

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**A MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF ISLAMIC STRATEGIES FOR
CONVERTING CHRISTIANS TO ISLAM AND THEIR
IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP:
A STUDY OF CONVERTS IN KAWANGWARE
AND EMBUL-BUL AREAS OF
NAIROBI-KENYA**

BY

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**A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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AND EMBUL-BUL AREAS OF NAIROBI-KENYA

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 the Africa International
University or the Examiners

(Signed) _____
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ABSTRACT

Islam has been acclaimed to be the fastest growing religion in the world today attracting converts from different cultures and religions across the world. Several studies have been conducted by several researchers in Africa on the phenomenon of conversion from Islam to Christianity, but not much research has gone into the investigation of why Christians convert to Islam. This study is an attempt to understand the factors that influence Christian conversion to Islam and also an attempt to discover the strategies employed by Muslims to achieve this conversion. This study was conducted among converts from Christianity to Islam in Kawangware and Embul-bul areas of Nairobi-Kenya. The study applied Lofland and Skonovd's conversion motifs in an attempt to discover the motifs behind these conversions through interviews with these converts using the qualitative research method.

The findings of this study reveal that these Christians converted to Islam as a result of comparative investigation of the two religions and of the practices they see in Islam. Other factors reported are simplicity, clarity and unity of Islam, friendship, the search for the true God and deliverance from evil spirit. In applying the conversion motifs, the intellectual and the affectional motifs were present in the conversion biographies of all the converts, which was in consonance with the reasons given for conversion. However few of the converts reported the experimental and revivalist motifs. The mystical motif was not clear and none reported the coercive motif. The study reveals that conversion is influenced by several factors and validating Lofland and Skonod's position that there is the presence of more than one single motif in every conversion biography. The findings of the study also reveal that conversion from Christianity to Islam is not restricted to any Christian denomination or tribal grouping in Kenya and did not reveal material enticement as reasons for conversion. The findings further reveal that Muslims in Nairobi use debates/street preaching/dialogue, friendship and care, media, mosque visits and invitation to ask questions and availability/ability to answer them as strategies to influence conversion to Islam.

In view of the findings, conclusions reached are that such conversions were possible because of the absence of effective discipleship and the conduct of Christians, which include denominational pluralism and disunity among churches. The study recommended the recourse to biblical theology for doing Bible study in our churches in Nairobi and Africa as whole, as opposed to systematic theology's topical approach in order to provide a holistic understanding of the Christian message and of the Bible. The introduction of Islamic education in the curriculum for the training of our pastors in all theological schools across Africa and church based Islamic education for the laity is recommended, which should include Bible study, seminars and workshops in order for Christians to provide answers to questions and challenges increasingly raised by Muslims in regards to their faith.

TO

Him who is able to do all things the only wise God, eternal and immortal, whose
timing is accurate and visitation real

And

To my dear sister Helen who passed away four months before I came to NEGST (now
AIU) and is not here to see the fruit of the lesson learned from her of the perseverance
and patience needed in waiting for God to come through

And

To all the heroes of faith who gave sacrificially not minding the complexion, location
or status of whoever was called by God to be trained for ministry. Only eternity would
reveal the harvest of your investment, and then we all will see clearly who you are and
rejoice with you at the crowns of souls which you brought to the master by self
imposed deprivation.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Background and Motivation for the Study.....	1
Research Problem.....	3
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Significance of the Study.....	4
Sub-Research Questions.....	5
Limitations.....	5
Delimitations.....	6
Operational Definitions.....	7
CHAPTER TWO	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
Review of Background Literature.....	10
Islam in East Africa and Kenya.....	10
Christianity in East Africa and Kenya.....	12
Colonialism Aided the Spread of Islam in Kenya.....	13
Historical Relations between Christianity and Islam in Africa.....	15
Substantive Literature Review.....	17
Nature of Conversion.....	17

Conversion: A Definition.....	18
Muslim and Christian Perspective of Conversion.....	20
Christian-Muslim Relations: Challenge and Opportunity for Conversion.....	24
Conversion Studies.....	27
Review of Literature on Methodology.....	34
Qualitative Research Method and Conversion Motif Model.....	34
CHAPTER THREE.....	36
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	36
Data Collection Procedure.....	37
Data Recording Procedure.....	38
Data Analysis.....	38
Lofland and Skonovd’s Conversion Motifs.....	40
Summary of Rambo’s Conversion Stage Model.....	42
CHAPTER FOUR.....	43
FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	43
Coding and Usage.....	44
Reasons for Conversion.....	46
Comparative Investigation.....	47
Personal Search for Truth.....	47
Providing Quick Answers and Openness.....	49
Muslims Knowledge of Scripture.....	50
Inequality and Discrimination among Christians.....	51
Moral Depravity/Materialism of Christians.....	52
Islamic Practices.....	54
Direct Belief/Knowledge and Access to God.....	54

Personal Hygiene and Circumcision.....	55
Behavior and Way of Living.....	56
Equality and Love for One another.....	56
Teaching and Obedience to Laws.....	57
Simplicity, Clarity and Unity of Islam.....	59
General Simplicity of Islamic Religion.....	59
Conversion/Reversion Process.....	60
Duration of Worship Time.....	62
Universal Oneness of God/Religion.....	62
Friendship.....	64
Searching for the True God.....	66
Deliverance from Evil Spirit.....	67
Description of the Converts.....	70
Other Emerging Themes.....	73
Growing Up Environment and Influences.....	74
Contact with Islam.....	75
Understanding of Being a Christian.....	76
Understanding of Being a Muslim.....	77
Areas of Conflict with Christian teachings before conversion.....	78
Conversion Motifs as Relates to Conversion of these Christians.....	79
Findings in Relation to Research Theory Applied in the Study.....	82
Findings of the Study as It Relates to Other Previous Studies.....	84
Findings of this Study in Relation to Some Assumptions.....	89
Strategies Employed by Muslims that Emerged.....	91
Debates/Street Preaching/Dialogues.....	91

Use of Media.....	91
Mosque Visitation.....	92
Friendship and Care.....	92
Invitation to Ask Question and Availability/Ability to Answer Them.....	92
CHAPTER FIVE.....	94
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	94
Summary of Key Findings.....	94
Conclusion.....	96
Missiological Implications.....	99
Recommendations.....	100
Areas for Further Studies.....	104
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	106
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS.....	110
APPENDIX 2: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW IN THEMES.....	112
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	146

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1. Summary of Conversion Factors in Themes and Sub-themes as Reported by Converts.....	46
2. Summary of Descriptive Elements of the Converts.....	70
3. Summary of Areas of Conflict with Christian Teachings before Conversion...	79
4. Indicating the Presence of Conversion Motif.....	79

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study focused on the examination of converts from Christianity to Islam. The desire was to find out the reasons Christians give for converting to Islam. The intention was to see if through this, an insight of the strategies Muslims use to influence conversion to Islam would be gained. Islam is in the minority in Kenya and as would be seen later its influence remained in the coastal areas until the 19th century. The presence of Islam in some major urban areas of Kenya indicates that conversion from Christianity to Islam is growing and there is the need to understand why.

Background and Motivation for the Study

I had my first brush with Islam as a young boy in the middle to late seventies. I became intrigued by their ritualistic life. I experienced the aggression of Islam as a secondary school student when I was accused of making a comment that was considered to have put a Muslim judge in bad light and was taken to court, based on this supposition, but later cleared.

In 1984 during my National Youth Service in Nigeria, serving with The Great Commission Movement of Nigeria (Campus Crusade for Christ), I experienced the antagonism of doing evangelism among Muslims by accident. We were on door to door campus witnessing and ran into a Muslim. We got engaged in a discussion on salvation. It then turned into a mini debate. His roommate pretended he was asleep, but when he saw that the discussion appeared not to be going in their favor got out of

bed and started a confrontation. We had to end the discussion and left the scene. That was the major turning point to getting interested in reaching Muslims.

In 1985, although I grew up and discovered that one of my uncles was referred to as a Muslim, and in spite of the fact that he never did anything too different from us, I met a Muslim convert from Christianity, who was said to be a former pastor. I could not understand how a pastor could convert to Islam. We had a fairly heated discussion with him, it appeared that he did not have a good grasp of Christianity and really did not appear to have a good knowledge of Islam too. I therefore assumed there was a reason other than “truth conviction” responsible for his conversion. Then around the late eighties, my maternal cousin, a lady, married a Muslim and converted to Islam. I was shocked and had a serious discussion with her because we were close, but could not understand why she could become a Muslim.

Again in early nineties, a paternal cousin, a lady, acrimoniously, against the objection of her father, got married to another Muslim. In fact she was given out in marriage by the Emir of my town since she was seen as a Muslim and her father was a *Kafir* (an unbeliever). Ever since I have always been curious to understand why a Christian who once had the certainty of salvation could leave Christianity and become a Muslim. This serves as the impetus for this research.

There is no doubt today that Islam is one of, if not, the major challenge to Christian witness in Africa. Its passion for expansion and world conquest is historical and legendary. There is also the idea that conversion from Christianity to Islam is growing even in East Africa and Kenya in particular. Yet it appears not much research has gone into the study of why this is so and to understand the strategies used to achieve these conversions. There have been several studies examining conversion

from Islam to Christianity; examples are Murumba (2007) and Asland (2005)¹ in Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and others. In NEGST one hardly came across a study concerned with conversion from Christianity to Islam, yet conversion to Islam from Christianity calls to question Christian witness and discipleship. The researcher therefore seeks to examine or understand what is behind these conversions and the strategies used to achieve this.

The rationale behind choosing the area to focus this research was based on the following considerations:

1. The ability to get converts to be interviewed for the study.
2. Research of this nature is costly; therefore, one must limit his studies within the range of financial ability.
3. It is also obvious that Islam concentrates its major efforts in urban areas; this naturally makes it necessary also to elect to have this study focus on these areas as a representative sample.
4. The constraint of time and accessibility and travel limitation places a constraint on the ability of the researcher to do a study outside Nairobi or Kenya, otherwise one would have loved to do a study of the Nigerian situation where the presence of Islam is big.

Problem Statement

It appears that a number of Christians in Africa have converted to Islam over time, and this appears to be true of Kenya also. The main research question of this study therefore is: **What are the factors, according to the converts, that influenced their conversion from Christianity to Islam in Nairobi area of Kenya?**

¹ See bibliography for bibliographical information on this works.

In their research of 1981, Lofland and Skonovd proposed a descriptive system for the study of religious conversion. The motifs are intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalist and coercive. They suggested that more than one motif may be present in any particular religious biography. They postulated that each motif is characterized by the degree of social pressure involved, temporal duration, level of affective arousal, affective content and the sequence of belief-participation.

Their model was more appropriate for this research in that we were not examining the process i.e. the stages leading to conversion but the motifs i.e. the influences leading to conversion in this study. This provided insight not only for religious purposes but for academic as well because it threw more light on the enigma of conversion hence increasing its understanding even within academic circles.

Purpose of the Study

This study was intended to examine and discover the reasons Christians give for converting to Islam. This was expected to reveal the strategies Muslims use in influencing people to convert from Christianity to Islam in Kawangware and Embulbul area of Nairobi-Kenya in order to find out what influence does deficiency in effective church discipleship play. It is also intended to find out what part do the strategies of the Muslims play to influence this conversions in light of Lofland and Skonovd's six conversion motifs.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are significant in the following ways:

1. The results of this study are an addition to the lean field of literature available in this area of study in Africa and add to this field of knowledge not only in Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology but the world at large.
2. The knowledge gained in this study is hoped would assist the church in general to have an understanding of this phenomenon, in which it appears not much attention has been paid to.
3. The findings in this study formed the basis upon which recommendations and suggestions were made as regards discipleship in the church, especially for those churches that are situated in urban areas of Kenya.
4. The findings are indeed a reference point for other churches in Africa to learn from the results of this research.

Therefore, literature review and interviews were combined, hinging it on an acceptable research design, to ensure that the results from the study are valid and verifiable to other interested parties.

Sub-Research Questions

1. How can the converts from Christianity to Islam in Kawangware and Embul-bul area of Nairobi be described?
2. How do the conversion motifs relate to the conversion of Christians to Islam in Kawangware and Embul-bul area of Nairobi?

Limitations

One very obvious and clear limitation in this study was the researcher's inability to speak Kiswahili, as a number of the converts interviewed were not proficient English speakers. The researcher used interpreters in two of the interviews. However,

additional interpreter was used to verify the accuracy of the translation after the interview was transcribed. This obviously reduced the limitation placed on the outcome of the interview. Strategies were also used to simplify and clarify questions in situations where it was noticed the interviewee was struggling with understanding by rephrasing and explaining questions.

Another limitation to this study was the inability of the researcher to get female converts to interview. All those who assisted the researcher to establish contact with converts were not able to assist the researcher to make contact with female converts. This further placed limits on the generalizations that can be made from the research. However, the researcher was aware of female converts, as some of the converts informed him that they have converted their wives. The lack of interviewing female converts is acknowledged to be a minus albeit not a major one to this research.

The study also relied on the authenticity of the information supplied by the interviewees. Beside the inbuilt checks in the question asked for integrity of information; no other approach was employed to verify the authenticity of information due to time. Whatever limitations this brings to the study is acknowledged.

Delimitations

This study initially intended to interview converts in Nairobi and Machakos areas of Kenya. However, the researcher was unable to get converts in Machakos as the facilitator declined at the last minute. The study therefore was limited to Kawangware and Embul-bul areas of Nairobi. Even in Kawangware, the facilitator backed out after he facilitated a number of interviews. Time and resources did not permit the researcher to extend this study beyond these areas.

Since this study assessed these converts in light of Lofland and Skonovd's six motifs for conversion, the study mainly sought to determine whether these motifs were present in these conversions and what reasons the converts gave for converting to Islam and then determined how they related to Christian discipleship. It therefore means that this study did not dabble into the debate of establishing what conversion is and many of its definitive facets. Although therefore this study has academic relevance, its ramification tilted towards the religious, specifically the evangelical strand.

Operational Definitions

Christian

Who is a Christian and when does one become a Christians is also subject to various theological debates. It was not the focus of this study to enter into a discussion of this debate. There is also the question of whether a Christian who has really converted to Christianity can lose his salvation by converting to another religion. I subscribe to the position that it is only those who persevere to the end that are truly Christians; this is in line with Grudem's argument that "perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere to the end have been truly born again."²

However, this study did not make such a distinction between Christians and the denominations of the Christian faith because of the singular reason advanced above that to Muslims and non-Christians, all Christians are Christians no matter their convictions. It was also assumed that those who have converted to Islam from

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 788.

Christianity believe themselves to be Christians before they converted, an assumption which appears to be confirmed by the findings. Therefore, a Christian in this study is defined as one who professes faith in Jesus and attends church either occasionally or regularly no matter his denomination.

Conversion

Conversion is a broad term that encapsulates many things. Conversion has several dimensions which was not the major concern of this study to bring out. It has both religious and cultural dimensions; in religious, it involves the changing from one religion to the other while in cultural, it involves the change from one culture to another, which involves total acculturation. This study was concerned with the religious aspect of conversion.

One identifies with Grudem's theological definition of conversion as being "our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sin and place our trust in Christ for salvation."³ This study was about conversion from Christianity to Islam however, and since Muslims do not differentiate between nominal and cultural Christians, this study assumed the simple understanding of conversion as a Christian changing his religious affiliation to Islam by practice, irrespective of whether he is a cultural or nominal Christian.

Islam

Islam means submission to Allah. The word Islam is said to be from the root word *aslama* meaning "submit" as in oneself.⁴ Islam, in this study, therefore refers to the religion that professes its submission to Allah and Mohammed as its prophet.

³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 709.

⁴H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 176.

Muslims

In this study, Muslims were seen as all those who adhere to the religion of Islam. This study did not make a distinction between Muslim sects. The researcher's conviction was that when it comes to converting Christians to Islam, such distinctions become salient and therefore not factors that are given prominence.

Strategies

In this study, strategies were seen as all activities that Muslims employ in seeking to influence Christian conversions to Islam.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Background Literature

Islam in East Africa and Kenya

It is important in doing this research for us to have an idea of how Islam came to East Africa and Kenya in particular. It is argued that Islam entered sub-Saharan Africa through two gate ways; the Indian Ocean and the desert sands of the Sahara; basically from the east and the north.⁵ Islam then traveled through the Indian Ocean to the eastern coast of Africa, as further argued, “Islam made its first impression through commercial exchanges between Africans and Muslims...” and that “...jihad never became the important instrument of conversion or enforcement in East Africa.”⁶

Through conversion and trade development, Islam grew peacefully and steadily such that “by 1500 and as early as 1200 in a few locations, Islam had become the majority religion of coastal peoples.” And by 1500 “Islam had become central to Swahili society and identity everywhere.”⁷ In Oded’s argument, “during the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Muslim cities that were established along the coast – such as Mombasa, Kilwa, Lamu, Malindi and Pate – and the Island of Zanzibar (tunguja) and Pemba flourished.”⁸ Islam therefore became entrenched in the life of the coastal people. It is still the same till this day. It is however, important to note that unlike

⁵ Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwles, “Introduction” in *Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwles (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 1.

⁶ Randall L. Pouwles, “The East African Coast, c. 780 to 1900 C.E.” in *Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwles (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 251.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Arye Oded, *Islam and Politics in Kenya* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., 2000), 2.

Africa West of the Sahara, the spread of Islam was virtually peaceful and non confrontational.

However, for twelve centuries the rural hinterland of Kenya was largely not influenced by Islam. So, “prior to the nineteenth century the influence of Islam in the immediate hinterland and the interior was negligible, hardly extending beyond the outskirts of the coastal towns.”⁹ Therefore Sperling argued that actually rural Islamization into hinterland “began in those places where non-Muslims developed particularly close relations with Muslims, as a result either of Muslim agricultural expansion into rural areas or of prolonged and intense trade with Muslims.”¹⁰ Consequently, we can say that conversion from other religions, including Christianity in Kenya in the hinterland, to Islam, is a nineteenth century to present day phenomenon.

We can summarize the history of Islam’s entry to Kenya by saying that Islam came to the present day Kenya via the Arabian Peninsula, through the East African coast and then into the hinterland. The major instruments used were trade and agriculture. Oded’s conclusion is therefore apt that “most Muslims are concentrated in specific areas of Kenya, which gives them political weight in those areas.”¹¹ Islam’s presence in Kenya, in recent times, is mostly in urban or semi-urban areas, such as Nairobi and other areas. I shall pause here to look at Christianity in East Africa, and then come back to address how colonialism helped the spread of Islam in Kenya even though it was seen as a Christian enterprise in some quarters.

⁹ David C. Sperling, “The Coastal Hinterland and Interior of East Africa” in *Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 273.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹¹ Arye Oded, *Islam and Politics in Kenya*, 11.

Christianity in East Africa and Kenya

There is a strong argument that Christianity in Africa is as old as the first century, as it was suggested that “the see of Alexandria was founded by St Mark the Evangelist, martyred AD 68.”¹² Alexandria and Carthage played prominent roles in the early formation of the church with characters such as Athanasius. And by the seventh century the Coptic Church was well established.¹³ This was well before Muhammad came to the scene between 570 -632. Egypt was then conquered by Islam nine years after the death of Muhammad, at around 641, after a number of military attempts.¹⁴ We can therefore argue that Christianity was in Africa long before the coming of Islam. However, with Islamic conquest, Christianity appeared to have disappeared except for the survival of the Coptic Church in Egypt and Ethiopia today. Islam therefore took over North Africa, and it is through this route, as we mentioned earlier, that Islam almost overran Africa.

By the time Christianity appeared again, and find its way to East Africa, Islam was already fairly rooted there among the “Muslim – dominated island of Zanzibar and its coastal hinterland.”¹⁵ And between 1863 and 1888, there were established seven mission societies in East Africa, the Anglicans and the Catholics established settlements along the coast like they did in West Africa.¹⁶ This coastal area would later stretch to Mombasa, Kilwa, Lamu, Malindi, Pate, and Pemba as we earlier saw. As missionary presence began to enlarge, like in the spread of Islam, the Indian Ocean played a huge role in the spread of Christianity in East Africa and to Kenya specifically.

¹² Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *The History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴ Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *The History of the Church in Africa*, 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 510.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

The biggest beach head of Christian presence that aided the spread of Christianity into Kenya was the protestant settlement near Mombasa after a few attempts at Meru had failed in 1896, although there was later success between 1900 and 1916.¹⁷ Although therefore the Kamba people provided communication between the coastland and the highlands, and later the railway to Lake Victoria, it is the arrival of the British Imperialists that finally provided the needed access Christianity required to make it to the hinterland of Kenya. In 1895 the area between the coast and Nairobi was declared a protectorate and by 1920 Kenya became a crown colony. Therefore, “the missionary occupation of Kenya was related to British imperialism and economic enterprise...the British East African Company, formed in 1888, was the key agency in this drama,” and “encouraged the Anglican CMS to open stations along the new route to the interior.”¹⁸ Under the supervision of the colonial imperialist, Christianity grew and expanded to all the nook and crannies of Kenya, and went through the independence struggles to independence.¹⁹ It does appear that this is how the church became dominant in Kenyan social life till this day.

Colonialism Aided the Spread of Islam in Kenya

The paradox, however, is that even though the spread of Christianity in Kenya was aided by colonialism, yet colonialism and colonialist aided the spread of Islam in Kenya also. This is also true in West Africa, as Triand argued that “the colonial period played a decisive role in the history of Islam in French Speaking Africa; it was the period of the greatest expansion of the Muslim presence in Africa.”²⁰ Therefore in Kenya, the adoption of indirect rule and the agreement between the Sultan of Zanzibar

¹⁷ Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *The History of the Church in Africa*, 551.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 557.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 883-900.

²⁰ Jean-Louis Triand, “Islam in Africa under French Colonial Rule” in *Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 169.

and the colonial masters in Kenya in the early 60s concerning the ten mile strip gave the Muslims a greater advantage to entrench themselves, especially in the Kenyan constitution, and later spread into the hinterland of Kenya.²¹

Backed by the constitution of Kenya and earlier protected by the colonial structure, it was therefore normal through the freedom of religion and worship for Islam to find its way through trade, agriculture and evangelism (*da'wah*) into the Kenyan hinterland beyond the coastal ten mile strip. It is therefore safe to conclude that both Christianity and Islam benefitted from colonialism in Africa, and in Kenya specifically and not only Christianity.

It is however, difficult to determine the population of Muslims in Kenya due to dearth of statistics, there is no debate however that they are in the minority. It is estimated that the Muslim population in Kenya is between ten to twenty percent (10% - 20%) and mostly in “large towns of Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu and Nakuru.”²² It is surprising that not much change has occurred in the percentage range given above of the Kenyan Muslim population in the 2010 census result released by the Kenyan government. The total population of Muslims in Kenya has been put at 4, 304, 798 out of 38,610,097²³, which represents 11.15% of the population.

In putting all this into the perspective of this research, it was very clear therefore that the expansionist tendencies of Islam are clear through history. Its desire for dominance is not hidden in world politics. It is therefore clear that there is a struggle by Islam to increase in number wherever it finds itself, hence the passion to convert as many as they can. There is the assumption that they will resort to different tactics. With the constitutional debate that took place in Kenya and the Church's opposition

²¹See Ahmed Issack Hassan, “The Kadhi Courts: Setting the Records Straight” <http://www.commonlii.org/other/KECKRC/2002/11.html> (accessed March 6th, 2010).

²² Arye Oded, *Islam and Politics in Kenya*, 15.

²³ <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/1000340/-/11114rlz/-/index.html> (accessed 16/10/2010).

to the inclusion of the Khadi Courts in the constitution, our supposition is that Muslims would be employing various strategies to grow their numbers and will continue to desire to do so since democracy is a game of numbers. The church therefore needs to understand these strategies and address them appropriately.

Historical Relations between Christianity and Islam in Africa

Having looked at the history of both Christianity and Islam in East Africa and Kenya in particular, the history of relations between the two religions will enhance the understanding of conversion between them. In discussing Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, we must briefly give an overview of these relations generally.

The contact between Islam and Christianity has lasted for about fourteen centuries. It has been a mixed bag of experiences from confrontation to cooperation. It is argued however that “the dominant pattern of relationship between the two faiths has been enmity, hostility and prejudice, rather than friendliness and understanding.”²⁴ The same author argued that the reason why this relationship has been so is doctrinal (both preach exclusivity), failure of leaders to curb in the excesses of its members (Jihad and the Crusades) and the missionary element of both religions.²⁵ We can see therefore that both Islam and Christianity seek to convert people to their faith.

Another issue that has shaped Christian-Muslim relationship, from the Muslim perspective, is the supposed alliance between Christian missionary effort and colonial powers, which led to the argument that the “close cooperation between missionaries and the colonial powers was the fact that most colonized Muslim peoples have become bitter about and suspicious of all missionary work, regardless of its

²⁴ Alwi Shahib, “Christian-Muslim Relations into the Twenty-First Century,” *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* 15, no.1 (January 2004): 65.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

motives.”²⁶ Therefore missionary effort was seen by Muslim as an attempt to overcome Islam. This feeling still exists today, as Christianity is seen even today as the religion of the European subjugators bent on seeing the demise of Islam. But we have seen earlier how Islam too benefitted from colonialism.

Christianity is also wary about the historical expansionist tendencies of Islam in the merciless occupation forces that conquered Christian territories with the sword. This therefore lays the foundation for the acrimonious conversion relationship that exists between them.

For a Muslim to convert to Christianity it is viewed as *Irtidad* (apostasy) and for a Christian to convert to Islam it is seen as denial of Christ and some say a sin against the Holy Spirit. This is the context within which conversion takes place between the two religions, even within the context of Africa. It is obvious that both religions rely majorly on their text to define relationship with one another. The Muslim takes verses like sura 9:29 literally, so also some Christians take 2 Cor. 6:14, which talks about unequal yoke with unbelievers. Whether this is right or wrong is another matter entirely.

Kukah’s argument in his paper²⁷ is that Christian-Muslim relations in Africa have been shaped by two factors, which are poverty and the historical imbalance that existed between the treatments meted to both religious adherents in countries where they are either in the minority or majority. He further argued that Christian minorities are not treated as fairly in Muslim dominated countries as Muslim minorities are treated in Christian dominated countries. He cited Rwanda, Tanzania and South Africa, where Muslim minority experience their status as compared to how Christian minorities are treated in northern Nigeria and Sudan and argued strongly that “it is

²⁶ Alwi Shahib, “Christina-Muslim Relations into the Twenty-First Century,” 67.

²⁷ Matthew Hassan Kukah, “Christian-Muslim Relations in sub-Saharan Africa: Problems and Prospects,” *Islam and Christian Muslim Relations* 18, no.2 (April 2007).

significant to note that in western societies where Muslims are a minority, they experience and enjoy rights that are well beyond what their numerical status entitles them to ordinarily.”²⁸

This minority treatment can be seen in the case of Kenya where the Muslim minorities have a strong voice in the polity in contrast to similar situation in places where Christianity is in the minority. Could this be the bedrock of Christian to Islam conversions in Kenya? It is however, good to note that in countries of Africa where Christianity is in the minority, there are serious tensions and conversion is difficult from Islam to Christianity, but in countries where Christianity is in the majority, conversion to Islam is relatively peaceful. Could this be an Islamic strategy in itself? It would be nice to study how strategies for conversion compare where Muslims are in the minority and where they are in the majority. This study took place in an area where Muslims are in the minority.

Substantive Literature Review

Nature of Conversion

Although this research was interested in discovering why Christians convert to Islam including the strategies used by Muslims in converting Christians to Islam, it is important to have a fair idea of what is seen as conversion and its nature by experts. There are different aspects of conversion which are handled by different scholars in different scientific fields. One such book that contains different aspects of conversion is *Handbook of Religious Conversion* written in 1992.²⁹ Space will not permit us to talk or address every aspect of conversion save that which we believe is relevant to

²⁸ Matthew Hassan Kukah, “Christian-Muslim Relations in sub-Saharan Africa: Problems and Prospects,” 157.

²⁹ H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard, ed. *Handbook of Religious Conversion* (Birmingham, Ala: Religious Education Press, 1992).

this study. It is however, safe to say that this issue of conversion has interested psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists. In his very important study, Strahler reveals the importance of looking at conversion through the psychological, social and cultural (anthropological) lenses.³⁰

Conversion: A Definition

It has generally been difficult for experts to agree or arrive at a common definition of conversion, one definition that has appeared to have lasted for awhile is that given by Nock in his book of 1933, which says;

By conversion we mean the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right. It is seen at its fullest in the positive response of a man to the choice set before him by the prophetic religions.³¹

The weakness of this definition is that it appears to be biased towards religious conversion and specifically to the three major prophetic religions of Judaism; Christianity and Islam. It also appears not to have taken into cognizance the various dimensions of conversion from the perspective of psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists.

The Psychologist see conversion from what happens to the individual at conversion, that is whether conversion causes personality change. Studies have been variously conducted to determine these changes with varying results, but it is accepted that changes in behavior are often associated with conversion or rather acceptance of a new belief system. The sociologist, on the other hand, looks at the communal or sociological influence on conversion i.e. conversion as not individualistic but having a relationship to community. In essence what are the factors within the social context of the individual that influences conversion to another belief or religion? While the

³⁰ Reinhold Strahler, *Coming to Faith in Christ: Understanding Conversion* (Nairobi: Life Challenge Assistance, 2010), 13-18.

³¹ A. D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander The Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 7.

anthropologist looks at conversion from the perspective of worldview change.³² The anthropologist believes that religion is more than ideas about the supernatural, it constitute the theory of the world, in other words a way of constructing reality that seems uniquely real to those who experience it (worldview). To the anthropologist therefore, to change ones religion is simply changing ones world. Why and how this happens has always been what the anthropologist seeks to find.

All these perspectives provide the various dimensions of the definitions that exist on conversion today. This study takes into cognizance that all these three perspectives are involved or are present in what amounts to conversion, and attention was paid to them as results of the interviews are analyzed, where necessary.

Although there would be undertones of these aspects or dimensions of conversion in this study, there was not a thorough examination of these aspects as this study only aimed to discover the reasons Christians convert to Islam so as to understand the strategies that Muslims use in influencing the conversion of Christians to Islam from the motif lens of conversion. However, in light of Karsdolf definition quoted in Murumba that conversion is “the religious and ethical process of man’s spiritual transformation in terms of his values, relationships, attitudes to God, himself, and others within the matrix of his own culture and social structure. It is always within the socio-cultural and religious-ethical framework that humans operate and confront change,”³³ this study was interested in examining the conversion experiences of Christians to Islam to find out whether they are sudden or gradual, individual or group, in light of the ethical, social and cultural aspects of Karsdolf’s definition.

³² See Pauline C. Murumba, “A Study of Conversion from Islam to Christianity Among The Borana Women in Nairobi, Kenya with Implications for Christian Witness” (master thesis Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 2008), 41-51, for a more detailed treatment of these aspects of conversion.

³³ Ibid., 23-24.

One does admit that conversion has personal, socio-cultural and spiritual aspects to it. It is personal because the individual has to make the decision, it is socio-cultural because the conversion takes place within the context of the society and culture the individual finds himself, with all the attendant implications, and it is spiritual because it comes from the inside of a person and transforms his or her attitude to life. This is where Eliade's argument appears strong that to understand and define conversion one has to understand three dimensions of tradition, transformation and transcendence and not be one dimensional as each dimension is crucial. He argues therefore that "conversion is a dynamic, multifaceted process of religious change," which he stressed can be "abrupt and radical; for others it will be gradual and not inclusive of person's total life."³⁴ Definitions on conversion abound, but one thing that is constant is that it involves change. What then is the understanding of conversion in both Islam and Christianity?

Muslim and Christian Perspectives of Conversion

The assumption behind this section of the review is that understanding the difference in what amounts to conversion in Christianity and Islam would reveal that conversion to Islam is much simpler than it is in Christianity and therefore might also be an influence and attraction to certain Christians to convert to Islam. This assumption was subjected to test in the collection of data for the research.

In the researcher's investigation, it is discovered that traditional Islam does not have a word for the concept of conversion. Conversion to Muslim faith is simply described as *Islam* i.e. surrender or submission to God, *iman* i.e. having faith in God and *ihtida* i.e. choice to follow right guidance. There is not necessarily a rite of

³⁴ Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 4; 73.

conversion, but the act of conversion is the confession of faith (*shahada*) i.e. the declaration of “there is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Apostle of God.” However, traditionally this is preceded by the greater ablution (*ghusl*) in which the entire body is washed. This is still practiced by certain sects till this day; at least the researcher is aware of this practice in northern Nigeria.

Woodberry did seem to argue that there are five terms to consider in understanding conversion in Islam, they are *huda* (divine guidance), which produces *Sharia* (the way), *tawba* (repentance), *iman* (faith) and *Islam* (submission). The convert is then expected to practice the five pillars of faith. Therefore in Islam conversion is essentially, in our opinion, defined by practice and not by a personal relationship with God (Jesus) as in Christianity. Conversion to Islam can be individual, family or group.³⁵ However, conversion from Islam to another religion is completely frowned against and it is seen as apostasy (*irtidad*). Consequently, what Christianity and other religions call conversion, Islam sees as apostasy and something that should be radically opposed. For further discussion on conversion from Christianity to Islam see next section on; Christian - Muslim Relations: Challenge and Opportunity for Conversion

Conversion in Christianity, on the other hand, is a subject that cannot be covered in a paragraph or two, so this is just a synopsis in view of space limitation of this research. It is revealed that there is diversity of imagery used in the Bible to denote conversion. The term conversion itself is “a relatively rare term in the Bible.”³⁶ Christian understanding of conversion is derived “mainly from three biblical words: the Old Testament Hebrew word *shubh*, and the New Testament Greek words

³⁵ J. Dudley Woodberry, “Conversion in Islam” in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard (Birmingham, Ala: Religious Education Press, 1992), 22-40.

