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Abstract of
ISLAMIC DA'WA IN KOREA:
A STUDY OF KOREANS' RELIGIOUS CONVERSION TO ISLAM TAKING PLACE
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Sungsu Park

As a missionary religion, Islam has expanded its religious boundaries to the world beyond the Arabian Peninsula since the beginning of Muhammad's religious movement. Muslims first contacted Koreans thirteen hundred years ago in China and then arrived in Korea at the end of the Shilla Dynasty. Throughout a few hundred years of history, Muslims greatly influenced Korean society in such arenas as politics, culture, economics, and even religion. However, ironically, their da'wa movements were not successful because they joined with the colonizing powers of the Yuan dynasty and later the Japanese. Muslims oppressed the Korean people in order to maintain their economic and political power. In this sense, the religion of Islam was not presented as favorable for the Koreans. By the second half of the twentieth century, however, the negative image of Islam began to soften in Korean society as Muslims spontaneously participated in the Korean War as allies and through their active involvement in the rehabilitation of war-devastated Korean society. Through these efforts, Islam has now become a more positive religion to Koreans and has grown. Moreover, foreign and Korean Muslims have developed da'wa methods in order to make Islam a popular religion in Korea. As a result, the religion of Islam has become a revival religion in Korea in the twenty-first century. While Korean Christian churches have declined since 1995, the Muslim population in

Korea has increased constantly. Particularly in the last decade, numerous Koreans have become interested in and are transferring their religious identities to Islam. My research explores the reasons for these conversions, identifies the characteristics of Korean Muslim converts, and suggests missiological responses for the Korean Church toward the Islamic *da'wa* movements taking place in Korea.

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters. Chapter one introduces the background of this study, the research problem, the assumptions for the research, and methodologies used. Chapter two explores the missionary world of Muslims within etymological, theological, and historical approaches to the missiological term *da'wa*. In this chapter, a hypothesis that Islam is a missionary religion is proven. Chapter three chronologically researches the history of Korean Islamic movements. In chapters four and five, I use data analysis comparing the results of antecedent research and identifying the uniqueness of this study.

This research shows that Islam is a revivalistic religion in Korea today. In particular, the rate of Korean Christians' conversion to Islam is greater than to other religions, such as Buddhism and Confucianism. These Korean Muslim converts are well-educated and middle class members of Korean society. Their previous religious traditions did not satisfy their spiritual and intellectual thirsts, whereas they found that Korean Muslim communities responded appropriately to their religious needs. Moreover, the converts interviewed in this study reported that their main reason for conversion to Islam was the clarity and simplicity of Islamic theology. For these reasons, these Koreans have transferred their religious identities to Islam

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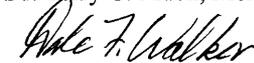
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ISLAMIC DA'WA IN KOREA:
A STUDY OF KOREANS' RELIGIOUS CONVERSION TO ISLAM TAKING PLACE
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
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In Partial Fulfillment of the
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Doctor of Philosophy

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By
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I shall come out like gold (Job 22:10).”

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In the fall semester of 2009, I took a class at Asbury Theological Seminary with Professor Terry Muck titled “Christian Witness and Other Faiths.” For the final project of that class, I carefully studied all of the major religions existing in Korea today. As the result of my research, it was clear to me that Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, and Christianity have greatly influenced both Korean culture and its traditions. Moreover, these faith traditions are all popular among Koreans. I also found, however, an interesting religious phenomenon taking place in Korea in the twenty-first century. Jeeyoun Kwon has shown that since the second half of the 1990s, the Muslim population has dramatically increased in Korea.¹ From that time, the Korean government has allowed immigrants to work in Korean factories to improve the international competitiveness of Korean products by reducing labor costs in globalizing markets. As a result, the number of Muslim immigrant workers has suddenly increased in Korean society. According to a report published by the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF), the Muslim population of Korea grew to more than 150,000 in 2005.² Most Muslims in Korea are, of course, foreign immigrants, but the number of Korean Muslims, including people who were born in Korea and then converted to Islam, has constantly increased. They constituted 23 % of the total Muslim population in Korea in 2005.³ Five years later, the Pew Forum⁴ reported

¹ Jeeyoun Kwon, “Islam in Korea,” *Muslim Christian-Encounter 2* (Jun. 2009): 53.

² Korea Muslim Federation, *Islam in Korea* (Seoul: KMF, 2007), 19.

³ Eunsuk Lee, *Korean Society and Multi-cultural family* (Seoul: Yangseowon, 2007), 14.

that the population of Korean Muslims had radically grown in recent years. In 2010, Korean Muslims numbered 75,000,⁵ more than double the figure from 2005. In addition, since the influx of the foreign workers, businessmen, and students has continued, the total Muslim population of Korea at the end of 2012 was more than 200,000.⁶

When I visited Korea for my field research in 2010, I met several of these Korean Muslims. Some of them were well-grounded in their faith, but others were just beginners. They had accepted the Islamic faith through diverse ways. In the case of one male Muslim, he went to the Middle East to work in the 1970s and 1980s. At that time, he was touched by the Islamic faith and then confessed the “shahada.”⁷ I also met a female Muslim who had married a foreign Muslim man and then became a Muslim herself through the marriage. Moreover, they produced two Muslim children. They call them “Koslim,”⁸ a synthetic word: Korean and Muslim. The term refers to a person who is born Muslim by a Korean Muslim parent/s. Korean Muslim scholars first used the term in their article, “Study on the Korean Attitude and Perception toward Koslim (1.5 and 2nd generation Muslim immigrants in Korea).” According to their research, such growth of the Korean Muslim population has become an issue in Korean society because the

⁴ The Forum is the part of Pew Research Center. It has been started in 2001 at Washington D.C. The research center are concerned about providing diverse information on social, religious, politic issues of America and World. See, <http://www.pewforum.org>

⁵ <http://features.pewforum.org/muslim-population/growth.php> (Last accessed on Dec. 15, 2012).

⁶ <http://www.kscomamdeo.com/news/read.php?idxno=5663> (Last accessed on Dec. 15, 2012).

⁷ This is to confess Islamic faith, “*La ilaha illa Allah, (wa) Muhammad rasul Allah.*” (There is no god but God, [and] Muhammad is the Prophet of God). It is the first and foremost step to become a Muslim.

