included elements such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.⁴⁷ This implied that trustworthiness dealt with credibility, which corresponded roughly with the positivist concept of internal validity.⁴⁸ Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement and building trust with the Kole community, particularly with local leaders, to encourage open and honest participation. Informants checking was also used: participants were invited to review summaries of their contributions to verify accuracy and ensure that their views were correctly represented.

Dependability, which related more to reliability.⁴⁹ Dependability was addressed by maintaining a detailed audit trail, documenting all phases of the research process, including participant selection, data collection, analysis procedures, and decision-making. Peer debriefing with academic advisors or colleagues was also conducted to review and validate the research process and findings.

Transferability, which was a form of external validity.⁵⁰ Triangulation was achieved by using multiple data sources interviews with older Muslim men, young Muslim men, and Adventist-Muslim Believers (AMBBs), to cross-verify findings.

⁴⁷ Sirwan Khalid Ahmed, "The Pillars of Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research," *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health* 2 (April 2024): 100051, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051>.

⁴⁸ Gary Rolfe, "Validity, Trustworthiness and Rigour: Quality and the Idea of Qualitative Research," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 53, no. 3 (February 2006): 304–10, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03727.x>.

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Gary Rolfe, "Validity, Trustworthiness and Rigour: Quality and the Idea of Qualitative Research," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 53, no. 3 (February 2006): 304–10, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03727.x>.

Additionally, data from different types of participants based on age, religious background, and experience, helped confirm emerging themes and interpretations.

Confirmability, which was largely an issue of presentation.⁵¹ Confirmability was ensured through a reflexive journal to monitor researcher bias, an audit trail documenting the research process, and peer reviews to verify that findings are grounded in participants' experiences.

To achieve the goal of trustworthiness this research relied on: primary validation, secondary validation, and triangulation. Primary validation and secondary validation: The primary validation was about credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity which were considered primary criteria of validity.⁵² It referred to techniques used by researchers to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of data collected during the research process.

The secondary validation had to do with explicitness, vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, and sensitivity which were considered secondary criteria⁵³ It was through engaging other experts or peers to review the data and interpretation, secondary validation adds an external perspective that can confirm or challenge the findings, contributing to a more robust and trustworthy study.

Triangulation was the means by which an alternate perspective was used to validate, challenge or extend existing findings.⁵⁴ It was also the use of complementary methods, theories, data sources, or investigators to counterbalance potential biases,

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Robin Whitemore, Susan K. Chase, and Carol Lynn Mandle, "Validity in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Health Research* 11, no. 4 (July 2001): 522–37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973201129119299>.

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Phil Turner and Susan Turner, "Triangulation in Practice," *Virtual Reality* 13, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 171–81, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10055-009-0117-2>.

enhancing the study's depth and credibility.⁵⁵ The triangulation helped the researcher to enhance the quality and reliability of qualitative research. Triangulation increased credibility and validity, it reduced researcher bias, enhance depth understanding, and increased transparency.

There are four types of triangulations: Data triangulation was the process of checking data by comparing results obtained from multiple sources. Theoretical triangulation referred to the possibility of exploring multiple theories, as a means of interpreting the same data group.⁵⁶ Researcher triangulation consisted of involving diverse researchers in the study of the same matter.⁵⁷ Finally, methodological triangulation referred to the use of multiple methods as a way of obtaining more complete and detailed data about the phenomenon.⁵⁸

This study employed the methodological triangulation, not only because it was the most used method but also, methodological triangulation enhances the rigor, validity, and depth of research by integrating multiple methods or data sources to investigate the same phenomenon. The methodological triangulation helped to understand the phenomenon of Jihad among Kole people in Gouna and its implications for Mission.

⁵⁵ Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardoff, and Ines Steinke, *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (SAGE, 2004).

⁵⁶ Márcio Moutinho Abdalla et al., "Quality in Qualitative Organizational Research: Types of Triangulation as a Methodological Alternative," *Administração: Ensino e Pesquisa* 19, no. 1 (January 5, 2018): 66–98, <https://doi.org/10.13058/raep.2018.v19n1.578>.

