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STRATEGIES FOR MUSLIM EVANGELIZATION

Lilly A. Takona

Muslims are the largest and fastest growing segment of non-Christians in the world today. David Barrett estimates that in the year 1900 there were 200,000,000 Muslims in the world, constituting 12% of the world's population. By 1996 Muslims numbered 1,126,995,000 or 19% of the world's population. By the year AD 2025 he estimates Muslims will constitute 24% of the world's population. Muslim evangelism must therefore become a priority in the Christian church. Much has been written about evangelistic strategies in order to be more effective in evangelizing the Muslims. Lilly Takona suggests various approaches that are helpful in making Muslim evangelism more effective.

Don McCurry made the following plea in the 1979 North America Conference of Muslim Evangelization:

We need the vision of a harvest among Muslims and the nerve to obey Christ in evangelising and discipling them. God is asking us to lay our long-standing prejudices and our centuries' old neglect, and make disciples of these hurting friends for whom Christ died. It is time to claim promises long lying dormant concerning the sons of Ishmael.¹

ADDRESSING FELT NEEDS

In order to reach a target people with the gospel of the redeeming Lord, an understanding of their religious beliefs, societal structures, world view, and present attitude toward the gospel must be cultivated. Further, any strategy for evangelism should focus on reaching a people within the context of their needs rather than on the basis of preconceived methodologies.

Although there is no one strategy for evangelization that could be

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¹ McCurry, Don. M. "Why are Muslims so Militant?", *Muslim World Pulse* Vol. 9, No. 2 (August 1980) 5.

regarded as universally adaptable for every cultural group, a number of strategies that could be used by the African church in Muslim evangelization should be considered.

Edward R. Dayton and David A. Frazer have rightly written:

Evangelization always takes place in the context of need. When we study the ministry of Christ, we are impressed at the way in which he always responded to the needs of people: He healed the blind, the lame, and the lepers; blessed the children, fed the hungry, instructed those who sought truth, forgave the guilty, accepted the outcasts, and reassured the fearful. He was sensitive to the deep needs of people, and broke the social taboos and conventions of his day if they prevented him from helping those in need.²

Human needs are as complex and varied as human beings. Abraham H. Maslow has presented a model of man's needs in terms of a hierarchy of priority.³ In his scheme, the basic needs are physiological. When they are satisfied, safety needs become primary, followed in order by needs for belonging and love, needs for esteem, and for self-actualisation.

Felt needs prompt people either to desire change of their environment (including the social norms, economic status, and others), or seek means to satisfy those needs. In this context, without felt needs, motivation toward change is minimal.

The gospel does not only affect the heart of sinners, thus bringing salvation. It should also free man from need drives so that he can become all that God intended him to be ("The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...." Ps. 23:1).

Decision Making Process

The object of communicating the gospel to Muslims is to move them toward a decision, the decision to accept Christ as the source and giver of salvation. Since making a decision means choosing between two or more alternatives, Muslim evangelization is more than evangelism. It requires, also, an understanding of decision processes.

² Dayton and Frazer, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980) 63.

³ Aiken, Jr. *General Psychology* (San Francisco: Chandler Pub. Co., 1969) 115,116.

