

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

*A Survey on Members' Perception of Faith Cathedral
Church on Muslim Evangelism and its Implications for Mission*

BY
KITUR CHEPKIRUI CATHERINE

*A Thesis Submitted To The Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Missions (Islamic Emphasis)*

JULY, 2008

HE
7
25
585
08

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

LIBRARY
NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
P. O. Box 24686, NAIROBI

**A SURVEY ON MEMBERS' PERCEPTION OF FAITH CATHEDRAL CHURCH
ON MUSLIM EVANGELISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION**

BY

KITUR CHEPKIRUI CATHERINE

A Thesis submitted to the graduate school in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for degree of
Master of Arts in Missions
(Islamic Emphasis)

Approved:

Supervisor:



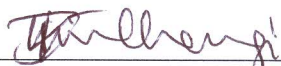
Dr. Josephine Mutuku

Second Reader:



Dr. Caleb Kim

External Reader:



Prof. Julius Muthengi

July, 2008

Student's Declaration

A SURVEY ON MEMBERS' PERCEPTION OF FAITH CATHEDRAL CHURCH ON MUSLIM EVANGELISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MISSION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)  _____
Kitur Catherine Chepkirui

July, 2008

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to find out and explain the members' perception of Faith Cathedral Church on Muslim evangelism. The study also sought to identify contributing factors to that perception with the view to help the church develop practical approaches toward Muslim evangelism. Interview questions were employed in collection of data. The study of documents was also done. Emphasis was placed on information gleaned from the interviews because perception is about peoples' opinion and attitude. An interview guide was used in order to generate information from the respondents. The following groups were interviewed: church leaders including the senior pastor and some sampled members of the congregation. In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the following questions were posited which gave direction to the research efforts:

1. How do the members of Faith Cathedral Church perceive Muslim Evangelism?
2. What factors contribute to the perception of the church members on Muslim Evangelism in relation to mission?
3. What are the practical approaches that can be used by the Church for Muslim evangelism?

First, the research findings showed that the degree of awareness was a key factor that influenced members' perception of Muslim evangelism as well as methods of approach. Secondly, there are secondary factors that contributed positively and negatively toward Muslim evangelism. These contributing factors determined the extent of members' involvement in Muslim evangelism. Those who had increased awareness of Islam had positive view. They were characterized by compassion, love, commitment and patience as they gave themselves to do open air meeting, door-to-door evangelism, and giving out tracts in order to enable Muslim neighbours or friends to hear the Good News. But those who had little knowledge of Islam were overwhelmed by fear, threats, terrorists and feelings of inadequacy, hence saw Muslim evangelism as a risk undertaking and very hard. As a result they took no action so as to win Muslims for Christ. Thus, right attitude or perception in any mission pursuit is vital.

TO

All who want to reach out to Muslims for Christ. My passion is to see every believer's life impact the Muslim world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I thank the Almighty God who made this work a reality.

My family: I will forever remain thankful to my dear husband John Kitur who shared with me the experience of this research work. I thank our children: Ebenezer, Jabez, Neema and Immanuel for their moral support which made me confident in my studies.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. Josephine Mutuku, my first reader, who supervised and saw me through the initial and difficult stages of this work and made valuable suggestion; to Dr. Caleb Kim, my second reader, who read whole of the work and offered valuable advice. I wish to acknowledge Dr. Stephen Sesi and Dr. Henry Mutua for their prayers and encouragements I received throughout my studies. I could not have made it without you. Thank you.

I thank all my instructors for equipping me with knowledge. I appreciate immensely their teaching and kindness. I enjoyed and appreciated every course I took at NEGST.

I am grateful to all my friends who believed in me and supported me as I embarked on this work. I sincerely thank my extended members of the family for all the support they gave me throughout my studies at NEGST. I am thankful to the friends made as a result of this work, especially those who took their time to walk through the interviews, discussions and interactions with me. Lack of space prevents my listing all their names, so I hope they will pardon me for thanking them collectively. This work would not have been completed without your support. Thank you.

NEGST community: I am grateful to all the community members, teachers, staff, and students for their encouragements and support during my time here.

Faith Cathedral Local Church Assembly: I want to acknowledge Rev. Benson Wagemma and the local church members for their kindness, availability and co-operation, without which the collection of the material for this thesis would have been delayed.

I am grateful to my sponsors: Educating Africans for Christ (EAFC), The Mustard Seed, Overseas Council, Mylne Trust, and Wayfarers among many others who supported me and my family. Without their contribution through the grace of God, I would not have completed my studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement.....	2
The Purpose of the Study.....	3
Research Questions.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	4
Limitation and Delimitation	4
Definition of Terms	5
CHAPTER TWO.....	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Substantive Literature.....	6
<i>Islam and Muslim</i>	6
<i>Faith of Islam and Its Claim</i>	9
Contributing Factors to the Christian Perception of Muslims.....	11
<i>Ignorance and Fear</i>	11
<i>Muslims' View of Christianity</i>	13
<i>The Facts of the Gospel</i>	14
<i>Islamist Terrorists</i>	15
Reaching Out to Muslims.....	16
<i>Get to Know Them</i>	16
<i>Point to the Work of Christ</i>	17
<i>Love Your Neighbour</i>	18
Summary of Literature.....	19
CHAPTER THREE.....	21
METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN AND PROCEDURES	21
Qualitative Approach.....	21
Entry Procedures.....	23

Population.....	24
Sampling.....	24
Data Collection.....	24
The Role of the Researcher.....	25
Data Analysis and Procedure.....	26
Validation and Reliability.....	27
CHAPTER FOUR.....	29
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION.....	29
Theory.....	29
Effect of Positive Awareness of Muslim Evangelism on Members' Perception ...	31
<i>College/School Education</i>	31
<i>Private Study</i>	31
<i>Friends</i>	32
<i>Outreach</i>	32
<i>Preaching and Testimonies</i>	33
<i>Media</i>	35
Effect of Negative Awareness of Muslim Evangelism on Members' Perception...	35
<i>Ignorance and Fear</i>	36
<i>Historical Events</i>	37
<i>Media</i>	37
<i>Fear of Suspicion</i>	38
The Relationship between Factors Influencing Perception and the Methods of	
Approach to Muslim Evangelism.....	39
<i>Open Air Meetings</i>	39
<i>Door-To-Door Evangelism</i>	40
<i>Giving Out Tracts</i>	41
Implications for Mission.....	41
CHAPTER FIVE.....	44
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	44
Recommendations.....	44
Areas for Further Research.....	48
REFERENCE LIST.....	49
APPENDIX A.....	51
Interview Questions Guide for church members.....	51

APPENDIX B..... 52
Interview Questions Guide for Church Leaders 52

FIGURES

Figure

1. Church Awareness on Muslim Evangelism and members' Perception.....32
2. How factors influencing perception affect methods of approach to Muslim Evangelism.....41

Abbreviation

- *FGCK*: Full Gospel Churches of Kenya.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Islam is the world's second largest religion with a following of over one billion people called Muslims (Clark 2003, 15). The word "Islam" actually means "submission to God." Therefore, a Muslim is one who strives to submit to God.

Islam has spread across the entire globe. Muslims can be found in every single country, but they are predominately found in Africa, the Middle East and Asia (Ibid., 13). As Muslims look at the world, they are convinced that their way of life is better than the Christians way. Furthermore, they believe they know the Christian religion and they want nothing of it. Such knowledge is challenging and it has frustrated the efforts of some faithful Christians who would have wanted to fulfill the Great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mathew 28:19 NIV).

This research is a survey on members' perception of Faith Cathedral Church on Muslim evangelism and its implication for mission. Faith Cathedral Church is situated in Kawangware market and is affiliated with the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK). Next to this Church is a Mosque. Besides the mosque, Faith Cathedral Church is strategic in its location by the fact that there is a society of Muslims living a few meters away from the church. The location has been identified as "Muslim village." While this is strategic in itself for the church to reach out with the Good News to the Muslims in the said village, it became apparent to the researcher that the church has not fully seized the opportunity to win Muslims to

Christ. The researcher felt that their passive involvement in Muslim evangelism could be challenged so as to awaken the church into active mission practice.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that many Christians are ignorant of the difference between Islam and Christianity. Apparently there is little teaching or nothing the congregation has received to ignite and mobilize them to engage in Muslim evangelism. The pastor may find it easy to proclaim from the pulpit that evangelism is required from every believer while he does not offer any guidelines on how to do Muslim evangelism. While it is important to encourage the congregation to share the Good News with all people regardless of their cultural background, it is vital for the pastor and church leaders to understand that cultures differ and so their approaches are not all the time the same. What may work with traditional people may not be applicable to the Muslim community because these are two distinct groups with different cultural practices.

Muslim evangelism is one of the areas where Faith Cathedral Church has neglected or somehow assumed in its priorities on the area of mission outreaches. It is for this reason that this paper sought to find out how the members of Faith Cathedral Church perceive Muslim evangelism.

Problem Statement

At no time has the church taken Muslim evangelism seriously. If there is a general agreement that Muslim evangelism is part of the church mandate, then the church should be prepared adequately to match the task. Every leader and member of Faith Cathedral Church should be familiar with how they can present the Good News of Jesus Christ to Muslims who believe strongly that Islam is the only straight path to God.