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Ibid

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter explored the research methodology, focusing on a qualitative, phenomenological approach. The study targeted the Kole people in Gouna, with a purposive sampling method used to select eight participants. Data collection involved conducting in-depth interviews with these informants, and the analysis was carried out through careful, reflective transcription. Ethical approval from the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) was obtained to uphold ethical standards throughout the research process. To enhance trustworthiness and rigor, methodological triangulation was also employed, ensuring a comprehensive and credible examination of the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions with the Kole people in Gouna, Cameroon. The purpose of this analysis is to understand how the concept of Jihad is perceived within this community and to explore how these perceptions influence contextual Christian mission strategies. The findings are structured around the main research questions and are organized thematically to capture recurring patterns, beliefs, and values. The following research questions guide the analysis:

- 1- What is the understanding of the concept of Jihad among the Kole people in Gouna?
- 2- What biblical principles offer guidance for reaching forceful individuals?
- 3- How do the lived experiences of the Kole people affect their perception of Christian evangelism and Mission?
- 4- What missiological strategies can the SDA Church implement to effectively guide the Kole people, especially the Muslims in Gouna, to Christ?

The analysis is divided into two main sections: interviews and focus group discussions. To strengthen the analytical framework, each theme below is aligned with the specific research questions it helps answer.

Data Collection and Analysis Process

To analyze the qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups, I employed thematic analysis using MAXQDA. The process followed Braun and Clarke’s six-step approach: Familiarization with the data through repeated reading, generating initial codes from meaningful data segments, searching for themes by grouping related codes, reviewing themes for coherence, defining and naming themes, and producing the report by linking themes to research questions.¹

Coding was inductive, allowing themes to emerge organically from participants’ narratives. Open coding was first conducted to tag key phrases and ideas. These were grouped into categories and refined into final themes.

Table 1. Below Demonstrates a Sample from the Coding Process

| Raw Data (Quote) | Initial Code | Category | Theme |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| “Jihad is when a man fights inside himself not to do wrong.” | Inner struggle | Personal ethics | Internal (Spiritual) Jihad |
| “People say jihad is war, but that is wrong, it is first peace with self.” | Misconception of jihad | Knowledge gap | Diverging Interpretations of Jihad |
| “If Christians come with respect, we can work together.” | Respect in dialogue | Interfaith values | Openness to Interfaith Cooperation |
| “Preaching against Islam makes us angry; but if you live well, we will listen.” | Missionary approach | Evangelism style | Ethical Witness in Mission |
| “As a Kole, we were taught to respect all who fear God.” | Shared religious values | Cultural ethics | Points of Convergence |

¹ Gail Fondahl and Gary N. Wilson, *Northern Sustainabilities: Understanding and Addressing Change in the Circumpolar World* (Springer, 2017), 156.

Themes were developed not only based on frequency, but also on emotional intensity, contextual relevance, and missiological significance.

Description of Participants

The data was collected through three methods: observations, interviews, and focus groups. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather insights from informants, offering flexibility that allowed the interviewer to explore participants' thoughts in depth and fully grasp the intended meaning of their responses. Additionally, purposive sampling was employed to select participants for the interviews, ensuring the inclusion of individuals with relevant experiences and perspectives.

All participants in this research whether for interviews, focus groups, or observations were Kole people. The sample includes four elderly Kole men (aged 60 and above) who have practiced Islam for over 40 years and possess extensive knowledge of the Qur'an, Ahadith, and Shari'ah. This selection is based on the understanding that older Muslims tend to have a deeper comprehension of the concept of Jihad compared to younger individuals.

Additionally, two Kole AMBBs (approximately 40 years old) with at least five years of Christian practice and a strong understanding of Christian beliefs and practices were included. This allowed for a comparative analysis of how the concept of Jihad is perceived by a Kole who remains Muslim versus one who has converted to Christianity.

Lastly, two younger Kole individuals (aged 20–25) with a solid grasp of Islamic beliefs and practices had also participated. Including younger participants provides insight into how their understanding of Jihad differs from that of the older generation. Women were excluded from this research because they do not actively

participate in Jihad, particularly in its physical form. This criterion-based selection ensures that only Kole individuals who meet these specific qualifications are included in the study.

All Kole Muslims who participated in the interviews belong to the Sunni Islam and follow the teachings of Imam Al-Shafi'i, one of the four major Sunni Islamic jurists. They are affiliated with the Maliki School of jurisprudence, which was founded by Malik Ibn Anas and is known for its emphasis on the practices of the people of Medina as a source of Islamic law. Additionally, they subscribe to Ash'arite theology, a theological framework developed by Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari. This theological perspective plays a significant role in shaping their understanding of key Islamic concepts, including Jihad, predestination, and the attributes of God.