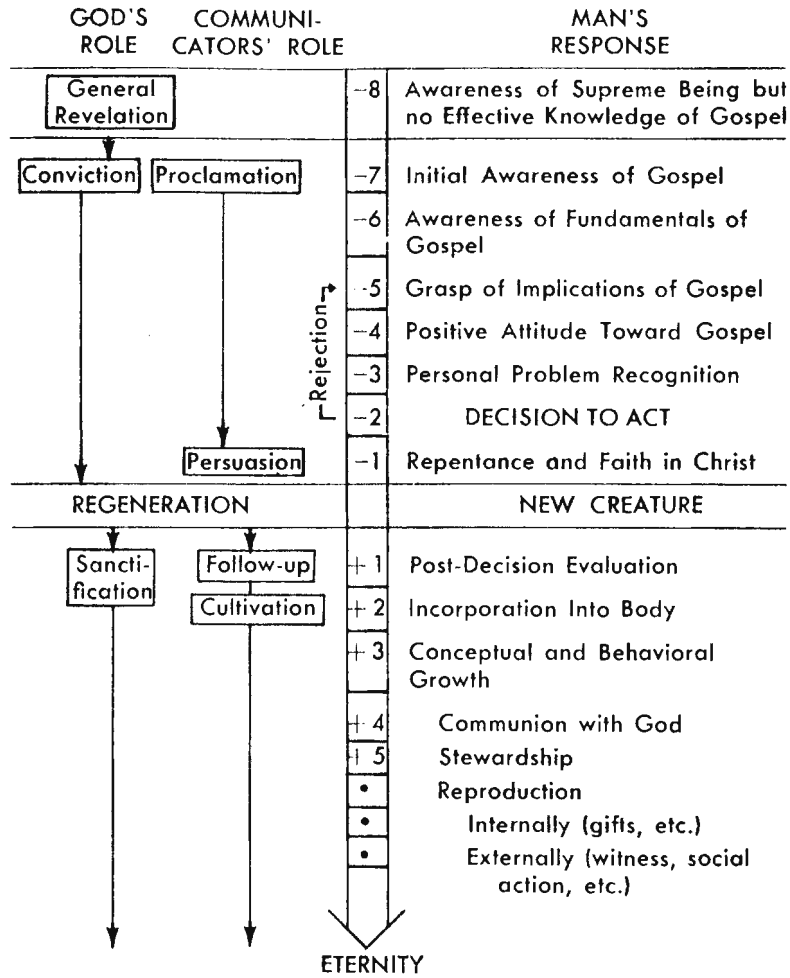


Figure 1. The Spiritual Decision Process. ⁴

⁴ Engel, James and Wilbert Norton, *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975) 45.

James E. Engel, formerly Professor at Wheaton College Graduate School and a fluent spokesman in marketing and audience behaviour, has suggested a model of spiritual decision processes which purports to be universal. The model suggests that everyone falls somewhere along a continuum in terms of their relationship to Christ. According to Engel's model, Muslims could be placed between -8 and -2. Muslims place the belief in the existence of One Supreme Being as central to man's life. God to them, as to the Christian, is immortal, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. He has not only created all things, but has continuously sustained and maintained them. The Quran speaks of God in this way:

God - there is no God but He, the Living, the Everlasting, Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep; to him being all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave?.... He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills. His throne comprises the heavens and earth; the preserving of them oppresses Him not; He is the All-high, the All-glorious.⁵

Christians have often debated the question: do Muslims have an effective knowledge or understanding of God? And, do Muslims have only an awareness of God? To respond with a "Yes" to either question may seem legitimate, but only on the surface. Muslims "know" God but only within the Islamic context. He is transcendent but not personal; merciful more than holy; He is vengeful and not a chastiser; He is capricious and less concerned.

Caution is useful when interpreting what Muslims mean when they claim to know God. Only in Jesus Christ is there a possibility of an accurate knowledge of God--a direct encounter of man with deity. Under his title, "Research Needed on Adoption Models," Joe M. Bohlem defines awareness as follows: "...is a state at which the individual knows of the existence of an idea or practice, but lacks details concerning its intrinsic nature and use."⁶

And, are Muslims aware of God? "Yes" if they can trace any events in which divinity encounters history; acknowledge man's limitation and ascribe omnipotence to a Living Being who cannot be manipulated by man or his environment; ascribe the existence of things to a Being who is orderly and capable of maintaining His handiwork. Muslims can verify their acceptance of

⁵ Quran: Suratul Al-Baggara (*The Cow*) 256.

⁶ Bohlem, "Research Needed on Adoption Models," *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*, edited by Wilbur Schramm, et al., (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971) 804.

these statements.