⁸ Koslim means the second generation of Korean Muslims born as a result of the marriage between foreign Muslims and Koreans. It is not a negative term. It was created by a Korean Muslim group of scholars.

Koslim have experienced diverse religious, sociological, and economic discriminations in the non-Islamic country of Korea.⁹

However, the focal point of this research is not the Koslim who are born Muslim, but the Korean converts to Islam. A number of Christians, including Roman Catholics, have transferred their religious identities to Islam in Korea today. When I asked the reasons why they turned back from their previous religion and became Muslims, their answers were varied. One young woman said that her father was a pastor, and she grew up in a Christian background. She was faithful to God, but she became disappointed in the Christian faith when she saw the corruption of the church and the contradictive lives of numerous Christians. Another female Muslim had been Catholic. She complained about complicated Catholic doctrine and the formality of worship. She preferred the simple faith and worship of Islam. I also met one gentleman who had been a Buddhist but was now a fresh Muslim convert. When I asked his reasons for converting, he answered, "I was a Buddhist because my parents were faithful Buddhists. However, I believe that there is a transcendence coming in the world. I think it is Allah, the divine of Islam."¹⁰ He compared monotheistic religions: Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, and Islam in order to rightly choose one religion among them.¹¹ He went not only to Catholic and Protestant churches but also to a mosque located in Itaewon-dong, Seoul. He met leaders of each

⁹ Heesun Cho, Daesung Kim, Jungkuook Ahn, Chongjin Oh, Hyojung Kim, and Wangjong Yoo, "Koslimae Daehan Hankukinui Insigkwa Taedoe Gwanhan Youngoo: Daehaksang Seulmoonjosareul Jungsimeuro (Study on the Korean Attitude and Perception toward Koslim (1.5 and 2nd generation Muslim immigrant of Korea): Based on the Survey Research," in *Kookje Jiyouk Youngoo*, No. 14 (Apr. 2010): 277.

¹⁰ Ahmad, interview by Sungsu Park, Jul. 14, 2010.

¹¹ Since Judaism is not popular in Korea, he did not know well whether or not Judaism is one of the monotheistic religions.

religion and studied about the basic faiths of the three religions. As a result, he thought that Islamic teaching was the best among them. That is why he became a Muslim.

Thus, a number of Koreans have become interested in and converted to Islam in the twenty-first century. Dong-shin Park, who identified himself as a Muslim evangelist for Koreans and was responsible for the Islamic Information Center, said, “Since numerous Koreans have become interested in the Islamic faith, I opened an Islamic Information Center in Seoul. Since then, I have met at least twenty visitors per day. All of them visited to learn about Islam. Among the visitors, forty people confessed ‘shahada’ in the last four months. Most of them were young adults, intelligent, and converts who have their own beliefs.”¹² He believes that interest in and conversion to Islam is a natural phenomenon because Islam is the only one true religion in the world.¹³

Some influential Christian leaders assert that Islam has a particular plan for Korea: building the kingdom of Islam in Korea by 2020.¹⁴ In order to achieve this purpose, Muslims have employed diverse mission strategies such as publishing books and brochures about Islam, using mass media for informing Koreans about their religion, teaching English and Arabic in their mosques, seeking the extension of economic relationships between Muslim countries and Korea, increasing inter-marriages between male Muslims and female Koreans, setting up educational systems, opening virtual da‘wa websites, and so forth. Moreover, the KMF has developed buildings for their religious activities such as mosques, prayer places, and cultural centers throughout Korea. As a

¹² <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/SERIES/298/478656.html> (Last accessed on Dec. 13, 2012).

¹³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0ti1Ui7WTI&feature=related> (Last accessed on Dec. 15, 2012).

¹⁴

<http://weekly.chosun.com/client/news/viw.asp?nNewsNumb=002145100004&ctcd=C01>. (Last accessed on Dec. 15, 2012).

result, Muslims have eight mosques, four Muslim cultural centers, and more than fifty temporary prayer places in Korea today.¹⁵ Furthermore, according to a recent article in a Christian Internet newspaper, a Korean Muslim not long ago bought a building which had previously been a Protestant mission church and then remodeled the Christian interior of the building to be a cultural center for Muslims.¹⁶ While many such Christian churches have now closed, the number of Islamic buildings for performing their religious activities has recently increased throughout Korea.

As a result of these diverse efforts by Muslims, Islam is no longer an alien religion in Korea. A religious sociologist, Giwon Hong, forecasts that since the Muslim population including Korean-born Muslims will continually grow in Korea, Islam will soon be one of major religions in Korea.¹⁷

Korean Christianity needs to be concerned about the growth of Islam in Korea and prepare missions to evangelize Muslims in Korea, as well as sending missionaries to Muslim countries. Nevertheless, most Christian leaders in Korea have not recognized this serious religious context of a rapidly-spreading Islamic faith throughout Korea which is converting many Korean Christians to Islam. These Christian leaders also assert that educated Korean people will not be interested in nor convert to a violent and terroristic religion, Islam.¹⁸ However, the methodologies of Islamic da‘wa have completely changed in the twenty-first century. They no longer seek to spread Islamic faith to the world through imperialistic force, except for in the cases of a few radical groups. Muslims

¹⁵ <http://www.koreaislam.org/mosque/intro2.jsp> (Last accessed on Dec. 15, 2012).

¹⁶ http://www.islamkorea.com/islamkorea_2.html (Last accessed on Dec. 12, 2012).

¹⁷ Giwon Hong, *Multi-Cultural Policy and Cultural Diverse* (Seoul: Korean Cultural Ministry, 2006), 23.

¹⁸ <http://kcm.co.kr/pakistan/people/cha/paper.html#02> (Last accessed on Dec. 12, 2012).

advertise that Islam is a peaceful religion participating in diverse social movements, making harmony with other religions, and cooperating to protect the natural environment. Their missionary methods have totally changed in the post-colonial era. Korean Christians need to recognize these Muslim methodologies in propagating their faith to Koreans, and then prepare appropriate responses to such Islamic da'wa.