³⁶ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 118.

epistrephein and *metanoein*.”³⁷ In the Old Testament, the idea like Gaventa revealed, is generally expressed by “the prophetic call for the return (*Subh*) of Israel to Yahweh,”³⁸ an example is found in Jer. 3:1-4:4. See also VerGemerer.³⁹ *Shubh* means “to return” or “turn back” hence there was no evidence of pendulum-like conversions as evidenced in the New Testament. Goodman however, argued that proselytizing was accepted by the Jews when he stated that Jews “before the Hellenistic period had accepted the principle that it was open to anyone to integrate him or herself into its political and social community simply by acceptance of Jewish religious customs.”⁴⁰ There is no clear evidence, to our knowledge, in the Old Testament that the Jews kicked against this.

In the New Testament, it is stated that “conversion seems to summarize the call of the church in response to Jesus’ commission to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations...conversion is a turning to embrace God.”⁴¹ Gaventa appears to suggest that the concept of conversion in the New Testament does not seem to be limited by change from one religion to the other, otherwise Paul cannot be said to be a convert⁴² suggesting that there are three types of conversion in the New Testament in his conclusion, which he calls “alternation, pendulum-like conversion, and transformation.” He however, summarized by saying that in both the “Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament the dominant understanding of conversion is that of transformation.”⁴³ What is meant by transformation often creates the complication

³⁷ George E. Morris, *The Mystery and Meaning of Christian Conversion* (Nashville: The World Methodist Council, 1981), 32.

³⁸ Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “Conversion in the Bible” in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard (Birmingham, Ala: Religious Education Press, 1992), 44.

³⁹ William A. VerGemerer, General ed., *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 55-59, 81-82.

⁴⁰ Martin Goodman, *Mission and Conversion: Proselytizing in the Religious History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 61.

⁴¹ Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 118.

⁴² Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “Conversion in the Bible,” 45.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 53.

that plagues the understanding of Christian conversion which makes it difficult for many to understand.

Although experience comes with transformation, Morris argues that in “Christian conversion it is not our experiences that interprets the Christ but the Christ who interprets our experience.”⁴⁴ Christ therefore is central to Christian conversion not activity or practice although they provide evidence of the conversion. This appears also to be the argument of Peace when he observed that “the essence of conversion is not found in the experience itself but in the content of that experience.”⁴⁵ There are divergent views across denominational divide as to what the content of that experience should be, which often is what makes the understanding of Christian conversion even to Christians complex.

Conversion in Christianity, Thiessen argues, consists of two elements i.e. repentance and faith. He defines repentance as essentially a change of mind, which involves three aspects of the person. These are intellectual, emotional and volitional elements. The intellectual implies a change of view as it pertains to sin, God and self. The emotional involves a change of feelings, i.e. intense sorrow for sin and desire to be pardoned, and volition involves a change of will, which means a conscious turning from sin. He also sees faith as more than an intellectual assent, which also involves the intellectual, emotional and voluntary elements. The intellectual involves belief in God’s total revelation, the emotional involves the awakening of the soul to its needs, and voluntary is the logical progression from the previous two, in which one then voluntarily surrenders himself to God.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ George E. Morris, *The Mystery and Meaning of Christian Conversion*, 10.

⁴⁵ Richard V. Peace, *Conversion in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 6.

⁴⁶ Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 268-273.

From the preceding discussion we have seen that there is a world of difference between what is understood as conversion in both religions. What they do have in common however, is that each involves a change of allegiance even if the understanding and the process are different.

Christian - Muslim Relations: Challenge and Opportunity for Conversion

As mentioned earlier, relations between Islam and Christianity have left a lot to be desired. It is characterized by distrust and mistrust. Historically in both Islam and Christianity, people have been killed or made fugitives simply for changing their religious beliefs. Although in recent times, conversion from Christianity to Islam has been less problematic than conversion from Islam to Christianity, yet even that has created social dislocations in some places.

Conversion from Christianity to Islam or vice versa can be referred to as *tradition transition* defined by Eliade as “the movement of an individual or a group from one major religious tradition to another. Moving from one worldview, ritual system, symbolic universe, and lifestyle to another is a complex process that often takes place in a context of cross-cultural contact and conflict.”⁴⁷

This conflict appears to be very heightened in conversion from Islam to Christianity, because in Islam, a convert from Islam to Christianity is termed an apostate (*murtadd*), which means one who turns back.⁴⁸ Eliade defines apostasy as “the repudiation of a religious tradition or its beliefs by previous members.”⁴⁹ It appears from this definition, apostasy is having no faith, a de-conversion of some sort.

This definition appears to be in consonance with the understanding of apostasy in Christianity. In Christianity, apostasy “refers generally to the abandonment of

⁴⁷ Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4, 74.

⁴⁸ H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 413.

⁴⁹ Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4., 75.

Christianity for unbelief.”⁵⁰ Therefore if a Christian lives his faith for any religion, not only Islam, he is termed an unbeliever. He needs to be reconverted to belief, i.e. there is forgiveness for him if he repents and comes back before he dies. In Islam on the other hand apostasy carries greater penalty than just the need for re-conversion in this life. This is apparent from the definition of apostasy given by Gibb and Kramer.

“Apostasy is called *irtidad* or *ridda*; it may be committed verbally by denying a principle or belief or by an action, e.g. treating the Quran with disrespect.”⁵¹

In the Quran, the apostate appears to be “threatened with punishment in the next world only,” without option of forgiveness as sura 3:88 reveals, see sura 3:86-90; 16:106-109. However, in the Fikh, it is unanimous that a grown up male who converts from Islam and who did not act under compulsion should be put to death and a woman be imprisoned.⁵² The punishment for apostasy in Islam appears to be fatal than it is in Christianity. (See Al-Bukhari n.d. 9:42-43).

This, therefore, in our opinion provides a challenge and opportunity for conversion. It is a huge challenge for a Muslim to convert to Christianity in view of the consequences that follows such actions. Musk reveals that “on the basis of the treatment of the subject in the traditions, jurists have concluded that apostasy from Islam is punishable by death in certain cases,”⁵³ especially “bleak is the situation of those who are Muslims by birth and upbringing, yet who choose as adults to change their religious allegiance.”⁵⁴ Considering therefore that Islam is more a community faith than personal faith makes this challenge more serious. And as Musk puts it, “To

⁵⁰ *New International Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 70.

⁵¹ H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 413.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Bill Musk, *Holy War: Why do Muslims Become Fundamentalists* (London: Monarch Books, 2003), 238.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 237.

change “faith” means to turn ones back on family, clan, nation and the only valid way of living.”⁵⁵

However, the argument of Friedman as to why apostasy is punished by death makes a lot of sense. He argued that “the idea that conversion to Islam ought to be irreversible developed as a result of the desire to protect the integrity of the early Muslim community.”⁵⁶ In other words they had to find a way of preventing the community from being extinct. This philosophy seems to still be present today. It does appear that Moucarry’s observation is still the present situation today, that “the severity of Islamic law appears to have a dual purpose: preventing Muslims from abandoning Islam and deterring non-Muslims from converting to Islam without seriously considering the full implications of their decisions.”⁵⁷ It is therefore obvious that it is quite difficult for a Muslim to convert to Christianity than it is for a Christian to convert to Islam.

Conversion from Christianity on the other hand, although there would not be the denial of the social consequences of separation from family, clan and members of the general community in a communal society as it is in Africa, Christians and indeed the Bible does not permit the killing of any person on the pretext of conversion. Indeed, the injunction of Christ is to love your enemies and do good to them that hate you (Lk 6:27).

It is therefore obvious that within these circumstances, it is easier for a Christian to convert to Islam than it is for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. This poses a huge challenge for Christians to convert Muslims to Christianity. On the other hand it is a huge opportunity for Muslims to convert Christians to Islam. It was therefore assumed

⁵⁵ Bill Musk, *Holy War: Why do Muslims Become Fundamentalists*, 239.

⁵⁶ Yohanan Friedman, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2003), 124.

⁵⁷ Chawkat Moucarry, *The Search for Forgiveness: Pardon and Punishment in Islam and Christianity* (Leicester: InterVasity Press, 2004), 273.

that this opportunity appears to exist in the context of this research; for Muslims to convert Christians to Islam. In what way they exploit this opportunity available to them was one of the central concerns of this study.

Conversion Studies

This researcher deems it important to look at studies on conversion at this point to give some basis for this study. This researcher surprisingly discovered that not much research on the issue of conversion has been done in Africa. There are a few on conversions from traditional religion to Christianity, a few more on conversion from Islam to Christianity, difficult to find those on conversion from Christianity to Islam, except a study of the conversion motives of both Christianity and Islam done by Maurer for his D.Th thesis in University of South Africa, which we shall discuss later, that this researcher found. We shall discuss those available and show how some of them may not be relevant to this study and how a few of them may be connected to this study.

One of the major studies of conversion in Africa is that which was done by Okorochoa (1987) among the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria. His study is based on conversion of the Igbo people to Christianity. In essence it is a clash of worldviews so to say. He therefore concluded as he wrote in his preface that the result of his study “shows that the inherited world-view and religious beliefs of a people are the determinant factors in their response to a new religious system or change-agent. Socio-structural and economic factors are important only when viewed as catalysts.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Cyril C. Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion* (Aldershot: Avebury Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1987), xi.

He did appear to acknowledge the religious or intellectual motif of conversion where he suggests that converts, in the acquisition of the new faith, compare it with the old.⁵⁹

As mentioned, his study was different from this study in that his was a study of conversion among a people group to Christianity and this was a study of conversion among individuals from diverse background of Christian experience to Islam.

However, it is interesting to note the influence of worldview and religious beliefs as a determinant factor in response to new religious faith. It is possible that some worldview assumptions in Christianity could have influenced some conversion to Islam. A variable to examine this was inserted in the interview questions.

Kunhiyop (2005) in his study of conversion among the Bajju people also did acknowledge the importance of understanding the worldview of a people in the process of conversion. In other words, the understanding of a people's cultural and religious beliefs is fundamental in understanding the process involved in their conversion. He found and acknowledged the influence of Bajju pre-conversion religion as playing a significant role in their conversion; that conversion to Christianity, in reality, only transformed their religious beliefs.⁶⁰ (This study appears to confirm Okorcha's conclusions as regards conversion among a people group). Therefore, unless a worldview is transformed, conversion is not complete. It appeared he saw conversion as transformation, similar to the position of one of our earlier definitions. Although this study does understand the significance of worldview in conversion, this study was not a study of worldviews even though worldviews are involved in conversion. It is important for a study like this to acknowledge the place of worldview in the conversion process, even though in this study such was not necessarily investigated.

⁵⁹ Cyril C. Okorocha, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion*, 262.

⁶⁰ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *Christian Conversion in Africa: The Bajju Experience* (Jos: ECWA Publications Ltd., 2005), 173.

Murumba (2008) employing ethnographic research method based on Rambo's stage model of conversion and using Kraft's worldview theory in association with Love's concepts of 'encounters', did a study of conversion to Christianity among Borana women in Nairobi. She discovered in her study that Borana women mostly came to Christ after they faced some crisis in their lives at personal, social and supernatural level.⁶¹ Although this study was an excellent study in conversion, it was different from this study because in this study we did not employ the ethnographic research method, (See research methodology for the method adopted for this study) neither employed the Rambo stage model but Lofland and Skonovd's motifs of conversion, and her study was on conversion from Islam to Christianity while this one was from Christianity to Islam. Hers was gender restricted, while this was not, except where context makes it difficult to obtain respondents from both genders. Its inclusion here is to provide a good insight into the process of conversion, as the process of conversion was seen to be essentially similar.

Asland (2005) also employed Rambo's model in his study of conversion among the Digo people on the East African coast. Using the stages in Rambo's method he sought to understand all the process of conversion in order to relate them to missiological studies. His study acknowledged the importance of worldview in conversion and concluded that team work is necessary to properly contextualize the message of the gospel to Digo people.⁶² He found out that conversions among the Digo was influenced by crisis, friendship, Christian message of forgiveness, power encounter and supernatural experiences. His study was however different from this in that he used Rambo's model which this study only referred to but not employed and it

⁶¹ Pauline C. Murumba, "A Study of Conversion from Islam to Christianity Among The Borana Women in Nairobi, Kenya with Implications for Christian Witness, (2008).

⁶² Oyvind Asland, "Conversion from Islam to Christianity among the Digo: Implication for Christian Witness" (masters thesis Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 2005).

was also the study of conversion from Islam to Christianity. This study was not looking at the process but the motives of conversion and it was from Christianity to Islam. It is important however to acknowledge that conversion is a change in worldview.

Strahler (2009) in his study, now printed into a book, examined the conversion of 17 Muslims to Christianity. Although his study was not similar to this conversion study in that, he studied conversion from Islam to Christianity, while this was conversion from Christianity to Islam, yet it was a study on conversion as this one, therefore his treatment of the chronological phases in the conversion process, which he gave as before interest-early awareness-awareness-interaction-decision-incorporation,⁶³ was helpful to this study in the way this process interacts with the motifs of conversion. He however, found out that emotional, intellectual /religious and spiritual need motifs played major roles in the conversion of the Muslims studied in Kenya. It would be interesting to see whether these motifs as well as those in other researches were similar in the conversion of Christians to Islam.

Oliveira and Mariz (2006) did a study of conversion to Islam in contemporary Brazil using interviews with converts. They discovered that majority of the converts attribute their conversion to the clarity, logic and rationality of the religion of Islam.⁶⁴ The experience of conversion here was mostly intellectual, not relating to any crisis or difficulty in personal life.⁶⁵ They attributed this experience to the reading of Islamic publicity material and the media such as television and internet. They concluded that conversion which is usually seen as personal and unique, is actually “something learned in the process of learning the new religion by the missionary,” and that

⁶³ Reinhold Strahler, *Coming to Faith in Christ: Understanding Conversion*, 44-53.

⁶⁴ Vitoria Peres de Oliveira and Cecilia L. Mariz, “Conversion to Islam in Contemporary Brazil” *Exchange* 35, no.1 (2006): 102-115.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

conversion account itself is a missionary discourse where the interviewee sees as sharing his faith.⁶⁶ This study, although similar, in that it studied conversion to Islam, but it was different in that it did not study it in the context of Africa or Nairobi and also did not focus on Christians specifically, it was however relevant to this study in that it studied the motif of conversion and used the method of interview which this study used. Comparison of the findings of this study and other studies cited would be done in chapter four.

Hawwa (2000) did a study of conversion from Christianity to Islam among migrant Filipina domestic helpers in Hong Kong. Religious conversion was primarily found to result from romantic involvement and intermarriage with Pakistani men.⁶⁷ Although Rambo's model was used to analyze the conversion process, it can be argued that the motif of affection was present. This study used the method of interview which this study also adopted. However, it was different in that it used the Rambo process model to analyze the data while this research, although had in mind other theories, focused on the Lofland and Skonovd's conversion motifs to analyze the data i.e. assess the presence of conversion motifs in the conversions. It was however similar in that it analyzed conversion from Christianity to Islam but not in African context or specifically Nairobi.

However, the study done by Kose and Loewenthal (2000) was quite similar to this study, in that it measured the presence of conversion motifs of 70 British-born converts to Islam. They used the same six motifs as advanced by Lofland and Skonovd. They reported that 67% of those interviewed reported intellectual, experimental and affectional motifs in their conversion. Only 14% reported the

⁶⁶ Vitoria Peres de Oliveira and Cecilia L. Mariz, "Conversion to Islam in Contemporary Brazil," 107.

⁶⁷ Sithi Hawwa, "From Cross to Crescent: Religious Conversion of Filipina Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 11, No. 3 (2000)

mystical motif and almost none reported the coercive and revivalist motifs. And they discovered that the normative convert to Islam is male, non-Sufi and not married at the time of conversion who reported the intellectual, experimental and affectional motifs. They also reported that Rambo's (1993) suggestions about the motifs present in the encapsulation of converts to world affirming and world rejecting religious groups were partially supported.⁶⁸

The difference however, between this study and that of Kose and Loewenthal is that whereas they used quantitative method in their research, this study adopted the qualitative approach to the research, although using interview technique as they used. Secondly the sample number was not as big as 70 as it was in their study due to time and availability of respondents. Their study took place in Britain, while this study took place in Nairobi-Kenya. It would be interesting to see, using qualitative approach, what results was returned in Nairobi in comparison to theirs in Europe.

Finally another study that was more relevant to this study was that which was conducted by Maurer (1999). The difference is Maurer studied twenty converts, ten converts from Islam to Christianity and ten converts from Christianity to Islam. This research only looked at conversion from Christianity to Islam. Maurer adopted five motifs of conversion and found out that more than one motif was involved in each conversion found in both cases he studied. Actually he identified between two and four motifs (affectional, religious, mystical and material) that played a role in each conversion experience.

Maurer concluded that conversion is driven by a variety of motifs and that human beings should be viewed in a holistic way, a person has different needs and all these play a role in the movement to conversion. He therefore argued that "one cannot

⁶⁸ Ali Kose and Kate Miriam Loewenthal "Conversion Motifs among British Converts to Islam" *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 10, no. 2 (2000): 101-110.

expect a decision as fundamental as conversion to a new religious community to be made solely on the basis of the truth claims of the new religion.” This therefore means that declaration of truth is not enough to influence conversion, supporting our earlier assumption. He also argued that the Bible supports a view of conversion that is two-way i.e. “Our understanding of conversion *to* our religious community – and consequently the nature of our self-understanding as Christians –is directly related to our understanding of conversion *away* from it.”⁶⁹

This study was significant to the present in that firstly it was done in Africa, therefore the context was similar. Secondly, it also dealt with one of the suppositions of this research from the beginning that there is more to Christian conversion to Islam than just understanding of truth. Thirdly, it used the same qualitative approach to research that this study used specifically the interview method. The major difference however was that Maurer combined both conversions to and from Christianity which this study did not. It however revealed as our earlier assumption that the conversion process is similar both ways. Secondly, Maurer’s focus was not to identify strategies but to seek to forge a common ground between Christianity and Islam’s understanding of conversion so as to breed tolerance within the context of South Africa. This study was concerned about what were the reasons Christians gave for converting to Islam which was expected to reveal how Islam exploits the motifs of conversion in their strategies to effect conversion of Christians to Islam in some Nairobi areas of Kenya. It would therefore be interesting to see whether the findings in this study were similar to that of Maurer’s in South Africa especially for conversion from Christianity to Islam.

⁶⁹ Andreas Maurer, “In Search of a New Life: Conversion Motifs of Christians and Muslims” (Dth diss., University of South Africa, 1999).

Review of Literature on Methodology

Qualitative Research Method and Conversion Motif Model

Review of literature on methodology is important in that it enables the researcher determine appropriate research design. There are three basic methods in research, which are qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. The research approach adopted for this study was qualitative research. This approach was deemed more appropriate for this study because studies in conversion are deemed to be phenomenological in nature and dealing with human behavior. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, “human behavior that cannot be investigated by direct observation such as attitudes and other emotions are best studied using the qualitative method.”⁷⁰

And as they argued earlier, in this kind of study, qualitative method “permits the researcher to go beyond the statistical results usually reported in quantitative research.”⁷¹ Furthermore, there are things in human behavior that cannot be explained deeply and exhaustively quantitatively hence as Mugenda and Mugenda rightly argued “by using qualitative method, researchers are able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply and exhaustively.”⁷² In quantitative research, mostly one identifies variables, define them into accepted definitions and questions that would measure these variable would be from this definitions. Then appropriate scales must be determined.⁷³ Certain nuances of human behavior cannot be captured through scaled analysis hence the choice of qualitative method.

On the choice of conversion motifs for this study, here the researcher felt that this was more appropriate for this study in that, although every conversion is a process,

⁷⁰ Olive M. Mugenda and Abel G. Mugenda, *Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Nairobi: ACTS, 1999), 156.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 197.

⁷³ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2002), 169.

and Rambo's stage conversion model, which the researcher will discuss briefly in the next chapter, is appropriate in the study of the conversion process, this study was not an outright study of the conversion process from Christianity to Islam, it is the study of the reasons Christians gave for converting to Islam which was expected to reveal strategies Muslims use to influence Christians to convert to Islam. This influence is therefore more on the motif side than study of the process.

Over the years the motives of converts to both religions have been questioned. For example Maurer in his work reported the case of Asia where converts to Christianity have been tagged "rice Christians,"⁷⁴ indicating a less than spiritual reason for converting. He further argued that the same can be said of converts to Islam in Africa where after the initial enthusiastic welcome, "converts experienced a much 'cooler' reception from members of the new religious community when their motives were discovered and classified as 'less-than-spiritual.'"⁷⁵

Therefore, although the Rambo stage model is good for describing the process of conversion and indeed, behind every motif for conversion is a process, this study was more interested in studying how Christians have been motivated to convert to Islam and invariably how Islam uses these motifs to achieve this conversion hence the choice of conversion motifs. There are a lot of people who appear disillusioned with their religious beliefs and are desirous of a change. It is only appropriate to use the conversion motif to study why they desire or accepted conversion to other religions, in this case Christianity to Islam.

⁷⁴ Andreas Maurer, "In Search of a New Life: Conversion Motifs of Christians and Muslims," 98.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, qualitative research method was adopted, since the aim of this research was not to generalize to a population but to understand the phenomenon of conversion from Christianity to Islam, as argued, that the intent in qualitative research is not to generalize to a population but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon.⁷⁶ In this study therefore, to best understand this phenomenon, the researcher was able to interview 11 converts from Christianity to Islam in Kawangware and Embul-bul, in carrying out the research in line with the argument that “the qualitative researcher purposefully or intentionally selects individuals or sites.”⁷⁷

I believe that since it is an in-depth exploration of this phenomenon of conversion to Islam by Christians that was intended, this approach was more appropriate in view of its characteristics. Maurer citing Dreyer (1991) suggests five important characteristics of qualitative research, which are:

- 1) It is usually undertaken in a *natural environment*.
- 2) It is *descriptive* in nature. Data are verbal or pictorial rather than numeric and may include transcriptions of interviews, field notes, photographs, video recordings, etc.
- 3) Researchers who use this approach pay attention to *process* rather than merely noting outcomes or results.

⁷⁶ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 193.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

- 4) Data is usually analyzed *inductively*. This implies that the theory used is ‘grounded’ on observation.
- 5) The researcher is particularly interested in the *meanings* which people attach to events and experiences.⁷⁸

This appears to give credence to what Creswell says about qualitative research and affirms the decision to use qualitative research for this study, which says that “the intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role, group, or interaction.”⁷⁹ This was in line with the intent of this study.

Data Collection Procedure

Although written sources form part of the information for this research, the main tool relied upon were interviews with converts in addition to some form of observation. The strategy was to try and establish trust relationship with some key Muslim leaders, if possible contact converts through the religious leaders. Agree with the converts the best and convenient way to collect data and seek their permission to record their experiences on digital recorder. The method of interview was face to face method as it was the experiences of individuals that were the intent of the interviews. This procedure was executed during the actual research.

As it is normative with qualitative sampling, purposeful sampling was employed in selecting the individuals that were interviewed. It is said that “purposeful sampling is where the researcher intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon.”⁸⁰ And in this study, opportunistic sampling was adopted for the reason that the respondents could not be determined before the study began and to

⁷⁸ Andreas Maurer, “In Search of a New Life: Conversion Motifs of Christians and Muslims,” 133.

⁷⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 198.

⁸⁰ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 194.

also make room for flexibility as there were last minute withdrawal of facilitators/respondents. Opportunistic sampling therefore is “undertaken after the research begins in order to take advantage of unfolding events.”⁸¹

Data Recording Procedure

Creswell argued that the qualitative researcher before he enters the field must plan the approach of recording his/her data. And he gave a list of several approaches among which are two that the researcher adopted for this research and they are; conduct an unstructured, open-ended interview, audiotape the interview and transcribe the interview and keep a journal during the research study,⁸² as the experience on the field dictated.

Data Analysis

In view of the volume of the data collected during the field research, the three step procedure of organizing and preparing the data for analysis, reading through all the data and coding process advanced by Creswell was used. A theoretical lens was used to analyze the data. Again Creswell argues that “qualitative researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens or perspective to guide the study and raise the questions of gender, class, and race (or some combination) they would like to address.”⁸³ In this study the Conversion Motif advanced by Lofland and Skonovd was the lens for the study, while Rambo’s stage model of conversion stood as a reference.

Perhaps it would be necessary at this point to differentiate Lofland and Skonovd’s conversion motifs and Rambo’s stage model of conversion. First of all we would say that this study was trying to answer why Christians convert to Islam not the study of

⁸¹ John W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, 196.

⁸² John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2nd ed., 189.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 131.

the stages Christians pass through to convert to Islam. We therefore argue that Rambo's stage model discusses the conditions that lead to conversion while Lofland's and Skonovd's Motifs discuss the persuasion that leads to conversion. In other words what influences people to convert.

Although Rambo's analysis of the conversion process does imply some influence, for example someone in an urban area is prone to the diversity of options which Rambo calls "multiplicity of options, cacophony of voices pulling in different directions"⁸⁴ and therefore can be influenced to convert. However, his study was about the process of conversion, i.e. the stages in the process of conversion, whereas this study was interested in the factors influencing conversion. One accepts that some process may have been followed to conversion, but we want to see the motif behind this conversion. We believe that strategies are woven around these motifs to influence conversion hence the need to look at the presence of these motifs in these conversions.

In this study we acknowledge that there are steps to conversion. However, it was not the steps or how you climb the steps to get there (conversion process) that we examined, for we know before you get there you must climb the steps, it is what made you want to climb the steps in the first place (conversion motifs) that we wanted to examine.

We however agree with Rambo that in conversion, at the stage of encounter, the potential convert and advocate "both strategize, maneuver, and engage in mutual interaction during encounter stage,"⁸⁵ it is more of this stage we are interested in, it is more at this stage that motifs come into play. So what strategies or maneuvers do Muslims employ to influence conversion, what motifs find convergence with this

⁸⁴ Lewis R. Rambo, "The Psychology of Conversion" in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard (Birmingham, Ala: Religious Education Press, 1992), 164.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

strategies that influence conversion of Christians to Islam? As Rambo suggested, “what ways advocate and convert reciprocally meet each other’s needs is an important topic requiring further research.”⁸⁶ This is more the focus of this research in the context that it was undertaken.

Lofland and Skonovd’s Conversion Motifs

It is now necessary to briefly state this conversion motifs advanced by Lofland and Skonovd. They advanced six motifs of conversion and each is characterized by the degree of social pressure involved, temporal duration, level of affective arousal, effective content, and sequence of belief – participation. This invariably reveals that these motifs must not be independently viewed; they are interlinked by other influences exerted on the individual. This is akin to Hiebert’s system of systems approach to study of human beings. The human being is a product of many systems which influence each other; social, spiritual, cultural, biological, physical and psychological.⁸⁷ This theory would also be borne in mind as one interprets the data collected. The six motifs are intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalist and coercive.⁸⁸

1. Intellectual

This is where the person actively seeks religious or spiritual knowledge through literature, print or electronic media, lectures or other media. In other words the person acquires knowledge about the religion through reading and investigation and then belief follows.

⁸⁶ Lewis R. Rambo, “The Psychology of Conversion” in *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, 169

⁸⁷ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1985), 26-27.

⁸⁸ John Lofland and Norman Skonovd, “Conversion Motifs” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 20, no.4 (December 1981): 373-385.

2. Mystical

This is a case where someone gets a paranormal experience. Sometimes this experience cannot be expressed in logical and coherent terms. Such experiences can be in the form of dreams or visions. The most classical example of this in the Bible is Paul's Damascus road experience of conversion.

3. Experimental

As the term suggests, in this form of conversion, the person does some kind of trial of the religion. It is like a pilot test kind of approach. The person participates in the religion gradually and then this leads to belief. Conversion may take a longer period of time to take effect in this case.

4. Affectional

This motif stresses interpersonal relationship or bond as the decisive factor influencing conversion. The person experiences affection, i.e. feel loved, nurtured or affirmed by a member of the religion or a religious group. This can be a relative, friend or family member. Here personal attachments or strong liking play a crucial role in influencing conversion. Under this we would include Maurer's "material motif"⁸⁹ since it is our position that it bothers on show of affection or nurture and affirmation.

5. Revivalist

Kose and Loewenthal describe this motif as "managed ecstatic arousal in a group context."⁹⁰ This motif is event oriented, in that participants experience emotional highs and then quickly make a decision to convert. This might occur in such organized religious activities like preaching, conferences or speech by a Charismatic leader in a group event. This then influences conversion.

⁸⁹ Andreas Maurer, "In Search of a New Life: Conversion Motifs of Christians and Muslims," 126.

⁹⁰ Ali Kose and Kate Miriam Loewenthal "Conversion Motifs among British Converts to Islam," 102.

6. Coercive

Lofland and Skonovd admit that this motif takes place in extremely rare and special circumstances. This involves compulsion. The major instrument is fear of harm, deprivation or excommunication and isolation from a group. In some cases denial of privileges can induce or influence conversion. There are some reported cases of this kind of conversion where Muslims are in the majority in a country or town.

Summary of Rambo's Conversion Stage Model

In closing this section it would be important to summarize Rambo's stage model of the conversion process. He described seven stages of how conversion takes place. Each conversion in one way or the other passes through this stage. They are, **Context** (social, cultural, religious and personal environment), **Crisis** (disorientation that can be religious political, psychological, or cultural), **Quest** (desire for meaning and purpose, under crisis this search intensifies), **Encounter** (the meeting of the potential convert and the advocate-congruence or compatibility of ideology, age, sex, education, and similar attributes), **Interaction** (the continued relationship after encounter with the person or group-leads to more knowledge about the values of the group), **Commitment** (declaration of involvement in the new religion – explicit and public) and **Consequences** (the various aspects of life affected by the conversion).

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

As earlier mention, 11 converts to Islam from Christianity were interviewed for this research and were interviewed in two locations of Nairobi, which are Kawangware and Embul-bul. The researcher went through the Sheikh of Tawba mosque of Kawangware who facilitated the interview of 7 people out of the 11 individuals interviewed. However, he later declined further assistance without stating any reason for doing so. The researcher then contacted a Muslim friend in Embul-bul who facilitated the interview of the remaining 4 individuals that accepted to be interviewed.

The converts came from different denominations of the Christian church, and from different parts of Kenya, although there were more converts from western Kenya. They were of varying ages but predominantly youthful and having different educational backgrounds. The nature of these converts would be discussed in detail as we attempt to answer sub-research question one (see section on description of converts below).

Therefore, in the analysis of the findings of this research, the researcher adopted the following approach. The earlier sections of the analysis are the report and analysis of the findings as they answer the main research question and the sub-research questions. The main research question would be dealt with first before a description of the converts. This is because the researcher believes that the primary interest of the research be discussed first before the secondary concerns. This is then followed by the

analysis of the research analysis of findings as it relates to other previous studies, then the findings analyzed in relation to some assumptions before the studies and finally the discussion of the strategies discovered as a result of the research findings. This is done in a descriptive, interpretative and analytical manner.

Coding and Usage

First the researcher will explain the coding and its usage as adopted in this research. After concluding the interviews, the researcher transcribed and organized the interviews into themes and sub-themes and assigned codes to the various categories. Coding, as revealed, “involves organizing data into categories related to the framework and questions guiding the research so that they can be used to support analysis and interpretation.”⁹¹ Researchers can borrow coding systems used by other researchers previously in a different research or “they use a system that they developed themselves.”⁹² In this research, the researcher developed his own system of coding as they relate to the research questions. This simply means “actually reading through the interviews, fieldnotes, and transcripts and assigning to sentences or paragraphs of text numerical or alphabetical codes representing concepts, categories, or themes.”⁹³

The converts interviewed are coded according to locations. The 7 converts interviewed in Kawangware are identified with codes K1-7, representing the initial letters of convert and abbreviation of Kawangware respectively and numbered 1 to 7. Similarly the 4 interviewed in Embul-bul are coded E1-4, following the same pattern. In response to research question 1, the themes that emerged were coded. There were

⁹¹ Margaret D. LeCompte and Jean J. Schensul, *Analyzing and Interpreting Ethnographic Data: Ethnographer's Toolkit*, 5 (Walnut creek: Altamira Press, 1999), 45.

⁹² Ibid., 52.

⁹³ Ibid., 45.

six main themes, and the first three themes have sub-themes. The main themes are coded Th1 -6 and the sub-themes take their decimal numbers from their main themes e.g. Th1.1. The two Sub-Research Questions are coded SRQ1 and 2 respectively and Other Emerging Themes coded OET.

The responses of the converts are therefore posted according to the sub themes in alphabetical order as their comments are arranged for research question one, for example if you see Th1.1/K1a footnoted, it means that the quote is from theme 1 sub-theme 1 and it is the first posted comment of convert one from Kawangware. To see the original comment, you go to appendix 2 and look under theme 1 sub-theme 1 and K1a and you will find the comment. It is the same pattern for other categories. For example, SRQ1.1/E1 means the comment is found under sub-research question 1 sub-theme 1 and the comment belongs to convert 1 from Embul-bul. See appendix 2 for all the coded original comments of converts in all the categories as only selected quotations would appear in the analysis. Some comments appear in more than one theme; this is because they are applicable to those themes. In addition some questions and additional comments, where inserted, are in italics.