Based on such verification, the author concludes that Muslims are not left ignorant of the existence of God. However, Muslims have no effective knowledge of the gospel. Their scriptures contain distortions of the content of the Christian message - Christ is seen as only man. Any association of his person with divinity is considered a *shirk* (or in the terms of Paul's epistles, *anathema* or a curse).

Some Muslims have an initial awareness of the true content of the gospel - that man is a sinner and that sin is present in the life of every individual from birth; that God never overlooks sin; that the gospel is God's answer to remedy prevalent conditions; Jesus Christ gave his life for the cause of man's redemption; that Christ will return to earth and establish a kingdom whose participants shall be characterised by an upright behaviour and conduct; that God is pleased when man "seeks after God's own heart."

Other Muslims are, to one degree or another, aware of the fundamentals of the Christian gospel; that it is important that man acknowledge his corrupt nature, that God sacrificed his only Son, that man ought to respond to the call of God to accept the sacrifice made on the cross, that man ought to repent and "put his house in order" in preparation to meet his God. Others have acquired a positive attitude toward the Christian gospel and Christian institutions, including the church and mass evangelism in the market areas, and not destroying or carelessly disposing of Christian literature.

Most Muslims by-pass stages (-7) through (-4) of the Engel's model and find themselves on the Personal Problem Recognition stage in the continuum. The problems recognised in this stage are those discussed by Abraham H. Maslow (felt needs). Those who arrive at (-3) are faced with a decision-making crisis. Usually, when personal problem recognition is accompanied by sufficient knowledge of the gospel and some amount of spiritual awareness, "The individual is open to a challenge to turn his life over to Christ. Prior to that time, there is neither sufficient understanding nor need to permit a valid response to such a challenge."⁷

Professor James F. Engel observes that Jesus' view of mission strategies involved receptivity. The latter illustrates this by use of the Parable of Soils (Luke 8:5-15). Engel writes:

⁷ Engel and Norton, *How Can I Get Them to Listen?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1977) 33.

Much of the reason for non-receptivity of some soil is that the worries and riches and pleasures of this life choke out the seed of God's WordChrist is saying that filters are closed and there is no real response to anything said because of the absence of *felt needs*. The existence of felt needs implies the existence of an open filter.⁸

In another context, Engel summarises stage (-3) when he says that problem recognition occurs only when there is sufficient recognition of the gap between life as it now is and what it might be.⁹ A competent salesman would usually identify the prospective consumers' needs in order to persuade them to buy his products. The consumers may be only dimly aware of their problem or symptom. By identifying the existing condition, he creates an awareness of the need among the prospective consumers.

By supplying sufficient amounts of information, the salesman helps them to visualise satisfaction upon their consumption of the product. People are usually receptive to products or ideas when they are accompanied by sufficient information and when they appear to be dynamic enough to satisfy their needs.

Observable in Engel's model of spiritual decision processes are the three logical sequences of the procedures for the Great Commission. These are proclamation, persuasion, and follow-up/cultivation. To proclaim is to supply information.

In theories of communication, *information* is often defined as any content that is sufficient in reducing uncertainty or the number of alternative possibilities in a situation.¹⁰ Lasting decisions are usually made on the basis of the amount of information available. The larger the amount of available information, the higher the chances become of making better decisions.

To give a continuous supply of accurate gospel content to Muslims is to provide them with a basis for their decision. The Apostle Paul used this philosophy in his theology of mission. "How then shall they call upon him whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher" (Rom. 19:14)?

A continuous proclamation of the gospel among Muslims is certain to bring a clarification of the Christian doctrines. It is the field that is properly

⁸ *Ibid*, 28.

⁹ *Ibid*, 33.

¹⁰ Schramm, ed. "Nature of Communication Between Humans," *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*, 13.

prepared that is most likely to bring forth a better harvest when good seeds are sown.