Interview Data Analysis

This section presents four key themes from interviews with Kole participants, revealing the nuanced and multifaceted meanings of Jihad. Each theme contributes to answering Research Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 by offering theological and missiological insights relevant for contextual mission.

Data analysis in MAXQDA followed a structured approach. After transcription, data and field notes were imported and categorized by participant group for easier access. An inductive reading helped identify key phrases reflecting participant views. These phrases were grouped and coded based on recurring themes. Thematic coding then guided the interpretation process, with coded segments reinforcing and clarifying emerging themes.

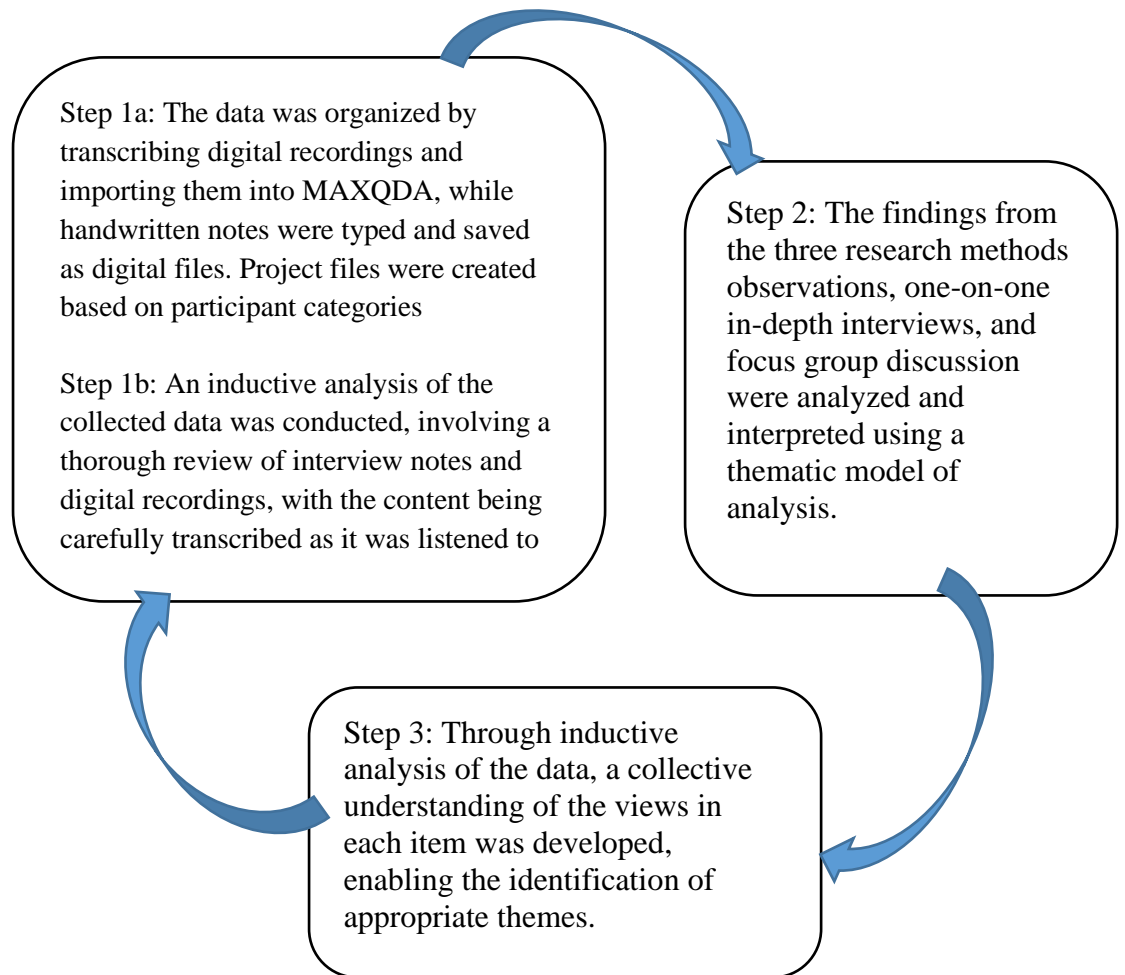


Figure 1. Data Analysis process: Thematic Model approach

Theme 1: Internal (Spiritual) Jihad (Answers RQ1)

Participants overwhelmingly viewed Jihad as an inner moral effort to live in obedience to Allah. This aligns with the Sufi tradition of the “greater Jihad” the battle against one’s own sinful inclinations. This internalized view of Jihad highlights a strong ethical foundation and presents a theological bridge to Christian concepts such as repentance and sanctification. These findings also illuminate how the Kole culturally interpret Jihad as deeply spiritual, aligning closely with their identity and worldview (RQ1).

