



Mission to Muslims in the light of God's mission (*missio Dei*): a study of select evangelical churches in Eldoret Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Christianity and Islam are both missionary in nature, but they are founded on different beliefs, values and practices, especially with regard to mission. The former believe in Jesus Christ and recognise His divine role as the saviour of the world, while the latter regard Him as a prophet who, after all, was rejected by His people, the Jews, as a result of which God sent Mohammed as His last messenger to the world. These varying and often conflicting beliefs have made it increasingly difficult for the Christian evangelical churches, including those at Eldoret, Kenya, to advance mission to the people of other faiths, the Muslims in particular. The differing views can offend the very essence of mission, namely God's mandate that is founded on the entire Bible.

A proper understanding of mission as a concept is essential for effective mission to people of other faiths. Theologians refer to the Christian understanding of mission as the *missio Dei*. There is hardly any dispute among missiologists that God in His triune nature is the initiator, implementer and sustainer of mission, but the concept of the *missio Dei* is yet to attain an acceptable definition. Its nature and content remain problematic to theologians, missiologists, churches and other stakeholders in mission.

This study critically examines mission to Muslims by five selected evangelical churches in Eldoret, Kenya, in light of the *missio Dei*. These are the Reformed Church of East Africa, the African Inland Fellowship Church, the Faith Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Anglican Church of Kenya. The research investigates how and the extent to which these churches have sought to implement the mandate. Mainly using data collected from oral interviews, the study finds that mission engagement to Muslims is slow and disjointed. The churches face challenges that include the lack of a concrete understanding of God's mandate i.e. mission, internal wrangling, financial constraints and neglect of the women and the youth.

The study concludes that there is a need for the selected churches to reassess and reconsider their missionary approaches with a view to enhancing their ways of engaging with Muslims. In the final instance the study formulates a viable model for that purpose.

Key Words: Church, Evangelical, Mission, the *Missio Dei*, Muslims.

OPSOMMING

Beide die Christendom en Islam is missionêr van aard, maar hulle fundeer sending op verskillende oortuigings, waardes en praktyke. Die eersgenoemde glo in Jesus Christus en erken Sy goddelike rol as die verlosser van die wêreld, terwyl die laasgenoemde Hom sien as 'n profeet wat deur sy eie mense, die Jode, verwerp is en derhalwe gevolg is deur Mohammed as God se laaste boodskapper na die wêreld. Hierdie uiteenlopende en dikwels teenstrydige oortuigings het dit algaande moeiliker gemaak vir die Christen evangeliese kerke, insluitende dié in Eldoret, Kenya, om sending te doen onder mense van ander gelowe, veral Moslems. Die verskille in sienings kan die essensie van sending skade doen, naamlik God se mandaat soos dit begrond word in die geheel van die Bybel.

'n Grondige begrip van sending as konsep is sentraal vir effektiewe sending na mense van ander gelowe. Teoloë verwys na die Christenbegrip van sending as die *missio Dei*. Daar is byna geen dispuut onder missioloë dat God in sy drie-enige aard die inisieerder, implementeerder en onderhouer van sending is nie, maar nietemin moet die konsep van *missio Dei* nog 'n aanvaarbare definisie kry. Die aard en inhoud daarvan bly problematies vir teoloë, missioloë, kerke en ander rolspelers in sending.

Hierdie studie doen 'n kritiese ondersoek van die sending onder Moslems deur vyf geselekteerde evangeliese kerke in Eldoret, Kenya, in die lig van die *missio Dei*. Die kerke sluit in die *Reformed Church of East Africa*, die *African Inland Fellowship Church*, die *Faith Baptist Church*, die *Presbyterian Church of East Africa* en die *Anglican Church of Kenya*. Die navorsing bekyk hoe en tot watter mate hierdie kerke poog om die mandaat te implementeer. Met die gebruik van data uit mondelinge onderhoude, vind die studie dat sendingbetrokkenheid by Moslems stadig en gefragmenteer is. Die kerke word gekonfronteer met uitdagings soos die gebrek aan 'n konkrete begrip van God se mandaat vir sending, interne struweling, finansiële beperkinge en die afskeep van vroue en die jeug.

Die ondersoek kom tot die slotsom dat dit nodig is dat die geselekteerde kerke hulle sendingbenaderings hersien en heroorweeg met die doel voor oë om hulle maniere van interaksie met die Moslems te verbeter. In die laaste plek formuleer die studie 'n geldige model vir hierdie doel.

Sleutelwoorde: Kerk, Evangelies, Sending, die *Missio Dei*, Moslem.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

‘God granted his favour and love because He wanted to do it, not because anyone naturally deserved it or attracted it by his or her own volition’¹.

1.1 BACKGROUND

At the core of the divine message in the entire Bible is God’s mission — a means through which God is committed to redeem His people from eternal condemnation to eternal glorification. At stake is the role of the Church as God’s instrument in advancing mission to people of other faiths, Muslims at Eldoret in particular.

The study critically examines mission to Muslims by five selected evangelical churches in Eldoret, Kenya, in light of the *missio Dei*. It investigates how and the extent to which these churches have sought to implement the mandate. The study formulates a viable model that may be used to advance the *missio Dei* effectively. The investigation covers a period of fifteen years (1994-2009). The select churches are the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA), the African Inland Fellowship Church (AIFC), the Faith Baptist Church (FBC), the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK).

The term evangelical as used here means ‘being committed to the centrality of Christ, historic Christian orthodoxy, and the urgency to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed, calling the world to repentance and faith’ (Tennent, 2010:225).

The centrality nature of Christ is material because He provides the critical link for the *missio Dei* in the Old and New Testaments. Thus, without Christ the plan of salvation would be futile. Concerning the *missio Dei*, there is hardly a universally accepted definition (Flet, 2010:5, 35, 76), but David Bosch’s definition comes close to providing a working definition that guides the discussion. Bosch defines the *missio Dei* as ‘primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church (Israel) is privileged to participate’ (Bosch, 2009:392).

Most Christian churches have the desire to accept new converts into their congregations (McGavran, 1980:38-43). The selected churches are no exception. The Reformed Church of East Africa was established in 1944 and has since grown to a denomination of more than 110,000 members. The RCEA has been involved in

¹ (Kaiser Jr., 2009:172) - Recovering the unity of the Bible: one continuous story, plan, and purpose.

mission among the Muslims since 1995 and the local congregation in Eldoret has recorded three members coming from a Muslim background.

The African Inland Fellowship Church was founded in 1940 and has since grown to become a denomination of more than 120,000 members. Unlike other evangelical denominations, the AIFC has an organized mission group to Muslims. However, the problem with this is that their missionaries engage Muslims in North Eastern and Coastal parts of Kenya and as a result nothing much is on record as far as Muslim engagement in Eldoret is concerned.

The Faith Baptist Church has been in existence since the late 1970s. Its initial membership was approximated at 10,000 and its current membership is about 50,000. The FBC got involved in mission among the Muslims back in 1985 and by 1995 it had managed to win two members to its congregation in Eldoret. After 15 years of engagement, the FBC has managed to record a total of ten Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) in Eldoret.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa has been in existence since 1947 and has since grown to become a denomination of more than 100,000 members. This church has since 1995 been involved in mission among the Muslims, but has recorded only one convert in Eldoret.

The Anglican Church of Kenya was established in 1959 and has since risen to a membership of 90,000. However, its attempts to engage with Muslims with respect to mission over the last fifteen years have apparently been nominally successful. This is evidenced by the small numbers of Muslim converts who attend their churches. This suggests that the ACK is facing many obstacles in this regard. These include internal wrangling and inability of the churches to effectively nurture new converts.

Furthermore, evangelical churches are founded on beliefs and practices that are at variance with those of the Muslims. For example, whereas the former believe in the teachings and the authority of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and the saviour of the world (Sesi *et al.*, 2009:239-242), the latter reject such teachings and view Him as a prophet only (Qur'an 5:75; 19:30-35). These differences are part of the external factors that constitute a barrier in attempts by evangelicals to advance mission to Muslims.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The thesis is based on three issues. First, since Muslims do not recognize Jesus as the Son of God, advancing mission to them that is Trinitarian in nature remains problematic. This creates a dilemma that the evangelical churches may need to

address if they are to succeed in advancing mission to Muslims. Achieving a shift by Muslims from the belief in Mohammad (May Peace be upon Him) as the prophet to the recognition of Jesus Christ as the Son of God presents a challenge to the Evangelicals who seek to advance mission to the former. Achieving this goal would mean that they have to establish the validity of the Holy Bible, in particular the New Testament (NT), while failure to do so undermines the goal.

Apparently, the mere mention of Jesus as the Son of God to Muslims is potentially harming to any attempts to undertake the *missio Dei*. Essential to the success of the *missio Dei* is the work of the Holy Spirit, which facilitates conversion of people from Islam to Christianity.

In essence, then, the responsibility of the evangelical churches is to be the instrument of God's mission. Moreover, it is not the preachers who convert people, but the Holy Spirit. For this reason, *missio Dei* is not merely centred on Jesus Christ alone, but rather on the Trinity. The failure of Muslims to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Son of God is by extension a rejection of the Holy Spirit, and in turn, presumed rejection of God the Father. The latter creates a paradox on the part of the Muslims who belief in *Tahwid*² i.e. the unity and oneness of God, as opposed to the existence of the Trinity. Additionally, it raises missiological issues in evangelization, such as cultural relativism (the belief that all cultures are equally good, as no culture has the right to stand in judgment of others) and religious pluralism (Stott, 2002:21).

Pluralists do not recognize the need for demonstrating Biblical support for their view, as this may result in the apparent superiority of Christianity over other religions (Tennent, 2010:204). They advocate a new idea of revelation, which Christians have over the years understood as God's disclosure of truth to humanity. They believe He did this generally in ways accessible to all people through nature and conscience, especially in the Scriptures, and importantly in Jesus Christ. Accordingly, truth is not '*disclosed*' to us but '*discovered*' by us through our experience. The effect is that the writings of different religions are thought to be different discoveries of one God through human experience. Since different religions are taken to be different expressions of the absolute, each is believed to contain facets of truth (Fernando, 2002:169).

Whereas cultural relativism attempts to give a solution to the problem of ethnocentrism³ and premature judgments, Hiebert (2002:379-380) warns that

² According to Cragg 'Tauhid was the term used to describe that theological principle by which there was only God and God was one' (See Cragg, 1959:51).

³ Ethnocentrism is the human tendency to respond to other people's ways by using our own affective assumptions, and to reinforce these responses with deep feelings of approval or disapproval. When we are confronted by another culture, our own is called into question. Our

adopting total cultural relativism leads to the loss of such things as truth and righteousness. This complicates the determination of issues such as truth versus error, righteousness versus sin, godliness versus evil and hence, the danger of losing the gist of the gospel, which means there will be no reason for mission.

Second, the evangelical churches are facing challenges such as the inability to nurture new converts, which may be a barrier to carrying out effective mission. Two examples will suffice. On the one hand, these churches are unable to sufficiently address the loss of confidence in the Gospel in a vast majority of their youth who are growing up in a relativistic, pluralistic, entertainment-oriented society. On the other hand, most of the new members of the evangelical churches, who had been ushered into the church through evangelistic campaigns, remain inadequately equipped theologically (Tennent 2010:28).

Internal wrangling is a common feature in most of the evangelical (and indeed in most generally) churches in Kenya. In-fighting on issues of leadership and lack of a common stand on political issues have in the recent past betrayed any purported unity. Differences in opinion among evangelical leaders surrounding the 2005 Referendum (that sought public approval of the then new draft constitution⁴) brought such wrangling to the fore (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Like political leaders, church leaders, including those of the evangelical churches, openly adopted opposing views on contentious issues such as the status of the Kadhis Courts in the Proposed Draft Constitution.

The disagreement was not so much as to why such courts were provided for in the Draft Proposed Constitution, but rather, whether such inclusion constituted sufficient reason for voting against it. The thesis argues that such differences did not begin or end with politics, but are manifestations of wider internal conflicts that negatively impact on *missio Dei*. In such circumstances, internal conflicts among the evangelicals are a burden that invariably draws the attention of the Church away from the *missio Dei*. In contrast to evangelicals, Muslims were united (as they are always under UMA⁵) in their quest to ensure that their interests were safeguarded in the Proposed Draft Constitution. Ultimately, Kadhis Courts were entrenched in the

defense is to avoid the issue by concluding that our culture is better and other people are less civilized (Hiebert, 2002:378).

⁴Article 170 of the Constitution (2010) Republic of Kenya. Its article 24 provides that '[t]he provisions of this chapter on equality shall be qualified to the extent necessary for the application of Muslim law... to persons who profess the Muslim religion in matters relating to personal status, marriage, divorce and inheritance'.

⁵ This is a terminology embodying the concepts of *Dar al Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, which represent submission to the house of God and household of non-Islam still to be brought into such submission respectively. Thus, the household of Islam is aware of itself as a community that belongs together and does not belong elsewhere (See Cragg, 1959:189).

new Constitution of Kenya (2010).⁶ It is tenable to assert that, in seeking to advance mission, evangelicals may need to put their house in order first to enable them advance mission effectively. How unity may be enhanced, retained and implemented constitutes an integral part of the discussion in the thesis.

Third, the concept of *missio Dei* has varying definitions and is thus subject to different interpretations. To justify his perception of the nature of the *missio Trinitatis*, Schulz says, '*missio Dei* is the Trinitarian redemptive and reconciling activity in history, motivated by God the Father's loving will for the entire world, grounded in the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and carried out by the Holy Spirit of Christ through the means of grace...' (Schulz, 2009:97). This rendition suggests God's justification of man through the means of grace, and appears different from Stephen Bevan's and Roger Schroeder's definitions, which seem to suggest an expansion of mission to encompass the entire horizon of divine and human history. According to their definition, '*missio Dei* encompasses the very mission of God in creation, redemption and continual sanctification', hence, every act of God is properly described as mission for the simple fact that God is missionary by nature (Bevans B. And Schroeder P.:2004:288).

Whether *missio Dei* should be defined from a Trinitarian perspective or from its two other elements i.e. the orientation to the kingdom of God and the missionary character of the Church (both of which developed independently from the doctrine of the Trinity), remains unresolved (Flet, 2010:76-77). Furthermore, some scholars argue that since *missio Dei* as a concept has been in existence for about fifty years, it is still in a transition (Kinnamon, 2005:389-390)⁷. Moreover, the concept is necessary, but it has a 'flawed Trinitarian basis, complex range, and lack of cohesion', all of which have left it mired in controversy (Flet, 2010:76). These could give rise to misunderstandings that range from the content of the concept to its application and effect.

Thus, efforts by evangelicals, in particular the selected churches, to advance mission are hindered by both internal and external factors. Hence, the churches need a workable model to enable them to advance mission effectively. This is desirable, but determining such a model remains a challenge to church leaders, missionaries,

⁶Article 24 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides that '[t]he provisions of this chapter on equality shall be qualified to the extent necessary for the application of Muslim law... to persons who profess the Muslim religion in matters relating to personal status, marriage, divorce and inheritance'.

⁷A report on the World Mission Conference Athens 2005 by Michael Kinnamon in International Review of Mission Vol 94, Issue 374, 25 March 2009.

scholars and other stakeholders. In seeking to resolve the problem, the thesis attempts to answer the following questions:

1.3 KEY RESEARCH QUESTION

How and to what extent may the selected evangelical churches effectively advance and maintain the *missio Dei* among Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya?

In order to systematically answer the key research question, the following specific issues are addressed:

- (i) What is the Biblical perspective of the mission of the Church to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei*?
- (ii) What is the Theological perspective of the mission of the Church to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei*?
- (iii) What is the nature and emerging trends with regard to the mission of the selected evangelical churches to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya, in light of the *missio Dei*?
- (iv) What viable model can the selected evangelical churches adopt to advance *missio Dei* effectively in Eldoret, Kenya?

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study is to critically examine evangelical mission to Muslims in light of *missio Dei* in Eldoret, Kenya, and to propose a viable model for effective mission.

To achieve this aim, the following specific objectives underpin the study:

- (i) To establish the Biblical perspective of the mission of the Church to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei*.
- (ii) To study and outline the Theological perspective of mission of the Church to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei*.
- (iii) To study and outline the nature and emerging trends with regard to the mission of the selected evangelical churches to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya in light of the *missio Dei*.
- (iv) To propose a viable model that can be adopted by the select evangelical churches to advance *missio Dei* effectively in Eldoret, Kenya.

1.5 RATIONALE

The rationale comprises two aspects: the reasons for choosing the five churches and the importance of the study. The five churches were chosen mainly because, on one

hand, they form part of the main line churches, i.e. churches that were founded by the missionaries in the early twentieth century (Falk.1979:261-270). On the other hand, they share common attributes, such as their manner of worship and their commitment to advance *missio Dei* to people of other faiths, including Muslims.

The selected churches face common challenges, such as internal leadership wrangles and an inability to nurture new converts, both of which negatively impact on mission. The researcher has lived in Eldoret and has attended worship services and the evangelistic campaigns of some of the selected churches. As a result the discussion is mainly carried out from a practical rather than an abstract perspective, an aspect that enhances the credibility of the study.

During the period covered by the study, mosques and Muslim activities have increased in Eldoret, especially after the Abuja Declaration of 1989⁸. Most of the mosques are built in urban centres and along roads. These developments strongly suggest that evangelicals were seeking to advance mission at a time when the Muslims were busy consolidating their position in Eldoret.

The study is important in three ways. It sheds light on what *missio Dei* entails and how it should be understood and applied in practical terms. The various theological concepts that underpin *missio Dei*, such as *missio Trinitatis*⁹ and *missio ecclesiae* (Flet, 2010:47, 74), are complex. There is a need for academics, church leaders and other stakeholders to critically engage with these concepts with a view to promoting mission.

The other important aspect is that mission is God's mandate to His disciples that underlie both the Old and New Testaments. For example, in Mathew 24:14 the Bible is emphatic that the word of God shall be preached unto the whole world as a prelude to the second coming of Jesus Christ. By developing a feasible model, the study can become a useful point of reference for the selected churches in issues concerning mission to Muslims.

Finally, the model developed may be replicated by other evangelical churches in Kenya and other areas in Sub-Saharan Africa.

⁸ See the movement of Islam in Ethiopia:

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:Zx00TRRLJawJ:www.salvationgateminsty.org/islamicmovement.pdf+abuja+declaration+1989&hl=en&gl=za&pid=bl&srcid>. Accessed on 21stDecember, 2011.

⁹ Quoting J. Andrew Kirk, Flet writes, 'to speak about the *missio Dei* is to indicate, without any qualification, the *missio Trinitatis*' hence indicating the popular notion underlying *missio Dei* as the doctrine of the Trinity. However, he disagrees, asserting that no such necessary connection exists (Flet, 2010:47).

1.6 DEVELOPING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The thesis is founded on a theoretical framework comprising key assumptions and the main theoretical argument.

1.6.1 Key assumptions

- (i) *Missio Dei* is a concept in transition¹⁰, and while it is mired in varying definitions and interpretations, a study such as this, carried out in a specific local area, would, (among other things), identify the challenges faced by evangelicals and shed light on how mission may successfully be advanced to Muslims.
- (ii) A viable model is desirable.

1.6.2 The Main Theoretical Argument

The thesis argues that a viable model would be one that embodies the tenets of *missio Dei*, and that is capable of effective implementation within an environment of religious pluralism. Extensive literature and the interviews undertaken enabled the researcher to identify and assess the initiatives, as well as the mechanisms that may meaningfully translate theory into reality. Hopefully, the outcome would enable the selected churches become better equipped for mission.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve the objectives, the data was assessed from different perspectives by use of interview schedules and focus group discussion guides. These were necessary to achieve reliability and validity of the questions asked, information secured and appropriate applications made (Elliston, 2011:55). These two instruments further helped to establish factors relating to the question of how and what actual practices the evangelical churches employ as part of their mission to the Muslims.

1.7.1 Research design

The study is largely qualitative, undertaken within the evangelical tradition (Couch, Mal., 2003) by using descriptive and analytical approaches. It focuses on identifying, describing, and providing explanations relating to the common themes regarding the evangelical mission to Muslims in light of the *missio Dei*. To arrive at this goal, a qualitative research method was used to gather and analyse data. However, in a few

¹⁰ "Though fifty years have passed since its inception, Scherer laments that "we are in the midst of a transition" and have "not yet fully grasped the meaning of a move toward the kingdom orientation, which closely correlates with the Trinitarian *Missio Dei* view point' (Flet, 2010:76).

instances, such as the oral interviews, quantitative methods were used, and where this was done, the study adopted a mixed method approach (Creswell, 2003:24-27; Morse, 1991:120-123). The method therefore involved collecting, analysing and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2006:11135-07-9105-3). Quantitative data was used to enhance the performance of qualitative data.

The following methods were used to achieve the objectives.

- (i) In order to establish a Biblical perspective on the mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei*, an exegetical study of selected passages in Scripture were undertaken according to the 'grammatico-historical method' (Bartholomew, *et al.* 2003). In addition to the Scripture analysis, the study offers a review of the relevant literature.
- (ii) Literature review was done to study and outline the Theological perspective of the mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei*.
- (iii) In order to identify and examine the nature and current practices and challenges of the selected churches with regard to mission, semi-structured interviews (face-to-face) (Kvale, 1996:97) were conducted and self-administered interview questionnaires on mission to Muslims were served to the leadership, membership and followership of each church.
- (iv) In order to identify and propose a viable model, empirical findings from interviews and the information gathered from questionnaires were evaluated and conclusions drawn appropriately.

1.7.2 Population and sampling techniques

Sampling is the process through which decisions are made regarding what and how to sample. A non-probability purposeful sampling (Dahlgren, *et al.* 2004:14-16) was used to obtain a sample of informants that helped in gathering information based on how the five select churches have been doing mission to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya.

The target population for the study was drawn from the five evangelical churches with a total of 238 respondents, 15 member groups and 34 focus groups. The distribution was as follows: (i) The Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA), 3 church member groups consisting of 7 focus groups were interviewed; (ii) The African Inland Fellowship Church (AIFC), 3 member church groups with 9 focus groups were interviewed; (iii) The Anglican Church of Kenya - Huruma (ACK), 3 member church groups with 8 focus groups took part in the study; (iv) The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), 3 member church groups with 5 focus groups were involved; (v)

The Faith Baptist Church Eldoret (FBC), 3 member church groups with 6 focus groups were involved. Table 1 below schematically illustrates the participation by denomination.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by denomination

Denomination	Frequency	Percentage
AIFC	45	18.5
FBC	37	15.5
ACK	65	27.3
PCEA	35	14.7
RCEA	56	23.5
Total	238	100.0

The respondents in table 1 above were randomly selected from an approximate equal cross-section of the church hierarchy that engages in evangelical theology, and the undertaking of inter-cultural mission in Eldoret. The variation in numbers was due to difference in the sizes of the five churches vis-a-vis church growth and mission over the last fifteen years. Face-to-face interviews were appropriate where a small number of participants were interviewed (Gillham, 2000:11). Moreover, the criterion for selection was random with a view to obtaining an almost equal cross-section of adult men, adult women, and teenage males and females in each church. This was done to obtain a balanced view of the work of evangelical theology, inter-cultural mission and the work of the Gospel in general.

1.7.3 Data collection procedure

The researcher conducted oral interviews in English that were voice-recorded. The principle of bracketing was applied to ensure that pre-understanding information did not influence the data. Bracketing involves the researcher holding back ideas, presumptions, and personal understanding when listening to, interacting with, and reflecting on the stories of informants (Moustakas, 1994, Cited in Creswell, 2007:11-13), to avoid influencing the description of the phenomenon under study. Furthermore, for the enhancement of reliability, field notes were recorded in a diary. The researcher monitored the voice-recording and took notes whenever there was a technical problem.

Colaizzi's (1978:726-735) data analysis method guided the assessment of qualitative data. The assessment started with listening to the voice recordings,

reading and re-reading of the informant's experience descriptions, and extracting important statements from the description. Thereafter, the researcher formulated the meaning derived from these statements. Furthermore, informants' statements were divided into meaning units, which were condensed into more abstract forms of text that created codes, categories, and themes. To validate the informants' experiences, the findings were taken back to most of the informants to see how it compared to their experiences. Finally, changes obtained from informants were incorporated into the final description. The bracketing principal was observed throughout so as to ensure that the trustworthiness of the findings is guaranteed. The quantitative data analysis was conducted using a statistical produce and service solutions (SPSS) computer programme (latest version). In general, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Reliability analysis was done to determine Cronbach's alpha value before creating an index.

1.7.4 Validity of the research instrument

Validity is the ability of an instrument to measure the variable that it is intended to measure (Elliston, 2011:57-59). It applies to both the design and the methods of the research. Validity in data collection means that the findings truly represent the phenomenon measured. It is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. Valid claims are arguably solid claims. Elliston (2011:56) reiterates that validity refers to asking the right questions, securing the right information and making appropriate applications.

The interview guide designed to tap information from the respondents was validated by relevant personnel from the department of post-graduate studies of the North West University, Potchefstroom campus. The tool was content and face validated to ensure that the items presented to the respondents were able to collect the required data to answer the objectives of the study.

1.7.5 Reliability of the research instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, and repeatability of a data collection instrument, with consistent results if repeated over time or used by two different investigators. It concerns the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials or the tendency towards consistency found in repeated measurements (Elliston, 2011:62).

To test the reliability of the instrument a pilot study was conducted among two groups from other evangelical churches in Eldoret, Kenya that did not take part in the actual survey (Elliston, 2011:63). This population was randomly picked across all the

institutions under study. The collected data was transcribed and interpreted to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. After two weeks the same tool was administered and the results of the two tests were analysed to ensure that responses were coherent and produced the same information.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One:	Introduction
Chapter Two:	Biblical perspective of the mission of the Church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i>
Chapter Three:	Theological perspective of the mission of the Church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i>
Chapter Four:	The nature and current trends regarding the mission to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya
Chapter Five:	A viable model
Chapter Six:	Conclusion

Table 2: Schematic presentation of the correlation between chapters 2, 3 and 5

Problem statement	Aim and Objectives	Methodology
The main research question of this study is: How and to what extent may the selected evangelical Churches effectively advance and maintain the <i>Missio Dei</i> among Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya?	The main aim of this study is to critically <i>examine</i> evangelical <i>mission to</i> Muslims in the light of <i>missio Dei</i> in Eldoret, Kenya and to propose a viable model for effective <i>mission</i> .	This missiological study is undertaken from within the evangelical tradition.
What is the Biblical perspective of the mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> ?	To establish the Biblical perspective of the mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> .	In order to establish a Biblical perspective on mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> , an exegetical study of selected passages in Scripture will be undertaken according to

		the 'grammatico-historical method' (Bartholomew, et al. 2003), as well as a review of the relevant literature.
What is the Theological perspective of mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> ?	To study and outline the Theological perspective of mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> .	Literature review will be done to study and outline the Theological perspective of mission of the church to people of other faiths in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> .
What is the nature and emerging trends with regard to the mission of the selected evangelical churches to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> ?	To study and outline the nature and emerging trends with regard to the mission of the selected evangelical churches to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya in light of the <i>missio Dei</i> .	In order to identify and examine the nature and current practices and challenges of select churches with regard to mission, semi-structured interviews (face-to-face) (Kvale, 1996:97) will be conducted and self-administered interview questionnaires served on the leadership, membership and followership of each church on mission to Muslims.
What viable model can the selected evangelical churches adopt to advance <i>missio Dei</i> effectively in Eldoret, Kenya?	To propose a viable model that can be adopted by the selected evangelical churches to advance <i>missio Dei</i> effectively in Eldoret, Kenya.	In order to identify and propose a viable model, empirical findings from interviews and the information gathered from questionnaires will be evaluated and conclusions drawn as appropriate.

CHAPTER TWO |

MISSION TO PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS IN LIGHT OF THE *MISSIO DEI*: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

'Our mandate for world evangelization is the whole Bible...It is to be found in the creation of God... in the promises of God... in the Christ of God...in the Spirit of God and in the church of God...' ¹¹.

2.1 Introduction

Mission to people of other faiths is a concept embedded in the entire Bible. By examining the various ways and principles that characterise mission in the Bible, this chapter discusses the subject for the purpose of placing mission in its appropriate context in the study. It is within such a context that the varying views regarding mission of the church to people of other faiths may be understood, assessed and appreciated. The Old Testament (OT) perspective is fundamental in establishing both the history and content of redemption and glorification—the fulfilment of which is realised in the New Testament (NT). This chapter is divided into five sections. The first introduces the chapter as a whole; section two discusses the concept of *missio Dei* and places it in an appropriate context in the Bible. The third and fourth sections deal with the perspectives of the Bible regarding the mission of the church and mission to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei* respectively. Section five concludes the chapter.

2.2 CONTEXTUALISING MISSIO DEI

The concept of *missio Dei* (God's mission) underpins all the teachings of the Bible as far as church mission to people of other faiths is concerned. Historically, mission signifies the deliberate attempt of individuals, groups, and churches to evangelize non-Christian societies. Mission groups work by acting in a Christ-like way towards strangers or people living beyond their boundaries, whether religious, cultural, social or other. As a result Warneck (1987:1) defines mission as evangelism to build the church in a non-Christian world. McGvran (1983:26) looks at mission as carrying the Gospel across cultures, especially to people of other faiths who owe no allegiance to Jesus Christ. In other words, engaging people of other faiths or undertaking church mission is understood in terms of the *missio Dei*. Appreciating the role of the *missio Dei* in this way implies acknowledging the purpose for which the earth and all therein

¹¹ John Stott, 'The Bible in World Evangelization', in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement (ed. R.D. Winter and S.C. Hawthorne; Pasadena: William Carrey Library, 2002) 4.

is given by God. Wright (2006:399) says that Yahweh, the God of Israel, owns the whole universe. The Psalmist agrees, 'the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it' (Psalms 24:1)

It is thus tenable to assert that since God is behind 'all,' then His *missio Dei* operates within the sphere of 'all' i.e. its context includes all that God created. 'All' signifies the whole of creation, time and humanity within its scope. This is a universal claim that defines the story of the whole world as a public truth (Wright, 2006:54-55). To embrace this truth is to embrace a meta-narrative, a grand narrative that offers a creational beginning of all things, an interpretation of the meaning of the cosmic history in between, and an end with a renewed creation story. It is within this hermeneutical principle that the context of *missio Dei* is set.

2.2.1 Defining *missio Dei*

From the statement and claim above, it is plausible to define *missio Dei* as God's purposes in and out of His creation. However, since the church is involved in this *missio Dei* and there is the important aspect of people of other faiths, the question to ask is what the relationship between God's *missio Dei*, God's Church (encompassing God's faithful people) and the world (encompassing people of other faiths) entails? Bosch's balanced definition comes in handy in providing answers for these vital questions. In his delivery, Bosch (2009:390-393) sees mission as primarily an attribute of God as opposed to being primarily an activity of the church. God is a missionary God and so mission is a movement from God to the world whereby the Son and the Spirit through the Father owns mission in their triune nature. As an instrument, the church is included in this mission so that her participation in the movement of God presents God's love towards the people.

This definition of *missio Dei* resonates in Wright (2006:22-23), who recaps that if mission should be biblically informed and validated, then its meaning should include the church's committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation. Wright also differentiates between God's role and that of the Church. God is the owner of mission whilst the Church is a participant upon invitation and command of God. Moreover, the fact that Wright (2006:23) mentions the purpose of God's mission as redemption of God's creation fits well with Bosch's (2009:390) rendition that the church is an instrument of God's love in the world.

2.2.2 The Old Testament on *missio Dei*

In order to establish the role of the *missio Dei* in both the OT and the NT, one has to ask whether the definition offered above fits within the constraints of these two testaments. This means that one has to first establish God's attributes of *missio Dei* and then the church's.

According to Kaiser Jr. (2000:11), mission (*missio Dei*) points to a central action: the act of being sent with a commission to carry out the will of a superior, in this case God. Here, God is the one who is both acting and being acted upon. The fact that God is the sent one links the OT with the NT. Within God's action is His undeniable character that not only demonstrates the will to be sent, i.e. in the person of Christ, but also to engage other agents in the sending. God engages various persons and offices (e.g. patriarchs and prophets) to undertake different errands in the OT. In Genesis 12:1-3, Abraham was called upon to go to a place unknown to him, then Moses and Aaron were sent by God to deliver His people, Israel, from bondage (Exodus 3:10-15; Deuteronomy 34:11; I Samuel 12:8; Psalms 105:26). The prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah were among those sent by God to deliver His message to His people (Isaiah 55:11, 6:8; Jeremiah 14:14, 7:25, 25:4; Ezekiel 3:5-6).

Since God's *missio Dei* in the OT involves both God and the Church, it is necessary to understand the way in which mission is undertaken. The Old Testament is both the foundation of the church's mission to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei* and a revelation of God's plan of redemption for humanity from creation in Genesis to recreation in Revelation. This is because when the story of creation unfolds in Genesis, God's mission begins. In a dramatic way, the story of redemption soon follows, with man being commanded to fill and subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28). Moreover, Adam and Eve had to continue God's creation by bringing forth generations that would make people of many nations. By commanding them to be fruitful, God was creating a world of nations. Due to disobedience to God's laws, the two succumbed to temptation by Satan at the Garden of Eden. As a result, sin separated man from God. After the fall, God did not abandon man. Being missionary in nature, (Stott, 2002:9) God chose one nation, the Nation of Israel, to bless the other nations. This was to fulfil the prophecies of re-creation of nations in Revelation (21:1-3, 22:2).

2.2.2.1 God's *missio Dei* defined in the OT

In the OT, mission is central to both theology and missiology (Wright, 2010:35-47)¹². Attempting to define mission is therefore crucial. It is crucial both to the understanding of biblical theology and mission, which is seen as the mother of all theology (Bevans B. et al, 2004:1). However, defining mission in the OT is problematic and an insurmountable task. Furthermore, it can be argued that mission in the Old Testament has been in existence as long as God Himself has been in existence (Jr. Kaiser, 2002:10). Hence, avoiding the Old Testament mission is equivalent to avoiding God Himself in mission. Doing that would be in itself suicidal, because without God's self-revelation in the OT, one risks diminishing God's love, making it appear smaller than it really is (Denver, 2006:19). Reflecting on these arguments, several ideas arise.

First, mission in the OT, just like in the NT, is about *missio Dei* (Bosch, 2002:59). This means that God is sending Himself to redeem the world. As a missionary (Aagaard, 1974:421), God is the actor both in the sending and in the saving (Moltmann, 1977:64). He determines the times, model and objects of His mission (Jr. Willis and Blackaby, 2002:55). Also, He decides whom to engage in His mission, for example Israel as a nation in the OT and the Church in the NT (1Peter 2:9). God in mission is God in His triune nature¹³. It is God the father sending God the Son; God the father and God the son sending God the Holy Spirit; (Newbigin, 1978:20-31), and God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world (Bosch, 2009:390). Stott (2002:3) concludes that Christians must understand the ground on which the Christian mission rests. This is because with the world's existing opposition towards the Christian missionary enterprise, obedience to a God of mission is a must.

Second, mission in the OT is about God's message. Contrary to the perceptions of many people that the OT does not have a missionary message or vision (Jr. Kaiser, 2002:10), a study of biblical theology presents a message about God's self-revelation to human beings for the purposes of redemption. For this

¹² Wright's definition of mission encapsulates what he refers to as world mission and the Bible story. According to him, mission does not begin with the Great Commission, rather it concerns a whole story as narrated in the Scripture; of one who gave the commission, of a people with whom the commission was given, of a Messiah who came to accomplish the mission and of the whole world as the arena of the mission. This is what Wright calls a biblical theology for life and the mission of God's people.

¹³ The concept of *missio Dei* has become influential and enduring according to its proponents. This is because unless Christian mission is understood as participating in the mission of God, i.e. being derived from His own very nature, the triune nature, one risks undertaking in a mission that is otherwise not biblically sound (Lalsangkima Pachu in International Review of mission: Vol. LXXXIX No. 355 page 543).

reason, Stott (2002:3) rightly observes that God reveals His will in the Bible. Consequently, this happens through the interpretation of the events and experiences written down in the Scriptures (Hafemann and House, 2007:17). This message is embedded in His living word, the Bible. The Bible comprises two testaments, i.e. the OT and the NT. The OT message provides a background to the NT message, which is a fulfilment of the OT message (Verkuyul, 2002:27). Without the OT message, there can never be the NT message (Dever, 2006:19), hence without the OT mission, there can never be the NT mission. Rightly put, “without the Bible, world evangelization would not only be impossible, but actually inconceivable” (Stott, 2002:21).

Third, the OT mission concerns God’s people (Exodus 19:5-9). God’s people are drawn from the whole world (Exodus 6:7), wherever God placed them (Exodus 3:7-10). Without God, these people would not be in the world (Leviticus 26:12). They exist in the world for a purpose given by God Himself, i.e. to be royals and priests (1 Peter 2:9). They are God’s people because God created them in His own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1:26-28). The image of God in them mandates them to glorify Him (Hawthorne, 2002:34). When they do so, they obey His commands and hence become His people (Pate et al. 2004:23 cf. 3 John 4-6). This new identity is important because it gives them a direct link to His abode and glory without which they lack a personal fellowship with God (Jr. Willis and Blackaby, 2002:55). It is because of this fellowship that God engages His people in His mission (Hawthorne, 2002:35). Because they are His people, they must then participate in the priesthood and be agents of blessings to all nations of the earth (Jr. Kaiser, 2002:14) (cf. Exodus 19). Again, this spells the reason why God created them purposely for His intentions to worship Him and to continue His creation.

Fourth, mission in the OT takes cognizance of the attributes of God. First, God is the creator of the heavens and earth and all there in (Genesis 1:1). Second, He created man in His own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). God created human beings to rule over creation and also to continue His creation (Genesis 1:28). To continue in God’s creation is to be engaged in His mission (Coggins, 2001:24). This is why the promise to procreate is repeated three times in the book of Genesis alone as a reminder of God’s love, justice and forgiveness to the generations of the world (Genesis 3:15, 9:27 and 12:3). Third, God is a judge. His judgements are evident in His actions after the fall and throughout the entire Bible (Genesis 3:15, Revelation 20:11-14). In Psalms 7:11, God is presented as a righteous judge who expresses His wrath every day. This includes the end when He shall bring sin to an end. Judgement will begin with God’s children (1 Peter 4,

Jeremiah 25) and then to the rest of the people symbolized by the Babylonians (2 Thessalonians 1:8 cf Jeremiah 25:29). Fourth, God is a loving God. He demonstrates His love by forgiving and providing the forgiveness of sin and also by sending His son to come and die for the world (John 3:16). The love of God is central to intercultural mission, both in the OT and the NT. This is the most important component of God's *missio Dei* as far as His attributes go.

In the OT, God's actions of love are seen when He calls Abraham, covenants with him and fulfils that covenant. In the NT, God demonstrates His love in the cross when Christ dies (John 3:16). The life, death and resurrection of Jesus provide a climax to God's saving grace to a fallen world. This act of saving grace demonstrated by such a great love presents God as a just God. In the cross, justice and mercy kissed each other and hence by His death, Christ conquered the world and the devil to become a King and a judge. The Bible describes Him as an eternal King (Psalms 10:16), a Prince of peace, Lord of Lords (Isaiah 9:6). His kingdom begins right from creation in Genesis to the end in Revelations when He re-creates the heavens and earth. As a King, God is sovereign. His sovereignty presents a proper view of His everlasting kingdom (Ellisen, 2002:17). Therefore, mission in the OT is about an eternal kingdom presented in the NT as a new beginning and a new covenant (Grant and Wilson, 2005:100).

2.2.2.2 God's approach to His missio Dei in the Old Testament

The way God approaches mission in the OT presents Him as the author of mission (Bosch 2009:392). This is evidenced by the way He relates with His people, Israel, and how He deals with the people of other nations. At creation, man was endowed with the ability to worship and serve God in truth and spirit (Genesis 1:26-28 John 4:24). Worship provided mankind with an opportunity to know God and His creation. The knowledge of God enabled man to understand God's character. That character was mainly embedded in God's commandments. Knowing God therefore created an obligation upon man to obey God's commandments. Hence, knowing God is an essential tool of succeeding in mission.

- *Created in God's image to serve God's purpose*

Goldsworthy (1991:29) reiterates that God makes Himself known to people. This knowledge of God comes when people study the word of God i.e., when they participate in His theology. God reveals Himself to people by letting them know and understand His will. This explains why God called Abraham and revealed Himself to Moses in the wilderness. It also affirms God's action when dealing with His people,

Israel. For example, the book of Joshua (8:30-35, 23:16-; 24) records the events that took place between God and His children in Shechem not once, but twice, in order to reaffirm their commitment to the ways of Yahweh, and to demonstrate their understanding of the knowledge of Yahweh in their lives (Grant and Wilson, 2005:34). The call to choose who to serve spells God's dealing with both His people and their enemies (Joshua 24:16-18). Therefore, worship between God and His people is one way that the OT approaches mission.

- *A command to fill the earth*

Procreation and the command to fill the earth is another way in which God's mission is fulfilled in the OT. This command, which began with Adam and Eve in creation (Genesis 1:28), was repeated to Abraham (Genesis 15:5). As long as humankind remained faithful to God, His approach to mission was well defined, simple to understand, and easy to follow. However, it was disobedience to God's rule and approach to His *missio Dei* that made God redefine His approach to mission in the OT. Since man could not come to worship God freely after sinning, he needs a mediator and a saviour. However a saviour could not come until man had fully understood the separation caused by sin. There was a need for man to appreciate the new status in order to understand the new approach of God's mission. Only then could man realize how he had lost eternity and the freedom to worship God.

- *A new status, a new understanding, a new approach to mission*

Sin reduced man's glory and his character from a perfect worshiper of God to a sinful state and to slavery. Worse, mankind would surely perish in his condition unless God intervened urgently. Not only did sin rob man of his glory, sin also brought shame and nakedness. This is because after the fall came the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:4, 22). There came the need for dress to cover nakedness, physically and spiritually (Genesis 3:10, 21). By falling into the trap of disobeying the commands of God, sin had stripped mankind of God's righteousness and therefore man could no longer commune with God freely (Romans 3:23). God's intervention in providing for a cloth from a sacrificed animal provided not only for the covering of their physical nakedness, but also for a cleansing of their sins so that their spiritual nakedness was catered for too (Genesis 3:21). This act of God's grace and mercy defined God's first approach to mission.

God's second approach to mission in the OT is given in Genesis 3:15 where God acts both as a judge and a saviour. On the one hand, by pronouncing a curse on both Adam and Eve, God condemns mankind to a life of misery, toil and death if

they fail to trust and obey Him. On the other hand, by pronouncing a judgement on the serpent and the serpent's offspring (talking of the enmity between Eve and her offspring and that of the serpent and its offspring), God made for a permanent solution to the problem of sin and prophetically sealed the fate of the devil and offered a free way of salvation to mankind. This is a classic approach to mission, not only in the OT, but also in the NT.

Third, by commanding Adam and Eve to fill the earth and also by speaking through His servant Abraham, God's *missio Dei* saw a perfect approach of mission in the OT with God acting as the object of mission and man playing the role of an agent (Genesis 12). Later on, God uses the nation of Israel to redefine His approach to OT mission as more centripetal (Bosch, 1980:79)¹⁴. Bosch explains the analogy of light in Isaiah 42:6. The light illuminates and draws attention to God's people. This light also beams across the frontiers to allow salvation to reach the four corners of the world. Furthermore, the light symbolizes God's salvation i.e. His *missio Dei*, which has the ability to draw people to it from darkness (centripetally) and yet at the same time goes out to them, (centrifugally) c.f. Isaiah 49:6.

Through His acts of mercy, God delivered Israel from her enemies and provided her with guidance in the wilderness. This is evidenced by God's continuous obvious presence during the Exodus as a cloud by day and fire by night (Numbers 10:11-12). Even though Israel failed hopelessly in realizing God's redemptive acts, God never stopped providing for His people, even up to their exile (Exodus 40:17, 34-37; Numbers 1:1; 9:1,2,11,15-23) cf Psalms 78:17-19. The engagement of man in God's *missio Dei* in the OT was not only limited to the nation of Israel. God engaged the kings and people from other nations to accomplish His mission in the OT e.g. when Israel sinned against God, God gave them into the hands of the Midianites for seven years (Judges 6:1-10). This was to remind the Israelites of their broken covenant and the consequences of their actions.

Fourth, Israel's engagement as a nation in God's mission in the OT saw God making use of the patriarchs and prophets to advance His mission. These were special agents of God's mission charged with the secrets of heaven. They were faithful and willing to undertake the *missio Dei* wherever He sent them. Often, the

¹⁴¹⁴ 'It has to be noted that a centrifugal pattern of mission was at work to some degree in the OT as well, as in the example of Jonah, or in that of a nameless Jewish girl who proclaimed to Naaman, the leprous captain of the Syrian army, the healing power of Israel's power of God. In the same way the centripetal force is not fully abolished in the NT, and because of it some are attracted to the church. However, Christians cannot rely on it, and must make up their minds to bring the Gospel "to the ends of the earth" cf Matthew 28:18-20, 24:14. Available at: http://www.btz.lt/English/Giedrius/works/Mission_in_OT_and_NT.pdf); Accessed on 28th March, 2011.

Spirit of God would move upon the hearts of these men and women and they would prophecy according to the will of God. A good example of these prophets is the prophet Jonah. However, Jonah's reactions and actions demonstrate man's place in *missio Dei* as just an agent as opposed to God's place. It also serves as a warning to all who engage in this mission that the business (MagGravan 1983:26-29) will forever remain God's and that anyone else has a privileged position. His mercies and grace to the Ninevites against the expectations of Jonah the prophet (Jonah 1-4) is a lesson to us today as we engage in the church's mission to people of other faiths.

2.2.2.3 Doing Mission Centripetally

The call of Israel presents a perspective of doing mission in the OT. As a chosen nation, Israel acted as a centre of mission where other nations came to receive blessings. This way of doing mission in the OT is called centripetal (Bosch, 1980:78-79) cf (Grant and Wilson, 2005:67). Expounding on the OT role of Israel, Bosch (1980:78) defines the importance of centripetal mission in OT by pointing out the significance of Jerusalem or Zion in the OT universalistic passages. Accordingly, the centripetal category is employed to give expression to the conviction that God, not Israel, is the author of mission. This is because as a witness to the world, Israel's role entailed her participation in the courtroom to witness in the case between God and the nations (Isaiah 42:1).

This strongly suggests that Israel had no message of her own to deliver, had no truth of her own to present or, any means to defend her role, other than that given to her by God. Consequently, Jerusalem became God's seat of justice (Bosch, 1980:79). It was the place where the nations heard about Yahweh, the God of Israel. Invariably referred to as Zion, this was a place where God's people came and witnessed God's mercies and judgements (Zachariah 8:7-8, 9-19). Grant and Wilson (2005:69) explain, 'alongside this exclusiveness of YHWH in covenant relation, with Israel there was also a definite universality regarding YHWH's dealings with the nations' so that their movements were under the control of YHWH identified by the nations as 'EL Elyon'.

Bosch points out the passages in Isaiah 42:18-20 and 43:8-13 as metaphors that are useful in understanding the role of Israel as a servant and witness to Yahweh. Whereas Israel appeared as a witness in the courtroom, Israel was not required to speak; rather Israel was expected to shine before the nations. In other words, God was the one making Israel visible (Bosch, 2002:59). This fact is supported by Bosch's (2009:392) definition of *missio Dei* i.e. 'mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for

the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church (Israel) is privileged to participate' cf (Bosch, 2009:10). As a nation charged with this privilege, Israel must not forget her election and existence, which had no goal in itself apart from that of *missio Dei* (Wright, 2010:72).

For Israel to remain an agent of God's centripetal mission role in the OT, the people had to live according to the commands of the Lord as contained in Scripture. The children of Israel were warned against making covenants or treaties with pagan nations and their gods. According to Grant and Wilson (2005:24 cf Exodus 23:32, Deuteronomy 7:2), the nations were a snare to be resisted at all times. As observers of Israel (2005:70) cf (Deuteronomy 4:6-8, 28:10), these nations were to be avoided by all means. The commandments given to Israel also served to distinguish Israel as a nation (and also as a culture) from other nations, from there her role to undertake intercultural mission among other nations in the OT. It is by obeying and meeting the conditions outlined in Exodus 19 and Leviticus 26 that the people of Israel could be blessed (Pate et al, 2004:41). Conversely, their disobedience brought them dire consequences. These included God's withdrawal of His protection, resulting in their being taken to captivity and experiencing terrible curses that characterized their generations (Deuteronomy 28:25, 64-68).

2.2.2.4 The Church's mission to people of other faiths in light of the missio Dei in the OT

Mission to people of other faiths is about a missionary God with a purpose that is manifested in the creation of the heavens and the Earth in the beginning (Genesis 1:1), a purpose that ends with redemption when He re-creates the heavens and the earth (Revelation 21:1) cf (Wright, 2010:48). It is also about an interaction between Godliness and ungodliness.

Genesis 1-11

Apparently, Genesis 1-11 forms the core of understanding the church's mission to people of other faiths in the OT.

First, the beginning presented a command to man to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:27-28). This meant that God was reaching out to the masses. He was interested in mission to people of other faiths i.e. mission not only of one man, but of many nations on earth. Without reaching out to the masses, the command to multiply would be meaningless. For this purpose, Wright (2010:49) says that we did not become Christians before we were human beings; nor do we cease to be human beings because we have become Christians. For this reason, he reminds Christians

that they have a responsibility towards humanity as much as we do towards our Christianity.

The question that arises, then, is why God gave the command for multiplication. By giving such a command, one may argue that God intended that man continues with God's creation for the purpose of worshipping Him. In any event, worship is the highest degree of interaction between God and humanity (Piper, 2002:49). In Luke 10:27, God commands man to Worship (love) Him with all his heart, soul, strength and mind. Moreover, John 4:23 mentions of a day now, and yet to come, that true worshipers of God would worship God in truth and in spirit.

- *Establishment of mission to people of other faiths in the OT*

At the core of the creation of man, God put a culture of interaction between Him and humanity. This interaction is neither conditional nor selfish. It was done in an environment of free will on the part of God and in obedience to God on the part of man¹⁵. The researcher views this interaction as an establishment of cultural interaction in Godliness. Since God and man enjoyed free interaction, it is tenable to argue that God intended such interaction to characterise God's people – the people that Adam and Eve were to bring forth in obedience to the command of multiplication.

Wenham (1987:33) considers this as God's implicit promise to enable men to fulfil the command of multiplication. Unfortunately, the fall of man interfered with God's interaction with humanity. As between God's people, the division was clearly manifested in the deteriorating relationship between Abel and Cain, culminating in the latter killing the former (Genesis 4:8). The controversy that resulted in the killing is attributable to God's acceptance of Abel's worship and rejection of Cain's (Genesis 4:4-5). This infuriated Cain, who sinned by killing his brother¹⁶. Hence, interaction has consequences, some of which are beneficial and some painful.

¹⁵ The New Interpreter's Bible: general articles & introduction, commentary & reflections for each book of the Bible, including the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical books [in twelve volumes], vol 1 1994:356.

¹⁶ Kim expounds on the acts of God, describing them as capricious, i.e. unpredictable. She says that these acts contribute to our understanding of Cain's deteriorating state of envy. That he ended up killing his brother Abel without any indication of an ensued quarrel is proof that Cain's state of character had changed from bad to worse, so that he became the first murderer in history. Her further interrogations into this behaviour provide no cause whatsoever for Cain to commit murder unto his own blood brother, save for the fact that his name suggests 'acquiring' in Hebrew. This by extension explains the dire consequences of sin and the rate at which morality was degrading from godliness to ungodliness. From: Journal for the study of Pseudepigrapha, 'Cain and Abel in light of envy: a study in the history of interpretation of envy in Genesis 4:1-16 by Angela Y. Kim, 2001 12 65 page 69-70.

- *Implications of mission to people of other faiths in the OT*

According to Carson et al., God accepts sacrifices characterized only by perfection and cost (1994:64). The allusion here implies that when people interact with God, they must be wary of their interaction. When they come to God with a lie, they too will receive the equivalent of their lie (Malachi 1:6-14, Romans 12:1). On the other hand, when people come to God faithfully, the benefits are clear, for instance double portions of approval and blessings will follow them just like in the case of Abel (Leviticus 22:20-22, 2Samuel 24:24).

Another implication is the one defining the interaction, for instance when sinners realize their waywardness, God's grace is still sufficient to let them in. The only standard of measurement is their response to His conviction wrought by the work of His Spirit. This is why Cain still had a chance to enjoy God's blessings and protection despite his earlier acts against his brother Abel (Genesis 4:17-26)¹⁷. God's mercy embraces the murderer¹⁸. What does this act of grace suggest in the context of intercultural mission? It means that it has benefits and risks. The benefits are inescapable so that whenever Israel obeyed the Lord, they enjoyed His protection and consequently prospered (Leviticus 26:1-8). However, Israel's disobedience often led to their misery and eventually exile (Deuteronomy 29:24-25, 64-68). A special note should be taken into account here - everyone who willingly chooses to disobey the Lord will definitely risk a life of misery and shame. Those who joyfully obey the Lord will reap many benefits, including the blessings of eternal life in Christ Jesus (John 3:16). This is one of the issues the model developed in chapter five addresses.

It is important to note that interference is neither the same as nor tantamount to inability to continue with interaction. The fall of man interfered with the smooth running of affairs between God and His people, as well as amongst the people themselves. However, God's purpose in creation continued. Moreover, humanity continued struggling and living under the curse of sin, and still experienced the love and grace of God the creator. In addition, the timing of the command to multiply is important as it came before the fall¹⁹.

- *The role of masses in the mission to people of other faiths*

After the fall, a curse was pronounced. It did not only affect one man or one culture, but many cultures as is evidenced by the words, 'her seed' or 'offspring' and 'your

¹⁷ Ibid, page 71.

¹⁸ The New Interpreter's Bible, 1994:374.

¹⁹ Ibid, page 376.

seed 'or 'offspring (Genesis 3:15)..." This means that both individuals and masses were involved, both in the promise and in the curse (Romans 5:12ff). The aspect of masses implies that it was the whole of humanity that would have benefited from the promise and that was affected by the curse (Guthrie, 1970:23-24). Enmity between both the woman and the serpent and between their prospective offspring defined the interaction between the two parties. Such interaction is fundamentally intercultural, as it is between Godly people (the church) and ungodly people (those who are yet to be born again). It represents the children of Israel on one side as God's representatives and the people of other nations on the other side.

In this intercultural interaction, the Israelites represent the people who are on God's side, and the rest of humanity is on the other side. The people on God's side have a right to be called God's children (John 1:12) meaning that they know who their Father is and what He can do for them. This is the message they pass to people of other nations through mission. Further, the interaction defines the New Testament Christians, the followers of Christ and His teachings, as opposed to the non-Christians, the unbelievers. Finally, it represents the devil and his angels (together with the unsaved) versus Christ and the heavenly hosts together with the redeemed when the final judgement takes place (Revelation 19-22).

- *God's drastic intervention*

The fall of man came with various curses (Genesis 3:14-19), such as eating from the sweat of one's labour, pain in giving birth, and death. It is concluded with the expulsion of the human couple from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23). The punishment following the disobedience had a reversing effect, in part at least, evidenced by the blessings previously announced by God (Genesis 1:22, 28). However, humanity's struggles to survive and interact with God in a world dominated by sin and evil, not only alienated them from God, but caused Him (God) to intervene with measures that were dire and consequential. "Eventually", says Alexander and Rosner (2000:117), "the growth of human wickedness is so great that God intervenes, destroying through a flood all human beings apart from Noah and his closest relatives". Even with those measures, human cultures became more and more aggravated in sin. The gap between godliness and ungodliness became widened. Human hearts became and remained essentially unchanged (Genesis 8:21). By the tenth generation, it is recorded that the creation was reeling in negative

response so that God had to do something²⁰. Indeed, this was a greedy humanity acting upon a suffering earth (Wright, 2010:55).

Furthermore, Hafemann and House argue that although the motives of the divine curse and judgement are reflected throughout chapters 3-11 of Genesis, there are, nevertheless, many signs of God's grace extended to creation and humanity in the midst of this judgement. These signs are summed as follows: Promise of a human triumph over the serpent (Genesis 3:15), in the divine act of clothing the naked couple (Genesis 3:21), in the help God provided in the conception and birth of a son (Genesis 4:1) and in the various ways God blessed and provided for the sons of Adam in the next narrative (2007:261). More so, the presence of the witness of God's grace and provision allow not only for continued interaction, but also for a move towards a future restoration (2007:262).

- *Interaction between godliness and ungodliness*

When Genesis 6 speaks of the 'sons of God' as opposed to the 'sons of men', it makes a comparison between two cultures or people of two faiths that interact. The distinction comes out as the result of an interaction defined as marriage between the godly children (referred to as the sons of God) and the beautiful daughters of men (born to them as result of the increase in wickedness) cf. Genesis 6:1-3. Consequentially, this interaction of cultures (faiths) does not please God, from there His decision to wipe the wicked human race from the face of the earth (Genesis 6:7). However, Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. As a result, Noah, his household together with a part of creation, survived the flood (Genesis 6:8-22, 7:1-24). Referring to this favour, Goldsworthy (1991:113, 115) says that the act of preservation of mankind and the establishment of a line of people as the object of God's special redeeming love define God's commitment to His creation and the promise to preserve the earth.

With a new generation born from Noah's family, one would expect a new beginning, perhaps of a new and better human culture (faith). For, 'Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord' (Genesis 8, 9:1-17), meaning that his ways were godly (Genesis 8:20-22). In addition, God's language when He addressed Noah at the end of the flood clearly shows that He renewed His creation mandate. As a matter of fact, this is a fresh start for creation (Grant and Wilson, 2005:59). Man is charged with the same task as in the beginning i.e. to fill the earth and exercise authority over the rest of creation, but to do it with care and respect for life (Genesis 9:4). One would expect

²⁰ The New Interpreter's Bible, 1994:394.

much more from these new people in terms of human mission, God's purpose for creation. However, Noah's generation, just like his predecessors, sinned against God, so that his youngest son (Ham - the father of Canaan) beheld his father's nakedness without shame (Genesis 9:21-22). What followed was a curse on Ham's generation and blessings on both his older brothers (Shem and Japheth) (Genesis 9:24-28).

Noah's pronouncements on his sons had implications on their interaction. Canaan became a slave to both Shem and Japheth (Genesis 9:25). In addition, Shem was honoured with praises and blessings pronounced upon his God (Genesis 9:26). This means that Shem and Japheth had found favour in the eyes of the Lord, just like Abel had. Again, a repeat of God's command to increase and fill the earth was repeated to Japheth (Genesis 9:27). Above all, Japheth's descendants were allowed to interact and live with Shem's descendants. This is important given that blessings were to follow them. More so, they were to become masters and leaders of Canaan.

The story of humanity before and after the flood provides evidence of humanity's continued rejection of and indifference towards the authority of God (Genesis 8:21). As humanity proceeded from Noah's generation to Abraham's, interaction between Godliness and ungodliness continued, with wickedness increasing. Sodom and Gomorrah is a case in point (Genesis 19). Human beings no longer found Godliness appealing. Their interaction was selfish, humane and self-seeking. The tower of Babel in Genesis 11 is a climax to this kind of interaction. Man started experiencing evil ideas, human selfishness and lust for freedom and power (Genesis 11:4).

- *The Tower of Babel*

The idea of building the tower of Babel signifies the desire of the fallen man to be independent from God - for they said, '...so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth' (Genesis 11:4b). This claim has many implications. First, seeking their own name implied that they no longer recognized their identity as human beings created in the image of God. One may argue that they possibly wanted to become like God. By extension, they had accepted Satan's idea (which they never viewed as a lie) i.e. that by eating the fruit, they would be like God (Genesis 3:4-5). This probably explains the reason why they wanted their tower to reach up to the sky (Genesis 11:4a), up to God to be like Him.

Second, they did not want to be scattered all over the earth, a desire that contradicted God's command to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:27-28). Failing

to live up to this command of masses had implications, not only with regard to disobeying God's commandments, but also for His plan of salvation. It could be interpreted as a means with which man sought to: firstly, limit God to human cultural interaction and, secondly, that His purpose for creation would be in vain. Thirdly, by wanting to be united in language and purpose, humanity attempted to dictate God with regard to intercultural mission. Their actions would have meant that His promises to Abraham would be fulfilled only in the Old Testament, among the Jews and not the Gentiles.

In order to reach out to humanity, God once again took drastic action (Genesis 12:1-3). For the first time after the fall, God sent away Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, but only after He had given them a grand message of salvation (Genesis 3:15). The second drastic action came when God regretted His plan of creating men and sought to destroy them in the flood (Genesis 6:7 and 7). However, Noah's righteousness had spared humanity so that creation received a promise from God that He would not destroy it again with a flood (Genesis 8:20-22). This led to yet another grand message of salvation in Genesis 9:27.

In Genesis 11:5-9, God intervened with His mission yet again. By destroying the tower of Babel, God demonstrated His sovereignty over all creation. By confusing their languages so that they could not communicate effectively, God demonstrated that He is no respecter of persons, languages or cultures (Acts 10:34-35). By scattering them over the face of the earth, God clearly demonstrated that intercultural mission (mission to people of other faiths) was His idea right from creation. In general, God's action was meant to send a warning signal to what Hiebert calls "A mechanistic approach" in reductionism of mission (1988:24).

Relating the issue of reductionism to mission today, one can rightly observe that, like the people who built the tower of Babel, some missionaries often set agendas based on their own understanding. Their engagement begins with acts of selfish ends, characterized selfish strategies and selfish executions that do not care to seek for God's guidance or intentions. As if to engage God, they only make Him do their bidding, asserts Hiebert (1988:24). Moreover, such missionaries get tempted to think that they can 'control' God for their own selfish interests. This characteristic is common to many missionaries who engage with Muslims in most parts of the world today - evangelical churches in Kenya included (Eldoret town notwithstanding). It is for these and other reasons that this research has been undertaken.

- *Genesis 12:1-3*

The call of Abraham about four thousand years ago has and still remains the backbone of mission to people of other faiths in the Bible today. Not only is this story a fascinating part of the Old Testament history, but it also reveals the glorious acts of a missionary God interested in intercultural mission throughout the entire Bible (Stott, 2002:3). How does God demonstrate this vested interest in humanity? Our understanding of this encounter between Abraham and God will undoubtedly unearth many vital questions in the minds of many sceptics today, especially those who say that there is no mission engagement in the Old Testament (Jr. Kaiser, 2002:10). This becomes clear from Genesis 12:1-3, where the Lord tells Abraham:

‘Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s home, and go to a land that I am going to show you. I will give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will bless you and make your name a great nation. I will bless you and make your name famous, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse those who curse you. And through you I will bless all the nations’.

In the Genesis account, history lays the foundation for mission. In this encounter with Abraham, God addresses the brokenness of humanity through this one man’s family. Abraham becomes the central character in this cosmic drama for generations to come. God promises to make his name great (Genesis 12:2). This is what Stott calls ‘a promise of posterity’ (2002:4). Accordingly, this is where Abraham’s name changed from ‘Abram’, that is, ‘exalted father’, to ‘Abraham’, i.e. ‘the father of a multitude’ (Genesis 17:5). Pate et al. (2004:36-38) presents a beautiful account of the covenant between God and Abraham in which the later not only becomes a very important figure in mission to people of other faiths, but also in the entire story of redemption and glorification. Abraham was told that he will be a great nation (Genesis 12:2). This corresponds to the number of great nations listed in the genealogy described in Genesis 10. The assurance, emphasizes Pate et al. (2004:37), is the fact that Abraham will be made more than just a people, but in fact one of the great nations.