Application to the African Context

Although Engel's model purports to be universal, it needs to be developed to become more adaptable in a cross-cultural communication of the gospel to Muslims. Africa's people are numerous and diverse. Muslims have cultures of their own with distinct cultural variables, including: attitudes, social organisations, roles and role expectations, patterns of thought and non-verbal expressions.

Pattern of Decision Making: Unlike the West, which is also the cradle of Engel's model, Africans are a very homogenous people. Their cultures revolve around the family, village, clan and tribe. Many African groups, including the Maasai, are oriented toward communal loyalty and dependence on initial decisions made by recognised persons in the community for the entire village or clan.

However, with the present situation in Africa, whereby plurality in society is becoming more acceptable, research ought to be undertaken to discover how Muslim communities make decisions. Secondly, research ought to determine how their process of making everyday decisions could be systematised or generalised into Engel's model.

Credibility of the Messenger: The model needs to include the stage in which the target Muslims establish a positive consonance with the Christian communicator. All the evidence in the Bible organised perfectly and delivered well will not persuade a Muslim to arrive at the decision-making stage of the Engel's model unless he associates it with the credibility of the Christian communicator.

Time Required: In addition, any strategy using Engel's model ought to be one willing to allow a considerable amount of time given to proclamation. Evangelism does not only mean persuading unbelievers to accept the Gospel but it also means preparing the field for sowing the seed. The Christian communicator may never see the seed germinating and growing to maturity.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE GOSPEL

Farmers specialising in horticulture know that having advanced farm machinery does not guarantee a plentiful harvest. Tools and techniques are of vital importance. However, other factors have to be brought into consideration,

including the type of soil, amount of rain per annum, weather variation, pests, fencing, and the experience of the farmer himself.

Tea plantations, for example, require a considerable amount of rainfall, a cooler climate, a higher elevation, and a well-drained volcanic soil. Rice plants do well at low altitudes, warmer temperatures and in marshy fields with dark loam soils. Any farmer whose goals are to have a bumper crop harvest must provide for his crop a situation within the specifications required by the very character of his crop. Yields of any given crop are largely determined by the nature of the field on which the seed is sown. In more appropriate terms, the content (soil type and climatic conditions) has a bearing on the ultimate size, quality and quantity of the harvest.

This same concept is transferable to Muslim evangelization. Adherents of Islam have, down through history, shown resistance toward God's eternal truths as presented by both the living and the written Word of God. Anthropologist Allen R. Tippet has rightly stated:

The greatest methodological issue by the Christian mission in this day is how to carry the Great Commission in a multi-cultural world, with a gospel that is both truly Christian in context and culturally significant in form.¹¹

Use of the Quran

Muslims do not, necessarily, resist the Gospel because they think it false or that it has been devoid of God's *Kalima* (message) to man; rather they perceive it as a threat to their culture, including the solidarity of *ummah*. The Willowbank report on Gospel and Culture, prepared by the Theology and Education Group of Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, states:

The.....problem is that the Gospel is often presented to people in alien cultural forms. The missionaries are resented and their message rejected because their work is seen not as an attempt to evangelise but as an attempt to impose their own customs and way of life.¹²

¹¹ Tippet, Alan R. "Contextualization of the Gospel in Fiji: A Case Study from Oceania," *Gospel and Culture*, John Stott and Robert Coote, editors (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1979) 393.

¹² Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, "The Willowbank Report - Gospel and Culture," (Wheaton, Illinois: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978) 13.