In this research, I focus on two aspects of Islam in Korea. One is Islam as a missionary religion. Another issue is the Korean converts to Islam. To address the first aspect, I have researched Islamic mission theology and its history. Using the Islamic missiological concept of da'wa, Muslims have spread their faith to all people. The Islamic faith and culture has expanded from the Arabian Peninsula where Islam was born to reaching all of the world since its foundation in the seventh century. The power of Islam first touched Korea about thirteen hundred years ago through inland China, outside of Korea. Although there is a disconnected period for about five hundred years during the Chosun dynasty, the history of Islam in Korea is quite long. More recently, the Korean War became an ignition point to revive Islamic movements in Korea. The Turkish army, who participated in the war as friendly troops with the UN, brought Islamic traditions again to Korea. Since the Muslims' religious ceremonies and culture were not familiar to Koreans in the beginning, just a few Koreans were interested in this new religious system and converted to Islam. In 1970s and 80s, though, the population of the Korean Muslim community expanded dramatically because Islamic countries supported Korea in overcoming its bad economy. Nevertheless, Islam was still a minor religion in Korea, while Christianity became one of the major religions, along with Buddhism, Shamanism, and Confucianism. After the mass influx of foreign Muslims into Korea began in 1995,

however, the number of Muslims has radically increased, and they have sought to effectively spread their faith to Koreans in diverse ways. To address this phenomenon, in the first half of this research, I focus on such Islamic missiology, its mission history, and specific methods of Islamic da'wa that have been applied to Korean society in the twenty-first century.

Second, I also studied Korean Muslims who converted from other religions to Islam. In recent years, many Buddhists, Catholics, and Protestant Christians have transferred their religious identities to Islam. I carefully analyzed the reasons why they changed and what kinds of attractiveness Muslim communities have for Koreans. While researching this issue, I found a significant article, "Conversion Motifs: A Study of Present-day South Korean Converts to Islam," written by two Muslim scholars, Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Heon Choul Kim. In their study, they met and interviewed twenty-seven Korean Muslims in order to find the reasons for their religious conversions. As a result of their research, the authors concluded that most converts were among those who were well-educated and successful in their fields of work; most converts had other faith traditions before becoming Muslims; their central motif of conversion was intellectual.¹⁹ I think that the results of their research are valuable and important to help Christian leaders to understand these converts to Islam. However, their research was done in 2002. Their research results need to be reevaluated to see if they are still valid today, because the population of Korean converts has constantly and rapidly increased in the years since then; the Korean Muslim population (in Korea) is now at least 75,000. In this research, I

¹⁹ Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Heon Choul Kim, "Conversion Motifs: A Study of Present-day South Korean Converts to Islam," in *Journal of Academic Studies*, Vol. 4 (Nov. 2002-2003): 123-137.

sought to have interviews with people who have converted to Islam recently, within less than 10 years. In particular, according to reports from a national daily newspaper for Koreans, *Hangyureh Sinmoon*, “Recently many people from young generations have been visiting mosques and Islamic cultural centers, and converting to Islam. Islam has become popular among young adult groups.”²⁰ Since numerous members of the younger generations of Koreans have chosen to become Muslims, I targeted these new young Muslims for this research. I have also interviewed, of course, older Muslims, those who are over 50 years old. However, within my study their number makes up only 25% of the total of 49 testimonies examined. In my data analysis, I also compare the different motives for conversion that the young converts and the older generation of Muslims have. This research thus focuses more on fresh and young Muslim converts than Mehmedoglu and Kim’s study did. In addition, the interview population of this research is almost twice that of the previous study. This research thus evaluates whether or not the results of the antecedent study are still valid in the Korean context today.

Missiologically, this study can help the Korean church identify reasons why Koreans are interested in Islam and want to become Muslims today. In particular, most converts to Islam are Christians, including both Protestants and Catholics. Within this research, therefore, their number makes up about 75% of the interviewees. As the result of this study, Christian leaders of the Korean church will be able to know the seriousness of this religious issue, the radically growing Korean Muslim population. Moreover, this study will also contribute to the recognition of how church members are vulnerable to

²⁰ <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/SERIES/298/478656.html> (Last accessed on Dec. 13, 2012).

changing their religious identities to Islam. Therefore, this dissertation touches an urgent missiological issue in the Korean context.

I. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of my research is to discover the reasons why Koreans have become interested in the Islamic faith and in Muslim communities and have converted to Islam in this century. Korean religious contexts have changed rapidly since the beginning of the twenty-first century. First of all, while more established religions have been declining, Islam has been growing. In particular, numerous adults have left Catholic and Protestant churches and Buddhist temples, and some of them have converted to Islam. However, most Korean Christian churches have not considered such changes in the Korean religious context as serious, nor have they researched the reasons why Christians have transferred their religious identities to Islam. I believe that it is an urgent and significant issue to study Korean Muslim converts because the number of Koreans converting to Islam has been increasing in recent years. Therefore, the focal point of this research is to explore why Korean Muslims have transferred their religious identities from being Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, or Confucian—to being Islamic.

II. Assumptions and Questions for Research

Within this statement of the problem, I can identify two assumptions that are foundational to this study:

1. Islam is a religion that seeks to convert non-Muslims through da'wa.
2. Muslims are attempting to perform da'wa in Korea.

From these assumptions, my research was organized around three main questions:

1. What is the definition of the Islamic missiological term, da'wa, and the missionary history of Muslims?

- What does da'wa mean? Where is the term from?
- How is the term da'wa understood differently among Muslims?
- Methodologically, how have Muslims spread their faith to the world in history?

2. What is the history of da'wa in Korea?

When did Muslims first step into Korea?

- What kinds of difficulties did Muslims have while settling into Korean societies?
- How rapidly has Islam been growing in the twenty-first century?

3. Why are Koreans being attracted to Islam?

- What kinds of missionary strategies have Muslims used for reaching Koreans?
- What were converts' religions before changing their religious identities?
- What are the differences between their previous religions and Islam?
- What aspects of Muslim communities attract Korean people?

III. Delimitations of the Study

In undertaking this project, I accepted the fact that this study poses challenges in gathering data to answer my research questions. Fundamentalist Korean Muslims are strongly offended by Christians. Most Korean Muslims did not want to discuss their religious identities with others because they have often experienced religious discriminations in Korean society. Therefore, I found it necessary to narrow my research in these ways:

First, this study focused on Muslim movements taking place in Korea. I did not examine universal Islamic da'wa.