Furthermore, Abraham’s name will be great. Notably, Abraham’s great name derives from Yahweh, whose particular concern for Abraham and his descendants occurs in Genesis 12:3 where Yahweh promises to bless whoever blesses Abraham and curses whoever curses him (Pate et al., 2004:38). In return, Abraham must be both a receptor and transmitter of Yahweh’s blessings. Significant to these blessings, is the hope for the world and all humanity to return to its creative design, which rests

entirely on the obedience of this one family and its descendants (Pate et al., 2004:38).

By engaging Abraham, God gets into intercultural mission with the whole of mankind. Throughout history, the people of God become known as 'the children of Abraham' (Psalm 105:6, Romans 4) cf (Pate et al., 2004:62-63). Later, God is referred to as the 'God of Abraham' (Genesis 32:9). Jesus himself is introduced as the 'son of Abraham' (Pate et al., 2004:119) (Matthew 1:1), and yet Jesus boldly proclaims His eternal nature and divinity when He exclaims, "Before Abraham was I am!" (John 8:58), "Jesus predated Abraham" asserts, Pate et al. (2004:69-70, 103, 168, 195). Abraham no doubt is God's agent in the undertaking of the mission to people of other faiths.

- *Exodus 19:3-6*

After the call of Abraham and the establishment of the covenant relationship between God and His people Israel, what unfolds is the story of redemption that occupies the rest of the Bible until in the final picture God is reconciled to His people from all over the nations.

While the historical content of the promise to Israel includes posterity, covenant blessing and land (Stott, 2002:5); the bottom line expresses its universal goal: "in you/through you, all nations of the earth will receive blessing" (Genesis 12:3 cf.18:8; 26:4-5; 28:14; 35:11). There are three missiological implications to this universal goal. First, through Abraham and Israel God expressed a universal purpose through election (Stuhlmüller, 1984:36). This universality of the Bible's mission to the nations is attested in the books of the Old Testament such as Psalm 22:27; 72:17 and Jeremiah 4:1-2, and scholarship. Election, according to Grant and Wilson, (2005:55) can be understood by further defining the term "The people of God". Simply put, Israel refers to that community in the OT in history through whom God has committed himself to the goal of blessing the nations. Likewise, the church is seen as a messianic heir of Israel in the NT and hence her role in participating in God's mission as one brought into existence purposefully and precisely for the sake of God's *missio Dei* (Bosch, 2009:493).

Second, there is a unique particularity in the universal goal of blessing for all nations evident in the uniqueness of Israel in its relationship with Yahweh (Deuteronomy 4:32ff; Amos 3:2; Psalms 147:19-20). Third, God's commitment is to bless the nations through a particular people - Israel. Thus, God is the object of mission and the primary agent of this mission is the people of God - Israel (Jr. Kaiser, 2002:14). In Isaiah 43:10-12, Israel is commanded to identify Yahweh as the true

God and the source of salvation. The implications noted above, further explain the role of Israel as God's own very special treasured possession. Their identity and task are set in the book of Exodus, where God reminds them of His goodness evident from His acts of salvation from the wrath of the Egyptians (Exodus 20:1-2).

In Exodus 15:13, the Exodus is described as a metaphor of redemption. The holistic nature of God's redemption throughout the first chapters of Exodus climaxes in this text, highlighting kinship commitment, cost, effort and liberation, all in relation to the suffering or debt of a family member. Yahweh is at the centre as a redeemer of His people, Israel. The redemption from bondage in Egypt is a demonstration that God delivers His people in all the dimensions of life so as to go and serve/worship Yahweh (Exodus 3:12, 19:4). The significance is inescapable that Israel who had been enslaved to Pharaoh must now become a chief agent of God's intercultural mission to the nations of the world. As a firstborn son to Yahweh (Exodus 4:22), Israel must be released to go and worship Yahweh. Israel as a whole had to be "a priestly kingdom", "a royal priest-hood." Furthermore, the children of Israel had to meditate between God and the nations (Jr. Kaiser, 2002:13). This is made clear in Exodus 19:6ff.

Regarding the passage above, Jr. Kaiser reiterates that it was according to God's plan for every Israelite to serve as a priest, for they were to act as priests for all the nations²¹. Furthermore, this priestly role defined the reason for their election, not to a privileged position, but more importantly, an election to service. It is the words of Jr. Kaiser (2002:15) that captures the thoughts of the reader. According to his thesis, Israel's privileged role of election can only be seen and understood in light of the activities of God evident in her story. This is what makes Israel a unique people between other nations. This is what defines her priesthood and uniqueness, even in exile. NT writers such as Peter and John take cognizance of the term used in these passages when they refer to the body of believers (I Peter 2:5, Revelation 1:6). Paul also speaks of the service to the Gentiles who become children of faith by reason of the promise of God through Abraham. More so, it is because of intercultural mission in Galatians 3:8 that the Gentiles too may have the right to belong to the royal priesthood in reference to the good news of salvation.

Moskala (2008:18-39) reinforces the thought of royal priesthood by pointing out the role and task of God's people after the Exodus in Egypt. "Israel", he noted, "was formed as a nation and a church at the same time in order to be a living witness for God in the world. Accordingly, the people of God worshipped the Lord God who

²¹ Jr. Kaiser, *International journal of frontier missions*: Vol XCIII, 1996:4.

made a covenant with His People (Exodus 19:4-6), were gathered together for a holy assembly on Sabbath (Leviticus 23:3), and came to the tabernacle to learn more about God, His will, the plan of salvation, and how to follow Him”²². This too is God’s message and call to the generations of the world today to participate in His priesthood as agents of that blessing. As a people called by God, cf (1Peter 2:9), Christians and church members today may count themselves as instruments in the Lord’s vineyard. Not only do they have to realize their special role as priests, but also as missionaries as defined by their Lord and saviour Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18-20.

- *Psalms 67 and Isaiah 40-55*

Mission to people of other faiths is at home in the heart of the Psalmist. With poetry and song, David gives reasons for praising the Lord God and giving Him glory. He says, ‘his love and mercies endures forever’ (Psalm 100:5).

The act of summoning the nations to praise the Lord God of Israel is one of the greatest achievements in undertaking intercultural mission in the Old Testament. Jr. Kaiser (1996:5) gives a reason for this. Accordingly, he says, “these invitations both presume and build on the fact that the invitation to believe the Gospel had been issued and responded to by the heathen peoples of the world”²³. This annotation may explain the reason why in seeking the praises of the nations towards God, the Psalmist wants them to acknowledge His sovereignty and kingship. In essence, the psalmist is saying that God is above all cultures, and hence He is the only one deserving of praise. However, the following questions beg for answers: How did Israel manage to convince the world of the mercies and love of God so as to warrant this great praise and glory? And how did the culture (faith) of the children of Israel sell to the other cultures (faiths of the nations) around them? The answer is right in Psalms 67:7.

God blessed Israel specifically, so that “all the ends of the earth might fear Him” (Psalms 67:7). In other words, there was nothing special to this culture, nothing unique to Israel, save for the election of God. God had chosen to bless them so abundantly for the sake of His glory (Newbigin, 1978: 62). Yes, God used this specific culture, He did not endorse it. Rather, He used it to make Himself known to the people of other faiths. An invitation to “sing to the LORD a new song” with the declaration that “The LORD reigns” is inevitable here, the psalmist makes it clear (Psalms 96, 98, 97 and 99). To require of the nations to come and sing and offer

²² Moskala, Jiri. Journal of the Adventist Theological Society, 19:1-2 (2008):18-39.

²³ Jr. Kaiser, International journal of frontier missions: Vol XCIII, 1996:5.

joyful service to the Lord is to repeat His commandments given in Mount Sinai to the Israelites. This maintains the covenant relationship established between God and Abraham, and heeds to the call to come and worship God by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Moreover, this recognizes that the Lord God is not only the Lord of Israel, but the creator of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1). Importantly, this call undertakes the great commission in the Old Testament, which entails inter-cultural mission to engage people of other faiths missionally.

Mission to people of other faiths (Intercultural mission) has to do with cultures interacting. Culture connotes the way people live, their experiences of what is ideal and real (Hiebert, 2002: 374-375). Every human culture goes through seasons for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1ff). Israel too had her own times, good and bad. An example is the time of exile. Throughout her history, the nation of Israel experienced painful times associated to sin and exile. This is why God made a new covenant with Israel and promised deliverance through one - a messiah (Isaiah 35:1). This messiah will bring hope and joy to the population forever. In relation to this promise, Isaiah 40-55 brings to a reality the time of consolation. In Isaiah 40:1-31, God delivers His people from their suffering. The word comfort is repeated twice as an assertion that the nation has received a double punishment for her sins (Adeyemo, 2006:837). As these words of comfort go out to the nation of Israel, the same is expected of them, to reach out to other nations with comfort.

Christians too are expected to do the same (II Corinthians 1:1-3). Highlighting the power and greatness of God as compared to that of the nations (Isaiah 40:15, 17), Adeyemo (2006:837) comments on the reality at hand, i.e. that today's nations too, like those in the time of Israel, have nothing to offer. By extension, this means that their cultural ways together with their forms of worship of idols are nothing but ridiculous in the eyes of the Lord (Isaiah 40:19-20). As advice, verse 26 admonishes them to worship the one and true God who created the heavens and earth. At the centre of this intercultural mission is God. On the right hand side is Israel, and the nations are to the left. In Isaiah 41:5-7 the nations face God's imminent judgement. Unfortunately, they turn to their idols and take refuge in them (Adeyemo: 2006:837) instead of worshipping Yahweh.

Like the biblical nations, many people of other faiths today consider the Gospel to be relevant only to those areas they are comfortable with. When faced with God's unchanging truth, they shy away from His righteous judgements, thus seeking refuge in their ideologies and imaginations. What they don't realize, however, is that God is all knowing and bigger than they can ever imagine. Nevertheless, God calls His church in these generations to behave differently in order to reach out to the

world. Mission to people of other faiths today, just like in the days of the Israelites, calls on God's people to be different from the world (I John 2: 15-17, Romans 12:2 and John 15:8). They should do this by abstaining from the pleasures of the world i.e. 'loving not the world or the things in the world' (I John 2:15-17). For Israel in the OT, God does this by recalling the faithfulness of their forefathers, Jacob and Abraham and referring to them as His friends (Isaiah 41:8). These remain both a challenge and motivation to all engaged in intercultural mission today. As God's missionaries engage cultures and different faiths in the world today, believers need to come to a point where God can differentiate them from their earthly culture and remember them for their faithfulness.

Mission is thus deeply embedded in the OT. However, considering that the NT is a fulfilment of the prophecies in the OT, it is imperative that the latter be analysed.

2.2.3 The New Testament on *missio Dei*

Without the Old Testament, there could never be the New Testament²⁴. Likewise, without the old covenant, there could never be the new covenant (Grant and Wilson, 2005:25, 161)²⁵. By extension, without the creation in the beginning, there could never be re-creation in the end. Moreover, without mission to people of other faiths in the Old Testament, one cannot speak of mission to people of other faiths in the New Testament²⁶. For this reason, Stott readily agrees with the New Testament writers

²⁴Jr. Kaiser presents the OT message as both universal in its scope and international in its range. Jr. Kaiser points to the inception of mission by referring to Genesis 1-11. In Genesis 12:1-3 Abraham's name, his blessings and being is made into a great nation, and this includes a mandate for mission. (Taken from the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*: Vol XCIII, 1996:3).

²⁵ Grant and Wilson compare the old covenant and the new covenant. In the OT, they say, the most important covenant is the covenant between God and Abraham and Abraham's descendants. This covenant was confirmed to the people on the Mount of Sinai, in Moab and in Shechem. It is important because it is divinely initiated, but bilateral in the sense that human response is specifically invited and documented. It is more specific and focuses on the election of God's people. Its importance is notable also because it forms the basis of the prophecies of a new covenant in the future, also to be everlasting cf (Isaiah 59:21; 61:8; Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:40; 50:5; 55:3 and Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26).

²⁶ 'But God works even in the bad for the good (Rom 8:28). The history of the Fall is at the same time the account of the incarnation, that is God's following us down into the deep.⁵⁴ Christ could not have come into an innocent world. Our anxiety (Kierkegaard) that seduces us to seek our security and safety outside our Savior, but causes our fall,⁵⁵ must be socialized to disobedience and

sin.⁵⁶ Where sin increased, grace increased the more (Rom 5:20). The world is falling from the hands of the Creator Father into the arms of the Redeemer Son.

"Christ on the cross is thus the goal of Torah." ⁵⁷ The cross on Calvary can be called the *(anti)climax of the Jewish covenant*. Out of the darkness of God's wrath and judgment where nobody is good but God,⁵⁸ a new creation is born in a circle of light around the cross, with the murderer and Mary Magdalene emerging as the new Adam and Eve.⁵⁹ That was the awesome vicarious task given to Israel – a task so formidable that God in Christ,

regarding the “triple fulfilment” labelling of the Old Testament’s prophecy within the New Testament (2002:5). What is your view on these?

2.2.3.1 Triple fulfilment as an act of God’s *missio Dei* in the NT

Triple fulfilment is a word employed to define the way the OT prophecies find a fulfilment within the context of the NT. Triple means three, in other words past, present and future fulfilments. That the OT prophecy finds a fulfilment in this category is a question of no doubt, as biblical history attest to this. Expounding on these issues, Stott (2002:5) defines the fulfilment of this OT prophecy as follows:

‘The past fulfilment was an immediate or historical fulfilment in the life of the nation of Israel. The present is an intermediate or Gospel fulfilment in Christ and His Church. The future will be an ultimate or eschatological fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth.’ The implications of this ‘triple fulfilment’ include among other implications; All the benefits that came with Israel’s end of exile e.g. their actual liberation from bondage, their return to Zion, their blessings that included restoration of their place of worship and the promise of the messiah (Isaiah 40-55). The other implication came with the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the blessings arising from His establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. The implications of this new kingdom include the reality that the kingdom is now and yet to come. Lastly but not least is the engagement of the church in the fulfilment of the mission as alluded in Matthew 24:14. This has a huge implication in the life, growth and work of the church as a proponent of the new heaven and the new earth in eschatology.’

To further appreciate the implications of the ‘triple fulfilment’ above, a definition of what mission in the NT entails is considered to include the role of the fulfilled promises of God to His children Israel shortly after exile. This definition will

the Messiah of Israel, had to take it over.⁶⁰ “That which, in the scheme of Deuteronomy, Israel needed if she incurred the curse of the law, is provided in Christ: the pattern of exile and restoration is acted out in his death and resurrection. He *is* Israel, going down to death under the curse of the law, and going through that curse to the new covenant life beyond.”⁶¹ On Calvary the Fall is completed.⁶² *Tetelesthai: It is finished!* (John 19:30). The mission of the Son is fulfilled. He can return to the Father in order that the Holy Spirit may come. “Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes” (Rom 10:4). The death of Christ is the terminus (*telos*, fulfillment) and as such also the termination of the Old Testament.⁶³ The mission to the gentiles can commence’ (Theron, P. F in the Dutch Reformed Theological Journal=Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif, 43:1-2 [2002]128-139).

then lead to a discussion of how Christ and the church engage in mission. The question 'what approach to mission in the NT' flows from this, which then resonates with the third question in this chapter. This also seeks to balance the equation of how mission to people of other faiths in the NT differs and/or resembles that in the OT. Finally, the fulfilment of the Gospel to the whole world will be assessed by comparing emerging principles that will ultimately lead to a fulfilment of God's mission in the Bible and therefore a hope for a renewal of things when Christ appears a second time in the skies to take people to heaven.

2.2.3.2 Missio Dei defined in the NT

As one reads the NT, memories of Genesis 1-11 come to mind with expectations of both Israel and the nations flying high to a renewal of a new covenant to restore worship to God (Pate et al, 2004:88-89). As God's number one approach to mission in the OT, worship becomes God's number one approach in the NT too. To drive this point home, Blackaby and Willis Jr. confirm that God has always been on mission throughout history to accomplish His purpose on earth, namely that of revealing Himself to people so that they can worship Him (2002:55). However, for this revelation to be realized in the NT, restoration of God's people must occur according to the requirement of the new covenant, which is everlasting (Jeremiah 31:31-34) cf (Grant and Wilson, 2005: 161-162). This act is preceded by a change of heart (Deuteronomy 10:16 cf Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25-26), a change of system, and a change of worship, possible only with the coming of a new kingdom and a new covenant through Christ Jesus (Hebrews 10:15-18) cf (Hafemann and House 2007:78).

- *The fulfilment of the kingdom of God as a past experience*

At the centre of this important role is Christ Jesus of Nazareth – the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham to bless all nations through his seed (Genesis 15:4). Abraham's only heir, Isaac, was to be offered as a sacrifice to God to demonstrate Abraham's obedience to the voice of the Lord (Genesis 22:1-14). The ram that stood in place of Isaac represents Christ²⁷. By offering His only son to be crucified at the cross, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham to bless all the nations of the earth (22:15-18). To seal this promise to Abraham, Jesus was born to the genealogy of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1-17). Obedience to a shameful death at the cross demonstrated the abiding love of God in worship via obedience. This act not

²⁷ Cornelius, E 'The blood of Jesus and the blood of the Lamb – a study of the taurobolium and the New Testament' in *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 18 (2007)32-42.

only explains God's motive in preserving His creatures, but also in preserving His character, which is only clarified in His law.

The story of Israel and the restoration of God's people are demonstrated by the victory evident in the resurrection of Christ. With this victory comes underlying realities in the lives of God's people namely that their enemies have been finally defeated, exile is over, evil is defeated at last, sins are forgiven, God's reign is restored, His glory has returned in His temple, the valley of the dead bones is coming back to life (Ezekiel 37), God's Spirit is poured upon people who trust in His Son, and finally, God's eschatological purposes and His restoration power has finally called His creation together from all nations of the earth under His kingship (Pate et al, 2004:151). Furthermore, God's act of love depicted in His triune character as a creator, a missionary and a sanctifier is now realized (Bosch, 2009:391-392). Significant to intercultural mission in the NT at this point is the realization of God's eternal purpose of using Israel as a hinge to open the door of His salvation to all nations. God's way of doing mission flows from the abundance of His grace. God's *mission Dei* can be understood in the NT in the obedience to His law, summarized by Christ as 'total love to God and selfless acts to one's neighbour' (Matthew 22:34-39).

- *The kingdom of God as a present experience*

The coming of Christ brought the fulfilment of the covenant between God and Abraham. It came with the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. According to Pate et al (2004:151), this means that God's children, Israel, could return from exile. This also signifies God's presence before His own people, Israel, and as a result His people can come and worship Him. It further means that the Lord of Israel is back in His holy temple, and so Zion can rejoice again because God's presence is again evident in Jerusalem (Pate et al, 2004:189). Importantly, the kingdom is not only here for the children alone, the Gentiles too can come and worship Yahweh because God's people have returned from exile and God's word is being proclaimed in all languages (Pate et al, 2004:191), for as prophet Ezekiel was shown, this was the time when the lifeless bones in the valley can respond to stimuli and be restored back to life again (Hafemann and House, 2007:78 cf Pate et al, 2004:151). By establishing His kingdom here on earth through Christ, God sought to redefine His *missio Dei* in the NT.

Characteristic to this kingdom is a call to repentance and faith. These two conditions are necessary in order to become a member of the kingdom. This is signified by a new birth, for no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit (John 3:5) cf 'those who believe in him are not condemned; but

those who do not believe are condemned already' (John 3:18). 'The condemnation here however is in part, not fully realized', says Pate et al, (2004:158) for surely as Jesus said, 'The hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out' – the good doers to the resurrection of life and the wrong doers to the damnation (John 5:25). This therefore presents the kingdom both as present and future. To the Jews, a presentation of the kingdom of God as a present experience provides a time to return from exile to meet with their Lord, and it restores their present life from that of suffering to that of joy. This is meant to brighten their lives and hence cause them to worship Him. To the Gentiles, this present kingdom brings to them the good news of salvation so that now they too can partake in the kingdom as Paul has written, 'now there is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus' because, 'here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and in all and is in all' (Romans 8:1cf Colossians 3:11).

Jesus Himself proclaimed that this kingdom has come while He was in Galilee (Mark 1:14-15). His call to people to repent and believe the good news demonstrates that indeed this kingdom is here with the people. Moreover, His preaching was accompanied with the works of the Spirit. His preaching presented a kingdom's claim that is beyond mere proclamations of the prophets. Pate et al (2004:123) shows that it was Jesus Himself in action. He was casting out demons (Matthew 12:28, Luke 11:20), restoring sight to the blind, causing the lame to walk, cleansing the lepers, causing the deaf to hear and raising the dead (Luke 7:22, Matthew 11:4-5). His presence was a connection between the Gospel story and the story of Israel at the point of fulfilment and not of anticipation (Pate et al, 2004:124).

The language employed by Pate et al, is one of visibility and experience and is further explained by terms such as the kingdom is 'already' here because it is near; and 'not yet' fully because the kingdom of this world still reigns. In light of these analogies, it can be said that the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus is enough proof that people have begun to experience God's reign in their lives. Yet, because His people are not yet delivered from the power and presence of sin, this will be fulfilled when Christ comes for the second time (Parousia). Significant to this 'already' here characteristic of the kingdom is the death at the cross. Here, it can be said that mission of people of other faiths in God's *missio Dei* reached its climax as all nations/cultures were reconciled to God and His Godliness, character, or culture.

- *The kingdom as a future presentation*

Presuming that the coming of God's kingdom as a future presentation fulfils the promises of God to His believing children (John 3:16) and also provides them with comfort and hope in the new life when God shall make all things a new (I Thessalonians 5:4-10). One wonders when the exact time of Parousia (the second advent of Christ) will be. Definitely, the words of Christ 'that the kingdom of God is at hand' are helpful, but not exhaustive, given that the same kingdom is here and not yet here (Pate et al: 158) fully or 'already' here and 'not fully' (Pate et al, 2004:124) cf Matthew 24:9-14. However, the fulfilment of this kingdom in part is proof that the same will take place in future. It is remarkable how John presents the question of the kingdom of God in the eschaton. Whereas signs of the coming of the son of man are important as presented in Mathew 24, most important is the warning given by Jesus in John's Gospel that in order for one to inherit the kingdom of God, they must be born again.

2.2.3.3 *Doing Mission Centrifugally*

Centrifugal mission is the opposite of the centripetal mission in the OT. Instead of God's people being in the centre to present God's love to the other nations, they too must go out to meet with the nations and tell them of the good news of salvation, of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection (Bosch, 1980:78-79). Centrifugal mission implies committing to the call of the great command in order to fulfil *missio Dei* as defined in Matthew 24:14, which means taking the Gospel to the whole world for the end to come. This call is to surrender to the will of God's enabling Spirit who directs the ways and means of doing mission in the lives of men (John 16:1-16). When a life is totally surrendered to the Spirit, worship to God becomes meaningful. When worship becomes meaningful, God's people will be willing to cry out to the world, and to speak of God's goodness and mercies (Psalms 111). As a result their participation in *missio Dei* is enhanced.

Speaking of the importance of worship in mission, Piper says that worship is the 'fuel and goal of mission' without which the nations cannot speak and sing of the goodness of the Lord (2002:49). It therefore follows that their motivation to undertake the Lord's command stems from their understanding of what true worship to God is.

- *The Holy Spirit in Centrifugal mission*

Not only does the Holy Spirit fuel worship in the life of a believer to undertake God's mission centrifugally, but the Holy Spirit also moves people to understand the

urgency of doing God's *missio Dei*. This explains why in the context of I Corinthians 12 and 14, the community in worship is engaged in the works of the Spirit, including an ongoing variety of non-verbal supernatural phenomena such as healings, miracles and moments of special faith. These manifestations were wrought by God to demonstrate the importance of the work of the Spirit in the lives of the believers in the context of Galatians 3:5. Since these manifestations were spontaneous, Fee (2000:97-99) says that they were useful in advancing God's *missio Dei* to edify the body of Christ (I Corinthians 14:26).

- *The role of the Church in God's missio Dei in the NT*

When the urgency of doing *missio Dei* is awakened, the church of God (representing the body of Christ), consisting of the believers who derive their identity from God's promise to Abraham to bless 'all' nations, 'all' being inclusive of both Jews and Gentiles, will rise to their prophetic call in Matthew 24:14. They will also accept their role as occupying a special place in the world, namely that of the priesthood defined by their election (1Peter 2:9).

On the significance of this awakening, Pate et al, says that this is the time when the Spirit of God rests not only on a selected few, but on all regardless of age, sex, rank, and nationality (2004: 191-192). Moreover, even the fishermen from Galilee are not left out of the equation. This climaxes with the outpouring of the Spirit of God to all, and the fulfilment of Prophet Joel's words (Joel 2:32 cf Acts 2:3, 21). Pate et al (2004: 191-192) further points the reader to the international gathering in Acts 2:9-11, to the obvious presence of God in the disciples, and the resulting conversion of three thousand at Pentecost as evidence that the prophecy of Matthew 24:14 is being realized.

2.2.3.4 The Church's mission to people of other faiths in light of the missio Dei in the NT

Mission to people of other faiths in the NT begins with the work of John the Baptist. His work was prophesied in Malachi 4:5-6. During His earthly ministry Christ explained how John the Baptist was the 'Elijah' who was to come.

'Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force...' (Matthew 11:11-14).

Jesus further expounded on this topic later on. 'Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Elijah truly is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands". Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist' (Matt. 17:11-13). After the baptism of Jesus in river Jordan, God affirmed the ministry of His son and commanded the world to obey Him (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:29-34). Soon after, Christ was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be prepared for the ministry ahead. At Christ's baptism, the triune God was present, inaugurating the ministry of Jesus. In the wilderness, it was God the Spirit that led Christ to be tempted, as well as strengthened Him to overcome the devil. All these were acts of God to demonstrate His love for the lost man. Christ's ministry signified a new beginning and a re-creation of man, who was lost to sin. At the onset of His ministry, Jesus chose twelve apostles to continue His work of the *missio Dei*. He taught them for three and half years before breathing His Spirit to them (John 20:21-22).

- *Matthew 28:16-20*

The great commission in Matthew 28:16-20 is a big task in the life of a Christian. Before one goes out to preach to others, one must first of all be a disciple. Additionally, there must be a willingness to obey the command to go, to be taught and to be mentored. This is an exercise that goes beyond a mere reading from the words of Scripture, it is about living the experience throughout one's lifetime (Nussbaum, 2005:105). Important to the preparations of disciples, is being baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All those who are baptized to Him form part of the community of believers that is sent out to preach the good news. This is a responsibility to carry the Gospel to "all" nations, meaning, one must be willing to cross boundaries and comfort zones to other cultures. It involves "building bridges across cultural divides", as Wiles candidly puts it (Panorama foundations 1.1 Biblical Mandate for Cross-cultural Mission, 2009:11).

According to Stott, the Great commission is not just about evangelism or evangelization, it is about a biblical mandate that reveals a missionary God, a triune God revealed throughout the entire Bible (2002: 21, 22). It is 'our opening up the mystery of God's love to all people inside that mission' asserts Nussbaum (2005:104). This is why Matthew 24:14 emphasizes the universality of the Gospel and emphasises the necessity of preaching shortly before the end comes.

- *Matthew 24:14*

To be involved in mission to people of other faiths is to realize the human limitations in God's work, in other words *God's missio Dei*. It is to say with Wiles that 'God's love for the nations is boundless but not timeless' (Panorama foundations 1.1 Biblical Mandate for Cross-cultural Mission, 2009:12). This means that our redemption and that of the world will not happen forever. Somehow, God's timetable must be realized and His perfect will and purpose in creation must soon be consummated in a dramatic way, when the old order of things will pass and pave the way for the new.

In Matthew 24:3, Jesus' disciples ask Him when He shall return. Jesus responds that earthquakes, wars, and tribulations, though they form part of the signs of His return do not signal the return. Rather, His return will only be realized when the Gospel of the kingdom has been preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations cf. Matthew 6:9-10, 9:35-38, Luke 2:30-32, 4:16-21, 10:2 and John 1:29. In other words, the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 'and through you I will bless all the nations' must be fulfilled before the end will come. Clearly, Christ will not come unless the Gospel has reached all the people of other faiths throughout the world. This is because mission to people of other faiths is part and parcel of the sign of the coming of man. Moreover, mission must be undertaken to characterize the coming of Christ and also to pave the way to the new heavens and new earth to appear according to the creator's intent (Revelation 21:1). This is a wake up call to God's people, individually and corporately as a Church, to partake in this privilege of being part of *missio Dei*. Surely, 'things shall not tarry', for soon, the son of man shall descend from the sky and they shall see Him come just as they saw Him go (Acts 1:11).

- *Acts 1:7-8*

The promise of the Holy Spirit plays a very important role in taking the mission to people of other faiths in the New Testament. Not only does the Holy Spirit empower the disciples, but also enables them to cross through frontiers in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. This is an agenda that occupies the minds of the disciples shortly after Jesus appears to a small group of them after His resurrection. The disciples confirmed things that had to take place shortly via the words of the Lord. They went to Jerusalem to await the promise of the Holy Spirit. After Pentecost, the apostles braced themselves for the difficult task ahead.

The Apostle Paul is one of those who drew from the power of the Holy Spirit. This is evident in his missionary journeys to take the Gospel to the people of other faiths such as from Antioch to Cyprus (Acts 13:1-14:1-27), Antioch (Acts 15:36-

18:24) and Asia Minor (Acts 18:23-20:38). In Matthew 28 and Acts 1, Jesus offers a message of comfort, assurance and power to His disciples. As long as they are with Him, He will be with them till the end (Matthew 28:18-20). This reminds the disciples and us today that the task of undertaking mission to people of other faiths is Godly and can therefore not be done with our “ingenuity and prowess” Wiles (Panorama foundations 1.1 Biblical Mandate for Cross-cultural mission, 2009:11).

- *Hebrews 1:1-4*

Mission to people of other faiths in the NT would not be complete without the person of Christ as the Son of God. The one with whom all was created and the one to whom all was committed right from the beginning to the end (Hebrews 1:2). He is also the one with whom all things are sustained, including intercultural mission (Hebrews 1:3 cf. Philippians 2:9). More so, He is the one with who all has been forgiven (Hebrews 1:4). Jesus both established the church (Matthew 16:16-20) and commissioned it (Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:45-49, John 20:21 and Acts 1:8).

- *Revelation 5:9 cf. 7:9*

John sees a vision in Revelation (5:12) ‘and they sang a new song, saying, worthy are you to take the book and to break its seals: for you were slain, and purchased for God with your blood for men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation’. John sees the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. He sees a vision of heaven to look forward to where people will worship the Lamb of God. This will be the culmination of mission to people of other faiths and the consummation of God’s purpose in creation, namely worship. Piper refers to this as the ultimate goal of the church (Piper, 2002:49). This will be preceded by a tremendous ingathering of souls evidenced by the outpouring of the later rain (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; cf. Romans 10:13).

2.2.4 Biblical principles regarding *missio Dei* and the church’s mission to people of other faiths

In order to appreciate the church’s role of mission to people of other faiths in the Bible, one must place the whole question of mission to people of other faiths within the wider context of *God’s missio Dei*. This is because without God, there is no history of redemption. Without redemption, there is no Jesus. Without Jesus, there is no grace. Without grace, there is no love. Without love there is no salvation. Without salvation there can never be eternal life. Without eternal life, there can never be glorification. In another way, God is the originator and end of life. God is the one who

begun it all, He created and now He will re-create. He caused life in the beginning and will cause life in the end. He was always present when human faiths and cultures begun and as a result He is the perpetrator of mission to people of other faiths.

Based on this truth, this study identifies ten principles of mission to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei* expounded in the Bible:

2.2.4.1 God's missio Dei and the church's mission to people of other faiths are embedded in God's righteousness

God is the initiator of mission in the Bible. As such, He chose a faith, a culture of righteousness to do His mission. This culture of righteousness has its origin from God Himself, for He is the one from the beginning who breathed His Spirit of life into the lifeless body of mankind, and created man in His own image and after His own likeness. This breath of life was lost when man sinned against God so that God's righteousness was replaced by sinfulness. Graciously, God send Jesus to save mankind from the bondage of sin. This is why the NT recognizes a new birth or being born again as a new life in God. God breathes a second breath of life into a sinner. In II Corinthians 5:17, a new birth in Christ is made available to all who believe. Paul speaks of this new birth as imparted righteousness and the church fathers refer to this process as a process of righteousness by faith (Martin Luther).

2.2.4.2 God's righteousness is possible only by faith

By faith Abraham was counted as one that is righteous before God. By faith, his descendants were to inherit the land of promise – Canaan. With Moses, they journeyed through from Egypt to the red sea. By faith, Moses raised his rod and the red sea became a dry land, so that they crossed the red sea. In the wilderness, they fought and won their battles. By faith Haron prayed so that the sun did not go down until they won the battle (Joshua 10). By faith, Moses gave manna for food and water from the rock. By faith, Moses raised a snake made of bronze and by faith; all the Israelites who raised their eyes and looked up in the cross of bronze were healed from the deadly wounds and poisons. By faith Joshua and Caleb crossed over to seize the Promised Land, Canaan.

In the NT, the Gospels give account of many people who walked by faith, others were healed because of their faith and many more believed in Christ and the coming kingdom by faith. By faith, the disciples turned the world upside down for Christ. By faith, Paul and Silas sang and prayed in prison so that the prison doors opened and they were free. By faith, John saw the New Jerusalem descending from

above. He also saw the creation of the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:2).

By faith, intercultural mission in the Bible took place so that many came to offer praise and sacrifice to the true God of heaven. By faith the missionary journeys of Paul were completed and successful. It is only by faith that we can please God.

2.2.4.3 God's culture/faith is defined by God's character in those who obey His commandments

Obedience has been fundamental to shaping the character and life of God's people from the beginning. Hafemann (2002:41-42) believes that, when God created the world, He revealed His word to His people on earth. This was to facilitate the call to worship via obedience in the Garden of Eden. However, as things turned, people's disobedience to God's commands paves way to them being exiled from the Garden. Nevertheless, God's unfailing grace granted a second chance so that through Israel, God continued to reveal His word/law as objects of blessings to the nations. With God's tabernacle as a sign of God's presence, Israel's election was meant to serve as a means of blessing the rest of humanity. However, Israel, like Adam and Eve, disobeys God and so end up in exile too.

It is after God destroyed humankind during Noah's generation that God established another culture through Abraham. Unique to this newly found covenant was the promise of an innumerable progeny and the role of a mediator to humanity. Since Abraham passed the test of obedience, God blessed him with a son whom Abraham accepted to offer as a sacrifice to the Lord. In doing so he passed another test of obedience. Through Isaac (Genesis 25:19-35:29), God blessed Jacob (Isaac's son) and honoured the promise made to his grandfather Abraham, and so a nation of Israel was born to reign and rule over the whole earth. This represents God's culture of righteousness (Genesis 37:2-50:26).

Hafemann (2002:44) points out Noah's character when discussing the importance of obedience to God. Through Noah's obedience, the earth was spared from the flood and as a consequence the covenant between God and Abraham, or the seed covenant (Genesis 3:15), could come into being to demonstrate God's faithfulness to Abraham for his obedience. The enmity between the serpent and the seed of Abraham demonstrates God's providence in dealing with the evil that results from disobedience of His word and commandments. The good news is that Abraham's seed was delivered in the end.

Hafemann (2002:45-52) shows how God's law as His wisdom for Israel's existence presented a conditional love from God. Israel had to either obey and get

blessed or disobey and be cursed. In the end, God made a promise to deal with this recurrent disobedience by making a new covenant with Israel, so that they would be given 'circumcised hearts' that would never disobey God. God promised to imprint His law within their hearts (Deuteronomy 30:1-14). This new covenant culminated in the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus, who became the final solution to the circumcision of the heart and concluded the disobedience of God's law by becoming sin and dying to fulfil the requirement of the law. He set precedence to all who trust and obey God's law. They inherit His kingdom when the new earth and new heaven is realized in Revelation 21-22.

2.2.4.4 Election is God's way of doing His missio Dei in the undertaking of mission to people of other faiths in the Bible

God's culture/faith is cultivated, communicated and shared first among God's children and secondly among the nations of the world.

The choice of Israel in the OT and the church in the NT as agents of His mission is not a secret. The question of election is important both in doing mission, as well as in undertaking intercultural mission. First, God sees the heart, weighs the character and tests the integrity of those whom He chooses to be partakers in His truth. Since, the truth entails words of life, of destiny and righteousness; those who handle these truths must be favoured by the Lord. The Lord favours some, and some He rejects (Romans 9:1-29). This is a reality of God, who is bigger than any human mind can comprehend.

Electionism however, does not necessarily mean favouritism as humans understand it. All people in the eyes of God belong to one race – the human race. This human race originated first from Adam and Eve (Genesis 1-11), and secondly from Noah (Genesis 9:1, 11:4). These two important ancestors were given a command by God to multiply and fill the earth. If God created them, then He also confused their language (Genesis 11:8-9), causing a break-up in population groups - what is now known as 'human culture' representative of groups from different nations (Batten et al., 2008:219-220). It follows therefore that if God caused the division currently existing within the human race, then He did so for His own *missio Dei*. His election of those to represent Him in undertaking intercultural mission is always done in the best interest of *missio Dei*.

Anything that is done in the interest of God's *missio Dei* is not a right, but a privilege. To belong to the family of God is not a right, but a privilege (Bosch, 2009:10). To be His mediators and intercessors does not make us more special than those who are not. It only presupposes our responsibilities as willing agents to share

in His plan of redemption. It does not earn us a place or a higher position in the kingdom. It only makes us appreciate the love of God the father, the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit within us. It makes us become servants and disciples of His everlasting truth, comprising of the good news of salvation. One man, Adam, caused humankind to be plunged into sin, and one man, Jesus, brought salvation for humankind. This is the backbone of electionism in the Bible. God so loved the world that He could not spare His only begotten Son (John 3:16) to be offered as a sacrifice for those who believe.

2.2.4.5 God of intercultural mission is a relational God

Throughout the Bible, God establishes relationships. First, He created man in His own image and filled man with a capacity to relate to Him.

Not only did God establish His image in mankind, He also put His likeness in man. This means that God would be able to commune with a free man who chooses to do right by will and not by coercion. This perfect will is filled with perfect love. When we engage in intercultural mission, we are participating in God's saving grace. By extension, we are partaking in His unfailing love. Our love and commitment to God is only possible through our service to humanity. When we love others, we tell them of the wonderful news of salvation. As we plant the seed of salvation, we engage in intercultural mission. The seed is the word of God, the mission field is the world. The people of the world represent different cultures. Our character as Christians represents Godliness. Engaging in acts of Godliness is engaging in intercultural mission. By extension, we are extending relationships and building them on Christ's character so that we too become relational, just as our God is.

2.2.4.6 Church's mission to people of other faiths is possible only when we trust in the triune nature of God

The doctrine of the Trinity is a very important doctrine in engaging people of other faiths in the Bible. Although the word Trinity does not appear anywhere in the Bible, the evidence of the triune nature of God is proof that God is one, but three. Although this research will not go into the details of this subject, a little understanding is important in order to appreciate the work of God in mission. For the purposes of this research the trinity will be understood in the role of a missionary God (Hoffmeyer, 2001:108-111)²⁸. This is the idea of God sending Himself in His triune nature to do

²⁸ See Hoffmeyer, John in 'The Missional Trinity' (A Journal of Theology: 40:2 (2001):108-111.

mission. Hence, in the OT, God the father is engaged in creation as the primary actor with His Spirit and His Son (His Word) as equal participants (John 1).

In the NT, while God the Son bears the humiliation and becomes the cursed (Galatians 3:13), God the father sacrifices Him to be crucified (Romans 8:32), while God the Holy Spirit facilitates His resurrection (I Peter 3:18). Later, God the Son sends His disciples to wait for Him in Jerusalem where they are empowered by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). Throughout the NT, the church engages in God's mission with the help and teaching of the Spirit of God. After Christ ascended to heaven, His Spirit took the lead in the lives of God's people in order to fulfil the prophecy of Matthew 24:14 and to bring everything to a conclusion. At the time of this conclusion mission will be finalized when the Son will come in the clouds a second time and judge the world. After that, God the father shall renew everything (Revelation 21-22)²⁹.

2.2.4.7 It is important that the church realizes the role of the Holy Spirit as an important principle in undertaking mission to people of other faiths

Apart from teaching, guiding, comforting and reminding the church of all the things that Christ did, the Holy Spirit sanctifies the church and God's people so that when Jesus comes they will be ready (John 16:1-6). The work of sanctification of the Spirit is not new to the history of *missio Dei*. In the OT, the Spirit worked with both the patriarchs and the prophets to give messages and warnings to God's people. Samson is one important character in the OT who was used by the Spirit to do God's work (Judges 14:6). In the OT, it was the Spirit of God who led Godly men and women to worship and follow God (Psalms 51). In the NT too, the Spirit of God still sanctifies the church so that they can be presented before Christ as blameless and holy as their father God is Holy. The Spirit of God convicts (John 16:8), converts (Titus 3:5), resides permanently in the life of a Christian (John 14:16), baptizes (Romans 6:4, 1Corinthians 12:13), seals (1Corinthians 6:19-20) and fills (Ephesians 5:18).

2.2.4.8 Mission to people of other faiths recognizes the presence of the kingdom of God in the world throughout history

God's kingdom begins with His kingship and sovereignty. Though once lost to the hands of evil due to sin, God's reign has, is, and will be fully manifested when Christ comes. This calls for the participation of God's people, His Christian followers and church members, to engage together with God in making the presence of this

²⁹ Pachua, Lalsangkima, in 'Missiology in a pluralistic world: The place of mission study in theological education' (International Review of Mission: Vol. LXXXIX No. 355 page 543).

kingdom a reality in their lives and the lives of the people of the world. All are eligible to become partakers of this kingdom as long as they accept the way of salvation provided them by Christ Jesus. This way calls for a better understanding of the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world, whose king is Satan. There must be paradigm shifts during engagement in mission so that missionaries do not only concentrate on church business, but are engaged in the kingdom's business, taking the work of *missio Dei* seriously.

2.2.4.9 God's missio Dei takes cognizance of the masses

The will of God the father is to have everyone attain eternal life (John 3:16). The will of God the Son is to draw all men unto Himself, 'says Christ; when I be lifted, I will draw all men to myself' (John 12:32). The will of the Holy Spirit is to comfort, convict, sanctify, and remind all of the things that Christ has done (John 14:15-30). It is the will of the triune God that His church may become one body, testifying that Jesus died, one in love and harmony (Philippians 2:2, I John 3:1, 4:7, 5:1-5). If this is the understanding of the triune God and His purpose in mission, then the church and everyone involved in His mission must be willing and ready to do His will. The will of God is to bring Jesus back the second time to save the masses. This should be the will of the church too, she must reach out to the masses as much as possible for Jesus to find them ready for renewal when He comes back (1Thessalonians 5:2).

2.2.4.10 God's missio Dei is about a new heaven and a new earth

This is the ultimate goal of every Christian. It was the ultimate goal of Adam and Eve after they lost that glory in Eden (Genesis 3:15, Genesis 4). Abraham too looked forward to the coming of the Son of God and a renewal of life in glory (John 8:56, Hebrews 11:8, James 2:19-22). The Israelites waited patiently upon the day of the Lord (Jeremiah 31:31). The apostles of Christ too looked forward to that New Jerusalem (1Corinthians 1:7, 1Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrew 1:24, and 37). God's children in this present world too wait in anticipation for that glorious day (2 Peter 3:10, Matthew 24, Revelation 19). Therefore, there must be an urgency to get everyone waiting. This is because that day will come like a thief and no one who is unprepared will enter into that kingdom. This should be the motivation of the church and the missionaries today as they engage in mission, especially in intercultural mission.

2.3 BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE REGARDING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The greatest question regarding the biblical perspective of the mission of the church is the question how well one knows the biblical story. While seeking to unearth the 'Biblical theology of the Church's mission', Wright (2010:39) reiterates the importance of following the examples of Jesus and Paul. Accordingly, these two persons knew their Bible well enough to tell other people of the story they were part of. In Acts 13, Paul was in Antioch in the Gentile Pisidian city where he had visited the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath as was his custom. Beginning with a Jewish familiar story from the Old Testament narratives, his intention was to provide a prelude to the story of Jesus, thus connecting it with the good news that what God had actually promised their ancestors, he had fulfilled for them and their children by raising up Jesus (Acts 13:32-33). Paul did not end there. He continued to demonstrate that what some of the Jews had rejected, some God-fearing Gentiles had accepted. He then challenged his hearers to a missionary calling, this time also with another Old Testament text that he applied to himself and his missionary colleagues: "For this is what the Lord has commanded us; 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Isaiah 49:6).

Luke 24 describes the first day in the life of the risen Jesus, spending the whole afternoon teaching the OT Scriptures. During a rare encounter with two of his disappointed disciples (disappointed that the redemption of Israel was a failure) on their way to Emmaus, Wright (2010:38) points out that Jesus confronted them with the OT (Moses and the entire Prophets) to explain how the grand narrative led up to him, the Messiah, and how his death and resurrection were in fact the way God had kept his promise to Israel (Luke 24: 13-27). This lecture continued later that evening with the rest of the disciples in Jerusalem where Jesus repeated the same OT story in order to help them understand where it led. Reminding them of their role as witnesses of the things that had happened, Christ opened their minds yet again to understand the Scriptures, reiterating the importance of his suffering and resurrection from the dead on the third day, which calls the sinner unto repentance for the forgiveness of sins, a message, they the disciples and others must preach in his name to all the nations (Luke 24:44-48).

Against the milieu above, it is important to visualize the biblical story as an actual line on which one can plot key points, as has been suggested by Wright (2010:39). The four major events on the biblical story line are Creation, Fall, Redemption in History, and New Creation. This study will not expound each story line in detail, rather, it will incorporate the understanding of each part throughout study. Greenslade (2002:42-43) believes that through the story line, the church in her

mission is drawn into the action where she finds herself caught up in the saving movement of God. This is where the church learns to enter the story, looking out from within the biblical world with new eyes to the postmodern lives and world. Stott (2002:4) boosts Greenslades argument, pointing out that the mandate of the church for world evangelization is the whole Bible and this must reflect in the creation of God. This has the following implications: All human beings are responsible to Him, who has an outgoing, loving and compassionate character that is not willing that any should perish. God's children are also responsible for the promises of God that all nations will be blessed through Abraham's seed and will become the Messiah's inheritance. Another responsibility is to the Christ of God, now exalted with universal authority. In the Spirit of God, who convicts the sinful, witnesses of Christ, He impels the church to evangelize. Finally and importantly, believers are responsible for forming the church of God, which is a multinational, missionary community under instruction to evangelize until Christ returns.

2.3.1 Defining mission in the Church

When one thinks of mission in the Church, one immediately thinks of mission as opposed to missions (Wright, 2010:23-25). There is a broad definition that allows for many different missions within the category of mission. Furthermore, mission should be understood in light of all that God is doing as part of His greater purpose for the whole creation and all that He calls men to do in relation to that purpose. According to Bosch (2009:11), mission has to do with God's *missio Dei*, whereas missions have to do with church engagements in a bid to fulfil God's mission or *missio Dei*. This is the definition and understanding that is adopted throughout this study. It is therefore plausible to state at this point that wherever these two terms are employed, their meanings as defined by Bosch will be maintained as much as possible.

In order to distinguish between the understanding of mission as the *missio Dei*, this study will use the singular of mission to refer to God's mission in general and missions (plural) to refer to any other venture apart from that which directly refers to God's engagement in His Triune nature. Regarding mission in the Church, this will be understood as God's mission (*missio Dei*) defining men's engagements and ventures, i.e. the Church's missions. Quoting Wright (2006:62), 'it is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission - God's mission.' This will be discussed at length later in the study.

2.3.2 The Old Testament and Church mission

The Old Testament and Church mission seeks to understand how the nation of Israel engages in God's *missio Dei* from the time when God created Adam and Eve and mandated them to be fruitful and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28) to the time when God gave Abraham a promise that he will multiply as the stars of the skies, then throughout the journey to the promised land up to the time when the promised Messiah is born. This section will consider in detail the engagement of the nation of Israel as God's chosen representatives of mission in the Old Testament and also their role in the *missio Dei* among the people of other faiths. As an agent, Israel acts as God's church in the Old Testament, entrusted with the privilege of sharing the good news of the Gospel to the people of other faiths.

Contrary to what some scholars consider as the absence of mission in the OT (Bosch, 2009:16-17), this study subscribes to the view that there is mission in the OT. Wright (2010:28-29) in his consideration of the question 'Who are we and what are we here for', does not mince his words. He refers to the whole church as comprising God's people with God's mission. In his view the church does not begin in the book of Acts as is popularly thought, taught and understood in most churches today. This not only provides an eye opener to the true understanding of the biblical truths, but also supplies the reader with the proper understanding of the biblical theology of mission, especially with regard to the role of the OT in God's *missio Dei*. Against this setting therefore, this study considers all the acts of *missio Dei* in the OT as mission and so holds to the belief that there is mission in the OT, as well as in the NT. As Wright (2010:29) asserts, 'the New Testament church did not actually have a New Testament when they set out on the task of world mission. It was the Scriptures of the Old Testament that provided the motivation and justification for their missional practice, as well as the underlying theological assumptions and expectations that reassured them that what they were doing was "biblical."'

Moreover, the researcher holds to the definition of mission as encompassing *missio Dei* with God as the owner of mission and the church acting as an agent in a privileged position (Bosch, 2009:392). Since the book of Genesis stands out not only as the beginning of the Pentateuch, or of the great story of Israel, but more so, as the beginning of the whole Bible (Farmer, 1998:349), the researcher agrees with the view that Genesis prepares one from the start to expect the wealth of books and their varied approaches that make up the whole of the Hebrew Scripture. Farmer (1998:349) aptly states that all the books of the Bible, OT and NT alike, not only propose one way of knowing God, but many. These many ways include, but are not

limited to all kinds of literature, legal codes, royal chronicles, poetry, prophecy, wisdom sayings, model stories and even love songs.

However, at the core of the mission of the church lies the good news of God's acts through Jesus Christ for the redemption of the world. It must be noted here that there is only one way to God, and that is through Christ Jesus. This is because although we come to know God in many ways, we only get to Him by accepting and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great revelator of God. Since at the end of the day mission encompasses loyalty, the ambassadors must demonstrate complete loyalty to the government they represent. As Wright (2010:31) rightly puts it, a trusted messenger will faithfully deliver what his sender has said and not with added opinion. The NT acts as the fulfilment of this revelation. For in it is the evidence of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. This is where the mission of God's people has to start and finish, with the commitment to God, whose mission the church is called upon to share.

According to Wright (2010:31), the people of God who forms His church must learn to know God deeply from both the experience of His revelation and salvation. This knowledge can only be found in both testaments because in both testaments, God's people are called to a non-negotiable, uncompromising loyalty to the uniqueness of God – revealed as YHWH in the OT, and walking among his people in the incarnate life of Jesus of Nazareth in the NT. This supreme revelation in Christ is the foundation of God's uniqueness as the God of the Bible and is the basis of the uniqueness of the mission of God's people. In Christ, the Word of God (John 1:1ff), which was, is and will be, is the source of mission of the church. It is Him who sends the church into the world in His name. He is the content of the church's mission. Moreover, all that the church says and does bears witness to the truth that the Lord is God and that there is no other name under heaven by which men must be saved, save for the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). This explains why at the end of all things in Revelations, God seeks to recreate the heavens and earth by the same Word that created in the beginning (John 1:1-4), the very Word which became flesh and dwelled among men (John 1:14-18).

In order to appreciate further the role of the OT in church mission, a few passages in the OT will be considered.

2.3.2.1 Genesis 1: 28 God's first Instituted Church

The involvement in the creative process of those created in the divine image takes the form of a command (Genesis 1:28). This is God's way of engaging his agents in His *missio Dei* (Matthew 28:18-20) from the beginning to the end. According to (The

New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, 1994:345-346), the first divine words to human beings are about their relationship, not to God, but to the earth. They share in the exercise of power (dominion)³⁰. From the beginning, God chooses not to be the only one who has or exercises creative power. This is evidenced by His sharing of His power relationship with human beings. After creating the pair in His own image and after His likeness (Genesis 1:26), God calls them to fill the earth and subdue it. This command to be fruitful immediately follows the word of blessing³¹ and involves a sharing of the divine creative capacities. God has brought the first human beings into existence, and the powers of propagating their own kind are now given over to the creatures (Genesis 1:22; continued after the flood, Genesis 9:1,7).

Concerning dominion, The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (1994:346) points out that it must be understood in terms of care-giving, even nurturing, and not exploitation. It further comments that as the image of God, human beings should relate to the non-human as God relates to them, an idea that is compared to the royal conception of responsibility outlined in Ezekiel 34:1-4; Psalms 72:8-14. However, the more general meaning of subduing involves development in the created order, which offers human beings the task of intra-creational development, of bringing the world along to its fullest possible creational potential. This is *missio Dei* at its climax and it represents God's success to bring everything back to His creational original purpose.

Blessing (Genesis 1:22, 2:3) indicates God's power, strength, and potential, which constitutes an integral part of the power-sharing image, a giving over what is God's to others to use as they will. This process refers to man's ability to fulfil his role as God's image-bearer on earth as is evidenced in Genesis 1:26 and seen in God's determination in renewing the commitment after the flood in Genesis 9:1. This is the

³⁰ Dominion is a word that Christ claims to be given when giving the Great Commission to His apostles in Matthew 28:18-20. The fact that these words are mentioned here albeit the perfect creation of the earth and all the creation gives a sense of God's *missio Dei* at work with the created pair from the beginning. It therefore stands to justify the fact that in Genesis 1:28, God was already doing mission with Adam and Eve – the first family to form God's small church in the OT.

³¹ Blessing is another word that God involves in His *missio Dei*. It seems to accompany His agents as a command wherever they go. God blesses Abraham in Genesis 12:3 so that he may bless the earth. All through the story of the children of Israel, a blessing follows when they obey God, which does not only benefit them, but also benefits their neighbours. When they fail to obey God's commands, Israel suffer consequences and these consequences affect their neighbours too. This offers a lesson on how God engages His *missio Dei* from the beginning, because then it means that He (God) is the one who owns mission. When Adam and Eve disobey his command, the result is a terrible curse - death. The fact that Adam and Eve are victims of eternal death and not just physical death indicates the beginning of God's involvement of human beings in His *missio Dei*. This act of mission is also seen at the end when God creates the world anew in Revelations. Prophetically, those who will disobey at the time of His re-creation will face spiritual and physical death.

kind of power that God gives His church in the OT and continues in the NT when Jesus institutes the church and sends the twelve apostles ((Wenman, 1987:33).

One striking characteristic of God's creation before the fall is perfection. According to the Oxford Bible Commentary (Barton and Muddiman, 2001:42), God's intention at a time of the creation of the world is to be found in the successive statements made at the conclusion of each act of creation, that 'God saw that it was good' (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21 and 25), culminating in the final comprehensive statement that he saw everything that he had made, and indeed, 'it was very good' (Genesis 1:31). Moreover, this is God's assessment of his own work as a craftsman, and it says something about his artistry. The word 'good' here refers more directly to the world – presumably primarily its usefulness to mankind. It does not necessarily have an ethical connotation: it is not mankind that is said to be 'good', but God's work as a craftsman.

Man as an agent plays a role in God's *missio Dei*, but thus far in the discussion the sending aspect of mission has not been addressed. All that the first church is expected to do is to engage in blessing and to worship God – the creator of the universe. Mission is still defined in general terms as it includes service to all creation, which is still as perfect as it comes from the hands of the creator. The motive and attitude ruling the church at this point is pure and godly because there is the substantial glory of God on the earth and in the hearts of men. It is only after the fall in Genesis 3 that God's mission adjusts to the need of salvation of men who are created in God's image and who are chosen as God's agents of the *missio Dei*. With the impending judgements of God upon the human race, Farmer (1998:364) reiterates the characteristics arising as a result of the new human order of sin (Genesis 3:38-24).

First, there is nakedness that continues to carry the lesson forward so that humans cannot face God because of their shame. However, God walks in the garden and still converses with them, thereby revealing the divine concern that will stay close to humans, even in sin. Second, where life before had been guided by blessing with given limits that they could keep and thus avoid disobedience to God, now it has new rules so that the human heart will always struggle with urges for the self over against God's will and evil acts will bring divine punishment in their wake. Three, fear becomes a major factor in all subsequent human responses to God (Genesis 3:10). This fear can be defined at two levels. It can be fear due to sin when one acts against others as a result of their motives, or this fear can lead one to discover God. This is seen in Israel's religious response to God through 'fear of the Lord' evident in their loyalty to God's revealed ways coupled with faithful worship (Farmer, 1998:364).

2.3.2.2 Genesis 12:1-3 *The call of Abraham*

Genesis 1-11 sums up the turn of events from a world perfectly created for a divine purpose to a disastrously broken society that has lost any sense of God-centeredness. From the fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-24), to the murderous acts of Cain (Genesis 4:1-27), to the time of the flood (Genesis 6-11), all the Bible records portray the consequences associated with the fall of man and the spread of sin on an ascending scale. A case in point is the account of the tower of Babel, which concludes on a note of profound despair with humankind utterly unable to fulfil its God-given destiny (Genesis 11:1-9).

The divine calling of Abraham and the blessing directed at him and his family, as well as at all the people on earth, is thus presented against the backdrop of humankind under the divine judgement. Through Abraham, God puts up a divine program to glorify Himself by bringing salvation to all on earth. This is where church missions really begins if understood within the context of both the sending and blessing in God's Great Commission mandate of the Bible (Kaiser Jr., 2000:13).

The blessing in Genesis 12:1-3 is very similar to the blessing of Genesis 1:28 i.e. 'God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it"'. There is an immediate sharp connection between the ways in which God engages man in the first instance before the fall to his new status after the fall. The role of God's blessing in mission engagement to humanity is by all means no accidental design of God's divine purpose in His *missio Dei*. Abraham's blessings were threefold: one, he would be a great nation, two, he would be personally blessed by God, and three, his name will be made great. Notably, Abraham's blessings were conditional. The condition served to define God's will in His *missio Dei*. First, Abraham and his descendants must learn to obey God and His commands. Second, the purpose clause 'in order that you may be a blessing' had to remind him and his descendants that God is no respecter of persons or tribes. Rather, salvation will be made possible to mankind through God's blessings and not man's efforts. This explains why God wanted Abraham's blessings to enrich others (Kaiser Jr., 2000:18).

When God summons Abraham, His command is clear: Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you (Genesis 12:1). In other words, Abraham was required to leave everything that would have been regarded in the ancient world as providing ultimate human security. The call represents a divine speech consisting of a series of promises that outweigh the command. This is where the gist of the passage lies (Wenham, 1987:274). It has to do with the focus of attention, what God intends to do through Abraham so as to fulfil

His divine will for His creation that was lost as a result of the fall (Legrand, 1990:3). Later on, the same is repeated for the NT church.

The Great Commission as given by the Lord Jesus Christ entails an act of obedience to leave all and follow Christ by carrying one's cross (Mark 8:34-38). This is a command that does not only demand personal commitment, but also requires one's understanding of the missionary call as opposed to one's personal commitment of family ties or worldly pleasures against the backdrop of one's apostleship. It further explains Jesus' answer to His disciples when they wanted to know what would become of them since they had left everything to follow Him. He answered that their reward would be a hundred times, besides the assurance of eternal life (Mark 10:27-31).

As a continuation of the creation and fulfilment of the promise given to man to increase and rule over the earth, Genesis 12:2 presents an assurance that Abraham's descendants will be made a great and significant nation, Israel will be born. The name for which the builders of Babel had yearned for (Genesis 11:4) will be given to Abraham (Kaiser Jr., 2000:17-18). Furthermore, the name he will receive will be 'great', according to Genesis 12:2. Over against the people's attempt to establish a world Centre in Babel, Abraham is promised that around him and his descendants the great nation of Israel will be gathered, a nucleus that will be the company of the redeemed, the 'new people of God' (Dumbrell, 1994:34).

2.3.2.3 Genesis 17 Covenant and Election

Grant and Wilson (2005:21) define covenant as essentially an 'agreement', 'contract', 'treaty', or 'commitment' between two or more parties. Accordingly, such an agreement may create a new relationship between the parties, or formalize a relationship that already exists. Generally, there will be written documentation, and often witnesses, though where the respective parties trust each other a verbal agreement may be sufficient, as in the London Stock Exchange where dealers hold to their motto 'My word is my bond'. More so, in a covenant, individuals, groups, and nations usually enter into contracts voluntarily, for mutual advantage, though in some cases one party may impose a contract or a treaty on another.

Biblically, making a covenant was a serious matter. After the call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, God entered into a binding covenant with him. Although God had shown himself to humankind in general, he also entered into a unique relationship with one people in particular: the nation of Israel. This vitally significant relationship in the life of Israel was expressed in the form of a covenant (*berit*), says Routledge (2008:160). This covenant relationship spelled Israel's strict allegiance to one God,

Yahweh, and bound them to a strict religion of monotheism. According to (Grant and Wilson, 2005:12), covenant presented God's desire to enter into a relationship with men and women created in his image. It was reflected in the repeated covenant refrain 'I will be your God and you will be my people' (Exodus 6:6-8; Leviticus 26:12). It was all about the Creator and his creation. Though the idea may seem simple, the implications of a covenant and a covenant relationship between God and humankind are vast. Often, covenant and covenant relationship between God and man was accompanied by sacrifice (Genesis 15:9-10; Jeremiah 34:18-19), or a covenant meal (Genesis 26:30; 31:54), or it had to be confirmed by a solemn oath (Genesis 21:31; 26:31; Joshua 9:15; 2Kings 11:4; Nehemiah 10:28-29) which, even when extracted by deception, was regarded as irrevocable (Joshua 9:15; Numbers 30:2; Ezekiel 17:15-16).

According to Routledge (2008:164), the covenant between God and Israel was like that of a bond between a husband and a wife (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 2:2; 3:14, 20; 31:32; Hosea 2:7, 16). This had an implication for the relationship because it involved a total commitment from each party (Genesis 2:24) in which each accepts the obligations and responsibilities the relationship imposes on them both.

The Bible lists several divine covenants, with the first being the covenant with Noah (Genesis 6:18; cf. 9:8-16) cf. (Grant and Wilson, 2005:13). The second and most important to this study is the one between God and Abraham. This is important because it is the one that refers to God's election of a people through whom God's purpose of redemption would begin to be fulfilled. Wright (2010:70-72) asserts that the covenant with Abraham is the most significant of all the biblical covenants from a missiological perspective. This is because God promises blessings to the nations through the particular means of Abraham and his descendants, who will form a community that embodies righteousness. God's unconditional promise that Abraham will have many offspring and that his descendants will occupy the land of Canaan is confirmed in a covenant in Genesis 15; 17:7. However, this comes with a condition of obedience (Genesis 17:1) and particularly on the observance of the rite of circumcision (Genesis 17:10-14). Finally, after testing Abraham's obedience, God confirms his promise with an oath in Genesis 22:16-18 cf. 26:3-5.