The Gospel is a life-changing force. However, it does not necessarily have to be a foreign element within the culture of their Christian communicator. The gospel must be recognisable to Muslims within their cultural matrix. There is need to recognise the distinctive features of Islam which provide a unique opportunity for effective Christian witness. Donald McCurry remarks:

It is widely known that many Muslims have come to Christ by first being pointed to Him by the Quran. True, they later encounter Him in the New Testament and from then on the Quran no longer remains a reference book for them. But the point is, I should not feel shy about using the Quran as a beginning point for introducing the subject of Jesus. And Paul has given us endorsement of this approach by his use of Greek literature in his Mars Hill sermon.¹³

Jesus, in his ministry in Palestine, used the method that leads men from the known to the unknown. In confronting the Pharisees who accused the disciples for having transgressed traditions, Jesus used the very Scriptures that the Pharisees read and had become acquainted with (Matt. 12:2-8); when casting merchants out of the temple (Matt. 21:14); when giving an answer to a lawyer who stood up to test him (Lk. 10:15ff); when in dialogue with the woman at the well (Jn. 4:5ff).

Quoting Geoffrey Parrinder, Parshall explains that "Jesus is always spoken of in the Quran with reverence, there is no breath of criticism for he is the Christ of God."¹⁴ The gospel needs to be related much more thoroughly to the Islamic context. The Christian communicator should not assume what the Latins call *tabula rasa* (blank slate), and ignore the realities of the Muslim religious knowledge. Time has come that the gospel presentation has to cease assuming the form of an exotic transplant from the Christian context. Proclaiming God's love means also to do it with that love which respects the dignity and spiritual treasures of Muslims.

The Logos Approach

The Christian communicator seeking to reach Muslims, to be an effective instrument of the gospel, has to have the courage to cast off the "idols" of his tribe and identify himself with the Muslim culture. A personal friend of the Author recently said, "you must become a Muslim to win Muslims to Christ." This

¹³ McCurry, Don M. "A Cross-Cultural Model of Muslim Evangelization," *Missiology*, Vol.4, No. 3 (1976), 280.

¹⁴ Parshall, Phil. *New Paths in Muslim Evangelization* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) 137.

may sound like a cliché. However, the Author is convinced that personal identification is key to persuasion.

To reach man, God did not mail a shelf of videotapes and slide presentations to the world. He appointed people with attitudes, personalities and feelings. God's sending enterprise climaxed with the sending of His only Son - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son..." (Heb. 1:1, 2).

The Gospels witness that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). Christ came and lived like man. He became a Palestinian Jew who spoke Aramaic; who largely conformed to the customs of his day; who identified himself with the misery of this world. This act shows how God freely chose the human situation. The writer of Hebrews observed:

Therefore, He had to be made like his brethren in all things that he might become a merciful and faithful high Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17).

Alizondo, too, observed:

The tremendous mystery of the incarnation is that God freely chose the limitation of man. Jesus was not just any man, nor was he a universal man; he was a Jew limited by the customs and conditions of his economic, social and religious situations.¹⁵

The *Logos Approach* to Muslim evangelization requires two kinds of identifications. First, that the Christian communicator identify with the Muslim culture and, secondly, that he or she identify with the truth in the Word of God. Christ, though he took flesh, did not sacrifice His divinity on the altar of Judaism. He remained as ".....one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

The New Testament presents a double identification of the person of Jesus Christ.

1. ".....God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). Though incarnated into a specific culture; dwelling in a

¹⁵ Elizondo, *Christianity and Culture* (Huntington, India: Our Sunday Visitor, 1975) 83.

specific land that had a specific history, keeping largely with the traditions and customs of Judaism, Christ did not divest Himself of divinity and the responsibility placed upon him as God's *khalif* (representative). He remained truly God. To meet Christ was to meet God. "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). "He who hates me hates the Father also" (Jn. 15:23). "...I am not alone because the Father is with me" (Jn. 16:34).

As the Son identified Himself with the Father so the Father identified Himself with the Son at the transfiguration, when He said, "...this is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; hear him" (Matt. 17:5).

2. "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5:21). God's supreme example of communication was in Jesus Christ. He lived out His life in human form. In God's eyes, evangelism is seen as not a task of isolation. It demands presence, an active presence.

The New Testament refers to the body of believers as being the "the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13). In many parts of this continent of Africa, salt is used as a preserving element. Food such as fish and other meats are salted to remain longer without decaying.