This research seeks to find out how the members of Faith Cathedral Church perceive Muslim evangelism. It is important, not only to understand the church members' perception on Muslim evangelism, but also to identify the underlying factors that may have informed their perception. The end result of the research pursuit is to help the church to develop practical and effective approaches to reaching out to Muslims for Christ within the neighborhood.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to glean factual information from the members of Faith Cathedral Church regarding their perception of Muslim evangelism. This was with the hope that the outcome would give the church members a better understanding of their perception of Muslim evangelism as well as to identify the contributing factors to that perception. Ultimately, the research effort is intended to help the church to develop effective mission approaches to Muslim neighbours or friends.

This research is a survey which is descriptive in nature. The researcher has adopted a qualitative approach. Oral interviews and a study of available documents were undertaken as the means of deriving data for this study. This research has been designed to help the researcher to find out and explain the perception of Faith Cathedral Church on Muslim evangelism. It is also to identify contributing factors to that perception in order to help the church to develop effective ways of Muslim evangelism.

Research Questions

In order to accomplish the above purposes, the researcher is guided by the following Research Questions.

1. How do the members of Faith Cathedral Church perceive Muslim Evangelism?
2. What factors contribute to the perception of the church members on Muslim Evangelism in relation to mission?
3. What are the practical approaches that can be used by the Church for Muslim evangelism?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this research are intended to contribute to the following:

1. The study provides understanding of the church's perception of Muslim evangelism.
2. The study will provide knowledge to the church leadership to broaden their vision of mission and will help them on how to sensitize and encourage the congregation on Muslim evangelism.
3. The study seeks to provide materials for educating the church on appropriate ways to Muslim evangelism so that the hindrances or offenses the church could have witnessed can be eliminated or minimized.
4. This study seeks to challenge the church on how to fulfil God's mandate. It will enhance knowledge on biblical understanding of Christian witness. The church must reach out to all people with the Good News of Jesus.

Limitation and Delimitation

This study is limited to Faith Cathedral Church in Nairobi West. The study narrowed its focus to members' perception of Muslim Evangelism. The study is confined only to Faith Cathedral Church but it could be applicable to other contexts.

This study limits its scope to the interview of the sampled members and leaders of the church. There were other resource persons from other regions but were not invited to participate. Another limitation is associated with denomination. The findings may not reflect perceptions by other Christians from other denominations living in the same region.

Definition of Terms

- *Church*: It is used in this study to refer to the members of Faith Cathedral Church. These are people who have obeyed Christ and who gather in a local fellowship and are therefore identified as followers of Christ. It is a spiritual body of Christ.
- *Informants/respondents*: These two terms were used interchangeably with reverence to research population chosen for study.
- *Muslim*: Muslim simply refers to one who strives to submit to God.
- *Pastor*: May be simply defined as a Christian minister having spiritual charge over a congregation.
- *Evangelism*: It literally means “to offer good news” or “to pass on the information” about the Gospel.
- *Mission*: It refers to the work of a religious missionary. A special assignment to deliver a message that is given to a person or group by God.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Substantive Literature

Islam and Muslim

Muslim can simply be defined as a person who has surrendered or submitted to the will of God and is a follower of Islam the religion of the Arab prophet, Mohammed (570-632AD). A majority of the Arab people are Muslims by religion, whether one is an Arab, a Persian, a Pakistan, Indonesia, African or Turk (Clarke 1990, 79). A Muslim is a person who is committed to God (Allah) according to the best spiritual knowledge that he has. Islam is precious to him as his religion, his culture and his very life. Unfortunately, Islam represents a distorted and negative view of Christianity which makes the average Muslim very resistant to the gospel as we understand it.

Christians on the other hand have often presented their religion as a religion of love and peace while understanding Islam as a religion of war and sword. In the modern media, Muslims and Islam have often been covered in a way which reinforces this old perception. Because of the Islamist terrorists, Muslim suicide bombers, and death threats against Christians in Islamic countries, and all these news are pouring into our homes through both print and electronic media; it has instilled fear, anger and hatred against Muslims in the minds of many, regardless of whether one is a Christian or not. People are now afraid of Islam even though not all Muslims are participants in these scaring events. But there is great ignorance about the true nature of Islam

religion among Christian believers. Though many pastors may be concerned and a few have tried to witness to Muslims, many have only been faced with fierce opposition. It is important for Christians to question their assumptions on Muslim evangelism and take stock of their past performance. While it is true that every born again Christian should be a witness of Jesus Christ to the lost, preparation of these believers on how to do Muslim evangelism is of paramount importance. Hiebert observes that Christians face challenges with Muslims because the church has not understood the true nature of Islam. He writes

Men have many different customs in worshipping God. Some take their shoes off, some keep them on. Some wear a hat, some remove the hat. Some fast at one time, some at another. Some ring the bell, some call people to worship with a loud voice. Some worship together on Sunday, some worship on Friday. There is no need to argue about these customs. It is quite wrong for Christians and Muslims to attack each other's way of worship. Let us not waste our time in quarrelling but strive in our own hearts to offer true worship to God (Hiebert, et al 1999, 89).

From this observation, Christians who are unaware of what makes up the life of a Muslim would find it difficult to share the Good News with them. The church does not need to take the same approach as she would among pagans when dealing with the Muslims. As a fact, some Christians who have tried to witness to Muslims have been totally frustrated because of wrong approaches which are by and large influenced by preconceived prejudice. They have tried to reach the Muslims by attacking the Muslims' practices which is quite inappropriate. Christians who do not understand well the nature of Islam would be quick to judge it on the surface. They look at outward practices and as a result begin to undermine Muslims and they quickly forget that Islam and Christianity are two different cultures. Because of this ignorance, there is contempt from adherence of each religious group, thus each member thinks that what they believe and do is the only correct way of doing things and that is the only

way to life. While it is a fact that there is no outreach without challenges, one ought to understand that Muslims have a diverse culture as well as Muslims view of Christianity.

Therefore, besides Muslims culture, it is important for Christians to understand Muslim's perception of Christianity so that they may adequately strategize on how to win them for Christ. Muslims are people who are brought up to believe that their religion is the only true religion. Goldsmith comments, "People's worldview provides understanding of "what" and "why" of the everyday religious beliefs and practices" (Goldsmith 1982, 26). This is true to every culture. He continues to write,

Christians call Jesus the son of God. Muslims usually ask, "God has no wife, so how can God beget a son? Muslims ask this question because they have misunderstood the Christian belief. So it is necessary to explain carefully what Christians really mean by the title; son of God (Ibid., 28).

It should be emphasized that concepts are very important. They shape people's lifestyle and they affect how people respond to the realities of the world. Kraft from his anthropological view says, "If we are to witness effectively to human beings, we have to take account of the culture in which these human beings live." He defines culture as "a total way of life of a people, the social legacy the individual acquires from his group" (Kraft 1996, 32, 38). It is a fact that no individual can exist without cultural observation because from all cultures, beliefs and practices are passed on to the next generation. However, with the Muslims, religion and culture are intertwined and thus it is difficult to an outsider to penetrate. To the Muslims, religious practice is part and parcel of their culture. "It is a total way of life" as Kraft puts it (ibid). It is important for all Christians to understand these facts. Further, it is vital for all Christians to be fully equipped with teachings so that when they face any challenge, be it doctrinal issue or practical issue being raised by the Muslims, they will be better placed to respond. The researcher felt that teaching would help bring about change in

perception. It is for this reason the researcher conducted a survey on members' perception of Faith Cathedral Church in order to find out how the church perceives Muslim evangelism since attitude in many instances influence action. Therefore, if Christians are to become relevant in witnessing to Muslims, they ought to understand the nature of Islam and learn how to minister to them appropriately.

Faith of Islam and Its Claim

The Arabic word "Islam" means "submission" and "Muslim" as mentioned earlier stands for one who submits (Clark 2003, 25). This forms the basic understanding of the Muslim faith as expressed in Surah 19:93: "*There is none in the heavens and the earth that cometh to the beneficent as a slave.*" This knowledge is vital for Christians, especially those with the passion to reach out to the Muslims with the Good News. Musk states that mission must be pursued within the constraints of the gospel (1989, 67). If Christians must become relevant to Muslim friends, they must meet the Muslim at the starting point: For example, Muslim believe and acceptance on the divine origin of the Quran. With this in mind, Goldsmith notes:

Until we have some knowledge of Muslims' beliefs concerning revelation, we cannot really understand the basis of their criticism of Christianity. When we have examined Muslims attitudes to the scripture, then we can see why they accuse us of having tampered with the original revelation of God (1982, 66).

Saal comments further that the Quran is considered by Muslims to be a miracle from God, eternal and uncreated, sent down from heaven (1993, 31.) From this comments it is apparent that if the church is better informed on Muslims beliefs, there are great tendencies to avoid confrontations and attacks against ones believe. On the contrary, the church ought to concentrate on presenting the gospel message they have been given, and preach it to the lost souls. Such knowledge of the Muslims' believe is vital because it informs Christians on how they ought to conduct their discussion with

Muslim friends in order to avoid confrontations. Every Christian should learn that their appeal to the truths recognized in the Quran would make Muslim attentive to the Gospel.