Throughout the life of the nation of Israel, God made and renewed His covenants with them. At Sinai, God made a covenant relationship with those who came out of Egypt. According to Routledge (2008:169), this covenant is often taken to mark the birth of the nation and represents, in part, the fulfilment of the promise that Abraham would become the father of a great nation, and the blessings promised to him would extend to his descendants. The second promise featured prominently in

the events surrounding the Exodus. It concerned the land of Canaan and, though the people had not yet received their inheritance, the possession of a Promised Land. The third promise to Abraham, which lay at the heart of the covenant relationship, was the declaration 'I will be their God' (Genesis 17:8). This finds expression in the Sinaitic covenant in the similar statement 'I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God' (Exodus 6:7). Wright (2006:370-374) notes that Exodus 19:3-6 emphasizes the priority of God's initiative, a universal perspective and the character of Israel as priestly (ie making God known to the nations) and holy (ie representing God's character to the nations).

The fourth and final promise is that of universal blessing. Abraham's descendants, Israel, are called to be a nation of priests, who will make God known to the nations and will bring the nations to God (Rendtorff, 1998:43). This is the promise that is most valid for this study. The basis of election of Israel lies not in favouritism, but as a gift in obedience to the covenant of the promise (Genesis 24:7; 50:24-25; Exodus 13:11; cf. Hebrews 6:17). Deuteronomy 7:7-8 spells out the basis for Israel's election as God's representatives on earth:

'The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

According to Routledge (2009:171), the people were chosen and saved by grace. It is God who took an initiative to choose Israel, redeemed the nation from bondage in Egypt in a profound act of sovereign grace, and took this people to be his own, committing himself to them. However, such a communion with God makes inevitable demands, and the response of the people should be to be obedient to the law (Exodus 19:8).

The purpose of election is seen in two expressions that characterize the NT church too. One has to do with a 'kingdom of priests' and the other with a 'holy nation'. The term holy as used in this sense means to be set apart, consecrated to God's own use. Israel was to be set apart for service to God. The nature of this service is seen in the former expression, 'kingdom of priests or royal priesthood'. The priest in Israel was an intermediary, representing God to people, and the people to God. He was consecrated in the service of God, and granted special access into the divine presence. There he offered sacrifices, both for himself and on behalf of the people, and presented to God the prayers and petitions of the nation. He also

brought God's word to the people. The priest was a man of the Law (Torah), who passed on and interpreted God's teaching. This twofold role, of teaching the Law and offering sacrifices on behalf of the people, is seen the blessing of Levi (Deuteronomy 33:10) (Routledge 2009:172).

As a priestly kingdom, Israel too was set apart. Israel was taken from the nations to be an intermediary: as God's representative to the nations and to stand before God on their behalf. Israel was called to bring the nations closer to God and, by sharing the light of God's revelation and the good news of his salvation, to bring God closer to the nations. Israel's role in this was to be mainly passive. They were called to be holy and distinctive: a people among whom God's presence would be seen, and to whom other nations would be drawn, seeking to share Israel's relationship with God. The effectiveness of Israel's witness depended on her distinctiveness. That continues to be true in the life of the church today. Several passages refer to nations being drawn to God's people (Isaiah 60:1-3; Zachariah 8:23), though Ezekiel also notes that unfaithfulness and disobedience led to the converse: God's name being profaned among the nations (Ezekiel 36:20-21) (Routledge, 2009:173).

2.3.2.4 Psalms 67 and 96 The role of Psalms in the universal blessings

The call for God's blessings and grace upon Israel include the call for Him to increase their families, to make them prosper and spiritually fulfilled, and also that their crops may increase and flock enlarge. The only reason for this call is indicated by the Psalmist. When this happens, the nations may look on Israel and say that what Aaron prayed for, by way of God's blessing, has indeed occurred. Not only will the nations witness the fulfilment of the blessings, they must also be drawn to receive God's message of salvation due to the fulfilment of all of His purposes to Israel. Analyzing this psalm, Kaiser Jr. (2000:31) says that this was sung at the Feast of Pentecost. He then makes a quick connection between this and the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh as prophesied by Joel 2:28-31. Since the Feast of Pentecost came at the time of the ingathering of the previous year's harvest, Kaiser sees this ingathering of the crops as an earnest, down-payment and a symbol of the spiritual harvest that God desired for every tribe, tongue, and nation. This was God's graciousness to all nations as promised through the repeated word of promise He had given to Abraham in Genesis 12:3.

An exegetical assessment of Psalm 67 shows at least three reasons to prove and test God's purposes: first, in Psalm 67:1-3, all believers are called upon to prove God's purpose to bless all the nations because God has been so gracious. In verse

2, the Psalmist says particularly that the reason was that all nations might come to know the 'ways' of God 'on earth'. The goodness of God to Israel was not only directed at Israel, it had to lead the nations to recognition of God among the heathen as Lord of all. God's 'way' (literally) was his purpose of grace, his salvation that was intended not just for Israel, but for the whole world. The second reason to prove and test God's purposes is found in Psalm 67:4-5. God rules and judges all the nations. This is neither in the sense of condemning, nor of judicial justice, but as a royal ruler who rules in righteousness. The third reason to prove and test God's purpose in Psalms 67 is found in the verse 6-7. God was good to Israel. This was evidenced by the overwhelming yields and increase in grain bins and barns, so much that all the storage areas were filled to overflowing. This was evidence enough that God had answered the prayer of Aaron and the priests (Numbers 6:24-26) and the only reason for this is recorded in Psalms 67:7: so that all the ends of the earth might fear Him.

The point that the Psalmist is trying to pass according to Kaiser Jr. (2000:33), is one of a missionary importance to the OT church. This message originated from Genesis 1-11, was defined in Genesis 12:1-3 and would achieve its clearest definition in Isaiah 42 and 49 when Israel is appointed to be the light to the nations through the theme of the 'servant of the Lord'. By demonstrating God's goodness via their praises for His majestic works, Israel was witnessing, proclaiming and evangelizing the Gentile world that must be brought to the light. The call was to fear (trust) the Lord as opposed to fearing (fright or terror) Him (Exodus 20:20). In Psalm 96, a call is made to the nation of Israel not only to sing unto the Lord, but to proclaim his salvation day after day too. Verse 2-3 admonishes them to declare God's glory among the nations and also His marvellous deeds among all the peoples. God's glory represents His character, while his deeds represent His conduct as suggested in verse 3. Verse 8 is a call to the nation of Israel to ascribe glory to God and bring sacrifices to his courts. Verse 9 extends this privilege to all the nations of the earth and is strengthened by verse 10 with the call to preach of Yahweh's reign and his impending judgements to all the people of the earth. In verse 11-12, there is an introduction of another verb, 'to make known or tell' in addition to the declaration used earlier. Verse 7-9 employs the verb 'to declare' that Yahweh reigns and hence He will judge the world in righteousness while verse 11-12 makes use of the verb to tell or make known of this reign to the nations of the earth.

It seems that the psalmists seem to suggest that the preaching of the good news to the nations is preceded by worship of God. People have to praise him before they tell others of His marvellous works. This is in tune with what Piper (2010) says

regarding the relationship between worship and mission namely that mission is not the ultimate goal of man, rather, worship is. Over and over again, the psalmists called on all the peoples of all the lands and nations to praise the Lord (Psalms 47:1; 67:3, 5; 100:1; 117:1). Even more directly, these ancient singers of Israel urged their people to tell, proclaim, and make known the mighty deeds of Yahweh (Psalms 9:11; 105:1) and to join in singing praises to God from all the nations (Psalms 18:49; 96:2-3). The psalmists themselves offer to sing God's praises among all the nations (Psalms 57:9; 108:3). The expected result would be that all the ends of the earth would turn to him (Psalms 22:27; 66:4; 86:9).

2.3.2.5 *Isaiah 40-55 (Deutero-Isaiah) Israel as a light to the nations*

In Isaiah 49:6, the words 'I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth' signifies Israel's call to a mission engagement in the *missio Dei*. Commenting on the idea of mission in this context, Achard (1962:8) says that it reaches its high-water mark. Not only is the idea of monotheism fully explored, but it also carries with it the weight of universalism where the God of Israel is charged with the power of controlling everything in history (Isaiah 41:4), given that He is the one Creator of the world (Isaiah 40:12ff.) and nothing can be likened to His majesty and authority (Isaiah 45:7).

Firth and Williamson (2009:117-119) outline the way in which Israel must present themselves in Deutero-Isaiah in order to be the light to the nations. Here, the overall message is clearly one of encouragement to renew trust in Yahweh, even though they say that the terms for trust are rarely used. Nevertheless, these terms are not entirely absent. For example, in Isaiah 43:9, in order to prove that there is no other god comparable to Yahweh, God challenges the nations and the peoples to produce witnesses to testify that some among them foretold the former things. As it appears, there is no such witness, hence this rhetorical challenge leaves no doubt that Yahweh's nominated servant Israel remains as His witness (Isaiah 43:10). The lesson for Israel here is one that is worth noting: by serving Yahweh as God's witnesses, as His prophets, teachers, lawgivers, Israel herself comes to know and believe more fully; that is, faith builds upon faith.

Such is Yahweh's way of doing His *missio Dei* among His people the Israelites. This spells out the whole idea of the exile and its experience: Israel may know that He is powerful and so remain faithful to Him. When this happens, the nations may lift the name of Yahweh high, because of His might and power. The power of God (Yahweh), who is the creator, is explicit. Compared to Him, the nations are nothing (Isaiah 40:12-17), compared to Him, images are nothing (Isaiah

40:18-20), compared to Him, rulers are nothing (Isaiah 40:21-24), compared to Him, heavenly forces are nothing (Isaiah 40:25-26), therefore, in Yahweh, the Creator, Israel's future is secured (Isaiah 40:27-31). The implication is beneficial both to Israel and the nations. When they come to learn of this timeless truth, each one of them will know that Yahweh is the God of the age in the sense of being sovereign over and throughout its whole course as long as it lasts, to its very end. This affirmation brings good news to the people in declaring that as these lands' original creator, Yahweh is sovereign over them in the present and can thus control their destiny so that events work out Israel's way. This way, Israel will bear the light to the other nations (Goldingay, 2005:33-70).

The servant's mission to the nations (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) stands out as a very important figure, not only in Deutero-Isaiah, but in the OT's mission as a whole. The servant's role and ministry within divine purposes had reference to both Israel and the nations and was ascribed the title the 'Servant of Yahweh'. The Servant of Yahweh's ministry is delineated by four servant songs in Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13; 53:12 and 61:1-3. According to Achard (1962:18), these songs seem to express another point of view, namely that the Servant is entrusted by Yahweh with a mission to the nations, and that his task is to make Yahweh's name known to the Gentiles. The emerging idea has to do with a publication of good tidings of salvation to the whole of mankind, meaning that he is truly the light of the world. As it appears, through him a true religion will be born, which must be preached to the end of the earth, as can be seen from Matthew 28:18-20.

Although the Servant's work is in the first instance interlinked with the redemption of Jerusalem and Israel's return to the holy city, that work will affect the whole world. The sequence of His ministry, namely to first minister to Israel and then bless the nations, suggests not only a pattern similar to the Abrahamic promises, but also a partial fulfilment for these promises. The fourth 'Servant's song' for instance is the jewel in the crown of Isaiah's theology, the focal point of his vision. It provides the key to understanding the Servant's ministry and with it God's plans for His people and for the world (Konstenberger and O' Brien, 2001:47-48). Moreover, the Servant's songs tell of a Servant who is sent to be God's instrument for the conversion of the nations, a conversion that will not be effected without the sore labour of preaching. Rather, this work will be accompanied by the communication of the Law to the nations. Yahweh has given Israel a Torah and in this passage He gives one to all peoples, even to the Isles (Isaiah 41:4 ff.). His commandments become the light of these peoples who apparently are allowed to share the blessings promised to David (Achard, 1962:19).

According to Achard (1962:8-31), Deutero-Isaiah's message is not a missionary message in the usual sense of the term, there is no question of proselytism in his preaching. The prophet does not invite Israel to go to the whole world in order to call the heathen to conversion. This is not about sending as evidenced in the NT. Rather, Israel's business is to exist. Its presence in the world furnishes proof of Yahweh's divinity; its life declares what He means for Israel itself and for the universe. The mission of Israel consists in reflecting the glory of God by accepting His gifts and His judgement alike. When they contemplate the singular destiny of the Chosen People, the heavens and earth find Him who has wrought it. Israel plays the part of intermediary for the nations, sending them back to Him who owes all. It is their light because, first, and in an exceptional fashion, it has been alighted by the glory of God. In choosing Yahweh, living by Him and acting as a light to the nations, Israel is living the *missio Dei* and hence fulfilling the mandate of church and mission in the OT.

2.3.3 The New Testament and Church mission

When Christ was born, a new generation of a chosen people described as a royal priesthood and a holy nation belonging to God was born (I Peter 2:9). This means that the role of the church as played by Israel in the Old Testament ceases and in its place comes another group made up of those who believe in the new birth that Christ brings and that is fulfilled through His death and resurrection. In attempting to define the mission of the church in the New Testament, this section seeks to demonstrate the difference between the role of the chosen people of God in the Old Testament and the new nation represented by the New Testament Church. Also, the role of both the Son and the Holy Spirit will be demonstrated as the driving forces of the Gospel in the life of the Church. Finally, the role of the Church in the accomplishment of the *missio Dei* will be considered as a promise made by Christ in Matthew 24:14 and as a prerequisite of the Great command in Matthew 28:16-20.

When God called and chose Israel among other nations, He had purposed for them to be his representatives all over the world. Their unique relationship with Yahweh defined them. It included their understanding of election, redemption, covenant and holiness. All these characteristics were meant to set them apart from the other nations at a fundamental level. God had chosen and called Israel in particular and not any other nation (Deuteronomy 7:7-11; Amos 3:2). God had redeemed Israel in a way he had not done for any other nation (Deuteronomy 4:32-39). God had revealed his law and entered into a covenant relationship with Israel and no other nation (Psalms 147:19-20).

Commenting on the uniqueness of Israel, Wright (2006:462) says it was for the sake of God's universality. This universality entailed a choice of a particular people with a particular means for a particular purpose. This purpose was to bless Israel so that the rest of the nations would be blessed through Abraham. Their unique redemption story was the paradigm of what God would ultimately accomplish through Christ for the deliverance of all from bondage. This included their unique stewardship of God's revelation so that ultimately God's law could reach the nations. It also included a unique structure of social, economic and political ethics designed to represent a type of redeemed community that would be realized under God's reign. Accordingly, these characteristics and uniqueness of Israel in the OT are central to the mission of the church in the NT.

2.3.3.1 Zachariah 2 and 9

The promise of the new covenant was given to Israel after their harrowing experience in exile. This exile experience was repeated throughout their history, starting with Egypt until Zachariah the Lord gives a promise in Zachariah 2 that He will gather them from the bondage of their exile so that all those who had been exiled in Babylon, Syria and across the four corners of the world (Zachariah 2:6-8) will be gathered. Not only does the Lord gather His people, but He actually punishes the nations who were responsible for enslaving his people (Zachariah 9). However, as the Lord gathers the Israelites, there is a call to flee the city of Jerusalem because of the wrath of the Lord visiting with the enemies of Israel. This calling is prophetic because it does not only warn the Israelites of the impending judgement, but it also provides an opportunity to the dwellers and the nations to run for their lives too.

The destruction of Jerusalem is symbolic to Christ's ministry of birth, life and death. He tells his disciples that he can destroy the temple and build it again in three days, referring to the temple of Jerusalem. He wants to let them understand that it is by destroying the city, including the temple, that the glory of God is manifested. If Christ does not die for the grievous sins of men, there will be no salvation, not for the Jews nor for the Gentiles. Wright (2006:506) posits that although Jesus' earthly ministry was launched by a movement that aimed at the restoration of Israel, He himself launched a movement that aimed at the ingathering of the nations to the new messianic people of God. While the initial impetus for His ministry was to call Israel back to their God, the subsequent impact of His ministry was a new community that called the nations to faith in the God of Israel. This double dimension in the mission of Jesus forms the basis of the church's mission in the New Testament.

Although God was true to His covenant relationship with Israel, their rebellion had led them into exile not once or twice, but many times (Ezekiel 36:17-19). According to biblical history, no sooner had Israel left Sinai, than they fell into the catastrophic rebellion and apostasy of the Golden Calf (Exodus 32:-34). Were it not for Moses' intervention, Israel would have been destroyed in the first instance for God's glory to be manifested.

As a result of the constant failures and the Deuteronomy experience, which reflected badly on the holy name of the Lord among the nations (Ezekiel 36:20-21), Israel had to be subjected to God's righteous judgements. These judgements not only served as a lesson to the rebellious Israel, they also sent a signal to the nations that they should not only sit and marvel at the wrath of God towards His people (Deuteronomy 29:24-25). The Lord God is also the one who holds the universe in his hands and therefore his judgements will spare none unless they repent and change their ways. In Zachariah 9:1-8, the Lord declares judgement on the nations. In the preceding verses (9-17), the Lord promises salvation to His people through the coming of a messiah (Zion's king). As the Lord restores His people Israel, God has a universal purpose in mind. Both Israel and the nations must know that He is Yahweh, the creator of heavens and earth, the redeemer, sustainer of all life and also the great I am. This represents the foundation of the Gospel and ministry of Christ Jesus in the NT's mission.

2.3.3.2 Acts 2:5

At the core of Israel's restoration are the blessings and benefits received at God's command. These blessings that were visible in the eyes of both Israel and the nations caused both Israel and the nations to worship God and consequently elicited a universal worship of Yahweh. Psalms gives a thematic explanation of the worship of both Israel and the nations. All of them responded to his mighty acts (Psalms 68:30-32), to the justice of His sovereign cosmic rule in particular (Psalms 66:3-4, 8; 67). His restoration of Zion became a benefit to the nations (Psalms 102, 126:2-3) and part of his outpouring of the universal praise of all creation (Psalms 22:26, 29; 96:1-3; 138:4-5; 145:10-12).

In an effort to demonstrate his ministry here on earth, Jesus went about his earthly ministry, limiting his itinerant ministry and that of his disciples for the most part to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:6; 15:24). However, amidst their engagements, Jesus and his party always came across members of the Gentile community and lacking a clear understanding of what the kingdom of God entails, His disciples became confused and overwhelmed about what Christ's ministry

represented (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10). Christ often sought to engage the Gentiles as well as the Jews, but more so, he sought to teach His first church (the disciples) that the kingdom of God entails a life of a prayer (Matthew 6:9ff), self-sacrifice (Matthew 16:24-25 cf Romans 12:1) and humility (Matthew 5:5 cf Luke 18:16-17). He understood what they were going through. All these were lessons aimed at presenting the bigger picture of His ministry, namely restoration of the Jews and more so, restoration of the whole mankind to God.

Speaking of the role of prayer in the ministry of Jesus, the teachings of the disciples and the coming of the kingdom of God, Holmas (2011:1) reiterates that the role of prayer features as an essential characteristic of the godly in Israel, and as the story of redemption progresses, it is presented as a vital aspect both of Jesus' life and teaching and of the mission of the New Testament church. By demonstrating the importance of prayer in His life as a role model, Christ not only taught the early church to depend on God, who is the author, sustainer and finisher of mission, but he helped them to entrust their limited prowess to the able hands of the Holy Spirit whom He bore testimony to (John 16).

Squires (1993:89) presents Luke's account of Jesus and the early church, replete with instances of divine intervention by miraculous means as seen in the various signs and wonders to which Luke refers and in the healings and exorcisms in which the divine power works through certain individuals. This is the way in which God's plan in the New Testament church is fulfilled. Through the Spirit, Jesus promises His disciples that they will have power, even to triumph over serpents and scorpions and to heal the sick and exorcise demons (Luke 10:19). As the author of the book of Acts, Luke describes divine intervention in history with the phrase 'signs and wonders'. In Peter's first public proclamation about Jesus on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22-23), he emphasizes the divine guidance of Jesus' life. By describing the deeds that Jesus performed before He was crucified as 'mighty works and wonders and signs', Peter draws upon a conventional Deuteronomic appellation for miracles that must follow the New Testament church soon after they receive the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:5).

Speaking of these acts of the Spirit, the New Testament Interpreter's Bible (2002:40) says that Luke's narrative is centred on God, who alone reigns and who, as the divine choreographer of history, is not detached from history, but is powerfully present to heal and restore those who trust God. In this context, God promises to bless all nations through the mission of restored Israel (Acts 1:8). This act of blessing and witnessing to the whole world follows Jesus' second instruction to the first church not to leave Jerusalem (Acts 1:4) until the promise of the father is realized. The third

instruction is to be baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). Neil (1973:71) posits that for Luke the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost brings the Church to birth and endows it with the divine power without which it cannot fulfil its appointed mission as set forth in Acts 1:8. Nothing less than this heaven sent gift could have changed simple fishermen into fearless Evangelists. They became the spearhead of an irresistible missionary campaign that swept through the Roman Empire and has transformed the whole world within a short space of time.

Neil (1973:71-72) further says, 'The basic event (Pentecost) was a communal religious experience, as a result of which the Apostles embarked on the first stage of the Church's mission'. This event is dramatized in terms of 'wind' (I King 19:11; Ezekiel 37:9; John 3:8) and of the Spirit of God and the 'fire' (Exodus 3:2; Luke 3:16) of the Power of God, together with the breaking down of the barrier of language, symbolizing the beginning of the reconciling power of the Gospel (Acts 2:2-5). Peter demonstrated that the ecstatic experience of 'speaking with tongues', irresistibly suggested to him the reversal of the mythical curse of Babel. Men's impious pride were punished with separation from one another through the diversity of language (Genesis 11:1-9), but men from all nations could be brought into one fellowship by the power of the Spirit. Included in the list of the men present from every nation are the Jews in their bigger numbers from all over the world, Galileans, Parthians, Medes and Elamites who were residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphilia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene. There were also visitors from Rome, Crete and Arabia (Acts 2:8-12).

Peter's message was mainly centred on the death and resurrection of Christ. He demonstrated the power of the Spirit by speaking of the things that had taken place. Being a witness to these things, Peter reminded his audience that the time had now come for them to be baptized by the Holy Spirit. However, before that could happen, they must cleanse themselves of their guilt of crucifying the Messiah for the Jews and for the Gentiles. Gentiles also had to repent and be baptized into the Jewish faith as one of the marks of their incorporation into the people of God. Repentance for past sins, and baptism as a symbol of the cleansing power of God's forgiveness, was the theme of John the Baptist's mission and of the New Testament Church. Peter's formula was in line with both of these, although at Pentecost, Peter invited all present to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ as an indication that He is a risen Lord and that those who believe are incorporated into the new community of the Messiah.

2.3.3.3 Acts 13

With the gift of the Holy Spirit empowering the apostles and the new members of the NT church, devotion deepened and unity was manifested so that it was a God-given Spirit that brought the Church to life, furthered its growth and linked its members collectively and individually with their ascended Lord and with one another. Neil (1973:79) points out how the Christian belief and practice of the apostolic age, the variable relationship between baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the laying of hands was faithfully reflected throughout the history of the New Testament Church (Acts 8:12-17; Acts 10:44-48; Acts 19:5-6).

This was the spirit that burned in the hearts of Paul and Barnabas as they set out to actively engage in the missionary work in Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-14:28). As members of the missionary team in the church in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas begin their mission by fasting and praying. Barton and Muddiman (2001:1044) refer to this as commissioning for a particular task. From the unspecified number of the missionary team, Paul (Saul) and Barnabas are charged with the responsibility of going to the Antioch church. In their excitement, Paul and Barnabas seem to be in the real missionary spirit (Acts 13:4). As they set out to deliberately visit the formal Jewish meeting places to take the apostolic task of proclaiming the risen saviour (Acts 13:5 cf 4:31; 6:2; 11:1) they take an assistant along with them by the name of John Mark.

According to the New Interpreter's Bible (2002:188), Antioch replaced Jerusalem as the centre of the church's mission in the NT and Paul and Barnabas replaced Peter and John as the principal pair of the prophetic witnesses to Jesus (Acts 13:9). Between their departure from and return to Antioch, the pair are sent out under the aegis and at the behest of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2) to do the work to which God has called them to (Acts 13:2; 14:26). They travel together to several important cities of Roman Asia (modern-day Turkey), including Cyprian Paphos (Acts 13:4-12), Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13-52), Lycaonian Iconium (Acts 14:1-7), and Lystra (Acts 14:8-20). This new missionary journey is marked by old practices and priorities. Paul is seen proclaiming the word of God (Acts 13:5,7, 16-41; 14:3, 7-25) and he performs prophetic signs and wonders (Acts 14:3 cf 2:17-21; 13:11; 14:8-10; 15:12) in the synagogues of urban centres to mixed audiences (Acts 14:1; 13:6-7, 42-48; 19) and suffers because of it. Unlike Peter (Acts 8:25), Paul and Barnabas retrace their footsteps to encourage new converts and to testify to the grace of God at work in the believers (Acts 14:21-26). This is a habit and a characteristic that is seen throughout the Pauline epistles as he engages with church mission in different

places throughout his missionary journeys and ministry as an apostle of Christ (Ephesians 2:8-22, 3:6, Philippians 1:13-14, Colossians 1:3-7, I Thessalonians 1:2).

The NT church in Antioch also represents the establishment of a church leadership that is representative of a community under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The identity of those within the congregation acts as a conduit for the Holy Spirit to make clear God's will for the congregation. Speaking of this new experience, The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (2002:189) describes its unique and interesting structure. The choice of leaders are drawn from different cultural and social statuses so that from Cyprus, there is a Levite, North Africa is presented by a black man who was not only educated under the feet of Gamaliel, but who also was a friend to Herod Antipas from his childhood (Acts 11:19-20). Despite a few notable instances of abuse, opposition and rejection of the Gospel (Acts 13:45), Paul's first missionary journey can be described as a success. In spite of his public rejection, Paul's irrepressible spirit boldly continued to do that which God had called him to do, moving from location to location while seeking out those more responsive to the Gospel for special attention (Acts 13:47; 14:21-26). This is the spirit that should direct the church today as she seeks to engage the world with the Gospel. While the church should expect opposition to the Gospel, whether for political reason or out of blind ignorance, its response is to be ever agile, willing and able to move to new places in order to minister to different groups who are responsive to its witness to God's good news (The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, 2002:202).

2.3.3.4 Revelations 21-22

At the beginning of His mission and discipling of the twelve, Jesus gave the promise that the Gospel will be preached in the whole world as a witness, then the end will come (Matthew 24:14.) The theme of the end times cannot be divorced from that of the beginning. The Bible presents a perfect beginning (Genesis 1) with a striking confirmation of the perfection of everything that God had created, and emphasized by the author's words that God Himself was the one making the confirmations at the end of everyday's work of creation. Resonating with this theme of perfection, is the promise that God would make everything a new (II Peter 3:13), in a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1, 5) where righteousness dwells.

The book of Revelations 21-22 is not only fit for the eschatological fulfilment of the *missio Dei* throughout the whole Bible, rather its outline confirms the real change of things from creation to re-creation. First, Revelation speaks of God who is not only the creator, but also the perfecter and finisher of His mission. 'He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End' (Revelation 21:6). Although the

act of re-creation is futuristic, otherwise known as the 'not yet' (Wright, 2006:503; cf Isaiah 65 and 66), the reality of its message to the church as an agent of this mission and to the people of other faiths as candidates to this glorious promise is one that Jesus Himself wished for His church when He spoke to the multitudes at the mount of blessing (Matthew 5:5) i.e. "blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth".

Reiterating the significance of the promises to Israel as given in Isaiah 65:17 and II Peter 3:13, Aune (1998:1116) points out that the theme of the re-creation or renewal of creation in ancient Judaism is not limited to Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22. This promise of re-creation is referred to in a variety of ways in Jewish apocalyptic literature as the final eschatological act. The implication here is that the mission of the church will cease at the culmination of re-creation (Revelation 21-22). This therefore calls for righteousness on the part of the church for 'behold the dwelling of God is with people, and he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God Himself will be with them as their God (Revelation 21:3). He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will no longer exist, nor will grief or crying or pain exist any longer, and the curse of war will no longer exist (Revelation 21:4). The throne of God and the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads (Revelation 22:3-4). There will no longer be any night, and people will have no need for lamp light or sunlight, because the Lord God will illuminate them, and they will reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:5).

Absent in this dwelling place of God are the wicked (Revelation 17:15 cf Isaiah 57:20), the fearful and the unbelieving (Revelation 21:8), and the dogs (Revelation 22:15). To these mentioned, The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (1998:722) says, 'The condemned will have no place in the new Jerusalem'. This is because they already belong to the list of those intended for the second death (Ezekiel 44:9; Romans 1:29; I Corinthians 6:10; Titus 1:16). In the list, the first two have no direct parallel in Revelations, although in light of the repeated emphasis on being faithful even to death (Revelation 2:10), only those who are courageous to conquer the beast are referred to as the faithful (Revelation 1:6 cf 2:10).

The message of Revelation 21-22 is not only significant to the creation of the new world order. Its significance is good news to the church both in the Old and the NT. This message of re-creation is a milestone towards the missionary journey of the NT from the time when Christ gave the promise of His second coming (John 14) to the time when they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). They joined the army by proclaiming the good news unto salvation to every nation, tongue, language and nationality. Its culmination will be in the New Jerusalem when they sit to judge the

twelve tribes of Israel (Barton and Muddiman, 2001:1302-1303) cf (Matthew 19:28, Luke 22:30 cf Revelation 4:4).

2.3.4 Mission of the Church in light of the *missio Dei*

Mission has been on-going for as long as God has existed, the church has not always been missionary. The failure is necessitated by what Bosch (2009:9) refers as the inability of the church to either give a definition of her mission or to map her aims and methods due to cultural-historical contexts within a given time of engagement. A good point in case is in the interrelation of the three elements of missionary activity: *Kerygma* (proclaiming the message of God's salvation), *Koinonia* (sharing the fellowship, unity, and equality of all believers in communion with the Father and Son through the Holy Spirit), and *diakonia* (serving the secular needs of other people, rooted in and modelled on Christ's service). These elements proved somewhat diverse in practice so that they were hardly ever given equal attention in the New Testament church.

Given the argument above, there has been continued never-ending debate on what mission is since the establishment of missiology as an academic discipline in the 19th century. For instance, the medieval and 19th century idea of Christianizing whole nations survives in a modified way in the emphasis on converting California. According to Ustorf (2000:440-442), J. Hoekendijk (1952) suggested a radical reformulation of 'mission from below'. He refused to see the world as an ecclesiastical training ground and declared that Shalom, not the formation of churches, was the aim of mission, and the task of missionaries was to participate in people's struggle for justice and integrity.

Traditionally, the conversion of individuals and the establishment of new local churches took priority. Some regarded mission as a one-way spiritual process within an emphasis on individual soul-saving (freelance and charismatic missionaries). Others expected the congregations established through mission to enrich the knowledge of God in ecumenical recognition (Zinzendorf and the Moravian lay missionaries of the 18th century). Uniquely though, the 19th century Protestant mission societies aimed at establishing a model church overseas, which was more than often intended to be a supra-denominational church, in other words a sort of a mini-Christendom, free from the agnosticism in the old heartlands of Christianity (Ustorf, 2000:440-442).

From the statement above, one does not struggle to understand why the Willingen International Conference in Germany (1952) wavered to redefine mission as *missio Dei*. The council first posited a seminal definition of the mission of God:

“Mission has its source in the Triune God. Out of the depth of his love to us, the Father has sent forth his own beloved son to reconcile all things to himself that we and all men might through the Spirit be made one in him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God” (Shulz, 2009:87). This definition arose from the preliminary work of the German missiologist Karl Hartenstein. It was followed by his superb coining of the phrase *missio Dei* in 1934 in response to Karl Barth’s use of the term *actio Dei*, a term one can translate as the action of God (Sanders, 2006:24).

Although the phrase *missio Dei* recalls traditional thought such as Augustine’s doctrine of the Trinity and finds allusions in his Confessions, Shulz (2009:87) confirms that its major application to missiology appeared first in Willingen International Conference in Germany (1952). Newbigin (1989:118) was also present, and his resounding sentiments to the ongoing discussion advanced the argument as follows: “The mission of the church is to be understood, can only be rightly understood, in terms of the Trinitarian model. Although Newbigin makes a strong assertion, one struggles with his definition of what the Trinitarian model of mission is. This has to do with his emphasis on the second person of the trinity, something that presents him as favouring one aspect of the trinity as opposed to the role of the Triune God.

To complement Newbigin’s advanced definition of the mission of the church, Bosch (2009:389-393) presents what this study regards as a balanced definition of *missio Dei*. Under the tutelage of leading missiologists and theologians such as Freytag, Karl Hartenstein, and Karl Barth, the byword *missio Dei* was soon widely adopted to express mission as God’s mission (Schulz, 2009:88). This presented a paradigm shift from mission as a mostly human endeavour to a theocentric approach that makes God the source and initiator of mission.

Tenant (2010:4) presents a conclusion to the discussion of church mission in light of the *missio Dei*. In his work entitled: ‘*Missio Dei: The Problem of God in Answer to the Problem of Church and Mission*,’ Tenant suggests that God’s mission recognizes that the question of the church’s connection with the world can only be answered by who God is in and for himself. In order to illustrate this point, Tenant shows how this works. First, he acknowledges that this is a key theological move that seemingly reinforces the dichotomy between church and mission. Second, while the problem presents itself as an issue of the relationship between the church and the world, it is contingent on an account of God’s own life where his movement into the world is a second step alongside his eternal being. To sum up, Tenant says, ‘*missio*

Dei theology illustrates well that the cleavage of church from mission derives from a cleavage within God's own life'.

If a Tenant's conclusive remark on *missio Dei* theology is anything to go by, then Bosch's (2009:370) position on the role of the church must be reinforced. It means that God's salvific work must be recognized to precede both church and mission. It further implies that no one should subordinate mission to neither the church, nor the church to mission. Both should be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which is the overarching concept. Furthermore, the church must change from being the sender of mission to being the one sent so that as one fleshes out the *missio Dei* concept, it is tenable to assert with Bosch (2009:390) that in the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. Any mission of the church that does not anchor in God's *missio Dei* becomes questionable.

2.4 BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING MISSION TO PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

According to Devadutt (1967:7), we live in a world of religious pluralism with major world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In addition to these major religions one finds other faiths that are generally limited to ethnic or other groups, most of which have sectarian expressions. However, despite these many religious ways, all men have a common nature and potentially possess a common destiny. This is because mankind owes its beginning and origin to God's creation and God's purpose (Genesis 1:26-31).

2.4.1 Mission to people of other faiths in the Old Testament

The Bible records a number of persons from other faiths who came into contact with the God of Israel in the OT. For the sake of this study, a few examples of individual believing Gentiles will be examined in order to establish the validity of missionary engagement to people of other faiths in the OT.

Kaiser Jr. (2000:39) posits that the promise given to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) is foundational to a missionary vision of the whole Bible and the people of God through all the ages. This promise that God would bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham was repeated in Genesis 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14. This is the Hebrew phrase for 'all the families', *kol mispehot*, which is the equivalent of the Greek word *phulai* for all tribes'. Kaiser continues to argue that the Hebrew word family refers to smaller groups rather than tribes (Joshua 7:14). From there he argues that God's promise to Abraham envisioned both large and small families. Furthermore, the promise for all the nations, *kol goye* (Hebrew) rendered in Genesis

18:18; 22:1 and 26:4 as *panta ta ethne* (all the nations), is equivalent to the Hebrew word *goyim*, a word for the 'Gentiles'. Kaiser's statement thus implies that both the 'nations' and 'Gentiles' alike were equal recipients of the same Good News from the beginning of time along with Israel herself.

2.4.1.1 II Kings 5:1-19 Naaman

The OT is full of stories and works of God's faithful servants engaging directly or indirectly in witnessing to the truth in foreign lands. Apart from the prophets who were directly assigned with the task of communicating God's messages and warnings to both the leaders of Israel and those of other nations, there were other individuals whose faith left the mark of their theology and understanding of God's *missio Dei* in the OT. One of these individuals was a servant girl who had been taken into captivity and made a slave to a commander in Syria by the name of Naaman (II Kings 5:2). Although nothing much is written of the background of this servant girl, the cultural context emphasizes her gender, her status as a servant, and her position in the society as a captive.

When one thinks of the context in which the conversion of Naaman was undertaken, one is reminded of the promises that God made to Moses regarding the children of Israel, namely that if His people who were called by His name would humble themselves and obey His commands, He would bless them and heal their land of all maladies and diseases. If they disobeyed his laws and commands, God would punish them and cause them and their children to be taken into captivity. This girl was a victim of such punishment. Life in captivity was not one of comfort, and yet this young girl remembered the words of God to Moses and she trusted that her master would really be a beneficiary of this blessing.

She plucked up courage and without fear of what consequences her suggestion may bring, this young missionary was faithful and preached the Good News of salvation in and out of season. She spared no opportunity to evangelize her master's household before she could think of her neighbours. Missiologically, her engagement leaves much to be desired as far as her understanding of *missio Dei* goes, because not only does she believe in her heavenly father, the God of her people, but she also believes in his mighty works of healing! What a faith, what a big heart!

In his own capacity, Naaman did not hesitate to go to Israel to try the treatment of which she testified. As things turned out, his expectations caused him humiliation. His humiliation started with the reception he received from the king of Israel and continued with the prophet who refused to receive his might and status

(loaded with gifts in form of silver, according to II Kings 5:10). The prophet even demanded that he goes to dip himself in the river not once or twice, but seven times. Indeed, Naaman's pride was wounded to the point that he was at the brink of abandoning the whole project (Kaiser Jr., 2000:45). It seems that the servants played a role in convincing their master, but we are not told whether they were believers. Whether by design or default, their role had influenced the resultant action of trying. This later bore fruit and led to a celebration in all their lives because their master was now healed of leprosy (II Kings 5:13). Their argument was based on logic, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then when he tells you, "Wash and be cleansed!" The bigger picture of God's *missio Dei* was in control, no doubt. Just like He was in control of the Gentile's proud heart when he conquered Syria through his commandership, so God was at work here to humble him for the sake of his own salvation (II Kings 5:1). The ones to engage him in this mission were his own servants.

It is interesting how God's *missio Dei* is not dependent on personalities. Indeed, God is no respecter of persons. The question that has to be answered is: why would God fail to send his prophet Elisha directly to Naaman to perform his healing miracles? Why would God use the faith of a young girl and that of the servants in Syria when there were many respected persons in Israel who would have procured the healing in a 'respectable and most appropriate way in the eyes of human beings?' Why would Naaman be required to dip himself in the river Jordan seven times instead of the prophet speaking a word of healing upon him? Why would he have to travel all the way to Israel and not receive his healing in Syria?

Verse 15 tells how Naaman confessed that there is no other God in the entire world except in Israel. Was this not how the psalmists called upon the people of the nations to come and worship the Lord of heavens and declare his righteous judgements because there was none like him? (Psalms 96:1-5; 117). According to verse 17, Naaman confessed his faith in Yahweh and pledged his allegiance to no other god apart from the God of Israel. This is an indication that Naaman would probably follow the footsteps of the patriarchs and prophets and be counted as one of those faithful servants of Yahweh in the history of the OT's mission.

2.4.1.2 Daniel 3 Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego

The account of Daniel and his companions in Babylon offer insights into faithfulness and mission that remain relevant even after twenty-six hundred years. The focus is on how God turns bad into good in this experience of four young Jewish men. Through no fault of their own, they were exiled to a foreign country. Yet, because of

their unswerving commitment, God was able to use them as witnesses for His purposes and power. Through various ordeals, such as a fiery furnace and a den of lions, God not only displayed His care for Daniel and his friends, but He demonstrated His power before pagans who knew only their idols. Who but God knows the eternal results of the faithfulness displayed by these young Hebrews?

In a world full of knowledge, philosophy and theology, the four young men stood out as instruments of God's *missio Dei*. Their experience stands out as a test of true stewardship in a foreign land where one has few if any choices to make. Already in Babylon and in exile, the four Hebrew boys knew that their lives depended wholly in God, the Lord of their forefathers. Commenting on their first test in this highly developed and sophisticated world, Steinmann (2008:100) states explicitly that these young men in their early teens demonstrated their ability to withstand the pressure of a foreign culture to compromise their faith.

A spiritual foundation is important as it plays a big role in the lives of God's people. When God called Abraham out of pagan practice and covenanted with him, His goal was mapped out not only for Abraham's own sake, but also for the sake of his descendants. God's intention beats all the intentions of men and His ways cannot compare to the ways of men. One of the ways that Abraham's descendants had to practice their faith before God was through obedience to His commandments. Their children had to be instructed in these commandments on a daily basis and they had to be passed on from generation to generation (Deuteronomy 6:6-7 cf 4:9).

The parents of Daniel, Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego could not have predicted what would happen to their children. However, through faithful, daily religious instruction, they provided a strong spiritual foundation for their children. How important that parents seek to do the same for their children today. The constant dwelling on God, the constant recounting of the miracles, the goodness, and the love of God can be of as much benefit to the parents as to the children. Even for those who do not have children or for those whose children are gone, how important to keep the reality, goodness, and power of God before us at all times. After all, how can we share with others what we, ourselves, have not experienced? How can God's *missio Dei* be a reality to the people of other faiths unless it becomes a reality to God's people?

The question of defilement and lack of temperance in what we consume, both physically and intellectually, is not only an issue of health, but also of missiology (Daniel 1:4). It is all too true that what we read, what we are exposed to, cannot but influence our thoughts. Perhaps for the first time in their lives, these young men were exposed to literature that espoused values and beliefs opposed to what they had

been taught. In Babylonian literature they were confronted with astrology, false gods, and myths of various descriptions. The battle for their minds, and hence their souls, had begun (Philippians 4:8). The same went for their bodies, which, as modern science has aptly shown, are linked intimately with our minds. The key word is *defile*, which in Hebrew means just that, to "pollute, defile." Thus, for these young men, the issue was not just healthy living or a mere preference. It was a moral issue (Daniel 1:8, 12-14). From the beginning of their time in Babylon, the four young men resolved to stand for principle, no matter what the cost. It set the pattern for the rest of their time in Babylon, where more than once they were tested for their faith. Through their faithfulness, they bore a strong witness to the God of heaven.

This biblical story clearly shows God's involvement in the life of the Babylonians, interacting with King Nebuchadnezzar and later with King Cyrus (Isaiah 56:1-8). God is portrayed as the God not only of the children of the Israel, but of all nations. The meaning of names was important to Jewish families, and children were named carefully. The names Daniel (God is my judge), Hananiah (God has favoured), Mishael (who is what God is), and Azariah (Jehovah has helped) reflect the high priority the parents placed on their children's spiritual lives (Daniel 1:6-7). Nebuchadnezzar's top official, Ashpenaz, gave the four young Jewish men new Babylonian names, Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, which were mainly tributes to Babylonian gods. The closest that these four men would get to idolatry is names about which they had no say. Under God's blessing they soon moved into prominent positions in the court and government of Babylon. After their period of preparation, Ashpenaz presented the four young men to the king. The king talks with them and "found none equal" to them (Daniel 1:19). "In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom" (Daniel 1:20).

What a tremendous testimony to what God could do through four faithful young men? Taken from obscurity in Jerusalem to the court of the most powerful person in the world, they rose to the occasion and stood before the king as witnesses to the power of God. Daniel and his companions made it to the highest levels of the court in Babylon, the greatest empire in the world at that time. However, as in most of the courts of power, perils awaited them (Daniel 2:1-13). God had earlier given Daniel the gift of interpreting dreams and visions (Daniel 1:17), but he was not presumptuous and took nothing for granted. He gathered his three friends and urged them to pray (Daniel 2:18), for without divine intervention they were clearly going to meet the same fate as the charlatans and frauds in the king's court (Daniel 2:20-23,

46-48). Think about what it meant for the monarch of the greatest empire in the world to bow down and worship a foreign captive in his court (Daniel 2:46-48)! The king was obviously impressed, no matter how much more he had to learn. Through Daniel, then, God spares the lives of the wise men throughout Babylon, guided a pagan king to at least the beginnings of belief in the true God, and advanced Daniel and his friends to positions of authority, where they could be a greater witness to Him. What a marvellous way to achieve the goals of the *missio Dei*? What a wonderful example of a viable model of the OT's church in the undertaking of mission to people of other faiths?

Commenting on the tremendous results achieved by God through these young Hebrew missionaries to engage people of other faiths in the OT, White (1981: 487-512) says, "The tidings of their wonderful deliverance were carried to many countries by the representatives of the different nations that had been invited by Nebuchadnezzar to the dedication. Through the faithfulness of His children, God was glorified in all the earth".

2.4.1.3 *Jonah 1-4*

The book of Jonah can be considered God's highest engagement through His *missio Dei* in the OT, both with His elect people (Israel) represented by Jonah's character, and also to the people of other faiths, represented by the nations (Nineveh).

The drama unfolds with God demonstrating His will by calling on Jonah (1:1) to undertake His *missio Dei* (Jonah 1:2) in a foreign land (Nineveh). Unlike Abraham (Genesis 12:1), Jonah refused to obey God outright by trying to deceive Him and running away to Tarsus (Jonah 1:3) instead of going to Nineveh. Commenting on the attitude of Jonah towards the mission of God, the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (1996:480-481) says, "Jonah's resistance to the call from Yahweh is not unique. Moses shrank from speaking to Pharaoh (Exodus 3:10-4:17); Elijah fled from denouncing the regime of Ahab (I Kings 19:1-18); Jeremiah recoiled from prophesying to the nations (Jeremiah 1:4-10). Yet Jonah exceeds them all in his defiance." This defiance is signalled not just by resistance, but outright disobedience. *The deleted sentence is a repetition*

Although motives for resisting God's call may vary as indicated by Moses' and Jeremiah's thoughts of their inadequacies for the mission of God (Exodus 3:11, 4:10; Jeremiah 1:6), Elijah's fear for his own life (I Kings 19:3, 10), Isaiah's dreadful message (Isaiah 6:9-13) and Amos' terrified feelings (Amos 7:2, 5), Jonah's motive was so different. In fact, he gave no reason for his resistance, save for his late explanations in 4:2-3, which contrasts all the explanations and reasons given by his

predecessors. Apparently, Jonah was not concerned about his qualifications, nor did he fear for his life or the fact that Yahweh was asking him to preach a message of doom. Instead, his objection is the certain knowledge that doom for Nineveh can be averted because of God's *missio Dei*.

From the facts above, it seems that Jonah understood very well the true meaning of God's *missio Dei*. He knew that God the Lord is Yahweh (Jonah 1:9), the creator of the heavens, sea and the dry land. He also knew that 'Yahweh', the covenant name of the God who redeemed Israel (Exodus 3:2-18), is the supreme creator who made the universe and that his other name was 'Elohim' (Genesis 2:4). Moreover, Jonah acknowledged that even though Israel was the rightful owner of God's blessings through Abraham, God's mercies and love would be extended to the people of other faiths as beneficiaries of His perfect will (Lessing, 2007:348).

While bitterly resenting the fact that God loved evil people (not because of their evil but because of their humanity), Jonah attempted to steal the right of God's *missio Dei* towards the salvation the people of other faiths (Carson et al. 1994:814). Just like many missionaries and church ministers today, Jonah's attempt to block God's *missio Dei* by refusing to undertake the divine assignment of preaching to the Ninevites not only attempted to rob God of His supremacy in His *missio Dei*, but also showed how ungrateful and selfish saved human beings can be.

In Jonah 4, God rebukes this selfish attitude and reluctance. Earlier Jonah was punished for failing to obey and to go to Niniveh immediately (Jonah 1:6-2:1-10). The stern rebuke found in chapter 4 is also meant to help many people like Jonah who harbour the same motives and attitude towards God's mission to people of other faiths. Kaiser Jr. (2000:69) contrasts Jonah's selfish attitude with that of the Lord. While Jonah violently opposed anything that would diminish the threatening judgement upon the people of Nineveh, the Lord, who is long-suffering and never willing for any to perish (Jonah 4:2; Joel 2:13; Psalms 103:8), repented His words and changed His judgements (Dunn and Rogerson, 2003:700).

While Jonah's attitude and selfishness is not unique in the lives of God's people even today, the story of Jonah 4 demonstrates a father who does not only minister to his servants, but who seeks to change their attitude and bring their understanding towards His *missio Dei*. Although Jonah expressed concern only for his own comfort and protection, as is evidenced from the episode of the dying plant (Jonah 4:5-6), God humbled Jonah by sending a worm to chew the vine so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint and wanted to die. The moral lesson that follows is loaded with missiological implications for Jonah as a prophet of God

and for the church as his agents on earth today, and especially for the salvation of the Gentiles.

Commenting on the Lord's response to Jonah's anger and the desire to die (Jonah 4:1-4, 9-10), Stuart (1987:479, 499-510) says that first and foremost, Jonah deserved to die and not to be delivered. Nevertheless, Yahweh demonstrated his gracious deliverance by intervening in a special way in Jonah's life every time he had rebelled in order that Jonah may recognize the greatness of Yahweh's compassion, praise him and hence realize his reliance on him alone (2 Corinthians 19, 10). God's moral lesson to Jonah, Israel and the church is to teach about His unconditional love. In this narrative, Jonah represents Israel and the church, who often hold a typical attitude towards people of other faiths whom they often find no reason to love. The other moral lesson has to do with the attitude of Jonah and the church towards the forgiveness and sovereignty of the Lord. According to Stuart (1987:496), God does not always exercise his power arbitrarily and discriminatorily. Jonah, a true Israelite nationalist, wanted God to bless Israel and harm all its enemies. His own inconsistent position demonstrated in his attitude towards the sailors in Jonah 1 contrasts the Lord's consistency and gracious character. Indeed, the Lord God is patient, 'not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance' (2 Peter 3:9) and wants people to be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

Moreover, God manifests his sovereignty not in stubbornness, but in grace, not in narrow particularism, but in a willingness to forgive anyone. However, His forgiveness is not cheap. It requires genuine repentance and a total change of heart. This is evidenced by the Ninevites' wholehearted move to trust in Yahweh. Upon hearing Jonah's proclamation, they immediately declared a fast and put on sackcloth to signify their sorrow and repentance (Luke 3:8). Commenting on their true act of repentance, Lessing (2007:300) points to their sincerity, which he says was confirmed by Christ when He promised that the Ninevites will arise on the day of judgement to condemn all the unbelievers (Matthew 12:41). He then adds that the Ninevites believed in the triune God, so they believed by grace alone and were justified by faith (Lessing, 2007:301). It is therefore tenable to assert that these people of the other faiths in the OT became beneficiaries of the blessing promised to Abraham. This is God's *missio Dei* fulfilled in the OT.

2.4.2 Mission to people of other faiths in the New Testament

According to Samartha (1977:123), it took a miracle to launch the mission to the Gentiles. In Acts 2:38, Peter is presented as the one among those Jews who had a difficulty in accepting the Gentiles into the union of the church. Samartha reiterates

that it took God's divine intervention in the form of visions and divinely scheduled coincidences for this mission to be undertaken. It was the power of the Holy Spirit in both the Jews and the Gentiles that motivated people like Peter to exclaim: 'if they have received the Spirit just as we have, what could hinder us to baptize them (Acts 10:47)?'

Significant in this point in time are the issues within the newly established movement of Christianity. Describing the situation as a sensitive and controversial one, Ariarajah (1987:40-41) says problems initially arose and surfaced during the time of Jesus. Apparently, some of the people could only recognize Jesus as rabbi, while others saw Him as a prophet and still many others as the one sent by God to save His people. This situation gave rise to a difference in conception of what the Messiah would do in the process of liberating the people. While some saw Him as a political hero who would deliver them from the bondage of Rome, others expected Him to usher in the messianic age that would bring about lasting peace and the immediate presence of God. Many viewed the political and the eschatological as two sides of the same coin. However, despite all these challenges, the NT church managed to witness to people of other faiths mainly because the church realized the power in the hearts of the newly converted and the 'would be' missionaries to people of other faiths.

2.4.2.1 Acts 8 - The Ethiopian eunuch

With Christ's command to his disciples to begin in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39) is a missionary story one would not want to miss out. Philip was led by an angel to the desert road connecting Samaria to the Jerusalem road, which in turn headed west to join the coastal road towards Egypt (Barton and Muddiman, 2001:1039). It is notable that this was soon right after the evangelism in Samaria (Adeyemo: 2006:1314). On this journey Philip's path crossed the route of the Ethiopian pilgrim.

Contrasting Philip's two evangelistic encounters, Carson et al (1998:1079) points out that the two stories have remarkable similarities, but the first one took place in Samaria to the North (Acts 8:4-25), while the second one was in the South (Acts 8:26-39). The first encounter concerned a mass conversion that resulted from scattering, while the second one with the Ethiopian eunuch concerned a single conversion because of a direct message from God. While the first happened among a people who had only the Jewish books of Moses, the second involved someone reading from the prophets. However, the stories are linked not only because they

involve the same missionary, but also because of the fact that they both deal with groups of people who are not Jews.

Philip's missionary encounters with people of other faiths can therefore be seen as twofold. Not only did he engage the Samaritans with the Gospel, but he is also witnessed to an African man from Ethiopia. According to many commentaries, the encounter with a eunuch from Ethiopia implies that the Gospel had finally reached its goal of reaching the 'end of the earth'. Speaking of the significance of this geographical location, Dunn and Rogerson (2003:1232) agree that Ethiopia was the point that Israelites regarded as the extent of the earth in a South-westerly direction (Isaiah 11:11-12). Their next rendition is of importance though, for as they reiterate, it is obvious that although the man was a Gentile, he was returning from worship in Jerusalem (Acts 8:27). He was probably the first of a number of proselytes who appear in the narrative of Acts 10:2; 13:50; 16:14; 17:4; 18:7. Since he was a eunuch, it is suggested that he would obviously be barred from entering the temple (Deuteronomy 23:1).

The fact that God's Spirit directed Philip towards this Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29) is an illustration that God reached out to people of other faiths through His own *missio Dei* engagement in the NT. This also becomes evident from the Spirit's action of snatching Philip away from this eunuch as soon as the mission was completed (Acts 8:39). It shows that God is the initiator, sustainer and finisher of His mission in the world. At the end when faith has been demonstrated, baptism by water is done, signifying the unity of the new birth of the body of the believers (Acts 8:38; 2:38). Philip's removal by the Spirit also signifies the continuity of the Gospel, for as the Scripture says, he was taken to continue the business of spreading the good news (Acts 8:40).

Emphasizing the role of contextualization and the Gospel, Adeyemo (2006:1315) reiterates that God came and spoke to people in a specific culture through Jesus. This is so that they could be able to understand Him better. The experience of the Ethiopian eunuch receiving guidance from Philip is a demonstration that the Spirit of God cares for His church in the whole world in a way that they may come to know Him in a language they can appreciate. It is because of this that all believers have been instructed to follow the Lord's example, so wherever Christianity spreads, it takes on the cultures and languages of the new believers. Noting that some of the first translations of the complete Bible were produced in North Africa, Adeyemo is grateful that the Spirit of God through Philip ministered to the Ethiopian Eunuch the truth of salvation.

2.4.2.2 Acts 10 Cornelius

The vision to Cornelius in the book of Acts 10:3-8 presents a perfect example of God's *missio Dei* in the NT's church, not only as one of the mission engagements with people of other faiths, but also as an illustration that God engages agents in His *missio Dei*, in this case Peter. The vision spells out many lessons, for example the fact that God addresses each and every one of His children by name, meaning that He knows each one by name (Acts 10:3, 3:1). Another lesson is that God answers our sincere prayers, and lastly, that God is no respecter of persons, so His kingdom belongs to the Jews as well as the Gentiles as long as they come to faith in Him.

The vision of Cornelius presents this Gentile as a pious man who was always very close to the kingdom of God. However, as Adeyemo (2006:1318) reiterates, this piety was not enough in God's eyes. Something better had had occurred, namely the Lord had died and been resurrected. Cornelius needed someone to link him with this good news of salvation so that he and his household may too become partakers of this kingdom. Since he was a prayerful person, the Lord appeared to him in a vision with special instructions on how to reach the person who would be the link. Note should be taken here that whereas in the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch God had sent Philip to him for ministry, in the case of Cornelius, the Lord appeared to him and sent him to Peter, who had to do the same ministration to Cornelius. God chooses whichever means to reach out to the spiritual needs of His people. All that is required of God's people is earnest prayer and study of His word. Just like the Ethiopian Eunuch had been interested to study the Scriptures and understand, so Cornelius had prayerfully sought to understand the secrets of heaven. In both situations, the Lord responded accordingly.

In his discussion of Cornelius' situation, Neil (1973:142) says that repentance unto life is an act of God's grace made possible for the Jews as well as the Gentiles in the new life in Christ. Gentiles can become believers without the necessity of first becoming Jewish proselytes through circumcision. This he says makes way for the official acceptance of the Gentiles, and it opens the doors to Gentile mission as people of other faiths so that membership can be made available to the Gentiles as well as the Jews by faith and baptism alone. Adding voice to these facts, The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (2002:171) speaks of a God who shows no partiality (Acts 10:34). Furthermore, the biblical idea that God had chosen particular people as object of special regard cultivated the dangerous suspicion that God did not choose others. To date, those believers who think themselves among God's 'elect' are often inclined to think that God has not chosen anyone who disagrees with their beliefs or customs on the basis of His initial selection of Israel. Nevertheless, one of

the most surprising features of Acts is the diversity of the people God calls to be included among His people, all of whom are symbolized by uncircumcised Cornelius.

The church today, just like the NT church, should not think that diligent study towards the inspired writings of God is uncalled for. Careful Bible study (Acts 17:10) and God's prodding must always be felt within all those seeking Him, and observation should be done to include in the bustle of life around them. In this way, as *The New Interpreter's Bible* (2002:172) puts it, the opinion of men will be reversed for the Lord's sake as a result of the existential encounters with the Holy Spirit in the mess and muck of ordinary living.

2.4.2.3 Acts 17 The Athenian unknown God

Athenians worshiped many idols, what Adeyemo (2006:1330) refers to as disturbing in number. Paul was particularly disturbed by the artistry with which these idols and gods were made. The inscription on one of the shrines was the subscript 'dedicated to an unknown god' (Acts 17:23). The Athenian context was particularly unique given its high level of education and the fact that Athens as a city was a centre of higher learning. Paul's desire to touch the needs of this learned group of stoics and philosophers had been further aroused by the Epicurean belief that pleasure was the highest good and also that mental pleasure was the highest source of happiness. The Stoics in turn taught that knowledge was the highest good and that the material world was the sum total of reality. Given that these philosophers were not acquainted with what Paul was teaching save for what they had heard others say, they were eager to hear from him just in case there was something new for them.

After reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as those who were interested in his teachings in the market place, Paul was taken to a meeting of the Areopagus, where according to the *New Interpreter's Bible Commentary* (2002:241), they demanded to know what strange ideas he was purportedly bringing to them. In his moving speech, Paul first and foremost commended them for their religiosity (Acts 17:22-23), which he admitted caught his attention because of the inscription on the statue: 'to the unknown god'. He then sought their audience to teach them about this unknown god they worshiped. Without much ado, Paul got into the business of narrowing his focus to God's relations to all things. He first created the world and everything in it (Acts 17:24; 4:24; 14:15; cf Isaiah 42:5; Genesis 1:1-23, Exodus 20:11). To drive his point home, Paul appealed to God's sovereignty (Acts 17:24) arguing that no natural creature can be capable of domesticating its Creator.

Paul then narrowed his claims to God's creation of humans, and through Adam, he managed to present the nations of the earth as descendants of this major creation (Romans 5:12-14). He then drew from this common ancestry that all men are religious in nature and whether they are religiously sensible or not, all that matters is their origin, namely from Adam, a one-time religious man created by God to worship Him. He then managed to demonstrate that since man was created to worship God, his creator, and since men across earth worship Him differently, God who created them is interested in their affairs of worship. Paul then drove the point home, for God wants and intends that men may search for Him and find Him through their environment (Acts 17:27). This allows for close interaction with humanity throughout their history so that God can easily be found.

Paul contrasted God with the human deities and idols and directed his listeners to the true worship of God, who relates with humans in a kingship way. He did this by reminding his hearers that relating with a substituted deity of inanimate material instead of a God who is transcendent and animate makes no sense (The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, 2002:247). He captured the essence of the biblical conception of a God who is at once transcendent yet personal, sovereign and fully engaged in human life (Acts 17:30). Paul warned his audience against a life of ignorance, citing the provision of God in sending them a prophet and making reference to the ignorance of the Jews and the implications that such ignorance may have for their worship of the true God of heaven (Acts 3:17). He called the Athenian listeners to a life of repentance unto life for salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is not only Lord, but who is also raised.

Although at the end there were mixed reactions to Paul's speech and teaching in Athens, the NT reader may appreciate that mission to people of other faiths takes more than just preaching the Gospel. It requires skill and patience with the voice of the Spirit who directs the engagements with His people in different contexts. The fact that there were both believers and non-believers in this audience (Acts 17:32, 34) also demonstrates that the Gospel is a power unto salvation. To some it is a gift unto eternal life, and to others it is foolishness (Romans 1:16-17, I Corinthians 1:18) (Dunn et al., 2003: 1249).

2.4.3 Biblical principles regarding mission to people of other faiths

Both the Old and the New Testaments testify to the work of the church to engage people of other faiths. From the discussions above, the following principles can be deduced regarding mission to people of other faiths:

2.4.3.1 Men share a common humanity

The book of Genesis attests to the beginning of beginnings when God created man in his own image and after His likeness (Genesis 1:26-28). Devadutt (1967:7) says that although men have many religious ways, yet all men have a common nature and potentially a common destiny. This is because mankind not only owes its beginning and origins to the act of God's creation and to God's purposes in creation, but also because God sent His begotten Son into the world to save the world so that whoever believes may not perish, but may have eternal life. Moreover, God did not send His Son to condemn the world, rather, He sent Him to save the world (John 3:17). In other words potentially belonging to a common destiny means that every human being, young or old, rich or poor, black or white, ignorant or educated, beautiful or ugly, may rejoice in the saving acts of Christ given to us by God's grace (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).

To be created in God's image and after His likeness also implies that we are different from other animals or creations. The thing that differentiates mankind is the ability to choose between that which is right and that which is wrong, to exercise the power of the will for his own sake and that of others. This explains why Jesus, when teaching on the greatest commandment, spoke of loving God with all one's heart, mind and strength, and also of loving one's neighbour as oneself (Matthew 22:37-39). Commenting on the place of man in God's creation, Devadutt (1967:10) says, 'man has been freed of biological restraint, also – for example, in the matter of sex. In some kinds of animals, it is only at certain preset periods that sex urge comes alive. But in man, the sex urge is not seasonal; and he must learn, in freedom, restraint and discipline to save himself and others from psychological and spiritual injury'.

Man's capacity for creativity demonstrates his freedom, for through the beauty he creates in art, music and literature he can transcend the limits of his environment. Man's capacities to love, give, 'turn the other cheek,' 'walk the second mile,' these too, exist only because he is free. Love cannot be constrained; giving cannot be compelled; turning the other cheek cannot be coerced; walking an extra mile cannot be legislated. That is why, in seeking to do mission to people of other faiths, Christians must learn to respect the power of their own wills. They should do that which the Lord demands from them, namely to show and demonstrate love to non-believers. By recognizing that men belong to a common humanity, men of other faiths may be engaged objectively with the Gospel. Also, by recognizing that men have a common destiny, Christians may feel the desire and urgency of engaging

people of other faiths with the Gospel, for this pleases God, who is the author and finisher of the faith of men.