Second, I limited my research to fresh converts to the Muslim faith, namely those who converted to Islam since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Although I

interviewed Muslims who converted to Islam in 1970s and 80s, their number is small. This study focuses more on fresh converts than the older ones.

Third, the target population of my research was Korean Muslims who transferred their religious identities from any other religion to Islam.

Finally, although the number of “Koslim” has grown steeply in Korean society, and although many sociologists and Muslim communities have recognized the Koslims’ difficulties in living in a non-Islamic country, this research is concerned only about converted-Muslims, rather than born-Muslims.

IV. Definition of Key Terms

Missionary religions: Max Müller aptly defines what a missionary religion is: It is “one in which the spreading of the truth and the conversion of unbelievers are raised to the rank of a sacred duty by the founder or his immediate successors.”²¹ Then, Müller divides the six great religions of the world—Judaism, Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam—into missionary and non-missionary religions. While the latter three religions have sought to spread their faith to the others, the former three have been state and national religions for Jews, Indians, and Iranians. In his book, *The Spread of Religions: A Social Scientific Theory Based on the Spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam*, Robert L. Montgomery also categorizes these same three religions as missionary religions. His writing distinguishes between “popular religions” and “elite religions.” Both types of religion desire contact with a supernatural being, but

²¹ Quoted in Thomas Arnold, *The Spread of Islam in the World: A History of Peaceful Preaching* (2nd ed.) (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2001), 1.

those who belong to popular religions seek transcendent sources for satisfying their felt-needs such as relief from suffering and misfortunes, healing diseases, and having children, crops, and good fortune. On the other hand, elite religions are concerned about orthodox doctrine, continuity, overall harmony, and official organization in order to effectively spread their faith to all people. In this sense, the three religions of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam belong to the category of elite religions. Throughout their long histories, those religions have sought to expand their religious powers to the entire world through many ways.²² Therefore, those religions, including Islam, are considered to be missionary religions. However, Muslims do not use the term “missionary” because they consider it a Christian theological term. Rather, they prefer to employ their own term, “*da’wa*.” In this research, I will use this term when I want to explain that Islam is a religion attempting to convert non-Muslims.

Da’wa: In the Qur’an, the word “*da’wa*” and its derivatives are used in different contexts more than a hundred times (2:186, 3:104, 10:106, 12:108, and so forth).²³ Some Muslim scholars insist that not only does the frequency of this word in the Qur’an prove the significance of *da’wa*, but also the Qur’an is a complete *da’wa* book, in which we find all its scope, directions and general aims. In other words, there is *da’wa* in the center of

²² Robert L. Montgomery, *The Spread of Religions: Social Scientific Theory Based on the Spread Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam* (NJ: Long Dash Books, 2007), 23.

²³ Torsen Janson, *Your Cradle Is Green: The Islamic Foundation and the Call to Islam in Children’s Literature* (Lund: Lund University, 2003), 59. Moreover, The word, *da’wah*, can also be found in diverse Hadith collections which record the life of Muhammad and the early history of Islam.

the holy book, the Qur'an.²⁴ In its usage, the word da'wa means addressing, calling, appealing, inviting, requesting, demanding and worshiping.²⁵ Paul Walker provides an even more inclusive array of meanings for "da'wa" describing it as "concepts of summoning, calling on, appealing to, invocation, prayer (for and against something or someone), propaganda, missionary activity, and finally legal proceedings and claims."²⁶ Moreover, Toren Janson argues that the word has three different meanings: worshipping God or idols; addressing, asking, and calling God, idols, or people; and inviting to religion.²⁷ Based on those interpretations of da'wa, most scholars consider Islam to be a missionary religion which invites people to join Islam.

Like the two other prophetic religions—Christianity and Judaism—Islam is also a monotheistic religion. Muslims confess that "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his prophet."²⁸ They assert that all religious traditions are based on a common source, the religion of God that He has implanted equally in all people. However, people changed and corrupted the original teaching of this one supernatural being in human history. Only Islam has maintained the original truth as revealed by God. In the beginning of the seventh century, Muhammad ibn-Adbullah, the founder of Islam, received the way to reach the original truth from God.²⁹ According to Sura 16:125, "Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best

²⁴ Paul Walker, "da'wah: Quranic Concept," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, I. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 343.

²⁵ David Kerr, "Islamic da'wa and Christian Mission: Towards a comparative Analysis in *International Review of Mission* 89 (2000), 151.

²⁶ Walker, 343.

²⁷ Janson, 59-61.

²⁸ Hans Küng, *Islam: Past, Present, and Future* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 77.

²⁹ Isma'il Al-Faruqi, "On the Nature of Islamic da'wah," *International Review of Mission* 65 (Oct., 1976): 396-399.

and most gracious; for your Lord knows best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance,”³⁰ Allah gave all Muslims including Muhammad the command to spread Islam to all people. As a result, Muhammad had a responsibility to proclaim the truth and became the first missionary of Islam. Since Allah commanded him to preach what he received, Muhammad preached Islam to non-Muslims—Arab pagans, Christians, and Jews. Then, after he died, his successors also sought to disseminate the Islamic faith to new regions in North Africa, Syria, and Persia. From a historical perspective, Muslims employed two different methods for expanding their religious influence. The first was through peaceful missionary activities—preaching and dialogue—which was employed primarily in the beginning of Islam and in the present post-colonial era. Second, though, Muslims also sought to spread Islam to the world through military conquests similar to what some Christians did during the Crusades and through colonial expansion.

Conversion: Definitions of “conversion” are abundant. In its most basic sense, Daniel Reid, in the *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, writes, “Conversion means a turning from one way of life to another.”³¹ In this sense, conversion for Christians is a turning from sin to salvation in Christ. On the other hand, Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder understand it in a different way. They assert that in conversion, one could also be simply changing denominations from one Christian denomination to another, i.e. from

³⁰ Quoted from Abdullah Yusuf Ali’s *The Meaning of the Illustrious Qur’an with Footnotes and An Introduction to the Qur’an* (NY: Al Arqam Dawa Center, 2007), 206.