Hiebert, however, approached it from a different view. He points out “Muslims resistance to the gospel is not only due to their creedal simplicity and historical confrontations but also the Christians failure to deal with the common people’s felt needs (1989, 45). It is clear from this comment that Christians should minister to both physical and spiritual needs of Muslims. It is critical for every Christian to show genuine concern to Muslim and seek to minister to them holistically. In spite of this, Muslims view of Christianity contributes also to great degree of rejection of the gospel. Those who have interacted with the Muslims can concur with Nehls’ report that Muslims cannot fail to throw such provocative phrases like, “We have the final truth, the Bible is not true, because it was changed, and that is why God sent Quran, so that all people can believe the right way” (1988, 121). This is challenging but the Church should be assured that the Biblical teachings are without error hence complete revelation of God’s truth. While arguments or confrontations may not be dispensed with totally, for example, when such criticisms are posed during periods of discussion, Christians should be trained on how to tackle such confrontations (and mind to) so that church members may learn to win the soul rather than the argument. If every Christian would observe what Sweeting comments, then evangelism among the Muslims would see great achievements. He says, “It is often said that if a man has a soul; and he has, and if that soul can be won or lost for eternity, and it can; then most important work in the world is to bring men and women to Jesus Christ” (1978, 101).

Arguments should not distract the members' focus. Every Christian, be it member or leader of the church should be vigilant and aim to touch the Muslim's life rather than show their greatness through arguments.

Contributing Factors to the Christian Perception of Muslims

An important factor that might have a bearing on the perception of Muslims and evangelism is the issue of the context. For this reason, the researcher took a case of Faith Cathedral Church in order to find out their perception of Muslim evangelism. The researcher saw this as vital because if the church does not have right perspective that is motivated by love, then nothing would move the church members to share the Good News with Muslims. There are some Christians who believe and teach that Muslims are just under a curse and beyond redemption. A few have even tried to witness to these Muslims but have been strongly opposed. They have been bombarded with arguments against Christianity, and on the other hand some have been enticed by all kinds of benefits to embrace Islam. As a result some have found themselves on the receiving end where they became mission "objects" to be switched over and some have become Muslim converts. Because of this, many Christians have dismissed and discarded the dream and passion to do Muslim evangelism. Instead, some have regarded it as a ministry for specific people, perhaps a pastor and outreach team.

Ignorance and Fear

There is no doubt that many Christians are ignorant of the difference between Islam and Christianity. At no time has the church members taken Muslim evangelism seriously. A few individuals or groups have, in isolated cases, tried to witness but these were exceptions rather than the rule. It is crucial to realize that fear is based on ignorance. An ignorant Christian who does not know Islam or Muslims, and is

confronted with arguments against Christianity just cannot deal with this. Ignorance causes fear and fear suppresses evangelism. But knowledge and experience reduces this fear. Katerrega and Shenk in their book *“Islam and Christianity”* have discussed many things that distinguish Islam from Christianity, for example, Muslims’ teaching about Jesus. The Quran’s teachings are more contradictory to the teachings of the Gospel. The Quran teaches that the coming of the Messiah was glad tidings, (Surah 19:17). Katerrega and Shenk present Muslims’ view, which they describe in this manner:

Jesus was a prophet sent by God who received a divine revelation, the gospel. He was conceived by his mother Mary when he was a virgin and he performed miracles by divine will. However, he was virgin and he performed miracles by divine will. However, he was not son of God and did not instruct his followers to regard him as divine (1980, 13).

While the mission of the church is to tell the Muslims the gospel, the church would not succeed until she has carefully explained to the Muslim listener what it means to say Jesus is the son of God. It is clear that Muslims acknowledge Jesus was born by a virgin and he performed miracles, but they miss out the most vital part; that he was the son of God. Evangelism among Muslims has been fiercely opposed because many Christians are ignorant of the way Muslims view Jesus and Muslims have been offended instead because each body carries a different view.

Therefore, before we identify ways through which we can effectively witness to Muslims, we have to deal with the crucial fact of ignorance by helping the church understand the faith of Islam and its claim, as well as Muslims’ thinking about the Bible. Muslims believe that Christians and Jews have changed the Bible. Christians ought to have this in order to explain the Gospel meaningfully and explicitly to a Muslim.

Muslims' View of Christianity

Watt comments that for the Muslims, God is a numerical one who cannot be divided even to reveal himself to man. The average Muslim around the world has a tremendous misunderstanding of Christianity. Muslims perceive Christians as believing in three gods: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Mother (Mary). He notes:

According to the true teachings of Islam, God is not to be conceived in an anthropomorphic way. He is above all other attributes. Since he is one and the only one, a Muslim cannot invoke him in the name of the father, the son or Holy Spirit. All the divine attributes are well embedded in his perfect unity (1983, 38).

Muslims like Jehovah Witness reject the Christian doctrine of trinity and affirms the apparent doctrine that God is one. As Christians, we all know how hard it is to grasp the deep truth of the trinity and it is even much harder to explain it to others. Rippin explains that the creation of the distorted image of Islam was largely a response to the cultural superiority of the Muslims, especially those of al-Andalus. He writes,

The Christian perception of Islam, without neglecting the intellectual side, gave rather more weight to moral weaknesses. This meant that Christians could feel that, even if the Muslims were superior to them in various cultural matters, yet they, besides having a true and thus better religion, were in many ways morally superior to the Muslims. The Christian perception of Islam implies a corresponding perception of Christianity (2001, 75).

Furthermore, the doctrine of the death of Jesus is completely rejected by Muslims.

They argue that it is completely impossible that God could die. But Christians on the other hand believe there is no salvation outside Christ. Christians believe that salvation is earned through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. On the contrary, Muslims hope that God (Allah) will some day forgive their sins. Many Muslims believe that Muhammad will speak up for them on the judgment day. They have their own perceptions of how sins are forgiven. Ridgeon (2001, 80) following Quranic

teachings said, “A Muslim believes that to be accepted into paradise, one has to do good works which are then rewarded by Allah. How can Jesus die for mankind so that their sins can be forgiven? That is impossible” (Surah 6,164).

Muslims would always try to put good argument on these subjects, and Christians ought to be aware of this so that they do not waste energy arguing with them. Moreover, every Christian should make use of some contact areas that are familiar to both Muslims and Christians as pointers to lead Muslim into studying the Bible. In fact any Christian should understand that finite minds will always have difficulties putting this divine mystery into proper words. Perhaps there is need to observe what Shenk viewed. He says:

Muslims are not surprised to hear that Jesus was persecuted because the same thing happened to many prophets. But they believe that God never allows his messengers to finally be defeated. So, one should explain that Jesus’ death on the cross was not a defeat but a victory (1989, 19).

So, any member of the Church who does not know how Muslims behave and react will not be able to deal with such oppositions.

The Facts of the Gospel

God loves the world and the people of his creation. He hates sins but is full of compassion when he sees man’s depravity. The effect of sin and the sense of value moved God to make a way of reconciliation so that man can be brought back to God Himself. Isaiah 63: 9 says, “*In our distress He was distressed, and he saved us.*” God took the initiative to look for man and no one knows why God chose this way, and no other. But the main thing is that we can trust him fully. The scriptures are very clear on the call of the church to mission. From Genesis to Revelation God is seen to be on the mission of reconciling men to Himself. God has given this responsibility to the church. The members of Faith Cathedral Church need to understand that God has

called them for a purpose. As it was asserted in the introductory, the church is focused on mission but there is hardly any tangible attempt towards Muslim outreach. The Muslims are being neglected in the priorities of the church yet the Bible commands every believer to go to all the world and make disciples (Mathew 28: 19, 20). The verse states “all” people of “all” nations must be made disciples through the teaching of the word. Every Christian has the mandate to reach out to all people regardless of their background. Christians should understand that they are indebted for the lives of the Muslims living in their neighbourhoods, if ever these Muslims will not hear the gospel. Furthermore, these Christians should be a model so as to attract those Muslims to Christ.

Islamist Terrorists

Safa comments from his perspective that terrorist acts are other causes for the lack of witness to Muslims (1979, 129). Many Christians are fearful of their lives as they think that if they are seen trying to convert a Muslim they will be invaded. With no doubt Islamic terrorists are extremists within the Muslims faith. It is true that Muslims are trying to gain popularity through this act of terror, but Christians should remember they cannot judge all Muslims in the light of Muslims fundamentalist. Rather they should observe keenly the caution the Lord Jesus Christ warns the believer: “Do not judge for you will be judged” (Matthew 7:1). In fact Muslims are not worst than any Christian who is not fulfilling God’s desires but merely professing his faith. God is pleased if His people are observing fully His decrees because those who do not believe might be won to Christ through their lifestyle.

Reaching Out to Muslims

When discussing on the contributing factors to members' perception of Muslim evangelism, fear and ignorance were identified as one cause. This is how Nehls illustrates, "Everybody is scared of snakes, but if I know *how* they behave and react, and what can be done in case of snake bite, I lose an irrational fear" (1988, 50). Knowledge and experience greatly reduce fear. The same applies to Muslim evangelism. Evidently, it is crucial to identify the underlying causes to lack of aggressive witness to Muslims. Primarily, Christians should be equipped with the knowledge of what constitute Muslim evangelism and thereafter be mobilized to reach out. The Good News can be properly and appropriately communicated if the church is informed. This should be true to Faith Cathedral Church. Below are some suggested ways on how to reach out to the Muslims.