As the researcher starts analyzing the factors revealed by these converts for converting to Islam, it is important to note that the supposition of what the researcher calls “gratification conversion” did not appear to be proven in the findings of this study. Although converts revealed a quest for some form of satisfaction, such a quest did not appear to be materialistic, as none of the converts reported conversion as a result of what he was given, or a desire to acquire things. Many even after conversion had no jobs and are not under any support from Muslims. They continue to work to earn a living by themselves, where they have received anything after converting, it was mostly unsolicited and unexpected. However concealment cannot be over ruled.

Reasons for Conversion

There were six (6) major themes that emerged as factors revealed by converts for converting to Islam. The themes and their sub-themes would be discussed below as follows;

Table 1: Summary of Conversion Factors in Themes and Sub-themes as Reported by Converts

Themes	Sub-Themes	Number of Converts Reporting Theme/Sub-theme
Comparative Investigation	Personal Search for Truth	11
	Providing Quick Answers and Openness	8
	Muslims Knowledge of Scripture	4
	Inequality and Discrimination among Christians	3
	Moral Depravity/Materialism of Christians	8
Islamic Practices	Direct belief/knowledge and Access to God	4
	Personal Hygiene and Circumcision	5
	Behavior and Way of Living	8
	Equality and Love for One Another	5
	Teaching and Obedience to laws	6
Simplicity, Clarity and Unity of Islam	General Simplicity of Islamic Religion	10
	Conversion/Reversion process	7
	Length of Worship Time	3
	Universal Oneness of God/Religion	11
Friendship		10
Searching for the True God		11
Deliverance from Evil Spirit		1

As these themes from the data are analyzed, it is important to note that there is another possible way of categorizing the themes. For example the Sub-theme “personal search for truth” and the theme “Searching for the true God” can be categorized together. However, they are separated to capture the nuances of the converts in the search for general truth through comparison of the two religions and searching for God as the object of worship. Secondly, the sub-themes “Behavior and Way of Living”, “Inequality and Discrimination among Christians” and “Equality and Love for One Another” can be grouped together under Islamic practices, the latter two being reverse of each other. The sub-theme “providing quick answers and openness”

which can be categorized under the theme “simplicity, clarity and unity of Islam” was also separated for the same purpose stated above.

Comparative Investigation

There were a number of factors revealed by converts that are categorized as comparative investigation of the two religions, which influenced conversion. All the converts interviewed gave reasons that fell under this category classified into sub-themes and discussed as follows:-

Personal Search for Truth

There seems to be some truth in what Straus said that conversion is not necessarily a product of external or internal destabilization, but could also be “the individual seeker striving and strategizing to achieve meaningful change in his or her life experiences, and which treats the groups and others involved in the process as salesmen, skills, coaches, guides and helpers.”⁹⁴ This seems to reflect a description of the experiences of the converts interviewed.

For most converts, the journey to conversion started with a personal search for truth. What triggered this search for the truth could be that striving and strategizing to achieve meaningful change in life and experiences. One of the converts revealed that he simply started asking questions from the Bible and the Quran.⁹⁵ This personal search for the truth involved many activities. It could begin by simple listening and asking questions as was revealed by one of the converts that his house was not far from the mosque and he used to simply listen to the Friday sermons from the mosque and prepare questions to ask,⁹⁶ or visitations like another revealed that he heard

⁹⁴ Roger A. Straus, “Religious Conversion as a Personal and Collective Achievement,” *Sociological Analysis* 40, no. 2 (1979): 158.

⁹⁵ Th1.1/K1b

⁹⁶ Th1.1/K1h

different teachings from different teachers.⁹⁷ It might also involve active comparison as one convert revealed that he compared the beliefs in Islam and the beliefs in Christianity,⁹⁸ and may also include reading; “I researched myself by reading materials. They have this Friday bulletins, so I would go over to my friend’s house then borrow the bulletins and always read them in English.”⁹⁹

The theory about the passive convert,¹⁰⁰ converted by external forces appears not to hold water in this research. It revealed active people seeking for the truth, often generated from the inside of the person as one said “I was looking for a good religion; I was looking for where I can find God.”¹⁰¹ What triggered this search may be difficult to ascertain and may be varied, but the influence is not merely external. As also revealed, the duration for this search was varied; for one it took almost one year¹⁰² and another said “it took me like four years to convert to Islam.”¹⁰³ For others the search continued even after conversion as revealed by one of the converts that he continued to read books and kept asking questions from friends on how best he could be exposed more to Islamic literature.¹⁰⁴

This brings to the fore the debate of when actually conversion takes place. Is it immediate or gradual? Although many think that conversion is immediate,¹⁰⁵ but as this study reveals, conversion can be gradual. If we therefore agree that conversion involves transformation, then it never is complete until transformation takes place. How to measure transformation remains a complex issue. However, as revealed, one

⁹⁷ Th1.1/K3c

⁹⁸ Th1.1/K4a

⁹⁹ Th1.1/E2d&e

¹⁰⁰ James T. Richardson, “The Active vs. Passive Convert: Paradigm Conflict in Conversion/Recruitment Research,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24, no. 2 (1985): 119-236.

¹⁰¹ Th1.1/E3A

¹⁰² Th1.1/K1i

¹⁰³ Th1.1/E2b

¹⁰⁴ Th1.1/K5b

¹⁰⁵ See James R. Scroggs and William G. T. Douglas, “Issues on the Psychology of Religious Conversion,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 6, No. 3 (Jul., 1967):206-207, 211.

of the reasons that led them to conversion is personal search for truth, whatever that truth is.

Providing Quick Answers and Openness

It was also revealed in this study that quick response to questions and openness was a strong factor behind the conversion of some converts. Eight out of the eleven interviewed alluded to this as a factor. A convert stated that one of the things that convinced him to convert to Islam and see it as the right religion was its openness.¹⁰⁶ Another stated that he was openly invited to the mosque to see what happens in the mosque.¹⁰⁷ Referring to how open their dialogue was on the two religions, one convert stated that “so they will tell me go to the Bible verse, go and look this and go and look that, so that is why I decided to be a Muslim...when you come to the Quran, it has put all things straightforward and clear, there is no hidden agenda.”¹⁰⁸ Another one stated that when you asked a Muslim a question, he does not give you answer from his mind but refer you to the Quran or the Bible, so that you can see the verses that would answer your questions. Muslims simply show you where you can get your answers in the Bible or the Quran.¹⁰⁹

In comparison, one of the converts, a Catholic, bemoaned the secrecy concerning some parts of the Bible of the Catholics. He said that,

the Catholic Bible, has some books removed. Now I was kind of curious, why did these books need to be hidden from that particular Bible of theirs, so I went to this library, they have a library, they have the old version of the Bible, so I read those forbidden six books. It was like those books were removed because they were inciting people against the Catholic religion. So I said to myself whereas this church has something to hide to the rest of the population, then definitely it is not the right path for me. So I moved out as a person. You can't go to a church that deceives people.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Th1.2/E4b

¹⁰⁷ Th1.1/K7d

¹⁰⁸ Th1.2/K1k

¹⁰⁹ Th1.2/K2g

¹¹⁰ Th1.2/E2f

Another, a protestant, reporting about the negative response of his Sunday school teacher stated that he kept trying to ask his Sunday school teacher questions to clarify things for him, but the teacher appeared to be rebuking him for asking too many questions even though he told him that his Muslim classmates were trying to teach him about Islam in an attempt to convert him to Islam.¹¹¹

From the foregoing, it appears that the perception of openness and quick response to the quest for information nourishes conviction, conviction provides basis for trust in the Quran or Muslims, and trust certainly is the foundation for faith. It is argued that there are two dimensions to building trust. “The first dimension of trust focuses on the objective credibility of an exchange partner, an expectancy that the partner's word or written statement can be relied on. The second dimension of trust, benevolence, is the extent to which one partner is genuinely interested in the other partner's welfare and motivated to seek joint gain.”¹¹² Converts reported both dimensions in their interaction with Muslims.

Muslims Knowledge of Scripture

This study also revealed, that four of the converts think that there is a relationship between knowledge and truth; “Now what made me really follow the religion, I started following small boys. I said how come this small boy knows his religion better; he knows many things than I do.”¹¹³ Another convert relating his experience in a debate on the day he converted to Islam said that on the day of the debate, he I learnt that the Muslims’ book is the Quran. However, he discovered that they were asking questions from the Bible and pastors present could not provide answers to such questions. He then took the Bible and began to ask the Muslims questions and

¹¹¹ Th1.2/K7e

¹¹² Patricia M. Doney and Joseph P. Cannon, “An Examination of the Nature of Trust in Buyer-Seller Relationships,” *The Journal of Marketing* 61, no. 2 (Apr., 1997): 36.

¹¹³ Th1.3/K3e

discovered that they were providing correct answers from the Bible, which convinced him.¹¹⁴

Although the converts revealed these factors as reason for converting, it is not revealed that they ascertained the difference between trained Muslim speakers and scholars, or even the exposure to Islamic teaching by the so called “small boys” and other ordinary Muslims. It appears they were just so impressed and it formed one of the bases for their conversion to Islam as they compared it with the seeming ignorance of the Christians pastors who are supposed to know and provide answers to Islamic questions.

Inequality and Discrimination among Christians

Another factor revealed by three of the converts as reason for converting to Islam was the perceived inequality and discrimination among the Christians that they either saw or experienced when they were Christians before converting to Islam. One convert, a university graduate, stated “I want to say that before my conversion I did not have a problem, a major problem with Christianity, apart from the fact that I was seeing a lot of discrimination in the church, so perhaps that could be the reason why I decided to be a Muslim.”¹¹⁵ In explaining this observed discrimination further he stated:

And one cardinal teaching that these two religions share is that we were all created equal before God and when I contrasted that with the kind of practice, you know Christian practices in our churches, I never saw that equality really, much as the clergy will keep on propounding that we are created equal before God, that equality was never like quite explicit in the churches, because there is a section of the church that is like set aside for the who is who in that particular church or set up. And when I shared that with my Muslim friends, they were like there was nothing like that and because I have never stepped into a mosque to really cross check, I took it for granted that ok fine if this is really what this guys are telling me and if it is true, let me try and find out myself.¹¹⁶

It appears he did find out and eventually converted. One of the converts bemoaned the celebrity status given to some people in the church above others by revealing that

¹¹⁴ Th1.3/K6e

¹¹⁵ Th1.4/K5f

¹¹⁶ Th1.4/K5e

he observed that when you are a leader in the church you are given much recognition above others and that he had problems with that.¹¹⁷ Another reporting what he saw among the Muslims revealed that when Muslims go to the mosque to worship, there is no boss all of them are equal. The only boss they have is God and it is to him they offer their worship. He revealed that it is this that convicted to think that Islam is the right path.¹¹⁸ One convert recounted how the church elders shunned visiting and comforting him, alluding to the fact that he was not recognized as important, after he lost his son, simply to count money in the church. He reported that;

Now having reported about what has happened in my family, I expected that the church will plan to come and comfort me and my family, remember it was the day of tithe. Instead I saw all elders and church leadership just dealing with money, counting money. They told me wait we shall go, wait, wait, but I waited until 4pm then I decided to leave for home. When I was back at home after nobody cared for me, I began to reflect that for the whole year I went to different churches trying to get where truth is. Then I decided to join this church, and now today I present my problems but they don't care about me instead they cared more about money.

A human being is a product of many influences. Individuals have diverse expectations. It appears that the meeting of such expectations is a strong influence on religious conversion as we have seen from the forgoing, even if such expectation appears to lack some level of objectivity.

Moral Depravity/Materialism of Christians

More than half of the converts interviewed alluded to this as one of the factors influencing their conversion to Islam. One convert alluded even to lack of physical grooming of the Christians in keeping nails, unshaved hair, walking and bouncing and lack of good behavior as some problems he had with Christianity.¹¹⁹ Another alluded to the fact that in Christianity, Christians worship God but their actions are very bad. This is in the sense that they may be drinking beer and do many other things which

¹¹⁷ Th1.4/E1g

¹¹⁸ Th1.4/K6h

¹¹⁹ Th1.5/K3g

are bad. But in Islam Muslims are told what is good and what is bad.¹²⁰ Yet another reported that in any church he attended, he noticed some form of evil being practiced in the church such as immorality, gossiping and all other evil things. This raised the question in his mind as to what kind of churches there are since people come to church to repent and be washed, but right in the churches people go there to commit sins.¹²¹

One convert was more direct by revealing that he chose to become a Muslim because of the things I saw happening in the church and the school he was because it was a Christian school. He went further to say that;

When I was in school there were these pastors who came from outside even from Nigeria, Australia and America, they use to come in the parish. They use to do stuff that I did not like, they often come into our classes and pretend to be telling us the word but in fact they would just pick the prettiest girls around, tell them to go for counseling but it turned out to be something else, you know. It went on for about two years until one of them was discovered. He went back to wherever he came from. So I was, in like, they were lying to us.¹²²

Other examples given are dancing, wearing miniskirts, sitting with ladies in the church, and even killings. The question that comes to mind is the fact that one can hardly say the issues of killings, dancing and other things mentioned are the exclusive preserve of Christianity or Christians or any religion at all, including Islam. This actually agrees with the assumption revealed earlier that conversion may not only be a “truth conviction” thing. This begins to reveal that conversion is a product of many influences, bringing to mind Hiebert’s claim that humans are a product of diverse influences as seen earlier, which would be briefly discussed later.

¹²⁰ Th1.5/K4d

¹²¹ Th1.5/K6i

¹²² Th1.5/E2g&i

Islamic Practices

The next major theme that emerged as a strong factor that influenced conversion among the converts interviewed is summarized under the theme of Islamic practices. It appears that various aspects of Islamic practices held a strong appeal to the converts and are categorized under the following sub-themes.

Direct Belief/Knowledge and Access to God

It appears also that some of the converts believed access to God in Christianity is through a medium and direct access to God is not available as stated by one convert that Muslims believe directly in God and they don't go through any person and the deeply have a knowledge of God.¹²³ There appears also to be the belief that only Islam provides direct access to God in dealing with the issues of sin as was suggested by another convert that when one commits sin, he is allowed to talk directly to God. He does not have to go to a pastor or somebody else; he can simply communicate directly to God.¹²⁴

Another convert expressed his attraction to Islam by revealing that as regards praying, Islam is very direct. One does not need anybody to reach God.¹²⁵ Such comments reveal an apparent impression that when you pray through Christ you are not having direct access to God. In fact much more is the clear misunderstanding of the Catholic practice of confession as one of the converts revealed that as children they were taught in Catholicism to go to the reverend father and confess their sins. That practice troubled him while he remained a catholic. He revealed that he even disagreed with his teacher about it. His question was why should he go and tell a person what he did in secret. It disturbed him the whole time he was a Catholic.¹²⁶

¹²³ Th2.1/K3h

¹²⁴ Th2.1/K6k

¹²⁵ Th2.1/E1j

¹²⁶ OET.5/K2

Whatever the case, the concept of direct access to God did hold a strong appeal to the converts as a reason for converting, as against the perception of praying through someone.

Personal Hygiene and Circumcision

One of the practices that also held a strong appeal to a number of the converts is the question of personal hygiene in the practice of worship which appears to them to be absent in Christianity. One clearly stated that the first thing that made him to be a Muslim was that he saw that Muslims were very hygienic. When they use the toilet they go with water. And to him the first thing is hygiene. He went ahead to say that “many Christians don’t have hygiene.”¹²⁷ One other convert revealed that cleanliness is important and we are all supposed to be always clean. We are supposed to be clean in the body and internally in our hearts as well.¹²⁸ He did not explain what to be clean in heart means.

However, one could get the idea from the comments of one of the converts that when you become a Muslim you are enjoined to be clean every time but in Christianity, when they were going to church, they can even wake up in the morning and go to church without showering. However, in Islam you have to take shower to make yourself clean.¹²⁹ Perhaps clearer still is the explanation given that;

The difference is that in Islam they have prayers for all the doctrines which they observe, like washing their hands and legs before they enter the mosque, like after going to the toilet, before they eat, before they sleep and you have to wash your hands before you touch the Quran but Christians do not observe those things or traditions. Before you read the Quran you have to wash all your body, prepare yourself to be clean before you read the Quran.¹³⁰

It does appear that, for some, outward rituals as a sign of worship held a strong appeal, strong enough to influence conversion.

¹²⁷ Th2.2/K3j&k

¹²⁸ Th2.2/E1k

¹²⁹ Th2.2/E3f

¹³⁰ Th2.2/E4d

Behavior and Way of Living

Most of the converts reported the appeal of the behavior of Muslims as one of the factors that convinced them to convert to Islam. A convert revealed that one thing that led him to Islam was the behavior of Muslims. He said that when someone becomes a Muslim; he becomes a brother of every Muslim. Muslims take you as their brother. It is as if you have become their relative such that you can even forget your people.¹³¹

Another simply said that the way Muslims lived is more straight forward than in Christianity and added that it was their behavior that made me to follow them. He revealed that Muslims were humble, polite and were not selfish.¹³²

Ones behavior as a mirror of what he believes in and stand for is highly captured in this comment that “my friends when they converted to Muslims, I was looking at their behavior. The way they were behaving when they were Christians is not the same like when they became Muslims.”¹³³ Some were attracted because Muslims were more concerned about their fellow believers,¹³⁴ for others it was because they found that Muslims cared and loved each other. Whatever part of the country you went as a Muslim you cannot sleep outside. They will provide shelter and give you food as well as take care of you.¹³⁵ Yet for others it is not only before, but after conversion as was revealed that “their behavior before and after I became a Muslim was very cordial and in fact not just cordial but also sympathetic.”¹³⁶

Equality and Love for One another

Some converts saw inequality and discrimination among Christians as earlier revealed. They, however, saw equality and love for one another among Muslim as a

¹³¹ Th2.3/K2i

¹³² Th2.3/K3l&m

¹³³ Th2.3/E3i

¹³⁴ Th2.3/K6l

¹³⁵ Th2.3/E4e

¹³⁶ Th2.3/K5g

strength which drew them towards Islam. There is this observation that when Muslims worshipped, they are all equal before God without a boss. No matter their status they all worshipped God and are equal before him as they offered him worship. This equality convinced one of the converts that Islam is the right path.¹³⁷ Another observed that when you compare Muslims and Christians; Muslims love themselves and love all people. But Christians love only themselves and not others.¹³⁸

Love for one another is reflected in sharing as the convert continued by saying that Muslims love one another by sharing everything they have in common. For example even if the food is small, it is shared with many people and they get satisfied.¹³⁹ Indeed one was very direct when he said that “the experiences that led me to Islam is that I found that they care; they love each other.” He collaborated further by saying that “through observing them I can see their good conduct; the way they loved each other and the way they hang together.”¹⁴⁰

Teaching and Obedience to Laws

Consistency in adherence to teachings and obedience to religious laws was one of the influences upon several of the converts to accept Islam. This is very clear in the opinion expressed by this convert that “I converted to Islam because of their way; they read the book and follow what is written in the book that is what inspired me to convert to them.”¹⁴¹

A number of the converts alluded to the specificity of the teachings of the religion as a case in point. For example one said that Muslims are taught from childhood to know what *haram* (forbidden) is and what is *halal* (permissible) while in Christianity, in spite of the knowledge acquired through school and the possession of degrees,

¹³⁷ Th2.4/K6m

¹³⁸ Th2.5/E3k

¹³⁹ Th2.4/E3m

¹⁴⁰ Th2.4/E4i&j

¹⁴¹ Th2.5/K21

knowledge of what is *haram* (forbidden) or *halal* (permissible) is not known.¹⁴²

Another gave example of the teaching on marriage and concluded that “if you look at that institution and what Islam teaches about it, Islam gives concessions that if it doesn’t work out you are free to be apart, but now if you go into Christianity... it is like to the Christians there is nothing like a marriage which will not work out.”¹⁴³

Even the issue of burial came to the fore when a covert said that in Islam all are taught how to conduct funeral services but in Christianity you are not permitted to do that.¹⁴⁴

This matter cannot be more pungently conveyed than the comment that “the way I understand it is that the way Muslims are taught, they are observing the commandments and act upon the word of God, but the Christians, they preach but they don’t act upon the word of God.”¹⁴⁵

It does appear that there is the lack of understanding of the difference between the teaching and compliance to the teaching. The fact that you don’t comply with the law is not that the law has a problem, the problem might be, and indeed it is often with the individual. It is however obvious that compliance to the law adds value to the law and the one keeping it, as revealed in the comments of these converts. Fidelity to a religion by its followers appears to be evidence of its genuineness, and may satisfy the quest for truth for those hungry for it. They did not see this in Christians living with them.

¹⁴² Th2.5/K3o

¹⁴³ Th2.5/K5j

¹⁴⁴ Th2.5/K6n

¹⁴⁵ Th2.5/E4l

Simplicity, Clarity and Unity of Islam

The third major theme that emerged in the opinion of the converts interviewed as a major influence on conversion to Islam is simplicity, clarity and unity of Islam. This theme is also discussed under the sub-themes that follow:-

General Simplicity of Islamic Religion

This opinion was expressed by all but two of the converts. The statement that the mind struggles when it encounters complexity might aptly describe the views expressed by the converts, even though simplicity might not necessarily be equated with the truth. It however, appears more acceptable to some as revealed by the comments of the converts concerning Christianity. One of them simply said Islam is “easier than Christianity.”¹⁴⁶ There is some concurrence to this, in that in Islam, as one convert revealed, you just follow what is written. This is because you have the book (Quran) as your guideline. However, in Christianity there are several conflicting doctrines such as the Catholic doctrine, Protestant doctrine and so on. It is therefore, very hard to follow what is single Christianity because there is no common focus.¹⁴⁷

Simplicity appears to be equated with straightness in the views expressed here that Islamic teaching is much more straight,¹⁴⁸ which seems to tally with the expression that “Islamic teachings are very clear but Christian teachings are mixed up. I found it very simple. It was not confusing. Islam is simpler.”¹⁴⁹ It is simpler even in what some refer to as reversion back to Islam because to become a Muslim you are simply reminded that you once a Muslim.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Th3.1/K1n

¹⁴⁷ Th3.1/K2m

¹⁴⁸ Th3.1/K3p

¹⁴⁹ Th3.1/K4f

¹⁵⁰ Th3.1/K5k

One of the converts revealed that there is no complication in Islam as found in Christianity. It is therefore not easy to get lost in Islam.¹⁵¹ The same opinion appears to be expressed by another in saying that Islam is simple to follow because it does not contradict itself.¹⁵² It does appear that the simplicity of Islam to the converts is aptly summarized by this statement that;

I find Islam is simple, because in Christianity you know they tell you how to be saved, I think you have to be baptized, they say John baptized Jesus so you have to be baptized and in Islam you just say words *laillahaillallah Muhammadan rasulullah* and you have been converted. There is no lots of things you have to do; only that and you become a Muslim. Even you can say it anywhere you are, yah.¹⁵³

Two of the converts however expressed the opinion that Christianity is simpler to follow. However, when you examine their views, their opinion was based on the perceived moral laxity of Christianity which permits you to do anything you want,¹⁵⁴ or the regularity of going to church, which is only Sundays, as compared to five times a day for Muslim.¹⁵⁵ What amounts to simplicity appears to depend on the angle you are looking at the issue, however, as revealed. The converts found Islam, in their perception, simpler to follow than Christianity hence their conversion. Yet the opinion of the two does reveal that perception of simplicity may not be the driving force behind the conversion alone since the two would not have converted to Islam in the first place.

Conversion/Reversion Process

The nature of Islamic conversion is also one of the factors that more than half of the converts gave for converting to Islam. Some however do not view it as conversion but reversion since you are only going back to follow the right thing as this convert stated that “Reversion means that you lost the way at some point so you are coming

¹⁵¹ Th3.1/E21

¹⁵² Th3.3/E4m

¹⁵³ Th3.1/K7g

¹⁵⁴ Th3.1a/K3q

¹⁵⁵ Th3.1a/E1m

back to the fold. So you are not really converting; you are just simply reverting. You are like engaging the reverse gear. That is the gist about Islamic reversion.”¹⁵⁶ The question is, if it so, why do you have to make declaration in reverting?

Islamic conversion or reversion, as it were, is simply saying something and you are a Muslim as revealed that in Islam you are asked only to say something you believe in and once you say it you are a Muslim.¹⁵⁷ As reiterated further, “if you want to be one (a Muslim), all you have to do is to decide that you really want to be one with your heart and soul and be ready to live upon the teachings of the Islamic population as a whole and see an imam for the conversion ceremony.”¹⁵⁸

Perhaps another befitting description of the simplicity of the conversion process is found in the comments of this convert which says that:

it is not really like there was a major ceremony, it wasn't really there, it is just a question of have you made up your mind, and so I was walked into a mosque and the imam was made aware that there was a brother here who would like to become a Muslim so I was invited and I was taken through the whole procedure and at the end of it I was ok now I have become a Muslim, after reciting the *fatiha*, not the *fatiha* let me correct that, by reciting the *shahada*.¹⁵⁹

Confirming the similarity of the above statement, one convert revealed that he was asked to recite with his mouth that there is only one true God and so he did and after that he was officially a Muslim. There was no baptism or catechism and revealed that is how he became a Muslim.¹⁶⁰ These comments appear to reveal that these Christians who converted to Islam perceived that there was something extra to do besides simple confession with the mouth in converting to Christianity, which one stated include baptism and the long explanation of how to be saved. The clear-cut Islamic conversion process simply made the conversion to Islam attractive to these converts.

¹⁵⁶ Th3.2/K5m (see also Th3.2/K1o)

¹⁵⁷ Th3.2/K4g

¹⁵⁸ Th3.3/E2o

¹⁵⁹ Th3.2/K51

¹⁶⁰ Th3.4/E2p

Duration of Worship Time

A few of the converts alluded also to the length of worship of the religion as a factor influencing conversion. One convert stated that in performing the Muslim prayer (*sallat*), it does not last for more than five minutes. Going to the church on the other hand takes you from morning to evening.¹⁶¹ Another convert was blunter when he said that “when you go into the mosque you pray five minutes then you go to your work. When you go to church you spend the whole day and God says you pray five minutes then you go to search. When you stay in church from morning till evening you won’t find something to eat.”¹⁶²

It does appear that the problem here might not actually be length of worship time but the unmet need. The desire to meet other needs might have found expression in the appreciation of a shorter time of worship provided by the mode of worship in Islam. But there is no mention of the fact that it is only once a week this takes place as opposed to five times a day in Islam. Again indicating that perhaps it is not the duration that is the issue, this is not suggesting that the length of worship should not be a problem. However, this fact only reveals the more that conversion process is multifaceted and driven by all the influences exerted on a human being.

Universal Oneness of God/Religion

All of the converts interviewed revealed the perception of universal oneness of God and the religion as one of the cardinal factors that influenced their conversion to Islam. It appears that most had difficulty with the concept of Trinity in Christianity and could not come to terms with the fact of the manifestation of God in three persons. So also the perceived lack of unity in Christian churches was a major issue

¹⁶¹ Th3.3/K1p

¹⁶² Th3.3/E3o

with them. The perceived universality of the practices of Islam in having one Quran and one approach to worship struck a chord with most of them.

This convert clearly expressed his dissonance to Trinity by complaining that “when somebody tells you that God is one; the Quran clearly states that God is one. Now when you come to the Bible they say that God is three in one, but when you do that mathematically, it is not logical to me.”¹⁶³ There was concurrence in the opinion expressed here that in Christianity there is the belief that Jesus himself is God. In Islamic teaching however, it is clearly stated that Jesus is not God but he is respected by Muslims.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, one clearly stated that he was convinced by the belief in one God in saying that what convinced him to become a Muslim is the belief in only one God.¹⁶⁵

The plurality of the mode of prayer got a mention too that Christians pray in different ways, yet they call themselves all Christians. Muslims; however, pray one way and trust only one God.¹⁶⁶ This is the same understanding expressed by another convert that what he understood by being a Muslim is that there is one God and all the prophets are true and the messages they brought to the people are true.¹⁶⁷

Clearly the universality of the practice of Islam was prominent in convincing the converts about the authenticity of Islam as the religion to follow as one convert revealed that he found Islam to be the same even if one goes to America. One will find there that they pray to one God and believe in one thing. They also believe that God exist and he is everywhere¹⁶⁸ hence the argument that it is Islam that is the

¹⁶³ Th3.4/K1r

¹⁶⁴ Th3.4/K2o

¹⁶⁵ Th3.4/K7i

¹⁶⁶ Th3.4/E3p

¹⁶⁷ Th3.4/E4o

¹⁶⁸ Th3.4/K4h

religion for mankind. He discovered that God chose Islam for mankind therefore he argued that:

I was left asking myself if indeed it is true that we were all created equal before God, and the main reason why we were created, both Christians and Muslims teach these that the main reason why man was created was purposely to worship God, why could it be that the same, same God who created all of us to worship him, purposely to worship him could live us groping for the vessel we would use to worship him, so when I read the Quran and it is explicitly mentioned therein Islam is the chosen religion for mankind, I was like yes this must be it.¹⁶⁹

Indeed, according to one, it is the Christians that have a misunderstanding of Muslims because they think that Muslims believe Muhammad as their God, which they don't. Muhammad has a superior mightier than him. Muhammad was just a prophet. Christian population always mistakes the two; they mistake God and Muhammad.¹⁷⁰ That is why when it comes to the issue of God, Christians allude to three gods but in the Quran, it says there is one God.¹⁷¹

It does appear from the foregoing that the concept of God manifesting himself in three persons is a problem among Christians even today. It appears the oneness of God preached by Islam appear easy and logical for some to accept, which provides a strong reason for changing faiths.

Friendship

The fourth major theme and one of the strongest factors is friendship as revealed by the converts. It is a common saying that every heart responds to the touch of friendship. This might be the case in the story narrated by the converts. They narrated stories of friendly attitude exhibited by Muslims towards them as a major factor influencing their conversion to Islam.

¹⁶⁹ Th3.4/K5n

¹⁷⁰ Th3.4/E2q

¹⁷¹ Th3.4/E3s

For one, it was when he started enquiries about Islam. He revealed how when he approached Muslims and started asking questions, they were friendly, invited him in and behaved nicely in answering his questions signifying a good relationship.¹⁷² There is the story of the prison inmate who was shown a lot of kindness in his first contact with Muslims that marked a turning point.¹⁷³ There is the ones who had neighbors who left an indelible mark by their hospitality¹⁷⁴ and received contribution from the Mosque on the day of his conversion without bothering to know who he is,¹⁷⁵ and the one who was not visited by the church after the death of his son, but was visited daily by the Muslims for just being sick.¹⁷⁶

There is also the story of a student who was touched by “the way they use to invite me and the way they use to talk to me; you know they use to teach me and I try to practice what they were doing, so I found that I liked it.”¹⁷⁷ And the one who found a contrast between the way Christians treat Muslims as opposed to the way he was treated. He said that Muslims behaved very well and nicely and he liked them as compared to the extremely bad things he would hear Christians saying about Muslims.¹⁷⁸ There is also the friendship that made the young man to say that the help they gave him by making him understand Islam was one of the reasons that made him to convert to Islam. He revealed that whatever he did not understand he went to them. So it is this that contributed to his conversion. He however, emphasized that his heart and soul did the rest. He decided for himself to be a Muslim.¹⁷⁹ And finally the one that said;

¹⁷² Th4/K2q

¹⁷³ Th4/K3s&t

¹⁷⁴ Th4/K4k & CK5o-q

¹⁷⁵ Th4/K5r

¹⁷⁶ Th4/K6r

¹⁷⁷ Th4/K7k

¹⁷⁸ TH4/E1o

¹⁷⁹ Th4/E2s

this is how I look at it, this is a Muslim in whom I have contact with and this is a Christian who also I have contact with and now if the issues am trying to address with this Christian brother are the same issues which am addressing with the Muslim brother. But look at the difference in approach here, look at how this guy is embracing my difficulties look at how this guy...before this Christian brother could see me, he could see my problems but before this Muslim brother could see my problems, he was seeing me.¹⁸⁰

The comment of this convert leads us to the discussion of the next factor.

Searching for the True God

The fifth theme or factor revealing influence on conversion to Islam, as revealed by the converts, is the search for the true God. Some concluded that Jesus cannot be the son of God or God, as one cannot find where Jesus said he is God even in the Bible.¹⁸¹ So how can you say Mary mother of God, meaning Jesus is God, when he has taught his followers to pray to the father.¹⁸²

So it became confusing; “Christians say Jesus is the son of God; then he is God. So I didn’t understand where the truth is.”¹⁸³ Yes the true God cannot lie as pastor Mary was doing by saying that God revealed to her that someone did not attend a funeral, yet he did. So what kind of God is Pastor Mary serving? So there is the need to look elsewhere.¹⁸⁴ No wonder then the biggest reason for a search is, wanting to know “who is God and who the king of everything is.”¹⁸⁵ It is this search that led one of them to Islam since he said he was looking for God.¹⁸⁶

There is a reason why one would really look for God, especially when comparison is taking place as one convert stated he started comparing Christians who claim to be people of God, yet the things he saw they were doing was wrong.¹⁸⁷ Then the search

¹⁸⁰ Th4/K5t

¹⁸¹ Th5/K1t & CK2r

¹⁸² Th5/K3u

¹⁸³ Th5/K4l

¹⁸⁴ Th5/K6s

¹⁸⁵ Th5/K7m

¹⁸⁶ Th5/E1p

¹⁸⁷ Th5/E2t

really becomes legitimate as one revealed that he began therefore looking for where God can be found because when he was going to church he saw many things he did not like.¹⁸⁸

It therefore appears that the way people behave and act can be a reflection of the God they serve, and when the image people see does not reflect the concept of God they expect or have, dissonance occurs. And when that happens, it appears the seed of conversion is sown; a search for this true God begins and can manifest in conversion as it appears to have happened with the converts interviewed.

