

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Missiology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: A SURVEY ON ISLAMIC POPULATION AND ITS METHODS OF EXPANSION IN HARARE

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Date completed: June 2014

An investigation to ascertain the population of Muslims in Harare and their impact for good or otherwise is an informative exercise. This research has added to other literature in this area. The last of such works were in 1983 by Professor Ephraim C. Mandivenge in, "*Islam in Zimbabwe.*"

After examining the Bible, the Qur'an and other authors, the researcher developed a program which involved field visits to Islamic mosques in five strategically selected locations in Harare. The exercise commenced in February 2012. A simple itinerary was drawn which took a day or two at each centre. Ten Muslims were interviewed and some in-depth discussions were carried out with three imams. The whole exercise took fifteen months to complete though due to the interest raised, dialogue is continuing in three mosques.

A conclusion was reached that the exact population of stanch Muslims might be impossible to come up with due to the form of governance in Islam. The fact is

that, Islam is growing in Harare at a rate of a debatable 30-40% per annum. This growth is precipitated by the economic situation in Zimbabwe. It is common in Africa to accept a religion for personal gains and when the gains are gone, the adherents may also go. The words of Mahatma Gandhi in John Stott's book, *Mission in Africa* says it well, "I do not have to be a member of your church because you have treated my disease."<sup>1</sup> Though it is very easy to become Muslim, it is almost impossible to abandon the faith, though the situation may be different in Harare presently.

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<sup>1</sup> John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, Downers Grove, IL: (Inter Varsity Press, 175-2008), 41.

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A project  
presented in partial fulfillment  
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To all interested in Islamic Studies

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God the Almighty for all the Seventh-day Adventist Church which He inspired to command to go into the entire world to preach the Gospel to all people, kindred and tongues. I am also grateful for the few people who contributed directly to my studies. Dr. Joel Musvosvi who was dean of AUA at the time I started my studies. He worked tirelessly for me to be at AUA. Professor Oscar Osindo, the fearless pioneer of Islamic Studies in Africa, I thank him. My special thanks go to all professors who were patient with me during my studies. Professor Ezra Chitando, my fast and efficient research supervisor I thank you from the depth of my heart. My gratitude goes to Doctor J. Ekwenye for reading thoroughly and patiently my paper. I am greatly indebted to Faith my wife and our three daughters for the support and patience during the times I would be absent from home. Your support was my encouragement. Last but not least I want to give praise, glory, honor, wisdom and power to God for seeing me through it all during the most trying moments of my life during my research.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Among the major religions in Zimbabwe, Islam ranks second as is the situation world over. There is a seemingly rapid growth of this young religion in Harare Zimbabwe. Frederick M. Denny in *An Introduction to Islam, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* posits, “Today Islam comprises the second largest religious community in the world, with approximately 1.57 billion members.”<sup>1</sup> This was underscored by Professor Ezra Chitando of the University of Zimbabwe, in his article "*Religions of Zimbabwe*," he reiterates, “Islam had grown from being a tolerated minority to a significant force in Zimbabwe.”<sup>2</sup>

Muslims in Zimbabwe were well-known for trading in beads and minerals and later in humans in the immoral trade called slave-trade which deepened its roots in southern Africa. Since the abolition of slave trade there has been little migration of Muslims of Malawi and Zambia origins into Zimbabwe. A larger number of Arabs has been known to have arrived in Zimbabwe for trade in other acceptable goods. Most of these have long died while some have crossed over to neighboring South

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011), 186.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra Chitando, “*Muslims in Zimbabwe*,” <http://www.muslimpopulation.com/africa/Zimbabwe/> (December 16, 2012).

Africa for better economic prospects. The quantity of those that have remained in the country is the reason for this study.

The challenge is the exact population of Muslims in Harare has been a big debate in a number of circles. Some estimate it at 200 000 while others blow it up to 2 million. The objective of this research is to investigate to find some figure that is close to the exact population of Muslims in Harare. We will further investigate factors that influence this growth and establish its religious, economic, and political effects in the country. Does it matter anywhere if Islam is growing or dwindling?

“Is Islam a ‘threat’?”<sup>3</sup> inquired the Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the University of Qatar, in Egypt. His response to this rhetoric question was in the affirmative. According to David W. Shenk, “in regions where Muslims ruled for an extended period of time, the church has declined in membership because of the Muslim commitment to assure a movement from church to the *umma*.”<sup>4</sup>

Is it to peace, trade, politics or religion in Harare, Zimbabwe? Reading further into *The Post*, may assist us in discovering how Muslims in Harare exist with the rest of the country's population seemingly peacefully. Origins of Islam in Zimbabwe will give us a good foundation for the research. Questions like how Islam came into this land-locked state? What its aims and methods to expand were? What its current population is, being the major reason for this research.

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<sup>3</sup> *Tripoli Post*, December 15, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> David, W. Shenk, *Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church: Exploring the Mission of the Two Communities*, (Accra, Ghana: Herald Press, no date), 32.

More questions can be raised concerning the seemingly bitter relations between the west and the Middle East. Has this spilled over into Africa and Harare too? Looking at the uprisings in Egypt, Libya and Syria just to name a few. One then starts to speculate: Has modernization overtaken the traditional methods of Islamic expansion called *da'awa* pact which she has employed in her expansion expeditions in Europe and Asia. Has she invented new underground methods which make it difficult for any searcher to ascertain her exact population? The research seeks to attempt to answer these and other questions on this subject.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The real population of Muslims in Harare is not certain. The risk and threat of Islam in Zimbabwe is said to be at “0.02%”<sup>5</sup> according to the Global Center for Adventist Muslim Relations notes read in class in 2012 by Professor Oscar Osindo. Seventh-day Adventist head-quarter’s assessment of needs. As part of the critical issues in witness according to Rick McEdward in his article *A Brief Overview of the Adventist Witness Among Muslims* in the book, *A Man of Passionate Reflection* edited by Bruce L. Bauer, McEdward suggests, “In the area of Adventist witness among Muslims there are three important areas for future development: evaluation, leadership development and theological reflection.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Oscar Osindo, class notes for ISLM 645 Islam, Culture and Gender in African Society, Adventist University of Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, (February 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Rick McEdward, “*A Brief Overview of Adventist Witness*,” “*In A Man of Passionate Reflection*,” ed. Bruce Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, 2005), 249.

The 0.02% was an outcome of an assessment which was carried out when the church was allocating students who could take up further studies with Adventist University of Africa. This resulted in the church picking only two students out of a long list of about twenty applicants. Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi reports, “Many times and in many areas, alarm is sounded that Islam is growing in Africa.” He goes to say that this is due to the multiplicity of Islamic phenomena such as mosques, Arab attire and writings and Islamic schools.”<sup>7</sup> This may mean that the real population of Muslims in Harare may be underestimated or over-estimated. Evidences of the “Islamic phenomena is subtle when we consider what Mvumbi reiterates, “Nevertheless, principles of sociology of religions remind us that big mosques are not a sure sign of Islamic growth.” He clarifies further by declaring that often, the size of the mosques does not correspond to the Muslim population resident in an area.<sup>8</sup> Rick McEdward is baffled by the methods used by the church to evaluate [and to assess], he reiterates, “Without evaluation the same programs and methods are used year after, sometimes for generations, with no evaluation to measure the effectiveness of a ministry.” In this case though there maybe assessment and evaluation are the results used in decision making processes? McEdward continues, “Evaluation can provide needed feedback that could alter strategies, budgets and ministries, and lead to better use of funds and personnel.”<sup>9</sup> The fact of under or over estimation becomes a major

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<sup>7</sup> Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi, *Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church: Exploring the Mission of the Two Communities*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa), 124.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>9</sup> Rick McEdward, 250.

issue then. This research therefore attempts to provide statistics that are closer to the real situation in Harare.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study seeks to investigate the growth rate of Islam in Harare. It will further assess the methods used by the Muslim *umma*. Balanced responses to this phenomenon will be recommended. The study will also look at the social, economic and political impacts, whether positive or negative which in-turn may be affecting Christianity in Harare.

The words of Nancy Jean Vyhmeister shed more light on the major objective in this research. A research focuses on “system[atically] search[ing] for all obtainable evidence to reach an objective of knowledge in a specific topic.”<sup>10</sup> This will be done to determine the presence of Muslims who believe, Frederic Mathewson Denny reiterates “Like Judaism, [which] Islam is a religion and a way life, extending into all the community’s existence and activity.”<sup>12</sup> Since Arabs practice their religion wherever they are, it is therefore necessary to find out the impact of this religion on Christianity in Harare.

The researcher will lay-out some strategic methods on how to form good relations with Muslims, to fulfill Jesus’ admonition to the His followers that they should be as wise as a serpent but humble as a dove. So Islam cannot be reached just like any other religion, but requires more than just faith. Jesus further assures that He

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<sup>11</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan , 2008), 1.

would bring other sheep which initially are not the main fold that they too may become one flock under one Shepherd, John 10: 26.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research will provide a data-base for other organizations that may need to know the population of Muslims in Harare. It will also attempt to give the growth rate of Islam in Harare. The research will assist leaders in church authority to make informed decisions when funds and opportunities are available to train workers for Muslim work. What it may be today, may not always be so, the words of Edward B. Lindaman in his book, *Thinking in the Future Tense*, advises; “ The only difference is our perspective, our readiness to put the pieces together in an entirely new way and to see patterns where only shadows appeared just a moment before.” Lindaman comes from a milieu of this understanding; he adds, “New discoveries rest upon new perceptions of activity.”<sup>11</sup>The research will seek to dispel what is termed Islam phobia or suspicion of Muslims that exists in many Christians in Harare as is in many other cities of the world common in the west. The research also intends to build good relations with Muslims in Harare above other things.

### **Definition of Terms**

In this study there are terms that are derived from Islamic scholarship. Islam being a religion from a particular geographical location on the globe has its own language and jargon that may not be found in most spoken languages of the world.

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<sup>11</sup> Edward B. Lindaman, *Thinking in the Future*, (Nashville TN: Broadman Press, 1978), 83.



Arabic being the language is claimed to be one of the Semitic languages. For God it uses Allah, which is denied by many Christians as not to mean God. A community of believers in Islam is called *umma*. The term *Islam* itself can be defined to mean agreed belief, life, and the straight path. According to Frederick Mathewson Denny, “Islam is a religion and a way of life,” Denny clarifies what he means by “way of life,” as he affirms: “Islam extending into all areas of the community’s existence and activity.”<sup>12</sup> These are defined in this section. Muslim is a male believer in the faith, while *Muslima* is female though it is not commonly used. *Dawaar* is the method of evangelism in Islam. The Qur’an is the holy book in Islam. *Salah* is the Friday prayer meeting. *Imam* is the pastor in Islam. *Sheik* is the equivalent of elder in Christianity. *Tawid* is the understanding in Islamic scholarship about the unity of God alone, His *unicity*. God has no equal to Him. *Kafir* is term that means an infidel or the ungrateful but in this work it means unbeliever in Islamic *umma*.

### **Methodology**

The research will use both quantitative and qualitative methods in search of data to achieve the desired results. Interviews, observations and field visits will provide interactions with Muslims in Harare as data is collected. A survey will be implemented on pastors to find out how much they know about Islam and their readiness to work with Muslims. Furthermore ascertain how well they know what is going on in the city about Muslims. A questionnaire will be given to a hundred

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<sup>12</sup> Frederick Mathewson Denny, *Introduction to Islam*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011), 187.

pastors and results will be drawn up. The program will be designed as follows:

Chapter 2 will look into the theoretical foundation of the study. A literature review of the Holy Bible will be explored into, using the historical grammatical approach. Old Testament texts will be examined which will allude to the origins, expansion and activities of Islam. The story of Hagar will shed more light on this matter. The Qur'an will be examined to establish its position on Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael. Professor Ephraim C. Mandivenga's work will be consulted on issues of growth and expansion of Islam in Harare. The Writings of Ellen G. White will be used to bring awareness to Seventh-day Adventist Christians on how to deal with other religions/denominations. This awareness will recommend the fulfillment of the demands of the Three Angel's Message of reaching every nation, kindred, tongue and people with the everlasting gospel.