KPI3, KPI5, KPI4 participants described Jihad not as violent struggle but as a personal moral effort to live rightly before God. This aligns closely with the Sufi

Islamic understanding of the “greater Jihad”, the inner struggle against the self.

Among the Kole, Jihad was often framed as resisting temptation, seeking forgiveness, and maintaining personal integrity. Respondent KPI1 emphasized that “Jihad is not killing. It is fighting with yourself when you want to do wrong.” This internal understanding presents a bridge to Christian concepts of repentance, sanctification, and spiritual discipline. It invites a contextualized mission approach that highlights spiritual transformation and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Theme 2: Diverging Interpretations of Jihad (Answers RQ1, RQ3)

Participants recognized multiple, sometimes conflicting interpretations of Jihad. “Some say Jihad means war, but my grandfather taught me it is peace” (KPI3). This reflects generational shifts and confusion introduced by the media or extremist teachings. This theme also shows how lived experiences (e.g., local teachings vs. external narratives) affect understanding of jihad (RQ1) and Christian mission reception (RQ3).

Theme 3: Openness to Interfaith Cooperation (Answers RQ3 & RQ4)

Participants demonstrated an encouraging openness to collaboration with Christians when mutual respect was present. “If Christians come with respect, we can work together. We are all created by God,” (KPI5). This openness rooted in cultural hospitality offers a strategic opening for relationship-based mission. It echoes Paul Knitter’s interfaith theology, which supports dialogical engagement.² Christian mission here should emphasize humility, respect, and presence over apologetic confrontation.

² Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth, Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility* (Orbis Books, 1995).

Theme 4: Ethical Witness in Mission (Answers RQ4)

Kole participants stressed the significance of Christian behavior. An authentic lifestyle mattered more than doctrinal correctness. Integrity, kindness, and service were often cited as the most compelling forms of witness. “Preaching against Islam makes us angry; but if you live well, we will listen,” (KPI7). This supports the incarnational model of mission living as a witness among the people. Evangelism in Gouna should prioritize daily integrity and service over polemics or aggressive proselytizing. “We watch how you live more than what you preach” (KPI6). This approach aligns with Hiebert’s model of critical contextualization, emphasizing ethical presence as a credible form of witness.³

Theme 5: Biblical Principles for Reaching Resistant Individuals (Answers RQ2)

AMBBs shared how specific biblical principles helped them come to faith despite resistance from their community. These included:

- Persistent love and prayer (Luke 18:1–8)
- Gentle correction and humility (2 Timothy 2:24–25)
- Responding to injustice with grace (Romans 12:21)

AMBB1 shared, “My friend never argued; he just loved and prayed. That touched me.” AMBB2 noted, “I saw forgiveness in Christians when they were wronged. That changed me.” These accounts reveal that enduring love, humility, and ethical witness, hallmarks of Christ’s ministry, are powerful tools in reaching resistant individuals. These themes help missionaries identify effective, Scripture-rooted approaches

³ Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Baker Academic, 2009), 45.

Proposed Missiological Models

These findings call for a rethinking of traditional mission models, urging a more respectful and relational approach. Drawing from Hiebert's "critical contextualization," three models are particularly relevant for mission strategies.⁴

- a- **Interfaith Dialogue:** respectful conversation between people of different religions
- b- **Dialogical Approach:** Listen first, speak later.
- c- **Incarnational Model:** Let life speak louder than words.
- d- **Bridge-Building Model:** Find shared values such as moral discipline and peace.
- e- **Contextual Understanding:** Understanding the local worldview, language, and religious concepts is foundational.

The Kole emphasis on inner struggle and peace reveals shared moral ground with Christian teachings. These bridges provide meaningful entry points for contextual gospel presentation.