Deliverance from Evil Spirit

This theme was actually reported by only one of the converts. For him the experience of exorcism by a Muslim imam proved to him that Islam was the true religion to follow, as his testimony reveals. “I was living in a Muslim residence whereby one day I was possessed by evil spirit, and my parents were Christians and they were unable to pray for my deliverance, so what happened was that they sent for a Muslim imam and he came and prayed for me, and the spirit departed so that convinced me to be a Muslim.”¹⁸⁹ And so he could declare clearly that “the main reason that made me to be convinced about Islam is the issue about the evil spirit which came upon me and I asked myself; where my mother was attending, why were they unable to deliver me from the spirit? So I realize that in Islam there is certain power which could deliver a person.”¹⁹⁰ Quite a number of Christians often see this experience as an exclusive preserve of people converting to Christianity.

There is no gainsaying the power of experience to influence conviction. Often experiences are hard to be denied or disproved. It is therefore difficult to disprove

¹⁸⁸ Th5/E3u

¹⁸⁹ Th6/E4r

¹⁹⁰ Th6/E4s

experience hence a strong influence on conversion, as it appeared to be the experience of this convert. How these experiences reported relate to the conversion motif theory used for this study would be discussed as we provide answers to sub-research question 2. Whatever the case, this shows that conversion is influenced by a combination of many factors. Different set of factors influence different individuals, based on context and experience.

In summary therefore, comparative investigation, simplicity, clarity and unity of Islam, friendship and searching for God are very strong themes that were reported by majority of the converts. Specifically however, the reasons reported by all are search for the true God and truth and universality of Islam. Those reported by all but one are general simplicity of Islamic religion and Friendship.

It is also important to note that more than half of the converts reported providing quick answers and openness, and behavior and way of living of Muslims as factors influencing conversion. Others are the teaching and obedience to laws and conversion/reversion process as seen in Islam were also strong factors revealed by the converts that attracted them to Islam. Only three converts reported length of worship time and one reported deliverance from evil spirit.

It is also important to observe that in the opinions expressed by the converts under the theme Islamic practices, there appears to be a basic lack of understanding of salvation by grace, a basic tenet of the Christian faith. In addition, we can say that good behavior may not be the exclusive preserve of one religion, and what you call good behavior can be susceptible to subjectivity. This notwithstanding as the comments reveal, perceived good behavior and way of living did hold a strong appeal of true religion and influenced conversion in this study as it was obvious the lives of Christians they knew did not portray this.

Furthermore, the monopoly of goodness, equality and care for one another is not the exclusive preserve of Islam. You can say the same things about the Hindus, Buddhists and African Traditional Religion. One sees the effect of proximity and exposure as strong factors here. However, in comparison to what they see in Christians near them, it was sufficient enough to convince them that there is more equality and love for one another in Islam to sway them to convert.

It is also important to note at this point before we proceed that having converted to Islam, these converts may probably be desirous of justifying their decisions to convert to Islam. They might even see it as an opportunity to evangelize. Therefore they would want to present Islam as the ideal religion better than Christianity and may even conceal their real motivation for converting to Islam. But we must however present what the data reveals.

Whatever the case, the foregoing does reveal the complexity of the conversion process. This is what makes it difficult to develop a single theory that would capture all the intricacies of the conversion process reported by individuals. Rambo's stage model focuses on one aspect; Lofland and Skonovd focuses on another. As various experiences of conversion and studies are reported, influenced by the various changes society undergoes and different influences exerted on man, new theories would still emerge hence anthropologists, sociologists and psychologist would continue to be interested in the phenomenon called conversion. We must now shift our attention to the description of these converts.

Description of the Converts

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Elements of the Converts

Code	Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation	Marital Status	Religious Background of Family	Region and Tribal Affiliation	Church Affiliation before conversion	Church Attendance before conversion	Former Pastor
K1	32	4 th form	Casual Worker	Married	Christian	Nyanza-Luo	Church of God	Sundays only	Mammamku
K2	45	2 nd Form	Driver	Married	“	Eastern-Meru	Catholic	Regular-including week meetings	Italian-cant remember name
K3	35	Standard 8	Driver	single	“	Western-Luhya	Pentecostal Assemblies of God/Catholic	Regular-including week meetings	John
K4	29	Standard 7	Casual Worker	Married	“	Western-Luhya	Protestant Church	Sundays only	Pastor died-Cant remember name
K5	36	1 st Degree	Statistician	Married	“	Nyanza-Luo	Catholic	Regular-including week meetings	Coleman
K6	38	Standard 7	Plumber	Married	“	Western-Maragoli	Salvation Army-African Church-Pentecostal Assemblies of God	Sunday only	Wafula
K7	28	Standard 8	Factory Worker	Married	“	Western-Luhya	Pentecostal Church	Sunday only	Kenneth
E1	27	Standard 8	Jobless	Married	Dual (Christian and Muslim)	Rift Valley-Masai	Catholic	Regular-including week meetings	None
E2	22	4 th Form	Jobless	single	Christian	Eastern-AKamba	Catholic	Regular-including week meetings	Conn
E3	28	Standard 8	Carpenter	Married	“	Eastern-AKamba	Presbyterian	Sundays and Wednesdays	Kevin
E4	28	None	Carpenter	Married	“	Western-Luhya	African Divine Church	Sunday only	John

Since the factors reported by the converts interviewed as influencing their conversion to Islam have been revealed, it is now time to look at the description of these converts to see what pattern or patterns would emerge.

It is important to note, as believed rightly from the beginning, that all the converts considered themselves as Christians before converting to Islam. In fact some even have a clear understanding of evangelistic perception of what it is to be a Christian. And as the table reveals, except one who has one of the parents as a Muslim, all clearly reported that their parents and siblings were Christians and are still Christians. This might indicate the reason why the intellectual motif is very strong in this study i.e. converts predominantly compared Christianity with Islam; they mostly sought and

investigated spiritual knowledge through literature, print or electronic media, lectures or other media.

It is also clear that the belief that those converting to Islam might be from one particular brand or denomination of Christianity is also revealed not to be true. Although four or five out of the converts are Catholics, 5 or 6 of these converts are from the strand of Christianity that can be reported to be Protestant or Evangelical (e.g. Presbyterian, Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Church of God, etc) and one from an African Instituted Church. This is very significant if we consider that opportunistic sampling was employed. Considering that this research was also conducted in two locations of Nairobi, it might provide a glimpse as to the pattern of conversion from Christianity to Islam in Kenya even if strong generalizations cannot be made.

It was revealed that most of the converts were committed to their churches as they reported regular attendance of church beyond Sunday services, and also regular attendance of church programs. Even those who confess attending church on Sundays only were consistent in doing so. Therefore, if attendance to church and church programs is the yards stick for measuring true Christianity then all the converts can qualify as true Christians. Many reported how their parents insisted on church attendance. With the exception of 2, all the converts clearly remembered their pastors or priests.

As the table also reveals, there are more converts from Western and Nyanza Provinces, 7 converts; 2 Luos 4 Luhyas and 1 Maragoli, yet there were converts from other provinces. There were converts from Eastern and Rift Valley provinces: 2 Akambas, 1 Merian and 1 Masai. It is therefore not correct to assume that conversion to Islam is particular to people from a particular province or tribal group of Kenya.

Other demographic factors reveal that majority of the converts were youthful in age. Only 3 of the converts are above 30 years, like Kenya's population. It does confirm initial information the researcher was given that a lot of Christian youths are embracing Islam in Nairobi. Majority of the converts are married; only two are single youths. The converts therefore do not fit the description of deviant youths influenced by a desire for adventure; in any case the factors discussed earlier did not suggest that.

It is also revealed that majority of the converts; though not in white collar jobs, are gainfully doing something in their respective trades. Those who have no permanent trades are casual workers. Only 2 reported that they were jobless, but still searching for jobs. Although they cannot be said to be affluent, it does not also appear that they were desirous of benefits for converting. It was not evident in the data that their conversion was influenced by desire for material benefits neither is there evidence from the data that they are presently enjoying any special favors for converting to Islam. The benefits reported can be said to be more personal and innate (psychological) in nature, which may not be divorced from the intellectual or theological.

The converts are however, not a highly educated group in terms of educational qualification. 6 of the converts ended their educational pursuit after standard 8 (primary school) mostly due to lack of financial support. 2 finished 4th form (secondary school). 1 dropped out of secondary school after form 2 and 1 did not attend school at all. However one of the converts is a university graduate with a degree in mathematics. Although majority of the converts are not highly educated, it is not conclusive to say that conversion to Islam is only among the less educated in Kenya, considering the opportunistic nature of the sampling in poorer parts of Nairobi. Such a generalization would discountenance the presence of a university

graduate and the youthful nature of the group who have prospects of furthering their education; nothing shows that they may be willing to revert back to Christianity later after further education. But it can be safe to conclude that conversion to Islam as revealed by this study is strong among youths if we take into consideration that the Sheikh was involved in the contact with converts in Kawangware and the opportunistic nature of the approach in Embul-bul.

In summary therefore, there is no definite conclusive demographic pattern to describe the converts from Christianity to Islam in this study. They came from different Christian traditions, different parts of Kenya, different tribal groups and different educational backgrounds. Even though they are predominantly youthful, about one third of the converts are above 30 years, which in terms of probability ratio are significant, in that by this study, one out of every three convert is above 30 years. They also have different occupations and have different marital status, though dominated by the married, but not restricted to it.

The only constant appears to be that the converts came, in the views of the converts, from Christian homes with strong affinity to Christian tradition and are committed Christians in terms of attendance of church programs. This might suggest that faithful Christians do convert to Islam. In this study therefore, it is not safe to apply any fixed descriptive pattern to the converts from Christianity to Islam, as the characteristics are diverse. See SQR1 in appendix 2 for transcript on these descriptive issues.

Other Emerging Themes

Some more facts emerged from the data that the researcher believes would throw more light on the characteristics of the converts. These are captured in the description

of the growing environment of the converts, how they came into contact with Islam, their understanding of Christian conversion when they were Christians and their understanding of Islamic conversion after they became Muslims and finally the areas they had contention or disagreement with Christian teachings before they converted to Islam. It is the belief of this researcher that this would further throw more light on the description of the converts, hence this analysis.

Growing Up Environment and Influences

Social learning theory in education considered behavioristic says that behavior involves the interaction of people with many different environmental conditions. One key element of this is that “an individual is continuously engaged in two-way interaction with the self and the environment.”¹⁹¹ This appears to be true in this study; the urban environment had a strong influence in the conversion of this Christians to Islam. This discovery also appears to support Oded’s position quoted earlier that Islam is an urban/semi-urban religion in Kenya, in that most of the converts studied made contact with Islam in such areas.

Those who grew up outside the urban areas never came into contact with Islam until they came to urban/semi urban areas, for example one of the converts stated that “I grew up at Meru... before I came to Nairobi, I had no Knowledge of Islam.”¹⁹² However, all those who converted to Islam revealed that they lived in areas where Islam was present and such areas are either urban or semi-urban. Several grew up with Muslim friends at home and school in urban and semi-urban areas; such relationships obviously played a major influence on their conversion experience. Some started their growth in Nairobi, went back to the rural area and later came back

¹⁹¹ Ellery Pullman, “Life Span Development,” in *Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Michael J. Anthony (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 27.

¹⁹² OET.1/K2

to Nairobi; it was after their return to Nairobi that they came into contact and converted to Islam away from their families. See OET.1 on appendix 2 for detailed transcript of the growing experiences of the converts. It is however strongly supported in this study that the environment in which the converts grew up played a major role in their conversion to Islam.

Contact with Islam

Several converts came into contact with Islam as early as when they were born because they were born in the environment that had a strong presence of Islam. For example, all the converts interviewed in Embul-bul were actually born there and grew up with Muslims as this convert revealed; “I heard about Islam every day of my life since I have been living in Bul, because I live with Muslims. There are Muslims all over around me, my friends, part of my family; I can say that even some of my teachers, some of them are Muslims.”¹⁹³ Some converts in Kawangware lived close to the mosque as one of them revealed that his parents lived near the mosque and he heard about Islam through the Friday (*Juma*) preaching from the mosque conveyed through the loud speakers of the mosque through which he raised questions that he asked the Imam.¹⁹⁴

Others made contact with Islam only when they came to Nairobi as this convert revealed; “when I came to Nairobi, I was just going on with my business, then I met the people preaching in the streets and after I listened to them, they convinced me.”¹⁹⁵ See OET.2 in appendix 2 for a record of how these converts came into contact with Islam. It is safe to say therefore that Christians growing up where Islam is present and

¹⁹³ OET.2/E2

¹⁹⁴ OET.1/K1

¹⁹⁵ OET.2/K2

living among Muslims are more prone to convert to Islam. This suggests that without exposure to a religion and its teaching, conversion might be difficult.

Understanding of Being a Christian

The researcher sought to find out what was the understanding of the converts as to what it means to be a Christian before they converted to Islam. This was to establish whether they had a true understanding of what to be a Christian means, which would help to ascertain their true identity as Christians. The data revealed that a number have a genuine conviction that they were Christians before conversion. Does profession of conviction amount to genuine conversion or is it only a product of accident of birth? This takes us back to the debate of what conversion really is. The problem with conversion is that its entire ramification is difficult to ascertain empirically, perhaps this is why its study is complex and conclusions diverse.

This notwithstanding, we will state the facts as the data revealed. The interviews reveal that a number of the converts have a clear understanding of what can be referred to as evangelical understanding of conversion, for example one convert stated that “being a Christian, you have to believe Jesus is your savior that he died for your sins and you have to follow the way Jesus use to teach.”¹⁹⁶ Another said that “to be saved as a Christian then, was accepting God as your personal savior; that was what it meant to be saved and to be baptized.”¹⁹⁷ Whether inner transformation took place by this knowledge cannot be proven by the data but it is difficult for any evangelical to disagree with this description of what it means to be a Christian.

Majority however, stated that being a Christian means one or a combination of the following; being born into a Christian home, attending Sunday school, going to

¹⁹⁶ OET.3/K7

¹⁹⁷ OET.3/E2

church every Sunday, being baptized, doing good and knowing there is God. Two samples illustrate: “I was baptized, and attended Sunday school as a child, I loved it and I knew Christianity. To be a Christian, you have to be polite or humble, fear God, and do good.”¹⁹⁸ Another said he went to church and was baptized i.e. when he grew up he was instructed that he must go to the church, which he did and after a month was baptized. He explained that he was given the name John for that reason.¹⁹⁹ To see all the range of opinions expressed by converts, see OET.3 in appendix 2. The question is can these be classified as Christians?

Now those who see or perceive conversion as an event, and a lot of evangelicals do, would out rightly say no, but those who see conversion as a process would say yes. There is the argument that there are biblical evidence of whole family conversions e.g. Acts 10. This debate thus has no end in sight, however, based on earlier position and for this study the converts fit our definition of a Christian. What is clear however is that some of them have an evangelical understanding of being a Christian while others do not, and these within the context of their Christian traditions are accepted as Christians. It is therefore difficult from this study and even from an evangelical perspective to decide whether the converts can be described as Christians or not.

Understanding of Being a Muslim

On the contrary all converts have no confusion as to what it is to be a Muslim or how to become one. One of the converts summarizes all the opinion expressed by all the converts by revealing that one becomes a Muslim by saying the *Shahada*. In the confession you make a declaration that there is no other God who we know and there

¹⁹⁸ OET.3/K6
¹⁹⁹ OET.3/K4

is no other God rather than Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet. The requirement is to testify with your mouth and swear to one God.²⁰⁰

All the converts believe that good works are important but it begins by believing in one God and confessing the *shahada*. He said, “first, believe that God is the only one, and all prophets you believe them and you have to leave what God does not want and believe everything that God wants and follow the way Islam teach.”²⁰¹ This is in tune with the belief of Islam in salvation by good works. Refer to OET.4 on appendix 2 for a record of all the views expressed by the converts.

In summary therefore, compared to the length of time spent as Christians and the length of time as Muslims, converts have demonstrated more knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a Muslim than what it means to be a Christian from an evangelical perspective. It is important to note that the characteristics of the converts did not change between when they were Christians and when they became Muslims, perhaps the only change is in age. Majority were also still going to church, as the data revealed, until they converted to Islam.

Areas of Conflict with Christian Teachings before Conversion

Perhaps the areas of conflict with Christian teachings and ways before conversion would reveal the reasons why the factors became significant in influencing the conversions. What the researcher was not able to determine clearly was whether the converts' responses were tainted with their knowledge of Islamic doctrines after conversion. But converts were requested to state what the area of conflict before conversion was.

²⁰⁰ OET.4/K3

²⁰¹ OET.4/K7

Table 3: Summary of Areas of Conflict with Christian Teachings before Conversion

Areas of Conflict	Number of Converts Reporting	Codes of Converts Reporting
Sonship and Deity of Jesus	2	K1, K3
Plurality of God	2	K7, E3
Conduct of Christians	4	K4-6, E4
Catholic Confession	1	K2
The nature of Catholic Bible	2	E1, E2

* See OET.5 for the transcript of all this and using the convert codes.

It should be noted that 4 of the converts paid more attention to Christian conduct rather than any doctrine or teaching of Christianity directly. Could Christian conduct be a major factor in sowing seed for comparative investigation? The data appears to suggest that possibility. It is also possible the converts could not separate Christian teachings with the conduct of followers or it is a way of saying that the teachings of Christianity are supposed to find expression in the conduct of Christians. What is also difficult to establish is whether this conflicts were generated before exposure to Islamic teaching or during, considering that many of the converts were exposed to Islamic teachings from birth being born in areas where there was strong presence of Muslims. However this was what the data revealed as shown on table 4. The researcher will now consider the findings as relates to the theory adopted by examining the conversion motifs as they relate to the conversion of these Christians.

Conversion Motifs as Relates to Conversion of these Christians

Table 4: Indicating the presence of Conversion Motif

Converts	Conversion Motifs					
	Intellectual	Mystical	Experimental	Affectional	Revivalist	Coercive
K1	✓			✓	❖	
K2	✓			✓		
K3	✓		✓	✓		
K4		❖		✓		
K5	✓		❖	✓		
K6	✓				✓	
K7	✓		✓	✓		
E1	✓			✓		
E2	✓			✓		
E3	✓			✓	❖	
E4		❖		✓		

Key

- ❖ Not definite or clear
- ✓ Presence of the motif

As the table above reveals, in the experiences of the converts interviewed, two motifs were predominant; the intellectual and the affectional motifs were reported in almost all converts. Only two converts did not report the intellectual motif. This may be related to education level since K4 did not complete his primary education while E4 did not attend school. Furthermore, only convert K6 did not report the affectional motif. He simply said he did not have any Muslim friends before converting. However, if we consider his comments in Th4/K6r, we cannot help but see the possible presence of affectional motif. Whatever the case, it is not surprising that he is actually the only convert that reported the presence of the revivalist motif. The researcher was not convinced that the experiences of convert K1 and E3 qualify to indicate the revivalist motif since there was a time lag, and he participated in dialogue and debate in more than one occasion.

Only two converts reported the experimental motif while in the third person it was not clear in his testimony whether it can be classified as experimental motif. He simply said that “I think the experimentation period for me would be the interaction I had with those Muslim friends before I made up my mind. So whatever I was sharing with them on the table that would qualify as the experimentation for me.”²⁰²

It was not also very clear whether the experiences of K4 and E4 can be classified as mystical experience also. If you notice, they are the only two who did not report the intellectual motif. Convert K4 said before the experience he was already contemplating conversion²⁰³ while convert E4 made it very clear that his experience was definitely the reason for his conversion by revealing that his main reason for

²⁰² SRQ2.3/K5

²⁰³ SRQ2.2/K4

converting to Islam was really the possession by evil spirit, which came upon him. He questioned why the church his mother was attending was unable to deliver him from the spirit. It is this that gave him the realization that in Islam there is power that could deliver a person.²⁰⁴ It was not clear if spirit possession amounts to a mystical experience. No convert reported the coercive motif. Generally there were four motifs that were definitely present in the experiences of these converts and one not very clear.

What the data reveals in answering the main research question appears to be in consonance with what the data reveals here. If we examine all the factors reported under the six themes, majority of them can be classified under the intellectual and the affectional motif. With the exception of the supernatural experience in Theme 6, majority of the themes hinge on intellectual and relational factors. However, what is conclusively clear in this study is that there was interplay of conversion motifs in the conversion of this Christians to Islam; majorly that of the intellectual and affectional motifs. This appears to also agree with Straus conclusion, quoted earlier, that conversion is not necessarily a product of external or internal destabilization revealing the interplay of both intellectual and affectional motifs.

It can be argued that the use of the term affectional as a motif appears to be constricting, in the sense that it does not differentiate whether it is social or emotional or even show the relationship between the two. It however appears that Lofland and Skonovd in this motif laid emphasis more on social relations in that they stress interpersonal relationship. In that light, the data in this research supports strongly the presence of this motif in influencing conversion. Some clarification might be more helpful in dealing with this motif.

²⁰⁴ SRQ2.2/E4

Findings in Relation to Research Theory Applied in the Study

Let us now look at the findings in relation to the research theory used as the researcher believes it would throw more light in answering sub-research question two. Lofland and Skonovd identified six conversion motifs, which we used in this study. They suggested that more than one motif would be present in any particular religious biography. This theory in this area appears to be validated in this study. As evidenced on table 5, all the converts reported more than one conversion motif in their conversion biography. In this study, two motifs were predominant i.e. intellectual and affectional motifs. If we include the not so definite entries, other motifs reported are experimental, revivalist and mystical. However, none of this was reported in more than three converts. The only motif not reported is the coercive motif and this appears to be the case in other studies cited that used the same theory, e.g. Kose and Loewenthal.

Lofland and Skonovd suggested that each motif is characterized by social pressure involved, temporal duration, level of affective arousal, effective content and sequence of belief – participation. They said that the intellectual motif is low on social pressure, medium on affective arousal and usually brief and entailing self conversion with little pressure. The findings of this study appear to support these postulations to some extent. Most of the converts reported self investigation, with little or no affective arousal, (if the interplay with other motifs is discountenanced) and conversion with little pressure (see Th1.1/K1g, Th4/E2s). This position however, appears not to countenance the interplay between the affectional motif and the intellectual motif, especially if they exert influence concurrently. At what point does one motif stop and the other take over? How do you measure the extent of the influence of each if they

are running concurrently? In addition, it was obvious that the duration of the search in this study for most of the converts was not brief. It took some between a year and above (see Th1.1/K1b, Th3.2/K5l and Th1.1/E2b for examples). It is however affirmed from this study that belief preceded participation (see th1.1/K2d for example), except in the case of the one experimenting.

This study does not clearly report the mystical motif therefore we cannot test whether their postulations have been validated. However, for the experimental motif they suggested that social pressure and affective arousal are low, and the period is long, characterized by curiosity. All this appear to be true as one of the converts revealed, in fact he did all this for about seven years. (see SRQ2.3K3 and also Th4/K7k for examples).

For the affectional motif, they suggested that social pressure is medium functioning as support and attraction. Affective arousal is medium and the process relatively long with the principal emotion as affection. The findings of this study appear to affirm this position to some extent also (see SRQ2.4/E3, SRQ2.4/E1, SRQ2.4/K2, SRQ2.4/K5). The Muslims applied medium pressure by invitation and suggestions, and through that aroused the feeling of the Christians and indeed the process was relatively long as compared to the experimental motif.

In the case of the revivalist motif, they said that this is managed ecstatic arousal, high social pressure and brief duration; belief follows participation characterized by love primarily and fear secondarily. It does not appear that the case of the only convert who reported this motif fits this description (see SRQ2.5/K6). There was no high ecstatic arousal, only high dialogue. The presence of social pressure appears not to be there although the duration was brief. Yet the experience fits the characteristic of the motif as event oriented, in that participants experienced emotional highs and

then quickly make a decision to convert. This might occur in such organized religious activities like preaching, conferences or speech by a Charismatic leader in a group event. This appears to be the case with this convert. The experience took place in the context of an organized religious debate and a quick decision was made to convert by the convert. This study did not report the coercive motif.

Generally, although the theorists acknowledge the presence of more than one motif in a conversion biography as this study reveals, the major weakness of this theory is that it does not show how each motif interacts with the other. For example, in the event of more than one motif in a conversion biography, how do you measure the level of influence each has on the other or on the convert also?

Findings of the Study as It Relates to other Previous Studies

The main focus of this study is to find out the factors that influenced the conversion of the Christians interviewed to Islam. However, analyzing the findings of this study in relation to other previous studies will help to put it in context and also provide further insight. In this section therefore the researcher will compare the findings of this study with the findings of other similar and relevant studies done in other contexts cited. Let us start by saying that this study appears to give credence to Eliade's conclusion that the process of conversion is dynamic and multifaceted.²⁰⁵ We do notice that in the experiences of the converts recounted here, the process was both gradual for some and abrupt for others e.g. K6 ran into a debate and ended up converting the same day²⁰⁶ while for K3, the process took up to seven years.²⁰⁷ And in this study conversion is predominantly individualistic; most of the converts are the only converts in their families and among their Christian friends.

²⁰⁵ Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4, 73.

²⁰⁶ Th1.1/K6b

²⁰⁷ SRQ2.3/K3

Therefore as Karsdolf postulated (see page 16 of this study) and as the data in this study reveals, conversion does take place within the matrix of the converts culture and social structure. As we noticed, it is within their religious-ethical frame work and socio-cultural structure that all the converts wrestled with the implications of their change. Quite a number faced challenges from parents and community for going against cultural norms, in this case Christian culture and heritage. The dynamics of why one transfers his allegiance away from his heritage, in spite of social opposition in some cases, has always been the challenge of conversion studies.

There is also the issue of Okorocho's conclusion that inherited worldview and religious beliefs of people can be determinant factors in their response to a new religion or act as change agent. It does appear that such was evident in the example of one of the converts in this study (see Th4/K71 in appendix2). The convert associated the dressing of Muslim girls and the way Muslims wear Islamic gowns to the image he held of Mary and Jesus' dressing when he was a Christian as a sign that Muslims were following the right path. Perhaps further studies could reveal more corroboration of this in other converts in another study.

Furthermore, in the literature review, we also referred to Strahler's Chronological phases in the process of conversion. The chronological phases of the conversion process, established by Strahler when he studied Muslims converting to Christianity appear to also be similar in this study that looked at conversion to Islam from Christianity. These phases are before interest, early awareness, awareness interaction, decision and incorporation (see page 26 of this study). He argued that changes in the conversion process happen during these distinct chronological phases and that this

happens in two dimensions, i.e. cognitive (change in knowledge and understanding), and affective (change in attitude).²⁰⁸

This study appears to affirm these two dimensions of changes even in conversion from Christianity to Islam as the two predominant motifs are intellectual (cognitive) and affectional (Change in attitude) in the sense that there is a change of attitude towards Islam. And even in this study, the stages appear to be the same with the exception that the early awareness stage appears not to be too different with the awareness stage in some cases, as the experience of K2 revealed. His was a sudden awareness and interaction began immediately (see Th1.2/K2e and Th1.1/K2a & d also).

As in Strahler's cognitive change, evidence showed that change begins with the conviction about Christianity (see examples in Th1.2/E2f and Th1.5/E2i), then knowledge about Islam (see example in Th1.1/K3c), followed by the understanding of the Quran and the teaching of Islam, unlike knowledge of Christ in conversion to Christianity (see examples in Th1.3/K6e, Th1.1/K7c, Th1.1/E2b) and then the acceptance of the Islamic faith (see examples in Th1.1/K1f, Th1.1/K2d, Th1.1/K6b).

It is also similar in the affective change, first the attitude towards Christianity changes (see examples in Th1.5/K4d, Th1.5/K6i, Th1.5/E1i, Th1.5/E3d), the attitude towards the Quran and its teaching changes (see examples in Th1.1/K5c, Th1.1/K1c, Th2.1/K6k, th2.1/E2j), then the change of attitude towards Muslims (Th4/K5t, Th4/K6r, Th2.4/E3k, Th2.4/CE4i) and finally an intensity of spiritual interest (see examples in Th1.1/K5b, Th1.1/K6c, SRQ2.1/K3, SRQ2.1/K6).

This in a way reveals the interaction of the conversion motifs with the chronological phases of conversion. Strahler's chronological phases appear to be a

²⁰⁸ See Reinhold Strahler, *Coming to Faith in Christ: Understanding Conversion*, pages 44-54.

modification of Rambo's stage models. If this is the case, then we can confirm as earlier postulated that conversion motifs do not operate independent of the process or stages of conversion.

There are also four studies cited in this study that have a lot of similarities with this study, that of Oliveira and Mariz, Hawwa, Kose and Loewenthal and Maurer. However, only Maurer's was done in Africa; South Africa in particular. The findings of this study appear to be very similar to that of Oliveira and Mariz in Brazil, even though they did not study only Christians converting to Islam as was done in this study. This study found, as in their study (see page 26-27 of this study), that clarity, logic and rationality of the religion were factors that influenced conversion. And as in their case, not all converts reveal any crisis or difficulty as table 5 revealed. However, in their case the experience was mostly intellectual while ours is strongly influenced by a combination of intellectual cum affectional motifs. One wonders if the context of social environment played a strong role in this difference.

The affectional motif which was predominant in Hawwa's study, in her study of conversion of migrant Filipinia domestic workers from Christianity to Islam (see page 27 of this study), was also very strong in our study, even though her study only covered women, but not independent like in her study in spite of her use of Rambo's model and this research using Lofland and Skonovd's.

Similarly, this study found the presence of similar motifs like in the study by Kose and Loewenthal, in their study of 70 British born converts to Islam. Using quantitative method, they found intellectual, experimental and affectional motifs present in the experiences of the converts they studied. This study using qualitative approach found the same motifs present in addition to the revivalist motif in the experiences of the

converts studied. It should however be noted that they also used the interview approach.

This study also appears to confirm Maurer's findings in South Africa, using similar approach of qualitative method, that conversion is driven by variety of motives and a holistic view of human beings is needed (see page 28 of this study). This study revealed the presence of intellectual, experimental, affectional and revivalist motifs. The fifth, mystical, is not definite and clear. We also found, like he did, that conversion decision to a new religion is not solely based on truth claims of the new religion, though truth claim appear to be strong in the strong presence of the intellectual motif.

There are other influencing factors found, which include relational, moral, social and cultural issues as the testimony of the converts revealed. This agrees with Hiebert's claim that the human being is a product of many influences; social, spiritual, cultural, biological, physical and psychological.²⁰⁹ As seen briefly from the data, there is the social aspect of conversion (friendships, equality, love for one another, etc); the spiritual aspect (deliverance from evil spirit); its culture (way of living, dressing, etc); the biological and physical (personal hygiene and circumcision) and psychological (conversion/reversion process), which is not really tangible and empirically describable but provides psychological fulfillment of change. This are all interplaying with one another as the process of conversion takes place in a human being. The process of conversion touches all aspects of a human being. Conversion process is truly multifaceted. It is also clear from this study, like Maurer concluded that declaration of truth alone is not sufficient to influence conversion as there was interplay of different motifs.

²⁰⁹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 26-27.

Findings of this Study in Relation to Some Assumptions

There are certain assumptions that have been stated in this study and we shall examine and see if these assumptions were confirmed or disproved by the study. On page 17 of the study, the first assumption that was made was that conversion to Islam is much easier and simpler than conversion to Christianity, and might be an influence and attraction to convert. Majority of converts in this study confirm that they find Islam easier to follow than Christianity, for example in terms of intellectual understanding, clear ethical rules and teaching and practice (see Th3.1). Not only that, majority also affirm that the conversion process in Islam is simpler and many appear to affirm this was an attraction for them to convert (see Th3.2).

Secondly, on page 29 there was the assumption that there is more to conversion than the declaration of truth. The declaration of Maurer quoted on page 28 of this study is pertinent and appears to be validated by the study. Besides the quest for truth as revealed by the converts (see Th1.1), there was interplay of several factors that influenced their conversion to Islam (see table 1 for a summary of these factors).

On page 9 and 12 of this study, there was an indirect assumption that Islam's presence in Kenya, in recent times, is mostly in urban or semi-urban areas such as Nairobi. There appears to be some level of affirmation of this from the data and the researcher's experience, especially that the researcher has visited quite a number of rural areas in a number of regions in Kenya. Most of the converts studied made contact with Islam in urban and semi-urban areas of Kenya. A number of the converts not initially based in Nairobi, did not make contact with Islam until they came to Nairobi (see OET.1 and OET.2). However, in view of the number and location of the interview, this is not conclusive but only a hint.

On page 5 there was a veiled assumption that conversion to Islam has a relationship with Christian discipleship. In other words conversion to Islam by Christians is a reflection of the failure of proper Christian discipleship. This assumption does not appear to be conclusively validated depending on the side of the argument one takes. Examining the comments of converts in OET.3 of appendix 2 would reveal that if ones definition of what is a Christian and how to become a Christian is evangelical, then there is a clear indication that majority of the converts do not really have a proper understanding of what it means to be a Christian. However, there are a few who have that understanding yet have converted to Islam. This appears to strongly affirm that conversion to any religion does not happen by truth declaration alone.