2.4.3.2 God is the Sovereign Lord of all history

In Isaiah 45:1-6, the Bible says, “Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and ungird the loins of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed: ‘I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut asunder the bars of iron, I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name’. For the sake of my servant Jacob, and my chosen, I call you by your name; I surname you, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I gird you, though you do not know me, that men may know, from the rising of the sun and from the West, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other”.

In verses 1-3 above, Cyrus is called the Lord's anointed (*mashiyach* [*maw-sheek'-akh*]) in Hebrew. This denotes a person specifically chosen and set apart for a special task. Notice also that God promised to intervene and help Cyrus conquer many nations. The Creator God states in verse 6 that one of the reasons for this prophecy is so that people will have a continual witness that he is God. The prophecy concerning Cyrus and its fulfillment is a continual witness of the Creator God's power and authority over his creation (John 1:1-3; Ephesians 3:8-9; Hebrews 2:10). Chapter 36 of 2 Chronicles and chapter 1 of the book of Ezra shows that the Creator God made King Cyrus aware of the prophecy in Isaiah and motivated him to allow the Jews to return to their homeland in order for the prophetic words He had spoken through Jeremiah's to be fulfilled. The prophet Jeremiah primarily recorded the progression of world events throughout history and their culmination in the return of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. The holy scriptures reveal that, within the Sovereign Father's plan for humanity, there is a specific time frame within which this plan will be completed and that there are specific times when certain events within this plan must occur. It seems that the only prophecy recorded by Jeremiah that speaks to Babylonian captivity for the House of Judah and their repatriation to their homeland from this captivity is in Jeremiah chapters 25 and 29.

The prophets Daniel, Haggai, and Zachariah were all captives of the Babylonian and Persian empires. All three were given various insights by God into the reasons for Cyrus' proclamation concerning the Jews and each recorded certain

understandings concerning the seventy-year prophecy. Daniel was given insight into the first year of King Darius' reign and Haggai and Zachariah were given insight into the second year of his reign (Haggai 1:1-15; Zachariah 1:1-16; Daniel 9:1-2, 25-27). The plan of God for the salvation of humanity was laid out before the world began. Within this plan are events and dates on which these events must occur in a specific sequence in order for the plan to be completed within its allotted time. Therefore, the timing of the prophecy concerning Cyrus was critical in order for the seventy-week prophecy, which was revealed to Daniel, to begin and end exactly on schedule. With the accomplishments of Ezra and Nehemiah, the return of tens of thousands of Jews from exile in Babylon to Palestine, the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple, the prophecy concerning Cyrus and the 70 years of Jewish punishment was complete. The fulfilment of prophecy proves that the Sovereign God does exist and that He has the power and authority to control the destiny of humanity. Moreover, the fulfilment of prophecy tells us that God's plan for humanity is right on schedule.

2.4.3.3 God redeems in spite of man

Jonah's resentment of God's commands and assignment towards a call to save the Ninevites is one that sharply presents the contrast between the power of God's *missio Dei* as compared to the weakness and selfishness of mankind in His service. As beings made in the image of God, men have a common nature that shows a capacity of both good and evil. This capacity is the result of man's estrangement from God, a state in which both the non-Christians and the Christians tend to live. All of mankind shares in this common situation, and therefore God's attitude to such a situation should be common too. In Romans 3:23, the Bible presents the falseness of all men and describes it as a falling away from God's glory, a situation in which only God through Jesus Christ can reverse (Acts 4:12 cf Romans 7:20-25). All sinful men as a result, are equally the objects of God's redemptive purposes and action. Christians are not the only ones comprehended by God's redemptive action.

The action that draws God towards sinful men and women is love (John 3:16). According to Devadutt (1967:19), the world is God's creation consisting of a created order that is an expression of God's love. God continues to love that which He created, and from there His desire to redeem that which He loves. Accordingly, love does not destroy the distressed world, rather it rescues it. As a sovereign God, His sovereignty is redemptive as opposed to destructive. As the sovereign, God is the Lord of history and His leadership is exercised to redeem men, despite men's resistance to Him. This is what Jonah did not grasp, even to last when the Lord

taught him humility by allowing a worm to eat the gourd that protected him Jonah wished to die rather than repent before the Lord. Here is the Lord's confrontation with Jonah's bitterness: 'Do you do well to be angry for the plant?' And Jonah said, 'I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.' And the Lord said, 'you do not pity the plant, for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many cattle?' Insert Scripture reference

Like Jonah, Peter also had to learn the truth about God's will to redeem in spite of him in a bitter and painful way. Cornelius and the vision that the Lord revealed to him made Peter realize that 'God treats everyone on the same basis!' (Ariarajah, 1987:18). Perhaps the model presented at in this study can provide guidance to the evangelical churches in Eldoret, Kenya, and even in the whole Sub-Saharan Africa, so that they too may come to realize this basic truth. Perhaps, like Peter, they will be willing to engage and accommodate the people of other faiths as God's loved ones who must be engaged with the Gospel for the sake of salvation.

2.4.3.4 God redeems through a chosen servant

The theme of the servant of the Lord is central to redemption, both in the Old and the NT. In Isaiah 52 and 53, prophet Isaiah gave tribute to the servant of the Lord, whom He described as one willing to bear many tragic burdens and the sufferings of others, but who triumphs at last. Isaiah continued to define the characteristics of the servant, indicating that his ministry will have a cosmic significance, for in this lowly person's words and works, kings and many nations will witness the consummation of that which has been promised of old. Though the servant dies, he lives, for his resurrection will take place so that through him God will fulfil His will. His own righteousness and obedience will make many righteous and obedient.

Isaiah 42:1-45, 49:1-6 and 50 offers the following important characteristics regarding the servant:

The servant is chosen for a special task, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, my elect one in whom my soul delights! I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house' (Isaiah 42:1, 6-7). The servant restores the Jewish People, 'Indeed He says, "It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be my salvation

to the ends of the earth.” Thus says the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nation abhors, to the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen you” (Isaiah 49:6-7). Also, the suffering servant will be tormented (Isaiah 50:5-8), but he will be vindicated, (Isaiah 52:13-15).

Although Israel was chosen to represent God in the Old Testament through Abraham, their story was a sad story of failure. However, within the nation of Israel was a remnant group that remained faithful to God even during difficult times. This remnant of the Lord is significant because in Isaiah, the remnant represents the servant of the Lord who will save the nation of Israel from bondage and who will rescue the whole world from the bondage of sin. This remnant represents none other than the faithful servant of the Lord – Christ Jesus. In the NT, the fulfilment of the message of the servant of the Lord is realized.

‘So he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And he was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Then he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:16-21). Luke (1:32-33) further described the servant of the Lord, ‘He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’

Although the OT and the NT represent many characters who have been engaged as servants of the Lord, the climax of the redemption of the whole world, specifically people of other faiths, can only come through one faithful servant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.4.3.5 Faith must be demonstrated by prayer and fasting

When Daniel, Meshach, Shadrack and Abednego were witnessing in Babylon, their lives were characterized by prayer and fasting. This is what strengthened their faith and enabled them to withstand the test of their time. In answer to the faithful prayer

of Peter and John, a lame man who had been begging for many years received healing and started to walk while singing and praising the Lord (Acts 3:1-13). Many of God's faithful children who witnessed the good news both in the Old and the New Testament demonstrated their faithfulness by fasting and praying.

Commenting on whether faith is possible today, Carpenter (1967:10) asks: Who stands his ground? He goes ahead to provide an answer. The one who stands his ground is only the one whose ultimate criterion is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom or his virtue; but one who is ready to sacrifice all these things when he is called to obedient and responsible action in faith and exclusive allegiance to God. Such a person can overcome sin and weakness only in willingness to subject body and soul in humiliation through prayer and fasting. For it is only a responsible man who makes his whole life a response to the question and call of God.

Since men are religious by virtue of their nature as God's special creation (Genesis 1:26-28), they to demonstrate this religiosity by their faith, for as the Bible rightly puts it, 'without faith is impossible to please God' (Hebrews 11:6). Carpenter (1967:16) continues to say that faith is the first fruit of man's wonder and it includes more than recognition that he is made in the image of God, rather, it is an act of commitment. Religious faith therefore can rise to confident and joyous trust in a God who is love. Such faith may include courageous acceptance of the doubt and loneliness and even terror with which one accepts the hidden nature of God. For it was not lack of faith, but a plummeting into the depths of faith that led Job to say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' (Job 13:15) or that echoed in Jesus' cry from the cross: 'My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:45-46). In order to exercise this kind of faith, believers may ask God to increase their faith (Luke 12:5).

2.4.3.6 Obedience is mandatory both to the sender and the recipient

One principle that God instituted from the beginning when He created human beings is the power to choose obedience, and more so to do His will. The first test of obedience came in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were to choose to obey God's voice, as opposed to the serpent's voice (Genesis 3:1-15). Due to their disobedience, sin became part and parcel of humanity. However, God in His own grace and mercy made a promise to bring back man's lost glory and to set them on the highest places once again. However, in order for this to take place, God placed some plans that required both Him and man to have a covenant relationship.

A covenant is a binding agreement or a contractual relationship. It must of necessity be between at least two or more parties. In purchasing a house the buyer and seller come to an agreement. This agreement may also depend on the approval of a bank or some other lending institution. A covenant can be among two equal parties or a superior and inferior party. For instance, in purchasing a car the buyer and seller are two equal parties. They can haggle over the price and terms of the sell. An example of superior and inferior parties could be parents telling their children they promise to take them to grandma's house if they clean up their room. The children are in no position to debate or bargain and say they will clean up part of the room. In a marriage covenant, the man and woman entering the relationship are equals, but God is superior to both parties. It is God and not the man or woman that sets the conditions of marriage. This information is important in reading the Bible, for we read of various covenants between God and His people.

In the Bible we first read of God's covenant with Noah. God was going to destroy the world by flood. Due to Noah's righteousness, God told Noah to build an ark of gopher wood and to take inside the ark certain animals, Genesis 6. Genesis 6:18 reads, "I will establish my covenant with you." Thus this covenant was between a superior party, God, and inferior party, Noah. Noah was not in any condition to bargain or haggle over the conditions laid out by God. After the flood the Lord promised to never again destroy the world by flood (Genesis 8:21). The Lord did not set any conditions for man to observe. He simply stated what He would not do, namely destroy the world by flood.

In Genesis 15 God entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham. He promised to give Abraham the land of Canaan. That covenant was expanded in Genesis 17 when God promised to make Abraham a great nation. Abraham entered into a covenant with Abimelech when there was a disagreement near Beersheba over some wells. Part of the covenant between Abraham and God was through Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:1-3). God always fulfilled His promises to Abraham. From Abraham came Isaac. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. God stipulated that the covenant relationship would carry on to Jacob. Thus, Jacob had twelve sons and it was this family that went to Egypt in Genesis 46. Roughly 400 years later we read of the Israelites that had become so numerous that Pharaoh was afraid of them. In Joshua we read of Israel taking the land of Canaan and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed because Israel had obeyed God (Genesis 22:18).

The LORD gave to Israel all the land that He swore to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it (Josh 21:43-44). The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. Not one of their

enemies stood against them, the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand (Joshua 21:45). Not a word failed of any good thing that the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass. God had fulfilled what He had promised Abraham in all areas except one, the promise involving the seed of a woman in Genesis 3:15. On the other hand, God had laid out conditions for Israel to continue to live in Canaan. "The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good...If you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law" (Deuteronomy 30:9-10). "But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess" (Deuteronomy 30:17-18).

Eventually Israel did turn to serve other gods and were punished. However, the covenant of a great nation and the land of Canaan was fulfilled. Sadly, many today expect God to re-establish Israel as His Holy nation. This is based on the assumption that God intended Israel to live in the Land of Canaan forever. It also minimizes the final part of the covenant with Abraham. Through his seeds all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Still later on, God entered in to a covenant with David. 2 Samuel 7:12-16 states that God promised to build a house for David. The seed of David would establish his kingdom and he would build a house for the Lord. In this kingdom, the seed of David was said to reign on this throne forever. In one sense Solomon did some of what God said. Solomon, the son of David, built the temple in Jerusalem. Solomon ruled over Israel. However, neither the temple nor the reign of Solomon lasted forever. After 40 years Solomon died and later on the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:15-21).

The seed of David was not Solomon, but Jesus. He is of the lineage of Abraham and David according to Luke 3:31-34; Matthew 1:2, 6,7,16. It was when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave that His church, the kingdom of God, was established (Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:47). It is through the blood of Christ that people of all nations have forgiveness and hope of salvation. In Acts 3:25, the Bible records, '[y]ou are sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' In Acts 3:26, the Bible continues to say, 'To you first, God, having risen up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.' In Galatians 3:8, Scripture says, 'foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel to

Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed" (Acts 3:9). So then those who are of faith are blessed together with believing Abraham.

So what does all of this mean to us? First, the condition for salvation is determined by God and not man. Second, God is not going to re-establish Israel today in order to fulfil His covenant with either Abraham or David. Once a covenant has been fulfilled, it is fulfilled. Third, the only way for man to be saved today is to obey Christ's law. Man cannot be saved by any other religion. Finally, those that claim to believe in the Bible must accept Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises and be ready to obey his word all the time.

2.4.3.7 Christian truth and other religions

Although there are many religions in the world today, there must be a true religion that pulls towards God and to His purposes here on earth. A true religion must be charged by its ability to follow the Lord's mandate as given in the beginning before the foundations of the world (Ephesians 1:4), 'for he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless'.

All religions are characterized and understood by their founders. In Colossians 1:15-20, we read:

'He is the image of the invisible God, the first – born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. He is the head of all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first – born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile him to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.'

According to Devadutt (1967:42), there is hardly any other passage in the NT that speaks as decisively about Christ and assigns to him such divine qualities. It was probably originally intended to correct an erroneous teaching that was creeping into the churches when Colossians was written, sometime between A.D. 55 and A. D. 63. This teaching apparently held that matter was inherently evil and that the immortal spirit, in contrast, was essentially and unchangeably good. Evil consisted of the union of spirit and matter, and sin was no longer thought of as disobedience to God. Thus, salvation was not reconciliation with God, but the escape of the spirit from its bondage to matter. It was also thought that angels and other powers

controlled various spheres of the bondage to matter. The universe and other powers were seen to control various spheres of the bondage to the highest realms and one had to somehow bypass the realms of these angels and principalities. On the basis of such teaching, Christ and his work would have no central place in God's plan of redemption.

To counter this type of teaching, Paul affirms the preeminent, incomparable and unique place of Christ in the universe and in relation to God. The universe was created in and through Christ, He was prior to all created things, and everything holds together in Him. Jesus Christ represents not only the divine creative energy, but the meaning of the created order, for the diverse aspects of creation manifest their unity only in terms of what we perceive and experience in Him. He is also the head of the church, which is His body, and He gives it true meaning and life. All these things are true because the fullness of God was in Him. God's very presence was in Him and through Him God reconciles an estranged world to Himself.

In Acts 17:22-28, there is a contrast between Paul's intonation and that in Colossians. However, as eloquently as possible, Paul spoke of Christ, who he refers to as a creator of the universe. He said that Christ does not need a dwelling place built by human hands, but rather one that originated in a common humanity, so that even the Athenians who worship the 'un-known God' are devotionally sound because of God's constant nearness to all. So, as Devadutt (1967:43) says, Paul here recognized certain universals or constants, both in the religious instincts of man and in God's relationship to the whole human race. In his letter to the Romans (1:20), Paul reiterated, 'ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So, those people have no excuse at all!' He goes on even further to say that conscience, in the case of the Gentiles, and Law in the case of the Jews, made it possible for people to do what is right.

Ariarajah (1987:19) reiterates what Paul said, 'The Gentiles do not have the Law; but whatever they do by instinct what the Law commands, they are their own law, even though they do not have the Law. Their conduct shows that what the Law commands is written in their hearts. Their consciences also show that this is true since their thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them'. In chapter 3 of the book of Romans, Paul continued, 'God's way of putting people right through their faith has been revealed...God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:21-22). And as Ariarajah (1987:19) goes on, 'the rest of the letter of the Romans and indeed all the letters of Paul, are an attempt to show that God has acted in a decisively saving way in Jesus Christ and that one can enter this

salvation through faith in him'. Paul summed the whole purpose of mission to people of other faiths by reminding Christians and the Christian church that the task that remained and that must be fulfilled sooner than later, is to proclaim Christ's death and His resurrection to the whole world. Indeed, through Him, Christianity has a truth unique to other religions of the world.

2.4.3.8 People who are redeemed for redemptive living

The Christian community is both a sign and a promise of God's coming liberation. It is the presence of God's liberating kingdom in a broken world where liberation can be found, and also where destitute and exiled people can be safe. This is what Christ meant when He said; 'You are a light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden' (Matthew 4:15 cf Proverbs 4:18 and John 8:12).

The challenge of the church over all ages has been to articulate Jesus' message of liberation in a way that connects with people's experience of who God is, and what He has done in their lives and the lives of the whole world. For that reason, the church must always live a life that seeks to bring the different dimensions of God's idea of redemption – as expressed in the Exodus and Year of Jubilee – to bear on all such manifestations of oppression as surround us. In the Exodus, God acted as redeemer and the event itself is called an act of redemption. This is the first time when God promises liberation to the whole community of Israel from bondage (Exodus 6:6). This act was shortly followed by Moses' own celebration of the same (Exodus 15:3). As an act of grace and mercy, God had redeemed Israel for a purpose. He wanted to fulfil His mission of redeeming the world through Israel and that is why He had covenanted with their father Abraham. This was an act of God's glory and *missio Dei*.

The Exodus experience was an act of redemption of reality requiring practical responses in the present. In order to keep this experience alive within the lives of the children of Israel, God instructed Moses to prepare an annual Passover feast as a remembrance of this act of grace. It had to be passed on from generation to generation so that its significance could be felt by the nations later on when Christ becomes the Passover lamb and His blood is shed to cleanse all the sins of the world. In his last supper meal with His disciples, Wright (1996:557-559) points out two significant things: one, like all the Jewish Passover meals, the event spoke of leaving Egypt. To a first-century Jew, this pointed to a return from exile, the new Exodus, and the great covenant renewal spoken of by the prophets. Two, the meal brought Jesus' own kingdom movement to its climax. It indicated that the new Exodus, and all that it meant, was happening in and through Jesus himself. Jesus

intended this meal to symbolize the new Exodus, the arrival of the kingdom through his own fate. The meal focused on Jesus' actions with the bread and the cup, told the Passover story, and Jesus' own story, and wove these two into one.

So, the Exodus redemption is clearly a major theme for our biblical theology of mission and it certainly impacts the *missio* of God's people. Those who have been redeemed, like the church, represented by the body of Christ, are called to live redemptively in response to the Exodus-shaped experience. Reiterating the important role of the church as the redeemed community for a redeemed living, Wright (2010:111) says that a biblical theology of redemption portrays God as the divine Redeemer who undertakes to do whatever it takes and to pay whatever costs to deliver His people from all that oppress them. He (God) is the great champion who wins the victory that sets His people free. On the role of the OT witness, Wright goes on to say that the Exodus provides the OT model of redemption and shows how broad and comprehensive a thing it is when God steps in as a redeemer. The NT presents the cross and resurrection of Jesus as the grand Exodus 'par excellence', the crowning accomplishment of God's redeeming will and power. It is His victory over all powers, human and satanic, all of which oppose God and oppress his people.

To live as a redeemed people of God charged with the responsibility of a redemptive living also means to live as those who have experienced that redeeming power of God already. Such lives, individual and corporate, are signposts of the ultimate liberation of all creation and humanity from every form of oppression and slavery. It is an act of experiencing God's grace as manifested by the OT acts of redemption of Israel, for example the Exodus experience, and supremely at the cross when Christ died for the world. Our lives must be characterized by holiness in God, especially as seen in the life, death and resurrection of Christ as opposed to the degraded ugliness and impotence of all the false gods that surround us. It is to heed to Peter's call to live as foreigners and exiles and to abstain from sinful desires that war against us and to live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse us of doing wrong, they may see our good deeds and glorify God on the day of his visitation (1 Peter 2:9-12).

2.4.3.9 People who attract others to God

Beauty is a mark in God's creation in Genesis and God's re-creation in Revelations. In the beginning, God was revealed in all the works of creation. It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field. 'His strength setteth fast

the mountains.' 'The sea is His, and He made it' (Psalms 65:6; 95:5). It was He that filled the earth with beauty, and the air with song. He wrote the message of the Father's love across all things in earth, and air, and sky. All these were intended to give glory to God and to attract all the creation to give glory to Him.

After the fall, sin marred God's perfect work, yet that handwriting remains. Even now all created things declare the glory of His excellence. There is nothing, save the selfish heart of man that does not live unto God's glory. No bird that cleaves the air, no animal that moves upon the ground, but ministers to some other life. There is no leaf of the forest, or lowly blade of grass, but has its ministry. Every tree and shrub and leaf pours forth that element of life without which neither man nor animal could live, and man and animal, in turn, minister to the life of tree and shrub and leaf. The flowers breathe fragrance and unfold their beauty in blessing to the world. The sun sheds its light to gladden a thousand worlds. The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land, but takes to give. The mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud. And so is true with God's people who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Their mission is to attract others to God with the fragrance and beauty of their characters.

The OT presents many ways in which God's people had to attract others to Yahweh. From attracting seekers (I Kings 8:41- 43, 60-61), to attracting admiration (Jeremiah 13:1-11), to attracting worship (Isaiah 60), to attracting approval (Matthew 5:14-16). However, these presentations do not occur without certain assumptions, motivations and content. In I Kings 8:41-43, Wright (2010:134) says, there is an amazing openness, compassion and vision in Solomon's prayer. In asking what he does, Solomon makes some assumptions that are significant in themselves from a missiological point of view. The first assumption is that people of other lands will hear of the reputation of Yahweh the God of Israel. He assumes that people from afar will be attracted to come and worship Israel's God on their own and seek answers to prayer from that God. He also assumes that Yahweh will hear the prayers of such foreigners and will actually want to answer them. Historically, these assumption can be proven, for not only was Jerusalem a cosmopolitan city from the time of king Solomon when many foreign kings and visitors who came for political reasons and tourism, but we also read in the OT of great individuals like Ruth and Naaman who were attracted to Yahweh. Moreover, in the NT, many Gentiles continued to be attracted to Yahweh so that the Bible speaks of such prominent characters like the Roman centurion (Luke 7:1-5), Cornelius (Acts 10) and Paul's audience in Acts 13:16, 46-48.

Solomon's prayer was motivated not by selfishness, but by an act of intercession. In asking God to answer the foreigner's prayers, Solomon did not seek his own glory. He rather wanted God's name to be glorified, for he said that God's reputation may be spread even further and so that many may continue to come and see His wonders in Jerusalem. Solomon's prayer did not limit God's name to Israel's boundaries, rather, it is universal in nature. The prayer sought that people, 'all people of the earth', not only any particular part of the earth, but 'to the ends of the earth' should know God. These are words that the Master himself will speak to His disciples later on in Matthew 28:16-20. These are missional words that should have been remembered by all the children of Israel in their prayers. Whereas God did not expect them to go on a mission field, God expected them to attract their neighbours through such acts of prayer like those of King Solomon. Even today, God's people, the Church, may remember too that there is no limit to God's mission work. If the church cannot engage everyone else in the mission field, the church can still engage all in a missional prayer like that of King Solomon. In Solomon's life, his wisdom, his kingdom, his achievements in building the most magnificent temple in the world and his prayerful life are beauties that were utilized to attract people of other faiths to Yahweh.

In I Kings 8:60-61, King Solomon urged his subjects and the people of God to walk in the ways of the Lord. This, he said, will attract the people of the earth to Yahweh. The only setback in King Solomon's life was his failure to keep the same law and commandment he urged the people to keep. Nevertheless, God had promised to be faithful to those people who keep His commands (Genesis 18:19). By rejecting the commands of the Lord, Israel failed to attract the nations to the Lord, but when they did obey Him, the Lord promised to decorate them by setting them in praise, fame and honour above all the other nations (Jeremiah 13:1-11). This would set Israel in an attractive admiration where the nations would see Yahweh's holiness and would come and praise Him (Jeremiah 33:8-9). This admiration will lead other nations to desire to worship Yahweh. This worship can only be possible because of the light emanating from the temple where Yahweh dwells and where His people are lighted day and night (Isaiah 60). First, Yahweh will come to His people (Isaiah 60:1-2), then the world will come to Yahweh (Isaiah 60:3-16), whereupon gifts (Isaiah 60:5-9, 11) will be brought to the house of Yahweh, and true worship (Isaiah 60:6, 7, 13) will be experienced by the nations. In Isaiah 60:17-22, Yahweh promises peace to the world.

2.4.4 Mission to People of Other Faiths in light of the *missio Dei*

Mission to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei* takes cognisance of the sending God. It is an activity of all three Persons of the Trinity regarding the missional dynamic within God himself in relation to the world. This missional dynamism is seen in the entire Bible as it relates primarily to salvation and revelation (Wright, 2011:210).

2.4.4.1 God the Father as the sender of the Son and the Spirit

God the Father sent Jesus and the Spirit to the world. As the Word incarnate, Jesus demonstrates the love of God to the world (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; I John 3:1-3 cf I John 4:8, 16). Reiterating God's love through His Son, Loader (2007:144) paints a perfect picture where all revolves around the love of God demonstrated through Jesus. First, God loved the whole world so that He sent His Son to die for the world (John 3:16). Second, His love brought light to the world. Jesus is the light of the world and all that follow Him need not to walk in darkness anymore (John 8:12). Third, He is the bread of life (John 6:35) and whoever feeds in Him will not die. Fourth, He is the resurrection and the life. He is the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6, Acts 4:12, John 14:9). Fifth, He is the true vine (John 15:1). Sixth, He is the Son of God (Matthew 27:43 cf Isaiah 9:6) who is one with God (John 10:30).

In sending the Spirit to the world, God the Father expressed His life—giving power within the whole created order (Psalms 104:30). Ezekiel (37) prophesied of this with the image of giving the breath of life to the dry bones in the valley, specifically signifying the resurrection. In Luke 24:49; John 20:21-22 and Acts 1:8, the risen saviour, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, commanded the Spirit, breathed the Spirit and sent the Spirit to empower His disciples for mission.

2.4.4.2 The Son as the sender of the Spirit and the Apostles

In John 15:26; 16:7-15; 20:22-23, Jesus sends the Spirit with specific missional tasks related to salvation and revelation.

Speaking of the 'Holy Spirit, the Book of Acts and the *missio Dei*', Tennent (2010:411ff) explains that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as a divine invasion was an extension of the incarnation through the abiding and empowering presence of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was not merely an impersonal force or a spiritual add-on, rather, the Spirit was the authoritative, empowering presence of the living God through the Son, another self-revealing extension of the Person of God and vitality into history. What this means is God's action in salvation

history continues to unfold in the world due to the fact that the Spirit is the ongoing reminder that God does not just exercise imperial authority over the world, but an executive authority to act in the world.

Furthermore, the Spirit empowers the church for a global mission so that in Acts 1:5, and prior to the ascension, Christ Jesus told His disciples to wait until they have been 'baptized by the Holy Spirit'. 'When He the Spirit comes', said Jesus, 'You will receive power and you will be my witnesses all over Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and to ends of the world' (Acts 1:8, Luke 1:35). Ten days later, when the Holy Spirit came to a small group of Jesus' followers praying in Jerusalem, they were filled with power and spoke in tongues as the Holy Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:4). Reiterating on the significance of the events at Pentecost, Tennent (2010:412) says that the understanding of this event should go beyond a mere sociological one to a theological statement whereby God undertakes the initiative to overturn the chaos of Babel that symbolizes the global rebellion against God (Genesis 11:1-9). In the place of this rebellion, the Spirit empowered the small church gathered for a global mission of the redemption to the ends of the earth. In fulfilment of the promise of Christ to His disciples in John 16-17, the disciples were baptized by the Spirit into the reality of the adaptability of the Gospel for every language and culture.

In the OT, the coming of the Spirit empowered God's people firstly in Exodus 3:2, when Moses experienced the presence of Yahweh in the form of a violent wind and with fire; secondly in Exodus 13:21-22 and Exodus 19:18 when the pillar of fire protected and guided the Israelites in the wilderness. Thirdly, in I Kings 19:11-12, Ezekiel 1:4 and Nahum 1:3, the Spirit manifested the presence of God to the prophets. Lastly, but not least, in Genesis 2:7, the wind re-called the breath of God, which gave life at creation.

2.4.4.3 The Spirit as the sender of Jesus and the Apostles

As the sender of Jesus and the Apostles, the Spirit extends the breaking of the New Creation through the powerful manifestation of signs and wonders and holiness of life.

Peter declared that on the day of Pentecost the coming of the Holy Spirit will fulfil Joel's prophecy, which declared that the coming of the Holy Spirit fulfilled Joel's prophecy that declared that God would 'show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below' (Acts 2:19). As Tennent (2010:413) further posits, the ministry of the early church reflected the ministry of Jesus Christ in the emphasis on the proclamation of the Word through preaching and teaching, and in the ongoing

ways in which the realities of the New Creation continued to break into the present order through signs and wonders and holy living. According to the Gospel of Luke (Acts 2:43), the apostles were filled with awe so that many wonders and miraculous signs were done. Moreover, these manifestations were not only limited to the apostles alone, but they were also evident in the ministry of other faithful servants like Stephen (Acts 6:8) and Philip in (Acts 8:6, 13).

Wright (2010:211) summarizes the work of the Spirit as the Sender of both Jesus and the Apostles. Speaking of the anointing of the Spirit upon the life and ministry of Jesus, he quotes Luke (4:18-19) by pointing to the fact that it was through the empowerment and the leadership of the Holy Spirit that Christ's mission was fulfilled. As alluded to earlier in the chapter, Peter's experience with Cornelius further serves as a testimony to this empowerment (Acts 10:38). Paul too sees the instrumentality of the Spirit in the resurrection of Christ (Romans 1:4), while Hebrews offers a connection of the eternal Spirit with Christ's self-offering in sacrificial death (Hebrews 5:14). However, as the mission of a sending God and of His people, sending in a mission or *missio Dei* is a participation in the life of God. As Wright (2010:211) reiterates, being sent in this sense is to be caught up within the dynamic sending and being sent that God the Holy Trinity has done and continues to do for the salvation of the world and the revelation of his truth.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The biblical concept of mission to people of other faiths exists for the sake of God's *missio Dei*. Understanding this concept is an attempt to reposition the understanding of the church's engagement of this mission within a larger Trinitarian framework. The chapter analyses inter-cultural mission within the context of the *missio Dei*. It places the understanding of the church mission within a biblical, rather than a purely human framework. It finds that the doctrines of creation, Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology materially contribute to the overall understanding of mission to people of other faiths.

By relating the entire biblical process concerning God's mission to the breakthrough in the on-going new understanding of the *missio Dei* and the in-breaking of the new understanding concerning the *missio Dei*, one is able to provide a vantage point from which to objectively critique and celebrate as the Gospel is embodied afresh in a potentially infinite number of new global contexts and faiths. This is expounded in the discussion on the theological perspective that follows.

CHAPTER THREE

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH TO PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS IN THE LIGHT OF THE *MISSIO DEI*

‘It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God’s mission’³².

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of Church mission or the mission of the church to people of other faiths in the light of the *missio Dei* (God’s mission) has begun to appear in theological circles more than half a century ago (Bosch, 1009:370), but this field did not become an established discipline for long after that. Even today, the field has not been given its due recognition in many churches and theological institutions around the world³³. Differences in the understanding of *missio Dei*, church mission and the contradictions between the different renditions of church engagement to people of other faiths have placed missiology in a state of confusion. This has prevented it from occupying its proper place in theological circles. The confusion is the result of drastic changes in mission understanding and the resultant multiple faces of mission. This chapter offers a fresh look at the problem of identifying the nature and characteristics of *missio Dei*, and suggests a viable understanding. The development of the discipline requires a comprehensive approach to understand mission as a concept within the church, an inclusive understanding that is critically open to both the traditional view and new understandings and interpretations of mission.

This chapter has five aims. First, it introduces the issues that provide a platform for questioning and analyzing the existing theological understandings relating to the mission of the Church in the light of the *missio Dei*. Second, it critically evaluates some of the key approaches and perspectives in order to show that exclusivist attempts from a single point of view may lack objectivity. A healthy development of the discipline requires a holistic understanding of mission, which provides a theological perspective on the *missio Dei*. Third, the chapter attempts to

³²Wright, The mission of God, 62.

³³Commenting on the developments at the Willingen conference in 1952, Sundermeir notes that although the triune God was seen to be both initiator and fulfiller of mission, the new line of thinking took a new direction so that the question of *missio hominum*, which was only touched upon at the conference, resulted in the persistent differences in theological debates to date (*Missio Dei* today on the identity of Christian mission. *International Review of Mission*, Vol 92:367, pg 1-19) March, 2009.

define the mission of the Church in light of the *missio Dei* to confirm that any proposal of its comprehensive understanding is veiled with confusion and misunderstandings. Fourth, it shows that the multidimensionality of mission not only confuses theological perspectives, but also hinders the discipline of mission engagement from finding its proper place within this context. The chapter will delve into the theological perspective regarding mission to people of other faiths. Finally, the chapter offers a conclusion.

3.2 THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE MISSIO DEI

Missio Dei is perhaps the most influential and enduring concept and to some extent it subsumed other biblical concepts of mission. Its proponents claim that Christian mission should be understood as Christian participation in the mission of God by putting God in the centre as the source and author of mission (Moreau, 2000:636). Based on the Western medieval theology that describes the activities within the Trinity, the concept suggests that mission should be understood as derived from the very nature of the Triune God, that is, the sending of the Son by God the Father, and God the Father ('and the Son') sending the Spirit, and the Triune God sending the Church into the world (Bosch, 2009: 390). Effectively, then, mission is 'a movement from God to the world' (Bosch, 2009:390). One may argue that cumulatively, mission was put in place by God as a bridge that connects Him with His people. It could also be used to disseminate God's message amongst His people without overlooking His centrality in mission.

Embedded in sound biblical and theological grounding, the concept is almost incontestable. Furthermore, the concept serves as a major alternative and corrective principle to the traditional understanding of mission. It challenged the triumphalist and paternalistic inclination of western missionaries under the protective umbrella of colonialism. The emphasis on the singularity of mission against the traditional notion of missions (plural) as the churches' endeavours, has far-reaching implications. The new emphasis on the oneness of mission has indirectly left important marks on the on-going discussion of mission and unity. Consequently, mission as God's mission anticipates that mission cannot be claimed by any one particular church or region, and therefore, it should be carried out in and to all the six continents.

At the first Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) meeting in Mexico City in 1963, "mission in six continents" became 'the leit-motiv' (Anastasios, 1978:357). The 'Message' of the meeting reads, "(the) missionary movement now involves Christians in all six continents and in all lands" (Orchard, 1964:175). The old practice of identifying the "non-Christian worlds" as "mission

fields” was done away with. As the object of God’s mission, there can be only one mission field, that is, the world. Mission as a movement from the western Christian countries to non-Christian countries came to be considered inadequate.

3.2.1 The concept *missio Dei*

Since 1952 during and after the Willingen Conference held at Willingen Germany, the concept of *missio Dei* lacks a universally acceptable definition. Its meaning, content and effect may appear to be incontestable, yet difficulties exist in its interpretation and role in mission. The concept suffers from a number of drawbacks, key of which are problems associated with identifying and defining the missionary activities of God in the world.

The concept of the *missio Dei* suffers from a number of drawbacks, one of which is the difficulties associated with identifying and defining the missionary activities of God in the world. The Willingen conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1952 — where the *missio Dei* concept first surfaced publicly — “wrestled with the question of the relation between God’s work in the mission of his Church and his work in the secular history” (Newbigin, 1963:23). The meeting could not come to a consensus. In Willingen and the period following, two major and somewhat competing approaches to *missio Dei* emerged. The first one, a dominant view in the Willingen meeting, understood mission as God’s evangelizing action through the church. The second, which raised serious opposition to the dominant Willingen view, was later developed more forcefully, especially in the report on the study of the “Missionary Structure of the Congregation” in the early 1960s. It conceived *missio Dei* as God’s activity in the secular world over and above the church, thus saying, “the world provides the agenda” (World Council of Churches, 1967:20).

Whereas the first approach maintains “the church as the principle vehicle of God’s mission” (Scherer, 1987:108), the latter tends to reduce the church’s place in God’s mission “even to the point that it *excluded* the church’s involvement” (Bosch, 2009:392). The conflicting convictions regarding the extent of God’s activity in the world relate closely to the conflicting theories of salvation-history (*Heilsgeschichte*) between Karl Barth and Oscar Cullmann. Whereas Barth and his followers identified God’s work only within the “sacred history ... inaccessible to secular historical research and known only by faith”, Cullmann and his followers, some well-known missiologists, view God’s work as discernible in the secular history. Here is the distinction between missiology “from above” and missiology “from below” (Jongeneel and Engeleen, 1995:447-457). In other words, the *missio Dei* concept, which is often

presumed to be exclusively a missiology “from above”, is also conceived to be a missiology “from below”.

3.2.1.1 *Defining missio Dei*

Missio Dei continues to be at the center of missiology as a contested concept among scholars and theologians today, as indicated in 3.2.1 above. Not only are they grappling with its meaning, but also with its implications for and relevance to the world, the church, theology and missiology. The gist of these discussions has nothing to do with the origin of the concept. It rather has to do with varying understandings and theological convictions of experts in the same or related fields towards the word of God, the Holy Bible. It is therefore tenable to argue that these discussions are not only healthy, but also crucial in so far as theology and missiology is concerned. However, crucial as these discussions may be, it is important that one defines the terms and their usage candidly in order for them to map their scope and objectives. This is why defining *missio Dei* for this research is fundamental. For as Martin Lee (2008) rightly says, “Understanding *missio Dei* requires a change of mindset, new terminology and a new change of working”³⁴.

3.2.1.2 *Problems of defining missio Dei*

Missio Dei’s ambiguity lies mainly in God’s identity. Flet (2010:17) posits that this problem makes an undue distinction between who God is in His Triune nature and who He is in His economy. Accordingly, the difficulties of *mission Dei* are derivative in nature. First, they manifest a larger problem within Trinitarian theology, and second, these difficulties have to do with God’s incarnation in the world. Bosch attempts to offer a solution to the latter problem. First, he uses the analogy in Isaiah (42:1) cf (40-55) to contrast the centrality of the concept ‘witness’ and ‘servant’. Second, to clarify the issue, he defines the verb ‘yosi’ in Isaiah 42:1 as, ‘causing to be visible’ rather than ‘carrying out’ or ‘bringing to’. Third, he proposes the New English Bible (NEB) translation for the same verse ie ‘...my servant...will make justice shine on the nations’. Lastly, he negates the emphasis on the servant’s activities to that of God, thus agreeing with Flet that this is about God’s work in and through him (Bosch, 1992:59). These varying descriptions of the concept make the understanding and interpretation of the concept unclear, resulting in continued discussions.

³⁴ Lee, Martin ‘The five marks of mission’- Global connections paper No. 29 (2008) issue 1.

Regarding the issue of the *missio Dei* theology and the Trinity, Flet (2010:4) asserts that it can only be understood within the context of God's mission³⁵ (*missio Dei*) in answer to the problem of the church and mission. Precisely, mission exists only because God is a missionary God, hence he is the subject of mission (Bosch, 1992:52). This would mean that while the problem of *missio Dei* exists largely within Trinitarian theology, it illustrates well that the schism between church (and world) from mission derives from a schism within God's own life. It is God's business and His problem. The other predicament associated with *missio Dei* has to do with the definition of the term itself. This gives rise to a twofold problem:

First, given its usage and significance, it is always difficult to determine the right meaning of the term. Alluding to this difficulty, Gunther recommends a more precise definition of the term or a drop of it altogether. This is occasioned by what he terms as *missio Dei*'s tendency to blur more than clarify issues (Gunther, 1998:56). Rather than drop it, Matthey (2002:221-239) calls for restraint for what he refers to as the classical use of the term. Although both Gunther and Matthey are objective in their suggestions, their rendition does not provide a clear way of defining *missio Dei*, one can rather say that their discussions are good because they serve as bridges to the impending problem.

Second, the concept has many phrases identifying it, all of which are ambiguous. Phrases such as 'God is a missionary God', 'the church is missionary by her very nature', and 'the church participates in God's mission' aggravate the problem and should be well defined and reconstructed within the Trinitarian *missio Dei* viewpoint (Tennent, 2010:35). However, the difficulty of redefining terms within the Trinitarian *missio Dei* is a huge one. Considering that there are many churches subscribing to different theologies of the doctrine of the Trinity, it is difficult to deal with issues such as *missio Dei* within the African context because of a lack of clarity regarding the role played by each member of the Trinity. As a result, many congregations emphasize *missio Dei* within their limited understanding of the role of the Trinity prescribed by their denomination.

Scherer (1993:76) laments the current transition, which he feels means that theologians and missiologists have not yet fully grasped the meaning of *missio Dei*. He decries the meaning of a move toward the kingdom orientation, which closely correlates with the Trinitarian *missio Dei* viewpoint and can only be understood in the light of the Kingdom of God (Padilla, 1985:186). In his long analysis of the problem

³⁵Flet explains the reason why he uses the term 'God's mission', which the researcher ascribes to. The term recognizes that the question of the church's connection with the world can only be answered by who God is in and for himself (Flet, 2010:4).

of *missio Dei*, Flet (2010:76) asserts, '*Missio Dei* is a Rorschach test. It encourages projection, revealing our own predilections rather than informing and directing our responses...*Missio Dei*, with its critical necessity, flawed Trinitarian basis, complex range, and lack of cohesion, conspires to create a concept that mires any constructive potential in a bog of elasticity. Though it coordinates three constitutive elements, such coordination remains at a superficial level. The doctrine of the Trinity plays only a negative role, distancing mission from improper alignments with accidental human authorities'.

As far as the concept of *missio Dei* is concerned, this analysis leaves much to be desired. First, Flet (2010) sees *missio Dei* as the source of all confusion and misunderstanding within theology and missiology. His view is based on *missio Dei*'s inability to clarify critical issues in spite of their magnitude and inevitability. For example, such use of strong words as; 'flawed Trinitarian bases, 'lack of cohesion,' and '...in a bog of elasticity' all denote strict emphasis. Whether this analysis is correct or not remains debatable. From these presentations however, one may appreciate some of the problems the proponents of *mission Dei* face in their daily subscription. Unless their views are clarified further to provide for a justified position, these views may remain as confusing as their allegations to the whole issue of defining *missio Dei*.

Second, Flet's (2010:77) articulation of *missio Dei*'s ambiguity is seen in the two other elements of *missio Dei* theology: the orientation to the kingdom of God and the missionary nature of the church, both of which are developments of the doctrine of the Trinity. For instance, the confusion in understanding the church's place in God's mission (*missio Dei*) and the conflicting convictions on God's work in secular history led to the difficulty in identifying what is involved in Christian mission.

The problem indirectly led the discipline of mission study to a perplexing state. For example, the study of mission with a primary understanding of mission as *missio Dei*, could not find its place in the existing theological education system as it is clearly an overarching discipline that holds all other disciplines of theological study within itself. In one sense, the entire arena of theological education deals with *missio Dei* (Bosch, 2009:494). In another, the same critical challenges drove the development, and this contingency allows for their coordination under the *missio Dei* rubric. However, Flet (2010:78) views the move as submerging the actual location of the problem, thus creating presumptuous Trinitarian attributes, which results in eschatological or ecclesiological paths associated with the liberals. This presumption is the key error and requires further investigation.

Engelsiviken (2003:484-485) calls for a restraint and caution with the inclusive usage of *missio Dei*. *Missio Dei* has been used in missiology as a comprehensive concept to advance everything that the church is supposed to do, or even more, what God is doing. This problem has implications for its usage as it lacks in discrimination and therefore in meaning. A practical example of this can be traced to the many Christian ministries in the name of 'Christian missions' in Africa (especially in the Sub-Saharan countries). These ministries bear the title 'Christian mission' with an aim of alleviating poverty and other pandemics like HIV-AIDS, but they lack in definition and more often than not, they leave much to be desired as far as the understanding of what Christian mission entails.

Another obstacle is that of identifying God's works (or mission) in the concrete historical sphere. This has also led to the difficulty of stabilizing mission as an academic discipline. Aagaard (1974:17) has pointed out that under the *missio Dei* conception, 'everything we do is (easily) identified with the historical *missio Dei* of God, unqualifiedly and indiscriminately'. This notion leads to the obliteration of boundaries to define mission. It was such a tendency to limitlessly broaden the concept of mission under the *missio Dei* concept that compelled a prominent missiologist, Stephen Neil (1959:81) to protest, 'If everything is mission, nothing is mission'.

Whereas many views were added to *missio Dei*'s woes and ambiguities, a few of them stood on the opposite side to propose its role in theology and missiology. While responding to Spiller's (1963:202) assertion that '*missio Dei* is a trope' and that it satisfies an instinct that missionary witness properly belongs to the life of the church without offering any concrete determination of that act, Matthey (2003:581-582) made the following sober remark, 'reference to *missio Dei* did not really solve any of the major missiological challenges which shook Protestants from the beginning of the last century, rather it provided a necessary critical distance between the missionary act and the colonialist project, yet if we were to lose the reference to *missio Dei*, we would again put the sole responsibility for mission on human shoulders and thereby risk, missiologically speaking, believing that salvation is gained by our own achievements'.

Matthey's opinion offers a solution to the need for a well-defined concept of *missio Dei*. First, he admits that the concept is not well understood given its failure to provide for proper solutions to missiological quests. Nevertheless, he sees the importance of the concept within the life of the Church as an instrument of *missio Dei*. Additionally, Matthey acknowledges the fact that salvation is God's act of grace and must not be attributed to anyone else's effort.

Rosin (1972:26) describes *missio Dei* theology as the 'Trojan horse through which the unincorporated "American" vision was fetched into the well-guarded walls of the ecumenical theology of mission'. After defending itself against the anglo-American position, *missio Dei* seemingly confirmed German mission's treatment of *Volkstum*³⁶ and its link to God's acting in creation through both the law and the Gospel. *Missio Dei* in this way provides an ecumenically affirmed rubric while suffering from significant internal discord. This view lacks in objectivity because it does not clarify the proponent's point of view in defining *missio Dei*. Rather than criticize the concept, Rosin should consider a solution that can enable one to decide the direction to undertake in developing one's own understanding of the concept, just like the attempt by Matthey above.

3.2.1.3 Definitions of *missio Dei*

Various attempts at defining *missio Dei* have been made since the inception of the terminology around the turn of the twentieth century. Proponents and opponents of *missio Dei* have wrestled with a variety of issues related both directly and indirectly to this concept, each one of them in an attempt to supply a viable meaning.

For purposes of this study, a few of these definitions will be discussed briefly. Vicedom (1958:12-13) defines *missio Dei* as God's work, He is the Lord, the commissioner, the owner, and the one who accomplishes the task. He is the acting subject of mission and every human whim is withdrawn as far as this attribute goes. For Suess (2003:552), '*missio Dei* is the theological concept that allows us to speak of both 'the presence and transcendence of God', which connects the being of God with his acts in history, and this 'draws our attention to the question of the mediating divine presence'. *Missio Dei* is the very mission of God in creation, redemption and continual sanctification. Thus, every act of God, since God is by nature missionary, is properly described as mission according to the explanation by Bevans and Schroeder (2004:288).

More specifically, Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney Douglas (2008:32) provide a Trinitarian definition of the *missio Dei* concept as the 'idea of God's nature and expression extended and stamped upon the world. God the Father sends God the Son who sends God the Holy Spirit; all the three send the church'. This is a joint responsibility, defining a missionary God in His economy. Alluding to this economic nature of the triune God, Richebacher (2003b:599) calls for a more precise definition

³⁶*Volkstum* or *Volk* is a German concept that can best be defined as 'the sum total of social and environmental relationships, constituted both by ties of blood and by the sharing of common ground, by *Blut*(blood) and *Boden* [soil]' By Gensichen in Flett, 2010:78.

of *missio Dei*. This is explained by his rendition of the function of *missio Dei Triunius* for the sake of the invitation to believe and the dignity of all religions, in this case, Islam.

Bosch (2009:10) has a balanced definition of *missio Dei*. This overt definition is careful to mention the church and its position, thus; '*missio Dei* is God's self-revelation as the one who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate'. This definition is adopted in this study as it contributes to the proposed model for the evangelical churches in Eldoret, Kenya.

3.2.2 The theological development of the concept *missio Dei*

The idea that the mission of the church is in the first place the mission of God (*missio Dei*) has its origins in the thought of Karl Barth. A good summary of its development can be found in David Bosch's 'Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission' (2009:389-393). Barth's argument that mission must be understood as an activity or attribute of God himself was first proposed in a paper given at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932. The full concept was articulated in 1952 at the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council. Mission was understood to derive from the Trinitarian nature of God: the Father sends the Son; the Father and the Son send the Spirit; and the Trinitarian God sends the church into the world as a dynamic embodiment of divine love towards creation.

Bosch (2009:390) encapsulates the paradigm shift involved: '[m]ission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission.... There is church because there is mission, not vice versa.... To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love'. This encapsulation is the beginning of the understanding of a paradigm shift that is very important to the work of mission in the world today and must be understood from its development to core in order to appreciate the challenges of mission engagement in every missionary field. Moreover, history testifies that the world has witnessed many events, including the two World Wars, the Russian and Chinese revolutions of the early twentieth century, varying and conflicting ideologies such as Socialism, Fascism and capitalism, all of which had (and others continue to have) a profound influence on the socio-economic and political developments worldwide. Likewise, developments in theological thinking have been influenced by developments in areas that include natural and social sciences, philosophy and history (Bosch, 2009:363).

These developments strongly suggest that the theological perspective on the *missio Dei* has been and continues to take place within an intertwined socio-economic, historical and political context that cannot be overlooked when seeking to understand the nature and content of the concept.

3.2.2.1 The inception of *missio Dei*

According to Gerald H. Anderson (1999:282), *actio Dei* (Latin for the 'action of God') is the term that gave rise to *missio Dei* (Latin for 'mission of God'). These two terms are attributed to Karl Barth ([1932]1957)³⁷ and Karl Hartenstein (1894-1952)³⁸ respectively. The contributions of Karl Barth can be traced to his paper presented at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932 after the First World War. In his presentation, Barth articulates mission as an activity of God Himself (Bosch, 2009:389). Whilst responding to Karl Barth's emphasis, Karl Hartenstein presented a paper '*Die Mission als theologisches Problem* (1933) expressing the same sentiments (Bosch: 390). In 1934, however, he wrote a thesis in which he attributed mission primarily to God as opposed to being the activity of the church. This is what earned him the credit of the origin of the concept *missio Dei* (Anderson, 1999:282). Here, the annotation is directed to a missionary God whose sending nature is seen in the person of His Son, Christ Jesus (John 3:17; 5:30; 11:42, 17:18).

Expounding on *missio Dei* as God's mission, Moltmann (1977:64) asserts, 'it is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church'. This exposition places *missio Dei* directly within the triune nature of God right from its inception and may explain why the Protestant missiological discussions readily applauded its use, especially since the 1950s³⁹ (Rosin, 1972:7) (McIntosh (2000:631).

From this exposition, the concept developed from the acts of God and hence must end in the acts of God. It is the original Augustinian phrase (within Western discussions of the Trinity) in reference to 'sentness of God (the Son)' by the Father that defines the Latin *missio Dei* as the English 'mission of God' within the Protestant missiological discussions (McIntosh, 2000:631; cf John 3:17, 5:30, 11:42 and 17:18).

³⁷ Bosch, 2009:389.

³⁸ Anderson, 1999:282.

³⁹ According to the Evangelical Dictionary of World Mission, *missio Dei* Latin for 'the sending of God' in the sense of 'being sent', dates back to Augustine during the Western discussions of the Trinity for the 'sentness of God the Son' by the Father. It is translated into English as 'mission of God'.

Fundamental to the discussion on *missio Dei* is the role of God as a missionary. Missionary is used here to refer to a God who sends. God's sending as opposed to man's sending is defined as His *missio* (Flet, 2010:36). His *missio* can be made sense of in His act of sending His Son, His *missio* plus His Son's *missio* of the Holy Spirit, and His *missio*, His Son's *missio* plus the Holy Spirit's *missio* of the Church. Flet (2010:36) sums this up as God's definition as a missionary, which reduces God as a sending God. Marie Aagard (1974:422) describes this as 'God sending Himself' and hence the economic sending of the trio to the world. Tribute to this role is the introduction of the term *missio* 'trinitatis', a term that clarifies the *missio Dei* as God's initiative as opposed to a human's initiative and yet seeks to define this God as the triune God (Schulz, 2009:88). Distinguishing *missio Dei* as God's initiative is important because the process is instituted by God as part of the plan of redemption, the means through which sinners can be saved. Being a sinner, man has no legitimate claim to *mission Dei*. Moreover, the tenets of the concept are embedded in God, not man.

3.2.2.2 Essential attributes of *missio Dei*

Based on a Trinitarian view of mission, invitation to world missions derives its structure from the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the mission of God (*missio Dei*). According to Tennent (2010:74), the doctrine of the Trinity is the church's attempt to tell the truth about God and men and therefore the concept of the *missio Dei* must remain central to all the understanding of missions. Furthermore, the Trinity forms a very important attribute of the *missio Dei*. This is because the mission of the triune God is best described with the shorthand phrase *missio Dei*. In this study, *missio Dei* will be discussed in light of three of many of its attributes namely that the triune nature of God revolves around the work of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, mission flows from the heart of God so that God is the source, initiator and sustainer of mission and mission is God's business. God not only initiates mission, He will accomplish mission at the end because He does mission for His own eternal glory.

- *The Triune nature of God*

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit possess the same but equal powers. This is what makes God sovereign. Kane (1982:86) acknowledges this sovereignty, a characteristic that belongs only to God; for the Bible points out clearly God's mighty power (Isaiah 40:12-13), His perfect wisdom (Romans 11:33-36) and His intrinsic goodness (Psalms 145:17) all make up the concept of God's rule. While it

is important to realize this sovereignty, it is also tenable to say that mission in itself depends on God's perfect character described in His sovereignty. This guards against any thought and belief that *missio Dei* is dependent on man or his abilities to engage in mission. Furthermore, the sovereignty of God as seen in His divine triune nature is revealed in the Bible with His activities witnessed historically via His creative work (Revelation 4:11), His redemptive work (Ephesians 1:5-9) and His impending judgment (Revelation 15:3-4) cf (Kane, 1982:87). Arguably, a Christian engaging in mission forms part of God's sovereignty. This is the work that has been and is witnessed throughout the history of the universe. It describes an everlasting unity of the triune nature of God.

Grudem (2005:226) argues that 'God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.' The essence of the triune nature of God is to define God's *missio Dei* in such a way that no one, not even the unsubordinated nature of the Holy Trinity, can claim credit as an individual or in their distinct nature as persons (Grudem, 2005: 231). Rather, as a unit, the Godhead stands always fulfilled. As Kane (1982:87) testifies, nowhere else in the history of the universe is the sovereignty of God more clearly seen than in the Christian mission. This explains why the triune nature of God is a very important attribute of the *missio Dei*. Moreover, the distinct roles played by each member of the Godhead are primarily different functions relevant only to the world and those living in the world. It is justifiable then to say that in order for a perfect relationship to exist between the Godhead and the world, and also between the members of the Godhead in relation to the *missio Dei* and the world, there was a need to have the three persons of the Godhead to function differently (Grudem, 2005:248-249).

Furthermore, the distinct roles of the Godhead are there to remind the readers that these roles are not temporary, but eternal (Grudem, 2005:249). In addition, it demonstrates that the work of mission is purely God's *missio Dei* – what others have defined as purely His business. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul describes God as everything to everyone at last (I Corinthians 15:28).

- *Mission flows from the heart of God*

David Bosch (2009:392), a renowned missiologist, contends that 'Mission is, primarily and ultimately the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate'. Since *missio Dei* seeks to define mission at its best, Bosch sees in it a beginning that is as old as God. It is the beginning of the beginning and so it can be said that as long as God has been in existence, so has His mission.

Ultimately this work does not only stem from the triune nature of God, it also finds its fulfillment in His nature. In other words, God's purpose depends on His divine will and can only find its accomplishment in His final goal, which is spelled by His program of saving mankind. Systematically, this work begins with God in creation, finds its fulfillment in the cross (redemption), is sanctified by His renewal of the Spirit to await a culmination in the new history of the world. It is a work that begins at creation and ends at re-creation. Such is the strength and emphasis possible only in the minds and understanding of those who appreciate the true meaning of the *missio Dei*. Simply put, the depth of mission is only found in the innermost parts of God's being.

In seeking to emphasize the weight on God's heart, Bosch (2009: 392) continues, '[i]t is impossible to penetrate deeper still....' Thus, the heart of God must be really big. Otherwise, no amount of reason can explain how God the Son would forego His own glory and be humiliated on the cross for man's sake (Philippians 2:5-8). This is why Bosch (2009:393) asserts, 'There is mission because God loves people'. Such a love is sovereign, just as God is sovereign. This is why Kane (1982:87) strongly suggests that from first to last the Christian mission is God's mission, not man's mission. In addition, this mission originated in the heart of God.

- *Mission is missio Dei*

Mission is *missio Dei* and God's *missio Dei* is His mission. According to Bosch (2009:10) one should make a distinction between mission (singular) and missions (plural) whenever one engages in transforming mission. Mission must be understood to clearly and primarily refer to the *missio Dei*, God's mission. This is a vocabulary that links mission to God's self-revelation as the lover of the world. His total activity culminates in His sovereignty in which the church is privileged to participate. It further defines a relational God who does not only care for His creation, but who also owns the good news of salvation because He is a people's God. On the other hand, missions should be understood in terms of the missionary ventures of the church. The church participates in particular forms, related specifically to times, places, and needs in the *missio Dei* (Bosch, 2009:10).

Against this backdrop, it is apparent that mission stands purely as God's business, both in nature and form. It seeks to reveal the character of the triune God and the one that stands superior to any form of missions. Undoubtedly, *missio Dei* is God's mission. In addition, God's *missio Dei* is God's initiative from the beginning, an attribute of God the father (Tennent, 2010:75). The four major themes identified with God the father as the initiator of His *missio Dei* are further outlined as firstly the

reality that God the father initiated missions, secondly that He is the sender of missions, thirdly that history is the stage for God the father's actions and thirdly the fact that missions express God's relational, holy love (Tennent, 2010:75-78).

These themes do not alienate the work of the Trinity from God's *missio Dei*. They rather affirm the roles of both God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They include the role of God the Son who embodies the presence of the kingdom of God in His person and God the Holy Spirit who empowers the presence of the *missio Dei* and demonstrates its relevance for the mission of the church. This empowerment is vital and crucial for the role of church missions. The church's participation in the *missio Dei* is an act that aims to continue the mission of God the Son in the world till the end of times (Tennent, 2010:101). Moreover, the end signifies the culmination of God's kingdom on earth and God's eternal glory as brought about by the *mission Dei*. Engel and Dyrness (2000:37) describe this ending as 'God-originated, Christ-centered and Spirit-empowered'.

Expounding on the *missio Dei*'s role in the establishment of the kingdom of God and His eternal glory, the two authors above point out the importance of rooting missions in the being and activity of the triune God. In what they describe as two corollaries, their insistence in God's acts of creation and recreation shows high regard the work of the triune God, God's *missio Dei*, as part of the paradigm shift of missions. This means that any engagement by missions must take cognizance of the breadth of God's activities from creation to consummation or from initiation to completion (Engel and Dryness, 2000:37).

3.2.2.3 Towards a working definition of the *Missio Dei*

This research attempts a working definition of *missio Dei* in the hope that it will contribute to the knowledge that already exists. Overall, a well-defined concept of *missio Dei* embodies the following four factors: one, the original impetus of mission as God; two, the missionary impulse which stems from and reflects the intrinsic nature of God; three, the subsequent nature being triune, and that each member of the trinity is missional; and four, other agents including the church, individuals, organizations and other stakeholders, all of whom are privileged to participate and who do not initiate mission⁴⁰. In order to justifiably identify a working definition of the *missio Dei*, it is necessary to examine the concept within its historical context as well its current perspectives.

⁴⁰Taken from an essay written by Christopher Ducker, September 2008.

3.2.3 Current perspectives on *missio Dei*

Historical accounts of *missio Dei* can be traced back to a 1932 lecture delivered by Karl Barth. Barth's argument that mission must be understood as an activity or attribute of God himself was first proposed in a paper given at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in the same year. The full concept was articulated in 1952 at the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council (Barth, 1932:189-215). Mission was understood to derive from the Trinitarian nature of God

The emergence of *missio Dei* as a concept can therefore not be divorced from its historical context. The existing political and social changes in the early twentieth century to mid-twentieth century together with the two world wars and the onset of decolonization contributed to the development of *missio Dei*. Another example is China where in 1994, the introduction of the *missio Dei* led to the expulsion of missionaries—an act which resulted in new thinking within Christendom and a redefining of mission. Accordingly, this new thinking is what gave rise to the birth of the *missio Dei* and a paradigm shift that saw the articulation of mission from ecclesiology and soteriology to the doctrine of the Trinity (Bosch, 2009:390). To further appreciate these developments, this study briefly discusses the times, people and places of *missio Dei* within the current perspectives.

3.2.3.1 Times

Missio Dei concept is a development of theological and missiological importance. Historically, this concept dates back to the time of the church fathers such as Augustine (in the Western discussion of the Trinity)⁴¹ onwards (McIntosh, 2000:631). However, even though *missio Dei* is as old as the time of the church fathers, its use in missiological circles was not recognized until the 1950s when hot discussions occurred. Bosch (2009:390) points out that it was the efforts of the German theologian Karl Barth in 1932 that brought the *missio Dei* concept into the limelight. This brought a paradigm shift that would later challenge the understanding of mission as far as role of the church is concerned.

Later on many missiologists came to see *mission Dei* as the role of the triune God as opposed to that of the church as far as mission is concerned (Corrie, 2007:233). It is also important to note at this stage that there was a delay between when the sentiments of *missio Dei* first arose and when the precise term was actually employed twenty years later. In order to delve deeper into this historical change, the events of 1932-1934 will be considered.

⁴¹Shulz refers to Augustine's confessions for this. See footnote on page 87 (2009:87) of the confessions.

- *The 1932-1934 initiative*

As discussed in 3.2.3.1 above, the German theologian Karl Barth initiated a very important discussion that saw the term *missio Dei* not only re-introduced in many missiological conferences, but also critically examined in the literature of the missiological arena. At the conference at the Brandenburg Mission in 1932, Barth presented a paper placing mission primarily in the docket of God as opposed to the then popular notion that it was in the hands of the church (Bevans and Shroeder, 2004:290).

Commenting on the constructive potential of Barth's 1932 lecture, Flet (2010:120-121) explains that apart from the barest passing reference by Schick and Schlunk, no other author examined Barth's 1932 essay up until the key theological turning point at Willingen. Flet (2010:123) continues to say that although Barth's presentation places the justification for mission apart from any accidental grounding, but fails to develop a positive Trinitarian theology of mission. Rather, this historic presentation rocketed a paradigm shift that only gained popularity in the later years.