Description of the local setting is dealt with in chapter 3. The first setting will be Zimbabwe from 1500 A.D. to present. Such information is critical to verify the reasons that brought Arabs into the country and justification for this study can be realized.

The similarities may give us two conclusions: (i) if the reasons why Muslims came into Harare back then are still there, then the Arabs-Muslims may still be migrating into the country's capital, or (ii) if the reasons do not exist anymore, then there may be a small diminishing populace of Muslims in the city. Further description of the local area will deal with Harare as a capital of the state. The methods afore said will be designed into the program and implemented in chapter 4. The evaluation will also be done in this chapter. The final chapter in this research will summarize, conclude and make recommendations. This will be done in chapter 5. All the above

tools and methods will contribute towards a balanced conclusion and obtainable knowledge on the current population of Muslims in Harare.

### **Delimitations**

The research will be limited to Harare since most recent Islamic activities seem to be taking place in this city. Harare will be the center of this research also because as a capital it acts as a good representative of the whole country. Harare can be taken as an index of the whole country in matters of religion, politics trade and commerce in a big way as compared elsewhere in the country.

### **Limitations**

There about two limiting factors in this research; firstly it has to deal with the target populations. Most Muslims in the high-density suburbs of Harare are illiterate such that data cannot be collected through fill-in questionnaires but we will use interviews. Secondly the Muslims *umma* type of governance makes it very difficult to ascertain its national or even metropolitan population. It is not certain if this is deliberate or not. The *umma* is run on a congregational or autocratic system. What might not be known is whether it is by design or default. The congregation does not report anywhere, whatever the local *umma* decides it becomes the practice though it is believed that all governance is derived from the one and only original Qur'an. By this it is believed that the Qur'an has not been altered from the words of *Jibrel* (Gabriel) to Muhammad, not even a dot has been altered. But we understand from Reuven Firestone in his article "The Qur'an and the Bible: Some Modern Studies of the Their Relationship," in The book Symposium: Bible and Qur'an, Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality, when he asserts, "The Qur'an ... contains so many parallels with the Hebrew Bible and New Testament that it could not possibly exist with it scriptural

predecessors as subtexts.”<sup>13</sup> So the task to ascertain the Muslim population becomes a mammoth one.

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<sup>13</sup> Reuven Firestone, “*The Qur’an and the Bible: Some Modern Studies of the Their Relationship*,” *Symposium: Bible and Qur’an, Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*, ed. John C. Reeves, (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 2,3.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Christians and Muslims have been in a competition since Abraham's time. This is echoed by David W. Shenk and Badru D. Kateregga in their book, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*. Badru Kateregga is a Muslim writer and scholar while David Shenk is a Christian author and scholar too. These two men believe in dialogue with the aim of bringing harmony between the two religions. The authors assert, "We know that we are in competition, for I give witness to the Muslim *umma* and he is committed to the mission of the church. Nevertheless, we are very good friends. The way we relate to each other is a model of the way all Christians and Muslims should relate."<sup>1</sup>

It is generally believed that most religions gain their believers through the products they assert to provide. These products usually come at the beginning of a denomination or an organization as a competing team and an enticement. This is where the whole idea of competition comes in. Its values, beliefs and how they will benefit the members as opposed to the present condition or faith. People are found by these organizations with some set of beliefs and values. So, in order for the new

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<sup>1</sup> Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1977),108.

organization to gain members it has to downplay and denounce the prevailing system in order to pave way for the new ones.

It is therefore of paramount importance to identify the high selling points in Islam in order to rate it as a growing religion in Harare. What do we mean by Islamic High Selling Points? These are activities that attract people towards Islam. These values, beliefs and ideas made people prefer Islam over other early religions. This is common in most denominations in the world.

In this section we have looked at Islamic relevance and prevalence in the Bible both the Old and the New Testaments. The Quran will give us its views on the origin and expansion of Islam and what it offered people of the ancient Middle East and later in the whole world over. We will examine the Seventh-day Adventist view on other religions and denominations as we conclude this chapter. The writings of Ellen Gould White will provide the needed data.

The words of Yusuf al-Qaradawy as quoted by Raymond William Baker, in his book, *Islam Without Fear*, introduces the historical background to the origins and expansion of Islam in general. Qaradawy provides the research with a thought-provoking preamble. Baker declares,

The “New Islamists” condemn all signs of irresponsible thinking that misleads young people. In their view, empty Islamic slogans and random acts of violence distort the message of Islam and do nothing to neither advance the genuine values of the Islamic revival nor alter the reality of western hegemony.

This is a well-calculated statement from one of the Islamic scholars; he goes on to condemn mob psychology and acts of violence in the name of Allah though these may be common in most Islamic countries now. The dean of Islamic theology at Qatar University in Egypt concurred in his inquiry if Islam was a threat to peace. His

answer was an emphatic “yes!” The Islamic agenda, growth and expansion are necessary components for its survival and some may resort to use any means to realize these objectives. Yusuf al Qaradawy reiterates, “A different approach is needed.”<sup>2</sup> One wonders if the different approach is a deviation from the [ancient, original or official one]. Baker continues by shedding more light as he further points out that while Islam appreciates the scientific and technological advances of the West, she is not impressed by the consumerism and unbridled power of wealth that undermines democracy, trivializes values and vulgarizes culture.<sup>3</sup> Islam does not want to feed on western inventions and methods of gaining power over weak masses. The arrogant and cunning methods of the west are the hemlock which Islam vows never to drink. Instead Islam has resorted to become the best of what it can be in any geographical location to be effective and relevant. The words of Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi nail the point home. He informs us that Islam in Africa is becoming an African Islam; that is, Islam in the African way.<sup>4</sup> Yet our major question would be how it was in the Old Testament? Did it ever exist?

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<sup>2</sup> Raymond William Baker, *Islam Without Fear*, (New Dehli, India: Viva Books Private Limited, 2005), 212. In his chapter *Engaging the World*, Baker quotes from the words Yusuf al-Qaradawy. This stands as a strong argument as it is from the emic perspective. Muslims have no trouble accepting something from this angle. “Qaradawy, is fully aware of America’s strength. He nevertheless rejects the conclusion that current Western dominance demonstrates a civilization superiority that is forever beyond challenge.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>4</sup> Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi, *Journey into Islam*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008), 117.

## **Old Testament Allusions to Islam**

Back in the Old Testament times, a small humble family had no child. Abram and Sarah his wife were emotionally and socially staggering under Yahweh's incontrovertible promise of a son in their advanced age. Time seemed to have been obliterating this hope as the days, weeks, months and years came and went. Their ages seemed to have gone ahead of the hope. In full confidence in the One who promised and their desperate desire for an heir, a temptation to assist Jehovah was irresistibly lurking. Yielding to it became easier than to resisting it. After all, it stood conspicuously as the only sagacious solution. The alternative was brewed which seemed very successful at first.

Due to a Jewish practice to circumvent social and emotional embarrassment that comes with barrenness, something unusual against the nature of women was crafted, clearly without cohesion. In this occurrence, the legal wife suggested that her maid be the progenitor of the promised son by becoming intimate with her husband. All seemed well till hell broke loose when heaven's floodgates opened; the legal wife became pregnant too and jealousy was ignited. When she gave birth to a baby boy just as Jehovah had promised, jealousy was overtaken by hatred. The worst scenario took center-stage. Hagar was not welcome anymore in this home.

## **Hagar and Ishmael**

There started something as small as sibling fights. In no time it deteriorated to sour relations between the mistress and her maid. It went further down to expulsion and breaching of employment rules. Hagar, the maid to Sarah was expelled from employment without any significant package except for a jar of water and probably a morsel of bread. This culminated with the birth of two rival religions which both trace their origins in the loins of the patriarch Abraham.



The single mother wandered in the wilderness of the modern Arabian Peninsula. In that desert, Jehovah showed His unfailing love towards all nations, tribes and people. He comes to the rescue of this nearly forgotten young mother and her son. Twice the Lord encouraged her to remain faithful and wait on the Lord until all is fulfilled according to His fore-knowledge. He established Hagar's faith by blessing Ishmael into a big nation as well.

Later the two sons of Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac though amidst antagonism, hate and sour relations which their mothers branded on their sons' orientations, united at their father's funeral. This act is clearly emblazoned in the Bible when the two brothers embraced each other at the burial of their father at the cave of Machpelah, (Gen 25:9). The *SDA Bible Commentary* adds another dimension as it comments on the burial of Abraham by his two sons, points out; "As chief heir of Abraham, Isaac is mentioned first. That Ishmael, Isaac's half brother, participated in the last rites for their father is evidence of reconciliation between them." The commentary further refers us to chapter 35:29; the author laments the absence of Keturah's sons who might not have turned up due the distance and time of their habitation. These might have prohibited them from arriving on time for the burial.<sup>5</sup> Keturah, who was Abraham's last wife before he died also had sons with Abraham, though the sons did not feature much in the history of the father of faith.

Yet it is unfortunate that the bitter relations even after the brothers had reconciled have spilled over to the two major contemporary religious tenants,

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<sup>5</sup>"Keturah's Sons." [Gen 35:29], *Seventh Day Adventist Bible Commentary* (SDABC), rev. ed, ed. Francis D. Nichol. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-1980) 1:367.

Christianity and Islam. It is absurd that Sarah's plight of barrenness and how she responded to it precipitated the mess and misunderstandings between these conflicting, competing and growing religions of the world. This became an unfulfilling prophecy, and is played today as a game in the arena of religious life.

The divisions and antagonism that causes havoc in Christianity can be taken as the culprit to the growth and expansion of Islam. Christianity's spiritual and social barrenness has made it pay dearly for it. While Christianity traces its umbilical origins to Sarah and Islam having been cuddled in Hagar's arms, the battle wages on as one is engrossed in in-house fights (Christianity) and the other goes merchandizing its culture and religion (Islam). Islam has managed to turn whole nations once heathen into hundred percent Muslim. A number of states in the world have succumbed to this force. This is something which Christianity has never been able to do except in tiny Islands such as Pitcairn.

Later in the third generation from Abraham, Jacob's family inherited and experienced a serious problem among many others which may assist us in our search for Islamic expansion methods. We are introduced to Joseph. After some jealousy and rivalry in the family, (in-house fights) his brothers sold him to an Ishmaelite band of traders who are generally accepted as the ancestors of the present day Arabs. We are only introduced to these men as merchants (Genesis 37:28). The SDA Bible Commentary posits, "The Arabs, descending from Ishmael, occupied the desert regions of Arabia east of Egypt.... Biblical and secular records reveal that the Arabs carried on flourishing trade with Egypt." Time frame for Ishmael's descends to

become established traders can be justified, we are informed in the commentary that it was now 180 years since Ishmael's birth, and no doubt his family had grown rapidly.<sup>6</sup>

### **Ishmaelites from other Perspectives**

Ishmaelites became a nation to reckon with as we see from about six references in the Old Testament. In Genesis 36:3 we find the first mention of this tribe in reference to Basemath who was Ishmael's daughter married to Esau. Esau's marriage to the Canaanites had brought displeasure to his father Isaac (Gen 28: 8). To make up for that mistake, he went to the tribe Ishmael and married Basemath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham (Gen 28:9). The identity we are given here of Basemath takes us back to Abraham. It gives us the impression that Esau or even his parents at this time had good relations with Ishmael's descendants and marrying from this tribe was honorable, commendable and was a corrective measure. The SDA Bible Commentary shedding more light on verse 9, confirms; "No doubt Esau with intention of pleasing his parents, he went to fetch a wife from the family of his grandfather Abraham, as Jacob was instructed to do from the family of his maternal uncle, Laban,.... Esau did to his paternal."<sup>7</sup>

In Genesis 37:25, 27-28, and 36 we find a band of traders with camels loaded with spices, balm and myrrh taking these to Egypt as Ishmaelites from Gilead who bought Joseph as alluded before. At this point we see Ishmaelites as traders going

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<sup>6</sup> "A Company of Ishmaelites" (Gen 37:28), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)* vol.1, Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1953-1978), 430.