This notwithstanding, the argument of this research is that there is enough evidence in the findings of this research to support the assumption that these converts revealed the failure of the church in discipleship (this refers to both parental and church discipleship). First, 6 of the converts (above half) interviewed fall into the category of Pentecostal/Evangelicals, 4 are Catholics and 1 from an African Instituted Church. Pentecostal/Evangelicals emphasize the word of God (Bible) as central. The expectation therefore is that their members would have a clear understanding of what it takes to be a Christian if there was proper discipleship and teaching in an evangelical sense. Most do not understand what it takes to be a Christian. In addition, majority of the converts reported a strong attendance to Sunday school and church programs. If this is the case, it raises the question of what they were taught in Sunday school and church every Sunday or whether teaching takes place at all.

The Catholics too believe in the saving grace of the Lord Jesus, but most of the converts do not reveal an understanding of having a relationship with Jesus as the

basis of being a Christian, yet they all claim to be Christians based on birth, church/Sunday school attendance, baptism, taking of sacrament or doing good (works) revealing a deficiency in understanding what it means to be a Christian.

Strategies Employed by Muslims that Emerged

Among the desires of this study, as the title suggests, is an attempt to identify strategies that Muslims are using in Kenya to influence conversion to Islam. The research hoped that through the data collected such would be revealed. The researcher did not ask the Muslims or their leaders what activities they are using to propagate their religion. It was clear this would raise suspicion and hinder the process of data collection. It was imagined that it would best be discovered through the testimony of the converts. The weakness of this approach, however, is that it is a little subjective. Nonetheless, the strength of it is that it would be purely gleaned from the comments of the converts themselves, especially in how they made contact with Islam and the activities of Muslims towards them before conversion. Based on the comments of converts, the following strategies appear to emerge as follows;

- a. **Debates/Street Preaching/Dialogues:-** Muslims engage in the promotion of regular debates in Nairobi. Quite a number of the converts reveal that they participated in or attended debates and dialogue with Muslims (see Th1.1/K1a, SRQ2.5/K6 as examples). Others reported that the point of contact was through street preachers (see Th1.1/K2a&d, Th1.1/K1d as examples). The researcher had chances to attend a number of these debates in Eastleigh.
- b. **Use of Media:-** It also appears that Muslims use different forms of media to reach their targets with Islamic messages. A number of the converts reported being given access to printed materials to read, which influenced their

conversion to Islam (see Th1.1/K5b, Th1.1/E2e, SRQ2.1/K1, SRQ2.1/K3, SRQ2.1/K5, SRQ2.1/E3 as examples). Some received Islamic information through other forms of media like tapes (see example in SRQ2.1/K7).

- c. **Mosque Visitation:-** One influential strategy that appeared to also be effective was arranging and permitting mosque visitation by Christians. A number of the converts reported that they were invited to visit mosques to have firsthand experience of what happens there; a factor that played a part in influencing conversion. The researcher in the course of the interviews was offered an invitation to go in to the mosque and observe what is going on during prayers (see Th1.1/K3c, Th1.1/E7d as examples). The interesting thing about this is that this is not a common practice in northern Nigeria where Islam has a majority population.
- d. **Friendship and Care:-** Perhaps as the testimonies of the converts revealed, one of the most effective strategies appears to be friendship and care. The converts reported a lot of close friendship initiated by Muslims and how they deliberately showed them care through visits, especially when they were in need. Many of such friendships resulted in conversions (see Th4/K5t, Th4/K6r, Th4/E2r, SRQ2.4/K1, Th2.3/K3m as examples).
- e. **Invitation to Ask Question and Availability/Ability to Answer them:-** One strategy that may not appear very obvious is Muslims invitation to Christians to ask questions and their being available and able to answer questions. A good number of the converts attested to being invited to ask questions and the availability of the Muslims to answer such questions played a vital part in their understanding of Islam and subsequently led to conversion. There appears to be greater influence in direct face to face contact in responding to questions, it

becomes relational and not impersonal (see Th4/K2q, Th1.1/K2a, SRQ2.4/K2 as examples). Compare this with the comment in Th1.1/K7a.

There is no doubt that these strategies provided information, clarity and direction and propelled people towards conversion.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Key Findings

The researcher will begin this chapter by highlighting key findings of this research. The following are considered as key findings of this research.

1. There are several factors revealed by converts in this study influencing their conversion to Islam. This revealed that it is not a single factor that influences conversion in individuals. The factors that influence conversion are diverse and vary from individual to individual depending on the influences around him.
2. There is no single cohesive pattern in describing the converts from Christianity to Islam in this study. They came from diverse backgrounds. However, there is a strong tilt towards the youths and it appears that Christians living in urban areas are more prone to be exposed to Islam and to convert.
3. This study clearly reveals the presence of four conversion motifs: intellectual, affectional, experimental and revivalist. The mystical appear not definite. However, two motifs are predominant as all converts reported them i.e. intellectual and affectional and this appears to be consistent with the factors given by the converts influencing their conversion.
4. In view of the data analyzed in this research, it is difficult to ascertain the Christian status of the converts before they converted to Islam even in the light of the suggestion that only those who persevere to the end are truly Christians.

5. This study also reveals that Christians who converted to Islam are not limited to one Christian tradition. They came from varied Christian traditions.
6. In this study, it appears that Muslims in Nairobi use four main strategies in influencing conversion to Islam, which are propagation through Debate/Preaching/Dialogue, Friendship and care, invitation to visit mosques and encouragement to ask questions and availability to answer them.

There have been different theories propounded on conversion in general and religious conversion in particular over many decades. A lot of the theories have been disproved over time and some have been affirmed. This is not a bad thing as Heirich argues that “if more careful replications of past findings lead to their rejection, this may be a good thing: it may free us to formulate alternative questions that touch experience at a more basic level.”²¹⁰

This study has been a replication of some sort. Lofland and Skonovd’s conversion motif theory were tested in the context of conversion of Christians to Islam in Nairobi Kenya using the qualitative research method. The main claim of the theory that more than one conversion motif may be present in any particular conversion biography appears to be validated. However some of the characteristics of the conversion motifs appear not to be validated in this context.

This therefore suggests to us that each conversion biography is unique and different depending on the influences exerted upon the convert. Different people even within the same context and converting to the same religion may have different conversion biographies with different influences, as revealed in this study. This is because every human being is a product of many influences as we saw in an earlier

²¹⁰ Max Heirich, “Change of Heart: A Test of Some Widely Held Theories about Religious Conversion,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 3 (Nov., 1977): 677.

argument. This in our opinion should free us to formulate alternative questions that touch experience at a more basic level as argued. This will require critical thinking and detailed contextual analysis in order to develop appropriate instruments to develop dynamic conversion theories. In as far as social conditions vary from culture to culture; it does not appear that a universal theory applicable to all situations is a possibility. May be we should start thinking of developing an academic framework within conversion studies for the development of what may be called “situational conversion theory” that would describe particular conversion biographies within their respective contexts, which might reveal conversion patterns peculiar to such contexts. In view of this, I will go ahead below to state the conclusions reached as regards the findings of this study.

Conclusions

One of the major conclusions reached in this study and from the testimony of the converts to Islam is the failure of discipleship in the church. It is sad that in our churches here in Nairobi and perhaps in Africa, Christians would be raised in Christian homes, attend Sunday school, grow into adult members of our churches, becoming regular church goers and program attendants for years and not have a basic grasp of the message of Christianity. This appears to be an indictment of our churches and parental care. Perhaps parents are a product of the church system. It does appear that in these churches, development of Christians and their characters is not a priority.

It is difficult to understand that Christians would spend more than twenty years in the church and have no basic understanding and knowledge of what it means to be a Christian as majority of these converts displayed. No understanding of what praying

through Jesus means, no understanding that what constitute righteousness and holiness is not outward rituals and no understanding of God's work of redemption.

Secondly, from the findings of this study, it is concluded that most conversion experiences are not the exclusive preserve of conversion to Christianity. One convert even reported deliverance from an evil spirit (usually referred to as power encounter) as an experience that led him to Islam. Therefore, Christians must be aware and find alternative explanations otherwise, why should one convert to Christianity if such powers are found in Islam? Similarly, felt needs as reasons Muslims give for converting to Christianity are also expressed by Christians converting to Islam. Similar conversion motifs are reported by converts both ways. Emphasis on these issues to influence conversion may not be very effective after all. Emphasis on character, especially "how they love one another" would have been Christianity's strongest point but it appears it is losing or has lost grounds in this area as the findings reveal.

Thirdly, conversion motifs or process works in all the directions that conversion is taking place; to or from a particular religion. The similarity found in Strahler's chronological phases in this study is a case in point. The findings suggest therefore that mechanistic theories are not enough to explain the phenomenon of conversion as often mechanistic theories do not appear to take into consideration various aspects of the complete situation.²¹¹ Human situations and influences are never the same. Theories are often assumptions based on certain criteria which may not be present in all situations. Such may account for why certain aspects of some theories are not similar in different contexts.

²¹¹ Roger A. Straus, "Religious Conversion as a Personal and Collective Achievement," 160.

Fourthly, it appears that denominational pluralism appears to be creating huge dissonance in the minds of young Christians in Nairobi and perhaps across the church in Africa. Although it is not possible to create a single denomination for all Christians, it appears that proliferation of churches and denominations is a weakness that is undermining the testimony of the church. It is concluded that the perception of disunity among Christians is undermining the credibility of the church and leading young people to the embrace of Islam in Nairobi, perhaps elsewhere also, as the testimony of the converts in this study seem to reveal.

Fifthly, the researcher also concludes that the process of conversion is both sudden and gradual. What might determine it is the level of personal desire for change based on the existing state of the individual as the testimony of K6 who said he had no Muslim friends and had a negative view of Islam, yet the first day he encountered Islam in a debate he converted, because in the researcher's opinion, he was already disgusted with Christianity and was very ripe for change. However, it took E2 four years of careful examination, though he grew up with Islam all around him, before converting to Islam.

Sixthly, the researcher concluded from the testimony of the converts that in spite of the universal claim of the religion of Islam, it manifests itself in different forms depending on the context. In one context as attested to by convert K7, and even in the researcher's experience, he was invited to enter the mosque even when he is not a Muslim, but convert E2 revealed that in his context if you were not a Muslim you are not allowed to enter the mosque.

Finally, the findings of this research have led the researcher to conclude that, though in other places material conversion is strong, such is not the case here. None among the converts reported any reason for the researcher to believe that there was

less than personal conviction to convert. Christians and churches in Nairobi must not think that Christians are converting to Islam basically as a result of enticement. The researcher concluded that in this research, Muslims appear to be building better bridges into the hearts and minds of Christians and winning them.

The findings of this research do have implications for the church in Nairobi and indeed the African church. Below are some of the perceived implications of the findings of this research for the church.

Missiological Implications

One major implication of this research for the Nairobi church and perhaps the church in Africa is that the church must pay attention to the content of its gospel presentation to young people in the church in particular and everyone in general especially in the areas where the presence of Islam is strong.

It does appear that the church in Nairobi is failing in its mandate of teaching them to observe all that I have taught you of Matthew 28:19-20. The future of the church lies with the young people. If the young are being disillusioned with the church, then the future of the church is bleak. The researcher had an opportunity to interact with night-club going youths, many of who expressed their disillusionment with the church and lack of connection with the church as reasons for leaving church. No wonder Islam is appealing to them.

Secondly, the church in Nairobi and indeed in Africa must develop ways to promote unity among the churches in Nairobi as denominational schisms are obviously destroying the image of the church among the young people in the church and perhaps the larger church population. In a situation where denominations discourage interactions between them and other members of the church, yet these

people do not see this obviously among Muslims, is bound to indicate that Islam is more authentic than Christianity.

Thirdly, it is obvious that no denomination in Nairobi is shielded against the onslaught of Islam. The seeming minority status of Islam is making the church in Nairobi to go to sleep and be unaware of the damage Islam is doing quietly by capturing its young people. There is the need to sound an alarm to the churches in Nairobi.

Finally, there must be a reawakening or the educating of the church in Nairobi and perhaps across Africa towards evangelism among the Muslims, since Islam is gradually increasing its settlements across Nairobi. There is Kawangware, Embul-bul and Eastleigh, only God knows where next.

Recommendations

In view of the conclusion and the missiological implications highlighted above, the question is what can the church in Nairobi and indeed the churches do to remedy this situation that has arisen? I would proffer the following recommendations

First, I would recommend the need for the introduction, revival and a return to biblical theology approach to doing Bible study in our Sunday schools and Bible study programs of the church as a deliberate plan for discipleship. As evident in this research, most of the converts who converted to Islam appear not to have an understanding of the salvation story of the Bible.

We must tell the story of the Bible in our churches to the young people as opposed to the disjointed topical Bible studies predominant in our churches today. What Roberts said appears to be true of the findings of this research that “a few decades ago everyone would have known about Joshua and the walls of Jericho. A large

proportion of children went to Sunday school, and the rest still receive grounding in the main stories of the Bible in class. But those days are gone.”²¹² How sad for the church. There is the big story of the Bible and we need to tell it to all. It is sad that systematic theology, as good as it is, is actually disjointing the story of the Bible even among the clergy. We must teach the people, young and old, in the church the story of the Bible as a unity, so that they can see the big picture. We must teach people the human story of the Bible through the human stories in the Bible. It is only then they can understand the salvation story and not depart from it. There is a single story of the Bible,²¹³ let us teach it and reduce confusing people with theological jargons until they mature.

Secondly, in chapter two titled “Basic doctrines of Christian faith” in his book *What the Muslims Should Know about Christianity* Michael listed 9 topics, which include incarnation, Christian monotheism, Mary, Redemption, etc, he believes Muslims should know.²¹⁴ I agree, but much more I would argue that as a result of this study, this generation of Christians in Nairobi particularly young people need to know this more than the Muslims do. We must get back to the basics of Christianity. We must be deliberate about it and never assume that because people are regular in church, pay their tithe and participate in church programs they are grounded in their faith.

It would not be out of place to even borrow the Wesleyan method which “combined several interlocking group techniques to construct a ladder of personal

²¹² Vaughan Roberts, *God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 14.

²¹³ C. Mavin Pate et al., *The Story of Israel: A Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

²¹⁴ Thomas Michael, *What Muslims Should Know about Christianity* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 2003), 50-91.

spiritual improvement.”²¹⁵ A method where no Christian is discriminated against by any standard, “all sincere Christians, whatever their intelligence or background, could work up that ladder simply by faithful participation, from one level of spiritual maturity to the next.”²¹⁶ All Christians no matter their ages need to grow unto maturity whether they are educated or not. If so called uneducated Christians can understand Islam enough to convert to it then they can understand Christianity enough to resist converting to it.

Thirdly, the church in Nairobi and in Kenya, indeed in Africa should not only be concerned more with numerical growth, than personal growth of members and their knowledge of Christian doctrines and character development. 4 of the eleven converts said that the behavior of Christians was what disgusted them and led to their conversion to Islam.

As Gibbs argued, “mission is not simply self-proliferation, for the Church is not the Kingdom. As Rene Padilla cautions, ‘To speak of the kingdom of God is to speak of the purpose of God, of which the empirical church is little more than a pale reflection’.”²¹⁷ There is no reason why the African church should be numerically wide as it is today and be spiritually shallow.

Fourthly, the church in Nairobi and indeed the African church must pay attention to developing knowledgeable and skilful pastors. Converts revealed how pastors were unable to address questions raised by Muslims during debates. A reflection that a lot of pastors are either not versed in their Christian doctrines or not prepared to face the challenge of Islam. The church can rise as far as the level of its leadership. If pastors

²¹⁵ D. Michael Henderson, *John Wesley’s Class Meetings: A Model for Making Disciples* (Nappanee: Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 11.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Eddie Gibbs, *I Believe in Church Growth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), 52.

cannot handle Islamic questions, how can we expect the followers to do so, no wonder they are converting to Islam.

Although we must acknowledge that even the few trained ones have problems with church structures as argued that “we are convinced that the stagnation of the laity is caused mainly by the frustrating power of a church system that keeps the laity marginalized and prevents the pastor doing the most important,”²¹⁸ yet training of pastors must be maintained. We must introduce in theological schools in Nairobi and Kenya and indeed in African theological schools Islamic courses or introduce them in existing courses to prepare pastor for the obvious Islamic expansion.

Further to this, as it is a fact that Islam is growing rapidly in Africa, the church in Nairobi and indeed across Africa must initiate the deliberate training of Christians in churches, not only the pastor, in Islamic knowledge and major areas that Muslims challenge their faith. Seminars and workshops should be conducted in churches regularly to keep members sensitized of the need to reach the Muslims with the gospel and defend their faith when the need arises.

Fifthly, it is obvious we live in a period where pluralism is the in thing. And it is obvious that Muslims are building more bridges to the heart of young Christians in Nairobi. We must turn this tide by building bridges to Muslims, as young people in this pluralistic world are questioning the relationship of Christians to Muslim and rightly so. It appears that young Christians do not understand the fact that Jesus says love your enemies but what they see is hate speeches. Two of the converts expressed their disgust at the derogatory language used against Muslims by Christians and their Christian leaders.

²¹⁸ Paul Stevens and Phil Collins, *The Equipping Pastor: A Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership* (New York: Alban Institute, 1993), xiii.

How do we build these bridges? We must beat the Muslims at their game, and indeed it is a game that Muslims should have learnt from us. We must extend friendship to them, sacrificially meet their needs if necessary, and provide a listening ear to them. We must be willing to invite Muslims to our churches and allow our young people to bring them to church so that they can hear the gospel as a result; it is a risk worth taking. We must build these bridges by our character and way of living. Above all, as difficult as it might seem, we must show true love to Muslims, as well as true love without discrimination among Christians, as Miller argued, “this reminder is necessary, for it is easy to think of Muslims as enemies to be overcome rather than as lost children of God to be sought and saved.”²¹⁹

Areas for Further Studies

This study has raised newer questions that would need to be explored further than was done in this research. The following are areas that can be further investigated

1. This study was initially designed to interview converts in both Nairobi and Machakos. However, interviews could not be done in Machakos because the Imam contacted backed out at the last minute. It would be interesting to find out if the study is extended to other parts of Kenya and Africa what the result would be. And this would aid generalization.
2. One aspect that was not really investigated was to what extent are responses tainted by the acquired knowledge of the new religion in the answers they supplied when they are interviewed about their conversion to the new religion, this would expand the horizon on the dynamics of conversion.

²¹⁹ William Miller, *A Christian's Response to Islam* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1976), 133.

3. This study was also not able to interview women converts to Islam. Would their conversion experience follow the same pattern as that of men in this study?
4. The study of the conversion motifs in conversion mostly tries to discover the presence of these motifs in conversion biographies. It would be interesting to study how do these conversion motifs interplay with the stages or process of conversion, in other words to what extent and in what way do the motifs propel the transition from stage to stage in the process of conversion?

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS

Personal Information:

Name: _____ Marital Status _____

Age: _____ Islamic Group _____

Location: _____ Educational level: _____

Occupation: _____ Sex: _____

Main Research Q: What are the factors, according to the converts, that influenced their conversion from Christianity to Islam in Kwangware and Embul-bul area of Nairobi-Kenya?

- How did you hear about Islam?
- Can you remember when you first came into contact with Islam?
- How often do you come into contact with Muslims after this contact?
- There may be several reasons that influenced your conversion to Islam, what are these reasons (s)?
- Describe how you converted to Islam in general including how long it took before you converted?

Worldview Influence

- What Christian doctrines do you disagree with before conversion?
- What Islamic teachings did you find more straightforward than Christian teachings?
- How do you compare Christian doctrines to Islamic doctrines?

Testing Sub-research Q 1: How can the converts from Christianity to Islam in Kwangware and Embul-bul area of Nairobi-Kenya be described?

- What part of the country do you come from and your tribe?
- Were your parents Christians?
- Describe your family background in general?
- Where did you grow up? Were there Muslims where you grew up?
- How did you know you were a Christian before converting to Islam?
- Which church do you attend before you became a Muslim?
- How often did you attend church before you became a Muslim?
- What was the name of your pastor then?

Testing Sub-research Q2: How do the conversion motives relate to the conversion of Christians to Islam in Kwangware and Embul-bul area of Nairobi-Kenya?

Intellectual

- What kind of Islamic materials did you come into contact with?
- Through which medium did you come into contact with them?
- Was the teaching of Islam logical to you? How?
- Was it confusing? How?
- Which religion did you find more reasonable Christianity or Islam and why?

Mystical

- What, if any, special experiences did you have before converting to Islam?
- How did the experience happen and where?
- What would you say led to this experience?
- Did this experience influence your conversion to Islam? How?

Experimental

- Did you try to practice the rituals of Islam before you converted?
- How long did you practice this before you decided to accept the faith?
- What other things did you put into practice before you finally joined the religion?

Affectional

- Do you have friends, family members or leaders who are Muslims?
- How will you describe their behavior towards you before you converted to Islam?
- Did the conduct of the Muslims appeal to you before you conversion? How?
- In what way will you consider this to influence your conversion to Islam?

Revivalist

- Did you attend any Islamic programs before conversion? Can you list them?
- What did you hear that convicted you about the goodness of Islam? Through what medium did you hear this?
- Was that when you converted to Islam or not?

Coercive

- Is there any reason you converted to Islam other than your personal conviction?
- What pressures did you experience before converting to Islam? Can you describe these pressures?
- Will you say these pressures influenced you conversion to Islam? How?

Clarity of conversion method

- Can you describe Christian conversion?
- Can you describe Islamic conversion? Which one is simpler and why?

APPENDIX 2

Transcript of Interview in Themes

What are the factors, according to the converts, that influenced their conversion from Christianity to Islam in Nairobi Area of Kenya?

Th1: Comparative Investigation

Th1.1: Personal Search for Truth

- K1a:** It is from my own research...there was this comparative religion; they were coming to somewhere like market place, so they would make a dialogue, the Quran was there and the Bible was there, so I was not forced, just to follow the verses of the Quran and the Bible now they are picking some topics for example they could differentiate who is Jesus, how the Quran talks about Jesus and how the Bible talks about Jesus so from there is when I started to follow up.
- K1b:** I just came asking some questions, from the Bible and from the Quran, so they differentiate for me how the Bible speaks about this and how the Quran speaks about that. I was not forced.... It has to do with almost a year
- K1c:** It is this verse that says that Jesus is the son of God, and for example they say that Jesus is God. Whereas the Bible puts it clearly that he is not the son of God but the messenger of God. Now when I come to the holy Quran the same book talks about him as a messenger not as God; now when you come to the Bible there are so many verses also which proves that Quran is right which says that Jesus is messenger not God and not the son of God.
- K1d:** Yah, my parents, they were not living far, they were living nearer, not far from the mosque, so I would follow that *hutuba* Juma sermons from the speakers, so it is there where I would compile my questions to come to the mosque and ask the Imam, I have heard this one and this one, can you prove for me.
- K1e:** By listening and there was some few books which I was given to go and do my own research.
- K1f:** Hmmm, what I can say, no just the guidance of Allah. I just asked God to give me direction; show me the right religion among the two. So that is when I decided to do my own research and he showed me this is the right religion.
- K1g:** No, because some of them are drunkards, some of them were not praying regular prayers, so it is me alone...some of them I will ask them a question and they will give me direction, so I will say on my own they didn't convince me, yah.
- K1h:** As I said earlier, my parents used to stay not far from the mosque, so it is that *hutuba*-Friday sermons, I would listen to them when I was just sitting outside, so I will just compile my questions, and decided to say one day I will go to the mosque and ask them if these things they are saying are true.
- K1i:** Yah, from there is when I started to follow those programs. I go to those comparative religious gatherings, as I told you earlier it is almost one year.
- K2a:** Me I came into contact with Islam through *miadara*- that is the gathering of street preachers of Islam, that is when I started asking them questions, and when they answered me according to the Bible, because I have a rough idea of the Bible, then I became satisfied with them.
- K2b:** You see, about Jesus, because in Christianity, we use to believe that Jesus is the son of God; that he is God then in Islam we are told that Jesus was not a god, he is not the son of a god. According to the scriptures if you read the Bible clearly, you will; get that message that Jesus is not a god and he is not a son of god. According to the Bible, because in the Bible there is no where Jesus said I am the son of God, I am the God, no where in the Bible but Christians believe Jesus in the son of God contrary to the Bible.

- K2c:** Actually, Christian teaching they...sometimes I will say they cheat people because what they say is not what is in the Bible but in Islam, they stick to what is in the Quran and some things in the Quran are in the Bible.
- K2d:** No, no. Me after meeting those street preachers I just started asking them questions because I was a believer in Christianity, so I was wondering how these people know our book, Bible than even us, then I started asking them questions. After answering my questions and convinced it is a correct answer, I had nothing else but to convert.
- K3a:** After doing my research, I saw this is the right religion which I should follow,
- K3b:** So I wonder how comes these people were given privileges, so I followed them, I followed them, slowly by slowly. I took time, I took a lot of time, because when you convert sometimes after getting out of prison you don't follow, you go back to your friends, you are not either a Christian nor a Muslim, you are just like a pagan, then afterwards, ehrrrrr this life, don't live just like a creature or mammal, live like a person because at the end of the day God said in the Quran he will make all the animals to be soil but only people human beings and jinn are the ones who will be punished or are the ones who will enter in the eternal life.
- K3c:** I visited different kinds of mosques; I heard different teachings from different teachers. Now what made me really follow the religion, I started following small boys, I said how come these small boy knows his religion better, he knows many things than I do, so small boys were my teachers, I started going to town in Nairobi city, going to Eastleigh. I started behaving like a *makanga* (tout), yah going with *matatus* carrying people. In Eastleigh around 75% of people who are living there are Muslims. So when I stayed with them, they gave me quotes, they gave me education, small, small education; that is when I started learning Arabic alphabets, that is where I found someone to translate for me what this and that means, and I said this is the right religion for me and the right way to follow.
- K4a:** And I compared the beliefs in Islam and the beliefs in Christianity.
- K4b:** I was digesting to become a Muslim.
- K4c:** I studied about the change, I went home in December, I was in my place, and I was with my friends, they were all drunkards.
- K5a:** Ammm, essentially I don't want to look at it as there were several reasons but basically there was one major reason, the main driving force and it centers around the teaching that both Christians and Muslims share. You know these are two major religions globally and one cardinal teaching that these two religions share is that we were all created equal before God and when I contrasted that with the kind of practice, you know, Christian practices in our churches, I never saw that equality really. Much as the clergy will keep on propounding that we are created equal before God, that equality was never like quite explicit in the churches, because there is a section of the church that is like set aside for the who is who in that particular church or set up. And when I shared that with my Muslim friends, they were like there was nothing like that and because I have never stepped into a mosque to really cross check I took it for granted that ok fine if this is really what this guys are telling me and if it is true, let me try and find out myself. So when I made up my mind to become a Muslim the main thing that actually I was seeking to find out was how much cohesive are the Muslims viz-a-viz the Christians. When we say that we are all equal before God, we are basically saying there should not be discrimination between us, so how much are Muslims not discriminating against each other viz-a-viz the same, same concept when you look at it from the Christian point of view.
- K5b:** After reading these books, that is immediately after becoming a Muslim, I got these two books and after reading them I needed more and so I started asking my friends how best I could really get myself more exposed to Islamic literature, things like that. So I was recommended for training by one of these friends and so I went and attended *madarasa*. It was supposed to be a six months period but I only went in for three months because there was also pressure, family pressure because I had also to take care of my wife and my three kids.
- K5c:** Yes, ammm I have gone or read Islamic literature, I have read the Quran, I have gone through the hands of my teachers in the *madarasas* and by and large I want to believe that...you know Islam is about two basic sources of knowledge; the Quran and the *Hadith*. The Quran is like the book of God. Whatever is contained therein is actually the word of God clean and pure and no adulteration. Then we come to the *hadith*,

now the *hadith* are the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, now the question is how does the *hadith* agree or dovetail with the Quran and because the prophet Muhammad himself when he was about to die made it very clear that am leaving you two sources of information; the Quran and the *hadith* and should you find anything in the *hadith* that contradicts the teachings in the Quran, bury whatever you have gotten from the *hadith* and propel what is in the Quran. The gist of that is that the prophet Muhammad understood that he as a human being is prone to making mistakes, he can make mistakes but because the Quran is the word of God clear and pure, God is beyond making mistakes. So should you find any teaching which is contradicting your life style in my *hadith* please forget about that; contrast it with what the Quran says, if what you find in the Quran is in agreement with what you are doing then take up that. So I want to say, that alone is really, really cardinal because we are dealing with a people who believe, like Islamic teachers, these are class of people who believe, who actually appreciate that as human beings they are prone to certain weaknesses, they are not beyond reproach.

- K6a:** So from that day I told my wife that from that day, we will never go to that church again, we will just wait, stay home until when God shows us the right or true church to attend. So for a whole year I did not attend any church looking for the truth. Now any church I attended, I noticed some form of evil being practiced in the church; immorality, gossiping and all other evil things, so I continued to question, what kind of churches are these, because we come here to repent and be washed, but right here people come from outside to come and commit sins here. So I continued to question the kind of behavior the church was exhibiting. Then I decided to join Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church and now I became committed with my life and family.
- K6b:** At the same time while I was asking questions, I was learning to get where there was truth or false. I was not just asking questions to the Muslims, at the same time I was learning to get the truth. They began at 8 in the morning till 8 at night and I discovered that all the questions I asked the Muslims, they were able to give the right answers. So the result, at the end of the day, after I learnt that Muslims have truth, I decided to convert to Islam, that very day I acknowledged Islam. That very same day I came to the mosque, I was instructed how to do the worship and I was asked where are the jinn that you were told that Islam associate with, they are not here. From that day I began to be a Muslim.
- K6c:** As I continued to grow in Islamic faith and at the same time my wife at home was still weeping and crying because of this change, so I told the leadership in the mosque whether to live my wife who is not a Muslim because as a Muslim I had to marry a Muslim wife, so I came and asked the leadership what should I do with my wife at home who is not a Muslim and always crying, "should I leave her" I asked them. They said, "no, you don't have to leave her just teach her slowly by slowly until she becomes a Muslim". Even my mother was so much discouraged because for a long time she had waited and expected me to become a pastor and now I have changed to Islam; she was so much discouraged and said "now you are no longer my child". Then I said I will not revert, I will not leave Islam, I will continue with my religion, but my mother told my wife, "you continue with your religion, your Christianity, let him also continue with his Islamic religion".
- K7a:** The reasons are these, you know when I was a Christian we use to have Sunday school, and we use to learn about how the religion is and how Jesus used to teach his disciples but when I learnt more about Christianity, I asked some questions but my leader, the one who was leading us, I ask him why we Christians believe that God is in three, we use to believe God is one but in three, we tried to discuss that, he tried to tell me we believe that God is one but in three, God the father, the Son and Holy Spirit and I tried to listen and tried to think about that and I asked him how can God be three, and here you are teaching me that God is only one and in another way you tell me God is three, in another way you tell me this is God and in another way you tell me this is the son of God. So I was confused. He tried to explain and I was always trying to follow him and ask him a lot of questions. And he asked me why you are trying to ask me a lot of questions, is that what you came to discuss, I told him that I met my class mates and they are Muslims and they are trying to teach me about Islam, they are telling me the way they believe God, the way they believe that

- Jesus was the prophet and not the God, so I saw that there is a difference between Christianity and Islam.
- K7b:** I have been learning about Islam and Christianity, I have found that Islam is the right way and I feel it in my heart that this is the way.
- K7c:** The way they were teaching me, the way our leader in church use to teach me and the way my class mates used to teach me, I compared it with Islam, I compared it and found that Islam was high.
- K7d:** Yes, they invited me to the mosque to see how the mosque is, so I decided, I asked the teacher, I want to follow them and the teacher said to me, you are a Christian, how can you follow them, I told him, no I want to see how they are doing.
- E1a:** First of all, I was looking for God.
- E1b:** I just stayed for almost four to five years without going to church or going to mosque. I was just an idle boy like the other guys. So when I realized I have to look for my God, and then that was when I just said to myself, now I have to look for my God. There is a time Muslims came to our area for their crusade, a times pastors with Sheikhs, I just observed there, I compared and I just saw where the path is... by then I never said that I was a Muslim, I stayed for almost another year, just examining in my mind where I should be and later on I found myself in a mosque.
- E1c:** Because I was looking for my God not what they were doing, but even now if you look at what they are doing, you wont find your God, God knows your heart.
- E1d:** Yah I was just looking for my God.
- E1e:** Yah because I use to love God, I was always after my God.
- E2a:** Islam became serious in my mind after I left school, after form four, that was when Islam really got into me as in I started thinking about the religion as a whole; about these people's way of living and stuff, that was when I started really thinking about converting to Islam.
- E2b:** It took me like four years to convert to a Muslim. There is one thing that really kept pulling me back about being a Muslim. I did not understand, as in my mum use to always say that Muslims are murderers because of the Jihad, so one day I went to an imam and asked him, is it right to kill other people because they have different religion from ours and he said no it is not good. And one day there was this bulletin, the Friday bulletin, the one you always get in Mosques, so I took one and it was saying that Jihad is in fact illegal to do, as in, as a Muslim, it is not right, everyone does hate blood shed, so after I realized that the people who do that are wrong. You are supposed to respect another person's religion, you know the freedom of religion, so after that, I was very sure it was the true religion.
- E2c:** That was when I decided to research more about Islamic religion.
- E2d:** I researched by myself by reading materials.
- E2e:** They have this Friday bulletins, so I would go over to my friend's house then borrow the bulletins and always read them in English. Then I would go and study them and see if there is anything wrong in what they are teaching and what they are saying. If there is anything that is a problem to me I would go to an older guy and ask questions directly like what you are doing now.
- E3a:** I was looking for a good religion. I was looking for where I can find God, yah. When I was going to church, I saw many things but I didn't like them.
- E3b:** I have been reading books as in going to crusade of Muslims many times. My friends used to tell me that Islam is the right religion, but my heart did not decide in one day but I kept researching.
- E3c:** Even my friends were telling me that Islam is the best way but my heart did not decide one day.
- E4a:** At that time I was young and when my mother was murdered, I thought it was a cult, it was a traditional church somehow, so when my mother was murdered and it had never happened to a Muslim leader being murdered because he is a leader, that affected me and made me to just decide to be a Muslim.