Believers are said to be elements in society who function as salt in preserving its good cultural values from further decay. Notice here that salt does not change meat into salt, rather, it keeps it from decaying.

Christians should become salt among Muslims, encouraging them in their zeal for truth, promoting concern for their neighbours and giving charity to the poor, showing justice and fairness in their transactions. "Do not think that I came to abolish the law or the prophets, I did not come to abolish, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17).

As salt of the earth, believers in Christ have that responsibility to add taste to human life while showing that life receives meaning and purpose when Christ is given the central position in daily activities. As shall be discussed below under Context-Evangelism Approach, Muslims, especially African Muslims, are a very homogenous group that is often more aware of the need of society than their own individual needs. Goldsmith's testimony gives a vivid illustration of this character.

....This was true of my Malay policeman friend in Singapore. He became convinced of the truths of the claims of Christ, but he had little sense of

personal needs. However, he was deeply conscious of the needs of his Malay people as a race and felt that the Christian faith could be the one power that could change his people's national characteristics and attitudes. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ there could be an attitude toward work, marriage, honesty, etc.....¹⁶

Paul did not only speak of *Logos Evangelism*, but also articulated it in seeking to communicate the gospel across cultural and racial barriers. He wrote:

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without the Law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I maybe all means save some (I Cor. 6:19-23).

As the Christian communicator takes Christ to the Muslims he hopes that his message will be received. In the *Logos Approach* he must be careful that the message is not compromised to the point where it becomes only a shallow, meaningless mass of words. One warning must be issued at this point: the communicator must always keep before him the centrality of the message of Christ, not the over-involvement with social or cultural accommodations merely because there is pressure exerted by the method toward such considerations.

The *Logos Approach* calls the Christian communicator to learn the language of the people, to adapt himself and his message to their particular needs and backgrounds. This is not to say that the "offence" of the Cross is disguised or made to take a lesser place in the ministry. He must seek to borrow what is in the Muslim culture and infuse it with new meaning. He must seek to find opportunities to let the gospel infiltrate the Muslim society, taking on the language forms that will enable them to understand and embrace the gospel without alienating them from their high respect of consistency and dedication to divinity.

The Context-Evangelism Approach

How can the Gospel be brought to a people with any hope of salvation,

¹⁶ Goldsmith, "Community and Controversy," *Missiology*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (January 1976) 320.

when history shows that they have continuously shown resistance? As we ponder over the possible approaches in the evangelism of the Muslims, we reason that God can enable Muslims or any people, to reach points of acceptance of the gospel through their own societal structures. With such a realisation, we then suggest a Context-Evangelism Approach (C-E Approach) in which the initial effort to persuade is focused on key decision makers within a given group of people. Africans, be they traditionalists, Christians or Muslims, have a profound sense of community. They are a people, *umma*, *olosh* 'bo, one village, a tribe.

On this continent, community workers have learned that in order to ensure a successful innovation, the new thing must be introduced through the existing structure of society. Most often, the innovation is channelled through recognised leaders. For example, the introduction of vaccination to the Tiv tribe in Nigeria which refused to be vaccinated on the grounds that the head of the family had performed the appropriate *akombo* rites, took this form:

The British administrator wisely dealt with the man (head of family group) as well as his senior, the head of the kindred. When the family head was persuaded that European vaccination was advisable, he told his people, and they came easily of their own accord, without the need of persuasion.¹⁷

Are principles of social changes applicable to religious changes? Yes, if smoother patterns of conversion to Christ are attainable. Muslims have to be approached by way of recognised community leaders. And who are they? Are they the *Mu'lahs*? The *Maalims*? The Chiefs? Fathers who are also husbands? Who?