<sup>7</sup> "Then Went Esau unto Ishmael"(Gen. 28:9), *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)* vol.1, Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1953-1978), 381:2.

across a number of nations. Their place of origin is not here indicated but their destination. An act of crossing borders for trade is clear here which might have been used as way of spreading and growing Islam in Harare, Zimbabwe. We also see an evidence of jealousy and malice within the Jewish family while an absence of antagonism between the Jews and Ishmaelites is exhibited. There is something interesting here also, it is that Joseph's brothers planned to sell him to the Ishmaelites even before the Ishmaelites arrived. After having seen them from a distance, the plan was hatched. The conclusion might be that it was common knowledge to the Jews that Ishmaelites were traders even in *ummas*. The Bible does not inform us whether there was some negotiation or cohesion from Jacob's sons attempting to sell their brother while the Ishmaelites tried to resist purchasing such an unusual product, a human-being. The Scriptures seem to suggest that this was like any other business transaction.

Another reference is of a man named Amasa the son Jether the Ishmaelite, (1 Chron 2:17). Amasa was born to David's sister Abigail. We see good relations still between Israelites and Ishmaelites at this time. Later Amasa became one of David's trusted soldiers. In Judges 8:24 we are introduced to the custom of the Ishmaelites of wearing ear rings of gold. In this text they are also called Midianites who had been invading Israel until Gideon came to their rescue. The text shows something different from the good relations during David's time.

In the compilation of the Psalms we also find one allusion to this tribe (Ps 83:6). In this reference they are identified with Israel's enemies such Edom, Moab, Amalek and Philistia.

## **New Testament Allusions to Arabia**

The word Arab is found about 19 times in the Old Testament and only three times in the New Testament. According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, the word Arab comes from a root word which means to blend or to intermix or technically to traffic as if by barter.<sup>8</sup> This denotes the nature of the group as we know it today. These are mixed people of the world who thrive in trading. From ancient times even in Zimbabwe the Arabs were known to have come into the state as traders in beads and crops in exchange with gold, silver and copper. So we see the aspect of barter trade here as their name denotes.

Even later in the 16<sup>th</sup> century we hear of Arabs as traders in humans just as evidenced with how they got Joseph from his brothers and sold him to Potiphara in Egypt. In this section we looked at the New Testament allusions to Arabs or Arabia as a land. In Galatians 1:17, Paul recounts his conversion story by informing the Galatians that after Damascus he went to Arabia and came back to Damascus. In the second reference found in Galatians 4:25 he contrasts the two women Sarah and Hagar as he compares them with Jerusalem and Mount Sinai respectively. In the third and final reference Luke in Acts 2:11 records that Arabians were also present during the Pentecost and when the disciples were filled by the power of the Holy Ghost they also spoke in the Arabian language and the Arabs that were there heard in their mother tongue. It is amazing that right at the beginning of the Apostolic Church Arabs

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<sup>8</sup> James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (IA: World Publishers-no year), 91. This information is found in the last section entitled; Hebrew and Chaldea Dictionary.

were among those who witnessed the outpouring of Jesus' promise to His disciples.  
(John 14, 15 and 16; Acts 1:8.)

### **Christianity Gave Birth to Islam**

Christianity before the 6<sup>th</sup> Century mistakenly gave back to Ishmael the rights which he had lost through YAHWEH'S sovereign choice as recorded in Genesis 17:21.<sup>9</sup> Challenges in Christianity which are always dogging it seem to have given Islam its impetus to spread and grow, while Christianity is entangled in its inertia in the cradle of secularism, pluralism and inclusivism which have caused in-house fights. It was Joseph's brothers who sold him to the Ishmaelites. It was the Christian brothers who sold one who belonged to them to Muslims. The sons of Abraham sold one of their brothers to the Egyptians who are currently Muslims. Islam looks with scorn and mockery on the claims of Christianity of being the best and only authoritative religion because of its greed, disunity and compromise. Jesse Kanya Ndwiga Mugambi in his book, *A Comparative Study of Religions* reminds us, "During the 6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. the majority of the Arabian population was known to be nomadic, surviving on camels, dates and long distance trading."<sup>10</sup> Mugambi goes on to say that later Islam was known to have been established in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. by Muhammad. Yet it is currently the fastest growing non-Christian religious movement in the world. Mugambi estimates the Islamic current world

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<sup>9</sup> Genesis 17:21 But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year.

<sup>10</sup> Mugambi Jesse Ndwiga Kanya, *A Comparative Study of Religions*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Starbright Services Limited, 1990), 261.

membership to be over 2 billion. He underscores that Islam's advantage is the multiplicity of sects in Christendom, each of which claims to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ its founder. Owing to this doctrinal discord, Christianity may seem to have compromised a lot on the key and important teaching on monotheism, which Islam under the leadership of Muhammad took advantage of and counter-acted by teaching and practicing monotheism. He engaged the ancient Islamic method of evangelism coined as *dawah*.<sup>11</sup> *Da'wah* activities can take many forms. Some pursue Islamic studies specifically to perform *Da'wah*. Mosques and other Islamic centers sometimes spread *Da'wah* actively, similar to evangelical churches. This however did not go down well with the native Arabians who believed in more than 360 gods. They defeated Muhammad's Quraysh tribe and made them to seek asylum in Ethiopia where the Christians welcomed them and later left for Madina where the tribe established its empire.

Human philosophy had its share of blame as it gave greater mileage to Muhammad through the Qur'an which he dictated and is recited word for word. Emphasis on the *tawhid*/ unicity of God added the value of Islam as compared to the chaotic scenario of polytheism in Christianity. Jesse Ndwiga Kanya Mugambi, points out, "As Muhammad took the rank of the last prophet after Jesus, doctrinally, and culturally he stood tall as a great reformer of the Arabian culture. Politically and

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<sup>11</sup> *Da'wah* or *Dawah* (Arabic دعوة means the proselytizing or preaching (of Islam). *Da'wah* literally means "issuing a summons" or "making an invitation", being the active participle of a verb meaning variously "to summon" or "to invite" with a root made up of three consonants: (د ع ي). So a Muslim who practices *da'wah*, on full-time basis or as a volunteer, which is most common in the *ummah* of Islam since it has no clerical office in its organization, is called a *dā'ī*, with *du'āt* as its plural.

militarily in a short period of time he had overshadowed all political and military establishments in Arabia.”<sup>12</sup> In his great zeal he began to spread his wings of influence to other parts of the world. In the absence of a united matching power to keep an eye on him, he spurred to the north, west and east with little resistance at first.

Wherry Elwood Morris, in *Islam and Christianity in India and Africa*, laments, “Islam, like Christianity, underwent many changes and [challenges] since it was first promulgated.”<sup>13</sup> It was not spared by its own policies and practices. It had to be strong sometimes to drink its own medicine. It is always true that one who sets a trap, if not careful will himself be caught in it. It is well echoed by Hassan K. Muhammad that at the onset of Islamic establishments drive in Arabia, about 80 Muslims fled from Mecca to Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) to take refuge with Christians there, who were enemies of the polytheistic Mecca. The Ethiopian Christians treated the Muslims well. This was a necessary point in Muhammad’s life to appreciate Judaism and Christianity as superior to the polytheistic, humanist Arab religions.<sup>14</sup> This stands as an open secret to the growth and future expansion of Islam in the entire world. It did not take long for Islam to turn around and bite the hand that fed it. Islam fought against its ally and desired to dispossess it of all its gains ever since and until now.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Wherry Elwood Morris, *Islam and Christianity in India and Africa*, (NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1907), 101.

<sup>14</sup> Hassan K. Muhammad, “*The International Symposium on Qur’an and Contemporary Issues*,” Persian Newsletter Vol.1 Issue 12 (2011):19.



## Islam a Challenge to Christianity

As Christianity spreads throughout the entire world, Islam was not a passive spectator. It quickly moved in towards those parts of the world where Christianity had not found roots. Mugambi says that as Islam organized Jihads (Holy War) to fight and convert the areas which had been under Christianity. The Christians under the guidance of the Popes organized Crusades to recover those Christian lands which were rapidly falling to Islam.” Jesse N. K. Mugambi outlines all the efforts that were done by Islam through the use of *jihad*. The first crusade (1099) captured Jerusalem. The second crusade (1144) was a complete failure; the third crusade (1189) was not very successful either. The fourth crusade (1261) was directed to Constantinople. The rest of the crusades did not achieve much, but they exposed the Christian west to the cultural heritage and treasures of the East.<sup>15</sup>

The biggest mistake that the church indulged in was in the words of Pieter De Jong, “Backing the crusades and involvement in the investiture conflicts. Holy wars were fought. Jews and pagans who came into contact with the church in the Middle Ages did not really encounter a power which was different from their own. It was all worldly through and through.<sup>16</sup> Mugambi laments, “The church went through trying times during the medieval times due to the general decline in the papal power because of corruption and immorality. Rivalry between the church and the state further

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<sup>15</sup> Mugambi, 256.

<sup>16</sup> Pieter De Jong, *Evangelism and Contemporary Theology* (Nashville, TN: Tidings, 1967), 80.

enlarged the chasm.”<sup>17</sup> While all this was happening, Islam was consolidating itself under one religious and political leader in Muhammad. Islam never minded the means as long it got the desired results. Political muscle, economic strength of doctrinal superiority, whichever came first and was needed at the moment was what Islam used. Could this trend still be in operation elsewhere and particularly in Harare? We see this in application in a *hadith*, a recorded conversation between Muhammad and one of his companions, “Muhammad said, “If you do not find judgment in the *hadith* what do you do?”<sup>18</sup> And the companion answered, “I will put personal effort.” This is recorded as to have pleased the prophet. And that is how the *hadith* upholds the *tafsir*. That is grappling with a situation to solve it. Use of any means to reach a desired goal is the essence of *tafsir*. Looking at the local situation will suffice at this moment though in a small way since this will be done in a thorough way later in chapter 3.

### **Harare and Islam Today**

In his chapter *The Many Faces of Islam* John L. Esposito et al, says, “Islam’s presence and impact extend beyond countries in which the majority of the population is Muslim, often referred as ‘the Islamic world.’” What could be the situation in Zimbabwe has the strategy changed? This is the aim of this study to find out and continue to put more bricks of the foundation laid by the late Professor Ephraim C.

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<sup>17</sup> Mugambi, 256

<sup>18</sup> Al-Imam Abu Zakariyyah Yahya Ibn Sharaf Al-Nawawi, *Gardens of the Virtuous, In the Speech of Prophet Muhammad*, (Beirut, Lebanon: Sharif Al Ansari Son’s Company, 2007), 277.

Mandivenga, who's work "*Islam in Zimbabwe*", is the first in the country. Yet Esposito goes on to say,

A dynamic religion that interfaces and in times competes with other faiths, Islam has had a significant impact on world affairs. In contrast to the modern secular belief in the separation of the church and the state, Islam for many Muslims represents a more comprehensive worldview in which religion and society, faith and power, have been and are closely bound...historically, Islam has significantly formed and informed politics and civilization, giving rise to vast Islamic empires and states as well as Islamic civilization.<sup>19</sup>

Harare must have experienced similar treatment from Islam and the whole country seemed not to have been spared. The research revealed this to be true also in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa as a whole. It is clear from the words of Esposito that Islam has many alternatives to achieve its goal in a given location. It is not limited to one method or strategy. It suffices to say for now that one of the main arms that Islam might be using is culture and education if the political arm is disabled. In Zimbabwe this might be the case as indicated in Ali Risimati Mathonsi's words when "the President of Zimbabwe slashed Islam."<sup>20</sup> An uninformed conclusion that Islam is indifferent and inactive, maybe misleading and fatal too. As we may have seen in its history, it may be strategizing or just packed at the port of time waiting for a chance to offload at a more conducive period. In the program implementation we will attempt to ascertain if there are cards on the table or some stew already brewing on the fire of

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<sup>19</sup> John L. Esposito, Fasching J. Darrell and Lewis Todd, *World Religion Today*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 216,217.