Get to Know Them

Many Christians live with Muslims in their neighborhoods but they do not know how to share the gospel with them. Musk cautions the Christians that the basis of effective Muslim witness is to understand the background of the Muslims culture and the basis of their beliefs (1989, 44). For this reason, Christians must deliberately choose to learn and identify basic Muslim beliefs and the confusions that are shared by Muslims about Christianity. Musk has further challenged Christians to reflect interest in the Muslims' beliefs and allow them time to articulate their views (ibid). Christians can do this by listening to Muslim friends and then responding to their views in an effective manner. Christians should never be quick to conclude that Muslims are unreachable. It is true the call of God is always costly. It takes one to places which others regard as impossible to do work, but every Christian must remember that God provides. The church exists on earth to make Christ known.

Point to the Work of Christ

Gaudeul argues that Christians should not preach to people to come to their religion, for this will imply that God is found in only one side of the religious divide: That only Christianity or Islam is the religion and that the other is in error, but rather one must direct them to God (1999, 97). Any Christian should be courteous and should always aim to point out to the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ for salvation to Muslim friends. Throughout the nearly 1,400 year history of Islam, Muslims have resisted the Christian Gospel (Marsh 1975, 98). Some Christians tried to reach them with the Good News, but with little success and there must be reasons for this. Christians today should learn from the past mistake committed by fellow Christians and take the right approach for the purpose of bringing glory and honor to God. Some Christians who have tried to witness to the Muslims have received fierce opposition because of ignorance. Others have called on people to join their tradition and have failed to tell them the true gospel. Because of these mistakes, they have failed to make significant impact in the lives of their Muslim friends, among other people.

Chapman (1989 107) observes that Christians in their witness to Muslims must stress that because of Jesus, His cross, and resurrection, one may have the full assurance of salvation, both now and for eternity (see 1 John 5:13). In spite of the Muslims rejection to this truth, Christians should not give up, but must boldly share the plan of salvation with Muslims. They should point out that salvation is a gift and not to be earned. Chapman shares this testimony: An Egyptian man stated more broadly and unequivocally that the main attraction of Christianity for a Muslim is the assurance of salvation. A Javanese man said simply, "After I received Jesus, I had confidence concerning the end of my life" (1989, 125).

It is important therefore to encourage the church members to be willing to become a friend and a personal evangelist to Muslims. The reason for this is that unless Muslim evangelism become people-oriented there is no way Muslims are going to be reached. Christians should strive always to become good models so as to attract Muslims to themselves and make disciples for Christ.

Love Your Neighbour

Gaudeul comments that people easily sense whether we really love them. Muslims could tell if the church merely wanted to convert them without any deep concern for them as people. Giving an illustration, he says,

A young Sunni Muslim woman saw a kindness and experienced an intimacy with her believing friends that made her believe that God, too, could be her friend and give her eternal life. Admittedly, it is difficult to separate the example of love demonstrated by believers and the witness of scripture, testifying of a God of love. But the fact is genuine love shown by Christians to the Muslims would bring an attraction to the living saviour Jesus Christ (1999, 109).

The church must be genuine in her love for God's people. She should see Muslim friends as God sees them and accept them the way they are. Even if Muslims may appear as a threat to church, Christians must remain courteous and loving. The church should show genuine concern for them and not only seek to convert. Christians should be ready to walk alongside Muslim converts throughout their Christian journey. Nevertheless, Smith notes that there are various ways of witnessing to the Muslim. Among them are ministries in coffee houses or contacts through relatives. Another example is sharing with Muslim women in their natural way in their context. He says that Christian students should be quick to invite Muslim friends to their homes or church because this is the way to build relationships that would guarantee opportunity to share the gospel (1989, 201). It is important for Christians to be familiar with these

methods since they would contribute to a meaningful communication of the Good News of Jesus Christ to Muslim adherents at all times.

Summary of Literature

Reaching Muslims with the unique Gospel of salvation in Christ is not an easy task. This is because Muslims in the first instance are very different from Christians. Their beliefs are different, their culture is different, and they think and act differently. It is all together different from Christianity and it appears strange to many Christians.

Therefore, if Christians are willing to reach out to the Muslims with the Gospel, they must examine their attitude and learn to work with patience. But, first they should seek to understand the true nature of Islam because throughout the nearly 1,400 year history of Islam, Muslims have resisted the Christian Gospel. Many Christians tried to reach them with the Good News but with little success. However, this history can be changed if only the church would become people-oriented.

This research is a survey on members' perception on Muslim evangelism and its implication for mission. Perception rather than the attitude of the respondents is the main area of focus even though there is a close link between the two. Basically and in most cases our perception of things may largely be influenced by our attitude and vice versa. It is for this reason the researcher sought to find out how the members of Faith Cathedral Church perceive Muslim evangelism. This is important because unless the church takes stock of her perception, Muslims evangelism will fail to be given the serious attention it deserves in strategic planning. But, if Christians in their perception of Muslims would overcome any sense of prejudice, this becomes the initial step toward a successful mission work. As evidence by the above literature review, the

church leaders are charged with the responsibility of equipping the congregation on meaningful ways to witness to Muslims.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

This section avails the methods and the procedures utilized in the research. Since this study deals with people's perception and opinions, an appropriate methodology needed to be used to allow the researcher to gather the required data. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher employed Grounded Theory approach within the context of the Qualitative Research domain.

Qualitative Approach

Creswell (1998, 15) defining the qualitative research in positive terms expresses it as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem”. He adds, “The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words and detail views of the informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting”.

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 204) differentiate between quantitative and qualitative approach as seen in the following dimensions; purpose of the study, focus of the study, view point, values, reality (stable/dynamic), orientation, instrument, conditions, coding of data, data analysis, results and research reports. However, Creswell (1998, 15) gives a clear difference that quantitative research uses few variables and many cases, whereas the qualitative research uses a few cases and many variables. Creswell for this reason presents criteria for the selection of research approach to be adopted. Some of the factors include: Researcher's world view,

researcher's training or experience, the nature of the research problem, the researcher's tolerance of the ambiguity, and the audience for the study (ibid). Therefore, the researcher chose to use qualitative design because of the above mentioned characteristics of the paradigm.

Research Approach

According to Creswell there are five approaches for carrying qualitative research namely; biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Biographical research focuses on the life of individuals in terms of their history, events in their lives, interpretation of the meaning of events chosen and also the lesson learned from the study. Phenomenology focuses on the understanding of concept or phenomenon. It involves the exploration of the structures of consciousness in human experiences in which the participant needs to have taken part in the concept being studied. Ethnography describes and interprets a culture of people group or system such as patterns of behaviour, customs, and lifestyles. A case study focuses on a specific case. A grounded theory focuses on developing a theory from the studied phenomenon (Creswell 2003, 152). Of the five traditions discussed by Creswell, the researcher employed a grounded theory approach.

The Rationale for the Grounded Theory Approach

The researcher employed the grounded theory because of what Creswell describes. He says, "The intent of a grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon that relates to a particular situation" (Creswell 1998, 56). The researcher is looking into how the members of Faith Cathedral Church perceive Muslim evangelism. The researcher chose to carry a

grounded theory because a theory derived from data is more likely to resemble the reality than the theory derived by putting together series of concepts based on literature or solely through speculation. Grounded theories are likely to offer insights, enhance understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, 12).

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were used in data collection. The researcher asked for clarification whenever it was necessary. Face-to-face interviews were administered because of their effectiveness in gleaning the factual information. The informants were expected to express themselves freely on how they perceive Muslim evangelism. In this study the findings served as guide to provide a theory of the Faith Cathedral Church members' perception of Muslim evangelism.

Entry Procedures

In this study the researcher sought permission to conduct the research from the leadership of Faith Cathedral through the senior pastor. Also the researcher obtained an official letter from the Academic Deans office of NEGST as a confirmation of the research effort. After the permission was granted, the researcher shared her intentions of the study to the informants and the reasons for choosing the church as well as how the results would be reported. The researcher ensured confidentiality of data collected by using the terms "respondent" or 'informant" to avoid direct mention of the identity of the informant. The final task was to interpret the data, develop a theory from the research undertaking, and then report the findings.

Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 9) describe a population as “the aggregate of all that conforms to a given specification”. Thus, a population is a group that has characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. In this study, the researcher drew samples from accessible population. The researcher divided the population into two groups: fifteen church members and five church leaders (senior pastor, two elders, and two deacons). This population was twenty (20) in total. The informants were interviewed to enable the researcher to glean factual information from the members of Faith Cathedral Church regarding their perception of Muslim evangelism.

Sampling

The study used qualitative approach which allows for a non-probability sampling. Since the focus is on extensive inquiry, the respondents chosen were those with ability to provide the information needed and helpful to the study. The informants were hand picked because they were informative and they possess the required characteristics. In the grounded theory, Creswell (1998, 118) calls the strategy theoretical sampling, where the people chosen would contribute to the evolving theory. A number ranging from 20-30 has been suggested by Creswell, though he has gone ahead to suggest that when the saturation level has been reached, the interviewing map stops (Ibid., 158). Theoretical saturation is when the researcher cannot find new codes emerging from data analysis (Straus and Corbin 1998, 158).

Data Collection

In qualitative research, the most common method for data collection is through interviews. Mugenda and Mugenda state that to obtain accurate information through

interview, the researcher needs to obtain maximum co-operation from respondents. He must therefore establish a friendly relationship with the respondent prior to conducting the interview (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 83). The researcher gets an opportunity to ask questions so as to make comments intended to lead the respondent towards giving data to meet the objectives of the study. On the same vein Weiss comments:

We can learn also through interview about people's interior experiences. We can learn what people perceived and how they interpreted their Perception; we can learn the meanings to them of their relationships, their families, their work and their selves. We can learn about all experiences from joy through grief which together constitutes the human condition (1994, 1).