One of those who appreciated the proposition and contributed to its development in the two years following 1934 was Karl Hartenstein. Some refer to Hartenstein as the originator of *missio Dei* (Flet, 2010:123-124), some view him as a leading theologian and missiologist of his time (Rossel, 1969:204), and others consider him a tutor among the list of the leading missiologists such as Walter Freytag and Karl Barth. Schulz (2009:88) credits these persons with the historic shift from a view of mission as a substantially human endeavor to a theocentric approach that recognizes God and not humans as the source and initiator of mission.

- *The 1952 Willingen Conference*

The Willingen Conference is very significant in missiological history as it constitutes the moment when *missio Dei* was adopted, accepted and recognized as a term (Bosch, 2009:391). This year became a turning point in the minds of many missiologists such as Karl Hartenstein, who wrote a report some weeks after the Conference. The report summarized the main finding and placed mission within the context of the Triune God Himself⁴² (Rosin, 1972:6).

⁴² The statement: "The missionary movement, of which we are a part, has its source in the Triune God Himself. Out of the depths of His love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved 'Son to reconcile all things to Himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in Him with the Father in that perfect love which is the very nature of God...We who have been chosen in Christ...are by these very facts committed to full participation in His redeeming mission. There is no participation in Christ without participation in His mission to the world. That by which the Church receives its existence is that by which it is also given its world-mission" (*International review of mission*, Vol XCIII No.367 October 2003)

Like other preceding international conferences, the Willingen experience was not without challenges and hitches. First, the conference took place at a time of a major missiological crisis due to the abrupt end of mission work in China (Bosch, 2009:390). Influenced by the shock of such an event that had the potential to be replicated in other parts of the world, the conference struggled with the fundamental definition of what mission meant at such a time of uncertainty.

Second, Willingen like many other similar conferences, did not come to a satisfactory approval of missiological priorities. According to Flet (2010:157-158), participants understood Willingen as having failed in its central task. Goodall (1953:14) decried the lack of one inevitable word in which theological clarity and prophetic insight could be manifestly conjoined. According to both Flet and Goodall, Willingen failed to give a directive that would set the world mission of the Church on a surer and swifter road towards its fulfillment. However, history shows that Willingen had a great impact on the doctrine of the Trinity, both at the conference itself and for some time after (Beattie, 1952:433-443).

Earlier on, many missiologists defined mission as only possible within the realms of the church and as a result anything outside the church was hotly detested. After the Willingen there was a radical change towards a view that *missio Dei* was larger than the mission of the church, even to the point of suggesting that it excluded the church's involvement. This view was held by one British missiologist, Andrew Kirk. Speaking on the subject of *missio Dei*, Kirk (2002:25) asserts, 'its primary reference is to the purposeless and activities of God in and for the whole universe. The wideness of its scope means that it has become a tag on which an enormous range of meaning has been hung. Legitimately and illegitimately the *missio Dei* has been used to advance all kinds of missiological agendas'. This view contradicts the general adopted view that *missio Dei* is God's primary work that involved the role of the Church as an agent. By refusing to acknowledge the role of the Church, one may argue that Kirk was denying the 'sentedness' of God within the concept of the *missio Dei*.

Other interpretations emphasized the role of God the Son as ruling supreme to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (Bosch, 2009:392). This school of thought held that *missio Dei* was only possible after the 'Great Commission' was initiated in the New Testament (Matthew 28:18-20). This undermined the role of the *missio Dei* by insinuating that Christ's ministry was independent of the acts of God the Father and the Holy Spirit.

According to Lehmann, the failure of the Christian Church in Willingen 1952 was a failure of “prophetic and apostolic nerve”⁴³, which resulted in two problems: one, the Anglo-Catholics’ refusal to subscribe to the instrumental character of the Christian mission and two⁴⁴, the theological language surrounding National Socialism and the German Lutherans. These two problems led to a dangerous division of the divine activity to two spheres, one involving God’s judgment and another His redemption (Flet, 2010:159).

Whereas Willingen was understood to have failed in terms of its theological statement, the hope remained that it had initiated a continuous program of reflection (Andersen, 1955:53). Rather than separate the triune nature, the Willingen Conference placed mission within the concept of the triune God and the true meaning of *missio Dei*. Apart from the discussion of the importance of the Trinitarian basis of mission, the Willingen Conference also discussed other key issues. These include the issue on the eschatological nature of mission, the relationship between the church and mission, ways of implementing mission, as well as unity for the sake of mission (Bassam, 1979:31-34). These issues form part of the issues discussed in the years following the 1952 Willingen Conference.

- *1960 and the aftermath of the Willingen Conference*

The *missio Dei* concept gained popularity in the years following the Willingen Conference in 1952. These developments were both imprecise and non-definitive. However, after Willingen, key evangelical documents show evangelicals grappling with crucial issues of spreading the Gospel and an attempt to understand the *missio Dei* concept within their context.

In the Wheaton Declaration 2008⁴⁵ evangelicals raised a number of crucial issues, including mission and syncretism, mission and neo-universalism, mission and *proselytism*, mission and foreign mission⁴⁶. Due to these new developments, the use of *missio Dei* received new and varied interpretations within the realms of missiology and particularly within the Protestant evangelical circles. Unfortunately, study on the undertakings of the Wheaton 2008 Declaration does not show much on the understanding and use of *missio Dei*. It suffices to say that this meeting

⁴³ Taken from an essay “Willingen and Lund: The Church on the Way to Unity,” *Theology Today* 9, no. 4 (1953):431-441.

⁴⁴⁴⁴Ibid p 435.

⁴⁵ Available at <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/wd66/b18.html>. Date of access, 15th May 2012, cf. Published proceedings of the Congress: Study Papers: Congress on the Church’s Worldwide Mission, April 9-16, 1966, Wheaton, Illinois, Glen Ellyn, IL: Scripture Press Foundation, 1966.

⁴⁶⁴⁶ Ibid

recommended that future congresses must seek to address emerging issues and emphasized the need of evangelization of the world and faithfulness to Scripture, something that remains characteristic of the Protestant evangelicals (The Wheaton Declaration, 2008).

Another meeting following the Willingen 1952 Conference was convened in Lausanne under the title of “The Lausanne Covenant of 1974”. This meeting alluded to the triune God in reference to His purpose of creation and governorship of all things in the world, but apparently failed to spell out *missio Dei*’s significance in the work of mission. Equally important at this point is the fact that although all subsequent documents such as “The Twenty-One Affirmations of the Manila Manifesto” and “The Thailand Statement from the Consultation On World Evangelization Pattaya, Thailand, June 16-27, 1980” loyally subscribe to the Lausanne Covenant, none of them seem to grasp the role of the *missio Dei* in their missional undertakings, rather, they all emphasize their role in the evangelization of the world (The Lausanne Covenant, 1974)⁴⁷.

The Iguassu Affirmation of 1999 followed the Lausanne Covenant of 1974. According to the World Evangelical Alliance 2001, the declaration formulated in this meeting succeeded in affirming the Trinitarian basis of the *missio Dei* and also in explaining the roles of each member of the Trinity. This was demonstrated by a written declaration of commitment, “We commit ourselves to a renewed emphasis on God-centered missiology. This invites a new study of the operation of the Trinity in the redemption of the human race and the whole of creation, as well as to understand the particular roles of Father, Son and Spirit in mission to this fallen world” (World Evangelical Alliance, 2001).

3.2.3.2 The People

German missiologists are credited with the missiological developments of the late 20th to early 21st centuries. Among them are Karl Barth, Karl Hartenstein, George F Vicedom, Leslie Newbigin and David Bosch, to mention only a few. This study considers the contributions of a few of the mentioned missiologists forming part of the development and understanding of the *missio Dei* concept within the already discussed period in time.

Karl Hartenstein

Karl Hartenstein was born January 25th, 1894 in Badcastatt, Germany. He studied Philosophy, History and Theology and graduated in 1922, whereupon he

⁴⁷<http://www.Lausanne.org/lausanne-1974/lausanne-covenant.html>. Date of access, 15th May, 2012.

became a lecturer at Tübingen Stift. He developed interest in Karl Barth's proposition of a 'theology of crisis'. In 1923 he got married and became a pastor in Urach. His appointment to the Barsla Mission as a director saw him become a member of the German Mission Federation where he met with other German missiologists, like Freytag, with whom he became close friends (Schulz, 2009:88).

His continued interest in Barth's 'theology of crisis' saw him publish a little book 'What does the theology of Karl Barth have to say about mission?' after reflecting on Barth's impact on the theology of mission in 1928. In 1931, he travelled to Africa (Chana) on a mission trip before embarking on another trip in India in 1932. In 1933, he successfully defended his dissertation and became a Doctor of Theology in Tübingen Stift. His dissertation "*Mission als theologisches Problem*" (Mission as theological problem), Hartenstein 1933 deals with the theological foundation of mission, the understanding of "heathendom", the problem of syncretism and the challenges for modern mission on the fields in India and Africa. This achievement earned him a position as lecturer at the University of Basel in charge of missiology and religious studies (Flet, 2010: 124-129).

The years between 1945 and 1952 were important to Hartenstein because it is during this time that the restoration of the ecumenical fellowship was realized. The 1946 meeting in Rheinfelden, Switzerland, where 12 delegates from 6 European countries met to review the German mission enterprise to its European counterparts was crucial. During and after World War II, the 1947 International Missionary Conference (IMC) in Whitby (Canada) gave an opportunity to Hartenstein, Freytag and Ihmels to travel together. The meeting's focus was on evangelism and the reunification of the worldwide missionary community in commitment to world mission (Metzger, 1953:301-307).

In 1948, Hartenstein took part in the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam. In 1949 his health deteriorated. However, he participated in the preparation of the International Missionary Conference IMC meeting in Willingen (Germany) in 1952 at a time when missionaries were being expelled from China. This, together with post-colonial and post-war changes, called for a reflection on the definition of mission. It was also at Willingen where the concept of the "mission of God" was discussed, a process in which Hartenstein played an important role. Hartenstein died on October 1st, 1952 after receiving an honorary doctoral degree from both the theological faculty of Heidelberg and Halle University.

According to Wagner (1995:129), Hartenstein called missions to a critical examination when he first employed the term *missio Dei* in one of his publications in 1934. He links God's mission with that of the church and says, 'out of the "*Missio*

Dei” alone comes the “*Missio ecclesia*” thus, mission is placed in the widest possible frame of salvation-history and God’s plan for salvation’ (Wagner, 1995:131). For Hartenstein, the unity of the church can be seen in three dimensions: Spatial (worldwide, ecumenical presence), historical (continuation of the church through all phases of history) and transcendental (unity of the *ecclesia militans* with the *ecclesia triumphans*). The eschatological dimension of the unity of the church is related to all the three dimensions (Schwarz, 1980:189-190).

Regarding the doctrine of the Trinity and *missio Dei*, neither Hartenstein nor his friends brought it to the Willingen as a watchword. Hartenstein’s preparatory paper on ‘Mission and Eschatology’ does not provide any evidence to that effect (Rosin, 1972:7). Rather, it was Cullmann who provided Hartenstein with the kind of eschatological framework that could situate his Pietist core. While Hartenstein initiated the language of *missio Dei* and developed a profound articulation of the church’s missionary nature, Flet (2010:152) asserts that he neither mediated Barth to Willingen nor developed a Trinitarian grounding for mission.

- *George Vicedom*

According to Tennent (2010:55), it was George Vicedom who popularized the phrase *missio Dei* or “mission of God” in his publication of a landmark book ‘The Mission of God: An introduction to the Theology of Mission’. Insightfully, his contributions conceptualized mission as a participation in the Father’s mission of sending the Son, a missionary movement of which each believer is a part and that emanates from God Himself as the source.

Declaring that mission can no longer be spoken of as that of the church, Vicedom (1965:5) insinuated that the church should not see its work in the world apart from its source in the *missio Dei*. Whilst giving an account of this in his book titled “*missio Dei*”, Vicedom (1958:37) emphasized the Christological-salvific dimension of the *missio Dei* as follows, ‘mission is the work of the Lord between ascension and the *parousia* of Christ. Therefore the church has simply been given the task of proclaiming the perfect one to the people and continuing his work of salvation by pronouncing his kingdom till he comes.’ Furthermore, Vicedom (1958:5-6) developed his theology of *missio Dei* from a more enlarged dimension of the Trinity. Here, he pointed out that the missionary movement in which Christians engage as participants is founded in the work of salvation conducted by God Himself, thus emphasizing that mission is God’s work from beginning to the end.

Speaking on Vicedom’s understanding of the kingdom of God in the New Testament, Tormod (2003:484) reiterates that there is an affirmation of the fact that a

person's understanding of the kingdom has significant consequences for his or her understanding of *missio Dei*. This can be illustrated by Vicedom's dual understanding of the work of God as a creator and preserver *vis-a-vis* His lordship (rule of God). Moreover, in addition to the special *missio Dei* of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, together with the sending of prophets and apostles, Vicedom maintains that there is *missio Dei* wherever God sends impersonal realities. He says, 'That also by such means he brings his direct influence to bear on the world' (Vicedom, 1958:10). Out of this, God exemplifies Himself as a God who has not excluded His creation from His care.

- *David Bosch*

Bosch is an outspoken author and contributor to the concept of *missio Dei* in the twenty first century. His contribution as an African missiologist and a theologian is evident in the book 'Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission', where he extensively discusses the issue of God's *missio Dei* and thus provides a definition that has come to be accepted and adopted as the classic definition of *missio Dei* following the IMC 1952 Willingen Conference.

Bosch contributed knowledge that is not only useful in understanding the origin of *missio Dei*, but also as a paradigm shift in transforming mission. Referring to what Bosch's 'magisterial' work on Christian mission, A. Scherer and B. Bevans (1992: ix⁴⁸) outline and discuss up to six "paradigms" according to which missionary activity has been carried out in the past. Their definition of *missio Dei* attempts to provide readers and missiologists with an understanding of what God's mission is and the role of the Church in this mission - *missio Dei*. This provides not only a starting point, but also a critical turning point in mission engagement for many churches in the world today. On the balanced definition of *missio Dei*, Tormod (2003:486) agrees that this terminology has received a global near consensus so that many evangelicals, liberals, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and some Pentecostals are adopting the term (Bosch, 2009:390-391).

While much has been written on *missio Dei* and the church, it is Bosch's exposition that has called for a constant, careful re-evaluation of the mission of the church. He asserts that, 'the mission of the church needs constantly to be renewed and reconceived' (2009:591).

⁴⁸ For a full outline and discussion of these paradigms, read 'New Directions in Mission & Evangelization 1: Basic Statements 1974-1991. By Scherer & Bevans, ed. 1992, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Bosch points out that the *missio Dei* purifies the church so that its goal is not self-replication and numerical growth. Consequently, God sustains guides and sanctifies the church in order for it to be a witness to the meaning and relevance of the kingdom (Kirk, 2002:36). Subsequently, only as God uses the church as an instrument of his own missionary activity can the church's act be properly considered mission. Consequently, a focus on "sending" both critically distances the human act from alternate authorities and affords it an inviolate authority (Flet, 2010:37).

- *Leslie Newbigin*

Leslie J.E. Newbigin is one of the most renowned missiologists of both the twentieth and twenty first century. A bishop, great leader of his time and an excellent author, Leslie Newbigin's works evidently present a zeal for God's *missio Dei*. As a missionary to India for almost forty years (Goheen, 2002:354)⁴⁹ (Newbigin, 1963), Newbigin's personal experiences and journeys provide his readers with a clear picture of his dedication and love for lost souls. Newbigin served as an ecumenical general secretary of the IMC, as well as an associate general secretary of the WCC (Newbigin, 1972). During this time, he edited the *International Review of Missions*. Upon his return to Europe after retirement, Newbigin issued a challenge to the Western church to recover a missionary encounter with its culture. He was outstanding in his work, both as a pastor and missiology lecturer in Birmingham and at Selly Oak Colleges respectively. He authored and published more than thirty books (Goheen, 2002:355). Some of his titles include: 'The open secret', 'Trinitarian faith and today's mission', 'Truth to tell', 'The relevance of Trinitarian doctrine for today's mission', 'The finality of Christ', 'A faith for this one world', 'Foolishness to the Greeks' and 'The church local and universal', to mention but a few.

Characteristic of Leslie's writings is an articulation of the second person of the God-head. His emphasis on Christ almost in all his writings demonstrates his love for the Saviour. Hardly does one read his introductions, chapters or paragraphs without stumbling upon the second person of the God-head. This no doubt presents this author as a Christocentric. Although commendable, this style of writing may present Leslie as contradictory given that he discusses the subject of the triune God with clarity.

Leslie has discussed the relevance of the Trinitarian doctrine for today's mission in most of his books. However, he fails to speak of the *missio Dei* as a paradigm shift in the understanding of church and mission. Unlike Bosch (2009:390-

⁴⁹ Michael W. Goheen, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you": Leslie Newbigin's missionary ecclesiology. *International Review of Missions* 91, no 362:354-369.

392) who affords a few paragraphs to this important missiological development, Leslie maintains silence on the subject, but manages to intimate on the discussions following Willingen. This silence does not sit well with critics such as Konrad Raiser⁵⁰, who sees this as a weakness relatedly to his Christocentrism.

Additionally, as a member of the IMC and WCC, one would expect Leslie to contribute to the hot discussions arising within the periods that he was in office. Leslie confirms, '[a]t Willingen (1952) there was a strong affirmation of mission, but in the course of that meeting a new insistence began to be felt upon the need for a missiology which was not domesticated in the church...' (Newbigin, 1978:9). Although Newbigin agrees that consensus was reached at the meeting, the immediate sentence leave much to be desired. 'The 1960 conference, convened at Strasbourg by the World's Student Christian Federation on "[t]he Life and Mission of the Church," saw the emergence of a radically secular interpretation of the *missio Dei*. The assembled students were challenged "to move out of the traditional Church structure in open, flexible and mobile groups" and "to begin radically to de-sacralise the Church' (Newbigin, 1978:9-10).

Leslie's explanation of the events following Willingen does not reflect a positive view of the role of the *missio Dei*. It neither clarifies the position reached nor rejects it altogether. Instead, it blames the developments on what he refers to as the 'de-sacralising for the Church'. Whether his avoidance of the discussions on the *missio Dei* soon after the 1952 Willingen Conference in Germany are by default or by design, Leslie's contributions on the trinity leave no doubt that he is a proponent of *missio Dei*. Leslie exemplifies his thoughts on the role of the trinity by the way he links the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit (Newbigin, 1963:31-33). Nevertheless, his work on the third person of the God-head is still inadequate.

Goheen (2002:355-357) commends Newbigin's missionary ecclesiology. Outlining two major shifts in Leslie's articulations, Goheen (2002:355) fleshes out these formulations in the next decade to show support for Leslie's contributions within the missionary understanding of the church from Christendom to a missionary one. Leslie first challenged the Christendom theology attained in his theological training by moving the church to a central place through his missionary experiences.

⁵⁰Ibid. Raiser challenged Newbigin's articulation of the *missio Dei* in his book 'Ecumenism in Transition: A Paradigm Shift in the Ecumenical Movement' arguing that even though a decisive shift had taken place in the ecumenical movement away from the Christocentric-universalistic paradigm that had shaped the WCC from its inception until Uppsala, Newbigin's view never departed from it. Raiser thus accused Newbigin of not taking into account the developments and insights from Willingen 1952 to Uppsala 1958. Raiser sees Newbigin as reflecting on the earlier version of non-negotiable truth of the earlier paradigm, a position contested and protested by Newbigin in his responses to the criticism.

Reiterating on the experience, Newbigin (1993:138) says, 'I found that the experience of missionary work compelled me to it. I saw that the kind of Protestant in which I had been nourished belonged to a "Christendom" context. In a missionary situation the Church had to have a different place'.

As an associate of the ecumenical tradition at a time when the missionary ecclesiology was taking shape within that tradition, Leslie saw fruitful developments toward a more missional ecclesiology within a twenty-year period between Tambaran 1938 and Ghana 1958. His actual participation in ecumenical meetings began in 1948 in Amsterdam where he delivered an important address. In Willingen (1952), he was a major participant and he delivered a plenary address and played a major role in drafting the famous conference report. These interactions assisted in shaping Newbigin's ecclesiological understandings (Goheen, 2002:355-357).

3.2.3.3 Places

With its origins in Germany at the IMC Willingen, 1952 (Flet, 2010:78), *missio Dei* has spread to many places too.

- *European Context*

Whenever one speaks of Christianity in Europe, one imagines old buildings, churches and worship places, all of which stand as relics that give a sightseer the feeling that he or she is in a museum. 'The dilemma of Christianity in England has faded and no longer invites attention' argues Kettle (2002:57). The German situation is no better. Recent statistics show that only ten percent of the German population view personal faith as essential in their lives. In 2005, another survey indicated that only half of the Germans believe in the existence of God.⁵¹ Still, it is remarkable to note that of the Christian population in Germany, two thirds are nominal Catholics or Lutherans. 'A once Christian land has now become a pagan land with a handful Christians?' quips one magazine writer.⁵²

With the growth of postmodernism and secularism, one does not fail to see most Christian churches such as the Catholics, Pentecostals and even the evangelicals propagating the ideas of secularists and postmodernists in Europe. This could be an attempt to survive new age movements arising from the new world order. Europe, despite the advantage of enlightenment and the privilege of holding important conferences, faces a crisis regarding the identity of Christian mission (Sundermeier, 2009:560). The situation of Christianity in the European context does

⁵¹ "Umfrage: Ist Deutschland gottlos geworden?" *Idea Spektrum*, vol 36 (1999):6.

⁵² "Religion on Deutschland," *Der Spiegel*, 25 (1992).

not only require a new missionary endeavor, but it also begs for an urgent reconsideration of the meaning of the *missio Dei*. While offering a quick solution, Escabor (2000:38) reiterates that, even at the time of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostolic Church had to confront not only the Greek philosophies, but also the mystery religions of the day that had pervaded the ideas and practices of the popular cultures.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts provides a model for the European postmodern and secularized context. In a major paradigm shift from a centripetal movement to a centrifugal one, the twelve had to function as “witnesses” to Israel restore the kingdom to Israel, Acts 1:6. Subsequently, Paul acts as the “witness” to the Gentiles.... Nothing can hinder the irresistible progress of the Gospel, and the church, by the Spirit, overcomes all the obstacles. Paul and the apostolic church are now the “light to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:47) cf (Konstenberger, 2001:666). Moreover, since God’s *missio Dei* is concerned with God’s ultimate initiative of mission for the bringing about of the salvation through Christ Jesus, churches in Europe need this initiative in order to deal with the rampant postmodernism and secularism (Kostenberger, 2001:668).

- *Korea*

Contrary to the European context, the Korean context was quite receptive to the initiative of the theologians on *missio Dei*. Koreans voluntarily accepted the Christian faith even before the arrival of foreign missionaries. Giving an account of their faith, Soo-il (2009:538) says, ‘they were baptized in China and Japan, and began to translate the Bible into Korean.’

The South Koreans particularly have an important legacy of mission, namely separate politics and religion. This policy had several implications for their faith. One, it prevented Christians from participating in the independence movement of the Korean people. Two, it gave rise to conflict between progressive and conservative churches and was later used as an argument for criticizing missionary involvement in social issues, and three, it contributed to justifying oppression by the military dictatorship (Soo-il, 2009:538).

In the area of social commitment by Christians, the implementation of *missio Dei* in the Korean church comes from the International Missionary Council (IMC). The Korean church sent five delegates to the world missionary conference in Jerusalem in 1928. The leader of this delegation (Shin Hung Woo) assisted in the implementation of *missio Dei* in the rural areas by fighting for the social salvation of the farmers. The *missio Dei* in Korea during the 1960s and 70s saw a paradigm shift

that led to personal evangelism and charitable diaconal work within the status quo of that time. Many Christian students took to the streets to preach in factories and slum district,; an act that caused most of them to be expelled from the university and thrown into prison. Theologians and professors learned that *missio Dei* should not to be understood as mission to those who suffer, but as mission with those who suffer. Examples of these include among other things the (1970) democratization and human rights bills, and the 1990 foundation of the Jubilee movement - all made possible by *missio Dei* (Soo-il, 2009:540).

Like Europe, Korea has not been spared the monster by the name of postmodernism and secularism. As Soo-il (2009:542) explains, the challenge within the church is even more complicated. This is because the more secularized the world becomes, the greater the interest in religion is. Sadly, the established religions, particularly the church, are unable to meet the expectations of those who are seeking a new spirituality. Furthermore, the cause of the radical growth of interest in religion and spirituality is that people wish to rediscover their increasingly impoverished spiritual dimension as opposed to material wealth.

Fear is another aspect associated with the postmodernism. Analysts argue that fear, 'does not pop out of the heavens and hover in the ether before blanketing itself across huge segments of cities and societies; it has to be lived and made'.⁵³ Sunstein asserts that like other emotions, fear can be infectious,⁵⁴ While the new age, new computer technology, and chaos theory offer alternative religions to the intellectual class, dieting, drugs, exercise and sport work provide answers to the general population. These alternative religions now available all over in the homes and streets no doubt replace the place of prayer and worship in the sanctuaries of many churches in society. As Soo-il (2009:542) sums up, even prayer has given way to transcendental meditation and has in turn become a means of transferring human needs unilaterally to God (Cupitt, 1998:220; Herholdt, 1998a:217, 224; Milbank, 1997:270).

With these challenges, what remains in Korea is whether *missio Dei* can succeed in crossing the barrier between Christianity and other religions, given that it also faces with divisional challenges between ecumenical and evangelical Christians. On the one hand, conservative and evangelical churches still have the attitude that popular culture should be excluded and other religions are triumphed over. On the

⁵³ Pain R and Smith S 'Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life' in Pain R and Smith S (eds) *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life* (2008):2 Ashgate Hampshire (England).

⁵⁴ Sunstein C *Laws of Fear* (2005):6 Cambridge University Press Cambridge (UK).

other, the ecumenicals (Catholic missionary societies, some Protestant organizations and Buddhist temples) participate in the movement for socially responsible investment where a massive fund is created. This is enough cause for alarm as far as defining *missio Dei* is concerned. Soo-il (2009:548) sees this as a major barrier between conservatives and progressives, evangelism and humanization, saving souls and social involvement. It is therefore a major obstacle to the concept of *missio Dei* and raises two important questions within the Korean context: What relationship does *missio Dei* have with one, money and two, religion?

- *African Contexts*

When examined from the perspective of Postmodern and African Theologies, pantheism, relationships, sacrifices and justice, form an integral part of *missio Dei*. These are new emerging metaphors that contribute to the understanding of God and the mission of the Church in the world (Meiring, 2008:791). This is not an overstatement, especially given the rapid growth of Christianity in Africa. This growth necessitates a widespread suggestion from the missiological quarters that Christianity must undertake a new mandate that aims at carrying out a transcultural global mission in Africa (Walls, 2002; Jenkins, 2007; Bediako, 1992).

Klaus Nurnberger (2009:499) says that, 'Sub-Saharan Africa's needs are multi-dimensional, vast and deep-rooted. Therefore, the response of the word of God must follow multiple leads, assume bold proportions, and go to the roots. All I can offer is a general overview of the constellations of needs which we are confronted with when we think of God's mission on the African continent.' This is an indication that Africa as a continent, sub-Saharan Africa in particular, is a missionary field that not only requires the Gospel, but also that deep seated underlying religious issues must be addressed. In other words, Africa's Christianity must bear in a mind a paradigm shift that sheds light both to her cultural and religious challenges that affect her ultimate response of the Gospel and her role in the *missio Dei*, both as a recipient and also a potential missionary to the rest of the continents.

It is evident that Africa's Christianity and indeed mission is in need of freedom. Freedom takes pride, coming second dimensionally as far as the Christian identity of mission is concerned. Put differently, African Christianity requires a taste of God's mission, the *missio Dei*. *Missio Dei* for Africa and indeed for the whole world is the way of Jesus (John 14:6) or *missio Jesu*. He came to people as the first missionary, not as God, but as human in order to express and offer the true freedom of the *missio Dei* (Sundermeier, 2009:563).

Africa's *missio Dei* offers alternative insights from an African Theology on how to undertake mission. These include but are not limited to ideas on mission, on God, on the world, on the Church and on eschatology. These can supplement or better the accepted Western notions. An African view of God holds that God exists (Mutwa, 1998:561). The attributes of this God include among others creator of all things, of eternity, of all knowledge beyond description. He is the God of the gods, who is everything in everything, who was and yet was not, who will be and yet shall never be, because there is never is a time when God will not be. In addition, African theology agrees with a panentheistic understanding of God, which holds that God is part of the world (Adeyemo, 1998:374; Crafford 1993:176; Du Toit 1998:392; Kobia 2003:95; Thorpe 1991:123).

God is believed to be transcendent. He is 'so far' that men cannot reach Him, and yet He is immanent, 'so near' that He comes so close to men (Mbiti, 1969:32). Again, while God transcends all concepts of time and no one is beyond Him through prayers, sacrifices, and invocations, He is also near in the sense that He fills all creation, but then more in a panentheistic fashion, rather than pantheistic manner (Crafford, 1993:167; Crafford 1996:13; Eliade, 1958:47-49; Mutwa, 1998:559). Africa's view of the church embodies salvation, thus offering opportunities of membership and of participation in the community, both by God and human beings (Daneel, 1987:273). Moreover, the emphasis of African ecclesiology of the embodiment and re-enactment of salvation can be experienced only with a realization of a just society, which results from the success and prestige of a sacrificing Church. This church parallels God's true church (Mbiti, 1969:16-17) and represents what African theologians would interpret as the idea of *missio Dei*. The church is God's initiative to establish and heal relationships invited in His community, rather than simply fulfilling an imagined juridical requirement.

3.2.4 Summary

Mission, therefore, can no longer be seen merely as the practical extension of the church, it has to be understood fundamentally as a representation of God. As Bosch (2009:391) reiterates, '[t]he primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* can therefore not simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls; rather, it has to be service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany. In its mission, the church witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God's reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the powers of darkness and evil...'

This shift of focus away from the activity of the church towards the activity of God, however, exposed a critical divergence in the argument and many theologians took the concept of *missio Dei* in a direction altogether unintended by Barth and the German missiologists. Bosch (2009:391-392) traces the development back to Vatican II. If the church participates in the mission of God, the possibility arises that the mission of God in the world may be thought to happen more or less independently of the church. In effect, the connection established at Willingen between the mission of God and 'the sending of the church' could be undone and the *missio Dei* restated in rather different terms. The outcome is that 'the church encounters humanity and a world in which God's salvation has already been operative secretly, through the Spirit'. The mission of God comes to be understood as the Spirit-driven betterment of humanity, and the church may—or may not—choose to align itself with this historical process. Bosch (2009:392) quotes P.G. Aring, 'We have no business in "articulating" God. In the final analysis, "*missio Dei*" means that God articulates himself, without any need of assisting him through our missionary efforts in this respect'.

3.3 MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE MISSIO DEI

It may be an over-simplification to portray the Church before Barth and before Willingen as regarding itself as the origin of mission, even though this might be true to some extent. A nuanced interpretation might conclude that when the historical Church acted missionally, it did so out of intended obedience towards the will of God. It believed that it was spreading Christian values and furthering God's kingdom on earth. The community of believers was motivated to share the salvation that they themselves had received from God. This is a problem with *ecclesiocentrism* that gave rise to the problem of failing to recognize that the Church was, in some ways, seeking to 'follow orders'.

The Church's historical understanding of mission incorporated two key concepts: it was sent into the world; and that it took a message (*evangel*) with it (Hunsberger & Gelder, 1996:285). An example from modern times would be William Carey, who as a Baptist pastor published his '*Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens in 1792*' (Wright, 2006:34). The first section of this famous work was a justification for mission, based on the continuing applicability of the Great Commission. Christians are sent out by Jesus' command 'therefore go' (Matthew 28:19). In this first section, Carey also makes clear that the work of the missionary is 'to introduce the Gospel amongst them [the "Heathens"]'. This example shows that a historical Christian understanding of

mission was in some ways based on a concept of divine initiative bearing God's message of salvation for humanity (Wright, 2006:34). If it is not altogether true to say that the Church saw itself as initiating mission, where has the significant shift in missiological thinking occurred? It occurred in two areas:

One, within the development of a deeper Trinitarian theology, mission was seen as part of God's essence or nature, rather than just one of His actions. This means that the Great Commission issued by Christ was prefigured by the Father sending Jesus, and followed by the Father and the Son sending the Spirit (Newbigin, 1995:65). Two, the change is about the extent to which God's mission outside the Church occurs, as well as the nature of His relationship with the Church in terms of shared mission.

3.3.1 The concept mission

According to Wright (2006:22), mission should be understood as the church's committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation. This is in line with Bosch's (2009:390-393) definition and rendition that our mission flows and participates in the mission of God. In as much as this definition goes, Wright (2006:23) further expresses his dissatisfaction with what he terms as 'mission that stresses only the "roots" of the Latin verb *mitto*, to send, because they only tend to emphasize its primary significance in the dynamic of sending or being sent. This view seems to contradict that of Kaiser Jr. (2000:11), which considers mission a central point of action, the act of being sent with a commission to carry out the will of a superior, in this case God.

Whereas there is a fundamental difference between these two schools of thought, one appreciates their point of departure. For Wright (2006:23), tying the definition of mission to the act of sending alone tends to limit the broader view of God's *missio Dei* to a narrowed understanding commonly seen in the practice of mission engagement within the human circles. This practice robs the Church of the direct understanding of the true Biblical teaching of God's mission as opposed to the understanding of the practices of men. For Kaiser Jr. (2000:11), the sending provides a lexical link between the Old and the New Testament and by extension it is what defines the role of God and man in God's *missio Dei*. Furthermore, there is a great importance to defining the roles of both God and man in missiology, because it further defines the place of God and His Church in His *missio Dei*.

Whereas these two renditions differ in application, one sees a connection in their meanings. On one hand, in order to appreciate the whole purpose of mission,

one needs to understand mission within the broader perspective of God's *missio Dei*. Mission must always be defined as God's agenda and business, man is only privileged. On the other hand, in order to place the roles of each agent into perspective, one has to appreciate the centrality of mission, which definitely lies in the sending, because not only does one have to define mission in terms of sending, but also, one is forced to define who is sending and who is being sent. In this case, God is the one who is both commissioning and sending the Church while participating in the going. In other words, God plays two key roles: that of going and that of sending, which makes Him the primary object of mission and its owner.

This proposition of what mission is came during the age of discovery, which meant that mission was largely defined as 'expedition' (Gelder, 2000:33). In order to challenge these varied understandings of mission, the Willingen Conference in Germany of the International Missionary Council (1952), together with the Vatican II Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*AD Gentes*, 1965), made attempts to reclaim the meaning of the term to denote God as the sending and the sent one. This process placed the concept of the *missio Dei* and mission under the ownership of God's Triune nature as opposed to the hands of the Church.

Furthermore, a distinction was made between the terms mission (singular) and missions (plural) so that the former was preserved for God. A new definition of mission primarily refers to the *missio Dei*, which can be understood as God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. Formerly missions were defined as the missionary ventures of the church, and included particular forms of participation in the *missio Dei* related to specific times, places, or needs (Bosch, 2009:10). *Missio Dei* thus articulates the good news that God is a God for people and therefore His Church rejoices to be part of this mission.

3.3.2 The concept mission of the Church

Mission presupposes three categories of persons: first, a sender/senders (God in His Triune nature), second, a person/persons sent by the sender (the Church or the missionaries) and third, the person/persons to whom the person/persons sent is/are sent (the world or the unbelievers). However, history indicates that during Christendom, the understanding of mission changed so that instead of the authority of mission being vested in the Triune nature of God, it was instead understood to be vested in the hands of the church, mission societies, Christian potentates and even in the hands of the missionaries themselves. One case in point is the Roman

Catholic Church missions where juridical authority remained for a long time the constituent element for the legitimacy of the missionary enterprise (Rutt, 1972:228).

During this time, mission was viewed in expansionist, field-occupational, conquering and triumphalism terms. This further resulted in the excessive use and misuse of terminologies such as mission, missions, missionary, and mission field in and outside the church, so much that there was no proper distinction of the true meaning of God's mission as opposed to the ventures of human beings.

3.3.3 Theological development of the mission of the Church

Commenting on the development of mission, Bosch (2009:17) says that up to the 1950s, 'mission' equivocally and circumspectly referred to the sending of missionaries to a designated territory, the activities undertaken by such missionaries, the geographical area where the missionaries were active and the agency that dispatched the missionaries. Miller's rendition supports this when he refers to mission as a local congregation without a resident minister and still dependent on the support of an older, established church; or to a series of special services intended to deepen or spread the Christian faith, usually in a nominally Christian environment. Moreover, this refers to specific propagation of the faith, expansion of the work of God, conversion of the heathen and the founding of new churches (Miller, 1987:31-34). Furthermore, until the mid-1900s, no distinction was made between 'mission' and 'missions', even though the preferred term was 'missions'. Moreau *et al* (2004:17) posit that out of the work of the International Missionary Council, came a recognition that biblical discussions of the idea of mission was not limited to what the church was doing, since God has always been active everywhere in the world.

Recognizing that God is the originator, architect and controller of mission is both humbling and liberating to many believers. If the Church is seen as the product of mission, a truer perspective is gained: the Christian Church exists because of God sending His Son, Jesus and His actions throughout history (Chung, 2005:37-39). Moreover, the Church is also sustained, guided and sanctified by God, just as in Bosch's (2009:519) words, 'The *missio Dei* purifies the Church'. However, the fact that the goal of the Church is not self-replication or numerical growth is important. Mission should be a witness to the meaning and relevance of the kingdom... to be an emissary of the kingdom (Kirk, 1999:36). In addition, if the institution of the church is understood as a missional act of God, then it follows that God in His sovereignty may choose whatever instruments He deems appropriate to accomplish His mission. As the Bible repeatedly shows, God involves Himself in human history and human affairs, even at times through foreign agents or powers, as testified for example by

Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel. It does not always happen exclusively through a particular institution, nation or people. A theology that understands God as missionary only to His church would therefore be very impoverished.

While it is not the only agent of God's mission, the Church does have a special position or status within the *missio Dei*. The foundation of this fact is found in John 20:21-22 where Jesus commissions and empowers the disciples: 'Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you"'. This commissioning affirms something unique and purposeful for the followers of Christ. The Church's task is specific and divinely mandated. Consequently, the Church cannot be seen as just one of the several different areas where God is at work, its status is more privileged and its responsibility more elevated. That responsibility includes sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people of other faiths and nations, but it also includes recognizing where God is at work through 'secular' or non- church forces and discerning where it must participate and encourage.

Commenting on the meaning of mission in relation to people of other faiths and in the context of the elapsed time since the Edinburgh Missionary Conference (1910), Hogan et al (2011:24) say that mission is no longer what it was thought to be at Edinburgh. It is more about finding opportunities to interact with those of other faiths. It lies in the ability to discover that God's original revelation given to Adam and Eve was not entirely lost to sin. It exists in every human being bearing the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) because through one man, God made the nations (Fernando, 2001:72-73) (Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12-21).

3.3.4 Mission of the Church in the light of the *missio Dei*

Given that God the initiator, sustainer and owner of *missio Dei* (Vicedom, 1965:4-5) is universal, it is tenable to argue that the church that is included as an agent (Schulz, 2009:142) of the *missio Dei* must be understood in terms of its universality too. Schulz continues to say 'mission represents the activity of the Church that best affirms God's universal and salvific will'. The church's mission must always be undertaken within an understanding of Catholicism (2009:157) where all missionary endeavor should be seen not merely as an extended arm of the Church, but as an instrument of God's saving and loving desire to embrace the whole world.

A global church is missionary by her very nature (Flet, 2010:61). Flannery posits, 'The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the

plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit'.⁵⁵ This is characteristic of the church initiated by Christ shortly before His departure. A survey of the final commissions given by Jesus Christ and recorded in all four Gospels reveals that the Great Commission is multifaceted (Tennent, 2010:157). However, a distinction can be seen in individual Gospel messages as they seek to provide a theological basis for the wide range of the church's engagements in the name of missions.

A look into Matthew's exposition takes one to the role of the disciples as they struggle to plant churches cross-culturally (28:16-20). According to Tennent (2010:139), Matthew's Great Commission was more than a call to personal evangelism on a global scale. It was a call to create communities of obedience among the nations. Mark's Great Commission account lies within a context of suffering. He admonishes the believers to believe in the Gospel and be saved or risk eternal loss (16:16). The condition is baptism for unless one who believes is baptized, he or she will be lost, but if one believes and is baptized, then he or she will be saved. With the impending suffering, perseverance is crucial.

Luke's account emphasizes the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (John 1:15; 1:35; 1:41; 1:67; 2:25; 3:22; 4:14, 18), holistic missions (Acts 1:7-8), as well as the mighty works of God (Luke 24:16; 24:31). John's Gospel emphasizes the lordship of Jesus Christ. John 1:1 speaks of the Word who was with God and was God, (3:16) defines Him as the savior of the world, and presents Him as the way to the Father (14:6).

According to Tennent (2010:157), the account of the four Gospels provides a model of God's *missio Dei*. First, the Father imparts all authority to Jesus (Matthew 28:18). In Luke, the church fulfills only what the Father has promised (24:46-47) and in John, the Father sends the Son (3:16), who in turn sends the church (Matthew 28:19-20). Tennent (2010:157) sums this up by saying 'all commissions are set within the larger context of the *missio Dei* and God's original promise to Abraham that He would bless "all nations on earth" (Genesis 22:18).

3.3.5 Summary

The relationship between the theology of mission and the Church in light of the *missio Dei* is something that emerges to play a very important role in the engagement of missiology in the 21st Century, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. What began as a contextually driven search for answers has led to one of the most

⁵⁵ Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, rev. ed. (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996), 1:814.

significant theological developments of our time. There are perhaps other concepts that could have functioned to re-center the church in a similar way. Yet, it was immersions into the global vision that world missions uniquely engender that called the church to account in the middle of the last century. In that sense, the conceptualization of *missio Dei* is itself another affirmation that mission is the mother of theology.

The need to reconsider what it means to be sent as the Son was sent in His way for His purposes, afforded a renewed Theocentrism, a chastened ecclesiology, and a reframing of 'everything' in relation to God's being and act revealed in the sending of Son and Spirit. Undoubtedly, whenever a single formula attempts to designate what 'everything' is about, there must be tremendous repercussions. Many will continue to feel that *missio Dei* and its adjectival new word 'missional' are too provincial, too entrenched in the special concerns of missiology, to provide an adequate framework for 'everything.' In the ensuing dialogue about the adequacy of the words, it is vital to remember that terminology is not what is truly at stake. Rather, it is the need somehow to speak about the concepts that should shape Christianity's very worldview and the church's engagements. The capacity of the church to obfuscate essential theological tenets is undisputed, her tendency to see herself and the world wrongly, undeniable. Whatever words she chooses, she must not fail to speak about who God is in light of the sending of Jesus and the Spirit and what that means for everything she is and does.

3.4 THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE REGARDING MISSION TO PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS

According to Wright (2010:48-49), creation is one of the major themes in biblical theology and is significant in a biblical theology of mission. It is the beginning and the end of the Bible story. In Genesis 1:1, the Bible presents a new beginning with a creation story. In Revelations 21:1, the Bible presents a new heaven and a new earth in an act of re-creation. In between the two creations is a gap that defines the Biblical worldview of the two beginnings, namely the beginning in Genesis and a new beginning in Revelations. It attempts to answer the question of the origin and destiny of men (Devadutt, 1967:7). It also seeks to answer such questions as: Where are we?, Who are we?, What is this universe in which we find ourselves?, What does it mean to be human?, Are we gods or merely animals that have evolved further than the rest?, Does human life have any value, meaning, and purpose?

For Wright (2010:40), the questions above have profound implications for the Christian's understanding of mission in God's world amidst human beings made in

the image of God, but with different philosophies and religious views. For Hallencreutz (1970:7), Samartha (1977:8), Hick (1995:11) and Haring et al (2003:7), this calls for a reflection of the Christian faith amidst people of other faiths. The justification for their call lies in the fact that despite the many religious ways of mankind, all men have a common nature and potentially possess a common destiny, because mankind owes its beginning and origins to the act of God's creation and to God's purposes in creation (Devadutt, 1967:7). Reinforcing this statement, Wright (2010:48ff) speaks of a people who are called to care for God's creation. They are called to do so because they have a special and unique place in the creation. They are made in God's image to subdue and rule, serve and keep (Genesis 1-2). The implication is that we are human beings first before we become Christians, a situation within which we will be held accountable before God someday. This further mandates human beings to be accountable to God in his creation.

In addition to the blessing of rulership, service and keepership (stewardship), humans have been redeemed and obligated to live by God's original mandate to the human race. This is an act of God's grace and salvation through Christ Jesus, which follows the fall of man and a deterioration of his godliness in a world ravaged by evil and sin. As co-workers with God to restore man and creation back to its glory, human beings become a people with a mission. This forms a statement of fact that defines the theology of mission to people of other faiths. Commenting on humanity, lost glory, and mission to people of other faiths, Wittmer (2004:83) says that to be human is to be in a proper relationship with God, other people, and the world. This is because sin has marred relationships such as those between God and men, men and men and men and the rest of the creation. Christ came to restore these relationships. As a perfect human being, his exemplary life and character reflects the image of God. He therefore stands as a model for humanity so that as people behold Him, they become changed and become more and more like God. In the end, they are restored back to God's image and to God.

On the theological significance of people of other faiths and ideologies in the Christian perspective, Samartha (1977:80) reiterates that there is no new theological understanding of God and God's activity. Rather, there must be a review of the concept of God and God's ongoing relationship with creation, nature and history, in light of the present world situation. This is so because a theology shaped within a tightly isolated culture cannot fail to reflect the limitations of that culture. This is in reference to the people of God that he says that they, like the people of other faiths, are limited in their capacity to perceive God and God's actions by their own faith's understanding of creature-hood. The call to God's people and God's church is a

move towards a change in understanding. The church has to find a new language to describe God and God's activity, which forms part of their faith within a new set of limitations. This is what forms the backbone of the theology of perspective regarding mission to people of other faiths.

3.4.1 The concept mission to people of other faiths

The concept of mission to people of other faiths arises from the fact that God is a relational God. In his relationship with man, God has put his image in men, so that both God and man share a special relationship not found between God and other creatures. Man derives his origin and his destiny from this special place in creation. In other words, mankind owes its beginning and origin to God's purpose with creation and this must always be remembered in truth and love (Devadutt, 1967:7).

Commenting on the need of sharing the truth in love to people of other faiths, Fernando (2001:96-97) speaks of the 'God of the Bible and other Gods' and outlines up to twelve foundational facts that he says are very important before one presents God's way of salvation through Christ Jesus. These include several affirmations about God made by Apostle Paul while addressing the Athenians in Antioch, Pisidia (Acts 17:24-32). One, God is Creator and Lord of the universe. This is the Lord God who made the world and everything in it (Acts 17:24a). Two, God is self-sufficient. This means that He does not live in temples built by hands and He is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else (Acts 17:24b-25). Three, God made the whole human race out of a common stock. Out of one man, He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth (Acts 17:26a). Four, God is sovereign over the nations and he determines the time set for them and the exact places where they should live (Acts 17:26b).

Five, God implanted a thirst for the divine in human beings so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for him and find him (Acts 17:27a). Six, God is accessible to humans, He is not far from any one of them (Acts 17:27b). Seven, humans depend on God for their existence for in Him, they live and move and have their being (Acts 17:28a). Eight, humans derive their life from God as some have testified that they are His offspring (Acts 17:28b). Nine, God cannot be represented by an idol and no-one should think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone (Acts 17:29). Ten, though God may have overlooked the ignorance of idolatry in the past, He now expects repentance from everyone; because just like in the past when God overlooked such ignorance, He now commands all people everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Eleven, God will one day judge the world through Christ for He has set

a day when He will judge the world with justice by the man He has appointed (Acts 17:31). Twelve, God has demonstrated the validity of His Gospel through the resurrection of Christ and has proven this to all men by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:32).

These Biblical affirmations and facts resonate with what Ariarajah (1985) says with regard to the Bible. He sees the Bible as the record of a great dialogue and the Word of God, which expresses and enacts the divine will. For not only did God create the whole universe, He has also through his promises and judgments shaped the world of nations, one particular people, the person of Jesus, and the early church so that it is important for the Church to seriously engage in the theology of mission to people of other faiths by way of dialogue.

Explaining the theological concept to people of other faiths, Azumah (2008:123) speaks of a Christian's response to Islam as one that must always be guided by the question: 'What would Christ have done under such circumstances?' Seemingly, this would enable Christians and Christian churches to always bear in mind that Muslims too have been included in the plan of salvation and those that engage with them must always have that in mind. It also implies that one must consider the role of the Triune God in the whole business of engagement, because the mission to people of other faiths is theological as much as it is ecclesiological.

3.4.2 Theological development of mission of the Church to people of other faiths

According to Bosch (1980:9-10), the theology of mission concerns itself with the relationship between God and the world in light of the Gospel. As one of the best-known missiologists of the late twentieth century, David Bosch is remembered as a brilliant advocate for and scholar of mission. This is according to the testimony of Moreau et al (2004:75) who continues to say that according to Bosch, the practical missionary endeavors of the Church always remain, under all circumstances, ambivalent. Accordingly, mission must never be taken as something that is self-evident. Not even in the practice of mission itself or in the best of theological reflections of mission should the temptation arise to assume that all confusion could be removed. However, as a contributor to this subject, Bosch (2009:368-510) offers thirteen paradigm shifts that may assist in constructing a mission theology. These shifts or approaches sum up the theological development of mission and may help to understand the theological development of the Church's mission to people of other faiths. They include mission as the Church-with-others, as *mission Dei*, as mediating salvation, as the quest for justice, as evangelism, as contextualization, as liberation,

as enculturation, as common witness, as ministry by the whole people of God, as witness to people of other living faiths, as a theology and as an action of faith.

Importantly, the engagement to people of other faiths must be understood within the context of operation and the means of conversion employed. Bosch (2009:484-489) suggests that dialogue can be effective if well-defined. Apart from its ability to presume commitment, engaging people of other faiths in dialogue should be understood as a complete process that can either fulfill the mission of God or hinder it all together. Mashau (2009:93-100) gives a profound analysis of dialogue between Christianity and people of other faiths as outlined in Acts 13. He sees conversion between and among people of different religions as a reality. Given this veracity, Christian dialogue to people of other faiths is inescapable. Moreover, Bosch (2009:484) considers Christian dialogue with people of other faiths as mission that must not be seen to move from a vacuum to a vacuum, but rather as something fueled by God's *missio Dei*. God through his Spirit persuades His people beforehand so that conversion does not take place in void situations.

The above understanding calls upon Christians to exercise humility of heart and acceptance of intellect whenever they engage people of other faiths. This applies to religious affiliations and contexts. In the quest for a true meaning and process of conversion, the encounters between Christians and Muslims should not be trivialized at any time. Four elements of the *missio Dei* should always be borne in mind. These are outlined in the book of Acts 13 and simplified as follows: God is the initiator of mission, His 'word of grace' is communicated out of grace, the proclamation concerns the crucified saviour, and that the time of the Holy Spirit has come (Mashau, 2009:93). Understanding and applying *missio Dei* in dialogue leads to a re-definition of conversion from an understanding of the joining of communities to procure eternal salvation, to an allegiance to Christ Jesus as Lord, saviour and king of mankind. Such a personal relationship with Christ ensures one of cleansing, forgiveness, reconciliation and renewal, for purposes of a new identity within the body of Christ and a new role of becoming His disciple (Bosch, 2009:488).

With regard to development of the theology of mission within the church, Bosch (2009:489) explains that the early church did not have the luxury of constructing a theology. Rather, the exigencies of life and the desire to bring Christ to the world drove theology in such a way that 'mission became the "mother of theology"' (Moreau et al, 2004:76). Peters (1972:27) emphatically states, 'Missionary theology is not an appendix to biblical theology; it belongs at its very core.' Reflecting on the same issue, Dryness (1983:11) agrees by reiterating that mission indeed lies at the core of theology within the character and action of God in His triune nature. He

continues to say that there is an impulse to give and share that which springs from the very nature of God and that therefore characterize all His works, so that everything the theologians call fundamental theology is mission theology. Adding his voice, Johnstone (1998:177) says that missiology acts as the gadfly of theology.

Moreau et al (2004:76) say that mission theology should be at the heart of the church's theology, serving as an anchor for the rest of the theological 'house', defining who Christians are and what the church has to be and has to do. The implication deduced here provides for one the foundation for the church's theology of mission, which is the Bible according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:24-27). It is secondly the guiding theme providing for the orientation to the mission theology. Evangelicals tend to emphasize God's concern for the world and human estrangement from God as a core issue. Mission addresses this with personal evangelism and church planting as the one activity that addresses the human dilemma of separation from God, while; in the ecumenical circles, justice or liberation is the organizing theme (Moreau *et al*, 2004:74). Three, the motifs and ideas reinforcing the church's theological theme in mission as suggested by Bosch (2009) must take cognizance of the following six motifs: incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, the ascension, the Pentecost and the *parousia* (the complex of events related to the return of Christ). Shenk (1999) has presented almost a similar list of the motifs: the reign of the kingdom of God, Jesus, the Holy Ghost, church, world, and *eschaton*, parallel to Bosch's *parousia*, but more broadly focused on things related to the end of history.

The difference between Bosch's motifs and Shenk's motifs above shows that whereas Bosch's motifs are focused on the centrality of Jesus Christ, Shenk chooses motifs that incorporate Christ and more broadly explore the world in which mission takes place. Moreau et al (2004:80) views neither of these two scholars as right or wrong since both of them seek to provide motifs of mission theology that enhance the understanding of God's approach in mission. Both Bosch and Shenk illustrate how the church can undertake mission theology deeply and broadly today. Which set of motifs is employed depends on the implementers of the theology of the church mission in every context.

3.4.3 A case for mission of the Church among Muslims?

The emphasis in the Great Commission can be drawn from the command to go. Not only are we supposed to go, we have to go to the world 'to make disciples of all [peoples]' (Matthew 28:19). These last words given by Jesus to His disciples were categorical and final. They were given without expectations of other additional

words, discussions or further proposals (Acts 1:8). After speaking these words, Jesus was taken to heaven before the disciples, signifying nothing less than His expectations to trust and obey Him (Richardson, 2002:107).

According to Hawthorne (2002:110), after Jesus spoke His purpose to His disciples, all He could call for was a command to “Disciple all the peoples”. This was a goal, not a process, and it had an implication for each one of the disciples. To them, each nation meant that there would be a once and for all change among every one of the tribes, languages, and peoples. However, the same may not be said of the church today. This is partly because modern readers interpret the text differently. “Nation” may give an idea of a “country”, or a “nation state”. While rendering a Greek translation of “*ethne*” for “nation”, Hawthorne supplies the translation as “*ethnic*” and when the word “all” is added to it, its common meaning is given as an “ethnic or cultural people group” (Hawthorne, 2002:111).

Hawthorne (2010, 111) continues, ‘[t]oday, as it was in the days of those disciples, people still group together in enduring ethnic identities. There are several facets to the way people groups are identified: Linguistic, cultural, social, economic, geographic, religious, and political factors can each be part of what gives information to the peoples of the earth’. Moreover, “all” is inclusive. It includes Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of earth (Acts 1:8). Geographically then, we may speak of Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Linguistically, we may also speak of the Americans, Africans, Asians, or Europeans. Religiously, we may speak of Christians, traditionalists, Buddhists and Muslims.

Emphasizing the importance of undertaking the Great Commission to the people of all nations, Piper (2002:116) points out its importance in both Testaments. Apparently, the Great Commission forms the basis of the *missio Dei* both in the Old and in the New Testament. This command is significant to the message of repentance for the forgiveness of sin and is not only meant for the Gentiles, but for all the people of the world. Muslims too, need repentance and forgiveness of sin. This is because they do not believe in the lordship of Jesus Christ. Moreover, their belief in Mohammed as their last prophet shuts them out of the New Testament’s promise of inheritance since they do not have any claim on the works of the Triune God, the *missio Dei*. It is tenable therefore to suggest that this group forms part of the great population of “all peoples” who must be reached and preached to before the end of the world comes (Matthew 24:14).

Ibrahim Ishak (2002:94), born in Egypt and extensively travelling throughout the Middle East, calls for a re-evaluation in engaging Muslims with the Gospel. He warns of any mistakes afforded in the past, citing the ignorance of cultural, linguistic,

ethnic and sociological factors in the background of the people. Moreover, he warns against erroneous prejudices of Muslims or the Muslim world at large. Furthermore, there is the danger of neglecting the Muslims and branding them as resistant to the Gospel. Rather, he calls for a consideration of this people group, given that they have been subjected to the secularizing influence of the West. His testimony, full of stories and accounts of Muslims converting to become Christians, is a call to a re-orientation of missiology among this people group.

Ishak's (2002:649) suggestion continues to challenge the church and Christians at large. On a practical level, he calls all Christians not to forget more than one billion Muslims. He calls for efforts within Christian circles to make the Gospel relevant to Islam's various ethnic units. This he says can be demonstrated by exercising the commandment of love as given and defined by our Lord, "love your neighbor as thyself" (Deuteronomy 6:5). This also includes thinking through the most effective ways of doing evangelism cross-culturally.

On his part, Chastain (2002:650-654) calls the Christians to turn Muslim stumbling blocks into stepping stones. These include the psychological block that forms part the attitude towards the altar where all Christians must lay their lives as living sacrifices. Also, Christians need to sympathize with the great stumbling blocks that Muslims encounter such as the question of incarnation against their teaching of sin as forgetfulness, their teaching on revelation where they seek to protect God's word from any taint of man's influence, and their strong conviction regarding the doctrine of the Trinity where they fix their mind on the oneness of God (doctrine of the *tawhid*). This results in the rejection of the person of Christ Jesus, the only way to salvation. They deny the cross and teach that Christ was not crucified.

Muslims are religious. However, this does not exclude them from belonging to "all" the peoples of the earth. There is need to reach out to the multitudes in this group in order to disciple them. To achieve such a goal, this research discusses some practical ways in 3.4.4 below:

3.4.4 Sharing the faith with a Muslim neighbour: integrative ways

'As thou has sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world' (John 17:18). These were the marching orders of Christ to the Christian community shortly before He went to heaven. Jesus declared himself as God's herald, bearing the good news of salvation to the whole world. His assignment to the disciples is evidenced by His words, 'I have sent them into the world'. Through the disciples, all the succeeding generations may become a sending community characterized by an intimate fellowship of mutual support and caring. Jesus insistently urged the disciples to love

one another. For this reason, the Church exists to proclaim the fact of Christ's coming to declare freedom from sin to all who may come to Him by faith (John 3:16). This is the central conviction that has the toughness, resilience, patience and endurance to undergird sustained missionary effort to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya.

As the evangelical churches wrestle with the question of how they can relate the Christian faith to the Muslims, the following guidelines and approaches can be employed:

3.4.4.1 Dialogue

Luke 2:46-47 gives a description of Jesus at a tender age of twelve reasoning and discussing serious theological issues with religious leaders of Judaism. These discussions were characterized by Christ's ability to sit among teachers, listen to them and ask questions. Chapman (2003:22-23) outlines the attitude of godliness and ingenuity as defining Christ's behaviour in the midst of these Jewish leaders. His concentration was evident in the way He engaged in reasoning. His questions were relevant and not embarrassing. Moreover, His knowledge of Scripture demonstrated His grasp of important issues and intelligence in Spiritual matters. His answers and response to the questions raised elevated Him to the class of top scholars, yet in His early teens, He had never been to any rabbinic school.

Such a model for dialogue between Christians and Muslims is desirable, not only in Eldoret, but in the whole world. Sitting among Muslims like Jesus did calls for a visitation to their homes or spending time with them in social places. A dialogue in a university context or college requires that Christian students gather courage to attend meetings of the Islamic Society in order to get to know Muslims. Effective listening requires that the evangelical churches in Eldoret change their attitude towards their Muslim neighbours in a bid to understand them and appreciate them as God's people in need of salvation (Chapman, 2003:23).

Importantly, evangelical churches in Eldoret should learn how to ask good questions. This is only made possible if they encourage their membership and followership to read and study the Holy Qur'an. It may also mean accepting magazines or tracts offered by Muslim friends. This will enable the members to probe gently all fundamental issues between Christianity and Islam. This offers an opportunity to have a meaningful dialogue.

Any meaningful dialogue provides for the right approach. Evangelical churches in Eldoret must see their witness in a person-to-person context and endeavour to establish a relaxed atmosphere of conversation and dialogue. A spirit of mutual communication is vital if they aim to effectively convey the Gospel to

Muslims. They need to be open to discussion and allow the Muslim complete freedom to join in so that he/she can state his/her needs, fears, beliefs and misgivings as well. Above all, he/she must feel completely free to express himself/herself and not feel threatened in any way. If the evangelical churches show Muslims that they care for them as people and that their witness is intended purely to benefit them and that it comes without obligation or strings attached, they are far more likely to win their confidence and gain willing ears.

3.4.4.2 Friendship evangelism

The evangelical churches in Eldoret should take every opportunity to be friendly with Muslim neighbours, shopkeepers and others. They should show that they love them in practical ways. They should not try to preach to them. Rather, they should be good listeners. Hasty presentation of the Christian doctrines in a bid to win Muslims to Christ is not only detrimental to the Gospel, but also to the faith of the Muslim convert. This is where Christians fail today in every country. In order to spread the Gospel via friendship, the evangelical churches should learn to listen to the Muslims sympathetically and patiently. This will ensure that they understand the Muslim's point of view and their difficulties as far as Christian doctrines are concerned.

Insensitivity towards Muslims is a very subtle form of pride that makes Christians want to chalk up as many converts as they can in the shortest possible time. The same malady accounts for the spirit of triumphalism seen in so many of the churches today. Short-cut methods to elicit an early response or force a formal decision can do untold injury and harm to Muslims. Just as an untimely birth will damage or destroy a child, so a premature commitment will injure a Muslim and many have, in fact, turned against the Gospel permanently as the result of such hasty, insensitive approaches.

The Apostle Paul taught that on the day when the believers' works will finally be tested by God's refining fire, the wood, hay and stubble will be consumed and only the gold, silver and precious stones will remain (1 Corinthians 3.12-15). Evangelical churches in Eldoret must seek to work as closely as possible with the Holy Spirit and should ensure that the outward effects of their ministries correspond to the real inward work the Holy Spirit is doing. No Muslim should be pressed into a premature commitment. Let the Spirit of God give the growth while the Church plants and waters, and only when the Muslim himself shows a genuine desire to become a true Christian should he/she be persuaded to do so. Too often today Christians appear to be interested only in boasting about the numbers of converts they are attracting, as though head-counting is proof of the Holy Spirit's work and presence.