<sup>20</sup> Ali Risimati Mathonsi, "*Muslims in Zimbabwe*", <http://www.muslimpopulation.com/africa/Zimbabwe>, (December 16, 2012).

events in Harare. After following the patterns of history and how it repeats itself, Mugambi underscores,

The impact of European civilization on the Islamic world, particularly in Asia and Africa, was many-sided: economic, political, intellectual and religious. Beginning as legitimate trade, it led to colonization. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, European technology had developed ahead of the other parts of the world. Modern communication systems, telephones, trains, electricity and military hardware attracted non-European nations including Muslims in their desire to benefit from the new technology. Western-type of education was introduced in these areas to train artisans and junior administrators.<sup>21</sup>

Islam being a religion that operates in orthopraxy more than settling for orthodox only, may have adopted these policies of operation. And Mugambi continues to unpack the impacts of Islam now in practice world-wide by declaring that, the challenge of Islam is no longer Christianity but secularization of humanity and ideologies such as Marxism. The importance of Islam as a global faith demands a sympathetic understanding and a place in the panorama of human progress for harmonious progress of all.<sup>22</sup> Such ideologies affect Christianity more than Islam. This is because Islam is a complete way of life as compared to its sister religion which is mostly practiced once a week. In its enthusiasm one wonders if that of Islam is fake or genuine. Prof. Thomas Arnold declares,

A great historian has well put the problem that meets us here, in the following words: ‘Was it genuine religious enthusiasm, the new strength of a faith now for the first time blossoming forth in all purity, that gave the victory in every

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<sup>21</sup> Mugambi Jesse Ndwiga Kanya, *Comparative Study of Religions*. (Nairobi, Kenya: Starbright Services Limited, 1990), 280-281.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

battle to the arms of the Arabs and in so incredibly short time founded the greatest empire the world had ever seen?<sup>23</sup>

It could have been a combination of two or more factors that gave Islam its success. Yes enthusiasm combined with determination weaved together with a purpose. A treatise by Umar b. al-Khattab from the Christians of a certain city says it all. There is a pathetic description of the contents of the *dawar* pact.<sup>24</sup> It took away all freedom from Christians and left them with no hope of ever resuscitating their religion as they saw it crumble under their own noses. If ever there was any cruelty in colonization this treatment was worse than any. Geoffrey Hanks, in his treatise, *Sixty Great Founders*, points out, “The church in North Africa was destroyed in the 7<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Prof. Thomas Arnold, *The Spread of Islam in the World: A History of Peaceful Preaching*, (New Dehli, India: Goodword Books, 2008, 45.

<sup>24</sup>The Writing of Umar bin. Al- Khattab on the *dawar* pact, When you marched against us, we asked of you protection for ourselves, our posterity, our possessions and our co-religioists; and we made this stipulation with, that we will not erect in our city or suburbs any new monastery, church, cell or hermitage; that we will not repair any of such buildings that may fall into ruins, or renew those that may be situated in the Muslim quarters of the town; that we will not refuse Muslims entry into our churches either by night or by day; that we will open the gates wide to passengers and travelers; that we will receive any Muslim traveler into our houses and give him food and lodging for three nights; that we will not harbor any spy in our churches or houses or conceal any enemy of the Muslims; that we will not teach our children the Qur’an, that we will not show of the Christian religion nor invite any one to embrace it, that we will not prevent any of our kinsmen from embracing Islam if they so desire. That we will honor the Muslims and rise up in our assemblies when they wish to take their seats. That we will not imitate them in our dress, either in the cap, turban, sandals or parting of hair. That we will not make use of their expressions of speech nor adopt their surnames. That we will not ride on saddles, or gird on sword, or take to ourselves arms or wear them, or engrave Arabic inscriptions on our rings. That we will not sell wine, that we will shave the front of our heads.... That we will not display the cross upon our churches or display our crosses or our sacred books in the streets of the Muslims or market places. That we will strike the bells in our churches lightly. That we will not recite our services in a loud voice when a Muslim is present. That we will not carry palm branches or our images in procession in the streets, that at the burial of our dead we will not chant loudly or carry lighted candles in the streets of the Muslims or their market-places. That we will not take any slaves that have already been in the possession of Muslims, nor spy into their houses. And that we will not strike a Muslim. All this we promise to observe, on behalf of ourselves and our co-religionists and receive protection from you in exchange, and if we violate any of the conditions of this agreement, then we forfeit your protection and you are at liberty to treat us as enemies and rebels. This was to be signed by Christians as a pact called *dhimmi*. Those who would have been conquered by the Muslims and willing to stay in the empire where a Muslim ruler is established were the signatories of this pact.

century by militant forces of Islam, which continually campaigned against any remnants of Christianity.”<sup>25</sup>

“In the history of Islam, some interpretations have been developed other Muslims regard with suspicion or with outright rejection so that they have become, in effect, new religions. Suspicion can easily arise.”<sup>26</sup>

In Penelope Johnstone’s *History of Religions*, we are informed how the Islamic invasions entered into the interior of Africa, she reports, “The initial spread of Islam was indeed a consequence of the conquests under the early caliphs....Sub-Sahara Africa was accessible across the desert, or along the Nile into the interior, but Islam arrived mainly through maritime trade with the coastal cities.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Ellen G. White on Other Religions or Denominations**

In her book *Evangelism* Ellen Gould White devotes a whole chapter on how we are to labor for special classes. This, by no means does not exclude the Muslims. In the section entitled: Expose Fallacy by Presenting Truth, she underscores,

Decided proclamations are to be made. But in regard to this line of work, I am instructed to say to our people: Be guarded. In bearing the message, make no personal thrusts at other [denominations] churches, not even the Roman

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<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey Hanks, *Sixty Great Founders*, (Bristol, GB: J. W. Arrowsmith Limited, 1998), 28.

<sup>26</sup> John Bowker, *Beliefs that Changed the World* (London, GB: Quercus Publishing Place, 2007), 92.

<sup>27</sup> Penelope Johnstone, edited by John Bowker, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Religions*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 290.

Catholic Church...Let not our ministers follow their own impulses in denouncing and exposing the “mysteries of iniquity.”<sup>28</sup>

White advocates open air debates (*muhadhara as they are known in Swahili*)<sup>29</sup> and dialogue Ellen White under the topic, “The Street Meeting”, she encourages open-air meetings, she adds, “The cities must have more labor. There are places where the people can best be reached by open-air meetings. There are many who can do this line of work, but they must be clad with the whole armor of righteousness. We are altogether too delicate in our work; yet propriety and sound sense are needed.”<sup>30</sup>

Jerald Whitehouse has this advice to give to those who wish to do mission among these special groups, He advises: “Some Christians lack the intercultural competence needed for developing relations with Muslims...there is often a lack of an established relationships between a local church and the receptors...the problem is that even where such relations are easy to establish Christians often do not seek them.”<sup>31</sup>

The same dilemma that Sarah suffered from is what the church today is experiencing. She was too reluctant to confront the Egyptian Hagar with her religion.

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<sup>28</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946-2002), 576.

<sup>29</sup> *Muhadhara* is a planned debate between Christians and Muslims commonly practiced in Tanzania and Kenya. It is an open air debate where topics are chosen before hand and a date is set for the two groups to meet with sometimes large groups of spectators from both religions. Mostly done by Christians as one of the most effective methods of converting Muslims to Christianity. Those convinced do not openly admit it, but will on a later day meet secretly to renounce or to convert.

<sup>30</sup> Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946-2002), 586.

<sup>31</sup> Jerald Whitehouse, “*A Man of Passionate Reflection*,” (Andrews University MI: Department of World Mission, 2011), 265.

Instead she castigates her. Another encouragement for Muslim work comes from K.

C. Abraha in his article entitled, *Editorial Voices From the Third World: War and Globalization Inter-Religious and Gender Issues*, he points out,

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, both Islam and Christianity increased their adherents worldwide; as a result Christians and Muslims meeting each other on a daily basis almost every corner of the world...One aspect common to Christianity and Islam is the fact that believers actively invite other people to become adherents to their faith (Matt.28:19-20; Qur'an 16:125)...there are many Christians who are dissatisfied and disillusioned with their own faith for various reasons... I have come to understand how important it is to identify myself not as a Christian.

### **Synthesis**

The review of literature has revealed several factors and issues that will guide in the implementation of this project. The initial facts seen from history are that Islam traces its origin from Abraham. There was no much animosity between the two sons of Abraham except the normal hatred that exists between two women married to one man. We can also establish that Islam from its formation was a trading community as we have seen in the transaction between Joseph's brothers and the Ishmaelite band. It is amazing that even back there it had low esteem on human dignity as demonstrated in slave trade.

Another important point we see is that Islam was started by Muhammad when Christianity was involved in corruption, division and non-coherent in their beliefs concerning the nature of Jesus. The disunity that existed was the good soil for Islam to be planted and nurtured. Were it not for polytheism that invaded the Arabia peninsula we might have been talking of a different story all together. Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy* reveals another state of the church at a period when it behaved in a manner similar to that which Islam took advantage of; she asserts, " this compromise between paganism and Christianity resulted in the development of 'the man of sin'



foretold in the prophecy as opposing and exalting himself above God.” The church degraded further to levels where it “afforded converts from heathenism a substitute for worship of idols, and thus to promote their nominal acceptance of Christianity, the adoration of images and relics was gradually introduced into the Christian worship.”<sup>32</sup> This is the situation which was clear to Islam that Christianity had left its creed and was not better than heathenism. An alternative for genuine Christianity was over-due, and Islam provides it.

We ascertained also that Islam after being affected by the modernization from the west through technological advancement, politics, economy and civilization; it adopted those strategies to propagate its agenda in the entire world. In the same vein we saw that Islam has used these ways but not limited to these alone to expand its influence beyond the Arabian Peninsula. A very interesting point we discovered is that Islam has gone through rough times also in its endeavor to be become a world religion. Through all this, Islam has learnt to be patient where patience is required, aggressive where this manner of operation may be required. Islam has also learnt to be political, spiritual or social where these would provide better desired results.

The words of Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith of Harvard University summarizes it well as quoted by Karen Armstrong in her book, he points out that Arab’s sense of shame was increased by their sense of past greatness:

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<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association), 46, 47.

The Arab sense of bygone splendor is superb. One cannot begin to understand the modern Arab if one lacks a perspective feeling for this. In the gulf between him and, for instance, the modern American, a matter of prime significance has been precisely the deep difference between a society with a memory of past greatness and one with a sense of present greatness.<sup>33</sup>

The Muslim policy on International relations as pointed out by the celebrated late Professor of Islamic Studies at Al Azhar University in Cairo Egypt, Abd al ‘Ati perorates: Like other aspects of the Islamic life, this too stems from divine guidance and follows the:

1. Godly pattern. It is based on the following foundation: An unshakeable belief in the unity of mankind in origin, in human status and in aims (Qur’an 4:1; 7:189; 49:13).

2. Due respect to other people’s interests and rights to life, honor and property, as long as they do not encroach upon the rights of Muslims. This is because usurpation, transgression and wrong of all kinds are strictly forbidden (Qur’an 2:190-3; 42:42)

3. Peace as the normal course of relations, with exchange of goodwill missions and mutually honest endeavors for the sake of humanity in which all people share equally (Qur’an 8:61).<sup>34</sup>

Raymond William Baker pre-empted as a way of drawing up the Islamic road-map to victory. He reports, “They see the world-wide resurgence of religion, with Islam in the fore-front, as a powerful harbinger of change to come.” Islam has

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<sup>33</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and their Impact on Today’s World* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988-2001), 464.