Th1.2: Providing Quick Answers and Openness

- K1j:** Yah, my parents were not living far, they were living near, not far from the mosque, so I would follow the *hutuba* Juma sermons from the mic, then I would compile my questions to come to the mosque and ask the Imam, I have heard this one and that one, can you give me proofs?

- K1k:** Yah, but most of the time they came from the Bible and the Quran, so they will tell me go to the Bible verse, go and look this and go and look that, so that is why I decided to be a Muslim...when you come to the Quran, it has put all things straightforward and clear, there is no hidden agenda.
- K2e:** When I came to Nairobi, I was just going on with my business, then I met the people preaching in the streets and after I listened to them, then they convinced me... I convinced myself that this is a good religion and I asked them some questions and they answered me then I was satisfied.
- K2f:** Because when you asked them a question, they do not answer the question according to their thinking they just refer you to the book, either the Quran or the Bible, because they use both of them to answer the question.
- K2g:** Because when you asked a Muslim a question, instead of giving stories from his mind he would refer you to the Quran or the Bible, the verses that would answer your question, to them it is only to tell you where you can get your answer in the Bible or the Quran.
- K2h:** Yah, when I approached them and started asking questions, they were very, very friendly, the way they invited me, the way they behaved in answering my questions, it was a very good relationship.
- K3d:** I ask them why do you pray in Arabic language, something that we don't understand, we don't hear, this Arabic language how did you write this that to me it looks like things which are very rough, how comes? Is it special, they told me no, you just learn slowly by slowly and you will know.
- K5d:** ...basically after having read the two books that I told you and having engaged at some level of discussions with this Muslim brothers, they left it to me to make up my mind, because at the end of the day it is something like how much does the moon gain by lighting your path in darkness.
- K6d:** I took the Bible and now begin asking questions to the Muslims. Then I found that the question I was asking them, they were giving the right answers from the Bible.
- K7e:** He tried to explain and I was always trying to follow him and ask him a lot of questions and he told me why are trying to ask me a lot of Questions is that what you came to discuss? I told him that I met my class mates and they are Muslims and they are trying to teach me about Islam they are telling me the way they believe God, the way they believe that Jesus was the prophet and not the God, so I discovered that there is a difference between Christianity and Islam.
- E2f:** So the whole book stuff as, you see, the Catholic Bible, as in, has some books removed. Now I was kind of curious, why did these books need to be hidden from that particular Bible of theirs, so I went to this library, they have a library, they have the old version of the Bible, so I read those forbidden six books. It was like those books were removed because they were inciting people against the Catholic religion. So I said to myself whereas this church has something to hide to the rest of the population, then definitely it is not the right path for me. So I moved out as a person. You can't go to a church that deceives people.
- E4b:** Other things that made me to be convinced that Islam is the right religion, it is open, it is simple to follow, and it doesn't contradict itself and it is so clear.

Th1.3: Muslim Knowledge of Scripture

- K3e:** Now what made me really follow the religion, I started following small boys, I said how come this small boy knows his religion better, he knows many things than I do so small boys were my teachers.
- K3f:** Ok by that time when we were in prison I saw Muslims having much faith than the Christians and at that time when you believe in your faith it was funny.
- K6e:** After I had listened for a while I was wondering that Muslims do not know the Bible but yet they were asking questions to Christians, the pastors were there but I realized that some of the questions were difficult for the pastors to respond to, so I decided to side with the Christians. I said this are my people, Christians are my people, because these Muslims do not know the Bible, so I decided to side with the Christians. So I learnt that the Muslims' book is the Quran but they asked questions from the Bible and pastors failed to give answers to such questions, that motivated me to join the Christian side, so that I could now offer any assistance in answering these questions.

- I took the Bible and now began asking questions to the Muslims. Then I found that the question I was asking them, they were giving the right answers from the Bible.
- E1f:** Because before I went to Islam, I was confused about what were they talking about, which book are they reading? So when I realized there is injil as they call it, so when I recite it on Saturday lessons, it is not what was written in the real Bible.
- E4c:** Islam is more straight forward, because we are being taught the background of the prophets like Moses, Noah and the rest of the prophets, but Christians are only taught about Jesus Christ and they just concentrate on Jesus Christ nothing else.

Th1.4: Inequality and Discrimination among Christians

- K5e:** And one cardinal teaching that these two religions share is that we were all created equal before God and when I contrasted that with the kind of practice, you know Christian practices in our churches, I never saw that equality really, much as the clergy will keep on propounding that we are created equal before God, that equality was never like quite explicit in the churches, because there is a section of the church that is like set aside for the who is who in that particular church or set up. And when I shared that with my Muslim friends, they were like there was nothing like that and because I have never stepped into a mosque to really cross check, I took it for granted that ok fine if this is really what this guys are telling me and if it is true, let me try and find out myself.
- K5f:** I want to say that before my conversion I did not have a problem, a major problem with Christianity apart from the fact that I was seeing a lot of discrimination in the church, so perhaps that could be the main reason why I decided to be a Muslim.
- K6f:** One day we went to Kilbe, that is part of Luo land, and me and my friend were there. Now sometimes later my friend lost his child and he reported to the church but the pastor, that was Mary said, but you do not attend our funeral services. However, me I was a witness that me and my friend were both in that funeral, so I was his witness that he attend the funeral service, but the pastor was saying no, you do not attend when we have funeral service in the church. Mary would say that through vision that the guy who lost his child did not use to attend funeral services in the church when it happens. Then I questioned what kind of God she claims to have a vision from, because I saw this brother attending that funeral and this pastor now claims that through vision she did not see this man attending, so I again questioned the kind of God Mary was listening to or serving.
- K6g:** Now having reported about what has happened in my family, I expected that the church will plan to come and comfort me and my family, remember it was the day of tithe. Instead I saw all elders and church leadership just dealing with money, counting money. They told me wait we shall go, wait, wait, but I waited until 4pm then I decided to leave for home. When I was back at home after nobody cared for me, I began to reflect that for the whole year I went to different churches trying to get where truth is. Then I decided to join this church, and now today I present my problems but they don't care about me instead they cared more about money, they were just counting money, and they don't care about what I have gone through. If this is the case then I don't need to attend any church because if this is the kind of life in the church then why do I bother myself to go to church. Then I decided to stay at home. So I did not go to any church for the whole year. I just stayed at home praying to my God all the time asking God to show me or direct me to the right religion.
- K6h:** Since then I have seen how every time they feared God. They are concerned about their fellow believers and when they come to worship, there is no boss, and all are equal. The only boss is God whom they have to pay their worship to, not any other person, so that also convicted me to think that this is the right path.
- E1g:** The activities which I used to see there, because when you are a leader somewhere you are a celebrity, so everybody likes you. I had problems with these people.

Th1.5 Moral Depravity/Materialism of Christians

- K3g:** After that, we don't have nails, even the head, you must shave well, you don't have big hair, you must be good groomed, you see, good behavior. When you are walking on the road, you should not be walking bouncing, you see; have good habits, when

- you are walking on the road, say hi to old people, when you are next to the road help people to carry their goods, such and such things, yah.
- K4d:** In Christianity you worship God but your actions are very bad, may be you drink beer, you do a lot of things which are bad but in Islam you are told this is good and this is bad.
- K6i:** Now any church I attended, I noticed some form of evil being practiced in the church; immorality, gossiping and all other evil things, so I continued to question, what kind of churches are these, because we come here to repent and be washed, but right here people come from outside to come and commit sins here, so I continued to question the kind of behavior the church was exhibiting.
- K6j:** One thing that I did not agree with Christianity is, I could see the pastor accompanied by a woman, may be the woman is the pastor or the boss or a visitor and both of them will go and sit in the front chairs, but this woman is in mini skirt, she is there and the people who are now in front of them, men especially, are able to see some part of her body which should be covered well. That also would cause him to stumble, because as a human being seeing a woman in that situation, that is a temptation. That did not please me.
- K7f:** Like you can see, David danced until all clothes were removed and in Islam, when you learn about Islam, you see, in Islam we don't dance. If you try to weigh about prophets, you see all prophets are cool; they just took their things slowly. They don't do things as roughly...
- E1g:** You know my first time to take alcohol; I took it when I was an altar boy, the one which father use to take. It was on Saturday, I took the wine and I was drunk, when I went home my mother told me you don't have to go there again, if this is what you will be doing there. The following Sunday I was not in the church because I had a hangover. And then I was a lover boy, so I used to hang with girls. Anyway I compared Muslims and Christians and I just realized am lost.
- E1h:** In Christianity sometimes you keep aside your God *kidogo* (meaning briefly), that is like you are putting your God aside. Yah and then you return to your God.
- E1i:** So I can say in Christianity they are not serious about their God, but in Islam they know everything about God, so if you know about God and what he wants, it is upon you now to follow and that is what makes many to go back to Christianity and others to stay.
- E2g:** Me I can tell you as a person, I chose to be a Muslim because of the things I saw happening in the church and the school I was because it was a Christian school. I started comparing, these people claim to be people of God (Christians) and the things they were doing I saw they were wrong.
- E2h:** You see, Muslims they teach you the way of life, in churches, in the years I went to churches, when you hear a pastor has invited another pastor to come to your church to talk about something, the pastor would always say when you give, it is always about giving something, when you give God will give you more in return, it was all about taking and giving. So in that particular church it was like they just wanted the money, yah collection. In Islam when you need to give something to God you don't go to the imam and say here. You go buy stuff and you see that old lady in your neighborhood, who has no food to eat, go take those stuff to her, that you have given unto God. That is how we give to God our gifts.
- E2i:** When I was in school there were these pastors who came from outside even from Nigeria, Australia and America, they use to come in the parish. They use to do stuff that I did not like, they often come into our classes and pretend to be telling us the word but in fact they would just pick the prettiest girls around, tell them to go for counseling but it turned out to be something else, you know. It went on for about two years until one of them was discovered. He went back to wherever he came from. So I was, in like, they were lying to us.
- E3d:** I saw many things but I don't like them.
- E3e:** In the church, you can stay here with a girl, but in Islam you stay here alone. When you stay alone with boys your mind is straight on God but when you stay with pretty girls, your mind is there.
- E4d:** Other reasons which made me to be a Muslim, is that my mother was a church leader...and during that time my mother was murdered, because she was the leader of that church, this is one other reason that made me to become a Muslim.

Th2: Islamic Practices

Th2.1: Direct belief/knowledge and Access to God

- K3h:** The next thing, they believe directly in God himself, they don't go through any person like other people do. The second is knowing deeply your God. The third thing is knowing all the apostles, all the prophets and the prophet who we give the highest regard is Prophet Muhammad, whom we say is the last prophet, according to my knowledge, so we don't take anyone to be God or we don't have three gods in one.
- K3i:** Yah, like when we are praying we often pray like the Lord's Prayer, it's called the *fatiha*. The first thing is we say, *alhamdulillah rabbilalamin*, you thank God and you thank the almighty God for everything that he has given you, you don't thank anyone else, you see.
- K6k:** Because when you know you have committed sin, you are allowed to talk directly to God, you don't need to go to pastor or somebody else, you communicate directly to God. We practice five prayers a day, but Christians say once per week, on Sundays. In Islam all are taught how to conduct funeral services but in Christianity you cannot do that. In Islam you are told how to manage your family, your wife relationship and you are instructed on how to take care of your relationships and your wives, even subjects and any situation in the family. All this is from God. The Quran teaches everything concerning family life.
- E1j:** Straight forward through praying, you don't have to go to somebody else so that you can reach your God, so first there. Second, there is only one God, in Catholic they use to say there is Father, Son and the Holy Spirit like that, so yah.
- E2j:** In Islam, you are supposed to be with your God almost daily, you are going to...you are supposed to go to the mosque five times a day, as in for every moment you breath, you are given time to go and say thank you to the lord, you know, not like Christians who go to church on Sundays only, Muslims go to mosque daily, five times a day. To take time to tell God your problems and to thank him for the life you are living.

Th2.2: Personal Hygiene and Circumcision

- K1l:** Yah, there are many, one of the reasons that...because from the region where I came from, that is Yanza, they don't circumcise, but when you become a Muslim you become circumcised.
- K3j:** Ok, the first thing that made me to be a Muslim, I saw these people are very much hygienic, when they go to toilet they go with water, you see. The first thing is hygiene.
- K3k:** Ok in Islam, all the Islamic teachings are very much straight, because one thing as a Muslim, you must be hygienic you see, in Christianity, you have knowledge you have gone up to university level but many Christians don't have hygiene, first when you put two plates here, the two plates are dirty, you take a serviette and wipe one plate and the next one you wash with water, which one is hygienic? The one you sure used water, isn't it? It is so much clean and in Bible we say...how do you say this? You better be cleaning heart the than...I have forgotten. (interjected clean the inside rather than the outside, is that what you mean?) yah, so Christians may be when he goes into a toilet he doesn't use water. Us in our faith or in our faith you must use water when you are going to the toilet and be sure;...you must be very much clean.
- E1k:** You are supposed to be ever clean, you yourself you have to be clean in body wise and even internally in your heart you have to be very clean, yah.
- E3f:** They were telling me, when you become a Muslim, you have to be a clean person every time. When we were going to church you can even wake up in the morning and go to church but in Islam you have to take shower, something like that.
- E4d:** The difference is that in Islam they have prayers for all the doctrines which they observe, like washing their hands and legs before they enter the mosque, like after going to the toilet, before they eat, before they sleep and you have to wash your hands before you touch the Quran but Christians do not observe those things or traditions. Before you read the Quran you have to wash all your body, prepare your self to be clean before you read the Quran.

Th2.3: Behavior and Way of Living

- K1m:** It is easier than Christianity, ok look at the way they bury their dead ones, they go to mortuary, some of them they rotten. Now look in Islam when I die right now I would be buried immediately.
- K2i:** Even, the behavior of Muslims, once you become a Muslim when you convert to Islam, you become a brother of every Muslim. The way they take you, they take you as their brother. Your relationship with them, you are related with them, even you forget your people. That also encouraged me to stick to Islam.
- K2j:** Yah it is by what I saw in Muslims, their behavior.
- K3l:** Because their way of living is more, much straight than Christianity.
- K3m:** According to their behavior, that is what made me to follow them. They were humble, they were polite and they were not selfish, because, first thing, when they were fasting, they were given much food, their ration was much bigger and at that time in prison there was no food, food was very little, so they like welcoming people, they say come and have some food here, we know you were a Christian but as long as you are our friend have this, so you see.
- K5g:** Their behavior before and after I became a Muslim was very cordial and in fact not just cordial but also sympathetic.
- K6l:** Since then I have seen how every time they feared God. They are concerned about their fellow believers.
- E1l:** Their difference is first praying. Second, their way of living.
- E3g:** When I see Muslims, even when they have one thing they share all of them. Even if you do something wrong to him, even if you are a Christian, he doesn't blame you like the way Christians blame Muslims.
- E3h:** Like when you talk about praying, Muslims pray every day, because God is there every day, but when you go to Christians, they pray once; Sunday. They mean their God is only Sunday. God is there every day.
- E3i:** Yah, my friends when they converted to Muslims, I was looking at their behavior. The way they were behaving when they were Christians is not the same like when they became Muslims.
- E3j:** And even in praying you pray once or twice a week, in Islam we pray every day, that means God is there every day but Christians they believe God is only Sunday, but God is there every day.
- E4e:** The experiences that led me to Islam is that I found that they care, they love each other, whatever part of the country you go if you are a Muslim you cannot sleep outside, they will give you shelter, they will give you food and they will take care of you.
- E4f:** The difference is that in Islam they have prayers for all the doctrines which they observe, like washing their hands and legs before they enter the mosque, like after going to the toilet, before they eat, before they sleep and you have to wash your hands before you touch the Quran but Christians do not observe those things or traditions. Before you read the Quran you have to wash all your body, prepare your self to be clean before you read the Quran.
- E4g:** Normal things like loving one another, caring; I find it much easier in Islam.

Th2.4: Equality and Love for One Another

- K2k:** Even, the behavior of Muslims, once you become a Muslim, when you convert to Islam, you become a brother of every Muslim. The way they take you, they take you as their brother. Your relationship with them, you are related with them, even you forget your people, that also encouraged me to stick to Islam.
- K5h:** Ammm, essentially I don't want to look at it as there was several reasons but basically there was one major reason the main driving force and it centers around the teaching that both Christians and Muslims share, you know these are two major religions globally and one cardinal teaching that these two religions share is that we were all created equal before God and when I contrasted that with the kind of practice, you know Christian practices in our churches, I never saw that equality really, much as the clergy will keep on propounding that we are created equal before God, that equality was never like quite explicit in the churches, because there is a section of the church that is like set aside for the who is who in that particular church or set up and when I shared that with my Muslim friends, they were like there was

nothing like that and because I have never stepped into a mosque to really cross check I took it for granted that ok fine if this is really what this guys are telling me and if it is true, let me try and find out myself. So when I made up my mind to become a Muslim the main thing that actually I was seeking to find out was how much cohesive are the Muslims viz-a-viz the Christians. When we say that we are all equal before God, we are basically saying there should not be discrimination between us, so how much are Muslims not discriminating against each other viz-a-viz the same, same concept when you look at it from the Christian point of view.

- K6m:** They are concerned about their fellow believers and when they come to worship, there is no boss, all are equal. The only boss is God whom they have to pay their worship to, not any other person, so that also convicted me to think that this is the right path.
- E3k:** When you compare the Muslims and the Christians, the Muslims they love themselves, they love all the people. But Christians they love themselves.
- E3l:** You have to share something to people, you share minds everyday. When you become a Muslim you are brothers and sisters.
- E3m:** They love one another... They share everything they have even if it is a small food they can share with many people and you can be satisfied.
- E4h:** I was living with my landlord who was a Muslim, and he did not send me away so he brought me up as his own son giving me shelter, food but he never gave me education and that is why I became a Muslim.
- E4i:** The experiences that led me to Islam is that I found that they care, they love each other, whatever part of the country you go if you are a Muslim you cannot sleep outside, they will give you shelter, they will give you food and they will take care of you.
- E4j:** Through observing them I can see their good conduct, the way they loved each other, the way they hang together.
- E4k:** Normal things like loving one another, caring; I find it much easier in Islam.

Th2.5: Teaching and Obedience to laws

- K2l:** I converted to Islam because of their way, they read the book and follow what is written in the book that is what inspired me to convert to them and their behavior, when you see a Muslim, his belief is good, that is the reason why I converted.
- K3n:** Ok in Islam, all the Islamic teachings are very much straight.
- K3o:** Because you find the Muslim since he was young he is brought up knowing this is *haram* this is *halal*. While in Christianity, you have knowledge, you have gone to school, you have your own degrees, you never know this is *haram* or this is *halal*. Very few Christians know this is *haram* or this is *halal*, you might be a manager of Kenya breweries company, you see this is a brewery company, you are working for, you are earning, you are not doing any crime, but you are earning, while in Islam that is *haram* to you. You are different with someone who is committing a crime and who is working in a brewery or in a tobacco company or in a gambling company.
- K5i:** ...much as we are clinging to these teachings these doctrines, how much do we understand the extent to which they are preparing us, they are giving us spiritual nourishment. How much would we say really that these teachings, kind of make us the whole beings that we intend to be in the spiritual world.
- K5j:** Well, well let me take up a very quick one let us look at the institution of marriage and what Islam teaches and what Christianity teaches. Now if you look at that institution and what Islam teaches about it, Islam gives concessions that if it doesn't work out, you are free to be apart, but now if you go into Christianity, the same institution of marriage, sanctified in both the Quran and in the Bible, now what do Christians say or what does Christianity say? It totally says different thing, that when they do their weddings, the pastor will stand there and declare in death and in whatever, that I give you my life both in death and in I don't know what, so it is like to the Christians there is nothing like a marriage which will not work out. Marriage will always work out. And sometimes you find much as you brought these two people together in a sanctified manner but then some how certain things are not simply adding up but you gave them no room for recourse, so it is like you have tied them no matter what happens and that is why I would want to believe that we have

- recorded over a period of time a lot of breakups in Christian marriages than in Muslim marriages.
- K6n:** In Islam all are taught how to conduct funeral services but in Christianity you cannot do that. In Islam you are told how to manage your family, your wife relationship and you are instructed on how to take care of your relationships and your wives, even subjects and any situation in the family.
- E2k:** My friends, my older friends not my age mates, this older people, I got close to them and heard the words they say, how they speak, how they teach their children about Islam as in so, so and so, this is the light, this is the right path, so that convinced me.
- E2l:** Muslims are taught to always try to be perfect and do the right thing.
- E2m:** Am telling you it is not so different but even the teachings are not so different but the way they are taught, the mode of expression, the way they inform people about Islam and the way they tell people in Christianity, there is a contradiction and the belief.
- E4l:** The way I understand it is that the way Muslims are taught, they are observing the commandments and act upon the word of God, but the Christians, they preach but they don't act upon the word of God. That is how I can compare them.

Th3: Simplicity, Clarity and Unity of the Religion

Th3.1: General Simplicity of the Islamic Religion

- K1n:** It is easier than Christianity.
- K2m:** Because Islam is just to follow what is written, because you have the book which is your guideline, but in Christianity, if you go to Catholic you will get Catholic doctrine, the other protestant, so it is very hard to follow the full Christianity because it has no common focus.
- K3p:** Ok in Islam, all the Islamic teachings are very much straight.
- K4e:** When you read Islam, there is no problem. What God needs from you, you read what God needs from you.
- K4f:** Islamic teachings are very clear but Christian teachings are mixed up. I found it very simple. It was not confusing. Islam is simpler. When you follow Islam you will benefit here (earth) in the world and the hereafter. Islam is simple, in Islam we believe that when you pray to God, he sees you everywhere, even if you go into a hole.
- K5k:** It is simpler in the sense that for one you only forgot that you are a Muslim, so somebody is simply reminding you brother look here, like I am Coleman like I told you or oyango like I have told you. Then like I pretend, like if I become a celeb for instance I could have a celeb name, something that endears me to my fans. Now if somebody at one time came to me and told me my friend you know this is not your name, your name is Oynago I mean it is simply that I forgot am Oyango so it is just a reminder. So to become a Muslim is simply to be reminded that you are a Muslim at one time in your life.
- K6o:** *[Which religion do you find easier to practice, is it Christianity or Islam?]* Islam *[Why do you say so?]* Because when you know you have committed sin, you are allowed to talk directly to God, you don't need to go to pastor or somebody else, you communicate directly to God.
- K7g:** I find Islam is simple *[Why?]* Because in Christianity you know they tell you how to be saved, I think you have to be baptized, they say John baptized Jesus so you have to be baptized and in Islam you just say words *laillahailallah Muhammadan rasulullah* and you have been converted. There is no lots of things you have to do; only that and you become a Muslim. Even you can say it anywhere you are, yah.
- E2l:** I am trying to say I found Islam not complicated as Christianity. So it is not easy to get lost in Islam.
- E2n:** Christianity is a little more complicated, they have a million churches and all of them, when you listen to them, when you are watching televisions, they always say contradictory statements.
- E3n:** *[So you find Islam to be simpler to follow than Christianity?]* Yah *[How and why?]* Because when you go into the mosque you pray five minutes then you go to your work, when you go to church you spend the whole day and God says you pray five minutes then you go to search. When you stay in church from morning till evening you won't find something to eat. *[So it is simpler to be a Muslim?]* It is simpler.

E4m: Other things that made me to be convinced that Islam is the right religion, it is open, it is simple to follow, and it doesn't contradict itself and it is so clear.

Th3.1a: Simplicity of Christianity

K3q: Conversion to Christianity is much easier, because if you see the technology today, the communication that we get in radio, in television in whichever way we go, it is Christianity. We get gospel music, we get preachers from radios and TVs. In Islam we only have one channel which is *Iqra*, Kenyan Muslims are much down, so Islam doesn't spread like the way Christianity does. It is easier to convert to Christianity because when you convert to Christianity they are much simpler, they are westernized, they take you cheaply, yah but when you convert to Islam things are harsh, the first thing is this is *halal* and this is *haram*, this is good and this is bad. When you are on this side you know you are on this side and we are told that you should always walk on the right side you should not be on the other side, if you are on the other side you are a pagan, you see, am not talking about Christianity am talking about Islam. If you put things like rasta, you start doing beauty, piercing your ears, nowadays people are piercing their noses, such things in Christianity you are just welcomed, even in Islam you are just welcomed but, if you are doing such things the judgment is much harsher, you see, it is very much harsh, so when you are in Islam you must be deep in Islam, you enter with both legs not like Christianity when their holidays come that is when people get lost much, like Christmas, instead of going to churches and doing good things, it is when people are going to take alcohol and adultery and what, you see.

E1m: *[Generally now, between Christianity and Islam which one do you find easier to follow?] Christianity [Why did you say so?] Because it is only Sundays in the evenings or in the mornings, in Islam you have to pray five times a day and that is too difficult for others to do, even me one of them.*

Th3.2: Conversion/Reversion process

K1o: To convert, to take you back, that is to go back but when you revert, that is to follow the right thing; in Islam we say somebody has reverted to Islam not convert, yah? *[Which one do you think is simpler by your description, conversion to Christianity or conversion to Islam?] I can tell you its Islam [Is easier?] It's easier.*

K2n: Actually, if you live with Islam, a Muslim can never force you to convert to his religion, but in Christianity, there is some force, when you find them in their crusades they just insist, who wants to be saved as if they want to force you to be saved, but in Islam they just tell you this is the way then they leave you to decide for yourself, that is the difference.

K4g: *[Which one is simpler, Conversion to Islam or conversion to Christianity?] It is Islam [Why?] You are told to say something if you believe in it, if you say it you are a Muslim [That is why it is simpler?] Yes*

K5l: When I was converting into Islam, I was 30 years old I think, 30 to 32 years old, so I would say it took me that long to make up my mind and the minute I became a Muslim, I think I just went through life the usual procedure that anybody becoming a Muslim would go through, so it is not really like there was a major ceremony, it wasn't really there, it is just a question of have you made up your mind, and so I was walked into a mosque and the imam was made aware that there was a brother here who would like to become a Muslim so I was invited and I was taken through the whole procedure and at the end of it I was ok now I have become a Muslim, after reciting the *fatiha*, not the *fatiha* let me correct that, by reciting the *shahada*.

K5m: Christians do not have a conversion, they have salvation which may be the equivalent of conversion, am not so sure but if you are asking me about my understanding of what it mans to become a Christian, then I would say this, that in Christianity there is a period within which one could experiment with their lives that is the period you can engage in all manner of sin, evil acts. You can become an adulterer, you can become a thief, you can become a murderer then there is this period when you are supposed to have seen light and met Jesus Christ who is now supposed to be your personal Lord and savior. It means therefore one cannot become a Christian until and unless there is this period when you engage in all those manner of bad activities, which is not what is in Islam. First of all this is Islamic reversion, reversion means what?

Reversion means that you lost the way at some point so you are coming back to the fold, so you are not really converting, you are just simply reverting, you are like engaging the reverse gear. That is the gist about Islamic reversion. So what does it mean? First of all I never knew that Islam is a way of life before I became a Muslim. So when I became a Muslim I learnt that Islam is a way of life in fact, what is the definition of Islam; Submitting to God. So at what point do you begin to submit to God? At the point that your life begins, so it means what? It means that as soon as one is born, you are born a Muslim, but because of influence, parental influence, peer influence and so on and so forth, you get to come out of the track, so you remain a Muslim without knowing then at some point when you now make up your mind you want to become a Muslim you are simply falling back to original position. *[In your opinion, which conversion is simpler, Islamic or Christian conversion?]* Islamic.

K7h: Because, in Christianity you know, they tell you how to be saved, I think you have to be baptized, they say John baptized Jesus so you have to be baptized and in Islam you just say words *laillahailallah Muammadan rasulullah* and you have been converted. There is not a lot of things you have to do; only that and you become a Muslim. Even you can say it any where you are, yah.

E2o: If you want to be one, all you have to do is to decide that you really want to be one with your heart and soul and be ready to live upon the teachings of the Islamic population as a whole and see an imam for the conversion ceremony.

E4n: It is easier to follow Islam.

*** (As shown under General simplicity, two had mention that conversion to Christianity is easier. Note also that two people were not directly asked to speak about conversion, it was an oversight.)

Th3.3: Length of Worship

K1p: Because for example time of praying, performing *Sallat*, if you just want to do it... in some five minutes, but look at the Christians you go to church, you will come in the evening, from morning you come in the evening.

K6p: Now having reported about what has happened in my family, I expected that the church will plan to come and comfort me and my family, remember it was the day of tithe, instead I saw all elders and church leadership just dealing with money, counting money, they told me wait we shall go, wait, wait, but I waited until 4pm then I decided to leave for home.

E3o: Because when you go into the mosque you pray five minutes then you go to your work, when you go to church you spend the whole day and God says you pray five minutes then you go to search. When you stay in church from morning till evening you won't find something to eat.

Th3.4: Universal Oneness of God/Religion

K1q: In fact the oneness of God, marriage and some other beliefs let's say like fasting, we all fast at the same year all universally, that's why ... in Christianity there are some who believe that Jesus is born a Christian on the 25th while others contradict that verse.

K1r: Now when somebody tells you that God is one, the Quran clearly states that God is one, now when you come to the Bible they say that God is three in one, but when you do that mathematically, it is not logical to me.

K1s: One thing is you believe the oneness of God and his messenger prophet Muhammad (SAW) the last messenger that is when you become a Muslim. Just believe the oneness of God...once you say God is one, you never find another word saying God is two.

K2o: Because in Islam, *yani* what they were saying about Jesus is the topic which convinced me most because we in Christianity are believing that Jesus himself was the God, but in Islam when they were teaching they said that Jesus was not the God but they respect Jesus who is not a God, they respect him most, then I came to understand that even from the Bible that what they were saying is the truth.

K2p: Because Islam is just to follow what is written, because you have the book which is your guideline, but in Christianity, if you go to Catholic you will get Catholic doctrine, the other protestant, so it is very hard to follow the full Christianity because

- it has no common focus, but in Islam you have a common focus, if you become a Muslim and you are in any denomination of Islam it is the same.
- K3r:** You become a Muslim by reciting *Shahada*, you confess, saying I confess today that there is no other God who we know, there is no other God rather than Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.
- K4h:** I found that Islam is one even if you go to America, you are all praying to one God, you believe in one thing, we believe that God exist and he is everywhere.
- K4i:** Islam believes in one God and all others are the prophets of God.
- K4j:** To be a Muslim, I was told that I should believe in on God and the last prophet and all the prophets and Jesus was not God or son of God but was a prophet. He God did not die, he gave birth but that he was not born.
- K5n:** Again one that comes to mind immediately or instantly is the teaching that God chose Islam for mankind, chose Islam as a religion for mankind that is the one that immediately comes to mind and if you look at the Christian teachings, or their way of life, I want to believe that Christians observe teachings as stipulated in the Bible, that is their main book, and if you read, I stand corrected, but if you read from Genesis to Revelation, the entire Bible, I don't really think there is a particular portion of that book that captures the fact that Christianity was chosen for mankind as a religion, it is not there. Now I was left wondering or asking myself; that is after reading the Quran and getting to understand that actually Islam was chosen or the chosen religion for mankind, so I was left asking myself if indeed it is true that we were all created equal before God, and the main reason why we were created, both Christians and Muslims teach these that the main reason why man was created was purposely to worship God, why could it be that the same, same God who created all of us to worship him, purposely to worship him could live us groping for the vessel we would use to worship him, so when I read the Quran and it is explicitly mentioned therein Islam is the chosen religion for mankind, I was like yes this must be it.
- K6q:** Then I learnt that in the Quran there are these four books, torah, Quran, *injl* and *Zabur* and they believe in the prophets of God, and they follow the truth that God is one and with his prophets. That everyone is supposed to pray for himself not just telling others to pray for you because it is you with God; it is God who knows you that you should pray to him.
- K7i:** First in Islam the one I find convincing is that they believe that God is only one and they believe all messengers and they believe in all angels and they believe all three books, *taurat*, *zabur*, *injl*, four, *taurat*, *zabur*, *injl* and the Quran. So when I saw those books and I heard the way they were telling me, so I said if you are telling me you believe in all these books and you are telling me you believe Jesus is the messenger of God and he is in Islam, then it makes me to believe. And they are using one book where ever you go.
- E1n:** In fact Islamic teachings they are...in fact you can sit there for the whole day listening to Islamic teachings because every time they are talking about your God, whatever God wants, you have to do this and that and what you are supposed to be doing each and every second, it is not what you are supposed to be doing every time, no, it is what you are supposed to be doing each an every second of an hour, you see...
- E2p:** So I went there in front of him, then I was asked to recite with my mouth that there is only one true God and so I did and after that I was officially a Muslim. There was no baptism or catechism and stuff. That is how I became a Muslim.
- E2q:** The Christian people really misunderstand Muslims that is why they kind of hate each other; the two religions. The Christians always say Muslims think of Muhammad as their God, but they really don't. There is another superior being mightier than Muhammad. Muhammad was just a prophet, but the Christians; the Christian population they always mistake the two; they mistake God and Muhammad.
- E3p:** Christian teachings, they confuse themselves, you can see there is Pentecost, Catholic, PCA, they have many churches; even many don't even know their names. But when you go to Islam, their prayer is only one thing, but in Christian they pray this way that way but they call themselves all Christians. Muslims they pray one way, they trust one God. They love all the prophets, but when you come to Christians, they

- only love Jesus they don't want to know about Muhammad. If you don't know about other prophets you cant know the religions well.
- E3q:** I understand them because I was reading the verses of Bible and the Quran. They were written here, but when you see the Quran it remains one, but Bible, you can see the death of Jesus, they are talking about three people, but they say three different things. But when you go into Quran they say Jesus did not die. They are different, big difference.
- E3r:** In Islam they say one thing and that thing remains one thing, they can't change it, but Christians they say this one but when you go to other books they say another thing. When you go to Old Testament and New Testament, they are different. But in Quran there is only one book, you can't find another book which is written. It is only one thing.
- E3s:** The death of Jesus; they were talking about three people in the Bible. But in the Quran, the way they talk, they said that Jesus didn't die. But in Christianity they said that this one said this and that, they are not the same. And when you go to the issue of God, they say that there are three gods and in the Quran they say there is one God. When you come to Christians, they say that God is one but they are not sure... they have many churches, when you come to the issue of wearing dress, like women, they wear skin tight, but when you go to mosque they wear full dresses, something like that.
- E4o:** My understanding of being a Muslim is that there is one God, all prophets are true and the messages they delivered to the people are true.