³¹ Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley and Harry S Stout ed., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1990), 316.

being Baptist to Methodist.³² G. W. Allport, in his writing, considers conversion as a transferring from extrinsic faith to intrinsic.³³ Lastly, Lewis R. Rambo categorizes five diverse definitions of conversion: apostasy or defection, intensification, affiliation, institutional transition, and traditional transition.³⁴ For this research, the fifth type of conversion described by Rambo, traditional transition, is useful. Conversion means that people move from one worldview, ritual system, symbolic universe, and life-style to another.

Pre-converts: In his book, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, George G. Hunter III uses the term, “*Pre-Christian*” as a way of describing the Irish people preceding the arrival of St. Patrick. Before Patrick’s evangelism, the Celts were regarded as “barbarians” or “pagan” by the Roman Church. However, as a faithful evangelist, Patrick, never referred to them using these terms. During his twenty-eight year mission to Ireland, he passionately sought to reach out to the “pre-Christian population” which he found there. Patrick knew that the Irish Celts were not Christians, but also that they had great potential to become Christians soon. Because of this conviction, he called them pre-Christians rather than barbarians.³⁵ Similarly, New Testament theologian Margtin Hengel also uses this term, “pre-Christian” to describe the apostle Paul. Hengel, in his book *The Pre-Christian Paul*, describes Paul’s life before his Damascus experience and then how

³² Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, eds., *Conversion: The Christian Experience* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), 121-128.

³³ G. W. Allport, “Religion and Prejudice,” *Crane Review* 2 (1959): 1-10.

³⁴ Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), 12-13.

³⁵ George G. Hunter III, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 13-25.

his religious identity changed from Judaism to becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. Hengel draws the boundary line at his conversion. He separates his pre-Christian period and post-conversion Christian life.³⁶ From these two authors' ideas, I created a neologism, "pre-converts." For my purposes here, these refer to Koreans who are not yet converted to Islam, but who are vulnerable to the transferring of their religious identities to Islam. In chapter four, the term will often be used to indicate people who are unstable in their faith and who are unsatisfied in their previous religious systems and theologies.

V. Research Methodology

For this study, I employed a "qualitative research methodology" in order to gather an in-depth understanding of converts and to find reasons for their converting. I had two hypotheses and three main questions in this research. Using a qualitative research methodology helped me to explore whether or not the hypotheses were true and to give answers for my questions. Among the various approaches of qualitative research,³⁷ "analysis of documents" and "interviewing" were my primary research tools for this study. In addition, I spent three months in Korea to engage in "participant observation" so that I could obtain additional data on the Korean Muslim movements and be able to define the characteristics of Korean Islam.

³⁶ Martin Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London: SCM Press, 1991), ix- xii.

³⁷ In her book, *Designed Qualitative Research*, Catherine Marshall introduces diverse qualitative methods: Participant Observation, Non-participant Observation, Field Notes, Reflexive Journals, Structured Interview, Semi-structured Interview, Unstructured Interview, and Analysis of documents and materials; Catherine Marshall, *Designing Qualitative Research* (Newbury Park Calif.: Sage Publications, 1989).

A. Analysis of Literature

This research began with library research. First of all, I researched basic books and articles written on Islamic missiology (da'wa), the history of Islam, Islamic mission, the theology of Islam, and so forth. Then, I defined their mission theologies and their diverse practical methodologies for doing mission. In addition, I sought to trace the history of the Korean Muslim movement and its particular characteristics. For this purpose, I surveyed books and articles on the history of Korean Islam and its da'wa methodologies in Korean contexts. Furthermore, since my major concern was researching Koreans who convert, I collected data using grounded theories for conversions from this library work. Numerous theologians have been interested in finding reasons why people change their religions from one to another. They describe converts' motivations as psychological, sociological, theological, and so forth. From the result of this library work, I analyzed the conversion types of Korean Muslims using theological frameworks.

B. Semi-Structured Interview

Since interviewing is one of the most popular and valuable methods of qualitative research, I prepared a semi-structured questionnaire in order to perform in-depth qualitative interviews; these interviews were freely open to additional unexpected data. I sought mostly to conduct these interviews face-to-face. However, I did not find enough individual interviewees. So, I reached other Korean Muslim converts by telephone or group interviews. Moreover, I employed an email survey method in order to find further interviewees, but this approach to Korean Muslims failed. I received just two responses, although I sent surveys to numerous Muslims. On the other hand, online chatting was

useful when I sought to reach the younger generation of converts and Korean Muslims who live in outside of Korea. Finally, a book which was published by a foreign Muslim helped in this research because it introduced a variety of conversion stories from people of different countries, including several Korean Muslims. Through these approaches to field research, I collected 49 interviews with Korean Muslims. Their strata are diverse from high class to low, from teenagers to people more than 50 years old, and from the highly educated to lower educated. Moreover, 38 of the total interviewees are those who have recently become Muslims—who have converted in the last ten years. By this research method, I evaluated converts to Islam utilizing diverse theories of conversion.

In addition, I also researched the responses of Korean Christian churches to this issue. My assumptions for this study were that Korean Christian leaders might not be seriously concerned about what is taking place in Muslim movements in Korea, and that they did not know much about the religion of Islam. In order to test these hypotheses, I interviewed 327 students in Methodist, Presbyterian and Pentecostal seminaries. Since they would be the Korean church leaders of the future, I believed that it would be important to have their responses about mission to Muslims who live in Korea. Through this research, I diagnosed the missionary trend of Korean Protestant Christianity toward Islam.

C. Participant Observation

While engaging in my three months of field research, on every Friday I visited one of eight different mosques located throughout Korea: Seoul, Bupyeong, Pajoo, Anyang, Ansan, Kwangjoo, Jeunjoo, and Taegu. I also participated in diverse cultural

activities provided in the central mosque, such as Arabic classes, reading the Qur'an, classes in basic Islam, Tarbiyah class and so forth. I observed Muslims' religious lives and their religious culture in Korean contexts through visiting and participating. Although a Christian researcher, I sought, as much as I could, to avoid having a bias against Muslims while conducting the research.