This is a difficult question in that it involves an investigation into what constitutes a community. Is it not the tribe? No, that is too big. It is not even the clan. To recognise a community, a few questions have to be asked. These include questions as: If this Muslim is a part of a vital action taking place, either performing that action himself, or having it done to him, whom does this action affect in the same vital way as it affects him? If this Muslim finds himself in a judicial situation, who is affected by it? Or, if this Muslim makes a decision to become a Christian, who would be affected by his conversion? Will it be his tribe? Hardly. His clan? No.

The C-E (Context-Evangelism) approach should identify a given

¹⁷ Mead, Margaret. ed. *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change* (New York: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1955) 117.

community, its decision makers, and its values. Approaching head leaders is the initial step and contact with the defined community. To approach head leaders is to approach the symbol of unity in a community. To approach isolated individuals is to make them outcasts of the community. These will always remain outcasts of their community until such a time that a majority or all the community is converted. The C-E approach calls for an initial response for Muslims as a community.

Too often, the conversion of most individual Muslims has resulted in the departure from their own culture and community. J. Merle Davis points out:

Conversion tends to isolate a person from his social unit, destroy his source of support, render him a ward of the mission and deprive him of those normal human relationships and obligation through the exercise of which his one Christian experience may best be strengthened. It also deprives the group to which the new convert belongs of the daily witness of his Christian faith.¹⁸

An approach as C-E is more likely to open wider avenues for proclamation when the Christian communicator develops a positive rapport with decision makers. In so doing, the C-E approach leads the communicator to find a real community among Muslims, providing him with an opportunity to let Muslims hear an explanation of the gospel within the context of a crowd without making them become self-conscious.

The communicator is able to teach them as a unit, to dialogue with them as a group for they have similarities of feeling and reactions. A community such as this has its own distinct personality. Most often, such a community acts as a unit, accepting or rejecting an innovation. Innovations among Africans, and especially those that affect religious beliefs, do not usually take place in one individual at a time. Groups adopt changes as groups, or they do not adopt them at all.

The C-E approach, however, is convinced that decisions for or against Christ must be made by persons as individuals. Each individual soul stands before God as guilty. As such, this approach promotes mass responsiveness as opposed to mass conversion in which a large number of individuals hastily profess Christianity. The mentality of the C-E approach is to cultivate an appetite and an initial acceptance of the gospel. This concept has clearly been

¹⁸ Davis, J. Merle. *New Buildings on Old Foundations: A Handbook on Stabilizing the Younger Churches in their Environments* (New York: International Missionary Council, 1947) 38.

expressed by Bruce Fleming when he writes:

.....The effectiveness of evangelism depends upon our ability to design and apply methods of evangelism that will integrate and utilise the social web of relationships of people as natural "bridges of God" between individuals, families, tribes and communities. Such relationships serve most effectively as channels for the flow of dynamics in evangelism and gospel expansion.¹⁹

To a strong homogenous group of people as the Muslims, the C-E approach would, certainly, be much more effective than methods of approaching them on a one to one pattern. The Gospel must be presented to social units, via decision makers, rather than to one individual. New Christian "Muslim" families are more likely to survive the pressures and sufferings of persecution and to expand the church than scattered individuals. The twenty-first century African church must seek to develop Bible based and relevant approaches to evangelism while taking the New testament directives to reach every soul as absolute.

CONCLUSION

If we catch the vision of a great harvest among the Muslims, how then should we approach the task? This article has argued that it is imperative that we address the felt needs of the peoples we evangelize. To avoid having individual converts who are thrown out of their families, we should prayerfully approach the decision making individuals so that Muslims are won to Christ in families and groups. The messenger of the gospel must identify with the Muslims as the eternal Logos did in order to gain credibility as a Christian witness. Efforts should be made to contextualize the gospel by using the Quran as a bridge in communication. Time will be required to do all of this and the evangelist may never see the seed germinating which has been patiently sown over the years. But with much focused prayer we may say by faith that the Muslims will also be won to Christ.

¹⁹ Fleming, Bruce. *Contextualization of Theology* (Pasadena, California: William Carrey Library, 1980) 69-70.