Theoretical Reflections

This study is grounded in contextual theology, particularly Bevans' models of contextualization: The praxis model affirms the lived realities of the Kole people as a valid starting point for theological reflection and mission, the translation model ensures biblical truths are faithfully communicated in culturally meaningful ways.⁵ In addition, Paul Knitter's interfaith theology supports a dialogical approach that seeks

⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Baker Academic, 2009), 45.

⁵ Steve Bevans, *Essays in Contextual Theology* (Brill, 2018), 92.

the work of the Spirit across all religious traditions.⁶ This resonates with the Kole worldview, which values peace, respect, and reverence for the divine. At times, the researcher's position supports relational access and understanding. At other times, it settles for humility and active listening to perspectives different from his own.

Focus Group Data Analysis

The purpose of the focus group was to explore local understandings of jihad, uncover how it is expressed in cultural and religious life, and identify implications for mission engagement. The findings inform how contextual theology can shape effective evangelism among the Kole people. This section reinforces findings from interviews but adds generational and social context. Below are consolidated themes, each aligned with Research Questions 1 to 5.

Theme 1. Jihad in Daily Life

Focus group participants emphasized that Jihad is primarily about moral discipline, self-restraint, and spiritual commitment. Participant KPF1 noted, "Waking up early for prayer is Jihad. Refusing to steal is Jihad. Helping a stranger is Jihad." This practical, daily understanding of Jihad reinforces its spiritual dimension. It also shows KPI2 and KPI6 Kole Muslims view Jihad as integral to their character development and community responsibility. This theme reveals how Jihad is not abstract, it is expressed in daily moral decisions. Mission strategy should reflect this lived spirituality

⁶ Knitter, *One Earth, Many Religions*.

Theme 2. Cultural Practices Reflecting Jihad (Answers RQ1)

Participants described various cultural practices that align with the spiritual ideals of Jihad. For example, they referenced communal fasting, public charity, and social forgiveness. A youth participant KPF3 stated, “When someone insults you and you stay quiet, that’s Jihad. You win the fight inside.” This inner struggle reflects the greater Jihad (al-jihad al-akbar) in Islamic tradition, which prioritizes spiritual struggle over armed conflict. Practices like fasting and forgiveness align with spiritual formation in both Islam and Christianity. These parallels can help develop relevant discipleship approaches.

Theme 3. Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding (Answers RQ1 & RQ4)

The Kole community uses traditional forms of mediation and reconciliation, which are seen as expressions of Jihad. One elder KPF4 explained, “Making peace between people is the best kind of Jihad. It is hard, but it brings blessing.” This approach aligns with Islamic teachings that elevate peacemaking as a high moral endeavor. It also offers a bridge for Christian mission efforts focused on reconciliation and social harmony. Peacebuilding as Jihad connects directly to biblical reconciliation. This offers missionaries a powerful thematic parallel: Jesus as the Prince of Peace.

Theme 4. Influence of Islamic Education (Answers RQ1)

Participants frequently mentioned that local Islamic teachers (mallams) play a key role in shaping how Jihad is taught and understood. One Adventist-Muslim believer background, KPF6 shared, “Our Imam always says that Jihad is not with guns but with good character.” This reveals that religious leadership is crucial in shaping community perceptions, and thus, any mission strategy should include

engagement with local faith leaders. The role of mallams is central in shaping doctrine. Building respectful relationships with these leaders could greatly influence community openness.

Comparative Observations

Elders vs. Youth: A noticeable generational contrast emerged in the understanding of Jihad. Elders tended to emphasize moral discipline, communal harmony, and peacemaking as central expressions of Jihad. In contrast, younger participants framed Jihad more personally, describing it as an internal spiritual struggle particularly in resisting temptation, pursuing education, and staying faithful in a modernizing world.

Adventist Muslim Background Believers (AMBBs): Participants who had converted from Islam to Christianity described Jihad in transformative terms. For them, Jihad often meant “striving for truth” and was closely linked to their personal conversion journeys. They highlighted inner conflict, divine guidance, and a sense of calling as central to their understanding, reflecting both their past religious experiences and their current spiritual convictions.

Missiological Implications

1. **Contextual Theology:** Mission strategies should affirm the Kole people's understanding of Jihad as a moral and spiritual struggle. Evangelistic messages could draw parallels between Christian sanctification and Islamic self-discipline.
2. **Culturally Sensitive Language:** Avoiding negative connotations of Jihad and instead exploring shared themes (e.g., striving for peace, spiritual struggle) can foster trust.