<sup>34</sup> Hammudah ‘Abd al ‘Ati, *Islam in Focus*, (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1998), 136.

mistakenly assumed that through such religious resurgence she make a permanent change in matters of religion. Baker further suggests, “The New Islamists are confident that their forward-looking, centrist Islamic project offers to Egyptians, to Muslims, and indeed to all humanity an attractive alternative model of how to live in the global age.”<sup>35</sup> Would this be attractive alternatives to Muslims only or to religion as a whole?

*The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, volume 12, gives us a panoramic view of history and how this has influenced the growth and expansion of the Christian church throughout the ages. This has happened in the past and continues into the future. We of course have nothing to fear so long as we remain pure in our principles and practices of religion avoiding syncretism and all its forms. This is how it happened:

[The church grew] and developed from the eighteenth to the twentieth century under a tension between tradition and doubt, dogma and relativism. Religion retained the forms developed by tradition, but with a sense of restless dissatisfaction, particularly among the heirs of the reformation. The result presents a picture of widespread disunity.<sup>36</sup>

Let us then see how this contributed to the expansion and growth of Islam. In the book, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Marshall G. S. Hodgson purports that it was initially the effort to fulfill these religious aspirations that set off the Islamic society from its past and effect, assured the distinct

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<sup>35</sup> Armstrong, 464.

<sup>36</sup> Mario Veloso, “The Law of God,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, vol. 12, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2000), 488.

existence of an Islamic civilization at all. Hence these aspirations had a key position in the withholding or acknowledge legitimacy to any other tradition in the civilization as a whole, even though they may have done little more substantively than color the content of that civilization.<sup>37</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Surveys through the use of questionnaires to a few free Muslim *Imams*, interviews and field visits have been carried out in an effort to reach a desired conclusion and make suitable recommendations. The following chapters will deal with those and other aspects towards the goal. Yet before that, a description of the local setting has been done in chapter 3. This will dictate the actual methods that may be used and even the quality of work to be done.

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<sup>37</sup> Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974-1992), 447.

## CHAPTER 3

### DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL SETTING

The setting and the environment of a place are key factors to consider when searching for any activity within the range of origins and expansion of any entity or organization. C. M. Mwikamba has rightly declared the relationship between environment and growth of a phenomenon. He declares, “Poverty, population growth, and environment damage are interconnected.”<sup>1</sup> In this chapter we endeavor to establish the setting and background to the origins of Islam in Harare. But first, we will look at Harare since our study is limited to this city. Elements which are under review are background to the setting, socio-economical status of Zimbabwe.

We will focus at four oldest residential areas of Harare and two modern suburbs. Of the six, two are low-density while the remaining four are high-density areas. Islamic influence in these suburbs will justify the study. We will also devote some time to the religious and literacy rate of the population at the time of Islamic entrance into the country. The demography of Harare and the tools that are intended to be used to collect data will be discussed as well.

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<sup>1</sup> C. M. Mwikamba, *Shifts in Mission : A Theological Theology: Mission in African Christianity*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Action Printers, 2000), p. 34

## **Country Profile of Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is a land-locked state in the southern part of Africa. It borders with South Africa in the south, Botswana in the west, Mozambique to the east. Its neighbor to the north is Zambia as we move into the interior of Africa with a tip of Namibia in the north-west. Until 1965, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe had been under the British South African Company (BSAC) with its headquarters in Southern Rhodesia now Zimbabwe. Because of its capital status, Zimbabwe was favored in terms of developments more than its sister countries. It obtained the best infrastructure in terms of roads, buildings and communication network. In 1965 Ian Douglas Smith declared a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain. This was caused by Zambia and Malawi's independence in 1960 and 1965 respectively.<sup>2</sup> Southern Rhodesian reeled under this colonial rule until 1980 when it attained its independence through a bloody armed struggle. The infrastructural developments in Zimbabwe were too huge an investment for the white colonial-settlers to let go in a silver platter.

## **The Politics of Zimbabwe**

Two patriotic forces waged a gorilla war-fare from two fronts in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front (ZAPU PF) lead by the late Vice-President Joshua Quabuko Nkomo was fighting from Zambia. The Zimbabwe African National Liberation Association (ZANLA) initially led by Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and later by Robert Gabriel Mugabe hailed from Mozambique on

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<sup>2</sup> *Zimbabwe History* (Harare Zimbabwe: Longman, 2010).

the east. The two merged in 1982 and became Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) forming a unity government.

The relationship between the black majority of Zimbabwe and the white minority never improved from this war. It has impacted the socioeconomic, religious and political spheres of the nation. Since independence, Zimbabwe has been on a down-ward fall economically until 2008 when its currency became valueless. The general population has been reduced to serious poverty and the unemployment rate has increased to an unsurpassed record of 90-95%.

### **Harare Population**

Harare is the capital of Zimbabwe with fifteen other small cities and towns. The capital city has an estimated population of 2.3 million out of the 13 million in the country according to Zimbabwe census 2012.<sup>3</sup> Harare has about 36 major residential areas which are divided into three categories, namely: high, low and medium density suburbs. The inhabitants of most the suburbs are the black majority. Of the sixteen high- density areas only five were established before independence. This means that their residents are the oldest people in the population. These are the custodians of family traditions including family religions. All the tribes and people groups in the country are represented in the capital city, Harare.

Of the eighteen low density suburbs only three have exclusively the black Africans living there. The other thirteen have mixed races and two have exclusively Asians. These Asians have been exclusivists for years that even the independence did

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<sup>3</sup> “Population Statistics” [www.citypopulation.de/php](http://www.citypopulation.de/php) (10 February 2012).

not alter them. The rest residential areas are medium density and have mixed races in them. The mixed races that are resident in Harare are the black Africans who are in the majority, coloureds who are descendents of blacks and whites. Asians comprise the third largest group while Britons, Americans and other Afro-Asians are in the minority.

There is almost the same representation in all other cities and towns in the rest of the country as we see in Harare. In almost all cities and towns of Zimbabwe, there are places exclusively for Asians and they practice their home religions. The major religion in Harare is Christianity after African Traditional Religion fell due to technological advances, modernization and secularism just to name the major ones. The second major religion is Islam followed by Hinduism and a very small community of Buddhism.

Though the second largest city, Bulawayo was initially established as an industrial capital, business activity has shifted and is now more intense in Harare better than anywhere else in the country. These Asians are more into retail than manufacturing which does not benefit the Gross Domestic Product, (GDP) of the country at all. Most of the goods they sell are imported from countries of their origin as finished products, ready for consumers suppressing further the ailing economy.

### **Cultural Setting**

Zimbabwe inherited a very strong culture from its ancestors. Belief in ancestral spirits and preservation of the native traditions is the bulk of the heritage. Totemism binds people groups together as they connect through these totems. The British also having colonized the state for nearly a century interwove their British culture into the Zimbabwean one. Yet the African tradition and its pros and cons were not shaken by the European culture.



There two major languages spoken in Zimbabwe are *Shona* and *Ndebele* with a number of dialects. Among the other unique tribes of Zimbabwe one stands up tallest than the rest in its strong beliefs and practices. This people group is called *varemba*. Its practices are semi-religious, but *varemba* can now be found in any religious group. But before independence all the *varembas* belonged to Islam without them knowing it. Among other peculiar beliefs, they eat meat slaughtered only under their ritual practices by their own people. In 1985 a bitter wrangle ensued with the rest of Evangelical Christians of Zimbabwe. Ruzvidzo's essay on the *varemba* will shade more light in the socio-economic section later in this chapter.

In *People Making History* Book 1, P. Garlake and A. Proctor report about the *Shona* and *Ndebele* ancient belief in one God. They argue, "*Shona* traditions tell of a supreme god who created the world." This is what the *Shona* knew before the Arabs or Europeans came into the state. The authors conclude, "This god had many names. *Mwari* is one . Christian Missionaries have taken '*Mwari*' as the name of the Christian god also."<sup>4</sup> Some beliefs that are strong in the Zimbabwean culture are the worshipping of this one supreme God, who in *Ndebele* is called *Unkulunkulu*, literally meaning the biggest one. Yet no one can approach *Mwari* or *Unkulunkulu* directly. Garlake and Proctor report that *Mwari* spoke to people through priests from cave-shrines.<sup>5</sup> It is believed that a mediator or mediums are the only channel to Him. Hence several mediums through which one can approach God are prevalent in the

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<sup>4</sup> P. Garlake and A. Proctor, *People Making History* (Pretoria West, SA: Penrose Book Printers, 1985), 1:159.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

Zimbabwean culture. These mediums range from domesticated animals idolized to relatives long dead down to deities. The latest to die are given more honor and attention as compared to those long gone. Those gone the longest time ago in history are considered the strongest. The latest is believed to be closer to the surviving and understands the plight of the living much better than those long gone. In this way even Christians are lured to the latest prophets who died and this puts Muhammad at better vintage point than Jesus. In the Zimbabwean African culture a dead parent is revered more than the living parent. The dead person's words which were spoken just before their death are treated with more seriousness than for a living king. The same is done within the context of the Qur'an by those who would have absconded to Islam.

Another area in the Zimbabwean culture that favors Muhammad better than Christ is the idea that emanates from polygamy. Genuine and general Christianity sanctions one wife for one husband but Islam allows up to four wives for one man. The Zimbabwean traditional chiefs were well-known for polygamous marriages and this made their clans big enough to repel their enemies. This is in line and agreement with the Zimbabwean Traditional Religion which subscribed to the notion that the more the wives one had, the stronger was his power and influence.

It is also not honorable for a man to be content with only girl-children. A real man has to have sons in order to be honorable. These sons would aid during battles and situation that demanded aggression and became sure heirs to the man's estate. This is similar to the belief in Islam where women in general are not highly esteemed as men. In one of the sayings of Muhammad, the *Haddith*, three elderly women accused a certain man of some misconduct. The case was not final until a boy of twelve was called to confirm. And when he did then it was accepted. A male child in Islam would be a better witness than three elderly women. The challenge that

Christianity has on this aspect is better described in article entitled Women and Evangelism: A Challenge to the Church in the Third Millennium by Philomena Njeri Mwaura, in Challenges and Prospects of the Church in Africa, Mwaura observes, “Women, as he observes, are the ‘greatest source of energy to the church, the most eager customers of the Church officials, the core of any Church community.’”<sup>6</sup>

In the typical Zimbabwean culture a woman is not allowed to performed man’s duties, such as driving a car or work in the construction industry. This is so identical in Islam, which may be the reason why many Africans can prefer Islam than Christianity. In countries such as Saud Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan just to name a few, women are forbidden to drive, to work outside the home or sometimes even to be in the company of other men who are not their husbands at any time anywhere.

The Zimbabwean culture esteems certain type of dressing above many others. A good example is on the head-covering cloth for an elderly woman. This head-gear differentiated between a woman of virtue and one who is not. Islam comes with descend dress for all females with not only head cover but sometimes with a complete veiling of the face. There is no room for mini-skirts in Islam as they may be found in Christianity. Islam has weight among the African elderly because of such teachings which are strictly adhered to. Though there maybe two groups of Islam which of-course they deny, the *Sunni* and the *Shia*, yet there is no difference in their dressing and behaviors. Islam has a cultural advantage over other religious groups because “it

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<sup>6</sup> Philomena Njeri Mwaura, *Challenges and Prospects of the Church in Africa*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2005), 107.

is way of life". Muslims carry their religion with them wherever they go, while Christians are embarrassed to exercise their religion in public.