Th4: Friendship

- K2q:** When I approached them and started asking questions, they were very, very friendly, the way they invited me, the way they behaved in answering my questions, it was a very good relationship.
- K3s:** So when I was staying there I met different friends, different people, and I have never stayed next to a mosque since I was born, I was seeing mosque just as a building structure, now when I was staying with those friends of mine, I saw them fasting, the Ramadan, praying five *sallats* a day now I was very much interested and I wanted to do a research of what they were doing, yah. After doing my research, I saw this is the right religion which I should follow.
- K3t:** So according to them, people lived like animals, people lived like beasts, if you want to get a place to sleep, you must buy, you give out some money or you give out some cigarettes so that you can get a place to sleep, if you can't do that or you don't have someone who knows you, you have to sleep in the toilet standing, so the way they reacted to me, or the way they handled me that was what made me to get a chance, to get a chance to know what do they really do, you see.
- K4k:** We were neighbors we played together, we talked together, before I became a Muslim, there were greetings. We were talking (greeting) together, eating together, but no problem with them. If you do a bad thing they will call you and they give you some advice, they don't like bad things.
- K5o:** I think that my memory about how I came to hear about Islam is very clear, and it was through interacting with those who were Muslims, some of whom were really, really my friends and so from them I got to hear this and that about Islam which at first is not anything out of the ordinary, there was no big deal about that, but slowly and slowly I think I wanted to hear more and get to learn more.
- K5p:** Like I said these were my friends and through them I got to hear about Islam and some Islamic teachings and I was trying to compare that with the teachings I already heard as a Christian and I was seeing a very big diversion that did not really am...ok I would say naturally I think I was drawn to them, to their opinion, I mean the way they were talking about issues, I was like ok there could be some gem here so could I just find it out myself.
- K5q:** Not a very heavy presence yes, but I remember one particular Muslim family that were like our immediate neighbors, this time we were living in the Rift Valley province, northern rift valley, so our immediate neighbor that time was actually a Muslim and so that is the only Muslim family that I can remember. And I remember that family for particular reasons, because as kids while we were growing up we had made friends with kids from that family and so on and off we could find ourselves

going to their family to share pleasantries some things like that. And the way that family was treating us even at that early time, it was very peculiar from the way we are being treated from those other families that we could also go into but which were not Muslim families. So there was something particular about that family which I could not really lay my hands on as at that time, because I never understood at that time that they were Muslims. I never considered anything religious about them but I only looked at them as neighbors and that was all, but each time we went to their house it was like the treatment there would be very, very different from what we would experience from other homes and other neighbors.

K5r: Yes I was basically looking for embracement, because I was going through a lot of upheavals in my life and I thought that the only person I could seek recourse to is God and so when I tried to be close to my Christian brothers for that consolation I was looking for, I never saw it instead I was seeing discrimination and I was seeing a lot of all those things and so when I became a Muslim I think I was totally embraced. Let me give you an experience that I had and I believe this is the experiences that most other reverts saw before me and will still see. As soon as I became a Muslim, as soon as I recounted the *shahada*, immediately those who were in the mosque that time did what Kenyans call an Harambe, although they don't really take it as *Harambe*, Muslim don't call it an *Harambe*, so they were just simply coming into my life without even knowing my background, they did not know whether I was the son of a minister or the son of the most notorious thief in the village, they did not care about that but simply because I have become one of them by reciting the *shahada* they did an impromptu "*harambe*", don't call it *harambe*, and basically what they are doing is, that was a gesture of welcoming me into their fold. Take this, use it in whichever way you want to use it. Nobody cared about who is this guy becoming a Muslim. And I had struggled with my Christian brothers over a very long period of time to just try and do a small gesture like that it never worked out.

K5s: [*Would you consider that (friendship) to be part of the influence that led you to convert to Islam?*] I want to say yes and no. yes because had I not gotten that interaction with them perhaps I would not have had any other idea about Islam because the only idea I had about Islam was what I used to hear from the Christian clergy. And no because I was pushed into looking for an alternative by my own Christian brothers and sisters who were surrounding me before I became a Muslim.

K5t: [*Will you say then that their conduct appealed to you before you became a Muslim?*] Yah I want to believe that is true [*How did it appeal to you and what are the things that appealed to you?*] I was looking at them as people in whom I could confide, people whom I could look up to for support and who actually went out of their way to embrace me with all the difficulties I was going through and people who could actually give me a listening something which I was not getting from among my Christian brothers and sisters. [*In what way would you say that this has influenced your conversion to Islam?*] Good, this is how I look at it, this is a Muslim in whom I have contact with and this is a Christian who also I have contact with and now if the issues am trying to address with this Christian brother are the same issues which am addressing with the Muslim brother. But look at the difference in approach here, look at how this guy is embracing my difficulties look at how this guy...before this Christian brother could see me, he could see my problems but before this Muslim brother could see my problems, he was seeing me.

K6r: Now when the young men came back and visited him, everyone had something in his hand as a gift; they had sugar, they had flour for Ugali, milk, even biscuits for children and other things. So now I began thinking that even though I had not stayed long in Islam, but these people are sensitive to my needs and challenges, they did not just come empty handed to see me, that is to say when am in problem they are there to help me. When I do not get anything from my *juwakali* work, I could expect that my brothers are concerned about my life and children, so I began now rethinking about Islam and the people themselves. So every time they came, and they kept coming day after day, and every time they came they brought some assistance for the family, they did that so that in that challenging period of sickness this brother will not curse God, instead I could see that even though am in need or problem, God sent people to come and help me with my problems.

- K7j:** Ok the way I saw my class mates, when they were teaching me, they use to show me how Islam is eh... first you have to make friends or brothers, you have to be brothers to each other, you have to love each other and they use to like me, I was a Christian, but I use to listen to them and they made me their friend. So they make friends a lot.
- K7k:** Yes, in other words it is the way they use to do, the way they use to invite me and the way they use to talk to me, you know they use to teach me and I try to practice what they were doing, so I found that I liked it.
- K7l:** Well, the way I use to see them, they use to wear...Islamic gowns, when they went to madarasa, the girls wear hijab and when I see them and I see the picture, because I believe that picture is *Mariam* (Mary), Mary use to wear it and I see the Muslims are dressing like that, it made me feel this is the true religion, because they are practicing what the prophets use to do. Ok when I see one of my classmate wearing Islamic gowns and I see the way, I use to believe the picture which is in my heart or church that it was Jesus, I imagine the way Jesus was and I see the way Muslims are wearing the Islamic gown and the way they are going to their madarasa, I concluded this is the religion which Jesus obeyed.
- E1o:** Before, their behavior to me, they behaved very well and nicely, I liked them but when you listened to Christians talking about Muslims, they were saying bad things about them.
- E2r:** The relationships they have with other people. Christians don't want to associate with Muslims but when I was a Christian I use to feel free when I was with Muslims but after I converted some of my Christian friends think of me as an outcast because I chose a path that is different from what they think is right so I started asking the older men about Islam as a whole, after they explained to me, it became clear to me that Islam is the right path.
- E2s:** [So you wont consider your friendship or relationship as one of the reasons that made you convert?] It was one of the reasons because of the help they gave me by making me understand. Whatever I did not understand as in I really went to them. So it is like they contributed just a small part, but my heart and soul did the rest. I decided for myself to be one.
- E3t:** My friends of Islam, they gave me the book that was written, that was why I became a Muslim. I use to read those verses from the Bible and the Quran and I found out that the Quran is the only way, but it is the hard way but the only way.
- E4p:** The landlord use to take me to Muslim classes, teaching me about Arabic and other issues about Muslims. So from that point I was brought up as a Muslim.

Th5: Searching for the True God

- K1t:** It is this verse that says that Jesus is the son of God, and for example they say that Jesus is God. Whereas the Bible puts it clearly that he is not the son of God but the messenger of God. Now when I came to the holy Quran, the same book talks about him as a messenger not as God; now when you come to the Bible, there are so many verses also which proves that the Quran is right, which says that Jesus is messenger not God and not the son of God.
- K2r:** You see about Jesus, because in Christianity, we use to believe that Jesus is the son of God; that he is God but in Islam we are told that Jesus was not a god, he is not the son of a god. According to the scriptures, if you read the Bible clearly, you will get that message that Jesus is not a god and he is not a son of god. According the Bible, because in the Bible there is nowhere Jesus said I am the son of God, I am the God, no where in the Bible but Christians believe Jesus in the son of God contrary to the Bible.
- K3u:** So I use to follow very well but afterwards that was when I saw the difference between, when we were saying Mary mother of God after reading the Hail Mary; Hail Mary mother of God pray for us now ... so I saw there must be a very big difference. God, no one knows how God looks like, you see, and here you are saying Hail Mary mother of God, instead of saying Mary mother of Jesus, it means here, Jesus is God. And we are told in the first commandment you should not follow any God, isn't it, we have only one God. So Jesus himself told people to pray our Lord's prayer, our father who art in haven Hallow be thy name thy kingdom come, you see, there is no any other place where he said he is God or he is the Lord. He is just the son of God and we all ourselves are God's sons and daughters.

- K4l:** *[When you were a Christian, what major Christian doctrines did you find very difficult to agree with?]* Christians say that Jesus is the son of God, and then he is God. *[Those are some of the things you had difficulties with?]* So I didn't understand where the truth is.
- K5u:** that is after reading the Quran and getting to understand that actually Islam was chosen or the chosen religion for mankind, so I was left asking myself if indeed it is true that we were all created equal before God, and the main reason why we were created, both Christians and Muslims teach this, that the main reason why man was created was purposely to worship God, why could it be that the same, same God who created all of us to worship him, purposely to worship him, could live us groping for the vessel we would use to worship him, so when I read the Quran and it is explicitly mentioned therein Islam is the chosen religion for mankind, I was like yes this must be it.
- K6s:** Then I questioned, what kind of God she claims to have a vision from because I saw this brother attending that funeral and this pastor now claims that through vision she did not see this man attending, so I again questioned the kind of God Mary was listening to or serving. So from that day I told my wife that from that day, we will never go to that church again, we will just wait, stay home until when God shows us the right or true church to attend.
- K6t:** *[the Muslims]* when they come to worship, there is no boss, all are equal. The only boss is God whom they have to pay their worship to, not any other person, so that also convicted me to think that this is the right path.
- K7m:** *[Because of these reasons you decided to convert?]* Yes, that's the reason I have, but the biggest reason is because I wanted to know who is God and who the king of everything is.
- K7n:** This is what am telling you, that what I disagreed with is about how they use to tell me that God is the only one and in another way they tell me that Jesus is the son of God and he is God.
- E1p:** First of all, I was looking for God.
- E1q:** So when I realized I have to look for my God, then I said to myself, now I have to look for my God. There is a time Muslims came to our area for their crusade, a times with pastors and Sheikhs, I examined there, I compared and I just saw the path where it is...by then I never said that am a Muslim, I stayed for almost another year, just comparing in my mind where should I be and later on I found myself in a mosque.
- E1r:** Because I was looking for my God not what they were doing, but even now if you look at what they are doing, you won't find your God, God knows your heart.
- E2t:** I started comparing, these people claim to be people of God (Christians) and the things they were doing I saw they were wrong.
- E2u:** The Catholic Bible as in has some books removed. Now I was kind of curious, why did these books need to be hidden from that particular Bible of theirs, so I went to this library, they have a library, they have the old version of the Bible, so I read those forbidden six books it was like those books were removed because they were inciting people against the Catholic religion. So I said to myself whereas this church has something to hide to the rest of the population then definitely it is not the right path for me. So I moved out as a person. You can't go to a church that deceives people.
- E3u:** I was looking for a good religion. I was looking for where I can find God, yah. When I was going to church, I saw many things but I didn't like them.
- E4q:** I was living in a Muslim resident whereby one day I was possessed by evil spirit, and my parents were Christians and they were unable to pray for my deliverance, so what happened was that they sent for a Muslim imam and he came and prayed for me, and the spirit departed. So that convinced me to be a Muslim... and I asked myself, where my mother was attending, why were they unable to deliver me from the spirit, so I realize that in Islam there is certain power which could deliver a person.

Th6: Deliverance from Spirit

- E4r:** I have lived with Muslim people in the community and what made me convert to Islam, I was living in a Muslim residence whereby one day I was possessed by evil spirit, and my parents were Christians and they were unable to pray for my deliverance, so what happened was that they sent for a Muslim imam and he came and prayed for me, and the spirit departed so that convinced me to be a Muslim.

- E4s:** Not really about the crusades, but the main reason that made me to be convinced about Islam is the issue about the evil spirit which came upon me and I asked myself, where my mother was attending, why were they unable to deliver me from the spirit, so I realize that in Islam there is certain power which could deliver a person.

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

SRQ1: How Can the Converts from Christianity to Islam in Nairobi Area be Described?

SRQ1.1: Age

- K1** Mmmm am 32
K2 I am forty five
K3 I am 35years old
K4 29
K5 Yah, I am 36 years now
K6 My age is 38
K7 28
E1 I am 27 years old
E2 Am, 22 years old
E3 Am 28
E4 28

SRQ1.2: Educational Qualification

- K1** I have been to fourth form that is my secondary education, I have never gone to university level.
K2 My educational qualification is form 2 leaver.
K3 My educational background, lets say am comfortable with my life, I just ended at primary level in standard eight. I never continued because my parents never had money. They were working there at Karen, like laborers in European farms.
K4 I went to school small, up to class seven, primary class seven
K5 I have a first degree in Mathematics and sociology
K6 My level of education is standard seven
K7 I finished class 8
E1 Yah, but class eight level
E2 Yes I did, primary and secondary
E3 I have gone to standard eight
E4 I didn't

SRQ1.3: Occupation

- K1** Eh, for now where I was working I resigned, now am just doing some casual works, it is not somewhere permanent but *insha-Allah* I will come across somewhere permanent.
K2 Now am doing nothing, because I was a driver, when I got accident, I decided not to drive again until I recover.
K3 Now *alhamdulillah*, I continued working as a laborer, I saved up some little money, now am working as a driver but not permanent; we work with matatus. You might get job a day, your friend will give you two or three trips, then you get around two hundred shillings per day and you say its ok because in Kenya sometimes when you want to be employed you must have your relatives in big companies or in NGOs or in big corporations, so we are not employed.
K4 Cleaning the mosque.
K5 I am in the statistics field, and am keen on pursuing it further and further.
K6 I am a plumber.
K7 *[Do you work?]* Yes I work. We prepare mineral water.
E1 Yah I work, but jobless, I don't have a permanent job. Just doing whatever job I find.
E2 Right now am kind of idle at the moment, no work, I don't go to school.
E3 I am just idling. I don't have some work right now, but I do some works, carpenter, mason.

E4 Mason, Carpenter

SRQ1.4: Marital Status

K1 Yah, am married with a wife and two children
 K2 Yes, am married with eight children
 K3 No, am not yet married
 K4 Yes (*Married*)
 K5 Exactly, am married. Three kids, Just one wife
 K6 Yes, (*Married with*) one wife.
 K7 Yes am married
 E1 Yah, (*Married with*) Three, two dead and one is alive
 E2 No, am not married
 E3 Yes am married
 E4 Yah, (*Married*)

SRQ1.5: Family Background

K1 They are Christians, right now they are Christians. Ok they were strong Christian followers and they still believe in Christianity but the only difference is that they mix Christianity with traditional beliefs. So when I came up to do my own research, I choose Islam as my... because I have been born in Christianity they didn't bother me, though there was a little bit of confusion, oh you have gone to a religion which your fathers don't belong to, oh come back, but I told them it is my choice I will go with it. [*Parents rich?*] Poor, really poor.

K2 Yah my parents were Christians-Catholics, They are still Catholics up till today. My family was Catholic; they were Catholic believers. My family is not rich, they are just farmers.

K3 Yes they were born Christians and they are still Christians up till now. Ok, my parents were...they never got education. They came from poor family, so they came from all that distance to come to the city to look for green pastures. That is where we were born. They were earning their living as European laborers there in Karen and we were brought up there. We were born and grew up in Karen, yah so it is our time now to help them. Ok, I was born in a Christian family my mother and my father was...both parents were Protestants, they were Luhyas. Luyahs have their own churches which look like sects, it was called PAG (Pentecostal Assemblies of God) so the school which I went had a very big Catholic church and according to...we were being forced to go to church after lunch time and may be on Wednesdays, so we practiced Catholic very much. so I grew up in Catholic religion and the Karen area which we use to live, we have very many missionaries and they were all Catholics, so I grew up as a Catholic, I got baptized there and I was raised up in that manner but my parents were strictly in their own church PAG and they lived everyone on his own and the was no quarrel.

K4 All of them are Christians up till today. They are farmers, pastoralists, in between rich and poor.

K5 Yes they were Christians, they were Catholics. I would actually rate my family as middle class, because my dad was a teacher and my mum was a business lady and we were brought up not really having much complaint, so I would really rate my family as middle class.

K6 [*Were your parents Christians?*] Yes, even now. They were poor people.

K7 They were Christians and they are still Christians. My family was not rich, Yah I have brothers and sisters. All of them are still Christians.

E1 Before, it was neutral. It was neutral.

E2 My family is what you can call a normal family, not wealthy not poor. They are just in the middle but I can tell you it is a peaceful family. Although am a Muslim, I have really talked to them, before I converted, I gave them my reason for converting and they actually agreed and said son if that is what you want to do, it is ok.

E3 Yah, they are Christians, My parents they are all Christians, till now, they are all Christians. My parents are hasslers, they are poor but they are not rich, they are just hasslers.

E4 Before the passing away of my mother, the way I can remember, we were living well, but after her death, things have been different from that time.

SRQ1.6: Part of the Country and Tribal Affiliation

- K1** I come from Yanza, am a Luo.
K2 I come from Kenya, Meru tribe.
K3 Ok am a Kenyan citizen, am born here, my parents are Luhyas, They come from western Kenya.
K4 Me, I am Luhya, western province.
K5 Ok I have no problem with that because everyday all of us in Kenya belong to a particular tribe unless it is politicized that is when it becomes an issue, but I don't have a problem, am a Luo from Yanza.
K6 Maragoli, Western Kenya.
K7 Western, I am a Luhya.
E1 I am from Rift valley, Kajiado north. I am a Masai.
E2 I come from Eastern Province, a place called Kangundo. I am a Kamba.
E3 I am a Kamba by tribe, Kenyan born.
E4 Viiga, Western Kenya. Luhya.

SRQ1.7: Church Affiliation before Conversion

- K1** Church of God
K2 My family was Catholic; they were Catholic believers. Yah my parents were Christians-Catholics. They are still Catholics up till today
K3 *[Parents PAG-Pentecostal Assemblies of God]* I never went to PAG for a long time because I was young, so when I started nursery school I started in a Catholic area.*[nurtured as a Catholic]*
K4 Protestant, they just call it Protestant church.
K5 *[Were your parents Christians before you converted?]* Yes they were Christians *[What genre of Christianity do they subscribe to?]* They were Catholics. *[So you grew up as a Catholic?]* Exactly.
K6 Salvation army. *[He has moved in and out of churches. See K6a and K6f]*
CK7 Yah, to the same church Pentecostal
E1 By the way I grew up in an area where Muslims are very strong and I have lived with Muslim boys when we were young, by then I was Catholic. I use to serve in a very strong position in the Catholic Church as altar boy. So when I grew up I was one of the guidance of the altar boys. I became their leader. Then after, it is then I saw that Islam is better than Christianity *[You told us you use to attend Catholic Church?]* Yah.
E2 Catholic, as in I was baptized, I was taking sacraments, I went to the catechism classes, I took the classes and I finished.
E3 *[Which church were you attending?]* PCA *[Which one is PCA?]* Presbyterian.
E4 It is called ADC Church, African Divine Church.

SRQ1.8: Regularity of Church Attendance

- K1** Only on Sundays, that is when we go to church, sing and then we go to Sunday school.
K2 I was always attending church in my area, because my parents were very strict in the church.
K3 I was attending church almost daily because Catholics...I was a student by then, so in a Catholic school you must know your pillars, yah. First you don't just go to church on Sunday, first thing you must know your pillars so that you can be baptized and in Catholic they have seven sacraments and the first sacrament is baptism sacrament and you can't just be given that, first thing you must have faith, second thing you must have the teachings, you see, that thing you have...how do I call this thing, is it communion, I have forgotten. I went through all those things, so after leaving school was when I started facing the sun and the life. After facing the life that was where I did a small crime then I was arrested.
K4 I go to church every Sunday.
K5 I did that quite often and may be you don't know this but I was also an altar boy and my name Coleman, actually I was named after a Catholic priest who was presiding over our baptism that time. So I was a very committed Catholic follower up to and

including the time I joined secondary school. When I joined secondary school I was admitted into a very well ran Catholic school and that kind of really made me feel at home away from home but when my follower my immediate follower was admitted to a national school, my father could not bear the cost, the cost of fees for both my follower and myself, so he prevailed upon me to transfer from that school to another one and my only condition then was that it should be a Catholic school just like this one so when I was transferred to this other school, yes it was a Catholic school, it didn't have the facilities that the previous school had. So that kind of derailed me a bit and I started to rebel internally I was like, well if this is...I cant loose the best just to get this as a replacement, so slowly, slowly my attendance to church activities started waning.

- K6** Every Sunday
K7 Because we use to go to church every Sunday, not everyday every Sunday. You know the way Christians behave. Nowadays I can see everyday they are going to church, but long time they don't use to got to church every day, they use to go every Sunday. So every Sunday it is an opportunity to go to church. Yah we use to sit in a tent on Sundays because every week we use to go to school.
CE1 Every Sunday and when there was evening masses, like in week days. Only if there was a morning mass I was not there because I was at school.
E2 I was attending like every Wednesday, when I was in school I use to go to church we had a mass for the whole school and on Sundays I use to go to church and almost daily I use to go to the class (catechism) and choir stuff.
E3 Wednesday and Sunday only.
E4 I use to attend church every Sunday.

SRQ1.9: Memory of Former Pastor or Priest

- K1** I can remember him by the name *Mammamku*.
K2 I can't remember, he was an Italian.
K3 One I know was called John Mahoon. He was an Italian, I never went through an African pastor, but we lived next to missionaries, many of them were Nigerians, West Africans, Ivory Coast students, some of them came from Maritz.
K4 The pastor died.
K5 I was also an altar boy and my name Coleman, actually I was named after a Catholic priest who was presiding over our baptism that time.
K6 His name was Wafula.
K7 No now I can't remember, oh he used to be called Pastor Kenneth.
E1 -----
E2 The priest was father Conn. His behavior was a little shaky.
E3 Kevin
E4 His name was Josphat Usudu.

OET: Other Emerging Themes

OET.1: Growing Environment and Influences

- K1** In Nairobi, my parents, they were not living far, they were living near, not far from the mosque, so I would follow that *hutuba* Juma sermons from the mic, so it is there where I would compile my questions to come to the mosque and ask the Imam, I have heard this one and that one, can you give me proofs.
K2 I grew up at Meru, I went to school there at Meru, then after form 2...eh any way I dropped from form two because of school fees, then I came to Nairobi, before I came to Nairobi, I had no Knowledge of Islam. I live at Kawangware around the market.
K3 That is where we were born. They were earning their living as European laborers there in Karen and we were brought up there... We were born and grew up in Karen, yah so it is our time now to help them. [*Were there Muslims around the environment you grew up?*] No, no, no, no at all at all, there were only Christians. I just live in Ngong road around ten kilometers away from this mosque I live in Ngong road Race course.
K4 First there in my place in western Kenya, then I came here (Nairobi) [*While you were growing up there, were there Muslims around you?*] There were and now they are so many [*Where do you live?*] Here in Kawangware near the mosque.

- K5** I grew up like in the entire country for sure and I mean it because you see up to about age ten that was the time that I grew up in my native area, that is where I was born and after that my father, immediately after he completed his studies, his first posting was to *Taita Taveta* and so the family was moved from their home to *Taita Taveta* and then that marked the beginning of us moving from place to place. So we remained doing that until he passed away, so basically I was brought up away from my birth place up to including the time I did my form four. [*Where do you live?*] Right here in Nairobi, Kawangware.
- K6** [*Where did you grow up?*] Western Kenya. [*In Western Kenya where you grew up were there Muslims around you?*] Yes. I live in Kawangware, Nairobi.
- K7** First I grew up in Nairobi then I went home and grew up there for sometime then I came back to Nairobi. In Nairobi there were Muslims, and in western the classmates that we use to stay with them, ah...our neighbors were Christians, but the classmates we use to stay with were Muslims. I live here in Kawangware near to the mosque.
- E1** Just here in the ghito, in Embul – bul.
- E2** I grew up in Embul-bul. Muslims in my family? I can say two or three relatives who are Muslims. [*So in your environment there were Muslims?*] Yah, there were Muslims. I live right here in Embul-bul.
- E3** Here in Bul-bul. I was born here in Bul, I live in Bul even married here. I...Yah, here in Bul-bul there are many Muslims. I live in Kenya, Kajiado-Embul-bul.
- E4** Embul-bul, in the Embul-bul community. I grew up with Muslims.

OET.2: Contact with Islam

- K1** Eh...I was told they were radical, extremists and infested by jinn. But ever since I went to Islam I have never seen those things. Now its eleven years since I came to Islam. [*Is it through their preaching or through tape or television that you heard about Islam?*] It is from my own research...there was this comparative religion; they were coming to somewhere like market place, so they would have dialogues, the Quran was there and the Bible was there, so I was not forced, just to follow the verses of the Quran and the Bible. They are pick some topics, for example they could differentiate who is Jesus, how the Quran talks about Jesus and how the Bible talks about Jesus, it was from there I started to follow up. [*Can you remember the first time you heard about Islam?*] That was when I was in school, even we were taught that prophet Muhammad was the one who brought Islam, the founder of Islam, but no, he was just sent, the last messenger of Allah. [*How often do you come into contact with Muslims after you heard about Islam in school?*] After my primary level, is now when I came to join Islam, from there I went to secondary, there were no many Muslims.
- K2** Actually before I became a Muslim I had no idea about Muslims. First of all when I stopped going to church, I tried another religion called *Mungiki*, it is a traditional religion. After listening to them and what they were teaching people, I decided to leave them because they have some secrets which I did not want, and then it is after that that I went to Islam. Me I came into contact with Islam through *miadara*- that is the gathering-street preachers of Islam, that is when I started to ask them questions. And when they answered me according to the Bible, because I had a rough idea of the Bible, then I became satisfied with them. [*So when did you first here about Islamic preaching?*] When I came to Nairobi, I was just going on with my business, then I met the people preaching in the streets and after I listened to them, they convinced me... I convinced myself that this is a good religion and I asked them some questions and they answered me then I was satisfied.
- K3** Ok, am sorry to say this, I just finished my primary level, I went up in the streets and I was arrested, yah by the police. I was very young at that time; it was in 1990 after doing my KCP. Then when I was arrested and was taken to remand prison, I stayed there for around six months. When I was staying there I met different friends, different people, and I have never stayed next to a mosque since I was born, I was seeing mosque just as a building structure, now when I was staying with those friends of mine, I saw them fasting, the Ramadan, praying five *sallats* a day then I became very much interested and I wanted to do a research of the way they were doing it, yah. After doing my research, I saw that this was the right religion which I should follow. [*So it was in prison that you first came into contact with Islam?*] Yah, in the

Langata area where I used to live, there was no any kind of mosque or any kind of Muslim or the school where I was learning or where I was brought up there were no Muslims around or Islamic religion. *[When you left the prison, did you continue to have contact with Muslims?]* Yah, I did but I was a youth and when I was a youth, you know, when you are a youth you, may be... you are very arrogant sometimes you know, then life starts, you don't have education, the rest are going to school, usually around, you are not in any college, you see, so I took time, it was hard for me to follow, it was hard for me but afterwards, after some years, I sat down brought my mind together, I examined and asked myself where my life was heading to, where am I heading to?

- K4** Before I came to Islam, I was baptized as John. Christian religions are so many, so I could not understand where the truth is. So I did my research and I saw that Islam is only one. *[So how did you first of all hear about Islam?]* I heard that they worship only one God, and prophets are from God and God is one. *[Where did you learn about Islam?]* I learnt it through my friends. *[Will you be able to remember when you first heard of Islam?]* Now I am ten years since I heard of Islam.
- K5** I think that my memory about how I came to hear about Islam is very clear, and it was through interacting with those who were Muslims, some of whom were really, really my friends and so from them I got to hear this and that about Islam which at first is not anything out of the ordinary, there was no big deal about that, but slowly and slowly, I think I wanted to hear more and get to learn more. The first time I heard about Islam was actually when I was a Christian and it was coming from Christian practitioners and I want to tell you that it was..., they were not really talking about Islam in good light, it was like every time they were talking about Islam they were bashing the religion, it was like, this is bad they don't do it like it is supposed to be done and so on and so forth. So I got to hear about Islam from Christian clergy. *[whether friendship was established afterwards]* No, no that is not true, when I got to hear about Islam from a Christian clergy there was nothing actually that I would say that prepared me to become a Muslim or even befriending Muslims, there was nothing completely, because a lot of what I was hearing from the Christian clergy was very negative information about Islam so, it was not actually something that will draw somebody into becoming a Muslim.
- K6** Before I heard about Islam I was a very good Christian, I would not allow myself to hear anything beyond Christianity or outside Christianity, I loved it. *[Can you remember when you first heard of Islam?]* When I was a child at home in Western Kenya. I heard that in Islam there were jinn and they were evil people, so every time I escaped, I did not want to meet with these Muslims I was hearing about; that they associate with jinn. During that time, because I feared Islam, even I could not come close to the mosque until I became an adult and got married, and then I was free to think about Islam.
- K7** At home at the place where I was born in western and then we use to go to school and I use to be a Christian and we use to discuss, as in debate about Christianity and Islam... *[...in the school?]* ...in the school, yah, and we use to debate, why you are a Muslim and why you are a Christian, at that time when I was a Christian, I wanted to know why my other friends are Muslims and they tried to explain that Islam is like this and when you do this and that, that is how you become a Muslim. *[...that is the first time you met Muslims?]* Yes. We use to meet them every day because they were our class mates.
- E1** By the way my father is a Muslim; he never married my mother because my mother refused to be a Muslim, so they had to divorce. My mother got married to somebody else, so as I grew with my mother. Later on, my other parents from my father's side, use to question me about Islam, because my mother always hated it, I was then on the other side of my mother.
- E2** I heard about Islam every day of my life, since I have been living in Bul, because I live with Muslims, there are Muslims all over around me, my friends, part of my family, I can say that even some of my teachers, some of them are Muslims, although I went to a Catholic school, but I still had Muslim teachers. Islam became serious in my mind after I left school, after form four, that was when Islam really got into me as in I started thinking about the religion as a whole; about these people's way of living and stuff, that was when I started really thinking about converting to Islam. *[Was you*

contact with Muslims regular?] It was regular. *[How regular was it?]* Daily, like the people we hang out in school, the boys, as in, my childhood friends, about 98% were Muslims.

E3 I was born here. I have been living with Muslims; I went to school with Muslims so I have been hearing about Islam many times. Since I was born I was a Christian but when I finished class eight, I decided to become a Muslim.

E4 *[When you first heard about Islam?]* It was 2002. *[How often did you have contact with Muslims?]* I have lived with Muslim people in the community and what made me convert to a Muslim, I was living in a Muslim residence whereby one day I was possessed by evil spirit, and my parents were Christians and they were unable to pray for my deliverance, so what happened was that they sent for a Muslim imam and he came and prayed for me, and the spirit departed, so that convinced me to be a Muslim.