3. **Engaging Islamic Leaders:** Missionaries should build relationships with local Imams and Mallams to encourage dialogue and mutual learning.
4. **Narrative Evangelism:** Storytelling methods that incorporate local metaphors of struggle and perseverance may resonate better with Kole listeners.
5. **Peace and Reconciliation Focus:** Since Jihad is linked to conflict resolution, Christian mission can emphasize Jesus as the Prince of Peace and the Christian call to peacemaking.
6. **Discipleship Models:** Christian discipleship can be modeled as a form of positive Jihad daily striving to follow Christ with integrity and humility.

For evangelism to be effective in Gouna, missionaries must align with the local worldview, affirm shared values, and witness through relational integrity

Summary of the Chapter

The analysis of interviews and focus group discussions reveals that the Kole people in Gouna perceive Jihad as a holistic spiritual endeavor encompassing moral conduct, community service, and personal discipline. These findings challenge narrow interpretations of Jihad as violent extremism and open avenues for constructive mission engagement.

For Christian missionaries, understanding and respecting the local meanings of Jihad is essential for effective and contextual witness. By embracing shared values and promoting interfaith respect, mission efforts in Gouna can foster mutual understanding, reduce tensions, and offer a compelling vision of the Gospel that resonates with the heart of the community.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This research explores how the Kole people in Gouna, Cameroon, understand the concept of Jihad and examines the implications of these perceptions for Christian mission work. Drawing on rich qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions, the study uncovers a spectrum of interpretations. While a minority of participants linked Jihad to external conflict and violence, the majority viewed it as an internal, spiritual struggle for self-discipline, moral integrity, and faithfulness to religious duties. These understandings were deeply shaped by cultural norms, religious beliefs, generational perspectives, and community values.

The study highlights that Jihad, within the Kole context, is predominantly a lived, ethical experience rather than an abstract or militaristic concept. This diversity in interpretation calls for a contextualized approach to mission; one that respects and responds to the local worldview. It also points to the potential of Jihad, as understood by the Kole, to serve as a bridge for interfaith collaboration and peace building, rather than a barrier. The findings emphasize the need for missionaries and Christian workers to engage with cultural sensitivity and theological awareness to promote effective evangelism and genuine dialogue.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the concept of Jihad among the Kole people is multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to a single, uniform interpretation. While external representations, particularly in global media, often equate Jihad with violence, the lived experience among the Kole community reveals a more nuanced and primarily spiritual understanding. For many, Jihad signifies a daily internal struggle to uphold moral values, support community well-being, and remain faithful to religious practices.

This complexity underscores the necessity for Christian missionaries to adopt culturally responsive and theologically informed strategies. Misinterpretations of Jihad can easily lead to mistrust or resistance, thereby undermining the goals of evangelism and interfaith engagement. Therefore, effective mission work in this context requires not only theological clarity but also deep cultural empathy and humility.

Recommendations

1. Contextualize Mission Strategies

Mission efforts should be adapted to reflect the Kole people's lived realities. Emphasizing the spiritual and moral aspects of Jihad, rather than associating it with violence, can open pathways for respectful dialogue and shared values.

2. Implement Cultural Sensitivity Training

Missionaries and church workers should receive training that equips them with knowledge of local customs, religious beliefs, and social structures. This training should include interfaith literacy and practical tools for engaging across cultural and theological boundaries.

3. Promote and Facilitate Interfaith Dialogue

Create spaces where Muslim and Christian leaders, as well as ordinary community members and the Church members, can engage in honest conversations about faith, shared concerns, and cooperation. Dialogue can demystify misunderstood concepts and foster mutual respect, contributing to peace and unity and dispel fears as well.

4. Leverage Indigenous Values and Practices

Incorporate local expressions of hospitality, community solidarity, and elders' mediation into mission approaches. These cultural values can serve as points of connection between Christian teachings and the existing moral fabric of the Kole community.

5. Recognize and Empower Local Voices

Involve local religious leaders, elders, and youth in shaping mission strategies. Their insights can help ensure that mission work is grounded in community needs and resonate with indigenous spiritual worldviews.