### **Socio-economic Set-up**

Zimbabwe's independence has impacted the socio-economical situation in the country to a greater degree. The war-veterans as they are commonly known in Zimbabwe were not well-remunerated after the war until they made their demands through threats of going back into the bush to fight the new government if their grievances were not attended to. The leaders under strong cohesion from these pressure-groups offered them \$50 000 as a once off-payment, which the former fighters took and blew away quickly and carelessly. Before a year elapsed they came up with another demand. This time it was for a monthly payment of US\$50.00 allowance until they die. At its acceptance by government who had no choice, the economy fell to its knees. The aftermaths of these actions has negatively impacted the economy and the social life of millions in the country.

The economy finally collapsed in 2008 and has led to the abandonment of the local currency. A serious brain-drain has further damaged the already ailing economy. Zimbabwean citizen are now found all-over the globe, leaving the country to foreigners who are now doing retail business at the expense of local manufacturing as highlighted above.

Zimbabwe has been using a multi-currency system with the United States dollar being the most common currency country-wide since 2008. This has pushed the Zimbabwe population into untold poverty. Currently Zimbabwe could be rated at number 3 in the world's poorest countries world-wide. The unemployment rate in the country is now at 95% with many other struggling companies closing down daily.

This is caused by government policies while government blames it on economic sanctions imposed on her by Britain, America and the European Union.

Most businesses that are operating are not clean ones and have some shoddy deals that keep them going. This has opened massive opportunities for under-ground dealers to prey on the desperate and hungry population. The opposition party in Zimbabwe has no machinery and is not strong enough to unseat the current government. The ruling party also is not united in its call for integrity and to its agenda of zero-tolerance to corruption and rebuilding the country. Many of its members are the major perpetrators of corruption and white-color crimes, putting the last stroke on the ailing economy.

The other investors are the Asians who came into the state around the 1500s. According to Mandivenga it is believed that they arrived in the state around the 16<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. when the first Arabs entered into Zimbabwe. Ephraim C. Mandivenga has this to say, “The first Arabs to have entered the country of Zimbabwe were Asian. They found business opportunities in Kwekwe a mining town which is about 130 km from Harare the capital city.” In a very short time they had acquired a piece of land to build a mosque which they are using for *salah* (Friday prayer meetings). The centre soon became *madras*, a school where they are teaching children Islamic culture and the Arabic language.

During the liberation struggle Asians continued to seek business opportunities in the country since Arab nations were good friends of the patriotic forces as reported by Ephraim C. Mandivenga In his book *Islam in Zimbabwe*. Mandivenga cites an incident when the fighters operating in the neighborhood of Gutu rural district visited the building site at the ancient mosque at Chinyika Township in 1978. They inquired from the Islamic religious leader the (*Imam*) why building operations seemed to have

been suspended. The *Imam* who was flustered, advised that the authorities responsible for the building were wondering whether the guerillas (as the freedom fighters were known)... approved of the religion (Islam) for which the centre was being established. The [freedom fighters] immediately instructed the *Imam* to step up construction activities without further delay, adding that they had no quarrel with either this particular religion or its adherents. The fighters confirmed that there were good relations between the two entities. In short the Muslims were declared allies of the freedom fighters and were on the side of the patriotic front fighters.<sup>7</sup> The premise may suggest the absence of antagonism between the revolutionary party in Zimbabwe and Islam. The only challenge between these two allies in history is when Rasimati Mathonsi reported the president of Zimbabwe Robert G. Mugabe slamming Islam.

This could have been aggravated by the Muslims' in Zimbabwe threatening to disturb Zimbabwean meat exports if the cattle were not slaughtered according to the *varemba* rituals practices which is the Islamic culture. The tribe insisted that all meat should be slaughtered in accordance with their practice, which is also practiced by Muslims. An essay in the Evangelical Churches of Zimbabwe written by Munetsi Ruzivo had this to say;

The relations between the small Muslim community in Zimbabwe and the larger Christian community became acrimonious when evangelical Christians, under the banner of their umbrella organization the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, mounted a campaign that was aimed at forcing the Government to stop employing Muslims in the slaughter of beef that was to be consumed by the largely Christian majority. The campaign also encouraged Christians not to buy *halal* certified products in supermarkets. Islamic Scholars threatened to withdraw the license certifying meat products in Zimbabwean as *halal*, a move

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<sup>7</sup> Ephraim C. Mandivenga, *Islam in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1983), 33.

which would have had a negative impact on Government export interests in the Arab world. This was the first confrontation of its kind in the history of Muslim-Christian relations in Zimbabwe. Further confrontations included the teaching of Bible Knowledge and the recitation of the Lord's Prayer in Government controlled schools. The article further examined causes of the tensions among the three parties – Government, Christians and Muslims – and articulate the concerns of each of the parties that were involved in this saga.<sup>8</sup>

### **Literacy Rate**

Zimbabwe received its missionaries as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Robert Moffat and David Livingstone have been known to be the pioneers of Christianity in Zimbabwe. The missionaries made a big mistake by labeling everything African as evil. From education to food, everything was said to be militating against Christianity and God. They over-looked the fact that Africans were worshipping even before they came. Paul's method was lacking in their approach. In his endeavor to reach the Greeks in Athens, he tactfully redirected Athenians from worshipping the unknown gods to the worship of one and true Supreme God, Acts 17:23.

The missionaries thought they had succeeded in introducing their religion by condemning the African way of worship. They only succeeded in making the African believer notoriously religion, borrowing the words of John Mbiti. What the African believer did was to pretend to be a strong Christian only in the presence of the missionary. The moment the missionary was out of site his tradition became the order of the day. The most crucial moment he turned his back against the white man's religion was when they faced situations which demanded practical and tangible

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<sup>8</sup> Munetsi Ruzivo, *Essay for Evangelical Churches of Zimbabwe*, (Unpublished manuscript, 1990).

solutions to the prevailing situation. In issues such as marriage, death etc, the African would demand for immediate answers which were not forthcoming. So he decided to go back to his practical religion.

The other weakness of the missionaries was that they were segregative, they had separate special schools for their children while inferior and dilapidating schools were for African children. This scenario gave a chance to the rise of Islam, for when Asians came they invited and enrolled African children at their first centre in Kwekwe. The school grew so fast because this was one of the schools where black segregated children would meet with Asian children without racial discrimination. This promoted the religion so fast that many natives joined it. Islam started teaching Arabic language and Islamic culture including the dressing of a *hijab*.

In Masvingo Province, in Gutu district a tribe called *Varemba* had been practicing Islamic culture from time immemorial. In 1979, Ephraim Mandivenga reports that an Asian man on his way to Masvingo town stumbled into a group of *varemba* men and after some discussions; they were very happy to know that they believed the same things and practiced the same religion. This meeting precipitated training of the *imams* for the work of leading the Friday prayer meeting. This was arranged, and blacks were seen mixing with white Asians. Yet before the training, the *varemba* were supposed to be confirmed as Muslims through the repetition of the *shahada*, this is a creed; the confession: there is n God but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's messenger, *La ilaha illallah waMuhammad rasul allah*. They had to do the



*shahada*<sup>9</sup> but since Muslims do not believe in mass conversion a plan was hatched that would realize one person at a time be accepted into Islam. Through these two schools, one in Kwekwe and the other one in Gutu Islam started sowing seeds of its religion.

### **Target Population**

The targeted population in this research is Harare's five high-density suburbs and two low density suburbs because this is where many old people who lived in urban areas before independence live. We find the descendants of the early Asians and the Africans who worked with the first Arabic Asians who came into the country around the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The five are: Mabvuku, Mbare, Highfields, Mufakose and Dzivarasekwa and the two low density suburbs are Belvedere and Acardia. According Harare city records all these locations were built from 1900 to 1950<sup>10</sup>, and have an estimate population of about 1, 2 million people.

These seven suburbs will work as nucleus of the Islamic growth. We have ascertained that all other developments are the result of recent expansion of Islam in Harare. Mabvuku has a population of between 14 000 and 95 000 people. The variance is caused by the sources motives. Politics has distorted important issues in the country. If the statistics are for political reasons the figures in the cities are suppressed heavily. The percentage that can be allocated to children from Islamic

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<sup>9</sup> The *shahada* is the statement: "*illa ilaha Muhammad rasul allah*" which is the confession that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad his prophet. Once a person says this before two male witnesses it becomes almost impossible to reverse it. That is the reason why it has been said that it is very easy to become a Muslim but almost impossible to stop being one.

<sup>10</sup> "Zimstat-2012- 13" (03 January 2012).

parents could be between 80-90%. Names like Salim, Saidi, Musah, Fatima and Aisha, are very common in Mabvuku. Mabvuku has one of the oldest mosques in town.

Out of the 27 suburbs in Harare, Table 1 shows us the timetable of the research field visits in six selected suburbs of Harare.

*Table 1. Timetable of Field Visits*

PLACE	ACTIVITY	TIME FRAME
Mabvuku	Pay a courtesy call at the mosque to familiarize with the imam, the researcher will be wearing casual dress code in sandals in order not to raise eye brows while avoiding western dress code as much as possible. No questions will be asked during this visit and an appointment will be secured for the second visit which will be fact-finding.	May 2012
Mbare		July 2012
Waterfalls		September 2012
Highfields		January 2013
Belvedere		May 2013
Dzivarasekwa		May 2013

A visit to the city council statistical office was done on January 2012 and following the figures that were secured. Due to economic hardships being faced by the nation as a whole, the statistics here below are not exact according the officer who refused to be identified for reasons better known to him.

Due to the political instability in the country, exact statistical figures are hard to come by. Even though, rounded up figures as indicated in Table 2 show a summary of what was obtained from one of the city council office, with estimated years when the mosque was built in that particular location.

Table 2. Estimated Population of Harare's Six Oldest Suburbs

NAME OF SUBURB	YEAR BUILT	ESTIMATED POPULATION
Belvedere	1900	50 000
Dzivarasekwa	1900	400 000
Highfields	1932	700 000
Mbare	1900	250 000
Mabvuku	1902	600 000
Waterfalls	1978	300 000

Mbare is the oldest of all residential suburbs in Harare according to the findings. It is about 3-4km from the city centre to the south of the capital. Mbare has a population of 16 000 – 100 000 people and it has two mosques that were built around 1900. The same names that are found in the other five suburbs are the same as in Mbare. The residences of this high-density suburb were new arrivals from Malawi where the British were recruiting them for cheap labor. Some also came from Zambia and a very small number from Mozambique and a little from Tanzania.

Most people who live in Mbare cannot speak good Shona or Ndebele. They were looked down upon by the locals so they requested from their bosses who were whites to allow them to have their own churches which communicated in their own language and teaching their own culture. This is how Islam was propagated without any hassles or resistance. Mbare being the oldest of all African residential areas has the oldest people living in it. These old people hold strongly to their traditions and customs.

Highfields share the population on a 50-50 ratio with Muslims and other religions. The native Zimbabweans were now enlightened that locals could also

possess houses in the city. Before this it was like a taboo for a Zimbabwean to possess a house in town. It was something that was looked at with contempt. Many Zimbabweans now lodge while Malawian or Zambia descendants are the landlords. Most of them were workers as garden boys and cooks for the whites during the colonial era. They would meet in their own churches interferences from any local because of language, and their religion was Islam. The local would look at this religion with contempt for its members were almost one hundred percent garden boys and cooks. No one would want to be associated with them or their religion and this pleased this people group so well.

Dzivarasekwa was the poorest of all the old location yet in it is found a mosque still standing there. The Islamic centre there runs classes for school going age children and they are taught Arabic and Islamic culture nearly every day of the week except Friday since it the official day of worship with the Friday *salah*. The *Imam* there (Juma) not his real name was a Methodist and converted to Islam some fifteen years ago. He went to the Islamic training school in Waterfalls and has done five years advanced in Islamic studies including Islamic culture and language.

A comparison of Muslim population by age is shown in the following table. It is important to find out the ratio between the old Muslims who might have migrated into the country with the religion, compared with those who found it here. These were born in this country and might have inherited Islam from their parents.

Table 3 expresses the comparison between foreign –born Muslims and those born in Harare.