VI. Data Analysis

I had two hypotheses for this research: first, that Islam is a missionary religion, and second, that Islamic theologies and Muslim communities are attractive to Koreans. To test the first hypothesis, I researched books and articles about Islamic missiology and their da'wa methods as reported by Muslim and Christian scholars. From such library work, I defined da'wa etymologically, theologically, and historically and proved the first hypothesis that Islam is a missionary religion. Next, I characterized some features of Islamic growth taking place throughout the world in the twenty-first century, and compared the characteristics of Korean Islam with those general features through analyzing the data collected from participant observation. I then profiled particular Korean Muslim movements.

For the second hypothesis, I interviewed 49 Korean Muslim converts. Within the analysis of my interviews with Korean Muslims, I categorized their conversion types into the six conversion motifs suggested by Lofland and Skonovd: Intellectual, Mystical, Experimental, Affectional, Revivalist, and Coercive. Since my question format was open-ended rather than closed, the responses were diverse. The main conversion reason reported by Korean Muslims was intellectual. However, other motifs were working

together with the intellectual motif during the conversion process. Moreover, I found several scholarly studies about religious conversion from another religion to Islam, such as the work of Larry Poston, Ali Köse, and Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Heon Choul Kim. I lastly sought to compare my research findings with the results of these antecedent studies.

VII. Significance of This Research

1. The main focal point of this research was to discover reasons why Koreans are interested in and have converted to Islam. Among Korean Christian scholars, no one has researched this issue. Most theologians and Christian leaders have been a bit concerned about developing missional strategies toward Muslims who live in Korea and studying Muslims' da'wa methodologies. I think that my work as a Christian scholar, interviewing Korean Muslims and researching Korean Muslim movements is unique. This research has been welcomed by the Korean Christian churches, but not by the Korean Muslim community; although I honestly and specifically explained the intention of this project, many Muslim leaders seriously doubted the validity of my purposes. Nevertheless, this research was successful. The Muslim leadership group speculated that I might have less than 20 interviewees, but I obtained 49 Korean Muslims' testimonies. When I returned to the United States from Korea, both Christian and Islamic leaders said, "We are waiting for your dissertation findings."

2. For this research project, I employed Lofland and Skonovd's six conversion motifs. This theological framework is very useful for understanding the reasons why a person transfers her/his religious identity from one faith to another. However, this theory was developed for analyzing cases of Christian converts. Therefore, I evaluated whether or

not this conversion theory is also valid for converts to Islam. In addition, as Mehmedoglu and Kim had already used this theological frame for analyzing the conversion stories of Korean Muslims, this study examined the results of this previous study to see whether their research conclusions are still valid in the Korean context ten years later.

3. Studying Islamic da'wa and Muslim missionary methodologies in the twenty-first century is urgent and significant since the Korean religious context is witnessing the rapid increase of the Muslim population. Korean Christian leaders tend to have a bias against the religion of Islam, thinking that all Muslims are radical and forceful. However, Islam has changed its missionary methods in today's postmodern and globalizing era. They are no longer using imperialistic force to spread their faith. Through this study, I conclude that Korean Christians need new methodologies to reduce Muslims' religious missionary power.

4. Two Korean Muslim scholars, Heesoo Lee and Muhammad Kanso, have written books and articles about Islam in Korea. However, on the Christian side, this research is the first to document chronologically the history of Islam in Korea—how the Muslims first reached Koreans, propagated their faith in Korea, and why Islam first declined and then later was revived within the Korean political, sociological, and economic contexts in the twentieth century. Christian scholars, too, must concern themselves with deeply studying Islam and publishing numerous books on the Islamic faith for the “pre-Muslims” of the Korean Christian churches.

CHAPTER 2

STUDIES OF THE ISLAMIC MISSIOLOGICAL TERM: *DA'WA*

In his lecture at Westminster Abbey in 1873, Max Müller classified the six major religions of the world—Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism—into missionary and non-missionary religions. While the first three religions were said to have missionary characteristics, the rest of them were regarded as non-missionary. Müller clearly defined missionary religions as those which propagate their beliefs to people of other religions in order to make them transfer their religious identities from one to the other. In missionary religions, salvation is open to everyone, though the way to gain such salvation is different in each. The founders of the missionary religions or their followers construct mission strategies for expanding their religious territories. Those efforts are considered “as the rank of a sacred duty” in missionary religions.³⁸ On the other hand, the latter three non-missionary religions are not concerned about making people convert because of their exclusive and universal soteriologies. Since Jews recognize God as a divine only for their ethnic group,³⁹ they have not performed

³⁸ Quoted in Thomas Arnold, *The Spread of Islam in the World: A History of Peaceful Preaching* (2nd ed.), (New Delhi: Goodword Books, 2001), 1.

³⁹ In his book, *Crossing Over Sea and Land*, Michael F. Bird argues that Judaism is a missionary religion because of the scriptures, Isaiah 2:2-4; 60:1-3, and Matt. 23:15. Theologically, Jews need to perform missions to non-Jews. However, they have not evangelized non-believers to the faith of Judaism practically. In a sense, I think Judaism is not an active missionary religion.

evangelical activities toward non-Jews.⁴⁰ Moreover, salvation is not dependent on religious affiliation in Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. Both of these religions emphasize producing right conduct such as words, thoughts, and deeds for salvation rather than emphasizing that people need to join their religious communities.⁴¹ Therefore, those three religions are categorized as non-missionary religions.

In his book, *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam*, Larry Poston distinguishes the differences between missionary and non-missionary religions through using the concept of centrifugal and centripetal orientations.

The former [missionary religions] designation may be applied to any faith that has as an intrinsic part of its *raison d'être* the proclamation of its precepts to persons unfamiliar with them, in the hope that at least some—if not all—of those persons will adopt these tenets as their own. The orientation of such a religion is centrifugal; it is directed outward and seeks to expand its boundaries in both a quantitative and qualitative sense. A non-missionary religion, on the other hand, is centripetally oriented; its focus is inward and its boundaries are extended only in the qualitative realm (i.e., adherents of such a faith are preoccupied with their own spiritual development in either an individual or a collective sense). This is not to say that quantitative expansion cannot take place within a non-missionary faith, only that such expansion is not considered by the adherents to be a primary objective of the religion.⁴²

In terms of Poston's distinction between missionary and non-missionary religions, Islam could conceivably be classified as a non-missionary religion because its

⁴⁰ Bayron Earhart ed. *Religious Traditions of the World: A Journey Through Africa, North America, Mesoamerica, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, China, and Japan* (California: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 385-386.