6. Conduct Further Research

Future studies should investigate how perceptions of Jihad differ across other regions of Cameroon and among various ethnic groups. Longitudinal research could also explore how these views evolve over time and in response to social changes or missionary presence.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to participate in a research: the Understanding of the Concept of Jihad among the Kole people in Gouna District: 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: this study aims to clarify the Kole people's unique interpretation of Jihad in Gouna to guide SDA mission strategies that respect local beliefs, promote peaceful interfaith dialogue, and foster cultural understanding.

Your Participation: You will be asked to participate in an interview. This means you will be asked to voice your views, opinions, or experience about the understanding of the concept of Jihad among the Kole people. The interview will take about 30-45 minutes to complete. You will be asked about your own opinion/perception or experience on the concept of Jihad.

Benefit and risks: If you participate, you will contribute to knowledge about how the Kole people in Gouna understand the concept of Jihad, what shape their understanding, but also how to promote peaceful interfaith dialogue. There are no identifiable risks in participation in this study.

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 thesis 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.

Please if you face any issue relating to ethical consideration in the process of this research: Such abuse or coercion or any of the form that violate your privation, feel free to contact the Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC)) at the address: 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: Adventist University of Africa Institutional Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (AUA-ISERC) through this Email: ethics@aua.ac.ke, if you need more information or have questions, the supervisor of the research AGBABIAKA, N.O., PhD (agbabiakan@aua.ac.ke) or the researcher SALI Salomon through his Email: salmons@aua.ac.ke/ salisalomon24@gmail.com, phone number: +237690561112

Thank you.

SALI Salomon

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS

- 1- How would you define Jihad in your own words?
- 2- Can you tell us other definitions you have for Jihad?
- 3- How is Jihad discussed within Kole traditions or religious gatherings?
- 4- How does the Kole community view the concept of jihad compared to other communities or groups?
- 5- Can you share any Bible stories or teachings that, in your view, show how God's messengers approached individuals who were resistant, forceful, or opposed to their message?
- 6- What is the Kole community's perception of mission work or missionaries?
- 7- Are there aspects of jihad that you think influence the way the Kole people view mission efforts?
- 8- How do you think the Kole people's understanding of Jihad affects interactions with other religious groups?
- 9- What are the things they teach you in your traditions or religion that make or help you to live in peace with people of other religions?
- 10- What do you think missionaries should understand about Jihad when engaging with the Kole people?
- 11- What message or insight would you want to share with those outside your community regarding Jihad and its true meaning for the Kole people?

APPENDIX C

TRANSLATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(From English to Fulfulde)

1. Noy a fastirta Jihad foode annde mada?
2. Jihad don feere feere noy e dume laati fastirki maaje foode Kole'en?
3. Noy Kole'en mbolwata dow hala Jihad nder kawtal maɓɓe?
4. Dume woni ferotiral andinolji dow Jihad fodde Kole'en e wodɓe?
5. A wawan limtugo tariha nder Deftere dow njangirde no njagginiɓe Allah ɓaditiri yimbe caatube na?
6. Dume laati nume kole'en heedi kuɗe linjila Masihiinke'en?
7. Andineki Jihad ngole fodde nume ma don doowa Kole'en nder no be faamata kuɗe linjila Masihiinke'en?
8. Fodde nume ma, noy annde Kole'en dow Jihad don dama kawtal maɓɓe be dinaaji fere?
9. Janngirde ndee're nder kawtal kole'en malla diina Islam don waala ɓe ngam njoodidata nder salaam be wodɓe?
10. Dume on haani Masihiinke'en anndita dow Jihad haa nder kawtal maɓɓe be Kole'en?
11. Hubar ngale a marran haaje andingo yimbe ɓe'en laatay kole'en dow manna lamdum jey Jihad?

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by Jihad?
2. How do you see the role of Jihad in daily life within the Kole community?
3. Are there specific cultural practices or traditions in the Kole community that reflect the concept of Jihad?
4. In what ways do Kole cultural values shape the community's approach to conflict resolution or social harmony?
5. In your understanding, what lessons from the Bible can help us reach people who are strong-willed, defensive, or even opposed to Christianity?
6. How do Kole people respond to portrayals of Jihad in the media or by outsiders?
7. What role does dialogue or mutual understanding play in building relationships between Muslims and Christians in the Kole community?
8. Are there community events or practices where Muslims and Christians work together?
9. How do you feel the Kole community's understanding of Jihad could be better understood by others, including missionaries?
10. What examples can you share of peaceful coexistence or collaboration between Muslims and Christians in your community?
11. Are there aspects of Kole culture or spirituality that missionaries could learn from to engage more effectively?
12. What do you think would make mission work feel more inclusive and respectful in the Kole context?