Table 3. Muslims Under 30 Years of Age and 31 Years and Above

SUBURB	ISLAMIC POPULATION	UNDER 30 YRS	OVER 30 YRS
Belvedere	5 000	3 000	2 000
Dzivarasekwa	5 000	3 500	1 500
Highfields	3 000	2 500	500
Mbare	3 000	2 000	1 000
Mabvuku	4 500	2 100	1 900
Waterfalls	3 000	2 000	1 000

### Pre-program Survey and Interview

The initial emergency of Islam on the globe took advantage of the status quo within Christendom. David W, Shenk posits, “The Muslim mission emerged at a time when Christians were debating theology.” He goes on by giving us examples of the issues that boggled the church. The list starts with the debate on the virginity of Mary as the mother of God. Shenk highlights how the other group in the debate rejected the teaching; “Oh no,” they objected, “That is impossible! How could a woman give birth to God? The other issue they grappled with was the divinity of Christ. The point was how people could kill God if Jesus died on the cross. So the premise could be that Jesus was not God or he did not die on the cross.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>David W. Shenk. Muslim Nation and the Christian Church, (Nairobi, Kenya: Herald Press, no year), 17.

While these debates were waging on Islam found an opportunity of a divided enemy. The Qur'an underscores the point in *Surah 5:14, 19*, "And those who say: Lo! We are Christians? We made a covenant, but they forgot a part of that whereof they were admonished. Therefore we have stirred up enmity and hatred among them till the Day of Resurrection, when Allah will inform them of the handwork."

Karen Armstrong concludes it well in this statement; "The prophets of Israel the parent to the two younger faiths, proclaimed the necessity of creating new heart and a soul, which was far more important than external conformity." So we too today are in a similar rut. External political solutions are not enough.

All three of the participants in the struggle (Christians, Muslims and the West) must create a different attitude, a new heart and spirit. In the Christian West we must try to make the painful migration from our old aggressions and embark on the long journey toward a new understanding and a new self.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and their Impact on Today's World*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1988-2001), 464.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

In its inception and acceptance in the country it is on record that Islam was fortunate in not having been tarred with the brush of colonialism—for it was believed that the Revolutionary Parties that fought the white regime of Ian Smith, “received support from Islamic countries, notably Pakistan, Libya and Algeria,”<sup>1</sup> paving a way for its establishment, posits B.Y. Muhammad, in an article entitled “*The Hidden Muslims of Zimbabwe*”, in the Tripoli Post Magazine of December 12, 2012. This proposes that there were good relations between Zimbabwe and the Islamic *Umma*. We will further quantify the Islamic population in Harare as a sample of the whole nation, though from Muhammad’s article’s title we are alerted that the population of Muslims in Zimbabwe is hidden. Further studies will ascertain this fact. This chapter traces the plan of action proposing three stages in an attempt to come up with very close statistics of Islamic population in Harare. The steps are field visits, interviews and evaluation.

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<sup>1</sup> B.Y. Muhammad, “*The Hidden Muslims of Zimbabwe*,” <http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail>. (December 15, 2012).

## Field Visits

Two field visits per Islamic center were done by the researcher. The first one was an ice-breaker. With skills learned at AUA, the researcher de-rolled from the position of a pastor to an inquisitive inquirer of the Islamic faith. Jon Dybdahl quoting from, *A Deadly Misunderstanding*, by Mark Siljander, outlines the pre-requisites to working among Muslims, he suggests, “high level personal contacts where mutual respect, love and friendship rather than adversarial relationship based on traditional diplomacy prevail”.<sup>2</sup> The dress code changed to something similar to the Muslims themselves, with sandals on the feet and shirt out of the trousers added with great care to move away from anything western. During the first visit there were no questions asked, but just appreciating what Islam is doing in various aspects of humanitarian aid in the city.

Due to that, solid appointments were secured in preparation for the second visit which took place less than a week after. The reception was good in all the mosques. Vital data was obtained which is close to the exact figures from six Islamic centers in Harare.

During the second visit the Imam was not well, but all the same the interview went ahead as planned. Islam has no system of recording its members as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are no registers in place no files nothing. The most common answer that was given for the question: “how many members attend this

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<sup>2</sup> Jon Dybdahl, “*A Deadly Misunderstanding and Muslim Christian Relationships*,” in *A Man of Passionate Reflection*, ed. Bruce Bauer, (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Missions, 2011), 275.



mosque every Friday for *salat* was a clear and emphatic “many”. A quest for a specific figure seemed to have been falling on deaf ears.

Table 4 provides results from an interview with the Imam at Belvedere mosque.

*Table 4. Interview at Belvedere*

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
When was the first house bought with intention to make it a mosque	2010
How many Muslims were there in this year?	50
Who contributed towards the renovations?	(Name supplied)
Who is paying for the further construction work?	Local businessmen
What are their occupations?	Traders
How many members are attending now in these mosques?	Many
If one could count them how many can they be?	3 000+
Do you consider Islam to be growing in this city?	Come and see
What are some of the methods used to increase membership?	Business Network
What is this business networking?	Availing soft loans

This effort availed first-hand information to the researcher on the population of Muslims in Harare and their impact which in turn found out the methods used for growth of Islam in Belvedere.

The second visit done in Mbare was also informative. Two elders were found at this mosque, one who is the sheik and the other the imam. They both answered the

researcher's questions with great enthusiasm. It is natural for most humans to desire to tell, the researcher manipulated this principle as the two dominated the meeting. They ended up answering questions not yet asked, making the work of the researcher very easy. Their answers were so identical which proved a high degree of truthfulness. A discourse with a sheik and an imam at Mbare mosque provided the information on Table 5.

*Table 5. Results from Mbare Islamic Center*

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
When was this mosque built?	1920
How many Muslims were there in this year?	7
Who contributed towards its construction?	Asians
What were their occupations?	Traders
How many members are attending now in these mosques?	Many
Roughly how many people come every Friday?	450- 600
Do you consider Islam to be growing in this city?	Very fast
What are some of the methods used to increase membership?	Humanitarian Aid
What type of aid is given and how often?	Food and school fees
Where does Islam get its members from?	Christian churches
What are their reasons for joining Islam?	We have practical religion like Jesus

Mbare mosque takes the credit for most developments in the capital. The Imam highlighted that most of the buildings in the capital were constructed by Asians from Mbare who had originally come from Suid Arabia. This mosque claims to have been the birth place of the government initiative of male-circumcision. It is alleged that government officials visited this mosque to study how Muslims were circumcising their children and other member who convert to it when older. The two elders concur that government employed its members to start the program rolling.

It was also interesting to hear that the Imams at Mbare mosque concurred that they were following Jesus' example in the acts of mercy done for the community. Most if not all residents get their drinking water from this mosque. They also revealed that the bulk of their members do not attend *salat* at this mosque because they will be in town during the Friday mid-day worship, but that they attend one in town. If it wasn't for that fact they would not fit in the mosque. So the rough figure for all Muslims in Mbare according to these two elders is 1000-1500. This is where the researcher asked if there were documents showing membership. The Imam's facial expression and gestures revealed ignorance to this.

After the bridge-building visit at Highfield, the second one had its share of challenges. This is a much recent suburb as compared to the first two, and the evidences of that are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Interview at Highfield Mosque

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
When was this mosque built?	1962
How many Muslims were there when at first	15
Who contributed to its construction	Asians from Arabia
What were their occupations	Shop Owners
How many members are now attending	Many
What figure can put for Muslims in this area	2000-3000
Do these thousands fit in this mosque	Most attend in town
Do you consider Islam to be growing	Very fast
What are some methods used in increasing members?	Humanitarian aid
What type of aid is given?	Borehole water, food for elderly and school fees orphans

In Highfield a very young Imam manages this mosque. He is in his early late 30's and is very open to the realities of Islamic challenges. He reiterated on a number of real challenges that are threatening Islamic faith in Harare. He admitted, "Technology, moral degeneration and new wave of prophets in the city are serious threats to the survival of Islam."<sup>3</sup> These challenges are identical to those highlighted by Baker.

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<sup>3</sup> Abdullah, (Not his real name) , interview, April, 2012.

Mabvuku one of the oldest locations in the city, with a population of about 70 000 – 95 000 people was visited as scheduled. Mabvuku is located in the eastern part of the capital. Most residence of Mabvuku hail from Malawi and Zambia. They came to settle there as mine workers in the nearby Arcturus mine and the adjacent Circle cement plant. The smaller population of residents in Mabvuku is composed of housemaids and garden boys from Greendale and Chisipite who descendants of the miners. Their educational level is very low. A written survey would not mean a thing to most Muslims of Mabvuku. So the use of interviews proved effective in Mabvuku. During the familiarization tour, the afore-said assumption was proved correct. The other ultimate goal was bridge-building. These objectives were successfully achieved. An appointment with the Imam was sealed for the second visit. Table 7 provides first-hand information from the man in charge of the mosque in Mabvuku.

*Table 7. Interview at Mabvuku Mosque*

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
When was this mosque built?	1950
How many Muslims were there when at first	10
Who built this mosque	Asians from Arabia
What were their occupations	Shop Owners
How many members are now attending	Many
What figure can put for Muslims in this area	So many
Do these hundreds fit in this mosque	Most attend in town
Do you consider Islam to be growing	Very fast
What are some methods used in increasing members?	Humanitarian aid
What type of aid is given?	Borehole water, food for elderly and school fees orphans

The visit to Waterfalls Islamic Institute of Cultural Studies was most rewarding. This center has is the most feared of all Islamic centers in the city. It is not frequented, there is one person for security reasons, and the person interviewed will be identified as Abdullah to give him a pseudo name. Abdullah was very helpful in providing the most needed information on origins expansions and methods used by Islam currently in Harare. The table also show the responses given by the Abdullah . Though Abdullah could read or write without any challenges, it seemed more appropriate for the research to be implemented as in the other centers for uniformity's sake. The first visit gave the researcher a clue on what could work without much suspicion than any other method. Getting into his office without a book or paper to write on seemed to have made him more relaxed and reluctant during the interview. He was very cooperative and relaxed during the whole discussion. Here is what was found:

The origins of this school are very interesting. One Asian Sheik saw children who were displaced by the war of liberation from rural areas of Zimbabwe. He was touched by the catastrophic plight of children. He also observed how African children were marginalized in terms of education during the colonial era. The sheik approached the owner of the farm who consented without cohesion to sell the farm house and assist in renovating it into a school. Soon the farmhouse was a school for these children. In 1990 the school added another dimension of cultural learning centre. At present there three schools at this farm right in the midst of Waterfalls namely: girl's secondary school, boy's secondary school and male only Theological Institute. These three schools have a total enrolment of 800 pupils.

A place that can be taken as a Muslim shrine is in the heart of Waterfalls. Almost 24 hours a day and seven days a week, this place is locked up from outsiders

and people in general are not comfortable to visit this center. Table 8 represents the responses from interview at the center.

*Table 8. Waterfalls Interview*

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
When was this center built?	1978
How many Muslims were there when it first opened its doors	1 (name supplied)
Who contributed to its construction	1 Asian Sheik
What was his occupation	Trader
How many members are now attending	800
Do you consider Islam to be growing	School register shows it
What is the purpose of this school	Revival of Islam and Care for orphans
What type of aid given	Education and employment
Who are enrolled	Anybody who wishes
Who are the teachers	Anybody qualified
What is the curriculum	100% Islamic

The Sheik observed that education is the most powerful tool of empowerment. He believed it is also the best way of reviving Islam. The Sheik and his family can speak the local language so well that no one can tell if they know any other language. The schools are impacting Harare in propagating the cause of Islam in a big and strong way.

His influence of these schools has spread to other big institutions in Belvedere which are a primary school with an enrolment of 900 pupils and another one with 600 pupils. This school has such popularity that most high profile peoples of the city send their children to it. To get a place there for one's child is a nightmare for the school has all that the best school should have. In all these schools the highest selling point is

the teacher-pupil ration which is pegged at a non negotiable figure of 25. There are some schools in the country with a soaring and ever rising ratio of 1-70.