3.4.4.3 Witnessing by use of charity

To speak graciously and courteously and to be truly Christian in all our ways when talking to Muslims is an act of love. A good example of this is found in the fourth chapter of Paul's letter to the Christians of Colossae. Paul calls upon the Colossian believers to count the cost of conversion before they make such declarations. The cost of discipleship is great for all men, but especially for Muslims, who will invariably suffer much persecution and rejection for their faith. The temptation today is to obtain formal commitments at a minimum cost. This may give the appearance of power, progress and the work of the Holy Spirit, but it is both illusory and insensitive. How many Christians today would not have joyfully counted that scribe among the followers of Jesus upon such a declaration without further reflection? On more than one occasion Jesus was surrounded by people who appeared to be only too willing to believe in Him. On one of these occasions we read that "as he spoke thus, many believed in him" (John 8.30). We would probably have enrolled them in our churches immediately, but Jesus tested the sincerity of their faith and thoroughly examined their motives until, finally, they accused him of being possessed of a demon (John 8.48) and sought to stone Him (John 8.59). After He had fed five thousand men besides women and children with bread, they flocked after Him but, by the time He had finished with them, not even His regular disciples were keen to continue with Him (John 6.66). A fine summary of the whole problem and Jesus' acute awareness of it is found in these words:

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul shows that his desire to make the Gospel 'clear' means a willingness to speak with authority. He requests in prayer that 'utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak' (Ephesians 6.19,20). Twice in that passage he speaks of the need to boldly declare the mystery of the Gospel, yet in the very next breath in his letter to the Colossians he says: 'Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt so that you may know how you ought to answer every one' (Colossians 4:6).

Note, therefore, the beautiful balance that Paul maintains in his exhortation: be *bold*, but at the same time be *gracious*. On the one hand he cautions of a spirit of timidity and appeasement (so also 2 Timothy 1.7), but on the other he likewise warns against a spirit of arrogance and offensiveness. How well this applies to Muslim evangelism. A so-called 'loving' approach that makes no allowance for argument, challenge, apologetics or debate, is no more tolerable or spiritual than a triumphalist approach that is purely confrontational, dogmatic and overbearing.

Christians must endeavour at all times to be gracious in their conversations with Muslims. Evangelical churches in Eldoret must never become flustered or lose their temper when they seek to win Muslims to Christ. There should be no arguments for Christianity. Muslims are people for whom Christ died, not opponents to be silenced and downgraded by all means. Evangelical Christians must never become angry when Muslims debate relentlessly with them. They should argue on behalf of the truth, by all means, but charitably and tactfully and, above all, avoiding sheer confrontation and quarreling. Moreover, Christians should always be prepared to offer a defense to anyone who calls them to account for the hope that is in them, yet they should do it with gentleness and reverence and keep their conscience clear so that, when they are abused, those who revile their good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame (I Peter 3:15-16). When the occasion arises where they are obliged to expose some of the weaknesses of Islam, they should never be directly critical or judgmental, but speak sensitively and purposefully.

3.4.4.4 Jesus' way of evangelism

Christian-Muslim relations concern itself with sharing the Gospel with the Muslims, nurturing and making disciples of them. This was Christ's central way of doing evangelism in the New Testament. At the onset of His ministry, Christ identified twelve apostles to be representatives of His disciples to the whole world. He trained them for three and half years and gave them power before ascending to heaven (John 20:22). Later, He sends His Spirit during Pentecost to empower them (Acts 2). The message that Peter presented at Pentecost was heard by people present in their own tongues (Miller, 1976:132).

Having evangelical Christians in Eldoret town does not automatically translate into inter-cultural missionaries, just like having the Bible translated into a vernacular does not automatically translate into disciples of Jesus Christ (Sesi, et al., 2009:52). In order to do mission to the Muslims, the Evangelical churches in town must follow Jesus' way of evangelism, which looks at the new context of culture and uses the right understanding of *missio Dei*.

Miller (1976:133) enlists several ways in which one can present the Gospel to the Muslims. These include: Christians becoming acquainted with the Muslims and Islam so as to cultivate trust between the Muslims and Christians. This is important because when Muslims become friends with Christians, they become free to open their hearts and tell their deepest needs. Another important way is Christians' love towards Muslims and people of Islam. This arises from the understanding that these people are not enemies, but lost children of God in need of God's grace. Again,

Christians are entreated to pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17) for the task of engaging Muslims with the Gospel. This is a habit and lifestyle seen in Christ while on His mission on earth. Prayer is a reminder that the work to the Muslims is God's, and although it may look difficult in the eyes of men, to God all is possible (Luke 1:37). Evangelical believers in praying to God would do well to ask Him to send forth reapers to the Muslim territories (Matthew 9:38). Moreover, in praying for the work to expand in the Muslim areas, the whole Church would be getting involved in evangelizing the Muslim world (James 5:16).

Christ is the greatest teacher in history. He thought through parables so that everyone in society understood His lessons. Even those who were deemed to be difficult in the society benefited from these lessons. In order to emulate the master, the churches in Eldoret need to respond to the Spirit's call in Matthew 28:16-20 to go to the world to teach whole nations. These may include direct conversations with Muslim friends and relatives, dialogue with Muslim leaders, distribution of Christian literature and deliberate Bible studies with those Muslims who may inquire about the Christian truths. Likewise, Christian churches should aggressively present the Gospel via radio, Television and through the internet.

It is also crucial that Christians receive the Muslim converts to their fold and into the fellowship of the body of Christ. Most Muslim background believers will be cut off completely from their families. These persons should be welcomed and loved in the family of God and assisted to grow without fear and intimidation, both from the Church members and their fellow Muslims. It is here that the Church needs to clarify issues with the new converts, especially those regarding Christian growth and doctrine. It is also important that the new believers be guided to confess Christ as the Spirit directs in order to let them appreciate the uniqueness of Christianity as opposed to Islam.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The chapter has examined the theological perspective on the mission of the Church to people of other faiths in light of the *missio Dei*. The term *missio Dei* has not attained a universally acceptable definition, mainly due to the lack of understanding of God's identity vis-à-vis the Trinity and His role in mission. The chapter critiqued major approaches and perspectives by providing a theological understanding of the *missio Dei*. It discussed the theological perspective of engaging people of other faiths. The Church is God's instrument that He uses to fulfill His will of redeeming humanity from eternal condemnation to eternal glorification. It also provided a holistic

understanding of mission, and concluded by providing a way forward by suggesting integrative ways of reaching out to the Muslims in particular.

Having analysed the biblical and theological perspectives on mission, it is necessary to test how they translate into reality. It is within this context that the next chapter carries out field research with a view to finding out how and the extent to which the selected churches have sought to advance mission to Muslims. This confirms the topical nature of the problem and also enhances the originality of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATURE AND CURRENT TRENDS REGARDING MISSION TO MUSLIMS IN ELDORET, KENYA: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

‘Statistics is the plural of anecdote’⁵⁶.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the data collected from oral interviews. The data is presented partly by way of frequency tables and charts. Based on the findings, the study assesses the nature and current trends regarding mission to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya. The study used qualitative approaches and conducted self-administered interviews on the leadership, membership and followership of the selected churches. The chapter comprises nine sections, which examine issues ranging from demographic distribution of respondents to understanding the mission field.

4.1.1 Demographic information: Distribution of respondents according to denomination

Table 3 below summarises the information obtained from the respondents regarding their denomination.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondents according to denomination

Denomination	Frequency	Percentage
African Inland Fellowship Church (AIFC)	45	18.9
Faith Baptist Church (FBC)	37	15.5
Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK)	65	27.3
Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)	35	14.7
Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA)	56	23.5
Total	238	100%

⁵⁶ Quoted in Patrick Dunleavy (Authoring a PhD: how to plan, draft, write and finish a doctoral thesis or dissertation pg 165).

The information in table 3 was received from the various Church leaders on various dates during the interviews. The table shows that when one looks at distribution according to denomination, 27.3% belong to the ACK, 23.5% to the RCA, 18.9% to the AIFC while 15.5% and 14.7% belong to the FBC and PCEA respectively.

4.1.2 Distribution of respondents according to status in the Church

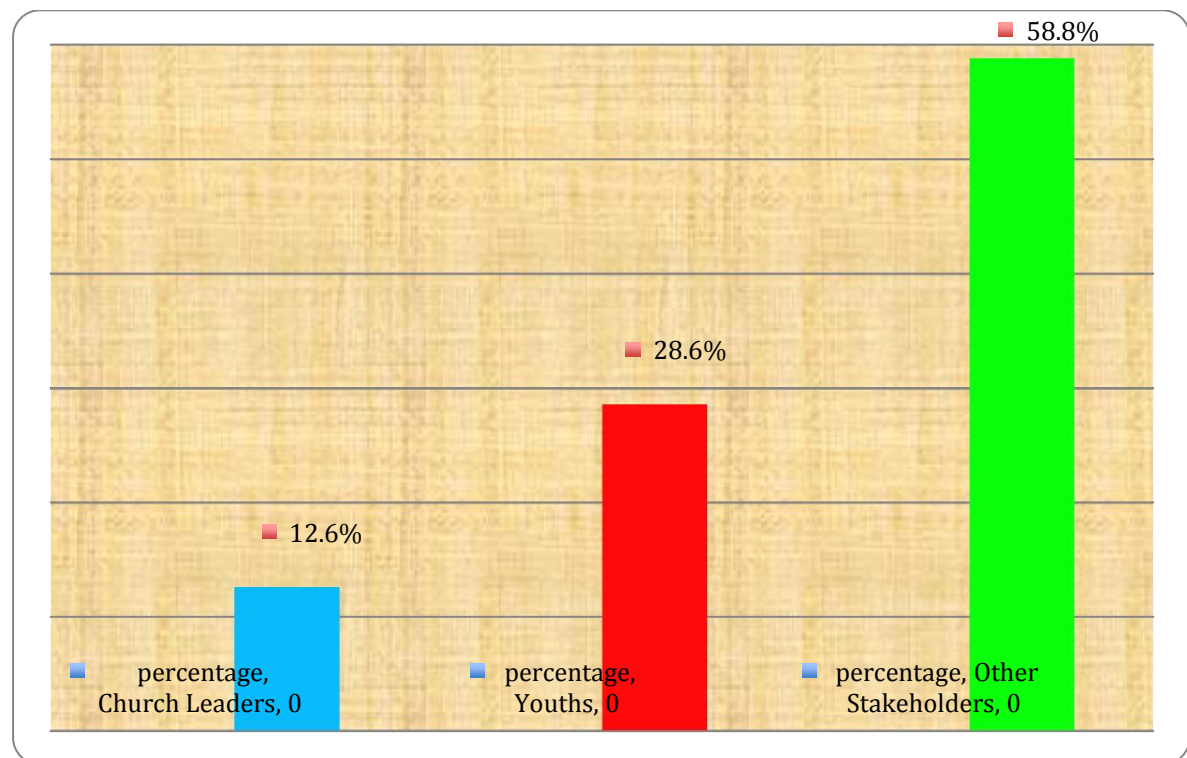


Figure 1: Distribution respondents

Figure 1 indicates that when categorised according to status in the church, the majority (58.8%) comprised the church membership, including women; 28.6% were youths while 12.6% were Church leaders. These findings confirm the views expressed by respondents that the harvest was plentiful, but the workers were few, consistent with God's word in Luke 10:2 (cf Matthew 9:37). The low figures on the participation of church leaders in mission create a paradox, because such leaders should be at the forefront in seeking to fulfil the church's responsibility regarding mission to people of other faiths.

4.2 REACHING OUT TO MUSLIMS

The respondents were first asked whether they considered reaching out to Muslims as relevant. Their responses are summarized in figure 4.2 below.

4.2.1 Relevance of reaching out to Muslims

The respondents were first asked whether they considered reaching out to Muslims as relevant. Their responses are outlined in figures 4.2 below.

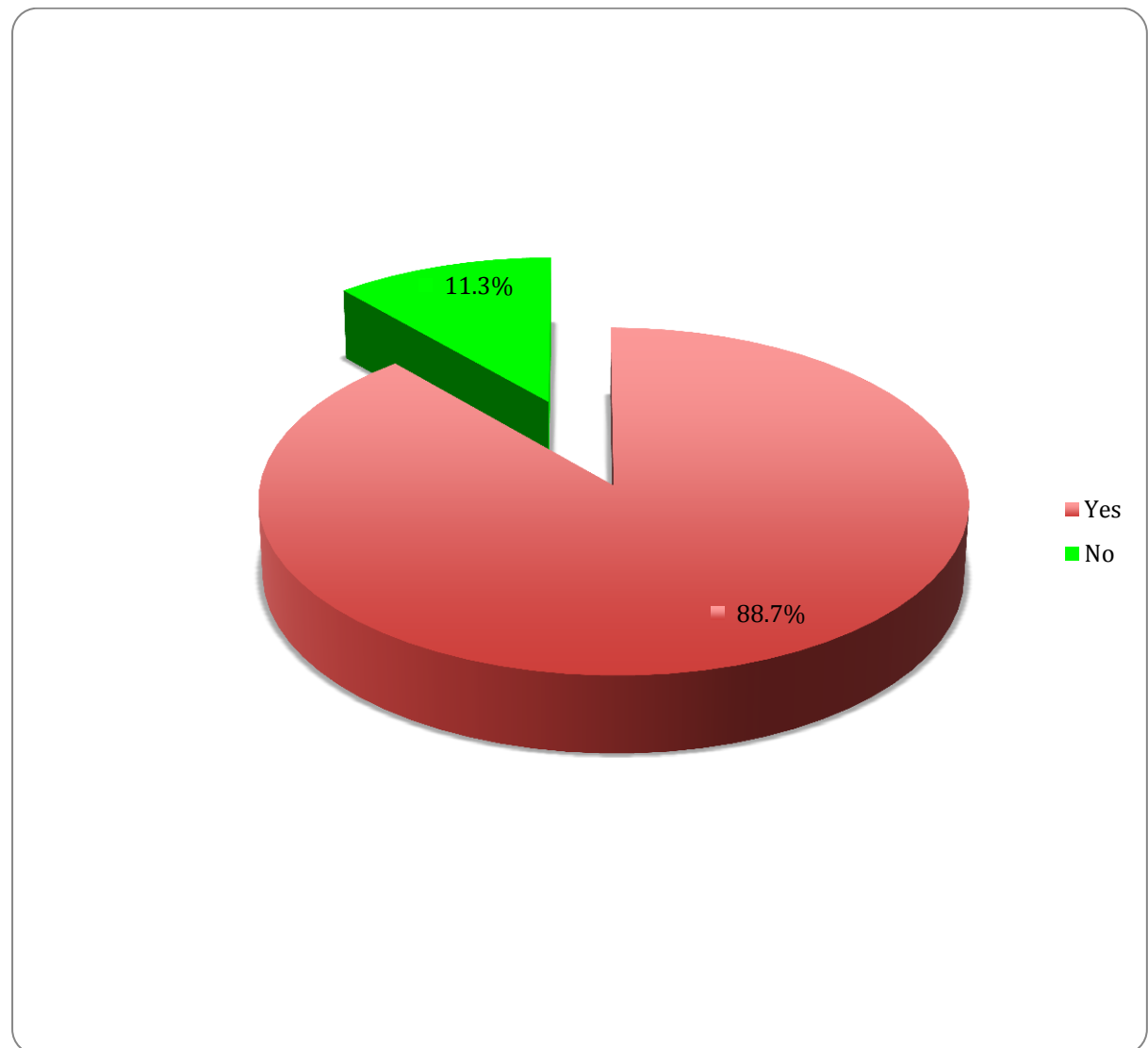


Figure 2: The relevance of reaching out to Muslims

Source: the information reflected in figure 2 on the page above was received from the interviewees on various dates.

Figure 2 illustrates that most (88.7%) of the respondents are of the view that mission engagement to Muslims was relevant, citing the Great Commission to the Church as outlined in the book of Matthew 28:16-20. However, 11.3% of the respondents were of the opinion that such mission was not relevant, partly on the grounds that whereas the church leadership was engaged in mission work to Muslims, the youths had no

interest in the exercise. In addition, other members of the church had limited knowledge and found it difficult to reach out to Muslims with what they do not understand in the first place. They further clarified that this could only be realised if the Church leadership taught its members regarding what mission was and what it entails. One respondent indicated that it was irrelevant because 'Muslims have their own God and similarly Christians have their own God'.

4.2.2 Reaching out to Muslims

The respondents were asked if they were reaching out to Muslims. Table 4 below represents their responses.

Table 4: Reaching out to Muslims

Is the Church reaching out to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya?	Percentage
Yes	57.6
No	42.4
Total	100%

Source: Table 4 above contains the answers received by the respondents of various churches on various dates.

Table 4 shows that the majority (57.6%) of the respondents confirmed that they were reaching out to Muslims, while 42.4%, many of whom belong to the Reformed Church, said that they were not.

4.2.2.1 Reasons for engaging Muslims

Those reaching out to Muslims explained that this occurred in various forms including deliberate individual visits. For example, while the AIFC is reaching out to Muslims, one respondent stated that he had personally tried to reach out in vain due to problems associated with ideological differences between the two religions. It was further clarified that some Muslims had accepted the Gospel, but were afraid due to their religion. Some of the methods used in this regard included formation of groups that visited Muslims in their homes. Some of the visits targeted mothers who accepted the word of God, but were afraid to join Christianity due to the perceived consequences that would follow, such as the risks of losing one's own identity, family and life.

A large number of the respondents agreed that there was a need to engage with Muslims, arguing that it was their Christian mandate as a community of believers who are part of the body of Christ. The Lord's command as given in (Matthew 28:18-

20 and Mark 16:15-16) in which Christ told his disciples to go to the ends of the world and preach the gospel, was seen as the heartbeat of the Church. The respondents complained of the current state of many evangelical churches where members are not aware of the need to go out to Muslims. The need to sensitise the church members and train them to reach out was emphasised, with one respondent reiterating the importance of engaging those who do not believe in Jesus as the saviour.

Faith Baptist Church is the only evangelical Church sensitising her members to reach out to Muslims. Almost three quarters of her membership are trained on Christian-Muslim relations. One respondent indicated that part of her family was Muslim and her attempts to witness to them had borne little fruit. However, she was grateful that her church had sensitized her on how to relate to them. According to her account, Muslims are religious, but they need the love of God from all Christians 'I am happy that as a young member of the FBC, I know how to interact and make friends with my family. I also have faith that I will win them to Christ'. In addition the FBC has organised several forums with Muslims in their territory for the sake of engaging them with the Gospel. Such forums as '*Mijadalas*' (public debates) and '*Mihadharas*' (public dialogues/discussions) attract Muslims from all walks of life, including prominent members and leaders.

All respondents from the AIFC indicated that they were indeed taught how to reach out to Muslims. This was being realized through testimonials and availability of literature on Christian living. However, respondents observed that the said literature was reviewed by the Church to ascertain if it is in tune with the training of missionaries. At the time of the interview, two-week training on how to follow Jesus Christ was in progress. The participants involved in this training were expected on completion to demonstrate their ability to engage those who did not know Christ, both on a personal and communal level. When probed to explain whether the teaching hinged on how to specifically reach out to the Muslims, the respondents were categorical that the teachings were not biased to reaching out to them alone but to all people of other faiths. One respondent added that Muslims were a special group whose religion needed to be well understood by all. These sentiments were echoed by a student interviewee who underscored the need to collectively evangelize to the Muslims since according to the Great Commission, none is set aside to work alone.

Asked to clarify whether people were free to mission out irrespective of their religion, the respondents cited the problem of attitude. There was a general perception that evangelical churches were not engaging Muslims because the attitude of Christ was lacking. Muslims and Christians are not on good terms.

According to their little knowledge, the respondents felt that not all Muslims wanted to avenge their fellow human beings. They suggested that one should be able to interact with them before introducing them to the Gospel, which they agreed must be done slowly and without haste. It was made clear that the motive of the engagement was paramount.

Some of the respondents lamented the apparent negative attitude of most of their pastors. It is one of the causes of poor performance, and tends to portray the Church as a losing participant. They claimed that some of these pastors spend much time preaching hatred against Muslims. They apparently want to increase the numbers of their members for selfish interests.

When the respondents were asked whether there is on-going mission work where the AIC church is involved, one indicated that they were not doing any mission, save for individual experiences. Another stated that they had not reached out to the Muslims in their area because the latter were not related to them. On the question that sought clarity about the importance of Christians reaching out to Muslims, one of the respondents was of the view that doing so was a waste of time because there were only a few Muslims in his area. However, there was a general view that Muslims, like any other people who do not know the way of salvation, should be taught the need to join the Christian Church. Some of the respondents were of the opinion that coexistence was key in establishing friendships with Muslim neighbours before introducing them to Christian teachings. This can be achieved when Christians take the initiative to invite the Muslims to their homes and seize the opportunity to share the love of God. The other alternative was to preach in joint crusades.

The respondents also addressed socio-economic matters. Poor members of the church are sometimes enticed by Muslims who take advantage of them to change their faith. The church should embark on a mission to build health centres, schools and to develop special programs that would create jobs for its own people so that they would not change their faith. The respondents were of the view that the church should stop focusing exclusively on spiritual issues, but also cater for the needs of its congregation. These ranged from social activities and social grounds, skilled and unskilled labour initiatives and programs aimed at alleviating poverty, like self-sponsored groups for both women and young people in the society.

On religious ideologies and whether they should mission to Muslims, the respondents were of the opinion that ideological differences between Christianity and Islam have to be avoided as much as possible. This they said, trips up mission because both Muslims and Christians believe in the same God and are likely to

share the same common destiny, albeit looking at things in a different way. A respondent explained that he had attended one school with Muslims and they listened to what he told them about Christianity. Muslims had been receptive to his Christian beliefs due to a trust cultivated over years of friendship and varied interactive sessions. The friendship was effective in addressing the matter of Muslim contempt for Christians due to mutual accusations of inferiority. This is evidenced partly by Muslim students excelling in Christian religious education studies. The respondent further explained that a confrontational approach by Christians would negatively affect the friendship and attract retaliation, as well as a loss of the trust of Muslims.

The respondents also noted that there was a lack of commitment among Christians in matters of engaging Muslims on one the hand, and participating in Church mission on the other. On the need to inculcate the burden of mission among the Christian believers to mission to Muslims, the respondents were of the opinion that Muslims were ahead. This came as a result of better programs that teach Muslim believers to take their religious teachings seriously. The respondents mentioned the need to emulate the Seventh Day Adventists believers who had good Bible Study sessions and also taught young children in their Sabbath schools to enable them grow with the Word of God. Moreover, if evangelical churches sensitise members on Biblical principles, it will not only guide them with regard to Biblical Theology of Mission, but they will be equipped with the knowledge necessary to deal with the deception from the Muslims that the Holy Bible is a human word. This foundation and training would also ensure that the churches are making disciples to the whole world as commanded by the Lord.

The respondents further reiterated the importance of engaging Muslims both on one-on-one level and also on public levels. One-on-one engagement and social forums provide opportunities to reach out to the Muslims because Muslims are good at making and keeping friends. Some respondents agreed that reaching out to Muslims was relevant since Muslims were brothers and sisters and more so God's Children who needed to be told that the only way to Allah is Jesus Christ. These respondents emphasised the words of Jesus that the Gospel will be preached to the whole world before He comes back the second time. Most respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the on-going efforts to reach out to the Muslims because of what they termed as ignorance and lack of requisite knowledge and skills on how best to approach them. Most respondents agreed that mission is the heartbeat of God and God wants every soul to be saved. There was a consensus among the respondents that everybody in this world must accept Jesus Christ as their personal

saviour. One PCEA respondent indicated that without mission work, the Church does not have a purpose and is dead. As a result, everybody should be engaged in mission work, even the young children. Since Muslims teach their children from a young age, it was reported that most Muslim children grew up with a negative attitude towards Christianity. However, it was the mandate of all Christians to preach love to these children and assist them come to faith in Christ Jesus. According to the youth leader of the RCEA, Mission should be about people who do not know about Jesus. These include such people such as Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims.

The respondents from the RCEA indicated that Muslim engagement with the Gospel was a demonstration that Christians had knowledge, that mission is Christ's, and that Muslims were not on the right path. However, there was a general feeling that a large part of the congregation was not aware of the relevance of this engagement, so they felt a need to be taught and to sensitize the whole church on this. It was reported that although the mission desk had been established to plan and strategized on how to reach out to Muslims, little was done to sensitize the whole church on the need to engage Muslims. However, there was one individual who was attempting to reach out to Muslims, but this individual was based in Mombasa in a place called Fasa. This report was not satisfactory to the respondents, since Mombasa is many miles away from Eldoret. The respondents pointed out that the RCEA church at Kipsinende was engaging Muslims informally because of the existing fear between the two religions. This was necessitated by what they termed as 'the dream of either or both of the religions to add converts to their fold'. However, it was evident that Muslims have the upper hand because they were taking advantage of socio-economic issues like poverty and unemployment among the youths and women in the society, most of whom professed Christianity as their religion from birth, but never followed Christian principles and Biblical teachings.

To deal with these issues and more, the RCEA respondents called upon Christians, especially evangelical churches, to relate to others and especially Muslims contextually by 'training her members, co-existing and winning hearts, develop relevant programs and help the needy in the society, step up efforts in organizing seminars with other member churches within the evangelical church in Eldoret, Kenya; and to make sure that all Church leaders are trained in Muslim related issues'.

4.2.2.2 Reasons for not engaging Muslims

The 42.4% who were of the opinion that effort had not been made by the Churches to reach out to Muslims indicated that they could only pray for the Muslims. This was

because Christians have different beliefs arising from their doctrinal orientations. These differences caused confusion and disunity among the evangelical Churches and therefore hindered the work of mission to Muslims in Eldoret. The respondents also cited the ideological difference between Christians and Muslims. This they said it was a stumbling block to any effort by the evangelical Churches to witness to the Muslims. On the one hand, Muslims for instance acknowledge Jesus as a prophet as opposed to Christians who see Him as a saviour of the whole world. On the other, Christians view Muhammad as a prophet of Islam who misled Muslims by claiming that Jesus was not the Son of God and never died or was resurrected. Since the two divides want to win their argument, the respondents felt that the two religions should be left to fend for its members and followers without interferences.

Respondents also cited dress as a major stumbling block in engaging Muslim women. Whereas Muslims understood their decorum as part of worship, Christians view Muslim women as hiding behind the veil and stereotype them for pretence. Again, the laws governing life, worship and religion were considered as keeping most Christians from engaging Muslims. One respondent decried the culture of Muslim women being accompanied by male counterparts everywhere and Muslim men not responding to handshakes from women. Enmity between Muslims and Christians was another reason why the respondents felt they were not engaging Muslims. One respondent pointed out that he hated Muslims with a passion because of their terrorist activities and history of violence. This attitude towards Muslims is a factor that exists even among the leaders of the evangelical Churches and can only be overcome when a new mind-set is introduced in seminary schools.

Mothers of the Faith Baptist Church reported that they had not started reaching out to the Muslims because they believed that they would be violent and retaliatory. This fear is based on the Muslims having deep-rooted faith in their own religion and culture. Besides, there was a general feeling among young members of the PCEA church that the church had not engaged Muslims because Muslims were perceived to be violent. The respondents stated they had neither seen nor heard of the Gospel to the Muslims in their church. They were also not aware of any engagement with Muslims by the PCEA anywhere, leave alone being involved in any engagements. According to one respondent, a Muslim was once sported in the church, but has never been seen since.

Other sentiments expressed against the efforts to reach out to Muslims ranged from Muslims being difficult persons, to them being a hard lot to engage. The respondents gave examples of the serious and suspicious looking Muslims who frequented the slaughter house next to their church to perform their 'Salat'. Besides,

Muslims were reported not to participate in any food or meat slaughtered by anyone else other than their own.

The church was also found to be more concerned with her issues than engaging Muslims. The issues ranged from internal wrangles among the leaders, lack of knowledge about the Muslims, lack of trained personnel and lack of adequate sensitization among the particular evangelical churches. One respondent reported that 'Muslims also kept their doctrines and knew the Bible better than Christians which presented predicament to Christians in case of know-how against negative attitude'.

Another respondent said, 'Christians did not understand the Quran and its teachings'. This called for an introduction of mission in the urban areas where there was much resurgence of Islam. To curb this spread, the churches need to equip their membership and followership with adequate knowledge and better programs of engagement. All members of the church need to be involved irrespective of their age and gender.

With regard to purpose of mission, the respondents expected the church to define mission engagement to Muslims by explaining what it meant to reach out to Muslims and equip its leadership. The church should also come up with programs aimed at engaging Muslims with the Gospel. Programs should include religious matters, relief work, learning the Qur'an, culture and other teachings. Christians also should be careful not to condemn the Muslims, but engage them with love and understanding. Trainings were proposed to be undertaken in Bible schools, seminars and rallies, churches and other institutions of higher learning. Distance learning too could be introduced for those who cannot afford the time and money to travel.

On cross-cultural relations, the respondents reported that Muslims naturally operated as a unit as opposed to Christians, who were selfish. They wanted trust issues among the two religions to be checked and tackled. Furthermore, the respondents were of the opinion that Christians should be careful not to confront Muslims on issues of culture, like what they referred to as 'blanket' condemnation of their practices and beliefs without understanding. Christians were required to embark on self-examination of their lives. For example, Christians should be aware of the influence that the Western culture has on their practices.

Some respondents applauded Muslims for not being carried away by Western culture, which unfortunately they said had enslaved the majority of the Christians. It was reported that whereas Muslims were careful not to depart from their religion, many Christians are guilty of living lives of double standards. The respondents blame programs from the West for this phenomenon.-

Lack of unity was also seen as the cause of evangelical breakups among the member churches. Wrong ideologies were blamed for the retaliatory approaches exhibited by many Evangelical Churches. One respondent reported “people believe that Muslims are out to kill Christians. We are told that Muslims kill and go to heaven. We have heard about the Jihad. When we think of Muslims, we see them as terrorists in Somalia for example. We don’t see them as our brothers and sisters born in Eldoret, or Western Kenya but as Osama Bin Laden or Al Shabaab out to terrorize us”.

There was also a tendency for Christians to shy away from Muslims because of the fear of being terrorized. Others felt that Muslim women concealed many things in the way they dress. This made them suspicious of their motives whenever they meet in social gatherings. For this reason, the respondents challenged the entire church fraternity in Eldoret, Kenya, to live to their missional purpose by supplying the flock with adequate information regarding Islam and the need to engage the Muslims with the Gospel. Both the clergy and the laity are responsible in the spreading of the good news to the Muslims. The respondents lamented the practice where training on Christian-Muslim relations is made out as complicated and consequently restricted to theologians alone.

On the understanding of the term mission of God, a youth leader from the RCEA had this to say, “The meaning of the word *Missio Dei* should be broken down so that all those who are members can partake to share the word. More so, the definition of all theological and missiological terms to be well-articulated so that a scientist like me can engage in preaching without feeling guilt or having misused or underuse[d] the terminologies.” The respondent, like many other respondents, indicated that most church programs were designed in a conservative way and left no room for improvement. These included Sunday school programs that only provide for the Christian children alone and leave no room for kids from other faiths, Muslim children alike. The worst scenario is when everyone leaves everything to the clergy because they cannot fit it into their schedules. Sunday school should target the young generation just like the way the Muslims do in Madras.

Most youth leaders were of the opinion that if the church failed to captivate young people at an early age, they cannot be expected to remain rooted in their faith. There was a need to inculcate the virtues of Christ in all children so that when they are old they can live up to their faith. Christians were accused of focusing on knowing Jesus alone and leaving out on His virtues. Muslims, they reported, were ahead of Christians in such crucial areas.

Within the context of Kenya, respondents talked of the Muslim resurgence in Eldoret and parts of Western Kenya as a major cause of concern to the Evangelical Church. This they pointed out was because Muslims were strategic in the way they did their mission. They cited their strategies as not only threatening, but confusing as well to the majority of the church members. Mosques are built by the roadsides and big loudspeakers are installed to call people to prayer. The FBC respondents reiterated that Muslims had built their mosques in every main road in town with all the four corners being taken care off. They spoke of the Muslim strategy of clustering the whole region so that Christians could not deny their presence. Moreover, Muslims had taken over some estates in town, for example West Indies and Maili Inne in Eldoret. This is seen as a strategy to slowly take over the town completely.

On cross-cultural relations, the respondents were of the opinion that they should be dictated by the Word of God to love, to be caring, to be calm, and above all, to be forbearing. These are attributes outlined by our Lord Himself while on earth and should be emulated throughout by the Church if she aims to succeed in engaging the Muslims. In addition, the Church of Christ must be willing to suffer for the cause of salvation.

An RCEA youth leader was satisfied with what his church and other churches in Eldoret, Kenya was doing in terms of engaging Muslims. Speaking of the effort of the RCEA church and the evangelical churches as a whole, this is what he had to say, “even though Islam is growing in town, every Sunday, there is a service going on in this town and all shops are closed to affirm the same thing. The church has tried to win the whole town to Christianity including Muslims somewhat. African Inland Fellowship Church is a living example of such a church. The many members that fill that church every Sunday are an indication in itself that Christianity is alive in this town”. However, he was of the opinion that even though they may not be engaging Muslims, their presence is worth noting. This in itself was one way to demonstrate to the Muslims that Christianity in Eldoret, Kenya commands much respect in its impact and effect. He further noted that Muslims know that Christians are serious about their faith.

Christians pray in town throughout the day as a sign that their presence still matters in town. There was, however, a concern that although all of the above were happening, there was lack of information regarding all the activities in town. These touched on both the Christian activities, as well as Islamic activities. It was a general concern that while Muslims were busy strategizing their way forward in claiming the town, evangelical churches were engaged in other business apart from mission.

There is a need to train as many people as possible on Islam, as opposed to seminaries training pastors who were only dogmatic.

The Muslims were also found to accommodate bits of African culture that Christian religion rejects. Christians should be able to take advantage of the opportunity that is offered to them in the Christian schools. The church should not judge the Muslims on the basis of how they dress, for the way a person dresses does not determine a person's character. As far as Muslims are sending children to Christian schools to learn, the respondents felt that these children should be accepted as this offers an opportunity to present salvation to them. Dress should not be a reason why such children should be denied the opportunity to inherit the kingdom of God.

Respondents lamented the unpredictable future of the coming Christian generations because of what they termed as laxity on the part of the Christian youth to live up to their faith as outlined in I Thessalonian 4:11, which states that one should learn to live a quiet life, work with ones own hands and mind ones own business. While Muslim men make sure that there is food on the table for their families, some Christian men are not concerned at all, a situation that subject Christian women and children to borrowing food. Muslims show good family cohesion, and they meet the responsibilities that go with it. Cases of divorce in Islam are not as common as in Christianity. Christians are encouraged to read the Qur'an and analyse it to know what the Muslims believed before engaging them in as Christians. Humility is emphasized and prayer is seen as the best way to reach out to the difficult Muslims.

The respondents also emphasized that persons who engage in calling should feel the calling. Some respondents felt that while some leaders lead in the front as missionaries, they do not have the missionary zeal or vision to take the Church of God forward. Pastors who do not lean towards mission should support those with the vision. Individuals who volunteered to be missionaries should be assisted to form teams to reach out to the Muslims. Respondents agreed that a hearty conviction to become a missionary is more important in reaching out to the Muslims than dragging the whole church into it if members do not have zeal. The work of mission is God's and the Holy Spirit is the director.

Some churches encourage Christians to do business with the Muslims in order to build bridges and make friendships. This will enable them to win the trust of the Muslims and facilitate easy transference of the Gospel to them. It was also reported that as a duty to their religion, Muslims also love giving and helping the poor in the community. This was a Christian duty too, even though the motive of a

Christian is to give willingly and not by coercion. Christians should therefore have understanding and not provoke their Muslim counterparts in matters of their religious practices, rather, where they can join hands, both should work together. Respondents expressed the need to concentrate more on the importance of mission and the understanding that God is involved at all levels. Christians must remember that the society they live in is mixed, so they should learn to live together.

The respondents also urged that the church should be the first one to bridge the gap between the two religions by demonstrating love for their neighbours like themselves. In order to do this, Christians need to have a serious fellowship among its members. This will ensure that Muslims around them do not have any reason to doubt their religion. It was noted sadly that some Christians celebrate when one of them falls into sin. Christians therefore must do a follow-up on the members of her fold who have back-slid to avoid such members falling victim to Islamization. Respondents commented on consistency by saying that Christians should demonstrate principle in matters of life and resist living hypocritical lives. Christians have enough teachings on cultural values and must not fall victim to assimilating other cultures. A respondent cited the failure of Christians to stand by their teachings on matters of faith and religion. Their youth often follow the strange practices of the West, especially in matters of dress and decorum.

Muslims perceive Christians who change to Islam as the poor in society. This requires that Christians should remain faithful to their religion by understanding and appreciating their own religion that God gave to them. They should be winners in their faith and have an ultimate goal. The churches need to realize the Great Commission and value dialogue. The churches in Eldoret should always strive to minimize confrontation in engaging Muslims. In addition, discriminations based on denominational backgrounds or doctrinal understanding among the member churches should not arise because they all belong to the body of Christ.

The respondents concluded that whereas the majority of the Christians identify themselves with the Western culture, which advocates secularization and monogamy in marriage, they should empathize with Islam because of its teaching on polygamy. They should be careful how they approach the matter, because it touches on their core practices. The question of the unity of God in Islam, *Tawhid*, is also sensitive to Muslim background believers and should be approached carefully and prayerfully.

Some respondents stated that they do not see the relevance of engaging Muslims because 'whereas they were aware that mission is God's, the Church had other issues to deal with i.e. societal issues. Mission is just in the sub-conscious of

the Church. The society needs us, modernization needs us, the society too e.g. issues to do with tribalism etc. When we reach here, the Church as an institution has a procedure which impedes reaching out to Muslims'. Sometimes, structures in the church is felt to limit the Spirit of God to a certain schedule, a youth leader for example said, 'I am given a program to follow for the whole year, e.g. I am given just three times in a year to do certain things so even if I come up with programs in the course of the year, I have to wait for the synod to sit which I am not sure if the synod will adopt these programs or whether they will even be regarded as a priority in the agenda come the annual meeting. These are problems that limit us as youth both locally and nationally and hence remain the greatest challenge in understanding and undertaking what mission is'. The respondents therefore agreed that the most effective way of reaching out to the Muslims was factually based, interaction during social functions such as sports activities and remaining focused on one goal. Theological mandate is therefore not negotiable.

4.3 CHALLENGES TO MISSION WORK TO MUSLIMS

Engaging Muslims with the Gospel is generally challenging. However, when Christ sends His disciples to the whole world, He promises to be with them because He was given all power and authority, both in earth and in heaven. The respondents in this study, while recognizing this promise, found several challenges facing the evangelical churches in Eldoret. These are outlined below in two categories. The first is the general obstacles and challenges, and the second is the specific challenges that must be addressed urgently according to the views of the respondents.

4.3.1 General obstacles and challenges outlined

When the respondents were asked to state some of the obstacles to Mission work to Muslims, the majority of them identified the perception that all Muslims are terrorists as the first and foremost obstacle. This problem led to the other important factor, which is fear of the Muslims. Muslims are not only seen as terrorists, but also as angry people who could kill at a first provocation, whether good or bad. They are seen as a threat to peace and stability in society, albeit their 'developmental' initiatives. As a result, most respondents felt that no Muslim could be trusted at any time whatsoever. However, despite these basic factors, respondents still felt that Christians should not give up their attempts to engage Muslims with the Gospel, citing Christ's promises that He will always watch over His servants for He says, 'Lo, I am with you always' (Matthew 28:20).

Respondents of the AIFC cited a lack of time due to the busy schedule occasioned by the many activities in the church calendar. The respondents of the AICF attributed this time factor to uncoordinated programs and activities by the clergy. They proposed a proper annual planner that is managed by a special program coordinator and communicated to the members of the church in time. Discrimination and hatred towards Muslims was once again mentioned as one of the obstacles to engage with them. This is notable, especially in those churches that reported a number of Muslim converts who were never visited or followed up for nurture. The mission team at the AIFC did not do mission to Muslims in Eldoret town and its environs because some of their churches are based in the remote areas of Kenya, such as West Pokot. Their argument is that since the church has appointed missionaries to Muslim invested areas like the North Eastern part of Kenya and Mombasa, there was no need for the church in Eldoret to be involved. This raised the question of the understanding of the mission field. Some of the respondents were of the view that whenever they see Islam growing, it occurred to them that Muslims had become difficult to reach and the only thing they could do was to pray for them. There was thus a strong belief that Muslims were hard people to reach, were always quick to put up a strong defence whenever an effort was made to reach out to them, and consequently there was no urgent need to win them. The respondents, however, pointed out that there is a need to understand the reality that beliefs are hard to change and from there the need for resilience in doing mission among the Muslims. There was a general need to coordinate the pastor's programs with those of the mission desk so as to engage every member of the church in the mission engagement with the Muslims.

Other obstacles identified included freedom of worship and the Bill of Rights as enshrined in the constitution of Kenya, Sharia Law, the language in which the Qur'an is written, and the strategies adopted by Muslims to Islamize people. One respondent took issue with the way Christians use public forums such as crusades to attack Muslims and other churches as opposed to the quiet, humble way by which Muslims approached the would-be converts. It was reported that Muslims enticed the young Christians by financing their studies and offering them job opportunities in big companies, both locally and abroad. When asked where the Muslims got their money to finance the needy in the society, the respondents were quick to point out that Muslims were obligated by their teachings of assisting the poor the needy in the society, unlike some selfish Christian corrupt wealthy people.

The other reason cited by the respondents as a huge threat to engaging Muslims with the Gospel has to do with the Islamic Literature. The respondents

pointed out the difficulty to obtain a translated copy of the Qur'an as opposed to the availability of different translations of the Bible. This they said was a setback for those Christians wishing to study the Qur'an for purposes of understanding before engaging the Muslims. This problem exacerbated the existing problem among Christians who are known to take matters of their religion casually. It also gave an upper hand to Muslims to find an easy forum to attack Christians on the basis of their own teachings. The majority of the respondents pointed out that Christians often post being 'born again' when they can not explain the mere principle and practice their teaching of loving one another. This is what one PCEA respondent had to say regarding this claim, "many Christians I am afraid have reduced Christianity to a mere routine. The leaders of the church have made it very difficult to reach out to the Muslims. Leadership and other things affect mission work. Moreover people disagree a lot in the church and this tends to hinder mission work. The model or the channel of information in most of the evangelical churches depends on human beings and what they deemed right not what God is expecting them to do".

Leadership was also viewed as a major problem in mission work since if they do not have the calling to reach out it becomes a hindrance. Furthermore, some leaders were not aware of the importance of mission work despite the prevalence of enmity between the two religions that require leaders to be at the forefront in bridging the gaps. Respondents were of the view that church leadership is a plan of authority that provides directions and strategies with a Biblical command and vision towards the work of mission. On the role of the church leaders in the sensitization of the church on missioning to Muslims, a young respondent from the ACK said, "leaders also prefer sitting pretty in their comfort zones and reach out to those far away and overlook their neighbours whom are close to them. Most of the old pastors in our churches love leadership and yet are not willing to change. When you bring up issues like contextualization and try to educate them, e.g. in the issues of Islam; like prayer, reading the Qur'an e.t.c. they say that those are new things which none of their fore-fathers, the missionaries never taught them. Again, when the District church councils sit and give them a goal to meet at the end of the year, it becomes almost not practical for these pastors to do any other thing because they have baskets to fill and therefore no time to listen to anything new. Most of the time, the pastors will talk about messages that will bring food to the table. However, African Inland Church Mission School has plans to train pastors in Islamic issues".

However, it is noteworthy that some respondents attributed failure to sensitize AIFC members regarding mission work to Muslims to the initial mission of the African Inland Church, whose commission was to reach inland into Africa. Others included

fear, materials and resources. Training is another obstacle. Most people do not know how to approach the Muslims. Special mention was made of the African Inland Church, which has a national leadership as opposed to the regional leadership, which complicates work at ground level. Respondents took note that unless training of leaders at ground level was done, it would be very difficult to sensitize the local church. They called for decentralization of leadership so that the church could see the need for missions among other groups like Asians, Muslims and not only among the locals, such as Turkana and Pokot.

4.3.2 Specific obstacles and challenges outlined

The respondents spoke passionately on the challenges and obstacles facing the evangelical churches in engaging Muslims with the Gospel. However, they outlined ten specific challenges that must be addressed urgently in order to engage Muslims meaningfully in Eldoret, Kenya. These include the need to train personnel, the issue of tribalism as an internal wrangle within the evangelical churches, and the question of unity and division among the evangelical churches in Eldoret, Kenya.

4.3.2.1 Training of personnel

Training requires resources and finances. Unless the church awakens to this reality, there is no shortcut. The churches must invest in personnel who will then sensitize the members to reach out to Muslims. Human resources are needed in Christian churches if engagement to Muslims has to be realized. Respondents were indecisive on whether evangelical churches were discipling members to mission to Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya. Those who affirmed mentioned an on-going training and sensitization by a few who had gotten the vision. They clarified that “there is “sheep stealing” among the churches in town. Most churches in town are mushrooming with the aim of outsmarting others and in the process; the sheep are tossed and confused. The interest of these churches is materialism”.

There is also the problem of schism. Division in the church is prevalent. There are advantages to having educated and learned leaders who seek to acquire what is in the basket. One respondent was of the opinion that the problem with the evangelical churches in Eldoret was the lack of training of church leaders to bring and foster unity among the churches. This is what he said, “instead of us fighting to bring more members to the fold, we are fighting over the resources, power and positions in the church. In previous years, a pastor was ministering to a huge number of churches to the tune of 50 churches, how could such a pastor be effective? In addition, the pastor got tired and hence often than ever, he spoke of his welfare.

Even at present where the pastor is charged with only two congregations, the pastor is still concerned with his welfare, that of his kids and family. This in my view limits the time available for study or any desire to acquire any new knowledge. Moreover, what will prevent such a pastor from not competing with other congregations for membership so that he may gain reputation and power?"

4.3.2.2 Tribalism

The two predominant tribes in Eldoret Kenya, the Kalenjins and the Luiyas, have their own pastors aligned to their own cultural affiliations. The problem with this kind of arrangement is that it creates cultural biases and ethnic differences among the members of the same church. Those aligned to a Luyia pastor are likely to listen to their pastor more than the Kalenjin pastor and vice versa. An implication arises out of these affiliations. The respondents mentioned that whereas most pastors in the evangelical churches take these tribal alignments casually, the work of God was suffering. For one, the members of the minority tribes suffer confusion and discouragement about the way church business is carried out. Two, the most affected are believers from Muslim backgrounds who are naturally victimised due to their culture, which is largely Somali. They are considered terrorists by virtue of the fact that they have connections with the Middle East.

Since tribalism is a reality in Eldoret, the 2007/2008 post-election violence affected the face of the evangelical churches and consequently mission engagement to Muslims. Respondents who had interacted with Muslims noted that Muslims do not trust Christians for the simple reason that they (Evangelical Christians) do not trust each other based on tribalism. They question the ability of the evangelical churches to preach peace, love and tranquillity when members of the same faith were burned to death in a church in the 2007/2008 post-election violence. As a result, they accuse Christians of preaching water and drinking wine. Asked what they deemed to be the solution to the problem of tribalism, the respondents were categorical: Let Christians, and especially evangelical Christians be converted before seeking to convert others, Muslims included. However, a percentage of the respondents felt that if the pastors studied the Word of God earnestly, prayed earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit, the problem of tribalism could be overcome. It was reported that most pastors, especially those of the African Inland Church, received their training more than 20-30 years ago, and as a result lack in new knowledge and means to deal with current issues affecting the churches.

4.3.2.3 Division among the churches in Eldoret, Kenya

Although it is very hard to come up with a uniform way to engage Muslims in general, especially because of mushrooming churches with different agendas, one specific problem in the churches is the leadership titles, for example the 'Reverend', the 'Bishop', the 'most right reverend', and the 'rector', just to mention a few. Respondents felt that these titles in themselves make the work of mission look like it serves the interest of the leaders. Besides, those who use these terminologies load upon their subjects heavy burdens to carry instead of them leading in front. These titles are the main cause of schisms and quarrelling among leaders of the same congregation. Such quarrels extend to the members of the evangelical churches. In an attempt to bring unity committees were formed to bring the evangelical churches together to unite, but some members of the committees felt left out because their titles did not sound authoritative or powerful, so they suffered from an inferiority complex. These titles are associated with more power, more wisdom, and better education.

Terms like "crusades" were viewed as insulting to Muslims and easily provoke them. There are those members of the evangelical churches who couldn't care less, but a few persons indicated that they understood the reason why the term 'crusade' angered Muslims. Many Christians snapped at the idea of the church desisting or refraining from this terminology, citing Muslims as difficult or dangerous people who were too sensitive. Respondents blamed the church leaders for failing to reconcile issues amongst each other soberly instead of opting for witch-hunting, which placed the work of mission to Muslims in jeopardy. Internal wrangles were also seen as an obstacle to unity. The respondents questioned the rationale of church leaders to engage Muslims as a united front as evangelical churches when they could not solve their own domestic denominational and doctrinal issues affecting their own membership.

On a positive note, one respondent cited the unity fostered by churches in Marsabit, Kenya, one of the densely populated areas and a stronghold of Islam for purposes of preaching the Gospel to local Muslims there, expressing his desire for the evangelical churches in Eldoret to emulate this. Emphasizing this team spirit, this respondent said, "in most of the Christian regions, the evangelical churches experience denominational differences at the expense of the purpose of mission. In Marsabit town, the churches buried their differences and hence managed to engage Muslims in a team work. Unless the churches in Eldoret, Kenya unite, their goal in reaching out to Muslims will be futile". The respondents were dissatisfied with their overall efforts to realize the dream of engaging Muslims. One respondent wished to

see missionaries from the other denominations and evangelical churches doing this mission. Reiterating the commitment that is needed urgently, this is what he had to say, “if about 20-30 missionaries came to train, there would be a possibility of being satisfied in retirement without having to leave this burden to those who were more interested in fighting each other instead of uniting for purposes of reaching out to Muslims with the Gospel”.

4.3.2.4 Lack of transparency

A lack of transparency was perceived as a very big weakness. For example, the Anglican Church was reported to have established schools that were founded in strict Christian values rules that did not allow or encourage children from other religions to be accommodated. Whereas it was agreed that it was a very good thing to establish such schools, there was concern about the fact that the neighbouring Muslim children could not be reached because the rules in the Christians schools victimised them for matters that they had little or no control over. There was general consensus that such schools could be adjusted to accommodate these young ones and when they were at school, teachings and Biblical principles are imparted to them. Whereas these suggestions were positive, they posed the challenges of double standards and the difficulty of balancing principle and transparency.

The issue related to transparency arises from the way Christians deal with disciplining their own backsliders. It was reported that most of the evangelical churches discriminated towards the girl child when found in disciplinary issues such as immorality and pregnancy. While the boy responsible is left to enjoy the comfort and company of church members and membership, the victimised girl experiences the shame and punishment of ex-communication, to the detriment of her spiritual welfare. Measures have to be put in place to punish the culprit who impregnated her too in equal measure. Failing to demonstrate fairness in disciplining members led ostracised members to become easy targets of Islamisation.

4.3.2.5 Different belief systems

Muslims believe in Jesus Christ as a prophet and not as the Son of God. This raises issues on ideology because it touches on the way of salvation. The teaching that God cannot give birth or be born (Qur'an, Sur 112:3) is a serious teaching in Islam that touches on the belief in the unity of God (*Tawhid*) and anyone subscribing to any other teaching is considered a blasphemer. The respondents confirmed that because Muslims know Jesus only as a prophet (Qur'an, Sur 4:171 cf Sur 66:12) and deny (John 1:29) Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of men, Christians can

only convert the Muslims through friendship. Friendship evangelism can be effective because the Muslims will learn to trust the Christians gradually and be willing to listen to the good news of salvation. The respondents pointed out that Christians needed to know their Biblical truths off by heart if they want to win Muslims. This is because Muslim scholars take issue with Jesus as the Son of God, citing irregularities in the Gospels. They especially say that there are discrepancies between the use of the term 'Messiah' in the book of Matthew (27:40) as opposed to the Gospel according to the book of Mark (15:29-30) and Luke (Qur'an Sur 9:30; 5:117). They say that the term 'Son of God' was employed only by men. The disciples used this term in reference to a miracle on the sea when Jesus calmed the storm. They shouted saying, "truly, you are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:33).

To solve the problem of different ideologies, respondents suggested that Christians needed to learn their Bible and live by its principles. Programs and strategic plans that would strengthen the faith of the believers are also important in order to shelter them from the wrong teachings and ideologies of men. The respondents felt that Christianity needs to be lived both at home and outside. The church should not be the only place where one demonstrates ones faith. It should rather be a strengthening ground for growth and development of the Christian faith. Respondents also took issue with folk Christianity. This is a practice where Christian believers pretend to follow the Biblical teachings strictly, but in practice, they resort to practices like witchcraft and other African traditional beliefs and practices. This hinders the spread of the Gospel to Muslims, especially those who practise folk Islam, since they too seek freedom from folk practices like '*Shaamanism*' and witchcraft.

4.3.2.6 Monetary consideration

The respondents attributed the alarming rate at which Islam was growing in Eldoret, Kenya to a failure by Christian believers to integrate their faith in living by taking care of socio-economic needs of its people and also of the needy in the society. On their part, Muslims were enticing poor women, unemployed youths, weak and vulnerable Christians with lots of money and promises of employment both locally and abroad. Whereas Christians lamented the hard economic times, those who are in leadership take advantage of the poor by preaching 'give and thou shall be blessed' sermons. Muslims on the one hand demonstrate care of her people and extend charity to their vulnerable neighbours, the majority of who are Christians.

The respondents also took issue with the fact that most evangelical churches keep asking for money for developmental activities, saying that they have succeeded

in discouraging a good section of its membership, mainly the young people, to stay away from church since they had no income and hence no money to bring to church as offering. Such youths would easily be converted to Islam because it requires no such a thing. As a fact, mosques are mushrooming in many parts of the town without a single call for money from the Muslim followers. In addition to mosques, there are institutions of learning and health, especially maternal healthcare, almost everywhere where there are mosques. This makes Christians suspicious of the activities of Muslims and the source of their income. Sadly, it was reported that such suspicions served to harden the hearts of Christians so that they do not see the need to engage the Muslims with the Gospel.

Budgetary allocations and consideration for missionary activities is another factor and major challenge facing the evangelical churches in engaging the Muslims. A respondent from the RCEA complained that “The Reformed Synod will question our budget. For example, they will ask the question, why are we speaking of mission to Muslims when the youths are dying of HIV and AIDS? Don’t you see this pandemic as a national problem which touches on the issues of the church budget right from the national level to the local church level?” However, this respondent was of the opinion that if the evangelical churches were to empower its membership economically and financially, Islam would not be a threat in Eldoret or Kenya as a whole.

4.3.2.7 Misinterpretation of the Bible by Muslims

According to FBC respondents, there was a deliberate move by the Muslims living in the Mailli-Nne part of Eldoret to misinterpret the Bible. This was evidenced by the engagements between Muslims and Christian Clerics in meetings such as public debates and discussions. They cited the unwilling attitude of Christians in this place to engage Muslims because of the arguments that ensued in such meetings and the deliberate move by the Muslims to discredit the Holy Scriptures. On their part, they felt that the evangelical churches should train their membership not to carelessly engage Muslims if they do not have enough and sufficient knowledge on the Biblical truths and also on the teachings of Islam.

The other challenge that was seen among the evangelical churches in an effort to retaliate the attempt by the Muslims to misinterpret the Holy Scriptures was the attempt by the Christian Churches to organize crusades next to the Muslim mosques. Whereas these meetings were aimed at preaching the Gospel, respondents were saddened by the attitude of those called upon to preach at these meetings towards the Muslim faith and the Muslims themselves. Such provocative

terminologies as “Muhammad (MPBUH) an immoral prophet, or Islam is a religion of terrorists, or Muslims are lost, or the Qur’an is a word of men” anger and provoke Muslims who lovingly co-exist with their neighbours. They therefore suggested that there should be an evangelical leadership meeting to sensitize the leaders on the need of propagating peace and love. The fact that Muslims were attempting to discredit the Holy Scriptures was not enough reason to retaliate in such away or in forums deemed to glorify God. These respondents called on all Christians to read and study Islamic literature and to reason with Muslims in a peaceful way.

4.3.2.8 Lack of proper teachings on missionary work in the theological seminaries

Respondents felt that the church is lagging behind on teachings on mission work. One respondent explained that he was a student at a Bible College and they had had very little training on mission work. He further observed “Muslims were people who abided by their laws. Christians are not allowed to preach in Muslim houses, although there was a need to capitalize on the fact that Muslim women are not aware of the Bible and be able to reach out to them easily”. This seminarian respondent was attempting to relate his understanding of Islamic cultural practices where women are not allowed to interact with men outside of her household, with the need to interact with such women in their neighbourhoods, probably during societal functions and ceremonies. His difficulty was related to establishing ministerial relationships given the existing boundaries, and the reality that these women are in need of the Biblical truth of salvation. He was also aware that according to Paul’s teaching, everyone had been set free (Galatians 3:28). This challenge raised the question of cross-cultural relationships and the Gospel. There is a need for the Bible Schools and theological seminaries to teach their students on these issues. Other respondents cited their experience in Mumias town. With little knowledge from their Bible Schools, they were forced to retract their steps of engaging the Muslims because the Muslims were overwhelming in numbers and knowledge, both concerning the Bible and the Qur’an.

4.3.2.9 Fear that Muslims are terrorists and very dangerous people

Most of the respondents reported that Muslims were perceived to be dangerous and fierce people who use tools of the earth to instill fear in people whenever people try to engage them in the Word of God. They also reported that Muslims had brought fear upon themselves with their strict laws and teaching. Muslim believers in general are afraid of the consequences that would befall them if they left Islam. Women and children are known to be more vulnerable to serious consequences that included

forfeiting their inheritance, identity, place in the society and more so, their lives, should they convert to another religion.

Respondents took issue with majority of Christians for their lack of knowledge on how to approach and engage Muslims due to this existing fear about them and their religion. According to one church leader who had engaged Muslims for a decade, there was a general misconception among the Christians that engaging and confronting Muslims would result in battle. However, having converted from Islam, he felt that these misconceptions were as a result of the mutual ignorance of the two religions and their past history. He was of the opinion that Christians who teach that fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10 cf Psalms 111:10) should know better that Muslims are mere human beings in need of salvation. Responding to the claim that Christians were afraid of Muslims, one respondent was of the opinion that this fear was necessary to some level. Substantiating his statement, this is what he had to say, “Christians do not know how to handle Muslims and sometimes they overstep their beliefs thus inciting Muslims to become more violent and dangerous. Christians should therefore know where the boundaries lie so as not to overstep the Muslims line”.

The RCEA respondents at Kipsinende related how Muslims in their area of residence strategized to win the Christian believers. They exemplified how Muslims built a mosque and a school in the community on arrival. To win the members of the community, the majority of who were Christians, they gave four vacancies in the high school to high school going non-Muslim children to study for free to the fourth form level. Many Christian parents rushed their children there, some withdrawing their children from Christian private secondary schools. Later, the school rules in this school were changed, demanding every student to study Muslim texts. Some did, but others did not due to a lack of fees. Those remaining had to study aspects of Sharia law, Qur’an language and the Hadith. Although they used deception, they succeeded in their objectives. The respondents at Kipsinende felt that Muslims were smart people and not bad people. Yes, there were allegations that a section of them were acting on terrorist teachings, but the majority are peaceful people who believe in personal decision to join religion. They felt that Christians should not fear Muslims, but rather study their religion so as to engage them meaningfully.

Dialogue is viewed as another way to diminish the fear between Muslims and Christians. In order to understand Muslims, their religion and beliefs, Christians should be willing to enter into dialogue with them. However, this must be re-defined not to mean subjectivity to the deceptive ideas of men, rather to provide a forum of communication where one can engage Muslims meaningfully. A respondent cited

how working with World Vision enabled him to change his attitude towards Muslims. This is what he had to say, “I worked with World Vision before as a humanitarian agent. In our engagements with the needy Muslims, we realized that our logo which bore the cross was an obstacle both to charity we gave and that which we received. We realized that life is more than religion and understanding better than ignorance, since then the World Vision changed its logo to include both the cross and the crescent. In that way, we have managed to save many lives than before”.

4.3.2.10 Failure by youths to discuss issues to do with Islam

Respondents were afraid that if the young people are not engaged in discussions on matters such as mission to Muslims, the majority of them will fall victim to Islamization. These sentiments were shared by the majority of the youth leaders, who felt that young people were easy targets of Islam, citing socio-economic challenges and lack of proper teachings in their mother churches. One youth leader took issue with the African countries that were once Christian strongholds, but who have now become 100% or more than 50% Islamized because of generational gaps between the elders of the churches and the young people who form the future generation of the church. His wish for the evangelical youth leaders in Eldoret was that they should engage the youths in all the member churches to discuss these issues and forge the way forward. In part, this is what his predicament stated, “countries like Egypt who were once Christianized are now Islamized so that it is only a small percentage of the population still professing the Christian faith. More than 800 years ago, Egypt was still a stronghold of Christianity, now it is a stronghold of Islam. I wondered if the same could befall Kenya in the coming 800 years. When in Mombasa attending a youth forum last year, the youth leaders were called upon to draw a 50 year strategic program”. The respondent emphasised his suggestion for all Christians to stop converting other Christians, instead establish mission areas in partnership. This would ensure that those who are against the Gospel do not find a basis of accusing Christians and Christianity as a religion. There was a call that churches should be established within police posts for protection in such areas as the North Eastern part of Kenya where churches were initially destroyed by Muslim fundamentalists. These sentiments were echoed by another youth leader who mentioned that in Eldoret town, Muslims were building their mosques next to the police stations. She thus felt that evangelical churches could build mission centers to facilitate reaching out to the masses like the Muslims in town and hence check their growing numbers.

4.4 EXISTENCE OF TEACHING ON REACHING OUT TO MUSLIMS

The need to train members of the church in mission work is a task that Christ left with His disciples before He left. After training His disciples, Christ wanted them to do the same to members of His Church in order to continue the work that His Father had started from the beginning of the world, and with which He had come to establish the fulfilment of the command of the Lord. Together with the Holy Spirit, which He had promised His disciples before His ascension, Christ had commanded His disciples to remember that the work must be continued until the end. After Pentecost, the disciples began teaching the first believers all that Christ had taught them. Their efforts were so huge that the Church grew from strength to strength. The same teachings were to continue from generation to generation until the end of the time. Whether these practices are going on in the churches today is a matter of study.

4.4.1 Effective and deficient aspects of the church leadership

First, the respondents were asked to state the various aspects of the church leadership most helpful in engaging Muslims with the Gospel. Second, they were asked to state those aspects most deficient. Their responses are captured in table 5 below.

Table 5: The effective and deficient aspects of the church leadership

Question	%
Which aspects of the church leadership do you find most helpful in engaging Muslims with the Gospel?	
Mission department and Projector Coordinators	33.2
Pastors and other leaders	33.2
Sunday School	8.4
Development Department	8.4
Church Outreach	8.4
Youth Department	8.4
What aspects of the church leadership do you find most deficient in engaging Muslims with the gospel?	
Leaders, especially Pastors	72.7
Church Elders	27.3

Source: Table 5 above was compiled from the answers received from the respondents of different churches and leaders.

From table 5, 33.2% of the respondents considered the mission department/projector coordinators, as well as pastor/other leaders departments to be the most helpful in engaging Muslims. Sunday school, development, church outreach and youth departments were represented by the same percentage of 8.4. However, one respondent claimed “there were no leaders in charge of mission program to engage Muslims with the Gospel, hence it was difficult to explain whether they were effective or not”. This is a discrepancy in thought given the percentage representation above. Nevertheless, where engagement of Muslims was seen, majority of the respondents cited pastors as well as other church leaders as part of the most helpful in engaging Muslims.