In this survey on members' perception of Muslim evangelism, the researcher employed in-depth interview composed of detailed discussion and probing of the investigation under the study. The researcher also examined documents in church for instance the accounts' books, discipleship documents, and other relevant documents. Gillham (2000, 42) noted that documents provide a formal framework to which one may have to relate the informal reality. They are good sources of data collection because they could be accessed at any convenient time to the researcher. The documents were accessed with the consent of the pastor. No specific sampling procedure was adopted for the written sources. The documents revealed that the church has no particular plan for Muslim evangelism. There was no budget allocated to cater for any mission activities for the Muslims. Though the view was positive, the sources revealed that Muslim evangelism is not the priority of the church.

The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the leading instrument in collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The researcher as the primary instrument was helpful since the interview questions served only as guide in the process of

interviewing. Therefore, the researcher administered interview questions and sought clarifications from the respondents when it was necessary.

Data Analysis and Procedure

In qualitative research, data analysis aims at bringing order, structure and meaning to the class of information collected. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 117) say, "In qualitative analysis 'researcher obtains detailed information about the phenomenon being studied and then try to establish patterns, trends, and relationships from the information gathered.'" The collection of data and analysis can be done at the same time in qualitative research. Coding and organization of the information into themes and concepts was expected in this study and it made the interviews done to be transcribed at the first place. Strauss and Corbin (1998, 121) suggest three types of coding: Open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

The procedure of data analysis involved open, axial and selective coding. Open coding involves looking for categories from data collected. They consider it as 'conceptualizing', defining and developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. They say data can be too big to manage. In reducing the large amounts of data to manageable size, there are three ways of doing open coding. That is analysis of sentence by sentence, a whole paragraph, or perusing the entire data to know what is going on.

In open coding the researcher examined the notes that were already transcribed which formed categories of the information. Categories are concepts derived from data that stand for the phenomenon. They can be a problem, an issue an event or a happening that is defined as being significant to respondent (Ibid., 114, 124). The researcher read through the interview transcription as she made necessary margin notes. One way to begin coding is to write concepts in the margins or on cards

as they emerge during analysis. As Creswell mentions, the data is reduced to “a small set of themes or categories that characterize the process or action being explored in the grounded theory study” (Creswell 1998, 151). With the topic under study, categories were formed to find out how the members of Faith Cathedral perceive Muslim evangelism.

Axial coding involves ‘relating categories to their subcategories’ (Ibid). A researcher creates coding paradigm to show the relationship of the categories of information; strategies for addressing the concept are taken into account. The axial analysis is essential because the researcher is creating a theory. In axial coding, the researcher selected one of the many categories and in the process of axial coding she positioned it within a theoretical model.

Selective coding represents a third aspect of data analysis in grounded theory research. Selective coding is the ‘process of integrating and refining the theory’ (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 161). Categories are arranged around a central phenomenon to see their relationships. Integration here means the interaction between the analyst and the data (Ibid., 144). The relationships that emerge during the axial coding are validated by searching for confirmation of the findings from the respondents. A “story” that connects the categories is built and a theoretical proposition is made at the end (Creswell 1998, 150, 302). The process of coding and categorizing continues until all the data are considered and no new categories emerge. Selective coding enables the emergent of a theory which is represented in a figure.

Validation and Reliability

Reliability and validity are essential to the gathering of data. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999, 95), reliability is the degree of consistency that the

instrument or procedure demonstrated after repeated trials. The definition seems general but each type of data gathering procedure exists. For a qualitative study where interviews are used, effectiveness is in establishing rapport so that the significant information needed is elicited (Best & Khan 1998, 205).

In validity, the quality of the instrument or procedures for data collection is achieved. Creswell discusses eight primary strategies to check the accuracy of the findings (2003, 196). In this study the researcher used a triangulation and a member checking approaches. In triangulation approach information from different sources is put together to shed light on the central theme of the study. The literature review provides supplements and validation. Here, the literature review will be expected to provide ethic accuracy or validation of the findings from the literature review. In the member check approach, the researcher solicits the respondents' view of the credibility of the findings and interpretations. In this member check approach the researcher took the final report back to the respondents to determine whether the information and result are accurate. Creswell and Miller (2000, 209) say that informants can provide a good criterion in judging the quality of the study, which is given under the procedures for verifications, and it was used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this study is to find out how the Members of Faith Cathedral Church perceives Muslim evangelism. Implications for mission are drawn from the findings. Data was collected through the interviews which were conducted with some leaders and members of Faith Cathedral church. Furthermore, a study of recorded documents was conducted. The basic research questions used in collecting data were as follows:

1. How do the members of Faith Cathedral church perceive Muslim Evangelism?
2. What factors contribute to the perception of the members of Faith Cathedral on Muslim Evangelism in relation to mission?
3. What are the practical approaches that can be used by the church for Muslim evangelism?

The data analysis using the procedure discussed in chapter three generated the following theory.

Theory

Majority of leaders and members of Faith Cathedral Church have positive view toward Muslim evangelism. Their perception was contributed by the degree of their awareness which include both positive and negative factors. Theses contributing

factors influenced both the perception as well as the methods of approach to Muslim evangelism. The awareness came through diverse means, including church activities, college training, high school learning, media, personal study, and association with friends. Those informants who had basic knowledge about faith of Islam had a positive view with regard to reaching out to Muslims. They identified them as human beings who are in need of God's salvation. Love, patience, compassion, and commitment characterized their view of Muslim outreach. On the other hand, some informants who were negative toward Muslims, regardless of whether they had heard about them or had seen them, responded negatively to any attempt to motivate them into action. Hence, fear, ignorance and lack of commitment characterized their perception.

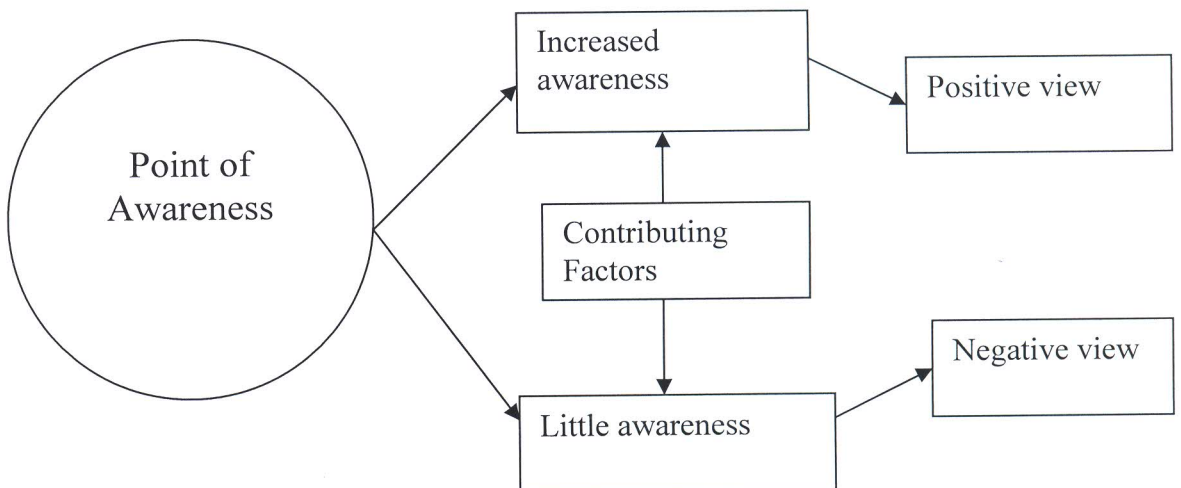


Figure 4.1: Church awareness on Muslim evangelism and members' perception

Effect of Positive Awareness of Muslim Evangelism on Members' Perception

From the findings, significant factors both positive and negative were identified by the informants as contributing toward their perception of Muslim evangelism. Several informants who had increased awareness of Islam appreciated it because it served as an eye opener.

College/School Education

Four informants expressed that through their studies in school, they came to understand better what Islam was all about. One informant said,

Before I took the course on World Religions, I had little knowledge of Islam. I could only identify who a Muslim was because of their culture of dressing and nothing more. But that course really opened my eyes and I began to understand what makes Christianity different from Islam and my view of Muslim evangelism changed.

It is clear from this statement that college training or school education served to influence positively the members' perception of Muslim evangelism.

Private Study

For some members, it was personal studies that influenced positively their view of Muslim evangelism. A respondent who is a leader narrated,

A big change on Muslim evangelism happened to me two years ago while I was going round in the city. A Muslim issued a tract to me and when I reached home I read through it. Surprisingly what was written annoyed me so much because it was criticizing the Bible. Since that day, I determined to study the Bible well and I committed myself never to let go in vain any opportunity that God would give me. I told myself, if God brings a Muslim closer to me, I will never shy off telling him the Good News. I was crazy about this.

The factors leading to positive view were instant or gradual. Though some were negative reaction from the Muslims, nevertheless, they inspired some of the church members to persist and not quit the task. In one way or another they led to a serious

commitment of each individual to fulfil God's purposes as well as to build up the spiritually.