OET.3: Understanding of Being a Christian (Christian Conversion)

K1 Ok, when I was young we have been taught Christianity, even in Sunday schools, they practice Christian faith. To convert, to take you back, that is to go back but when you revert, that is to follow the right thing; in Muslim we say somebody has reverted to Islam not convert, yah? *[When you say somebody is a Christian, what is your understanding of it?]* Ok I could just say that, the religion he is following is not right, he is supposed to go in deep research.

K2 You know, I was a Christian by birth, there was nothing which they will teach me about conversion, before I became a Muslim, because my parents were Christians, I went to Christian school, and then I went to learn Christianity in my childhood, that is how I learnt Christianity.

K3 Ok I knew I was a Christian, I can't really explain, because I was born a Christian. If you could ask me my religion, I could tell you I am a Christian, like a Kenyan citizen in Christianity. Ok I can't really explain because, I have never seen anyone converting from any other religion coming to Christianity because I was brought up in Christian manner, I have never seen anyone converting from this religion to the other, only what I see or only what I meet, I meet people converting from Christianity to Islam or from Christianity to Buddhism.

Ok being a Christian is just a way of living, like the way Islam is a way of living. All Christian and all Muslims believe in God, they believe in one God, and they believe there is life after death, they believe in doing good things so that there is hell and there is heaven. So when you believe in doing good things you will never go to hell and when you believe in doing bad things you will end up, your life will end up in hell. So the difference comes here when you believe there are three gods in one that is the difference the only difference between Islam and Christianity.

K4 I went to the church and I was baptized. When I grew up, I was instructed that I must go to the church, so I went there, after a month I was baptized. That is why I was given the name John.

K5 First I would want to say that it all boils down to the family I was born into, like I said my father was a Catholic and my mum was also a Catholic so on and on we could go to church like every Sunday we could participate in church activities. My parents would insist that we could only go to certain particular schools that were run by the church that they were also members. So through that I would say I became a little bit conscious about my Christian background.

Christians do not have a conversion, they have salvation which may be the equivalent of conversion am not so sure but if you are asking me about my understanding of what it mans to become a Christian then I would say this that in Christianity there is a period within which one could experiment with their lives that is the period you can engage in all manner of sin, evil acts you can become an adulterer, you can become a thief, you can become a murderer then there is this period when you are suppose to have seen light and met Jesus Christ who is now supposed to be your personal Lord and savior. It means therefore one cannot become a Christian until and unless there is this period when you engage in all those manner of bad activities, which is not what is in Islam

- K6** I was baptized, and attended Sunday school as a child, I loved it and I knew Christianity. To be a Christian, you have to be polite or humble, fear God, and do good.
- K7** Because we use to go to church every Sunday, not everyday every Sunday. You know the way Christians behave. Nowadays I can see everyday they are going to church, but long time they don't use to go to church every day, they use to go every Sunday. So every Sunday it is an opportunity to go to church. Being a Christian you have to believe Jesus is your savior that he died for your sins and you have to follow the way Jesus use to teach.
- E1** Yah because I was baptized, I used to take sacraments, yah. By then I became a Christian when I was baptized. Then if you are baptized you use to have sacraments so when you are taking sacraments you are a Christian. If you are not taking sacraments you had to go to studies, then baptized and now you are a Christian. Yah to be a Christian that time, because it used to be said that you have to be a Christian for you to see your God and so that is what made me to be a straight forward Christian.
- E2** As in I was baptized, I was taking sacraments, I went to the catechism classes, I took the classes and I finished. That is how I knew I was a Christian. All it meant to me was like going to church, listening to the word, going back home and offering collections to God, that was all Christianity meant to me then, and being saved like. To be saved as a Christian then was accepting God as your personal savior, that was what it meant to be saved and to be baptized.
I was born a Christian. I was baptized and stuff so I went to a Christian school but the things I use to see there, I use to go to church like every Wednesday and when we were in school we use to have masses, then I use to go to church on Sundays. It was a must, my parents would really drag me to go there, but then I never wanted to, some times.
- E3** Because I was born a Christian, my mother used to tell me we are Christians. My father and mother use to tell me you must go to church. [*So that is why you were a Christian?*] Yah. The understanding was that to know there is God and to follow God's word and to do some thing that God wants.
- E4** I knew I was a Christian because I was going with my mother to the church and I have been attending Sunday school. When I was young I understood that I was a Christian because I attended Sunday school, but when I became grown up, I never attended any church.

OET.4: Understanding of Being a Muslim (Islamic Conversion)

- K1** One thing is you believe the oneness of God and his messenger prophet Muhammad (SAW) the last messenger that is when you become a Muslim from there. Just believe the oneness of God.
- K2** It is just to say you believe in one God and Muhammad is his prophet, that is all, then you start following the *sharia*.
- K3** You become a Muslim By saying *Shahada*, you confess, saying I confess today that there is no other God who we know, there is no other God rather than Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet. That is all that is required, you testify through your mouth, you swear, I swear in one God no ...Lailahaillallah in Swahili we say hakuna
- K4** To be a Muslim, I was told that I should believe in on God and the last prophet and all the prophets and Jesus was not God or son of God but was a prophet. He God did not die, he gave birth but that he was not born.
- K5** First of all this is Islamic reversion, reversion means what? Reversion means that you lost the way at some point so you are coming back to the fold, so you are not really converting, you are just simply reverting, and you are like engaging the reverse gear. That is the gist about Islamic reversion. So what does it mean? First of all I never knew that Islam is a way of life before I became a Muslim. So when I became a Muslim I learnt that Islam is a way of life in fact what is the definition of Islam; Submitting to God. So at what point do you begin to submit to God? At the point that your life begins, so it means what? It means that as soon as one is born, you are born a Muslim, but because of influence, parental influence, peer influence and so on and so forth, you get to come out of the track, so you remain a Muslim without knowing,

- then at some point when you now make up your mind you want to become a Muslim you are simply falling back to original position.
- K6** Fear God first, believe in the prophets of God, to care for God's creation that is including people and also prayer and humble yourself before God.
- K7** First believe that God is the only one, and all prophets you believe them and you have to leave what God does not want and believe everything that God wants and follow the way Islam teach. When you convert to Christianity you have to believe that Jesus is the son of God, you have to believe in trinity and in Islam you believe only that God is the only one and all the messengers.
- E1** Just saying God is one and no one else, you must obey only your God and you become a Muslim.
- E2** If you want to be one, all you have to do is to decide that you really want to be one with your heart and soul and be ready to live upon the teachings of the Islam population as a whole and see an imam for the conversion ceremony. Being a Muslim is living right as in living the way God wants you to live. You know God is here for everyone so we should try to be perfect like him.
- E3** To be a Muslim is to know that there is one God and to do what God wants; to pray five times, to help people. The Muslims believe that Muhammad is the last prophet and the Christians they believe that Jesus is the last prophet.
- E4** My understanding of being a Muslim is that there is one God, all prophets are true and the messages they delivered to the people are true.

OET.5: Areas of Conflict with Christian teachings before conversion

- K1** It is this verse that says that Jesus is the son of God, and for example they say that Jesus is God. Whereas the Bible puts it clearly that he is not the son of God but the messenger of God. Now when I come to the holy Quran the same book talks about him as a messenger not as God; now when you come to the Bible there are so many verses also which proves that Quran is right which says that Jesus is messenger not God and not the son of God. The crucifixion of Jesus, the teaching of the crucifixion of Jesus and the contradiction also. And it was clearly stated that he was not crucified and when you come to the Bible it said clearly he was not crucified, but they thought that he was crucified, but the Bible clearly states and the Quran now puts it clear that he was not crucified nor was he killed. Before I became a Muslim we were told that Jesus was the son of God and is God, some could say he is the messenger but when we come to learn from their teachings they would say he is a messenger.
- K2** I was a Catholic, and when we were going for teaching, when we were children, we were told to go to the father and confess our sins to them, that thing was troubling me even when I was there, I even disagreed with my teacher, why should I go and tell that person what I have done in secret. It was disturbing in my whole time in Christianity, in Catholic.
- K3** So I use to follow very well, but afterwards, was when I saw the difference between, when we were saying Mary mother of God after reading the Hail Mary; Hail Mary mother of God pray for us now ... so I saw there must be a very big difference. God, no one knows how God looks like, you see, and here you are saying Hail Mary mother of God, instead of saying Mary mother of Jesus, it means here, Jesus is God. And we are told in the first commandment you should not follow any God, isn't it, we have only one God.
- K4** In Christianity you worship God but your actions are very bad, may be you drink beer, you do a lot of things which are bad but in Islam you are told this is good and this is bad. Christians say that Jesus is the son of God, Jesus is God, and you should worship Jesus so where do I go.
- K5** I want to say that before my conversion I did not have a problem, a major problem with Christianity apart from the fact that I was seeing a lot of discrimination in the church, so perhaps that could be the main reason why I decided to be a Muslim but after converting and becoming a Muslim, actually I don't want to say converting, after reverting and I became a Muslim I think I eventually managed to excavate a lot of Christian teachings that I really don't agree with, I don't know whether I should go ahead and perhaps mention some of these or just keep it to myself
- K6** One thing that I did not agree with in Christianity is, I could see the pastor accompanied by a woman, may be the woman is the pastor or the boss or a visitor

and both of them will go and sit in the front chairs, but this woman is in mini skirt, she is there and the people who are now in front of them, men especially, are able to see some part of her body which should be covered well, so that also stumbled me, because as a human being seeing a woman in that situation, that is a temptation. That did not please me.

- K7** This is what am telling you that the one thing I disagreed with is about how they use to tell me that God is the only one and another way they tell me that Jesus is the son of God and he is God.
- E1** First of all in the Catholic Church, their Bible is not the same as the original Bible which is known, that was my first problem. Second problem, was their preaching, when the preacher is preaching, I may get one or two points, the rest is his problem or the others problems, so I didn't like the teachings.
- E2** So the whole book stuff as, you see, the Catholic Bible as in has some books removed. Now I was kind of curious, why did these books need to be hidden from that particular Bible of theirs, so I went to this library, they have a library, they have the old version of the Bible, so I read those forbidden six books it was like those books were removed because they were inciting people against the Catholic religion. So I said to myself whereas this church has something to hide to the rest of the population then definitely it is not the right path for me. So I moved out as a person. You can't go to a church that deceives people.
- E3** When we were at school, Christians and Muslims were having debates, Some Christians believe that...some of them believe that God is one, some of them say that God are three, Holy spirit, the son and the God, but when you come to Islam they say God is one.]
- E4** At that time I was young and when my mother was murdered, I thought it was a cult, it was a traditional church somehow, so when my mother was murdered and it has never happened to a Muslim leader being murdered because he is a leader, that affected me and made me to just decide to be a Muslim.

SRQ2: How do the conversion motifs relate to the conversion of Christians to Islam in Nairobi area?

SRQ2.1: Intellectual Motif

- K1** By listening and there was this some few books which I was given to go and do my own research. Yah, but most of the time they came from the Bible and the Quran, so they will tell me go to the Bible verse, go and look this and go and look that, so that is why I decided to be a Muslim. No, debate and I just love Islam, when I just heard from Friday sermons, from the mosque near, I decided to love Islam slowly by slowly then started to follow them with questions. *[Was the teaching of Islam logical to you?]* Yah, they were logical *[How?]* Now when somebody tells you that God is one, the Quran clearly states that God is one, now when you come to the Bible they say that God is three in one, but when you do that mathematically, it is not logical to me. *[which is more reasonable to you? Islam [Why?]* Because of its teaching. *[Did you hear of Islam through preaching, reading or how...?]* Through preaching, through street preaching. *[Was the preaching of Islam very clear and logical to you?]* Yah, yah very clear and logical *[How?]* Because you ask them a question, they do not answer the question according to their thinking they just refer you to the book either the Quran or the Bible, because they use both of them to answer the question. When you ask a Muslim a question, instead of giving stories from his mind he just refers you to the Quran or the Bible, the verses that would answer your question, to them it is only to tell you where you can get your answer in the Bible or the Quran
- K2** They gave me a book called ...this book of hadith, because we say in Islam, *kalallahu kalarasul* Allah says this, Muhammad says this. I read some books, some different, different kind of books, they never neglected me, they took me as a brother, taught me the pillars, the main things that you should do, they taught me slowly by slowly, they showed me the difference between Christianity and Islam, what I should do and what I shouldn't do. So I followed slowly by slowly till now. *[Were those teachings they were giving to you logical to you?]* Yah, they were logical, because
- K3**

- when I weigh them and I weigh Christianity to me they were logical. To me, Islam was more humble, more reasonable.
- K4** I was told by my friends, my friends talked to me about Islam. I found it very simple.
- K5** There is a book which was ah...actually two books that I got into contact with that time and which I read from cover to cover and which really kind of reinforced my resolve to become a Muslim. The first book is called *Understanding Islam* and I can't recall who the author is and there is another book that is written by Dr. Abu...my goodness I can't remember...he is a Jamaican by the way. He was also a revert. If I remember the name I would tell you. So the book is called *The True Message of Christ*. Now if you read that book and he recommends that actually for Muslims who are reading that book they should read it alongside the Bible so that you can cross check the facts that he is quoting that way, so if you read that book, it is wonderful, it has some message. I got these two books and after reading them I needed more and so I started asking my friends how best I could really get myself more exposed to Islamic literature. I would say through and through I found them very logical. I only had one regret, that it took me too long to make up my mind to become a Muslim.
- K6** Then I learnt that in the Quran there are these four books, torah, Quran, injil and Zabur and they believe in the prophets of God, and they follow the truth that God is one and with his prophets. That everyone is supposed to pray for himself not just telling others to pray for you because it is you with God; it is God who knows you that you should pray to him. [*You were not able to read books or something?*] No.
- K7** They use to have tapes and I use to visit them at their place and listen to what the tapes use to say, after discussion, then we listen to the tapes and I found that the tapes were discussing just the same.
- E1** In fact we can say it is what they preach [*their preaching?*] yah their preaching [*You didn't read much of...?*] No, but now am reading because...but before I didn't. [*It is just the teachings that you heard?*] Yah.
- E2** [*When you finished high school that was when you became a Muslim?*] That was when I decided to research more about Muslim religion. [*How did you research, did they give you materials to read or did you attend programs?*] I researched by myself by reading materials. [*What kind of materials did you read?*] They have this Friday bulletins, so I would go over to my friend's house then borrow the bulletins and always read them in English. Then I go study them and see if there is anything wrong in what they are teaching and what they are saying. If there is anything that is a problem to me I would go to an older guy and ask questions directly like what you are doing now.
- E3** I have been reading books as in going to crusade of Muslims many times. My friends use to tell me that Islam is the right religion, but my heart did not decide one day but I have been researching. I read books. Islam is more reasonable.
- E4** [*Were you able to read Islamic Materials?*] No.

SRQ2.2: Mystical Motif

- K1** No, no I did not have any special experience, what I heard from people saying about Islam was that they kill people with bombs, extremists, radicals; that is what I heard, but when I came to follow up, I just came to find that there...ah Islam is a good religion. Hmmm, what I can say, no just the guidance of Allah. I just asked God to give me direction; show me the right religion among the two. So that is when I decided to do my own research and he showed me this is the right religion.
- K2** No I did not have a dream, just about learning and asking questions, yah.
- K3** Ok by that time when we were in prison I saw Muslims having much faith than the Christians and at that time when you believe in your faith it was funny, you were coming out of prison very fast and your things were running very fast, you see, so according to my faith I thought things were running well according to the faith I had rather than the Christian faith, because we were told do this a hundred times you will see a change but never had something like a dream. [*Nothing like any mystical experience?*] No, no, no.
- K4** I saw some things, I had a dream that I have put on white clothes and I entered the Mosque. [*And that now convinced you?*] No, it is through friends. *So even with the*

- dreams, it is still through the friends?* Yes, and I compared the beliefs in Islam and the beliefs in Christianity. Before the dream, I was digesting to become a Muslim.
- K5** No vision, no dreams and no mystical experience but I just want to say that given what I was going through that time in my life, I was basically looking for comfort, I was basically looking for consolation.
- K6** *[Did you have any mystical experience, dreams that encouraged you to become a Muslim?]* None.
- K7** *[Did you have any unusual experience that made you to become a Muslim?]* None.
- E1** *[Did you have any other experience beside the teachings that made you to convert to Islam?]* No, just the teachings and comparing these books.
- E2** *[Did you have any unusual experience that made you to become a Muslim?]* Unusual experience like dreams, visions or... *[Yah]* No.
- E3** *I didn't have a dream or a vision. I only read some books.*
- E4** *[Did you have any other experience that convinced you to become a Muslim?]* No other experience. But the main reason that made me to be convinced about Islam is the issue about the evil spirit which came upon me and I asked myself, where my mother was attending, why were they unable to deliver me from the spirit, so I realize that in Islam there is certain power which could deliver a person.

SRQ2.3: Experimental Motif

- K1** No no, I did not try to follow them until I became a Muslim. *[You did not experiment?]* Yah, yah.
- K2** No, actually no, I didn't do that. Me after meeting those street preachers I just started asking them questions because I was a believer in Christianity, so I was wondering how those people know our Bible than even us, then I started asking them questions. After answering my questions and convinced it is a correct answer, I had nothing else but to convert.
- K3** *[Before you converted did you practice some rituals so as to see how it was?]* Yah it took time for me, it took time. I just converted like for making fun at the first time. *[Just to practice and see how it is?]* Yah just to practice wearing gowns, wearing short trousers, that time I was doing as a youth, as an adolescent, you see, afterwards, after doing my researches. *[How long?]* Around seven years. I just enjoyed...the first time I was doing it practically as a game or as a youth because my friends were doing it, you see, I never had faith at that time but faith came later, yah, the faith came later.
- K4** -----
- K5** I think the experimentation period for me would be the interaction I had with those Muslim friends before I made up my mind. So whatever I was sharing with them on the table that would qualify as the experimentation for me. *[You consider that to be part of the influence that led you to convert to Islam?]* I want to say yes and no. yes because had I not gotten that interaction with them perhaps I would not have had any other idea about Islam because the only idea I had about Islam was what I used to hear from the Christian clergy and no because I was pushed into looking for an alternative by my own Christian brothers and sisters who were surrounding me before I became a Muslim.
- K6** *[Did you experiment with Islamic practices before?]* I did not.
- K7** Yah I use to practice because if they...on Friday you know they use to ask the teacher they want to go to mosque so even me I use to follow them... Yes, they invited me to the mosque to see how mosque is so I decided, I asked the teacher I want to follow them and the teacher told me you are a Christian, how can you follow them, I told him no I want to see how they are doing. It was a long period, about two years. *[When you were following them did you practice ablution or prayer before you converted?]* Yah that is what am telling you, I used to follow them on Friday, or the way they pray five times a day, the way they use to pray I follow them but I don't know what I was doing, because they use to... *[...including fasting]* Fasting I use to fast just for two days then I leave it. *[Did you think that this fasting influenced you to become a Muslim?]* Yes, in other words it is the way they use to do it, the way they use to invite me and the way they use to talk to me, you know they use to teach me and I try to practice the way they were doing, so I found that I liked it.

- E1** *Did you say let me practice or experiment?*] No, when I just felt like I have to look for my God, I just went straight forward.
- E2** *Did you experiment with Islam before you became a Muslim? What do you mean? Like let me test and see before I now commit myself to it?* No, you can't enter a mosque if you are not a Muslim. So I did not experiment, but after I converted, until today I have never seen anything wrong with Islam. So I have no regrets.
- E3** *[Did you experiment or test Islam?]* I didn't test, once I realized I wanted to become a Muslim, my heart told me that when I become a Muslim, I will always be a Muslim. I didn't test, I use to read books and when my heart told me one day to become a Muslim, then I went and became a Muslim.
- E4** *[Before you became a Muslim when you were growing up did you experiment with Islamic practices?]* No.

SRQ2.4: Affectional Motif

- K1** They were friendly, and now they became more friendly than ever. *[Will you say that it is because of their friendship that convinced you to become a Muslim?]* No, because some of them were drunkards, some of them were not praying regular prayers, so it is me alone...some of them I will ask them a question and they will give me direction, so I will say on my own they didn't convince me, yah *[however, some emotional appeal in some practices]* It is very emotional, because one of the appeal is how they bury their beloved ones once they pass away, the way they give their last respect. *[Is it one of these influences that helped you to convert to Islam?]* As I said earlier, my parents used to stay not far from the mosque, so it is that *hutuba*-Friday sermons, I could listen to them when I was just sitting outside, so I will just compile my questions, and decided to say one day I will go to the mosque and ask them if these things they are saying are true.
- K2** *[Muslims were friendly and nice to you, did it appeal to you?]* Yah, yah *[Will you consider that to be one of the reasons why you converted?]* Yah, when I approached them and started asking questions, they were very, very friendly, the way they invited me, the way they behaved in answering my questions, it was a very good relationship. They were very good anyway, they invited me to come and ask questions. They were very good.
- K3** According to their behavior, that is what made me to follow them. They were humble, they were polite and they were not selfish, because first thing when they were fasting, they were given much food, their ration was much bigger and at that time in prison there was no food, food was very little, so they like welcome people, come have some food here, we know you were a Christian but as long as you are our friend have this, so you see. *So you will say in your opinion, their attitude helped you to have interest in Islam?* Yah, it really helped me, they handled me nicely, slowly, politely.
- K4** We were neighbors we played together, we talked together, before I became a Muslim, there were greetings; we were talking (greeting) together, eating together, but no problem with them. *[Will you say that that is the real reason why you converted to Islam?]* It is among the things.
- K5** Their behavior before and after I became a Muslim was very cordial and in fact not just cordial but also sympathetic. *[Would you say that this has influenced your conversion to Islam?]* Good, this is how I look at it, this is a Muslim in whom I have contact with and this is a Christian who also I have contact with and now if the issues am trying to address with this Christian brother are the same issues which am addressing with the Muslim brother. But look at the difference in approach here, look at how this guy is embracing my difficulties look at how this guy...before this Christian brother could see me, he could see my problems but before this Muslim brother could see my problems, he was seeing me. *[So that really played a strong role?]* Exactly.
- K6** *[Before you became a Muslim did you have Muslim friends?]* No.
- K7** Well, the way I use to see them, they use to wear...Islamic gowns, when they went to madarasa, the girls they use to wear hijab and when I use to see them and I see the picture, because I believe that picture is Mariam (Mary), Mary use to wear it and I see the Muslims they are doing like that, this made me to feel this is the true religion, because they are practicing the way the prophets use to do. Ok when I see one of my

- classmate wearing Islamic gowns and I see the way... I use to believe the picture which is in my heart or church, that it was Jesus so I use to believe and the way Jesus was and I see the way Muslims are, they are wearing the Islamic gown and the way they are going to their madarasa, I said this is the religion which Jesus obeyed. They use to be nice to me. They use to invite me and if they have something they give me and I talk to them, they use to talk to me at their home and they prepare some *pilao* and we eat together. The way they use to behave interested me. *[Would you consider this to have influenced you to convert to Islam?]* Yah, first they give me their teachings, after that they showed me the way; they were behaving the way they were practicing, so all of that made me to be interested in converting.
- E1** Before, their behavior to me, they behaved very well and nicely, I liked them but when you listened to Christians talking about Muslims, they were saying bad things about them. *[Will you say that the way Muslims behaved attracted you to Islam?]* No *[Why?]* Because I was looking for my God not what they were doing, but even now if you look at what they are doing, you won't find your God, God knows your heart. *[So it is not their behavior, you were just looking for God?]* Yah I was just looking for my God.
- E2** I must tell you that there are some things I did not like about them for sure but you can't judge a whole religion by looking at just one person. *[But there are others you like?]* Yah, you know even in Christianity not all of them are good, so you might look at one person and think he represents that whole religion, while you are wrong, so I just compared, this friend is like this but this one and that one are good. *[So you won't say generally that it is because of your friends, their attitude or behavior of Muslims that convinced you to become a Muslim?]* No, although some of my friends did a good job by making me understand what I was getting into, they were not the reason why I really converted.
- E3** *[You saw the behavior of your Muslim friends did you like their behavior or actions?]* I liked their actions and behavior because when their behavior is good, their actions are strong, something like that. *[Will you say that is part of the reason why you became a Muslim?]* Yah, that is part of the reason.
- E4** *[How will you describe the behavior Muslims especially towards you?]* Through observing them I can see their good conduct, the way they loved each other, the way they hang together. The experiences that led me to Islam is that I found that they care, they love each other, whatever part of the country you go if you are a Muslim you cannot sleep outside, they will give you shelter, they will give you food and they will take care of you.

SRQ2.5: Revivalist Motif

- K1** Yah, from there is now when I started to follow those programs. I go to those comparative religious gatherings, as I told you earlier it is almost one year. Only debates. they were preaching, they will come with their topics, like Jesus is the messenger of God, now from there they will give all those verses from the Bible and the Quran. Sometimes they will come and say God is one not two in one, and they describe them from the Bible and the Quran. *[Was this then during one of these revival teachings sermons or debates that you converted?]* Yah.
- K2** No, before no, but after converting to Islam is when I started going to some places where there is teaching and coming to the mosque.
- K3** *Did you attend any Islamic programs before you converted to Islam?* No *You didn't?* I didn't, so after that is when, it took me a long time even to go to the conferences, to go to teachings, after converting, you could not notice the difference between...you could not notice if am a Christian or am a Muslim, because after I went there, there was Christmas I will celebrate it, because the people I lived with, many were Christians. *[So what aspects of Islam did you practice?]* We normally practice five *sallats* a day, but at that time you find you are just praying on Fridays only, one *sallat* a week like the Christians do one prayer...ok they meet once on Sunday, so we also knew people do meet on Friday only, so after that my faith grew up slowly by slowly, by research, yah after finding the teachings.
- K4** *[Did you attend Islamic programs such as conferences, debates, whatever?]* I didn't attend anything there?

- K5** *[Before you became a Muslim did you attend any Islamic programs?]* No, not at all. I didn't at all because before that time much of what I knew about Islam was basically propaganda, like Islam is religion of, you know like satanic religion, religion of where people preach and live life style of the jinn, something like that, so it was bad information that could not really lead one into wanting to become a member or something.
- K6** One day when I was going to work, then I reached Coastal stage by the road there, I found people debating about the two religions of Christianity and Islam. Then I remembered when I was young, I was told that Muslim people are very bad, they associate with jinn and I began thinking what I had heard when I was young, when I was listening to the debate, after I had listened for a while I was wondering that Muslims do not know the Bible but yet they were asking questions to Christians, the pastors were there but I discovered that some of the questions were difficult for the pastors to respond to, so I decided to side with the Christians. I said this are my people, Christians are my people, because these Muslims do not know the Bible, so I decided to side with the Christians. So I learnt that the Muslims' book is the Quran but they were asking questions from the Bible and pastors failed to give answers to such questions. That motivated me to join the Christian side, so that I could now offer any assistance in answering these questions. I took the Bible and now began asking questions to the Muslims. Then I found that the question I was asking them, they were giving the right answers from the Bible. Now when they asked me questions from the Bible and I tried to find answers, I could not find answers from the Bible. I was asking the right questions that even the pastors were now happy to have me because I was now asking the right questions to the Muslims. At the same time while I was asking questions, I was learning to find out where there was truth or false. I was not just asking questions to the Muslims, at the same time I was learning to get the truth. They began at 8 in the morning till 8 at night and I discovered that all the questions I asked the Muslims, they were able to give the right answers. So the result, at the end of the day, after I learnt that Muslims have truth, I decided to convert to Islam, that very day I acknowledged Islam. That very same day I came to the mosque, I was instructed how to do the worship and I was asked where are the jinn that you were told that Islam associate with, they are not here. From that day I began to be a Muslim.
- K7** *[Before you became a Muslim did you attend Islamic programs, besides the tapes and the debates?]* No, you know at home such programs are not many, the only programs that were there for Muslims, is all about going to *madarasa* and having what we call *Maulid*, sometimes I use to go there and the way they use to call everybody even if they are Christians.
- E1** *[Did you attend Islamic programs before you became a Muslim?]* No, not at all. *[You didn't go to any preacher?]* Yah, but the only one I went to was that of their crusade. *[Was it at that crusade that you converted to Islam or it was after?]* No, it was after, even I stayed for a long time.
- E2** *[Before you became a Muslim, did you attend Muslim programs?]* Yah, I did listen to the radio, both stuff about Muslims, a friend of mine from Canada use to send me CDs that I would listen to, so after that, that is how I learnt more. *[But you won't say that you went to crusade and heard a Mallam preach and that was what provoked your mind?]* They really don't do crusades as in crusades, they do, what do you call it? They take two pastors and two Muslim leaders and then they come and compare the books they have. *[Like debate?]* Yes like debate *[And you attended some of them?]* Yah I attended once or twice *[Would you say that the debates were one of the reasons why you converted to Islam?]* That was only a way to make me understand both the religions, but that was not giving me the reason to convert but I was like learning.
- E3** *[Did you attend Islamic programs before you became a Muslim?]* Yah *[What type of programs?]* Only crusades. When a Christian asks something, then they read Quran and they read Bible. But what the Imam reads becomes the right thing. *[This convinced you to become a Muslim?]* Yah.
- E4** *[Did you attend revival programs, teaching programs or debates of Islam before you became a Muslim?]* Not really about the crusades but the main reason that made me to be convinced about Islam is the issue about the evil spirit which came upon me

and I asked myself, where my mother was attending, why were they unable to deliver me from the spirit, so I realize that in Islam there is certain power which could deliver a person.

SRQ2.6: Coercive Motif

- K1** No, I was not forced or bribed, it was my own choice.
- K2** No pressure.
- K3** I thank God am a Muslim but I can't exactly come deeply to explain how I found myself into it because I was not forced by anyone. No, because I was not forced. *[You did not experience any pressure from.....?]* Ah! No, no, no, but afterwards I found some little pressure because whoever you meet, may be a woman she doesn't want to convert, we get different problems, like when you want to change documents from this religion to another, in Kenya it is a big problem and after that getting jobs when you are a Muslim is very difficult. *[But before you converted there was no pressure from anybody?]* There was no pressure from any body.
- K4** *[Will you say that you experienced any pressure before coming to Islam?]* No, after I became a Muslim.
- K5** *[Did you experience any pressure from any quarters to become a Muslim?]* No, oh if that is what you mean there was nothing like that, basically after having read the two books that I told you and having engaged at some level into discussions with this Muslim brothers, they left it to me to make up my mind, because at the end of the day it is something like how much does the moon gain by lighting your path in darkness.
- K6** *[Was there any pressure before you converted to Islam?]* None.
- K7** *[Did you feel any pressure to become a Muslim?]* To become a Muslim, nobody, they didn't force me. I just felt that my faith made me to follow them, they didn't force me. They did not promise me anything. They just taught me about Islam, the way it is and the right way and that is the way I wanted. Me I did not want anything; I just wanted to know who is God and what people believe.
- E1** *[Did you experience any pressure to become a Muslim?]* Before, no. *[No pressure from your parents?]* No. *[No pressure from your friends?]* No, nobody. *[You just made up your mind to become a Muslim?]* Yah.
- E2** *[Did anybody pressure you to become a Muslim?]* No *[Not your parents, friends or anybody else?]* In fact I took myself to the Imam. I went by my own free will no one pushed me.
- E3** -----
- E4** *[Did you experience any pressure from any quarters to become a Muslim?]* No there was no pressure. *[So you made up your mind?]* Yes I made up my mind to be a Muslim.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Michael Ezra Dikki

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EDUCATION

2011	Africa International University, Nairobi	Master of Divinity in Mission Studies
1999	Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria	Master of Business Administration
1990	Bayero University, Kano	B.A. (Hons) Mass Communication
1984	College of Education, Sokoto	NCE (Education)
1980	Govt. Teachers College, Wushishi	Grade II Cert.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Started out as a primary school teacher between 1980 to 1981 and continued teaching after graduating from College of Education as an English teacher in secondary school between 1984 to 1987. I Joined Nigerian Postal services as a personnel officer in 1987 until 1990 when I converted to public relations and served as the Territorial Public Relations Officer until 1997 when I left to join Iwopin Pulp and Paper Company the same year to serve as the pioneer Regional Marketing Executive covering the whole northern region. A position I Held until 1999 when I decided to leave and start a small business that would enable me combine it with Christian ministry work.

MINISTRY EXPERIENCE AND VISION

Before a went into full time Christian ministry as a preacher, I served as an Elder for Christian education in ECWA English Section for six years while still in private business. I left business for full time Christian ministry in 2004. In addition to serving in the church I became a church and conference speaker while keeping my involvement in Muslim Evangelism. In view of the need for training men and women in the art of reaching Muslims, I started conducting seminars and workshops for lay church members, educating them on Islamic teachings and the art of reaching Muslims with the gospel. This interest led to the formation of *The Complete Gospel Ministry* which was incorporated in 2006 with me as the Founding Trustee of the Ministry. This vision to reach Muslim

s with the Gospel necessitated the desire to obtain more training hence the coming to Africa International University (NEGST). The vision of the ministry is to start a school soon focusing more in the area of Islamic education and theology to train Christians from all works of life in the church. It is my belief that the church needs to be proactive in training the church and its members in Africa to meet the challenge of the spread of Islam with passion yet with considerate care and love for them. I invite you to join us in this noble kingdom business of our Lord. God bless.