One can also deduce from the percentage representation that the task of engaging Muslims has been relegated to a large extent to church leadership. This claim is supported by respondents from RCEA who affirm firmly that “the Reformed Church is very much aware of engaging Muslims and has trained some leaders, among them Rev Daniel Barnor, who is currently in the field”. Other respondents generally cited the office of church elders, because historically, they said that the office of the church elder was charged with the authority of making decisions. History plays a very important role in Eldoret because the Christian church begun immediately after the settlers left. In the past, settler farms could not allow any church to operate given the activities on these farms. As a result, the church began in a small way in the rural areas, but soon moved to Eldoret town when the settlers, who were mainly colonial masters, left. This explains why when the Christian church began its work in Eldoret town, there were no known clear missionary objectives. According to one respondent, it was only the Boers (White Afrikaners) who attended church in town and so no one understood what their aims or objectives were. When they left, the poor African leaders had to struggle with structures.

On the one hand, a large percentage of respondents credited the office of the pastors and elders as the most helpful in engaging Muslims, on the other, a huge percentage, comprising a whopping (72.7%) of the office of the pastors and (27.3%) of the office of the elders, were seen to be the most deficient. This means that 100% of the total blame rests squarely on the leadership of the church. It means that whereas church members would be responsible for their own failure to engage Muslims, this can only be explained in technical terms, given that those charged with the responsibility of tending and keeping the sheep have failed in their work. It also explains the attitude of the Christian church as a whole on missioning to the Muslims.

The question that begs an answer is: Is it possible for the flock to engage Muslims on their own, given that their masters have refused, or rather failed to do so?

This also explains why most of the respondents who spoke of the relevance in engaging Muslims said so, citing their personal experiences and personal interactions. If individuals were engaged in doing mission to the Muslims, then should the Church of God feel justified to claim credit? The other question that needs to be addressed is, in what way do the church leadership, especially church pastors and church elders, fail to engage? Is it in the training, in the implementation, or in the nurture?

The youth departments where they existed were very much involved in reaching out to the Muslim community. The youths have formed football clubs where Muslims are invited to become members. During club activities, these youths seized the opportunity and distribute pamphlets to their Muslim friends. These pamphlets were done by the church, but printed and distributed by the youths.

The pastors on the other hand were engaging the Muslims in open air debates and in evangelistic campaigns, otherwise known as crusades. Their aim is to win the argument and convert Muslims, but it is evident that such methodologies have not borne so much fruit. This is because Muslims are well aware of the tricks of the church pastors and leaders engaging them in these meetings, and they will always make sure they humiliate them in return. On the positive side, the engagements have served as forums for dialogue and peaceful agendas. It is only a few recorded cases where Muslims have been converted as a result of these debates. Even so, those who have converted were reported to have gone back to their religion because of a lack of nurture within the churches.

The respondents concurred that the church should consider enlisting the expertise of those who had practised as Muslims before, since they were well versed with the teaching of the religion. Other members should also be assigned responsibilities. It was vital that leaders take charge and be at the forefront to arrest fear of Muslims, demonstrate selflessness and be happy to work for God. This would in the long run cascade down to the entire congregation. Women have been granted the opportunity to only fund mission work because of the understanding of the position of women in Islam. Conferences have also been being organised in which members were encouraged to attend with all their families. During debates everybody participated, including women. The mothers had meetings and shared with Muslim mothers as they fellowshiped together. At least the church had been able to involve everyone in its mission work, regardless of their gender, and the work was no doubt being done effectively.

The respondents agreed on the doctrine of the trinity, stating that God was one in three. However, they admitted not to engage in mission with this understanding, because there was no good foundation to do so by the churches or church pastors. Although God was one and His Word and mission was one, people were not united in purpose and the ministers are to blame. However, there was some hope in one AIFC quarters where the pastor of the local church had developed an interest in reaching out to Muslims.

When further asked on whether the Church of Christ and her entire environment as a whole could be said to be in the process of training to reach out, the respondents were of the opinion they were not. The reason they gave was self-centeredness and self-righteousness among the members. Muslims they said, were not hard people to reach, but the attitude of the church members was the thing that complicated matters. They wanted the church to overcome the wrong perception that Muslims were hard to reach. A case in point was the African Inland Church who had engaged those with interest to go to special schools to study issues on Islam and were satisfied that their attitude regarding Muslims was changed. To assist such persons, the church had started a program to assist these persons to learn Arabic. They were also engaging personnel from life challenge ministries in Nairobi to reach out to Muslims.

Leaders were of the opinion that using crusades as a way to reach out to the Muslims would be effective if open air meetings were not confrontational. Christians should not use physical strength when trying to reach out to the Muslim, instead they should pray for them and ask God for direction. Asked whether they had had any encounter with Muslims, the respondents confirmed they often met and talked on different beliefs, although Muslims occasionally did not want to hear it due to deep-rooted beliefs in their faith. In an effort to reach out to Muslims, the church had initiated training on reaching out to the Muslims, though the training was very different from other training on mission.

Some respondents felt that Muslims were too far in proximity to their habitations and that even if they were to come nearer in future, the Christians could not succeed in changing their attitude to forfeit their religion. One respondent indicated that if one of his children were to marry a Muslim or change their religion to Islam, he would do his best to try and bring him back to the church, but if he refuses, he would have no other option but to accept.

With regard to the question that sought opinion on what the Anglican Church could do about the issue of the Muslim insurgence, the respondents stated "Christians need to live according to their calling as servants of God. Christians need

to detach themselves from their bad lifestyle and decide to live according to how the Bible has instructed. Also, they need to be able to demonstrate to the world that they value one another as brothers in Christ and show that they have one God and share their faith through love". On whether Christians should use the approach of crusades in Muslim areas or be apologetic, the respondents indicated that this largely depended on the nature and the content of how the Word of God was being preached to the Muslims. They alluded that "Christians mostly abused the Muslim faith and this brings about a confrontation between the two religions which is taken very badly from the Muslim side. Different churches conduct different type of crusades". A respondent also believed that showing love through friendship is better than crusades and that the emphasis should fall on preaching the rather Gospel than discrediting the Muslim faith. Crusades were not that effective. Love is.

Those respondents who were not satisfied with what the Anglican Church of Kenya had done explained that this was to a large extent due to their confrontational approach towards Muslims, who were often defensive. Christians needed to sit down and strategize and come up with clear plans on mission engagement with Muslims. They needed to understand the true meaning of *missio Dei* and use Paul as an example. A person to person approach should be highly considered.

4.4.2 Discipleship to reach out to the Muslims

The respondents were first asked if the church was equipping (discipling) its members for the role of engaging Muslims with the Gospel. They were then asked whether they thought this discipleship is relevant. They were further asked if this discipleship is done in the light of *Missio Dei*. Table 6 below summarizes their responses.

Table 6: Discipleship to Muslims

Question	Percentage Responses by denomination					
	AIC	ACK	Baptist	PCE A	RCE A	Total
Do you think the Church is equipping (discipling) its members for the role of engaging Muslims with the Gospel?						
No	14.28	⁵⁷	8.57	14.28	34.27	71.4
Yes	8.58	2.86	8.58	2.86	5.72	28.6
Do you think this discipleship is relevant?						

⁵⁷The respondents from the ACK decried the lack of discipleship within their congregations citing lack of good will from the top leadership as the major reason to engage Muslims with the Gospel.

Yes	13.54	10.15	20.31	10.15	37.24	91.4
No	-	-	-	4.3	4.3	8.6
Do you think this discipleship is done in the light of Missio Dei?						
No	6.67	6.67	-	33.33	13.33	60.0
Yes	-	-	13.33	-	26.67	40.0

Source: The table 6 above represents answers from respondents from the various churches that is undertaking mission in Eldoret.

The table shows that the majority (71.4%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the church was not equipping (discipling) its members for the role of engaging Muslims with the Gospel. This was because the churches had no personnel trained in reaching out. Plans are underway to send interested individuals to Limuru, a theological missionary school, so that they could be trained on issues of Islam. These sentiments are expounded by the need for evangelical churches to have a clear understanding of Islam and its resurgence. They should be enlightened and trained to reach out to Muslims. The churches should do proper planning with regard to how to reach out to Muslims. They should set mission programs to target Muslims. Besides, the church also has other priorities to deal with. Youths too were grappling with their own relational issues such as immorality and HIV/AIDS, although they were attempting to reach out to Muslims. The youths were of the opinion that if their leaders were discipling them, the youths could be even more effective in engaging Muslims.

The respondents felt that discipleship was not taking place because some churches are situated in a remote area where Muslims were unheard of. Such churches had other agendas to deal with as a matter of priority, albeit their desire to participate in the Great Commission. Factors such as lack of commitment in training personnel in mission departments emanated from the fact that nurture was considered a priority to mission engagements, especially to Muslims. Others felt that there was no need to train personnel to reach out to Muslims specifically because their understanding of the Great Commission is not about Muslims alone, rather it is about the whole world. In other words, they felt that the church should not spent its resources training a group to target a single religion, but should train missionaries to go out to preach the Gospel generally to all who are not Christians.

Other respondents agreed that it was relevant to disciple members to reach out to Muslims because Muslims were hardy and stubborn and could not be easily

convinced. Others felt that the church was not discipling its members because there was a general feeling that Muslims were on a Jihad mission and hence should not be provoked for whatever reason. These sentiments were confirmed by one youth leader who stated that he was not aware of any discipling by the church to engage Muslims. Asked why he thought the church was not training its members, this is what he had to say, "No, there are neither engagements nor discipling towards Muslim engagement in this Church. None that I know, unless, that which happened in my absence... Failure to engage Muslims with the Gospel is attributed to, holy war (Jihad), the consequences and implications of Muslims when they are provoked are obvious. Muslims are known to be fearless and ruthless especially towards death". A conservative mentality is also a factor that impairs discipleship. For example, it was reported that although Muslims were spreading and growing very fast in Eldoret, the Anglican Church of Kenya was reportedly still using the old methods in worship and mission. The respondents of this church disapproved the attitude of its leaders towards change and new knowledge, especially in worship. They said that the church leadership was not even willing to learn from their neighbours how to engage others in missionary activities, except for engaging those Muslims who are their next door neighbours. Respondents saw an urgent need for this church to devise new programs that target the training of the youth, the women and children in the church to mission to others, since Christ expects His Church to grow.

Fear is obviously a major factor in reaching out to Muslims in this church and other evangelical Churches and yet, the only way to disseminate fear is through equipping members. There is a need to teach members on the role of the Holy Spirit as opposed to their role in the engagement. Those who understand the role played by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in mission need not fear anyone because mission is God's, and those engaging are His people. *Missio Dei* is important to understanding the role of God in His mission and the role of the church. However, leaders never engaged the church on matters of *missio Dei*. Whether this was a deliberate way to avoid a terminology that they themselves never understood was another issue. For this reason, it was not easy for the respondents to answer the question on discipleship in the light of the *missio Dei*, because the majority of them had never heard of this terminology, albeit its importance in mission engagements. Those who had heard or seen this term, admitted to paying little or no attention to its meaning at all. It was then evident that discipleship was not being done in the light of *Missio Dei*.

Youths respondents from the Baptist Church indicated that they were not receiving enough training, although they had pastors who preached to them. They

subsequently stated that other churches were not engaging in mission to the Muslims because they have no material and people to teach them how to reach out. The youth leader therefore considered discipleship to his friends from other denominations that he had tried to encourage to reach out to Muslims a burden, for they have only made empty promises. "The church needs to make a schedule for the youth that will include Bible study sessions where the youth can learn about Christianity. We should remember that the young people change their religion because there are no restrictions in Islam". These sentiments were a clear indication that the members were not adequately equipped to engage Muslims with the Gospel.

In the PCEA training on how to reach out to the Muslim community and people as a whole were non-existent. According to the respondents from this church, Christians were a very ignorant and not only needed to change their attitude towards the Muslims, but also towards their Christianity. They thus echoed the sentiments expressed by youth respondents from Faith Baptist Church by underscoring the need to be serious with God's work as Christians and pray.

The 28.6% respondents who stated that the church was indeed discipling its members explained that discipling was relevant and on-going because Muslims did not believe in Jesus, but in Mohamed and therefore suffered from an ideological problem regarding God. Other reasons that were cited for the relevance of discipling included the general obstacles and challenges involved in engaging Muslims. These challenges they said, necessitated the church to equip its membership in order to effectively mission out. Also, they cited the differences between the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible as warranting proper teaching in approaching and interpretations.

A team of missionaries comprising young ladies and men who are trained on mission work was in existence within the Faith Baptist Church and they were mandated to reach out to the Muslim community. They had in the recent past undergone training so that they had a fair understanding of what *Missio Dei* entails. These youths understand that without mission there will be no church, because mission is the heart of the church and mission involved discipling other people. They explained that it is only when the church leaders see the need to support the vision of mission that the mandate to go to the whole world would be accomplished. On this basis reaching out to Muslims is seen as a Holy command from Jesus Christ.

4.4.3 Relevance of discipleship

Out of the total number of respondents, 91.4% felt it was relevant to carry out training on Church members on Muslim engagement, while 8.6% stated it was not. Those

who found discipleship to be relevant cited a lack of understanding of the importance of mission engagement to Muslims. It was noted that, whereas the majority of the Christian believers agreed that the Great Commission was a necessity, they never saw the need to reach out to Muslims in particular, rather, they engaged their fellow Christians, especially those of different denominations. Concerted efforts were required to remind members about the importance of missioning to the Muslims because they do not understand salvation.

The Kadhis Courts in the Kenyan constitution was also a wakeup call to the Kenyan majority Christians. The entrenchment of these courts in the constitution was interpreted by the majority of the respondents as a threat to Christianity and empowerment of Islam. They felt that these courts encouraged religious favouritism and dominance, since Kenya is a secular state and its laws must not be seen to favour any particular religion. Respondents felt that such a matter should be enough reason why the evangelical churches should prioritize discipling its members.

Those respondents who felt discipleship was not relevant felt that Christians must always remember their duty as believers and members of the body of Christ. To them, discipleship was a matter of personal discipline and growth in the Spirit. They took issue with the majority of Christian believers who don't know what their faith entails. They blamed this on a lack of commitment in reading Scriptures and with a devotional prayer life. Speaking of the Muslim believers, these respondents were of the opinion that none of them get discipleship, save for the teachings they received when they were young in their Madras. Yet, these Muslims know their Qur'an by heart, and more so, they now read the Bible. Lack of seriousness in religious matters was equated to a lack of commitment in mission engagements. Respondents therefore concluded that even if many resources were spent discipling such uncommitted Christians, there would be little or no change at all.

A good number of the respondents who supported discipleship cited positive Muslim response to the Gospel as a major encouragement. They said that the Muslims were difficult persons, but reports from those who had engaged them indicated that a few of them were responding to the Gospel and they deserved to be given an opportunity. Quoting the words of Jesus that "I have come that they may have life in full" (John 10:10), and also that "whoever comes to me I shall not cast them away", (John 6:37); respondents said that discipleship "we must all have a burden and Muslims are the easiest people to reach so far. Muslims cannot know about the Gospel until we reach out to them".

The table also indicates that the majority (60.0%) of the respondents stated that discipleship did not take place in the light of *missio Dei*. This was because

teachings are limited to evangelization, prayers and visitation of church members. Other respondents further clarified that they were not sure whether those engaging Muslims understood what the term is all about. A respondent narrated that *missio Dei* was only understood as an acquired knowledge, but not as part of the church ministry. The teachings of *missio Dei* apparently were not that effective. People did not understand that mission was an agenda of God. The church was reportedly seen not to be fully immersed in mission. Mission was not being emphasized from the Old Testament and the New Testament. The church leaders were reportedly known to have little knowledge on mission work.

In answer to the question on the stand taken by a section of the evangelical leadership to oppose the Kadhis Courts in the 2010 referendum, the respondents stated “the Church had acted in good faith to avoid any religion being superior over others hence this had no impact on mission work. Most of us do not yet fully understand what *missio Dei* is all about. Well, we can say that aspects of our mission are concerned with the Great Commission. But as to whether we are doing it in the light of the *missio Dei*, is an issue that can be discussed and debated. Some references were made concerning mission work especially in North Eastern part of Kenya in the light of the *missio Dei*. There was belief in the trinity and the power of the gospel”.

The respondents also mentioned the need for the church leaders to be trained in terms of *Missio Dei*. They lamented that trained theological pastors had no idea how to reach out to the Muslims, and so they can not do anything. They were of the idea that students should be trained so as to behave like the Muslims, to become Imams and sheikhs of the Muslim religion, which will make them penetrate easily into the religion.

There are no written materials in the church to help people to access information to combat fear. Christians are thus challenged to continue to write and publish more. They should also set up libraries accessible to each and every member. The understanding of mission work should be brought to the church where people need to be taught on how to mission on a daily basis wherever they maybe. These revelations indicated that *missio Dei* still posed a challenge, both to the church leaders as well as to the Church members. It therefore has a direct implication on discipling in terms of the *missio Dei*.

A youth leader who understood the role of the *missio Dei* had this to say, “*missio Dei* regards itself with the Holy Spirit and the outpouring of the same to the youths. In Joel 2, the Bible says that in the last days the young people will see visions and receive dreams. However, the teachings are not specifically explained.

They are general leadership skills and are based on the Great Commission". Another respondent commented that he was not sure if youth leaders were receiving any training at all in the light of the *missio Dei*. This was because of what he termed as irregularities in selecting those to lead the youths. Complaining of the way the church selected its youth leaders, this is what he said, "from among the youths those who are deemed to be leaders and are only dedicated to lead the other youths are given the opportunity. As such *missio Dei* remains to be the hard terminology that is only in the lips of the reverends and their training in the seminaries. I am not sure that it is a day to day terminology that can be used to train the youths even if they were leaders".

Another respondent said that he was not sure whether the church was doing mission in the light of the *missio Dei*. He was not sure whether the church even engaged Muslims or understood that it was supposed to engage them. Another respondent also was of the opinion that the government needed to be involved in matters regarding religion and that although there was a clause on the freedom of worship in the constitution, religious issues were complicated and could not be left to the people to decide on their own. This last comment left no doubt that there was little knowledge on what *missio Dei* entailed in the minds of many Christians.

However, 40.0% who said discipleship was being done in the light of *missio Dei* clarified that *missio Dei* is God's plan to reach out to people. Nevertheless, people tend to relax in undertaking *missio Dei* because the Muslims are known to fear coming out to be Christians lest they were rejected by their own families. It was nonetheless noted that there should be no restraint because of fear. Christians should not fear because God has a way of dealing with challenges. A case in point was the Church in MailiNne and Kipsinende. Churches were being established in Muslim areas and social interactions helped to engage the Muslims. The respondents felt that there was a need for the church to get serious with evangelism and put up plans for it. Personal as well as public evangelism were recommended as opposed to the many crusades that preached hatred most of the time.

4.4.4 Understanding of the mission field

The term 'mission field' received varied responses from the interviewees. Some stated that it was everywhere, and not specifically one place. The reason they gave for this was the missionary mandate given to the Church to go to the whole world (Mathew 28:18-20). This they said provided hope for the Muslims to be engaged with the Gospel. However, this group of respondents was quick to say that these Muslims would only be engaged through prayer, Biblical teachings and love as the Lord Jesus

loved them. Asked if there was such an understanding among the members of the church, they stated that only those with a higher calling would understand their call and obey the command to reach out to Muslims.

According to one respondent, the AIFC understood the term mission field as defined in their church constitution. The African Inland Missionary Board increased its missionaries to 1000 members in the year 2005 alone. However, these were national missionaries whose priority and interest was not among the Muslims, who were deemed to propagate fear among its faithful and neighbours. According to another respondent, while the missionary work had begun in the early years of church mission, it was only in 1980s that the church thought of improving her missionary work so that by 1986, she started training her first missionaries. The training of missionaries lasts for a period of 16 months. Respondents reported that there is a huge difference between the trained and untrained missionaries. They listed differences such as language of communication, cultural-anthropology and issues relating to family. Of importance was also the fact that the early missionaries dwelled only on issues to do with African Traditional Religion (ATR), animists and unreached groups such as the Pokot and the Turkana. Muslims were left to the elite among missionaries since these people could handle religious issues better. However, a respondent pointed out that the last four years has seen changes in the Africa Inland Church so that there is on-going training that target missionaries that aim at the Muslim world. However, it was not clear whether the church was concerned with those Muslims in Eldoret.

According to another respondent, early missionaries to Africa and Kenya in particular, introduced the understanding that the missionary field is only an area where people have not been reached with the Gospel. This caused the attitude that the areas within which the church exists do not require missionaries. According to his opinion, “the ‘*Mzungu*’ has taken our norms and practices. However, these practices are not dead yet. The way to do this is to go back to them and understand what it that was wrong. In this way, we will be able to understand and own mission as an evangelical Church”.

Respondents also felt that since Islam has an impact on the society because they too are targeting souls in the mission field by propagating hate and instilling fear, dialogue was the only hope for the evangelical churches and Christians at large. There was a general feeling that interactions and dialogue should create a common understanding and provide opportunities for evangelism. In addition to dialogue, Christians should live their faith as a way of communicating the Gospel to Muslims. Muslims should always feel at ease when interacting with Christians and vice versa.

When asked if there was hope that mission work could succeed in Eldoret town as a mission field, the respondents affirmed by equating this hope to a Muslim woman's position. "A Muslim woman does not have the hope that their husband will come to her in the evening or if she will go to heaven and if her house will still be united, yet she hopes against all hope that things will go well. Such is the hope that the evangelical Church in Eldoret must always profess. Hope against hope is the way to go". In addition, respondents said that the evangelical churches in Eldoret had many opportunities that were untapped. If only they could come together in unity of purpose, they could win the battle against Islam and its resurgence.

4.4.5 Acting according to the Great Commission

The respondents were asked whether the engagements were relevant in terms of *Missio Dei*. Figure 3 sums up their responses.

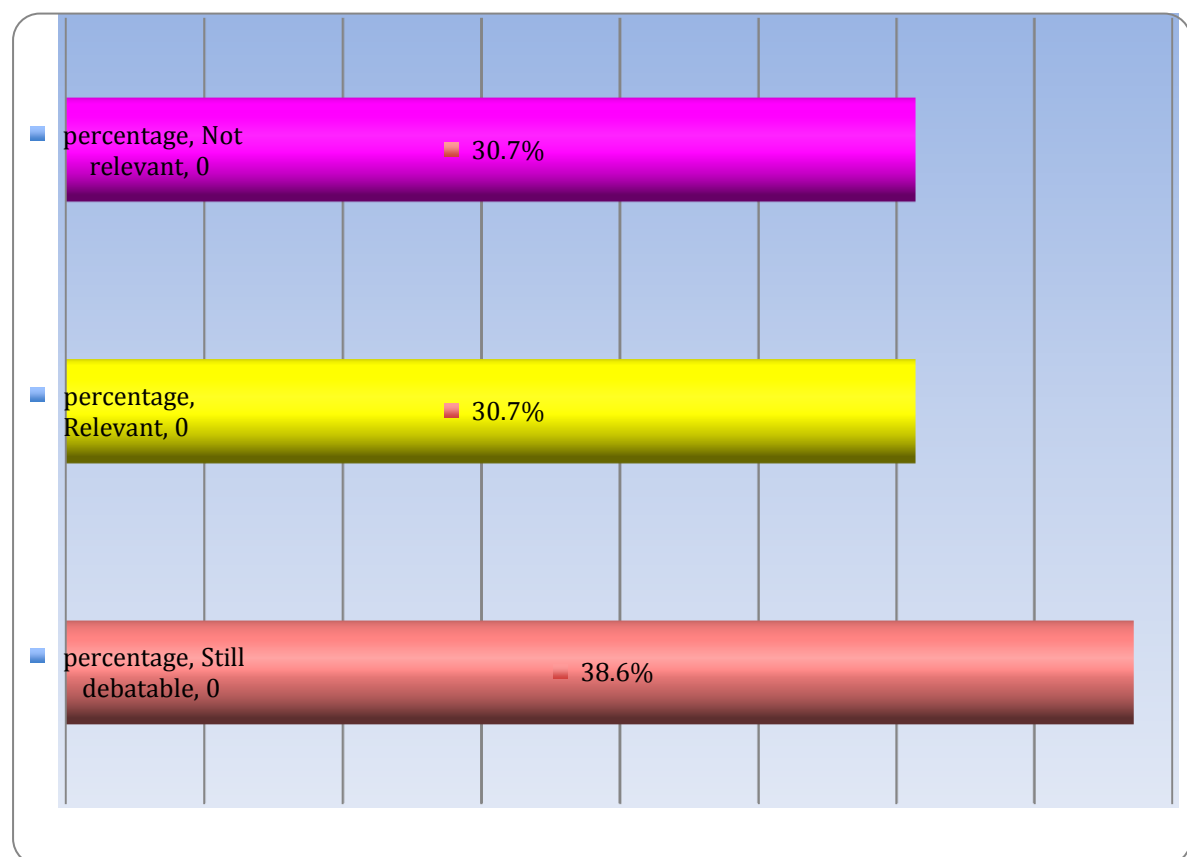


Figure 3: Relevance of engagement in terms of Missio Dei

Source: Figure 3 above is based on responses from various churches who have undertaken mission in Eldoret.

Figure 3 illustrates that 38.6% of the respondents were of the opinion that relevance in terms of *Missio Dei* was still debatable. One respondent indicated that pastors

shared the same sentiments from the theological schools. The general feeling that leaders too were ignorant of these issues was prevalent, with one respondent claiming that they had never heard of any teachings or training in terms of the term. It was thus difficult to determine what the respondents were not sure about, whether they received training in terms of *Missio Dei*, or whether their leaders understood the relevance of the term and hence the importance of training members in light of it.

About 15% of the AIFC respondents admitted that they know the term, while 85% of the respondents were not aware of the term. The respondents who know the term were of the opinion that the church should start teaching its members both on the meaning of *Missio Dei* and also on the importance of engaging missionaries in light of the *Missio Dei*. This they said needs to begin in the Bible Schools with the pastors. Respondents wanted church leaders and pastors to admit their inadequate knowledge and to seek knowledge in order to edify the body of Christ. Envy, hatred and malice were mentioned as some of the issues affecting the church and hence its failure to nurture and disciple its members in light of the *missio Dei*. One respondent reported that he was treated with suspicion because he had converted from Islam to Christianity. This made him feel betrayed by the same people who reached out to him to come to salvation. This, he mentioned, has challenged his family members who are still Muslims and have refused to join Christianity. Without enough spiritual and physical security to offer his family, he feels dejected and lonely in the midst of people who preach love, but practice hatred.

One respondent indicated that the church should demonstrate its mandate to care for its members as demonstrated by the apostolic Church. The church, he continued, needs to support those who have come from other faiths. Further, the church should sensitize its members not to sell their land to the Muslims to build mosques. Christians should know their enemies and demonstrate love towards them. However, the church should remember always that whereas it is interested in people gaining salvation, Islam is interested in property, to build mosques, hospitals and schools to convert people. If the church does not wake up to the challenge and fight Islam by all means, its saltiness will lose taste and nothing can be done to salvage its taste.

Respondents also felt that the church needs to sensitize its youth members, the young ladies especially, on the danger of playing into the hands of the Muslim boyfriends. Islam, they said, emphasized family and religion as basic in building their territory. Muslim women were careful not to marry Christian men, but Christian women frequently fall victim to circumstances. Before they know it, they are forced to become Muslims, a respondent reported. The youth therefore have to be advised to

take matters of their faith seriously and avoid being taken advantage of by Muslims. A respondent wondered what became of the Church of Christ in Kenya. On respondent commented on the way the Christians boast of being an 80% majority, “in Wajir town, the Roman Catholic Church is not preaching salvation to the Muslims. In Kenya we have 17 tribes that do not have a church in spite of 80% of Kenyans being Christians. One of these is the Somali tribe. What happened to the love of Jesus Christ? In Kapsabet town, we have seminaries to teach pastors on mission and Islam; yet, 60% of the church has not taken the issue seriously. The church needs to unite and be willing to embrace the challenge”.

Of the other respondents represented in figure 4.3 above, 30.7% said that engaging Muslims in the light of the *Missio Dei* was relevant and 30.7% said it was not relevant. Those who saw the relevance argued that Muslims were part of society and hence there was a need to create a friendly environment in order to warm their hearts to salvation. They wanted Christians to invite Muslims for tea in order to build bridges that would eventually introduce them to the Christian faith. Other suggested places include business fairs, sports grounds, political gatherings and school grounds. These interactions should be guided by the principle of love for ones neighbour as oneself. It also targets those Muslims who were challenged socially and needed a listening ear from a trusted friend.

The majority of the respondents who felt that engaging Muslims and discipling members in terms of *missio Dei* was irrelevant indicated that Christians readily took Muslims as enemies and there was no way they could either support or demonstrate interest in them. They cited cases where Christians have openly referred to Muslims as arrogant and selfish people. To them, there was a mindset among the Christians that needed to be worked on first before thinking of engaging Muslims. However, they agreed that the church had to do something to remedy the situation urgently. These respondents further stated that Islam is growing faster and consequently there is a need for the church to strategize and create programs that would counter its activities.

All the respondents agreed that engaging Muslims with the Gospel was a burden to be considered with urgency. The urgency does not lie in the manner in which mission takes place, but rather the unity of evangelical churches. Respondents were of the view that the Church of God should be willing to suffer for the sake of the Gospel, just like the apostles did. Leaders with a new perspective are needed to spearhead the work of engaging Muslims with the Gospel. Evangelical member churches should be required to demonstrate commitment within their departments of coordinating mission. Misuse of funds is another challenge to be overcome by the

evangelical churches. A good way forward is to create a special fund to train missionaries within Eldoret town to engage Muslims. Leaders with objectivity should only be chosen to head such departments and manage such funds. Again, the respondents reiterated the need for a clear audit on the work that has already been done. This will enable the evangelical churches to plan and strategize properly with clear goals and objectives in engaging Muslims.

4.5 UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRINITY

The respondents were first asked to define dialogue. They defined this as “embracing one another on issues that deal with humanity e.g. on areas of comparative religion, understanding the burdens of the weak and taking issues of faith back to God, who is one”.

With regard to the understanding of the Holy Trinity, the respondents observed that the Holy Trinity could not be separated and they were one and united. However when asked whether they taught the Great commission as the work of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, they stated that most pastors hinged their teachings on giving and praying and not salvation. The bulk of teaching in the church was therefore linked to prosperity and how to solve poverty issues. The respondents also hinted that the church had not attained maturity on issues that dealt with the trinity because the members were still being preached to. The respondents also took issue with the dogmatic issues, as well as the Apostle’s Creed. They said that they were not sure if their teachings centred on the trinity entirely as they were guided by what was said in the creed.

Respondents also mentioned that the Anglican Church of Kenya did not have programs that provided teaching on the doctrine of the Trinity. This raised many questions in their minds during sermons that touch on such topics. Asked what they did with such vital questions, they reiterated that they had no choice other than to listen and leave it to the experts – the leaders. When asked whether there was a need to put up with the notion that Muslims were hard people to reach and if there was a way forward, two respondents called upon Christians to be effective in their programs so as to target Muslims.

4.6 FINANCING MISSION WORK BY THE CHURCH

The majority of the respondents cited denominational differences as the major cause of disunity among the evangelical churches. This also causes a lack of proper funds for undertaking mission to the Muslims. Another reason for a money shortage is the belief or the myth that spending resources on Muslims was a waste because

Muslims had nothing to offer and will be lost anyway. Reiterating the attitude of some evangelical leaders toward Muslims and evangelism, this is what one respondent said, “the Church has lost its love towards Muslims. They believe that Muslims had something to offer in the past, not anymore, the Church now has something better hence Christians should not waste their money on these lost people”.

Ironically, the Church may be seen to have all. However, the truth at ground level shows that most members of the church depend on charity from Muslims. This help in the form of money not only provides food for many poor Christian families, but they also provide social and psychological stability given that the majority of the beneficiaries manage to earn a living in one way or another. This has implications for mission work because no one can sit down to listen to the Word of God on an empty stomach. In addition, the respondents cited the role of the early church as offering people spiritual nourishment, education and healthcare. We could go back to the mission of Jesus Christ. The church needs to start giving hope to people rather than condemning them. The church pastors need to be committed to teach their congregation. The Great Commission should be accomplished.

4.7 ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP THAT IS MOST EFFECTIVE IN ENGAGING MUSLIMS

When asked about the aspect of the church that was most effective in reaching out to Muslims, the respondents gave diverging views. Some mentioned the mission department, the women ministries, and the youths. However, one department that received many votes was that of the elders. Nevertheless, this office was voted not as one effective department, but as one most defective. The office of the pastor, although expected to provide leadership and guidance, did not feature among the most effective departments. Women and the youth were praised for their commendable effort in engaging Muslims. The answers indicate that mission work is something that is taken seriously by most young people and mothers.

The missionary team was the most effective aspect of the AIFC as far as mission engagements to Muslims were concerned. Her activities were seen especially in the North Eastern part of Kenya. Respondents, the majority of whom were theology students, praised the effort that has been put in place by this team given the hardships in this region. However, it was reported that there was little or no work going on in Eldoret, since the understanding of the mission field limited the scope to those areas deemed unreached by the Gospel. Eldoret town did not fit into this category because the AIC churches were already well established in town.

The church leadership at any level is expected to be at the forefront in this mission engagement. However, as one respondent indicated, it is not easy to balance the responsibilities of a section of leadership with those of the missionary work. Recounting his own experience, this is what he said, "I have always struggled as a leader to roll the stone on many occasions, but it is very hard. Up to now, I have come to accept that the hardest part of the church is leadership. Most people in the church even those on the top leadership are ignorant of mission work. There had been attempts to raise over 1000 missionaries in Kenya in addition to decentralization of the work of mission but it has been very hard. If the local church pastor is ignorant of what is happening in the mission field, it becomes very hard to talk of mission work. Although the members of the churches are willing to work, the pastors and those in leadership have proven to be very hard. Although there are five theological colleges in Western Kenya, most of the pastors training in these colleges are not interested in reaching out to Muslims".

One respondent suggested where the work must begin. According to him, the first step that should be taken is to introduce the training in all Bible colleges, then recall all serving pastors in the field to be re-trained. He also hinted that this training should be undertaken aggressively. Moreover, the local church council could be the first to be informed and trained because great influence emanates from here. He further wanted the office of the church elders to be held responsible for the success of reaching out to Muslims.

It was suggested that preference should be given to the youth and the mothers, even though all members of the church should be involved. It was noted however, there should be qualified personnel who understood the Muslim religion to teach the youth and the mothers. Teachings should begin from Sunday school to the senior youth clubs. It was agreed that beginning with the young ones would ensure firm foundations that would never fall, even when the storms of life arise. Some respondents respected Muslims for the way they engaged the young ones to recite the Holy Qur'an. The Bible also reminded the believers to teach their children on the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6) so that when they were old, they would not depart from the right path.

The respondents were of the view that church pastors and leaders should lead the way in engaging Muslims. One reverend had this to say, "members of the church value the knowledge of the pastor. Pastors need to be adequately trained in order for them to teach the congregation. Training equips them with skills to evangelize and they need to demonstrate practically what they have been taught. The church needs to have a committee that heads the Muslim mission and the pastor

needs to be the head of the committee and to give logistics and direction. If the pastor comes out from that fear of engaging Muslims, then the members of the church will do the same". Pastors were supposed to study the history and current trends of Islam, one respondent added. These would be helpful to training the church on the issues of Islam and how to engage them.

4.8 SUGGESTIONS

The respondents were asked to give their own input on other areas of importance in engaging Muslims with the Gospel. Their suggestions touched on four major areas: purpose of mission as outlined in the Bible, programs that the evangelical church needs to incorporate, context, and finally, cross-cultural relations.

4.8.1 Purpose

- Respondents said that the church should not fear facing challenges because these challenges were good for her and for every member of the church. In this case, the church is called upon to remember its purpose of mission and to aim at sensitizing all members in order to go out and engage the Muslims. The church was reminded that as its mandate, mission work was a must and that the Christian must unite together in purpose.
- Church unity was further emphasized as a realization of *themissio Dei*. It was for this reason that the purpose of mission was given to the church.
- Christians were reminded to give their lives for the sake of God's mission. This command was given by the Lord Himself and must be obeyed. In giving their time, money and resources, Christians demonstrate the love of God who gave Himself to save mankind. The old church should take care of the needs of the young church so as to fulfil the command of Jesus and demonstrate an understanding of its purpose and that of the mission.
- It is God's aim and that of the church to train all the believers, including the youth, in mission work.

4.8.2 Programs

- The respondents suggested that the young people should come up with many programs to enable them interact with the Muslims for purposes of spreading the Gospel.

- Christian youth retreats must be organized in centres to target the young Muslim friends. These retreats should have programs that are aimed at cross-cultural relations.
- Many books on both cross-cultural relations and Christian-Muslim relations should be published by Christian scholars. These books should be authored mainly by African Christian scholars who understand the challenges at ground level.
- The evangelical churches should train young missionaries to engage Muslims urgently. This is because young people have demonstrated knowledge, zeal and desire to engage Muslims with the Gospel. Women too should be included in the training.
- Programs like sports should be capitalized to bring people together so as to develop friendship and win confidence to engage the Muslims. There is a need to take the institutions of higher learning back to the local churches to enable the believers have access to information and training to undertake mission work to the Muslims. More Bible study must be organized to assist the church understand her mandate.
- Since conversing with the Muslims is difficult because they do not believe in Christianity, theological students should go back to grass roots and make an impact on the people.
- Christians should commit to their faith for them to be pioneers of Christianity to the Muslims.
- The church should come up with a good Sunday school curriculum that will be able to teach the children the art of mission. These should also include Bible studies, both for the children and the youth. These programs must be implemented well enough to make the work of mission more effective.
- The church needs proper teaching and understanding of the doctrine of the trinity before it sends missionaries out.
- The church should support her own missionaries both morally, financially and spiritually.
- All the church programs should be geared at focusing on contextualization of the Gospel to the Muslims.
- Church leaders within the evangelical churches should be sensitized on the importance of engaging Muslims with the Gospel. It is not enough to have only one pastor trained in the ministry to the Muslims.

- The government should step in, especially in checking the fast growth of Islam in the region. Church missionary programs have to target schools from primary level to secondary level.
- More programs aimed at reaching out to Muslims should be encouraged in Christian seminaries and also in the churches. The government should also assist in engaging Muslims. Often, the government considers this group a minority group and therefore gives them plenty of room to engage in their activities. Christian leaders in the government should assist the church in countering the activities of the Muslims in the country.
- Set up Christian academies and let the Muslim children attend the academies.
- There is need to create programs that will bring the experts to teach the youths on the issues of Islam so as to come up with a strategy that can address the impact of Islamization in Eldoret.

4.8.3 Context

- Muslims should be identified in terms of their context, in other words where they are, what they are doing and for what reasons. The entire church should be sensitized on the whole issue of Islamization. Leaders should be fast-tracked for training.
- Evangelical churches should work towards unity of purpose and consider mission as a very important entity in the church.

4.8.4 Cross-cultural relations

- Muslims are known to be strict in their teachings and practices. If the church has to win them, they should exercise patience with the full knowledge that they embrace change slowly. Slow change brings one near to salvation and prevents retaliation. Often, those who engage Muslims want to see change so soon that they hardly see the work of the Holy Spirit, who is responsible for conversion of hearts.
- Churches should teach congregations to appreciate the cultures of other people, including Muslims.
- Non-governmental organizations should also join in sponsoring church programs that can reach out to Muslims, like those that target poor Muslims.
- Christians should start practicing Christianity from their houses (Christianity should become a lifestyle or witnessing through modeling). This should begin

with parents who should be good examples to their children so that they can learn how to communicate the Gospel well to the Muslims.

- The economy impacts on religion in that it shapes people and makes them convert to other religions. The church should sponsor the youths and train them in specific jobs and also teach them how to be self-employed to avoid being influenced to change to another religion because of poverty.
- Christians should teach their children to appreciate their religion. All the church children need to be trained with regard to the doctrines of the church.
- The Christian community should appreciate the Muslims. First they should observe and respect the commission of the Lord, and second, they should practically participate in mission work in order to share the Gospel effectively. An arrogant attitude enables the Muslims to take advantage of the available opportunities to expand their religion. The church should also go back and accommodate the Muslims in their social, political and cultural life.
- Inter- relations between Muslims and Christians should be improved.
- The church should study the culture of Muslims. All those aspiring to be missionaries and pastors must undertake courses in cultural anthropology.
- Education should include the understanding of the Qur'an. Islam as a religion should be taught in Christian seminaries and institutions in order to broaden the understanding of Islam both as a culture and a religion.
- The evangelical churches should exercise tolerance and also determine the level of engagement. They should not borrow any of their cultural practices, rather they should encourage the Muslims to drop the bad aspects of their culture and embrace the good aspects of it.
- Christian schools should be sensitized to teach children about the Muslim religion.

The attitude of mission work should sink deep into the church and this aspect needs urgent attention. This could only be realized if the churches equipped its own members with information about the Muslims for them to be able to reach out. Theological Schools and Bible Colleges should teach its students on mission work. Other than just introducing Mission Studies in Colleges and theological seminaries, other programs must be introduced to include the technique of reaching out to Muslims. Institutions are supposed to have enough teachers and materials to learn the art of missions. Asked whether training pastors alone was enough in reaching out, the respondents observed that God had never been taken by surprise and as such one should not entirely rely on education and training only.

4.9 CONCLUSION

In carrying out the field research, the researcher used focus groups targeting a population of 238 people. The oral interviews were done by way of a question and answer method using voice recording. The recording was done by a research assistant, who also took notes as appropriate. The researcher moderated and monitored the voice recordings and took notes relating to the demeanour of the respondents.

The researcher analysed the data and reached certain findings, key of which is that the efforts by the evangelical churches to advance mission to Muslims is an on-going process. Some of the ways in use include evangelistic campaigns, prayer groups, social gatherings and the individual engagements. The interviewees said that the churches were facing various problems that negatively impact on mission to Muslims. These include division among the selected churches, lack of transparency in undertaking church business, insufficient training of personnel, financial constraints, different belief systems between Christians and Muslims, misinterpretation of the Bible by Muslims and an apprehension that Muslims apparently associate with terrorist groups. Some of the interviewees suggested that the churches need to enhance unity among themselves and have a proper understanding of the purpose of mission. They regretted that women and the youth were apparently not sufficiently involved in activities of mission.

The researcher observed that the process of mission was very slow, as only a few Muslims have been converted to Christianity. It was also apparent that there is hardly proper teaching on the trinity and there is poor understanding of the mission field. The selected churches have internal conflicts that immensely hinder activities of God's mission. These findings justify the researcher's thesis that the select evangelical churches are in dire need of a workable model for advancing mission to the people of other faiths. Further, the findings confirm the topical nature of the problem at hand and enhance the viability of the model formulated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

MISSION TO MUSLIMS IN LIGHT OF THE *MISSIO DEI*: A PROPOSED MODEL

‘By definition, missiological research is the process of consilience with the
missio Dei as its purpose’⁵⁸

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Developing a new model in an environment of major cultural change, leadership, and group identity is relevant, but challenging. The 21st Century is without any doubt a period of major cultural change that informs every major cultural, religious, and biblical institution. The search for a new sense of denominational unity and a hermeneutical principle in missiological studies in many parts of the world is a sign of this cultural change. Added to that is the rise of international leaders (disciples). As the church participates in these times of change, renewal activities establish a new sense of community and worship for which traditional leadership structures are not always adequate. Many missiologists, scholars, seminarians and individual missionaries have attempted to come up with practical ways to engage the Muslim world with the Gospel. These stakeholders have advanced different models that have been and are still being researched.

A fresh look at the existing individual models and their proposals is needed to assist these renewed activities in their quest for new forms of cross-cultural relationships and new patterns of leadership (discipleship). Some of the models currently being tested are included in the theories advanced by Vester (2003:51-54). They include:

- Apologetics and dialogue: This approach seeks to defend one’s faith, understand one’s opponent and learn from one another without trying to proselytize each other.
- Contextualization: Bringing the Gospel into the context of the Muslims and into the language and symbols of their understanding.
- Mutuality in mission: Seeking a position that compromises for the sake of solidarity and cooperation between Muslims and Christians in their missionary activities.
- Friendship evangelism: Bridging the gap between Christians and Muslims by establishing friendship mostly on social grounds first. This

⁵⁸ Elliston on the assumptions to missiological research pg xxii.

subsequently leads to confidence on the part of the Muslims to engage with the Gospel.

- Footsteps evangelism: Encouraging the Christians in Islamic countries to walk the walk and talk the talk by imitating Christ Jesus.

TD Mashau (2003) provides one comprehensive approach in his article entitled '*The belief in one God as a contact point in the Christian mission among the Muslims*'. The proposition to bridge the gap between these two faiths challenges both Christians and Muslims to agree on the issue that the God of Islam is the same God of Christianity. Nonetheless, the truth that there is a difference in conception between the God of Islam (Allah) and that of Christianity (Trinity) is undeniable. Like Paul in Athens, Christians engaging Muslims must look at Muslims as worshipping an 'UNKNOWN' God (Acts 17:23-31). Again, whenever missionaries use 'the belief in one God' as a contact point in their engagement with Muslims, they curb or avoid the Trinitarian controversy⁵⁹ at an early stage of their encounter (Mashau, 2003:14). This assists in opening up doors for further discussions on conceptual issues.

Mashau's (2003:15) model further encourages the Christian missionaries to bridge the gap between Muslims and themselves using the 'belief in one God' as a contact point in order to create ample environment for studying the Holy books together (the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Bible). This will enable both parties to find solutions to all the problems arising from their discourses. Furthermore, this fosters trust as it allows for opportunities to share the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith in a friendly, open and honest way. The 'belief in one God' as a contact point ensures that Christian missionaries are faithful to Christ's call as outlined in His Great commission (Matthew 28:16-20). This gives them the required boldness as they march to the battlefield without fear. It is the Lord's command that they should submit to His Lordship rather than attempt to explain all the Christian dogmas logically. Above all, the 'belief in one God' as a contact point ensures that doors of salvation are opened to the Muslims without fear of shutting the doors of communication.

Mashau's model acts as a link to the viable model developed by this research because it outlines the beginning point as God, whom as discussed in the entire thesis, is the initiator, sustainer and fulfiller of mission. The High Five model in turn acknowledges first and foremost that before engaging Muslims, Christians must build

⁵⁹ The problem arising because of the way God is conceptualized. On the one hand, Muslims reject the Christian view of God as pure polytheism due to the Christian teaching on the Trinity. On the other hand, Christians reject the Unitarian monotheist view, which calls for antithetical approach to Muslim evangelism (Mashau, 2003:14).

bridges that connect them to the Muslim faith. Such bridges, otherwise known as contact points, are crucial in all engagements at all levels.

In order to avoid proselytizing, the model for the evaluation of the evangelical church in Eldoret takes into account all of the elements presented in the literature as reviewed in chapters two and three, as well as the issues raised in chapter one. The driving force for this model is the material that emerged in chapter four, the analysis and findings chapter. Owing to the general findings and suggestions of those engaging the Muslims in Eldoret, a viable model supported by five cardinal elements represented by a 'high five' concept emerges. God's desire to bring blessings to people of other faiths through His Church in Eldoret, Kenya is evidenced by the activities of His faithful servants and His Spirit throughout the world, Eldoret included. Transforming the evangelical church in Eldoret from a non-performing missional entity to a performing agent in the light of the *missio Dei* is core to the study.

The following model is in the form of a greeting to acknowledge the work that has been going on and to complement the work that is on-going. Equally important, it transfers good wishes for the work that must continue. A handshake is a sign of satisfaction, a well done note. The 'High five' concept says: I acknowledge the work, but there is more to be done and you can do it. The way to do the work is to do it cheerfully. The five fingers represent five cardinal models that, if implemented correctly will hopefully ensure effective engagement with Muslims in light of the *missio Dei*.

High five concept

Source: Rebecca 2013

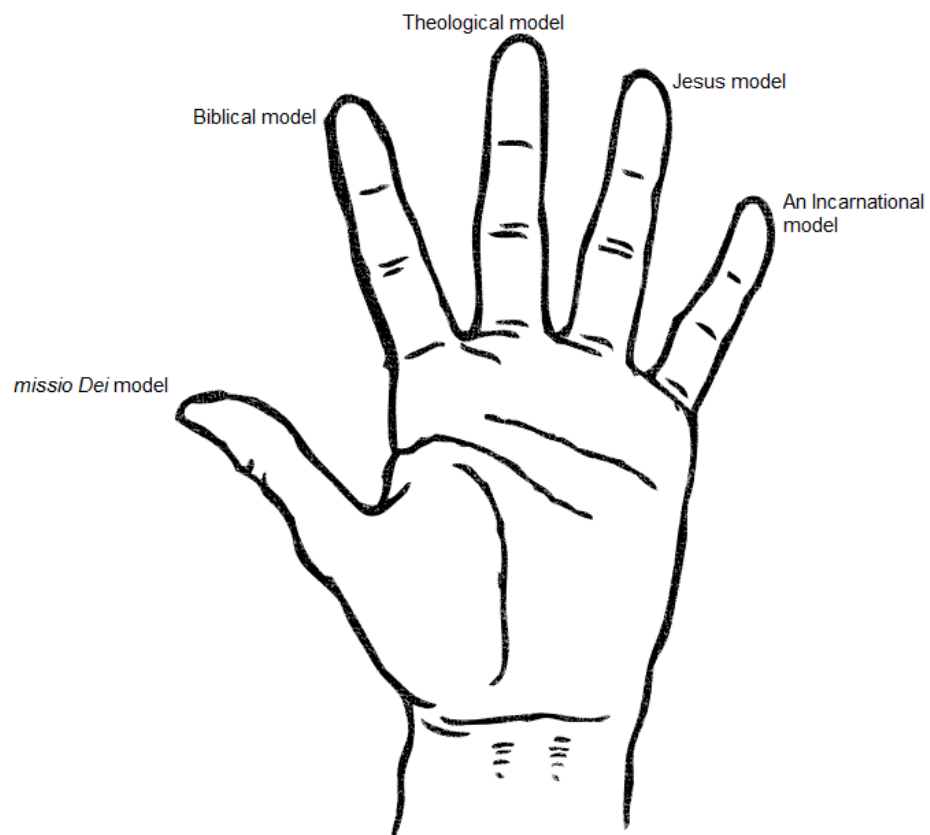


Figure 4: High five concept

Figure 4 above represents the five models of mission namely: *missio Dei* model, biblical model, theological model, Jesus model and the incarnation model. Each finger symbolizes the role of each model as a cardinal element and the whole hand signifies the unity of the models as they interrelate to form a viable model.

5.2 THE HIGH FIVE CONCEPT

The 'high five concept' is an idea developed by the researcher to illustrate the five supportive models of mission. These models together form one viable model for engaging the Muslims in Eldoret, Kenya. Symbolized by a high five greeting, the model looks at the role of the Church as God's agent in His *missio Dei*. The five fingers represent the five aspects of the *missio Dei* namely: the *missio Dei* model, the Biblical model, the theological model, the Jesus model and the incarnation model.

The 'high five' sign is frequently used in the business world to motivate both partners and clients (Gelatt, 1989:252-256). Consultants use the 'high five' concept to incorporate messages into a variety of products, workshops and speeches. Some use the concept in learning forums to teach young people, parents and teachers. A 'high five' greeting provides a sense of belonging on both ends and supposes a relaxed mood. 'Gimme 5: A Fresh Nutrition Concept for Students' is one of nine funded research studies by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) based on the significant inverse association between the intake of vegetables and fruits and cancer risk. This was a five day goal program to evaluate population-based strategies to increase fruit and vegetable consumption of high school students in the largest metropolitan area in Louisiana. Like the 'high five' concept greeting developed in this study, the 'Gimme 5' program was designed to create an environment in which predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing factors described in the model positively affected daily consumption of fruit and vegetables. Consistent with the model, specific program components addressed the following levels of behaviour change: awareness development, interest stimulation, skills training, reinforcement, application and maintenance⁶⁰ and the approach reported gracious results after five

⁶⁰Nicklas, T. A., Johnson, C. C., Myers, L., Farris, R. P. and Cunningham, A. (1998), Outcomes of a High School Program to Increase Fruit and Vegetable Consumption: *Gimme 5* — A Fresh Nutrition Concept for Students. *Journal of School Health*, 68: 248–253. doi: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.1998.tb06348.x

days. The successful results achieved by the 'Gimme' 5 program serves as motivation for the creation of a 'high five' model aimed at mission work.

5.3 MISSIO DEI MODEL

A comparative analysis of the common perceptions of leaders and members of the five evangelical churches in Eldoret, Kenya shows a lack of understanding of the concept *missio Dei*. This gives rise to the need to re-introduce, re-interpret, and re-apply the concept. The evangelical church needs a review of this concept. The following vital questions need to be considered: Is the Church of Christ in Eldoret in trouble? Is her mission to Muslims burdensome? Is this God's work or man's?

In the *missio Dei* model, effort is made to distinguish between the function and purpose of the church in relation to God's mission. The Church is God's agent in His *missio Dei*, an instrument, and the outcome of the work is the kingdom of God. The pragmatic church is one of the principal agents of mission as one of God's saving projects for the redemption of the world (Hull, 2006:5). The evangelical Church in Eldoret is a representation of this empirical church of God in the world. While it has a responsibility to participate in the *missio Dei*, it needs not feel burdened, troubled or overweighed by the work of reaching out to Muslims, unless it has assumed ownership of this divine work. This is because, whereas the Church is called upon in the undertaking of the *missio Dei*, God is the one who initiates, sustains and accomplishes His mission. As an agent, the Church should always trust the one who owns mission with all her burdens and joyfully participate in this noble work. This is not to underplay the work of the Holy Spirit who empowers the Church. However, the evangelical church in Eldoret must always remember its call and role in the participation in the mission of Jesus, who proclaimed the coming of the kingdom in His life, His words and His deeds. In order to achieve this goal, the evangelical church in Eldoret needs to re-examine its approaches towards engaging Muslims.

Everyone needs a fresh start in life. The notion of a fresh start comes from nature itself. A new day is a beginning of a new beginning. So is a new start in one's experience of life. When one wakes up every day, one experiences a new start. At the end of every week, one can look forward to the beginning of another week. People often experience a new start when they get into a new month. One of the most jubilating times in one's life is when they cross over into a new year. Celebrations, best wishes expressed both in words and gift cards, and prayers are said all over the world as loved ones get together once more. People make new resolutions, pledge to love more, improve their wellbeing and that of others at the

onset of every New Year. Emotions characterize such moments as people forgive each other, make new friends, marry, start a family or change jobs.

In Christian circles, people use the beginning of the year to make up with their friends, forgive each other, start up new projects such as setting up new mission fields, or setting aside funds to support missionaries. These practices are common to the membership and followership of Eldoret evangelical churches too. One of the areas requiring a new start among the churches in this town is the area of engaging Muslims. A respondent hinted that although his church made resolutions to engage their Muslim neighbours every eve of the New Year, there had been little or no effort to keep up the commitment. This church and other evangelical churches require a new model, a new start in order to honor their resolutions.

In chapter 2 and 3, the research established two critical models as far as mission engagement to people of other faiths are concerned. The two are Biblical and theological models, both of which expounded the roles of the Triune God, that of Jesus as Lord and Saviour of the world, and Christ's role as the link between God and men, i.e. His incarnation link between Christians and people of other faiths. A new model may be equated with nutrition experts who have developed various ways of improving people's health. The analogies below have been used to demonstrate how such renewed approaches will give the evangelical church the feeling of a new start in life.

5.3.1 The Newstart concept

'NEWSTART'⁶¹ is an acronym developed by health scientists to promote eight laws of health. This acronym is here employed to illustrate evangelical Church's steps towards a new beginning in its undertaking of the *missio Dei* in Eldoret. The letters are substituted with a relevant meaning for understanding the goals:

- (N) Nutrition – Spiritual nourishment, which includes a better understanding of Scripture.
- (E) Exercise – Engaging in mission by participating in God's *missio Dei*.
- (W) Water – Symbolizes the life of a believer, cleansing of sin.
- (S) Sunlight – Represents the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believers.
- (T) Temperance –The ability for the Church to love instead of dispensing hate.
- (A) Air – New and fresh ideas to guide the Church.

⁶¹Copyright © 2012 - NEWSTART® is a registered trademark of Weimar Center of Health & Education, Weimar, CA 95736, USA.<http://www.newstart.com/newstart/what-is-newstart/>. Accessed, 6/11/2012.

- (R) Rest – Provides a time for the Church to refresh, refill and recharge spiritually.
- (T) Trust in divine power – Discovering the ultimate purpose of life, which understands God's truth entailed in His *missio Dei*.

5.3.1.1 *Spiritual Nutrition and the missio Dei*

“Proper nutrition is the foundation of good health and recovery. Cooking classes, meals, and cookbooks all demonstrate the variety appeal, and satisfaction of whole plant food vegetarian cuisine. In addition, physicians explain the issues that link nutrition with health or disease in their lectures”⁶².



Figure 5: Spiritual nutrition

Source: NEWSTART excerpt

Figure 5 relates physical nutrition to spiritual nutrition

Spiritual nourishment should not be underestimated. Proper habits of Bible study and prayer life characterize a Christian with a healthy mind. Important is the growth and development of a disciple of Christ. Just like physical food provides physical growth, strength and development in a person's life, so does spiritual food. Nutritionists speak of a well-balanced meal to sustain life and enable a person to stay away from disease and sickness. Spirituality too requires a well-balanced lifestyle and spiritual diet to maintain a healthy spiritual life. Christ's object lessons are drawn from day-to-day experiences, including readings from Scripture and a life consecrated to prayer.

A balanced spiritual life is one that connects with God vertically and with man horizontally. To stay connected to God requires a formed habit that hears God whenever He speaks. Hearing God and developing a conversational relationship with

⁶² Ibid.

Him means being close to Him. It goes beyond a formal relationship to one that trusts in God to communicate heartily at all times. Hearing God means telling Him what is in one's heart in prayer. It involves hearing and understanding what is written in His Word. Importantly, hearing God is being filled with the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, hearing God is exercising one's will to trust in the ways of God, and pledging to do exactly as His Word tells one to do (Willard, 1999:9-13).

Christ is the reason to communicate and listen to God's voice. Speaking of His will, Christ made it clear to His listeners that His food was to do the Father's will (John 4:34cf John 5:30; 7:17; 8:29). The New Living Translation puts it in the right context: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me and from finishing His work". Other renditions use the word 'meat' for food (KJV). God's will for Christ rested on His love to the world and saving the world from sin and eternal death. This was Christ's food while on earth. He walked, worked, and lived this purpose until His death on the cross. At Calvary, the weight of sin upon Him became so much. Christ prayed to the father to take the cup away from Him (Luke 22:42, Mark 14:36). Still, He asked for the Father's will and not His own will. The Father's will triumphant at last, He died, rose, and ascended to Heaven. Christ's exemplarily life is demonstrated through finding nourishment in the Father's will. His disciples were expected to learn from the master and find nourishment in His will too. At the end of His ministry, Christ taught His disciples how to pray. In their prayer, they should invoke the will of their heavenly Father (Matthew 6:10). To do the will of the Father on earth as it is in heaven is to accomplish the work that Christ begun. It is to take the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20). Doing the will of Christ is more than reflecting a mere general concern for world affairs to conform to God's will, rather, it is the burning need for God and His children to be in constant communication, so that God may be a constant guiding presence in their individual lives and they as disciples may be willing to cry loud to the world to turn from their sinful ways (Willard, 1999:9).

Chapter two of the thesis discussed at length the role of Scripture in mission as a grand narrative in the *missio Dei*. The OT attested to the role of God's people through Abraham as agents to His mission. The failure of Israel as a nation resulted from her failure to trust in the ways of Yahweh. Disobedience to His commands can be equated to malnourishment, which eventually led to their spiritual damnation. The evangelical church in Eldoret can learn from the mistakes of Israel. A life of disobedience to the commands of the Lord leads to spiritual darkness. On the other hand, a life of obedience is a blessing in one's spiritual life.

5.3.1.2 Spiritual Exercise and *missio Dei*



Figure 6: Spiritual exercise

Source: NEWSTART excerpt

Figure 6 above is a picture of a man doing some press-ups. This relates exercise to *missio Dei*.

“Action is a law of life. Muscle tone and strength are lost without exertion, but exercise improves the health of body, mind, and spirit, multiplying vitality and health. Exercise therapy includes outdoor exercise, treadmill evaluations and stretch exercise. The many trails through beautiful surroundings beckon you to walk, walk, walk, but indoor exercise equipment is available”⁶³.

Action in one’s Christian life is a law of life too. In Mathew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:15-16, Christ gives a command to His disciples to go to the whole world to preach the Gospel. The disciples never understood the implication and magnitude of Christ’s words as far as the implementation of the command was concerned. It was only after they had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2) and also after Christ breathed His Spirit (John 20:22) into them that they realized the weight of true discipleship. In his book entitled ‘*Global mission handbook: A guide for cross-cultural service*’, Hoke and Taylor (2009:15-17) outline ten steps to a personal fitness assessment towards beginning a journey to the nations. The steps are: getting ready, discovering your ministry identity in the body of Christ, exposure to the cultures, critical issues in schooling and support raising, church and agency connecting and courting, ministry role and assignment, hands-on missionary training, apprenticeships and internships, lifelong learning and finishing strong.

⁶³Ibid.

In their illustrative diagram, Hoke and Taylor (2009:15) present a young woman with a backpack, dressed in a casual outfit and comfortable shoes. This image paints the picture of a person who has just begun a long journey. Naturally, long journeys require physical strength, enough mental preparation and a great deal of faith. Like physical exercise, spiritual exercise requires enough preparation too. The journey to the mission field is one that presents challenges of a higher magnitude than words can describe. Yohannan (2004:17) speaks of his own experience as one filled with difficulties that could only be overcome by God's amazing provisions for each step along the way. It is characterized by soft, choking sobs and the conviction of the Holy Spirit over the hearts of men and women to undertake the *missio Dei*.

The choice to leave home, village and family, business or career to go to a place where one would be hated and feared is one that could terrify the soul. Only those who have experienced this can testify to it. It is like an athlete who trains for a world marathon with confidence, only to face many obstacles along the way during the actual race. As athletes flex their physical muscles towards the finish line, Christ's disciples in every generation and age must flex their spiritual muscles towards the finish line too. This they do as they take comfort in Christ's words: "and lo, I will be with you till the end of the times" (Mathew 28:20). This promise motivates Christ's disciples to fix their eyes on Jesus, who is the author and finisher of their faith (Hebrews 12:2). This enables them to say with Paul, "[n]ow there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:8).

The evangelical church in Eldoret must exercise their spiritual power in order to engage in the *missio Dei* among the Muslims. They too must flex their spiritual muscles and expand their understanding of God's work. In committing to the call to take the Gospel to the Muslims in Eldoret, they will be exercising their call to go to the whole world. The Gospel awaits them in other parts of the country where Muslims reside too. They cannot have enough energy to reach these parts unless they learn to exercise this God-given power and authority to their immediate neighbours. Like Hoke and Taylor (2009:17) reiterate, cross-cultural ministry is crucial to character development. Understanding this ministry well is crucial, particularly in an activist Christian sub-culture that values task accomplishment and activity, like Eldoret town. The view of leaders who do not finish well and strong is attributed to a failure to take specific steps forward in sync with the Spirit. It is the lack of proper time in prayer, on

planning how to actively get involved, but importantly, it is the failure to flex the spiritual muscle to its potential.