Friends

For some members, association with their peers in school and place of work led to their change of perception. One respondent attributed her increased awareness on Muslim evangelism to the open discussion they often had with his friends. Sometimes through such discussions he came to learn many things about Muslims: for example, ways of approach. One morning he woke up and decided to pray that God would lead a Muslim to him and he would put to test what was suggested. He found the answer to his prayer and thus realized that Muslim evangelism can be approached in different ways. To him he used what he identified as "common ground." This refers to areas that are familiar to both Muslims and Christians. He mentioned areas like Jesus and prayer. He said as he began his sharing on the subject of prayer, the attention of his Muslim neighbour was arrested. This informant said that, due to that response, he was motivated to witness to the Muslims more than he had done. Feelings of compassion for the Muslims increased and this led him to serious commitment to the task.

Outreach

Speaking of the positive factors that influenced the members' perception of Muslim evangelism, three informants concurred in this sentiment:

I have other fellowship apart from the one within our church. At my place of work we have a strong fellowship that is committed to prayer and outreach and through this team I have gone for mission in regions that are densely occupied by Muslims. Through this encounter my love for the Muslims was ignited and my view of reaching out to them with the Good News ever since has changed.

The exposure and association with other believers and participation in the evangelistic exercise contributed to the positive view toward Muslim evangelism for some respondents. One other respondent narrated her experience, “I have Muslim friends and every time I try sharing the goods news with them, their willingness to learn and understand the things that make Christianity different from Islam really challenges me.” There is the awareness that Islam and Christianity are two different religions. This is critical because when these members are aware of their distinction it helps in preparing them to share their faith with others.

Preaching and Testimonies

Through activities of the church that include worship, preaching, teaching and testimonies, the informants were made aware of their responsibility to reach out to Muslim neighbors or friends. The informants of revealed that Muslims evangelism is part of the church mandate. All the respondents in this study were born again Christians. They all expressed their obligation to take the Good News to the Muslims. The respondents said that they were aware of the fact that it was their duty to reach out to the Muslims by virtue of their knowledge that Muslims are not Christians and they need the saving grace of God. They identified Muslims as one among the unreached people groups in Kenya.

Several informants said that their conversion experience and the urge within contributed toward this view as they saw their lives increase in love and compassion regarding Muslim outreach. They said the church cannot talk of reaching out before she can establish her identity. They said the church is a living community of believers, saved for the purpose of reaching the lost souls for God. One of the respondents who was a leader said,

I know Muslims are human beings who are sinners as any other person and not necessarily worst because of their religion, but God loves them and want to save them. And He has appointed the church to preach the gospel message to all humanity, Muslims included.

Passages like great commission (Matt 28: 19-20) were referred to as one of the passages that speak to the church about her obligation to take the Good News to the whole world.

One respondent who was a leader expressed, “If you deal with the Muslims, talk to them about salvation. They need the grace of God and the Holy Spirit to open their understanding of who God is and why they must be born again.” Other four respondents said that the testimonies from Christian missionaries who occasionally come to church have influenced their perception of how to reach out to the Muslims.

One respondent said,

When I listened to the testimony of pastor who is a missionary in Mombasa express how difficult it is to work with Muslims, yet he has not quit the call to be a missionary among these people, I was encouraged, especially as the pastor was narrating the experience of his most difficult moments.

Testimony was identified as one of the contributing factors to members’ positive perception of Muslim evangelism. It served as catalyst which motivated and changed the view of some of the informants toward Muslim evangelism. Several informants realized that at the point they learn to depend on God’s guidance, obstacles like fear, threats, rebellion, confrontation, and rejection caused by the Muslims are swallowed in love, compassion, patience and commitment to prayer and action.

Though these factors are seen as secondary, they are significant in understanding the members’ perception of Muslim evangelism. On the other hand, some of the respondents said, “The testimonies from the Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) as they shared the way they were saved and the way God has protected them against any harm, motivated us toward reaching out to the Muslims.” Therefore, through

testimonies, some of the respondents found their view of Muslim evangelism changed greatly and they found themselves motivated to witness to Muslims regardless of any challenge or risk involved.

Media

Some informants through the process of watching and listening to the media received information about Muslim evangelism a different perspective. One of the respondent said, “When I listen to one of the channels through the radio specifically Hope FM, I learn a lot about Muslims.” She said that the teachings which are given through this channel have influenced her view of Muslim evangelism. This realization broke her heart and she narrated,

Friends, (wapendwa) when I learned how Muslims are doom to destruction by rejecting the Good News of Jesus, I cried to the Lord and asked God to help me not to keep to myself the sweet message I have received. I heard the spirit of God telling me, “Those are my creation, I created in my image and I will not leave them to perish. Arise, I am sending you to go and preach to them.”

This respondent was changed by God and she began approaching the whole issue positively. She realized that though Muslims might become rigid to accept the Good News, it was alright as long as they are given an opportunity to hear the Good News. God would do His work. This demonstrated the level of love, care and commitment among some members of the church in pursuit of Muslim evangelism.

Effect of Negative Awareness of Muslim Evangelism on Members' Perception

Despite training, studying, preaching and encountering with Muslims, some of the respondents saw Muslim evangelism as a “risky undertaking” and very hard. Their view was negated by some factors that include confrontation, intimidation, disrespect, threats and violence. While for some they just did not know how to witness to a Muslim but for some who had tried at one point, they said that Muslims are violent

and disrespectful hence difficult people to deal with. In spite of being Christians for some years, some respondents realized that fear had paralyzed their attempts to reach out. For others it was evident that Muslim evangelism was a hard task, full of risk and so would not want to lose their peaceful stay with the Muslims in their neighbourhood. One informant said,

I fear interacting with Muslims because I remember some day in the years past when I lived in Mombasa. We had a Muslim neighbour and one morning I tried to talk to her about the Good News. Surprisingly, my friend reacted fiercely and she embarrassed me shouting and talking bad about Christianity. From that time I am careful and I made up my mind never to talk to any Muslim about my religion.

Ignorance and Fear

On the other hand ignorance of the true nature of Islam has contributed to a negative view among some of the informants. They see Islam growing fast in its population but they do not know what is attracting people into this faith. Some informants said they could only tell a difference between Muslims and others from their dressing code but they know little about Islam. One informant who is a leader said,

Islam as a religion is growing very fast. The church sees it as a threat because it is a fast growing faith. There is conscious awareness among the leadership of the church but many of us are not informed of how to counter them because we do not know where to begin. It is a problem we have noted because Muslims can easily be offended if you do not know how to handle them. And that “how” is still our problem as leaders and so it amount in no preparation of members since there is no resource person.

From this story, it revealed that there is awareness on how fast Islam is growing and posing great threats to the church, but the leadership of the church had feelings of inadequacy to counter this faith. As a result there is lack of preparation on the part of members and this has great bearings toward members’ perception of Muslim evangelism.

One informant said, “It is many years now since I heard my pastor teaching the church explicitly about Muslim evangelism without just mentioning of how the congregation is indebted to reach out to the Muslims.” It is clear that perhaps the pastor exhorted all that he had learned and he had nothing left to teach or he might have believed that his work was completed and now it was upon the church to act. Ignorance is indeed expensive.

Historical Events

Several informants said, “Some members due to historical experiences, their view of Muslim evangelism were influenced negatively. As a result, they have made up their minds never to witness to the Muslims.” Some said, “A few years ago we were commitment to evangelize Muslims, but Muslims attacked us one day. Since then we have been overwhelmed with fear because the memories are still fresh in our minds.” This story indicates that because of the past negative experience with Muslims, some church members’ perception of Muslim evangelism became negative. It marked a beginning of a different kind of perspective towards Muslim evangelism as well as ways of approach. Some of the members who were affected during that event made up their minds never to persuade a Muslims anymore into conversion.

Media

The awareness of the true nature of Islam was communicated negatively to some informants through media. Some respondents mentioned Television (TV) as one source of information that influenced their perception of Muslim evangelism negatively. One informant said, “Every time I watch the TV, I see ugly scenes of murder mainly in Arabic countries and I have always struggle to understand how Muslims are so merciless people.

I mean to me they are the same whether in Arab countries like Pakistan or in Kenya, a Muslim is a Muslim. Think for example the terrorist attacks in Kenya, I do not really like them.” The kind of message the media conveys had potentials to influence negatively the perception of some informants. This tool has played a part in members’ perception of Faith Cathedral Church on Muslim evangelism both positively and negatively.

Fear of Suspicion

Fear of suspicion is another contributing factor that has affected some of the church members’ perception of Muslim evangelism. Several informants concurred in this expression:

Muslims are good observers and they always know what Christians may be after. When they see a Christian associating with a Muslim regularly, they will question that relationship. I have been asked one day by a Muslim friend why I should relate with them and not with other Christians. They know that Christians will not avoid persuading them to believe the Biblical teachings and they are never at peace with us because of this fact.

It is clear from this story that because of suspicions and threat from the Muslims, some of the Church members have made up their minds to keep off reaching Muslims. Some have decided that if they want “peace” they forget about sharing their faith with Muslims.