⁴¹ S. A. Nigosian, *The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition & Modern Research* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 87-89; Adam Hamilton, *Christianity and World Religions: Wrestling with Questions People Ask* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 38-42.

⁴² Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

missiological term, da'wa means "inviting." That is, the term's nuance is negative towards outwardly expanding its religious boundaries. However, since Islamic mission in practice focuses on both qualitative and quantitative growth, Islam must be considered as a missionary religions, along with Christianity and Buddhism. In history, Muslims did not merely passively invite non-believers to Islamic faith. Their da'wa movements were progressive, going to the world for spreading their faith. Ever since their early religious movements, Muslims have sought to expand their demographics and to enlarge the boundaries of the Muslim community. As a result, Islam has become a world religion, not just a tribal religion on the Arabian Peninsula.

The term, "mission" is most often used as a Christian term for explaining the missionary characteristics of Christianity. Its meaning is "sending," but, as noted above, Islamic mission is not based on sending, but on "inviting."⁴³ In a sense, most Muslim scholars reject employing the Christian concept of "mission" in Islamic studies. They prefer to use "da'wa" instead of borrowing a missiological term from another religion. This term and its derivatives are often used in Muslims' sacred scripture, the Qur'an, and in the prestigious collections of traditions (*Hadith*).⁴⁴ For example, da'wa and other forms of the root appear often in 25 Surahs (chapters) of the Qur'an.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the word,

⁴³ Asghar Ali Engineer, "Da'wah or Dialogue?" in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* Vol. 39 (2002): 26.

⁴⁴ Hadith contains the stories of the early Islamic movements. Especially, the collections focus on the sayings and actions of the Prophet. Since the death of their religious leader, Muhammad, his followers had begun to record his verbal and behavioral traditions, because they regarded the prophet, Muhammad, as the best model for Islamic faith. Muslims respect the authority of Hadith alongside the Qur'an. There are a number of different collections of the Hadith in Muslim communities. Six collections, *al-Bukhari*, *al-Muslim*, *al-Tirmidhi*, *Abu Duad al-Sijistani*, *al-Nasai* and *al-Qazwini* are authorized in the orthodox Muslim traditions. See; Keith E. Swartley ed. *Encountering the World of Islam* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005), 83.

⁴⁵ Raciuss, 31.

“invite” or “invitation” is found 34 times in *Sahih Al-Bukhari*,⁴⁶ which is the best-known collection of Hadith.⁴⁷ Inviting non-Muslims to Islam is an important agenda in Islamic theology. Paul Walker said, “This da’wah is the declaration that there is no god other than the True God (Allah). The *da’wah* is Islam, and Islam is the *da’wah*.”⁴⁸ He identifies da’wa as the most important value in Islamic theology. Therefore, it is significant to learn and understand the term, da’wa, in order to clarify the reasons why Islam has been classified as a missionary religion and why Muslims have sought to expand their religious boundaries to the entire world. For these purposes, this chapter will illuminate the missiological term, da’wa, through etymological, theological, and historical lenses.

I. Etymological Approaches to Da’wa

The Islamic term, da’wa, is a noun derived from the verb, da’a. In the Qur’an and Hadith, the verb and its derivatives—da’wa, da’i, and du’ah⁴⁹—are used in different contexts over one hundred times. Its literal meaning is desire for Allah. However, there are a number of connotative meanings in the term, da’wa.⁵⁰

Some angels came to the prophet while he was sleeping. Some of them said, “he is sleeping.” Others said, “His eyes are sleeping but his heart is awake.” Then, they said, “There is an example for this companion of yours.” One of them said, “then, set forth an example for him.” Some of them said, “He is sleeping.” The other said, “His eyes are sleeping but his heart is awake.” Then they said, “His example is that of a man who has built a house and then offered therein a banquet and sent an **inviter [da’i]** (messenger) to invite the people. So whoever accepted the invitation of

⁴⁶ Janson, 59.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Walker, 343.

⁴⁹ Da’a is the verbal form of da’wa (to call); da’i is its active participle (one who calls or invites); and du’ah is the plural pattern of da’i.

⁵⁰ Christer Hedin, Torsten Janson, and David Westerlund “Da’wa,” in Richard C. Martin, *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (NY: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 170.

inviter [da'i], entered the house and ate of the banquet, and whoever did not accept the invitation of the **inviter [da'i]**, did not enter the house, nor did he eat of the banquet.” Then the angels said, “interpret this example to him so that he may understand it.” Some of them said.... And then they said, “The house stands for Paradise and the **callmaker [da'i]** is Muhammad; and whoever obey Muhammad, obeys Allah; and whoever disobeys Muhammad, disobeys Allah ...”
(Sahih al-Bukhari Vol. 9, Book 92. No. 385)⁵¹

... then when He **calls [da'a]** you, by a single **call [da'wa]**, from the earth, behold, you (straightway) come forth. (Surah 30:25)⁵²

I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he **calls [da'a]** on Me: let them also, with a will, listen to My **call [da'wa]**, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way. (Surah 2:186)

It was Allah Who gave you a promise of Truth: I too promised, but I failed in my promise to you. I had no authority over you except to **call [da'a]** you, but you listened to me: then reproach not me, but reproach your own souls. (Surah 14:22)

Invite [da'a] (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious...
(Surah 16:125)

But, surely, you **Call [da'a]** them to the Straight Way (Surah 23:73)

The Unbelievers will be **addressed [da'a]**: “Greater was the aversion of Allah to you than (is) your aversion to yourselves, seeing that you were **called [da'a]** to the Faith and you used to refuse. (Surah 40:10)

In the first two examples, the word is employed for expressing the secular (i.e., irreligious) meaning, such as in the invitation to dinner, to a wedding, or a banquet, and for describing eschatological scenes, but such usages are rarely found in the sacred texts

⁵¹ This is translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan. See, Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English* (Medina: Dar al-Fikr, 1981).