5.3.1.3 Water and missio Dei



Figure 7: Water

Source: NEWSTART excerpt

Figure 7 above is a representation of what water does to both our physical and spiritual beings

“Because the body is 70% water, keeping well hydrated and knowing what and when to drink are essential to health. Hydrotherapy (water applied externally to the body) followed by massage enhances the circulation and immune system in wonderful ways”⁶⁴. Water is a symbol of cleanliness, both inside and outside. In one of the suburban areas of Eldoret town, there is a dam called *Baharini*. During the interviews, one of the respondents noted that although there were no Muslims in his place of residence, some Muslims had bought land and put up a mosque near the *Baharini* area. This area was said to be fertile and a source of water for both domestic and industrial use. These attributes have made *Baharini* an expensive area in Eldoret. Moreover, water is essential to life and settlement at all times.

In the Bible, water symbolizes life. Jesus gave living water to the woman at the well in Samaria (Exodus 17:1-7, John 4:13-15 cf John 4:14; 7:38). His living water quenches the thirst of those who come to Him (Isaiah 44:3, John 7:31, Revelation 7: 16-17; 22:17) and brings healing to the souls. His fountain of water never runs dry (Proverbs 5:15-20, Jeremiah 2:13, Revelation 22:1). His water cleanses men from their sins (John 3:6; 4:1-10, Acts 2:38). The respondents indicated that many Christian believers were thirsty for the truth of the Gospel. They

⁶⁴ Ibid.

emphasized their willingness to become fishers of men and engage Muslims on condition that they received proper discipleship and training. In Christ, who is the source of the living water, these churches may find rest. Their membership needs to suffer no more for lack of knowledge. All that is needed is to direct the members and believers to the source of life is Christ Jesus. He promises never to cast anyone away (John 6:37).

Baptism both by water and Spirit is a sign of growth and faith in Christianity. Mathew 28:18-20 admonishes the disciples to go to the world to preach the Gospel. One of the things they must do is baptize the believers in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Water baptism cannot be underplayed in Christian discipleship. By accepting to go through baptism, one is pledging to die to sin with Christ, be buried with Him in transgression, and be resurrected to the newness of holy living with Him. It is a procedure that even Christ as the son of man had to undergo (Matthew 3:13-16). Mark 16:16 indicates that life is possible when one believes and is baptized. It also indicates that a believer who does not go through baptism will be lost. The story of Nicodemus is an illustration of that new birth.

Christ demonstrates His love by inviting all those who would be saved to a new birth both by water and Spirit. As a sign of acceptance and relationship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all the believers enter into a new relationship with the family of God and are counted as His children, the heirs of His kingdom. Baptism by water signifies the relationship between Christ and His body, the Church. Anyone who is not united with Him and His body has no union in His life, death, resurrection and ascension. The evangelical churches in Eldoret must include this important process in their mission engagements to Muslims. Muslim background believers who went through baptism demonstrated a great faith amidst persecution by fellow Muslims. One respondent who had converted from Islam to Christianity testified to this.

5.2.1.4 Sunlight and missio Dei

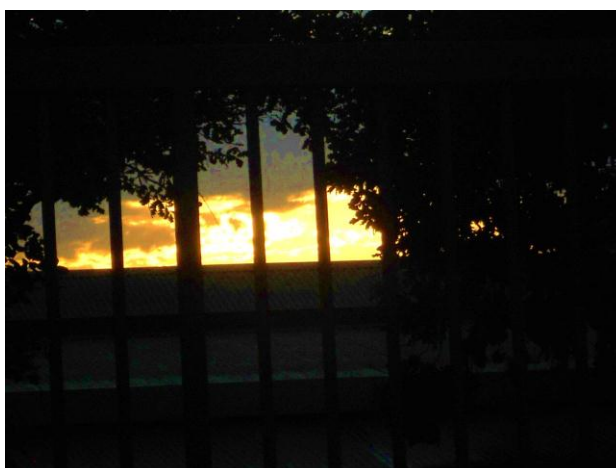


Figure 8: Sun shine

Source: Rebecca 2013.

Figure 8 above illustrates the relevance of sunlight of our health. This is equated to the role of the Spirit in the life of a believer.

“The sun is the established energy source ordained by God to sustain the cycle of life for plants and animals. Abundant in California, sunlight is supremely important for the body’s metabolism and hormonal balance”⁶⁵. Just like the sun, the Holy Spirit is the ordained source to sustain the cycle of life for human beings. In the Old Testament, the presence of God was experienced in Israel, both in the wilderness and in the temple in Jerusalem. In both cases, the presence of God was marked by His glorious appearance to His people (Exodus 33:15, 16 cf I Kings 8:11). As long as God’s presence was among His people, everything was fine (Psalms 68:15; 84:1). However, Israel failed to honour the Lord, their God so that His glory departed from them soon after the destruction of the temple (Ezekiel 10). The prophecies of Malachi 3:1 nonetheless gave hope to Israel, for the Lord promised to come back to His temple. Although the temple was rebuilt, its hope was short-lived so that the prophet Haggai decried its state. This temple apparently never saw the light of God’s glory in it (Haggai 2:3).

According to Green (2004:127), the coming of the Messiah saw the fulfillment of the prophecies of the prophet Malachi. In the four Gospels, Jesus embodied the new temple in His own person (John 2:13-22). Shortly before He went up to heaven, Christ made a promise to His disciples. John 15:26 and 16:12-15 outlines the work of the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Truth. His work includes guiding the Church into all the truth, attesting to what Christ spoke,

⁶⁵ Ibid.

convicting the world of its sins, reminding the world of the coming righteous judgments of God. As a believing community, the evangelical church in Eldoret owes their life together as a body to their common, lavish experience of the Holy Spirit (Fee, 1996:66). This role of the Spirit in the midst of His people is important because it unites a Jew and a Gentile, slave and free man, male and female in the goal of the *missio Dei*. The Spirit in mission does more than just uniting the community of believers in fellowship. The comforter comes not in order to allow men to be comfortable, but to make them missionaries. It is to equip the Disciples of Christ for mission.

Green (2004:71-93) outlines several ways by which the Spirit in mission serves the body of Christ. First as the author, controller and energizer of the Church, the Spirit initiates mission so that mission begins from Jerusalem, Samaria, Judea, to the ends of the world. This role is crucial for the evangelical church in Eldoret given the respondent's view that the believers did not know how to begin engaging their Muslim neighbours. Second, the Spirit universalizes mission so that all who have been baptized into it go out to proclaim the good news according to the prophecies given in Scripture (Joel 2:16ff, Luke 3:22, Acts 1:5). The result is good news to all (II Corinthians 3, Acts 2:5-11; 3:25, Hebrews 8 and 10). Third, the Spirit uses testimony so that many Christian people bear witness to Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and His imminent coming (Acts 1:11).

Fourth, the Spirit convicts and attracts those who would be saved. Every step of a believer's process of salvation is governed by the Holy Spirit's involvement. Significantly, it is the work of the sovereign Spirit to enable men and women in new situations and in new cultural forms to find the ways in which to confess Jesus as Lord in the language of their own culture (Newbigin, 1972:22). In John 16:8, the Spirit acted as a prosecuting counsel, convicting the person of their sin. Muslims in Eldoret become attracted to salvation because the Spirit makes Jesus attractive to them. It is the Spirit that bears witness to Jesus and glorifies Him (John 15:26; 16:14). Lastly, but importantly, the Spirit brings repentance and faith. It was the Spirit that fell upon Cornelius (a Gentile) and convicted him to repentance. He is counted as one of the benefactors of the gift of repentance possible only to the Jews then. Later, Acts 5:31 and II Timothy 2:25, recorded many Gentiles who came to repentance too.

Christianity is a gift possible only by the adoption of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit has adopted the evangelical church in Eldoret into the faith. It is the task of the Christians to engage the Muslims in this town so that they too may become members of the family of God by adoption. Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6 contain the good news that all those who have become children of God have been adopted to the

family by the Spirit alongside Jesus. Ephesians 2:12-18 mentions the access given by the Holy Spirit to the believers through the self-sacrifice of Christ. Evangelical Christians can rejoice that they are no longer strangers and foreigners in their land, but fellow citizens with the Old Testament believers and in the very household of God. If this is true of them, then the same can be said of the Muslim believers who come to Christ. The Spirit unites the Church, the believers and all who will be believers so that in the Spirit, they belong to Christ (Romans 8:9).

5.3.1.5 Temperance and missio Dei

“Using good things moderately and avoiding the bad is obviously wise, yet often hard to practice. Temperance can be neither bought nor earned, but is rather an important gift of God, a “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22, 23). Moderation in all things is a thread woven throughout the fabric of ‘NEWSTART’ Lifestyle programs”⁶⁶.



Figure 9: Temperance

Source: NEWSTART excerpt

Figure 9 above contains drinks that maybe harmful to one's health if not taken in moderation. This figure illustrates the significance of having self-control as a Christian.

In a world full of conflict, freedom and indulgences, living a balanced Christian life is challenging and frustrating at times. Paul's letter to the Galatians demonstrates difficulties in belief when the flesh and the Spirit are competing within the human heart. According to Cousar (1982:135), the desires of one are bent on intercepting the desires of the other and hence cause frustration. Even though individuals may have perfect intentions to do something worthwhile, often it is the flesh that gets to work and as a consequence throws what the commentator calls 'a monkey-wrench' operation. This operation prevents any action from taking place. However, hope

⁶⁶ Ibid.

comes to light when the works of the flesh and those of the Spirit are compared. The works of the flesh are plain, they cannot be hidden or mistaken (Martin, 1997:542-543). Cousar (1982:135) indicates the plurality of the fruits of the flesh. This plural suggestion characterizes the visible conduct of these fruits of the flesh as follows: outburst of hostility of strife, occasions of selfishness, and drinking bouts. The reward for such behaviour is forfeiting the kingdom of God. In contrast, the Spirit leads the singularity of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are important for communal interrelationships as well as inter-cultural co-existence. For the Apostle Paul, the quality of community relationships was very important (Dunn & Rogerson, 2003:1383).

Additionally, the majority of the respondents in Eldoret mentioned that Muslims were perceived to be intemperate in nature apparently because many people perceive them as persons who lose their tempers easily, especially when provoked. As a result of this knowledge, respondents were of the opinion that extreme care and a high sense of temperance was required when dealing with them. Some of the things they cited as provoking the Muslims included such issues as high-handedness and double standards witnessed in the lives of the majority of the evangelical believers in Eldoret town. Such behaviour annoys the Muslims. Importantly, such hypocritical behaviour no doubt hinders the efforts of engaging Muslims with the Gospel.

A Spirit-filled life can solve the problem of double standards among Christians. A life lived in the Spirit enables believers to love God sincerely and also to love their neighbours as themselves. Intemperate behaviour and hypocrisy does not build the body of Christ because it gratifies the self instead of honouring God. Christian caregiving is a way of life that requires temperance, according to Haugk (1984:11-14). The Spirit helps the believer by curing spiritual maladies. He, the Spirit, also enables the believers to study God's Word diligently, depend on the saviour's true promises, and live a victorious life in the sinful world. The Spirit of God is a faithful guide towards the journey of heaven.

By accepting a life filled with the Holy Spirit, the evangelical church must choose to abstain from acts of violence, drunkenness, conformity to the world in the way they eat, drink and have pleasure. Young people must learn to exercise self-control in matters of purity and stop engaging in pre-marital sex. Such behaviours misrepresent the true religion of God. On the one hand, evangelical churches must learn to care for each other and stop taking advantage of one another. Wealthy Christians should take special care not to mistreat or take advantage of the poor. On the other hand, there must be an effort to solve the wrangles between brethren.

These wrangles bring quarrels and hinder the work of God among the unbelievers. Also, there must be an effort to sensitize all the members on the importance of living and maintaining a balanced life that shows self-control in everything that is good and avoids everything that is harmful. Such a life is possible only by adhering to the laws and commands of the Lord.

5.3.1.6 Air and missio Dei

Figure 10 below is a picture of a blue clear atmosphere filled with pure and fresh air. “The body’s most essential resource is air. More important than food or water, proper breathing and pure air are fundamental to good health. Fresh, clear mountain air surrounds the beautiful natural environment of Weimar Center”⁶⁷ in America.



Figure 10: Air

Source: NEWSTART excerpt

Figure 10 above shows how pure air fills the atmosphere. As it blows, it purifies and spreads the particles around it. So is the breath of life from God, it purifies men of sin and gives freedom to the believers.

The continent of Africa is known to be a paradise of natural resources such as mountains, water bodies like lakes, rivers and oceans. Forests and trees characterize most parts of Africa. Eldoret, Kenya, is an area dominated by tree vegetation. Rivers such as the Sosiani, and Kipkaren, Oltiyani Sapuk and Kapkei to mention a few, empty themselves to a waterfall known as Sellby falls. These falls are a useful resource that taps water for hydroelectric power as well as providing clean water for domestic use. The Sellby falls provides a home to many birds and animals. It is a good place for leisure and tourism too. At the top of the Sellby falls are beautiful trees and rocks that provide fresh air. One can also catch a beautiful view of Eldoret from there.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Air (breath of life) is a gift from God to humanity in creation. Genesis 2:7 gives an account of how God formed man from the dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life so that man became a living soul soon after. The significance of a life lived with Godly breath is twofold. Life originates from God and ends with Him. According to Rutherford (1929:31), the means by which God gave life to man is plainly stated in the words of Genesis 2:7, “[t]he Lord God formed ...and breathed into his nostrils the breadth of life, and the man became a living being”. God did not give man immortality. He made man a creature, a breathing, sentient being, which is a soul. This explains the reason why Job (1:21) says that the Lord gave, and the Lord took. However, God created man to live, not for Him to die. God could not purposely take away a life He created. Men die when they sin against the laws of God (Romans 3:23). It was sin and disobedience to the laws of God that brought life to an end (I John 3:4, Matthew 5:19, Acts 23:3). Nevertheless, Christ came so that man could have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10 cf Philippians 2:16, I Corinthians 1:8). In Christ, humanity has been redeemed and given a second lease on life. Those who accept Christ must be born again into a new life of God – the author of life (John 3:7). Again, it is God who gives life by faith through Christ Jesus, the saviour of the world (John 3:16).

Proper understanding of our source of life is a good understanding of our destiny as well. As a people of God, who must breathe life from Him, the evangelical church in Eldoret may remember to preserve this God-given gift for purposes of His glory. God’s original purpose for man in the Genesis account of creation was to enjoy life and take care of God’s creation. God depended on man to water the gardens and look after the creation He had made. In the second lease on life, God in His *missio Dei* calls upon His Church to do the same. That is, take care of His creation, which includes his body as the temple of God, the environment where he lives, which includes other creations, and thirdly and most importantly, take care of His mission, which means becoming a faithful agent of God’s *missio Dei*. If the evangelical church in Eldoret ever runs short of God’s breath of life, they should ask the Spirit. The Spirit’s work is to revive and give life to God’s disciples to go out and preach the Gospel.

The evidence of pure and fresh spiritual experience was first given to the disciples by Jesus before His ascension. As illustrated in figure 7 above, air is characterized by freshness and purity. These are symbols of renewal of strength and fullness of life. Before Christ went to heaven, He breathed His Spirit to His disciples, commanding them to go into the whole world (John 20:22). This breath was so fresh and pure that as soon as Jesus ascended, the disciples were filled with ‘fire’. Filled

with new strength and power, they went out to prophesy in the name of Christ Jesus, the risen Lord. Everywhere they went, people were healed. Like in Ezekiel (37:1-14), their prophecies gave life to many people who were dead in their transgressions. And as bone by bone, joint by joint, flesh by flesh received healing, the work of the kingdom expanded. Such is the revival needed in God's Church in Eldoret.

5.2.1.7 Rest and *missio Dei*



Figure 11: Rest

Source: NEWSTART excerpt

Figure 11 above is a picture of a person resting peacefully. Jesus promises rest to all who come to him. This illustration shows that when one is in Christ, they will have peace of mind.

The figure above demonstrates ultimate rest, only possible when one trusts in the leading of the *missio Dei* in one's life. Restoration requires rest because sleep allows the body to renew itself. Many types of rest are important for health, but the sweetest rest follows labour. "Early to bed and early to rise" is a vital 'NEWSTART' principle, and a healthy lifestyle makes this principle easier to maintain"⁶⁸. Prayer provides for a healthy way for Christians to rest their burdens. Jesus beckons His disciples to come to Him in time of need (Matthew 11:28).

A time of rest is a time of spiritual reflection. This is a time when one takes stock of one's walk and work with God in His *missio Dei*. It is a common saying that 'change is as good as rest'. Missionaries too must make time in their missionary engagements to pray and have fellowship with the members of the church, the body

⁶⁸ Ibid.

of Christ. As part of the body, they need to be engaged in mission work, but it must be coordinated to feed and connect with the body through His living Word and prayer. This is made possible in observing the fourth commandment, which provides for rest on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8ff). It is impossible to carry one's burdens to the Lord when one is working round the clock. The Lord's life of prayer presents a good example to His would-be disciples in every age. The Lord made it a habit to connect with His father through prayer on a daily basis when on earth (Mark 1:35.). He believed in prayer (Matthew 7:7-11; 21:22, Mark 9:28-29; 11:24, John 14:13; 15:13-14; 15:7, 16; 23-14).

When one engages in a ministry of prayer, one also finds time to study the Word. Miller (2009:214-215) speaks of a praying life as a way of connecting to God in a distracting world in many ways. Importantly, he admonishes the reader to learn how to enjoy God's redemptive stories. These he says, adds meaning to suffering felt while praying. Furthermore, a prayer life enables one to see how God is weaving a larger story to redeem the world completely at the end. One of the missing links in the lives of many evangelical believers in Eldoret is seriousness in studying God's living Word.

The church should remedy the problem of sin, conformity and lack of seriousness in doing God's work by introducing proper study time and prayer time. This can be achieved by forming prayer cells and home groups. The evangelical church in Eldoret must recognize her worth and the worth of the lost sinners around her. God jealously desires that His Spirit that dwells in the world may indwell the lives of His children in the world (James 4:5). This is attainable through engaging in diligent Bible Study and earnest prayer for mission work. Trusting in God's promise is also of essence because His promises are true and eternal (II Corinthians 1:20).

The rest presented in figure 8 above and explained by the preceding paragraphs is available for both individual believers and corporate members of the church. The evangelical churches in Eldoret require such rest. By coming to Christ with all their burdens, including their internal as well as external challenges, the church may learn to rest from its labours.

5.2.1.8 Trust in divine power and missio Dei

"Directly linked to physical health (Proverbs 3:5-6), trust in God is a gift leading to right choices"⁶⁹. There are many reasons why people do not trust each other. The researcher found out some of the reasons why Christian believers do not trust

⁶⁹Ibid.

Muslim neighbours. Some of the reasons given were that Muslims were perceived to be terrorists, Muslims were known to be provoked, Muslims had top secrets that are not good for society (such as the introduction of the Sharia law to Kenya, Africa and the world by all means), Muslims were perceived to be crafty in their businesses, Muslims could do anything to defend their religion at all times. Asked of the place of faith in all these allegations, the respondents were quick to point out that their trust in God was wanting.



Figure 12: Trust

Source: NEWSTART excerpt

Figure 12 above is a symbol of divine power. The picture shows a lighthouse resting on a wide rock in the middle of the sea. Above it is the blue and white sky, symbolizing peace.

The Psalmist says of God's protection, "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Psalms 18:2). He is the stronghold of life (Nahum 1:7). He is the one with whom salvation lies (I Timothy 4:10). He delivers (Psalms 9:4; 22:10; 37:5), shields (Proverbs 30:5), and cares. He is a buckler of all that trust Him (II Samuel 22:31). God can be trusted even in times of darkness (Job 13:15), in time of persecution (Psalms 7:1), and in the midst of enemies (Psalms 25:1-2). The trust of God can compare to none on earth (Psalms 20:7; 32:10, 118:8). His promises are true (Psalms 56:3-4; 71:5, Isaiah 26:3).

Missionaries ought to learn to trust God in their engagements with Him, with others and with themselves. In his book entitled 'How to trust God when life does not make sense', Mayers (1995: x) speaks of difficult moments when anxieties, pressures, fears, and doubts make Christians feel abandoned and lonely; "You may be there right now. If you aren't, I am certain you have been in the past, perhaps

even recently. And I am certain you will return in the future. In fact, it seems that at any given moment all of us have at least one area in our lives where the pieces don't make sense...These are seasons of life that demand timeless and eternally relevant answers from God and His Word'. Such moments call for wisdom in the sight of God's children. This is called positive thinking". Peale (1988:24-25), the renowned author of 'The power of positive thinking' suggests an emptying of one's mind of fear, anxiety, pressure, doubt and worry on a daily basis. Furthermore, people need to fill their minds with love, joy, peace, kindness, forbearance, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 5:16ff).

Missionaries often face dark moments as part of their experiences in the mission field. Like the storms and strong winds threatening the stability of a ship and the faith of the captain and his crew in bad seasons at sea, discouragements and disappointments are Satan's tools to attack God's workers from all quarters. These may be in the form of terrorist attacks from the Muslims, hatred from fellow Christian believers, disunity among the evangelical churches, rigid leaders and poverty, both spiritually and physically. Yohannan (2004:143) refers to such trials as enemies of the cross. They are propagated by revivals of traditional religions, growth of secular materialism, including communism, and the rise of cultural and nationalist barriers – all uniting to oppose the Christian mission activity. Like the lighthouse (figure 9) above, the faith of God's children must be anchored in the unmovable rock – Christ Jesus.

Yohannan (2004:175-184) beckons the Church to remain true to God always and anchor their ship (faith) in the hands of God who has established His lighthouse in the rock of ages, Christ Jesus. Even when the evangelical churches go out to hold public debates with Muslims, they should not fear because their lighthouse (Christ Jesus) has assured them that there is no danger at sea. In similar a discussion, Piper (2007:69-78) asks the community of believers to wait for God's joy, but importantly, to demonstrate love to those who cannot see the lighthouse (Jesus). This is because the One who is in the lighthouse is greater than he who is in the world (sea) (Piper, 2004:15-16).

5.4 BIBLICAL MODEL

To illustrate how God's written Word in the Bible can be used effectively, this research proposes a biblical model. A biblical model is one that presents the testimony of both the OT and the NT. The two testaments provide enough evidence that God is in the business of saving sinners from sin. This is the ultimate truth that

may present an ultimate purpose of life. One can find the ultimate purpose of life by surrendering oneself to the ultimate truth found in Scripture.

The Bible is an excellent resource for ministry at all levels. This fact has already been established in chapter two and chapter three of the thesis. The written word is active and alive. It is sharper than a two-edged sword cutting from all sides. It is relevant in mission preparation, discipling, nurturing, exhorting, admonishing and fellowship. The written Word records how God has, is and will continue ministering to the needs of people through the ages. The Bible is a witness of the facts surrounding the universe and its history. It relates how God sent His Son Jesus to the world to become an offering for our sins (John 3:16). Reiterating the important use of the Bible, Haugk (1984:119) speaks of the Bible's ability to address itself to a broad range of human concerns, experiences, and situations. This can be seen from the work of the Psalmist (46:1-3; 51:1ff; 121). People often turn to Scripture when they are experiencing problems and needs. This church needs the Bible because it contains the written Word in which God's people are interested. The Word also offers a practical way to deal with the people's concerns. Above all, the Word of God is living so that those who are weary may draw from its strengths. Everyone should trust in God in compliance with His living Word.

Below is an illustration of how the evangelical church in Eldoret may reach her ultimate purpose in life by successfully employing the biblical model.

An acronym 'TRUTH' will be used to demonstrate these steps.

- T Trust in the Bible
- R Read the Bible
- U Understand the Bible
- T Tame and translate the Word
- H Hope in the Word

Source: Rebecca 2013.

5.4.1 T – Trust in the Bible

Trust is a basic part of any relationship. However, trust is “elusive and fragile...trust is hard to earn, easy to lose and, once lost, nearly impossible to regain”.⁷⁰ Trust issues form part of the major problems among the evangelical churches in Eldoret.

⁷⁰Bennis W, Goleman D and O'Toole J *Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor* (2008):61-63. (full citation: Bennis W, Goleman D and O'Toole J *Transparency: How Leaders Create a Culture of Candor* (2008) Jossey-BASS San Francisco.)

Confirming their distrust in the leadership of the church, most respondents from the youth department complained of being disadvantaged by their elders due to age, knowledge and position. They therefore suggested that the office of the elders should re-interpret their role in guiding and counseling to facilitate the work of engaging Muslims effectively. Most respondents also took issue with the way the church has been handling her issues. They said that the theology of the church is way behind the modern understanding of the challenges facing the believers, from there the desire for an improved system.

Anyabwile (2010:107) reiterates that in all his engagements with Muslims, the authority and reliability of Scripture never escaped questioning. Every spiritual conversation with Muslim friends assumed the trustworthiness of the Qur'an and a rejection of the Bible as a book without integrity. However, he neither blames the Muslims nor the Christians. Rather, he contrasts the ultimate purpose of life of a Muslim and that of a Christian. On the one hand, Muslims are destined to get lost in the sea of the Qur'an's miraculous transmission, which is central to their faith. On the other, true Christians' ultimate purpose of life rests in the truth found in the Bible.

Without assuming or defending the reliability of the Bible, its divinely inspired nature and its authority in faith and life, Anyabwile asserts that Christians run a risk of drifting to a sea of relativism if their anchor did not hold. The Bible is both reliable and truthful. For this purpose, evangelical Christians are called upon to effectively witness to their Muslim neighbours without fear or intimidation. The following is a summary of this call "it doesn't take advanced degrees in Hebrew and Greek to use the Bible (though those are wonderful). All a Christian needs to present the Gospel is trust in the Scripture and a willingness to demonstrate that trust by assuming their reliability" (Anyabwile, 2010:108). These words bring comfort and encouragement to the evangelical church in Eldoret.

5.4.2 R – Read, reassess and relate the Bible

In an interview with one respondent who is a leader of the Sunday school, the researcher discovered a picture of young ones kneeling down in prayer. Above the picture were the words of a common song taught to the children everywhere, be it at school, home or church and it read: "Read the Bible, pray every day...if you want to grow". The researcher could not help but ask the respondent what he thought about those words when he was alone. He was honest. "I rarely look up to those words".

Hoke & Taylor (2009:54) speaks of God's living Word as a very important aspect of a personal spiritual formation. Alongside prayer, spiritual disciplines, Christian witness and fellowship with other Christians within the church community,

the study of the Word of God enables Bible students to discern the Bible as the story of God's glory. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is the unfolding story of God drawing men to Himself in a relationship of love, acceptance and forgiveness. Reading the Bible requires discernment from the Spirit. Reassessing the Word means double-checking to make sure your understanding grasps the intended meaning and purpose in your life and the life of others. Relating the Bible is an art of re-telling the story of the Bible as God Himself would have told your listeners. Learning to act in the place of God is imitating Him (Ephesians 5:1). It is making an effort to know Jesus personally and following Him wherever He goes.

Practical ways of reading the Bible include assigning every member a portion to read during Bible studies, introducing Bible reading in Sunday schools, encouraging members to have a Bible and carry it with them to church every Sunday, giving the young people and the women opportunities to lead Bible studies in church and inviting experts, especially Bible scholars, to teach the church on difficult subjects in the Bible. This ensures that everyone is in tune with the truth of the living word of God.

5.4.3 U – Understand the Bible (Wisdom, knowledge and counsel is a gift from God - (Job 12:13-15)

One challenge evident from the respondents view on matters of Scripture was the reality that Christian believers, unlike Muslim believers, teach, talk and practice what they have never understood. Respondents said that most of the debates held in MailliNne area presented a true picture of the evangelical church in Eldoret and its believers. This was seen when Christians were challenged to substantiate certain views from Scripture. It was also reported that Muslim scholars were better than most Christian ministers who have been trained at seminaries. These are issues requiring urgent solutions.

Understanding the Word of God enables the church to deal with problems of unbelief. This unbelief is prevalent among the believers, from the non-believers to those who question the authority and reliability of Scripture as a whole. Wallace (2005: vii) posits two important aspects of a Christian's life that can be challenged or overcome by understanding the Word of God. One is prayer. Prayer affects life both in private and public. The Psalms for example occupy a very important part of the Church and prayer.

Effective prayer may help the evangelical churches deal with fear. Muslims are reportedly brave because they take matters of prayer and fasting seriously. Prayer offers both theological and educational support for the church and its

believers. Prayer guides the church towards a true worship of God, the creator of heaven and earth. This worship is offered in truth and Spirit. This enables the church to find meaning in song, prayer and meditation and consequently in God. Furthermore, this revives the church to study and use psalms in other aspects of worship, as well as other contexts of mission. The other aspect where Scriptural understanding is important within the life of the church is communication. Communicating the Gospel to Muslims in Eldoret remains a challenge because Muslims are easily angered and provoked. The evangelical Church must communicate the Gospel in love. A Gospel communicated in love takes cognizance of the bridges of salvation. These include making friends with the Muslims, learning their language, learning and appreciating their culture, reading their Qur'an for knowledge and avoiding confrontations with the Muslims.

5.4.4 T – Translate, tame and tell the truth in the Bible

Truth is said to be painful. Biblical truth is more than painful, it is convicting. Anything that convicts can either condemn or liberate. John 8:32 speaks of a liberating truth. It sets free from sin anyone who comes to Christ. In the Gospel according to John, Christ speaks of God's Word, which is His truth. Again, His prayer is that God may sanctify those who come to Christ by His truth, which is His Word (John 17:17). In John 3:19, God gives a verdict to those who reject His truth. The reason is because, when light came, they chose darkness instead of the light.

Wright and Lamb (2009:3) give advice regarding where one should begin translating the biblical truth. The starting point is the Bible itself. The Bible speaks not of itself. It speaks of God in His triune nature. The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit testify of their mission (*missio Dei*) in the writings of the Scripture. The Church worships God by faith through reading the Scripture. It is the faith of Christ as a Saviour and the confession of the Church in Him as Lord that defines real Christianity. This is the primary belief and identity that shapes every translation and interpretation, including what the Church believes about the Bible itself. It is the starting point of every believer, every evangelical member in Eldoret too.

The dual authorship of the Bible enables the believers to tame the Scripture so that they can communicate it effectively. The Bible is known as the 'word of God' and the same Scripture calls Jesus 'the Word' (John 1:1). One is a book, the other is a living Person, a member of the Godhead for that matter. According to Wright and Lamb (2009:3), care must be taken to ensure that Christ's dual identity is not distorted. Christ was 100% human and 100% divine. This truth helps believers to compare and tame the truth that God's word (His Scripture) and God's Word (His

Son) is both whole and true. The human aspect of Christ represents the truth that although the Bible is God's inspired word, written by men who were moved by His Spirit. The divine aspect of Christ represents the truth that God's Word was there in the beginning, creating the world (John 1:1) and also that the same Word became flesh and dwelled among human beings (John 1:14). The living 'Word' stooped down to bear the form of man in order to save men from sin. This is incarnation.

With the full understanding of translating the Scripture and taming it, the evangelical church can move forward to present the truth of the Gospel to the Muslims. At no time should these two important aspects be forgotten or ignored. The truth will stand to convict or condemn the hearer when presented in a manner that does not jeopardize or lose the meaning. The role of the Church is to do her faithful part and honour the guidance of Scripture. In a discussion entitled 'Subversion and sub-version' Brueggemann (2008:4) proposes the following thesis to the Church, pastors and missionary students in their mission engagements in light of the correct interpretation of Scripture.

The art of studying, reading and hearing Scripture is the art of re-constructing the world in an alternative way. This is because the world dominantly describes reality in a way that causes the church to become restless due to the reality on the ground. Hence, the church must be aware that every time it takes up Scripture, it undertakes a serious challenge to dominant characterizations of the social world. The church dares to propose an alternative reading, an alternative version (a sub-version), which rests underneath the dominant version in a less aggressive mode. The church does this in three ways: first, Scripture calls things by their right names (Isaiah 5:20) and so is the role of the church. Second, Scripture interprets data differently from the worldly framework, the church is called upon to do the same. Lastly, Scripture calls, interprets, but most importantly refers to God, Yahweh, who is the main actor in the history of the world and the *missio Dei*.

5.4.5 H – Hearing God in the Word and Hoping in His Promises

Truth entails hearing God in His Word and hoping in His promises. John 1:1 and Hebrews 4:12 establish that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God. Imperatively, hearing God can be equated to paying attention to His Son, depending entirely and wholly upon Him, and leaning in His righteous promises (Romans 4:21, Matthew 6:33 cf Isaiah 55:11, Numbers 23:19, Mark 9:23). Adam (2006:118) talks of Christians subjecting the will faithfully to Jesus so as to focus attention on His unique and irreplaceable occasion of all that follows. This is to imitate Christ and speak a language that derives its significance from its reference to the life and effects (Luke

22:19) of Jesus, always endeavoring to sustain a demonstrable continuity with that life and those effects (I Corinthians 11:24cf Ephesians 5:2).

Matthew 3:17 is an admonition to listen to Christ, the Son of God, with whom He (God the Father) is well pleased. Matthew 17:5, Mark 1:11; 9:7, Luke 3:22; 9:35 and II Peter 1:17 all speak of the 'beloved Son' of God. Luke 9:35 speaks of 'a beloved', but importantly 'chosen' Son of God. This emphasis serves a divine purpose. The purpose underscores the necessity not only to follow Jesus, but importantly, to trust Him as a personal saviour. Christ did not come to die for the world because the world deserved Him to die, rather, He came to the world because God loved Him together with the world (John 13:1cf 3:16). It was the love of the Father to the Son that made the Father love the world, but importantly, that made the Son love the world so that gave His life as a sacrifice to the world.

Listening to the Son (Jesus) is answering to His great command to go to the whole world to make disciples of all nations. It is responding to His Word of truth with certainty and urgency. Listening to Jesus is acknowledging together with God that Jesus is the Son of God. Importantly, it is accepting to cry aloud with John the Baptist to the world, 'behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of men' (John 1:29). This is accepting redemption through the Word of God as prophesied in Isaiah 49:6, 'he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth" ' cf Matthew 5:14. For Willard (1999:145), God does not only speak for the Christian believers and their purposes, nor primarily for their own prosperity, safety or gratification. God's saving grace enables the believers to His become companions. This process further makes Christians fit to demonstrate God's love to humanity and to assist humankind to know how to live.

Hearing God speak through Jesus further enables the Church to act upon God's words and trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is holding fast to the message that the God of Israel is the God who sustains and rules over all creation (Heskett and Irwin, 2010:17). When the Church embraces this truth and message of the sovereign God, the believers come to an understanding that obedience is better than sacrifice (I Samuel 15:22-23), and that God does not delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, but in a broken Spirit and a contrite heart (b 51:16-17). In the act of obedience, the Church will be fulfilling their role of the *missio Dei*, thus, they will be willing to go out to the whole world with the good news of salvation. The evangelical church in Eldoret will be spreading the message of love to their Muslim neighbours. They will be filled with the Spirit of God who will teach them to go.

5.5 THEOLOGICAL MODEL

As understood in chapter two and three, theology is the study of God (*theos*) and His Word (*logos*) in simple terms (Reumann, 2008:99). A theological model goes beyond this simple meaning to a consideration of complex issues such as the doctrine of the Triune God, the theology of mission, of His kingdom come, to mention a few. This model seeks to provide practical ways of undertaking mission to Muslims in light of the *missio Dei* in Eldoret. It discusses many issues handled in a sub-set of theology called practical theology. In practical theology, specific issues such as mission, formation, justice, kingdom of God and specific praxis of the church are provided with direct definitions. Since practical theology is often located within a specific context. It focuses primarily on external situations dependent on time, history and a sequential movement from the past, present, to the future (Miller-McLemore, 2012:43).

Given the limited understanding of the respondents of the five select evangelical churches in Eldoret regarding the issue of the Trinity, the mission field, and the *missio Dei*, developing a theological model that would address these challenges is paramount. Below is a map towards unearthing this problem.

5.5.1 Defining terms

In the majority Christian contexts, we assume that there is a mutual understanding of the words we use because of the language we share. In theological training, however, students of the Bible are guided into understanding of the Biblical narratives and writings. This is done with an aim of imparting knowledge that can be used and applied appropriately, like in the field of study or in the ministry circles. Language can be misleading at times. This is so especially in matters of interpretation. The Bible came in two original languages, Greek and Hebrew, also known as Aramaic (New World Bible Translation Committee, 1970:5). However, from the original languages to the Holy Bible, many editions and renditions have been witnessed, are still being witnessed and will still be witnessed. Moreover, the Holy Bible is still undergoing translations in different languages around the globe (Metzger, 2001:8).

Whereas the process of interpretation and translation is important, experts in this field have raised several issues. These range from editorial issues to interpretational mishaps. A good example of this is in the revision of the New American Standard Bible (NASBU) from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). Although this edition was said to have been updated in 1995 so as to rest upon the twenty-sixth edition of the Nestle Greek New Testament, there are notable deviations in it. A detailed analysis comparing the (NASB) and the (NASBU) indicates a

deviation in the number of words. While NASB contains 781, 182 words, NASBU contains 774, 216. Changes introduced by the NASBU occur in 10, 616 verses and directly affect 24, 338 words in the NASB edition. In reality, there are only 4, 704 changes in capitalization, 32 in spelling, and 30 in italics. This makes 19, 572 corrections involving word omissions, additions, transpositions, or substitutions in the text of the NASB. The updated edition makes up to 85 changes that introduce gender inclusive language (Metzger, 2001:150). These deviations occur in the introduction of a number of verses including; Matthew 6:13b; 12:47; 18:11; 23:14, Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28, and Luke 24:12.

Given the reality of the challenges of interpretation and translation of Scripture into different languages and dialects, many churches and Christian institutions depend on their leaders and pastors for guidance. In Eldoret, the evangelical churches grapple with issues of interpretation and translations too. Terms such as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are still confusing as far as the teachings on the Trinity are concerned. The mission field is still being understood to mean the areas that are not reached with the Gospel geographically. The Great Commission is still being taught to belong to the special group known as the 'missionaries'. These 'missionaries' take the Gospel to the 'mission field'⁷¹. This lack of proper understanding of who a missionary is and what a mission field is, are some of the issues requiring urgent attention of proper definition within the evangelical church in Eldoret.

Commenting on the rising problem of definitions, Barensten (2007:8) says, significant debates surround labels such as 'Jew', 'Christian', and 'church'. The modern understandings of these terminologies indicate two distinctions between Judaism and Christianity. Whereas these distinctions can be debated, Barensten (2007:9) highlights that the first century Jews and Christians never had this problem. This problem has however led to such labels as 'Christ-believer' or 'Christ-follower' instead of 'Christian'. One thus appreciates the allegations made by Muslims that Christians are divided in their beliefs and understanding of their own Scriptures. According to one respondent, Muslims fail to listen to Christians in Eldoret because 'the so-called Christians' are not speaking in one language. These are hard facts that require proper guidance within the evangelical Church.

⁷¹ One respondent in the African Inland Fellowship Church stated that mission engagements to Muslims were not being undertaken in Eldoret because the church had appointed missionaries to the mission field. Asked where this mission field was located, he said it was in Turkana and West Pokot.

Other issues requiring proper definitions relate to leadership and positions within the Church. One respondent admitted to a lack of unity among the evangelical churches in Eldoret because of what he termed as misappropriation of names to leaders and positions. There was the issue of the choice of titles such as 'reverend', 'bishop' and the 'most right reverend' that are overused and misused. These caused unnecessary strain between the churches that subscribed to these titles and those who did not. Paul addresses similar issues among the New Testament Churches. In his letters, Paul looks into the issue of leadership structures. He speaks of the institutionalization of structures as formal organizations where group slots may occupy by virtue of what authority one holds. These slots involved provisional appointments in areas of ordination, duration, payments and abdications in the language of the church or cannon law (Barensten, 2007:9).

The teaching on the Trinity is another aspect that needs urgent scrutiny. According to Anyabwile (2010:28), Islam and Christianity jointly agree that God is infinitely above all things man can fathom. However, Christians who are charged with the task of proclaiming the Gospel and persuading their Muslim neighbours and friends to faithfully embrace the mystery of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, lack in understanding themselves. These poor Christians have a slippery grip on this cardinal doctrine of the faith, and this makes for rather uneasy discussions with the Muslims. James 1:21 admonishes and exhorts all biblical readers to humbly accept the word planted in them, which can save them. Moreover, God reveals Himself to men not only by His acts, but by His very person too. Evangelical Christians in Eldoret should better know that the doctrine of the Trinity defies comprehension on the one hand, and on the other that Islam offers a view of God conformable to human reason. That is why the doctrine of the Trinity must be taken seriously within the evangelical Church.

5.5.2 A holistic paradigm shift

In their rendition of methods of theological reflection, Graham et al (2002) suggest seven ways through which theology can be translated from its application to its reflection. These include: Theology by heart, speaking in parables, telling God's story, writing the body of Christ, speaking of God in public, theology in action and theology in vernacular. These suggested ways provide a holistic paradigm shift in theology within the evangelical church in Eldoret. Having a theology by heart is experiencing God's immanent, personal, and intimate speaking through the interior of human experience. It helps church members to exercise their own faith by looking into their inner being and drawing from it the wonderful and marvelous acts of God. It

challenges them to do introspection and to locate their place in the mission of God as individuals. This leads to a natural desire to express gratitude to God through what Graham et al (2002:13) refer to as, journaling, autobiography, and psychological therapeutic accounts of the self. These are vehicles of theological reflection and construction. Quick checks of the responses from Eldoret indicate the need for such an experience. This is evidenced by the general agreement by all that salvation should be elevated to a personal level so that one experiences the Lord personally and sees the need to evangelize the Muslims.

The Lord Himself in His earthly ministry employed speaking in Parables. The four Gospels record a huge response to Christ's teachings by His followers, often emanating from His speech in parables. Only those eager to learn more came to Jesus to seek clarifications of what His parables and teachings meant. In a world filled with hatred and suspicion, God's Church may find in the parable teachings of Christ a method suitable for all ages. Parables, like story-telling in the African communities arouses in one's mind the desire to hear more and learn more. Parables may provide alternative ways to communicate the Gospel to Muslims in Eldoret without offending directly or indirectly. In Luke 13:10-22, Christ employs several parables to communicate the message of His kingdom to His listeners. The healing miracle takes place within the context of His teachings and provides His listeners with a practical illustration of what He says and does. The miracles of the mustard seed and that of the yeast present a difficult sum to the listeners. The seed is so small that naturally, the results of it could not produce big trees for the birds to shelter. Yet, the lesson challenges the listeners to think beyond their superficial understanding of the kingdom.

Telling God's story identifies Christianity as a religion among many religions of the world. It does so by presenting the redemption story as outlined in the Scriptures. God's story as found in the biblical narrative is grand. The world stands in judgment under the power of that revelation. Islam teaches that Jesus is a prophet, but not a saviour. This view denies Jesus the power to save and rule over the world and humanity. Evangelical Christians in Eldoret agree that Muslims will be lost without Christ. However, evangelical churches in this town are doing little to engage these lost people. There is no better way to do this than to present the Gospel of the saviour as it is presented in the Bible. To do this, the Christians must put on their full armour and go to war (Ephesians 6:11). This must be done from the Sunday school level to the adult level. Respondents in Eldoret decry the little effort taken with the early child development years of Christianity. They all agree that if our children were

taught to consider the Biblical truth from the time they were dedicated to the church, then like Samuel of the Bible, they would serve the Lord fearlessly.

Writing the body of Christ is crucial to the understanding of the Church as an agent of God's *missio Dei*. I Corinthians 12:27, 'Now you are the body of Christ, each one of you is a part of it'. Problems of disunity among the member churches of the evangelical church in Eldoret is a problem that can be easily dealt with if this Scripture in Corinthians is well-read, interpreted and implemented. Graham et al (2002:14) assert that the community of faith generates theological language in its life together, whether in its rules of pastoral discipline or corporate liturgies and metaphors. In the teachings of Paul to the Church at Corinth, 12:12-26 he reiterates the distinct parts of the body of Christ and how each part relates to each other. I Corinthians 10:31-33 is a reminder that none should pursue their own glory, but rather the glory of God so that many may be saved. Romans 12:3-5 is a reminder to consider others for the sake of Christ's body, which is made up of many parts, each functioning differently. Acts 20:28 is a reminder for the shepherds (ministers, pastors, leaders) to take care of the flock that was entrusted to by the Holy Spirit since the Church (the body of Christ) was bought with a prize.

Speaking of God in public is one of the ways suggested by the respondents in Eldoret. However, evangelistic campaigns must not target Muslims and their practices but should rather target God's redeeming love. This love as demonstrated in John 3:16 makes provision for all who believe. The Spirit and the Bride say 'come' (Revelation 22:17), let all who hear say, 'come!' and all those who are thirsty may come and whoever wishes may take the free gift of life. This is the noble work of the Church of God in Eldoret, in Kenya, Africa and the whole world.

Theology in action is preaching the Gospel in love. Of the many complaints received by the respondents concerning Christian-Muslim relationships in Eldoret, the most quoted complaint was hatred of Christians towards Muslims. Irrespective of their reasons, claims or excuses, Christians have no reason whatsoever to hate Muslims. This is because Christ teaches the Church to love her enemies and treat those who persecute kindly (Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36). The ultimate purpose of life is to know Christ, who is the revealer of God (Colossians 2:9). In Galatians 1:16 and John 1:18, Jesus is the only one to reveal the Father because He has been with the Father. Christ is the way to the Father (John 14:6). He is the truth and the life. Those who love Christ must learn to follow Christ and to do the will of the Father. The Father's will is to love the world (John 3:16). To do so, the evangelical church must be willing to die for the sake of the Gospel just like Christ died for the sins of the world. They can only do that by demonstrating their love to God with all their heart,

soul and strength and to show this love to their neighbours (Muslims) as themselves (Luke 10:27) cf Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:29-30.

Theology in the vernacular is the act of communicating the Gospel in a language that Muslims can understand. Cross-cultural relations require the evangelical Church to contextualize the Gospel for the sake of the Muslims. Jesus became a Jew to reach out to the Jews and to establish the kingdom of God here on earth. Paul became all in order to reach all with the Gospel (I Corinthians 9:19-23). Evangelical churches must speak the language of the Muslims, eat the food they eat, read the literature they read in order to bridge the gap and bring many to salvation. It is a process that requires total surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ's disciples were able to speak the language of the multitude soon after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2). Incarnation is a must for the evangelical church in Eldoret.

5.6 JESUS MODEL

The heart of mission lies in the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah, a unique saviour among all saviours in the world. From the exposition of the Gospel according to the book of Luke 4:16-19, the good news presents the vital question: What needs do people of the world have for Jesus' Gospel to qualify as good news? During His ministry on earth, Jesus healed the broken-hearted, set the captives free, made the lame walk again, and caused the blind to see (Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 11:5, Luke 4:18; 7:22, II Corinthians 3:17, Hebrews 1:9). Jesus worked and ministered to the people on a daily basis. He worked every day to save souls, including the Sabbath day. In John 5:8-11, Jesus encounters a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years by the pool of Bethesda. It was the Sabbath day, yet Jesus commanded Him to pick up His mat and go. This offended the Jews because carrying things was considered as doing work on the Sabbath day. Jesus was persecuted following this act of healing, but He remained faithful to His and God's mission of spreading the good news of the kingdom. According to Goldsmith (2006:131), Jesus had a choice to avoid this offense, but He did not. This is because neither the Father, the Son, nor the Holy Spirit ever stop working as far as salvation matters of human beings are concerned. If God in His Triune nature could slumber or take leave even for a split second, the world would surely collapse. The Psalmist says, 'indeed the one who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep' (Psalms 121:4, cf 121:3, 5; 127:1).

In the Jesus model, the work of salvation to mankind does not stop. John 5:8-11 exists within a present continuous tense. This indicates that the work of spreading the good news is an on-going one. It does not matter whether it is day or night,

whether the day is hot or cold, rainy or sunny. The work will not stop because there is peace or war, in time of famine or plenty, in summer or winter, planting time or harvesting time. It does not depend on whether the churches are ready to go or not, whether there are enough missionaries to go or not, whether the mission field is local or abroad, whether the language spoken is local or foreign. It does not look at whether the person is young or old, tall or short, big or small. It is not a respecter of cultures, nationality or race. The good news is preached anytime, anywhere and under all circumstances. This is because the one who owns mission never stands still.

In Eldoret, there are many needs that can only be met by spreading the good news of the Gospel. These needs range from poverty needs to financial needs, social needs to spiritual needs, personal needs to communal needs. Both Christians and Muslims have needs that can only be met by the good news within the Jesus' model of mission. For the evangelical churches to minister effectively to the Muslims there is a need for unity among the member churches. Jesus did not downplay the importance of unity. Reiterating the need for unity among the believers and His disciples, Jesus prayed that they may be united just as He and the Father were one. Unity reminds the Church of the unity within the Trinity (John 17:21). It promotes the fear of the Lord within the family of God (Jeremiah 32:39). Unity fosters faith among the believers that God sent Jesus (John 30:38).

Fundamental Christian unity should be preserved at all times. This is because Christian unity is not a new creation of men, but a creation of God, as discussed earlier. This unity of which Paul wrote is not one that the Christian needs to create, but one that already exists and must be diligently preserved (Ephesians 4:3). It is based on believers' sharing life in one body, the universal church, the body of Christ (vs. 5, cf. 2:15, 16). All Christians are sealed, possessed, and indwelt by the same Spirit and look forward to the same hope (vs. 5, cf. 1:18). Christians possess one Lord, that is, one Supreme Commander, one common faith (one system of fundamental truth) held by all Christians, and one baptism (i.e. spirit baptism, cf. 1 Cor. 12:13). Unity, although it cannot be created by the Christian, must be preserved by him. This should be diligently pursued (vs. 3) by an attitude of humility (seeing ourselves as God does, unworthy recipients of His grace). The Christian's humble spirit should be demonstrated by a gentleness and graciousness in all dealings with others. This gentleness should be longsuffering, patiently enduring prolonged irritation. The love that Christians have for one another should prompt them to put up with the peculiarities of fellow-Christians, fellow evangelicals in Eldoret.

In Ephesians 4:7-11, Paul speaks of unity in diversity. This does not mean uniformity. Every individual within the body of Christ is given a particular capacity for ministry. This capacity (or capacities) is commonly called a 'spiritual gift.' Although the particular function involved may not appear to be particularly 'spiritual,' the outcome is spiritual benefit to the body of Christ (Barentsen, 2011:174). For example, there is seemingly little difference between writing a check to the mortgage company and one to say Gospel for Asia. The difference is that in giving to the Gospel for Asia, men are trained to teach and preach, which will bring growth and blessing to many Christians. The man who has the gift of helping may fix the washing machine of one of the saints, not only meeting a very real need, but saving money that can be used in the Lord's work and bring real encouragement and blessing to the one helped (Yohannan, 2004:203-221).

Paul did not deal with all of the spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4. Rather he concentrated upon those gifts that might be called equipping gifts. These gifts are the gift of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher (vs. 11). Apostles and prophets were the men who laid the foundation of the church (Ephesians 2:20; 3:5). In the most restricted sense an apostle was one who had seen the Lord (1 Corinthians 9:1) and who had been with the Lord during His earthly ministry (Acts 1:20-22). These men were given the task of proclaiming the terms of salvation and establishing the primitive church. Prophets were those men through whom God spoke directly. Sometimes the revelation would pertain to future things (e.g. Acts 11:27-28), but not always (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:1-5). Although in a lesser sense there are men today who are instrumental in establishing churches and proclaiming God's word, a belief exists that apostles and prophets are no longer needed or expected (Barentsen, 2011:168-169) (cf. Hebrews 2:3,4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

Evangelists are those whom God has enabled to proclaim the Gospel in such a way that men respond in greater numbers. These gifts are still very necessary and still very important today. Pastors and teachers are vital today and are gifted not only to communicate the truths of Scripture, but are also qualified to pastor the flock of God. While teaching communicates the principles of God's word, pastoring applies it to the lives of individuals in specific situations. Pastors and teachers are teaching shepherds given by God to His church. Someone has aptly compared the evangelist to an obstetrician and the pastors and teachers to pediatricians. While the evangelist is instrumental in bringing about the numerical growth of the church, pastors and teachers are more concerned with the spiritual growth of the church (Barentsen, 2011:172-173). In Ephesians 4:12-16, the diversity of gifts leads to unity. Far from undermining the fundamental unity existing between individual Christians, the

diversity of spiritual gifts enhances, even necessitates unity. While in verses 1-6 the basis for Christian endeavour is fundamental unity, in verses 12-16 functional unity is the goal of Christian endeavour. The unity of verses 1-6 might be called positional, while that of verses 12-16 is practical.

In the Jesus model, the world depends on God's caring. His *missio Dei* is responsible for proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. His Church is an agent of this mission. The believers are both agents and potential citizens to that kingdom.

5.7 AN INCARNATION MODEL

Incarnation is the belief that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity also known as God the Son of the logos, became flesh by being conceived in the womb of a woman, the virgin Mary. Incarnation is God's metaphor for ministry (Lingenfelter & Mayers, 2003:13-26). John 1:14 reads, 'The Word became flesh and dwelled among us'. The Word is Jesus, the second person in the God-head. He was with God from the beginning for He was God (John 1:1-2).

God in the form of the Son became flesh and dwelled among human beings. The Bible presents Him as no more than a helpless infant born to Mary and Joseph of Nazareth (Luke 2:7). As the son of man, Jesus did not come as a fully developed adult. He did not come as an expert, ruler, or as a respected man. His peasant family knew the hardships and toils of life in a conquered and subjugated land. As a member of the family, Jesus learned to speak His parents' language. He was neither born with knowledge of the language of His people, nor the complexities of their culture. He became an ordinary child learning both from His parents and His peers. He was obedient to the family ethos and etiquettes, choosing to follow the worship lifestyle of His parents. At the temple, He listened carefully to the teachers of the law and asked good questions (Luke 2:46). This was God incarnate.

God's Son studied the language, the culture and the lifestyle of men for more than thirty years to bridge the gap between humanity and divinity and to teach His Church the art of incarnation. Becoming incarnate in another culture requires a new birth, symbolized by accepting Jesus as a personal saviour and by being baptized into the community of believers. It is a process made possible by receiving the Holy Spirit in one's life. Learning to belong to another culture is a trial by fire, a test of inner strength, of personal faith, and most of all, the veracity of one's love (Lingenfelter & Mayers, 2003:25).

In the footsteps of Jesus, His disciples through all ages learn all about the family lives and problems of those they intend to witness to. They should be willing to stand beside them as learners and co-workers with the Holy Spirit. This in itself

requires a total identification with those to whom they are sent. Jesus incarnate totally identified Himself with humanity to whom He was sent. He chose to be called 'the Son of man' (Luke 2:52). In Paul, Jesus is presented as a servant. Although He was divine in every way (Philippians 2:6-7), He was made a little lower than the angels, being made in human likeness. As a Jew, Jesus went to the synagogues to worship as was the custom. Even those in the streets identified Him as a Jew (John 4).

Culture is the anthropologist's label for the sum of the distinctive characteristics of a people's way of life (Lingenfelter & Mayers, 2003:17). It means that all human behaviour occurs within particular cultures, within socially defined contexts, cultural contexts. For example, in Eldoret, Kenya, worship occurs in specific contexts with distinctive characteristics such as church buildings, chairs or pews, music, readings from the Bible, sermons, offerings and tithes, prayers and recitation of the apostolic creed. The social organization of worship includes pastors, choir masters, and ushers, deacons and deaconesses, seating arrangements by gender, and activity schedules. In the same neighbourhood, you will see mosques with no chairs, no musicians, no Bibles, no sermons and no singing. The social organization includes removing of shoes, ritual cleansing before prayer kneeling, prostrations, sexes are separated during worship, prayer is the primary element of worship. A Christian entering a mosque would not understand what happens there as worship. He/she may deny that worship is possible in such a context.

According to Lingenfelter (1998:34), the Christian's perception of the mosque worship above reflects a particular bias the Christian has about the best and right way to live their collective life of faith. Culture is the conceptual design defining people's order of life, in other words the way they interpret their experiences, and evaluate the behaviour of others. During the interviews, the researcher learned of a Muslim man who could not shake hands with a pastor's wife during one of their one-on-one neighbourhood evangelisms. According to the worldview of that Muslim, handshakes between men and women are interpreted as a sexual behaviour. By definition, the comingling of the sexes cannot be part of the context of worship as far as Muslim contexts are concerned. This distinctive definitions, rules, and values are specific to each socially defined context. These specifics also make up the conceptual designs or culture in accordance with which all humans live.

Lingenfelter and Mayers (2003:19) tell of the goal of incarnation within one's own family as a necessary prerequisite of the incarnation into a cultural context. This is because every individual goes through a lifelong process, what anthropologists call enculturation. This is the means through which an individual acquires the cultural

heritage of a larger community. For children, peer pressure and socialization both in school and playground matter. Here is where they get to choose right from wrong and formulates one's own world, which forms one's own personal culture. Shared culture includes common beliefs and values that people share with others around them. These common things are both shared and reinforced within the family level. They produce to common values, beliefs and priorities that form the standards for behaviour applied in social context. These are the things that help one plan a career and a future. They help one secure one's own identity within the circle of family and friends. They also assist in solving conflicts within the society. Moreover, they lead to what is known as cultural blindness and cultural bias, the assumption that the problem lies with others rather than with oneself.

As Christians living in a non-Christian world, cultural blindness must lead the believers to become incarnate in the culture and in the lives of others. Christ had to become a child in order to become incarnate in the culture of humanity. Christians too, evangelicals in Eldoret in particular, must begin as children and grow in the midst of the Muslims around them. They must be willing at all times to be students and allow the Muslims to teach them before they can hope to disciple and teach the Muslims in turn. Christ's commission is a call to go to the whole world and make disciples, but one cannot do this unless one is taught as well. Jesus came to the disciples saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age' (Matthew 28:18-20cf Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-48, John 20:21, Acts 1:8).

The Christian mandate is unchangeable, says Jenkins (1997:25-26). This is because the sending word of God in written form is infallible in all matters, both in truth and practice for God's people in all ages. As the written, lived, resurrected, and ascended Word, Christ incarnate still speaks to His people today. He wants them to obey His written Word so that His second coming may be hastened (Matthew 24:14). The incarnation model acknowledges the difficulties in mission engagement, but importantly, it also acknowledges the many joys in heaven when a soul turns to God (Luke 15:7). With Christ victorious, His Church on earth may learn too to be victorious. This is possible only in the art of trusting and obeying (Romans 8:37 cf Ephesians 1:18, Romans 8:26-39, James 4:7, I Peter 5:6 -10, Luke 10:1-20, Acts 5:12 - 16). These promises belong to the evangelical church in Eldoret as well.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the various models of mission in light of the *missio Dei*. The analogy of the 'high five' was used to weave together five models that form integral parts of mission. The five models discussed are the *missio Dei*, biblical, theological, Jesus and incarnational models respectively. The viable model has attempted to address the following cardinal points of the thesis: the relevance of engaging Muslims in light of the *missio Dei* (Biblical model), the meaning of the *missio Dei* cf (the Trinity) and its relevance in discipling e.g. in programs (the *missio Dei* model), discipling and purpose of mission (Jesus model) and contextualization, addressing the issue of language, culture, and context (incarnational model).

Within the *missio Dei* model, the evangelical church as an agent of God's mission must maintain a balanced spiritual life in order to engage Muslims effectively. This life lived in the fullness of the Spirit entails feeding, exercising, resting in the divine power, and breathing the new life in Christ as a born again. The biblical model prescribes a paradigm shift that depends entirely on the authorship and reliability of the living Word of God as a sign of obedience of His mission. The theological model claims victory in understanding and interpreting Scripture. The Jesus model is the art of knowing Christ in person at an individual level as a disciple and as a Church – an agent of God's mission on earth. The incarnational model is the art of entering into the Muslim's culture in order to make the message of the cross relevant. The chapter concludes that engaging Muslims in Eldoret is viable only if engagement is undertaken in light of the *missio Dei*.

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ADDENDUM ONE

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The following information provides you with the reasons why you should or should not participate in this study. You are at liberty to accept participation or withdraw from it at any given time.

Study Title: Mission to Muslims in light of the *Missio Dei*: A study of select evangelical churches in Western Kenya

Study Purpose: This study seeks to learn and understand from the participants on matters pertaining the way mission to Muslims is undertaken within the evangelical churches and whether this is done in light of the *missio Dei*. The participants include: church leaders, church members and other people keen on mission to Muslims in Western Kenya.

Procedures: The researcher would like to request a number of persons falling in any afore-mentioned category to take part in taped conversational interviews. These interviews are limited to about one hour and will be scheduled to take place in a place of your convenience.

Confidentiality: The only persons who will have access to this information (ie tapes and transcripts) are the researcher and the supervisor. In any event of publication of the study, all potentially identifying information will be changed or omitted accordingly.

Questions: You are free to raise any questions regarding this study before, during or after the interviews.

Benefits: The following stakeholders stand to benefit from the study: Churches, missionary organizations, theological seminaries and all persons interested in undertaking mission to Muslims in Western Kenya.

Risks: The researcher does not know any risks associated with this study.

Please kindly sign this consent form with full understanding of this study and procedures herewith. A copy of this consent form will be at your disposal for future reference.

Participant's signature_____

Date_____

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ADDENDUM TWO

INTERVIEW FORMAT

- a) Welcome the interviewee and thank him/her for participating.
- b) Explain the purpose of the study and how the participant or his/her denomination may benefit.
- c) Review the Informed Consent Form to act as a research subject (i) ask if there are any questions (ii) explain the importance of recording the interview (iii) place emphasis on confidentiality.
- d) Turn on the tape recorder.
- e) Ask the questions in the questionnaire. The researcher will use her personal judgement to determine the exact order of the questions and what follow-up questions are most appropriate.
- f) If in the opinion of the researcher, the questioning reveals no new or relevant information as far as the study is concerned, the researcher will bring the interview to closure by asking two questions:
 - (i) Is there anything else regarding mission to Muslims in Western Kenya that we have not discussed and you would like to mention?
 - (ii) Is there anything else you would like to share or any questions you may have?
- g) Inform the interviewee that the researcher will forward to them the typed interview for their review and approval of its accuracy.
- h) Thank the interviewee for participating in the interview.

ADDENDUM THREE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE CHURCH LEADERS

1. Is mission engagement/s to Muslims relevant?
2. What aspect of the church leadership do you find most helpful in engaging Muslims with the Gospel? Explain.
3. What aspect of the church leadership do you find most deficient in engaging Muslims with the Gospel? Explain.
4. Do you think that these engagements are relevant in terms of *missio Dei*?
5. What personal input would you propose to the evangelical churches in Western Kenya to engage Muslims with mission in light of *missio Dei*? What would you suggest with regard to:
 - a) Purpose
 - b) Programs
 - c) Context
 - d) Cross-cultural relations
6. Overall, given your present church position, how satisfied are you with the way the church is engaging Muslims with the Gospel? Why?

ADDENDUM FOUR

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

1. To the best of your knowledge, how is the church engaging the Muslims with the Gospel in Western Kenya?
2. Do you think the church is fully equipping (discipling) its members for the role of engaging Muslims with the Gospel?
3. Do you think this discipleship is relevant? Explain.
4. Do you think this discipleship offered is done in light of *missio Dei*?
5. What personal input would you propose to the evangelical churches in Western Kenya to engage Muslims with mission in the light of *missio Dei*?

What would you suggest with regard to its:

- e) Purpose
- f) Programs
- g) Context
- h) Cross-cultural relations