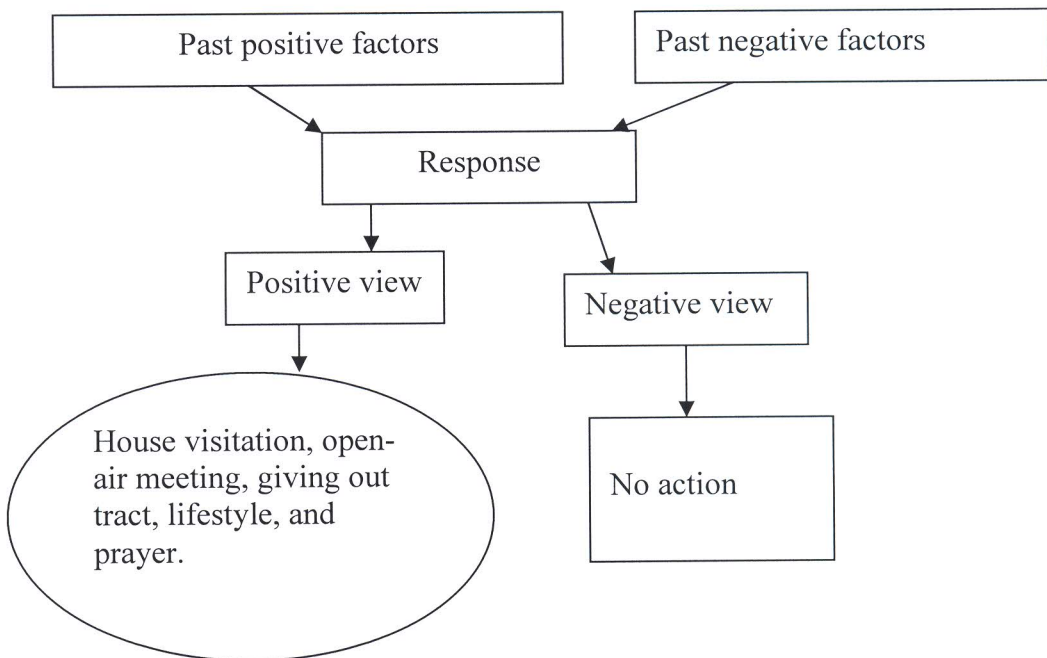


Figure 4.2: Factors influencing perception and methods of approach

The Relationship between Factors Influencing Perception and the Methods of Approach to Muslim Evangelism

The respondents found themselves charged with great task in regard to Muslim evangelism. The degree of their awareness of Islam was key factor which influenced members' perception of Muslim evangelism. Other secondary factors which were identified by respondents contributed to both positive and negative view. The respondents mentioned some practical approaches that they have employed during their evangelistic outreach, which they found appropriate because of outstanding challenges they have faced.

Open Air Meetings

Despite the risks in Muslims evangelism, several respondents were passionate and concern for their Muslim neighbors or friends. The respondents said they have

tried all they could to have the Muslims hear the Good News. For example fear was mentioned as an element that influenced the perception of Muslim evangelism. One respondent who was a member of the church said, “Since the day Muslims attacked the church, most of the members have lived in fear because we cannot tell whether we can be terrorized again even in our homes. I was personally happy when the pastor advised us to take caution as he declared that we were going to engage more on open air meeting instead of person-to-person evangelism.” The leaders and members of Faith Cathedral Church opted for an open air meeting thinking that if Muslims have denied access into their homes, Open air was seen as convenient method. One informant said,

As a result of the attack by Muslims whom we know and we are familiar with, because these are the people we live together, I feel scared whenever I intend to go and witness to them. But whenever the church plans for an open air meeting I am more comfortable because I know open air is free for all and if Muslims want to come and hear the message they are free. I prefer this method because I would not have to deal directly with any Muslim and my feelings of fear are limited.

Passion for the lost was seen as a driving force that pushed several informants to plan for open air meetings. Through this approach the respondents said that Muslims are privileged to listen to the gospel and some have extended welcome into their homes.

Door-To-Door Evangelism

This approach was identified as another method the church has embraced for Muslim evangelism. The members of Faith Cathedral Church seized the opportunity given to them by some of the Muslim neighbors. One respondent said, “Some Muslims are ignorant of Christianity and they wish to know what Christianity is all about.” Some informants through visiting the Muslims home have been impressed by the willingness of some Muslims to listen to the Good News. As a result their perception and approach have been influenced positively.

Giving Out Tracts

Some informants said that because of suspicion and threats posed by the Muslims, they opted to use literature to reach out to their Muslim friends. One informant who was a leader said,

When I attended Pastor's Book Set seminar, we were given tracts to use for evangelism. Through my study of these materials I discovered some were good for Muslim evangelism and I began issuing out to my Muslim friends. Amazingly, it has attracted some of them and they keep asking me to give more. I also realized this approach is working well for me and my friends because we do not have to argue. They read the material and we can now discuss. I have booked more of these materials from Life Challenge Africa.

It is demonstrated that through giving out tracts, friendships have been maintained and confrontations have been limited or prevented. One informant said giving out tracts has attracted a good number of his Muslim friends who are interested to know something about Christianity. Living in awareness of Muslims' view of Christians, and awareness of church members' responsibility to reach out to the Muslims and the risks therein led into this way of approach. However, those who were overwhelmed by fear and ignorance had a problem and they could not perceive how they could get involved in Muslim evangelism. As a result they took no action.

Implications for Mission

The study revealed that there is a big need to train both the leaders and members in order to be empowered for effective ministry to Muslims. There were expression of inadequacy among some leaders on one hand and ignorance and fear among many members. To overcome this challenge training and teaching are very crucial so as to enable the members of Faith Cathedral Church to be successful in Muslim evangelism. All respondents said that if there is a general agreement that the church has a mandate to reach out to Muslims, then adequate preparation is

compulsory to all born again members of the church since the work of evangelism is not for the pastor or out reach team alone.

Open air meetings should be focused so that if assessment is taken to establish its success, it would be valid. In this case the church can define a program which can provide for both the needs of the Muslims and the other people groups. On the other hand, there is need to teach the church about firm commitment and discipline in their Christian lives. One informant said, “We need to show commitment in our religion. Muslims are good observers and they know what we ought to do, and if we fail, it becomes their entry point to confront whenever we make any attempt to preach to them.”

Several informants expressed their observations,

Muslims have Bibles and they read a lot so that they can know what we believe but Christians do not have the Quran. They are not even familiar with the biblical teaching and this is a big problem within the church. As a result of this, there is need to sensitize Christians to study the Bible very hard and encourage them to be committed to the task of evangelism. There is need also to encourage them to buy a Quran and read it so that they can know what the Quran contain and critic it with the Biblical teachings. Through this way, many will come to understand how different Christianity is from Islam.

There is great need for preparation of church members in order to carry out their task.

It is evident from these expressions that there is need to have an arm or a department that deals directly with Muslim evangelism. This will help to constantly remind the church about their commission to take the Good News to all people and particularly to the unreached people groups, in this study the Muslims. Some informants said,

We have prayed a lot, we need to take action now. Initially we were sensitized toward reaching out to the Muslims who are living far away as in the distant regions like North East parts of Kenya and Mombasa. But today we have Muslims living with us in our neighbourhoods and we have no excuse why we are not preaching to them.

There were feelings from some respondents that some of the church members are not involved in Muslim evangelism because they think that prayers are enough. They

believe that God cannot be defeated. He is able to save the lost and so He needs no help. It will also help create positive awareness among those members who have held for long that Muslim evangelism is for particular people, for instance, the pastor and the outreach team. So, if such a system mentioned above is put in place, it guarantees effectiveness because it will help in motivating and sensitizing the church on Muslim evangelism. It will also serve as a resource in teaching the church about the nature of Islam which may influence positively those who were negative in their perception of Muslim evangelism. It will help increase awareness of those who were passionate yet ignorant of how to witness to Muslim. The members of Faith Cathedral church do not need to think of how they can travel far areas to find Muslims. They are just by the door in the Muslim village. They do not need to go as far as North Eastern province or Coast. God has brought them into their neighbourhoods.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings showed that the perception among the members of Faith Cathedral Church on Muslim evangelism was determined by their level of awareness. The degree of awareness was seen as a breaking point between two groups; those who were positive and those who were negative toward Muslim evangelism.

This awareness determined the extent of the church members' involvement in Muslim evangelism. Those who had increased awareness of Islam were characterized by compassion, love, commitment and patience hence engaged in open air meeting, door-to-door evangelism, and giving out tracts in order to enable the Muslim neighbours and friends to hear the Good News. But those who had little awareness were overwhelmed by fear, threat, terrorism and feelings of inadequacy, hence saw Muslim evangelism as risk undertaking and very hard hence no trial. The findings revealed that creating awareness alone without exposure and systematic teaching and training of the church would have great bearing on church perception of Muslim evangelism.

Recommendations

According to the research, creating awareness among the church members is vital. But there is need to increase that knowledge by teaching and training the church about the true nature of Islam. It is important for the members of Faith Cathedral Church to be able to make a distinction between Christianity and Islam. It was

reported that some Muslims are studying the Bible but none of the informants had read the Muslim book, the Quran. There is need to challenge the church on the importance of studying the Quran. It will help them to answer the Muslim friend using their resource. All informants expressed that the church can use Bible study time to teach people about Islamic faith. However, as mentioned earlier Christians ought to be guided in their Quranic study hence may find themselves being converted to Islam.

There is need to train the church on appropriate methods to employ when reaching out to the Muslim. The research revealed that both leaders and members were ignorant of the true nature of Islam and even the leaders had some feelings of inadequacy. As a result there was lack of preparation of the church for Muslim evangelism. Therefore, there is need for the entire church to be equipped through training so as to be effective in her ministry to the Muslims. The church should put up other arms to boost the ministry. There is need to have a department in the local church that deals with Muslim work. The informants said if the church sets a department it will help in planning and leading the church into active involvement in Muslim evangelism. People who will serve in this department will take upon themselves the responsibility to remind the church about her mandate to preach to the Muslims. It is a duty of every born again Christian to share their faith and their resources with the Muslims. On the other hand, the church needs to involve Muslim background believers (MBBs) when drawing the program for Muslim evangelism. Their involvement is significant because they can provide direction on how to train the outreach team on the appropriate ways to engage the Muslims into dialogue and how to win them for Christ.