Looking back as a way of conclusion at the Belvedere center, the researcher came across an ambiguous situation at Belvedere Islamic Center where one house was converted into a mosque in the year 2010. From that, a tremendous interest has arisen in the area for a bigger place to worship for women and for men as they do not mix. Currently four houses that are next the first mosque were purchased and renovated into mosques. The latest being in early 2014. The Imam at this center is Asian the son of the founder of the Waterfalls center; this young man speaks the native *Shona* language fluently just like his mother tongue. The most surprising thing was that the man in-charge said that he did not have figures for attendees. He sounded genuine and open to the researcher that they do not have a membership register and they do not see the need. Rana (not his real name) snorted, “Why do we need to record names or numbers, worship is personal and voluntary.”<sup>4</sup> In less than four years, four large mosques have been constructed “due to the high demand for Islamic faith”<sup>5</sup> according to the Imam. The attendance on every Friday ranges from 2000-3000 people. Rana confirms that the growth of Islam is alarming in Belvedere. Rana concludes, “There are plans to build more mosques as numbers are swelling by day.”<sup>6</sup>

A discussion with the Sheik in this place shows how lucrative Islam is becoming. Islam is affording answers to the economic challenges that are being faced

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<sup>4</sup> Rana (not his real name), during a personal interview with the researcher, June 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



by almost 90% of the population. Unemployment rate is soaring at an alarming percentage of 97 and is on a continuous rise.

In the western part of the capital is Dzivarasekwa, one of the poorest suburb in the city. Table 9 displays what the researcher found at the mosque manned by a very friendly *imam*.

Table 9. Dzivarasekwa interview

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
When was this mosque built?	1900
How many Muslims were there when at first	20+
Who built this mosque	Asians from Arabia
What were their occupations	Shop Owners
How many members are now attending	Over 300
What figure can <b>you</b> put for Muslims in this area	6000+
Do these thousands fit in this mosque	Most attend in town
Do you consider Islam to be growing	Very fast
What are some methods used in increasing members?	Providing
What type of aid is given?	water, food hampers every month for elderly and orphans

This interview reveals a deliberate humanitarian arm that is used to reach the masses in an effective way. In the book Ministry of Healing, Ellen G. White declares that it is only the Savior’s method which can give success in reaching the modern mind. She echoes: “The Savior mingled with men, showed them sympathy, ministered

to their needs and won their confidence, and then He bade them, ‘follow me.’”<sup>7</sup> This is the method that is being used by Muslims effectively in Harare today.

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<sup>7</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association 1909), 142.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher embarked on field visits, had one on one interviews with sheiks at all the six targeted Islamic Centers, namely Mabvuku, Mbare, Highfields, Dzivarasekwa, Waterfalls and Belvedere. The results are amazing though Islam seems to be an underground movement, borrowing from B. Y. Muhammad's title on his article, "*Hidden Muslims of Zimbabwe*". Yet the cooperation of these elders during the surveys deserves a great appreciation. One of the two assumptions could be drawn from these positive co-operations.

Firstly Islam in Harare could be so compliant that there is nothing to worry about it as a religious or political arm of any secret organization. That would echo and affirm the words of Professor Yusuf al Qaradawy of Quartar University in Egypt as quoted in the introduction of this work. He emphatically confirmed, "Yes Islam is a threat to those who do not want peace, those who thrive on oppressing weak and young nations." <sup>1</sup>Secondly, it could be that Islam in Harare has decided to go underground in terms of public appearance and social interaction with outsiders. While this maybe what she wants outsiders to believe about her, she maybe in hiding,

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<sup>1</sup> B.Y. Muhammad, "*The Hidden Muslims of Zimbabwe*," <http://www.tripolipost.com/article/detail>. (December 15, 2012.)

waiting for a more appropriate time to wage a holy war on all *kafir* (infidel) in an unsuspecting state. Munetsi Ruzvidzo a lecture at the University of Zimbabwe wrote an article as a response to some sour relations that had arisen between Christians and Muslims in 1996.

The whole argument was aggravated by the demands by Muslims to have all meat slaughtered in the country in conformity with Islamic rituals. Ruzvidzo reiterates, “One may ask why this debate garnered such attention in the first place. It turns out that the Consumer Council (CCZ) was circulating a document entitled *Zimbabwe a Muslim State: Is this Possible?*” Ruzvidzo reveals some unexpected moves by this seemingly docile movement, He asserts, “the aim of Islam is to subjugate parts of the world not yet converted to the law of Allah. Islam’s aim, supposedly, is to rule and to win territories and not human hearts.” How can Islam afford to do that when it is behaving like a peaceful and helpful society?

Munetsi Ruzvidzo provides us with more information on how Islam can do that. He concludes, “Muslims are making subtle attempts to entrench Islam through the building of mosques, granting scholarships, providing food and relief aid in numerous sub-Saharan states.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Synthesis**

Zimbabwean politics might have played a critical role in the good relations that exist between Christianity and Islam now. But are these good relations genuine and lasting? The commendable co-habitation of Muslims and the rest of the populace in Harare could be traced back to effects of policies of the present government in Zimbabwe. The government fought and is still fighting any seemingly foreign ideology which may seek to favor light-skinned people at the expense of the dark-skinned majority in the nation. Any smoldering smoke in form of segregation or

importation of it would result in almost serious political repercussions or a complete ban of the perpetrator.

In its seemingly goodness and harmless picture, Islam in Harare has spearheaded a lot of government initiatives. Islam in Harare has been like a permanent partner with International organizations. During the United Nations Peace Day, Global Warming Summit and Zimbabwe Council of Churches initiated programs; Muslims have been found very supportive. Islam has grown to millions in Zimbabwe now from the estimated 200 000 or even higher than the 1.2 million that has been debated on in previous statistics. The closest figure that the researcher can settle at is between two and three million because exact statistical figures may not be available to anyone due to political delimitations. So we observe the results from six of the 27 suburbs in Harare in Table 10.

Table 10. Estimates of Muslims in Harare

NAME OF SUBURB	ISLAMIC ESTIMATED POPULATION	MUSLIMS ABOVE 50 YEARS	MUSLIMS BELOW 20 YEARS
Mbare	5 000	1 500	3 500
Mabvuku	7 500	3 500	4 000
Highfields	3 500	2 500	1 000
Dzivarasekwa	4 000	3 000	1 000
Waterfalls	4 000	1 000	3 000
Belvedere	5 000	2 000	3 000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29 000</b>	<b>13 500</b>	<b>15 500</b>

If Harare can have such statistics as indicated, then, the whole country could be much higher than anticipated before. The conclusion, therefore would peg Muslims in Zimbabwe at between 2 and 3 million. Islam in Zimbabwe is deliberately using the humanitarian arm of *dawar* to win members. In all the six centers where the research was done it was evident that the neighbors are very comfortable with religion because of its open and transparency policy. They have borehole water points in every one of their centers. While city council water has been condemned from most quarters, Islam took this as an opportunity to provide this much-needed commodity free of charge within their premises. This has caused many people who use to be very suspicious about this group to feel comfortable to enter the premises to fetch water and eventually be-friend the kind providers of this commodity.

So major growth in Muslim is through humanitarian aid which is used as the best Islamic selling point all-over the capital. Secondly, Islam is growing through the manipulation of the poor in the state by offering them jobs and soft loans. Thirdly, culture being the fabric of most societies in the world, Islam has used it on children born to parents who subscribed to this religion.

### **Recommendations**

History has it that Christians and Muslims can co-habit peacefully, in *Ishmael my Brother*, Anne Cooper reports, “For the next century or so Muslims and Christians remained in close contact. In some places, like Spain, the contact and relationship proved, on the whole, peaceful and beneficial.”<sup>2</sup> Four recommendations can be drawn

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<sup>2</sup> Anne Copper, *Ishmael My Brother*, (Bromley, England: Cosmos House, 1985-1986), 123.

from the findings: In the first place, there is an open –door of opportunity now in Harare to reach the Muslims. Apathy on this issue is not an alternative; because the research has clearly revealed that it is very safe and can be-rewarding to reach the Muslims at this time. Not knowing how long this opportunity will remain available, future events will determine.

The words of Paul may be rightly used at this point as he admonished the young missionary Timothy to use every opportunity availed effectively. 1 Tim 4:13. To the Ephesians he exhorted that they should grab every opportunity to speed up the efforts to reach all the corners of the globe while time allows for a time will surely come when people will not be ready to accept the truth, Eph 6: 14, 15.

Secondly, we need to be sympathetic to the whole human race, without prejudice because of colour, race or tongue. To all would be evangelists, the words of Vivienne Stacey as quoted from Saadi a Persian poet, declare; “All men are members of the same body, Created from one essence. If fate brings suffering to one member, the others cannot stay at rest. You; who remain indifferent to the burden of pain of others, do not deserve to be called human.”<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly we need to recognize something good in others. Among the five recommendations that Professor Oscar Osindo gives in conclusion to his article, *Relating to Muhammad and the Mosque*, in his fourth recommendation he underscores, “we should take into consideration the overall contribution Islam has made to civilization and how it preserved vital Christian documents during the Dark

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<sup>3</sup> Vivienne Stacey, “Attitudes to Other Faiths:” *Ishmael My Brother*, comp, Anne Cooper, (Bromley, England: Cosmos House, 1985-1986), 11.

Ages of Christianity.”<sup>4</sup> Finally in 1 John 4:8, there is an encouragement to love if one prophesies to know God. “The need to maintain peace, harmony and understanding on earth among all nations, people and tongues is every human being’s obligation. Cindy Tutsch in *Ellen G. White on Leadership: Guidance for Those who Influence Others* encourages us, “to build relationships with... [All] based on shared purpose, values and vision and encourage dialogue and dissent as authentic steps to change.”<sup>5</sup>

The time to interact with Muslims is now in Harare. A further delay by a few years might turn out to be disastrous, dangerous and suicidal.

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<sup>4</sup> Oscar Osindo, “*Relating to Muhammad and the Mosque,*” in *Faith Development Symposium Papers*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer, (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission Andrews University, 2005), 202.

<sup>5</sup> Cindy Tutsch, *Ellen G. White on Leadership: Guidance for Those who Influence Others*, (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2008), 139.



APPENDIX A

TIMETABLE FOR FIELD VISITS

<u>PLACE</u>	<u>TIME FRAME</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
Mabvuku	May 2012	Interview Imam
Mbare	July 2012	Interview Imam
Waterfalls	September 2012	Interview Imam
Highfields	January 2013	Interview Imam
Belvedere	May 2013	Interview Imam
Dzivarasekwa	May 2013	Interview Imam

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MUSLIMS

1. Do you consider Christians friendly to Muslims?
2. State any problem you have with Christians.
3. Do you think Christians are a threat to Islam?
4. When did you become a Muslim?
5. Were you a Christian before?
6. What made you decide to become a Muslim?
7. Do you think Islam is growing?
8. Do you think many people understand Islam as you would want?
9. When was this mosque built?
10. How many people attend the Friday *Salat* here?
11. Do you have a register for your members?
12. What help do you give to the community around here?

## APPENDIX C

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT SURVEY

House 4149  
Tynwald North  
**Harare**

The Executive Committee  
East Zimbabwe Conference  
4 Thorn Road,  
Waterfalls  
**Harare**

January 04, 2012

**Ref: Seeking for Permission to Conduct a Survey in East Zimbabwe Conference**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

I am a student of Adventist University of Africa. Currently I am studying Missiology with emphasis in Islamic Studies. May I kindly seek for permission to conduct a survey in the East Zimbabwe Conference territory for the period between 2012 and 2013.

Your favorable and quick response is sincerely anticipated,

Yours Sincerely,

Godwell Gabriel Hwarari

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