APPENDIX E

TRANSLATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP


(From English to Fulfulde)

1. Dume woni mana Jihad?
2. Dume laati nafuda Jihad nder kawtal Kole'en?
3. Al'Ada toy nder njode Kole'en nandi be numo Jihad?
4. Noy noy Al'Ada kole'en don waala be nder sa'ire caadele malla habre ngam hebugo sulhu?
5. Fodde annde madã, Janngirde deftere toy fotti walla goddo bada caata ngiigu'en, malla turtobe dow Masihiinke'en?
6. Dume laati jabuye Kole'en dow mbole ko laareni Jihad, ha suudu radio malla ha internet ngal be'en laatay julbe?
7. Dume laati nafuuda gewte ha nder kawtal hakkunde Kole'en e Masihiinke'en?
8. Kawtal ngale don hawta Julbe e Masihiinke'en, baabal ngotal?
9. Noy hannu wodge e wazobe linjila Masihiinke'en faama annde Kole'en dow Jihad?
10. Misalu ngale on wawan limtugo heedi kawtal Salaama hakkunde Julbe be Masihiinke'en nder lesdi Gouna?
11. Annde toy nder njoonde kole'en hannu Masihiinke'en hebta ngam be njoodida nder kawtal bodgal?
12. Dume tamibe wallan kuugal Linjila Masihiinke'en haklingo njoode Kole'?


APPENDIX F

LETTERS

ETHICS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Adventist University of Africa
Developing Leaders for Service
A Private Chartered University Accredited by Commission for University Education, Kenya



2nd May 2025

Salomon Sali
Theological Seminary
Adventist University of Africa
Kenya

Reference: AUA/ISERC/23/04/2025

Dear Salomon Sali

RE: Contextualizing Mission Strategies: Understanding Jihad among the Kole People in Gouna, Cameroon, for Effective Evangelism


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/2025/0030. The approval period is 2nd May 2025 – 1st May 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
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LAMIDAT OF THE CANTON OF GOUNA APPROVAL

Canton de Gouna
Lamidat de Gouna
Région du Nord – Cameroun
N° 3/05/2025

Objet : Autorisation de mener une étude académique dans le canton de Gouna

Je soussigné, **Sa Majesté le, Lamido de Gouna**, autorise par la présente **Monsieur SALI Salomon**, étudiant en Master, spécialisé en Islamologie à l'Université Adventiste de l'Afrique (AUA) au Kenya, à mener une étude académique dans le canton de Gouna, auprès du peuple Kole.

Le thème de sa recherche est intitulé :

« **Contextualiser les stratégies missionnaires : comprendre le jihad parmi le peuple Kole à Gouna, Cameroun, pour une évangélisation efficace** ».

Cette autorisation lui est accordée dans le respect des traditions locales et sous réserve de bonne conduite, de respect de la population, des coutumes du canton, et de confidentialité dans la collecte des données.

Nous invitons les chefs traditionnels, religieux, et les habitants à lui accorder la collaboration nécessaire à la réussite de son travail.

En foi de quoi, nous lui délivrons la présente autorisation pour servir et valoir ce que de droit.

Le Lamido de Gouna

Faya Aboubakury
Lamido de Gouna

TRANSLATED APPROVAL OF LAMIDAT OF GOUNA

(from French to English)

Canton of Gouna
Lamidat of Gouna
Northern Region – Cameroon
No. _____/2025

Subject: Authorization to Conduct an Academic Research in the Canton of Gouna

I, the undersigned, His Majesty the Lamido of Gouna, hereby authorize Mr. SALI Salomon, a Master's student specializing in Islamic Studies at the Adventist University of Africa (AUA) in Kenya, to conduct an academic study in the Canton of Gouna, among the Kole people.

The title of his research is:

“Contextualizing Mission Strategies: Understanding Jihad Among the Kole People in Gouna, Cameroon, for Effective Evangelism.”

This authorization is granted with respect for local traditions and is conditional upon proper conduct, respect for the population and the customs of the canton, and confidentiality in data collection.

We call upon traditional and religious leaders, as well as the inhabitants, to provide him with the necessary support for the success of his work.

In witness whereof, we issue this authorization for all legal intents and purposes.

The Lamido of Gouna

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