The church should place Muslim evangelism at par with her other priorities, if not more. It was evident from the church documents that Muslim evangelism is not the church's priority at the moment. There is need to have a budget for Muslim evangelism as well as hospitality. Moreover, creating awareness should primarily come from within. The research revealed that greater part of the awareness came from without. The church should not wait to be replaced by other institutions. The church needs to create that awareness. This should be enhanced through teachings so that those who are passionate for Muslim evangelism may reach out effectively.

There is need to challenge the church members to become good models. It was revealed that the lifestyle of the church members is a louder testimony than any word of speech. Therefore, for our Muslim neighbours we need to be disciplined in all matters of faith and practice. That commitment to God must be consistent throughout the believer's life regardless of seasons. One respondent narrated a story of Muslims view of Christians in Dubai. He said that someone bought some items and he was afraid to leave behind in case he would not find them with the business man when he returns. But a Muslim friend told him, "We are not Christians." This statement has great implications on the nature of view that Muslims have of Christianity. Some Muslims cannot distinguish a thief from Christians because many of them understand that anyone who steals must be a Christian. They have problems distinguishing between an individual person and the group.

Change of attitude is also critical among the members of the church toward Muslim evangelism. Some of the informants said that the information through the media usually come in a way that makes the listeners or viewers to condemn the Muslims as 'terrorists.' Unless the Church is willing to change her attitude and learn to treat each

individual Muslim as a single identity, hence may get into the same problem Muslims have distinguishing a thief from the whole group of Christians. Therefore, Christians ought to understand that not all Muslims are terrorists. One respondent said, “Since the bomb blast incident in Nairobi, I have hated Muslims so much.” Such view must change if the church intends to impact the Muslim world.

Patience was pointed out as crucial virtue in dealing with Muslims. Patience must be cultivated by all born again Christians because ministry with Muslims is relatively hard. Some times there is rejection, criticism, harassments, and disrespect from some Muslims. It is not an easy undertaking as illustrated in the stories mentioned earlier in this study. Again it takes years to convince a Muslim into conversion because of their culture. To Muslims their religion is part of life. Miller writes, “Islam is a system of life in which political, social, economic, and religious elements are united together and even when a Muslim becomes convicted that Christ is the only saviour, it is very difficult for him to profess his faith openly and break with his society” (Miller 1969, 10). On the same view Rowdon (1993, 51) states, “For Muslims, religion is essentially a way of life including politics and culture. Spirituality therefore lies at the heart of the Muslim mentality.” Gaudoul comments, “Within Islam changing your religion is regarded as treason and punishable by death in some countries” (1999, 54). Nevertheless, Muslims have become Christians and so the church should practice more patience as she seeks to fulfill the mandate of the Lord.

Genuine love and acceptance for the Muslims should be the centre of believers’ life. Unless the members of the church show love for their Muslim neighbours, structures and good programs would not make anyone human. If Muslims

are to encounter the God of love, Muslim evangelism must be done in love and with concern for the lost. Nehls (1988, 35) formulates this for us:

Love is not an easy thing. It's just an emotional urge, but an attempt to move over and sit in the other person's place and see how his problems look to him: love is genuine concern for the individual. As Jesus reminds us, we are to 'love him as ourselves.' This is the place to begin.

The church needs to create a warm environment for the Muslims because it is not enough to persuade them into conversion but they need to feel and experience that care, love and concern as they identify with the church.

Areas for Further Research

The research showed "awareness" as a major contributing factor which influenced members' perception on Muslim evangelism. Further study could be done on effective ways of creating this awareness and the sustenance of its positive view.

This research dealt with the members of Faith Cathedral Church, which is in the urban setting. There is need to find out the members' perception of Muslim evangelism in the rural areas. This is important because it will provide knowledge to the church leadership to broaden their vision of mission to Muslim world.

REFERENCE LIST

- Best, John W. & James V. Khan. 1998. *Research in education*. Eaglewood cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 8th edition.
- Chapman, Colin. 1989. Rethinking the gospel for Muslims in *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road* by Woodberry, J. Dudley ed. Monrovia, CA: MARC.
- Clark, Malcolm. 2003. *Islam for the dummies*. NY: Ordey Publishing; Inc.
- Clarke, Peter. Ed.1990. *The world's religions: Islam*. New Fetter Lane, London: Rout- ledge.
- Creswell, John W. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.
- _____ 2003. *Research design: Quantitative and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. 2000. *Determining validity in quantitative inquiry: Theory into practice*. Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage publications.
- Gaudeul, Jean-Marie. 1999. *Called from Islam to Christ: Why Muslims become Christian*. Crowborough East Sussex: Monarch Book.
- Gillham, Bill. 2000. *Case study research methods*. New York: Continuum.
- Goldsmith, Martin. 1982. *Islam and Christian witness: Sharing Your Faith with Muslims*. London: Bromley, STL Books
- Hiebert, Paul, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou. 1999. *Understanding Fork Religion*. Grand Rapids; ML: Baker Books.
- Hiebert, Paul. 1989. *Islam and Christian witness*. Bedford, London: Holder and Stoughton Limited.
- Kateregga, Badru D. and David Shenk. 1980. *Islam and Christianity*. Nairobi, Uzima Press.
- Kraft, Charles. 1996. *Anthropology for Christian witness*. NY, Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Marsh, R. Charles. 1975. *Share your faith with a Muslim*. Chicago: Moody Press.

- Musk, Bill A. 1989. *The unseen face of Islam: Sharing the gospel with ordinary Muslims*. Great Britain: MARC
- Mugenda, Olive M. & Mugenda, A. G. 1999. *Research methods: Quantitative approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
- Miller, Jacques. 1969. *How to understand Islam*. Lymington, Hants: SCM (Spartan) Press Ltd.
- Nehls, Gerhard. 1988. *The Great Commission: You and the Muslims*. Bellville Evangelical Mission Press.
- Register, Jr. Ray. 1979. *Dialogue and interfaith witness with Muslims*. U.S.A: Watson Lithographing Company.
- Ridgeon, Lloyd. 2001. *Islamic interpretation of Christianity*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Rippin, Andrew. 2001. *Muslims: Their Religious beliefs and practices*. New York: Routledge,
- Rowdon, Law. 1993. *The rising tide: Christianity challenged in East Africa*. Rock, Illinois: Augustana Press.
- Saal, William J. 1993. *Reaching Muslims for Christ*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Safa, Reza F. 1979. *Inside Islam: Exposing and reaching the world of Islam*. Lake Mary: Charisma House.
- Shenk, David. 1989. Conversations along the way in *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road* by Woodberry, J. Dudley ed. Monrovia, CA: MARC.
- Smith, D. 1889. With women in the East in *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road* by Woodberry, J. Dudley ed. Monrovia, CA: MARC.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Ground theory procedure and techniques*. Newbury park, CA: Sage.
- Sweeting, George. 1978. *How to witness successfully*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Watt, W. Montgomery. 1983. *Islam and Christianity today: A contribution to dialogue*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Plc.
- Weiss, Robert. S. 1994. *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: Free Press
- Zwemer, Samuel m. 2002. *Islam and the Cross*. Selection from "the apostle to Islam" NJ: Roger S Greenway.

APPENDIX A

Interview Questions Guide for church members

1. Who is a Muslim?
2. How do you perceive Muslim evangelism?
3. What factors contribute to your perception?
4. From your opinion, how would you explain the difference between Islam from Christianity?
5. How would you explain Muslim evangelism in relation to mission?
6. What part have you played in Muslim evangelism?
7. What are the things that enhance or limit your ability to reach out to Muslims?
8. How often do you reach out to Muslim friends or neighbors?
9. What approaches do you suggest could be used for Muslim evangelism?

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions Guide for Church Leaders

1. As a leader, what plan do you have for Muslim evangelism?
2. What is your view of Muslim evangelism?
3. What contributes to your perception of Muslim evangelism?
4. What part have you played in Muslim evangelism?
5. What are the things that enhance or limit your ability to reach out to Muslims?
6. How often do you teach and mobilize the church on Muslim evangelism?
7. What methods of teaching do you use to sensitize the church on Muslim outreach?
8. How did the church respond to the approach you used in mobilizing them?
9. How would you explain Muslim evangelism in relation to mission?
10. From your opinion, how would you explain the difference between Islam from Christianity?
11. Do you think there are certain lessons that are inappropriate to discuss?
12. What is your desired outcome every time you reach out to Muslim friend or neighbor?
13. What do you suggest as appropriate methods for Muslim evangelism?

LIBRARY
NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
P. O. BOX 21536, NAIROBI
CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Catherine Chepkirui Kitur

Address: P.O.BOX 86 Fort-Ternan

Nationality: Kenyan

Marital status: Married

Name of spouse: John A. Kitur

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Cheptalal primary school: 1981-1988

Kipsigis Girls Secondary school: 1989-1992

Kenya highlands Bible College: 1993-1996

Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of theology: 2006-2008

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

Sotit AIC: 1997, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

Kipteris High School: 1998, TEACHER

Koru Bible College: 1999-2006, TEACHER