⁵² This research uses Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation of the Qur'an. See, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meanings of the Illustrious Qur'an with Footnotes and an Introduction to the Qur'an* (NY: Al Arqam Dawa Center, 2006), 317.

of Muslims.⁵³ In some of the examples which follow, the term is frequently translated as worshipping, praying or calling to Allah.⁵⁴ However, the subject of da'wa is not exclusively used for Allah in the holy book of the Muslim. When the Qur'an warns against worshipping, addressing, or invoking any deity other than Allah, it also uses the term da'wa, i.e. "Say: Shall we indeed **call [da'a]** on others besides Allah—Things that can do us either good nor harm—and turn on our heels after receiving guidance from Allah? (Surah 6:71)" Thus, the Qur'an emphasizes the monotheistic being of Allah through using the term, da'wa. In terms of the Qur'an, while Muslims are allowed to worship and call out [da'wa] to only one ultimate being, Allah; those who hold on to idolatry will be cursed.

Paul Walker approaches the term da'wa missiologically to define its meaning. He argues that the term in the Qur'an is used for religious acts of invitation, beyond the profane meaning.

The lexical meanings [of da'wa include] ... summoning, calling on, appealing to, invocation, prayer (for and against something or someone), propaganda, missionary activity, and finally legal proceedings and claims.⁵⁵

In other words, performing da'wa means inviting non-Muslims to Islamic faith and leading them to join the faithful community of Muslims. By Surah 3:110, Muslims believe that their religious community is the best for professing their beliefs toward Allah because it has been founded by Allah's direct revelation. In Islamic faith, when non-Muslims join the spiritual community, they are able to perform right conduct and to be

⁵³ Torsten Janson, "Da'wa: Islamic Missiology in Discourse and History" in *Swedish Missiological Themes*, Vol. 89 (Mar. 2001): 365-366.

⁵⁴ e. g. Surah 2:186; 3:38; 6:40; 11:22; 11:106; 19:48; 19:91; 22:12; 72:18 etc.

⁵⁵ Walker, 343.

far away from evil. Therefore, all people must be guided to Islamic faith and community for their salvation.⁵⁶ In this sense, the term, da'wa in the Qur'an, is frequently translated with missiological meanings—inviting, beckoning, guiding, calling, and addressing (Surah 2:221; 3:104; 10:25; 12:108; 13:36; 14:44; 16:125; 23:73; 40:10; 41:33; 70:17; 71:5-6).

David Kerr argues that when he researched the Qur'an for studying da'wa, he found that its subject is Allah, the prophet, or the people of faith.⁵⁷

But Allah does **call [da'a]** to the Home of Peace: He does guide whom He pleases to a Way that is strait. (Surah 10:25)

How is it then that you do not believe in Allah? –And the Messenger **invites [da'a]** you to believe in your Lord, and has indeed taken your Covenant, if you are men of Faith. (Surah 57:4)

... and they think they are being overwhelmed: they **cry [da'a]** unto Allah, sincerely offering (their) duty unto Him, saying, ... (Surah 10:22)

When the term is used with its subject as Allah, performing da'wa is understood as being derived from the very nature of Allah. Allah cordially wants to lead people to Islamic faith, “inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong (Surah 3:104).” For achieving this purpose, Allah called the prophet, Muhammad, to be a divinely authorized messenger who pronounced the Islamic message as a fulfillment of his “messengership.”⁵⁸ By following the Prophet as a role model for their faith, Muslims do have responsibility to honor the prophetic mission of calling, though they are not messengers in the same sense as the Prophet. Moreover, Kerr emphasizes the

⁵⁶ David A. Kerr, “Islamic Da'wa and Christian Mission: Towards a Comparative Analysis,” in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 89 (Apr. 2000): 151

⁵⁷ Ibid, 151.

⁵⁸ Hamid Dabashi, *Authority in Islam: From the Rise of Muhammad to the Establishment of the Umayyads* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 1989), 43.

importance of performing da'wa in the new religious community by Allah's revelation.

This Islamic missiological pattern is similar to the Christian missiological concept of *missio dei*: "God the Father sending the Son, the God and the Son sending the Holy Spirit, and Father, Son and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world."⁵⁹

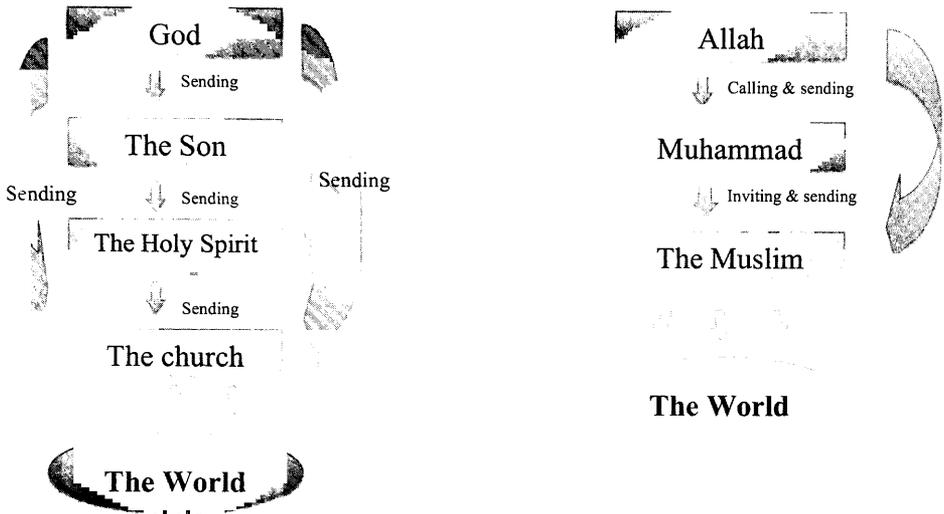


Figure 1 Sending Missiological Paradigm of Christianity and Islam

Of course, Muslims do not accept the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, nor do they highlight the role of the Holy Spirit in their missiology. Unlike in the Christian Scripture, the Holy Spirit is mentioned just a few times in the Qur'an. The Holy Spirit is simply considered as a messenger connecting the supernatural being and the Prophet, i.e. "Say, the Holy Spirit has brought the revelation from your Lord in Truth, in order to strengthen those who believe, and as a Guide and Glad Tidings to Muslims (Surah 16:102)." It has never played a propulsive force in Islamic mission, as the Holy Spirit

⁵⁹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Obris Books, 1991), 390.

does in the New Testament’s book of Acts. Even though Muslims totally reject the doctrine of Trinity and the role of the Holy Spirit in expanding their spiritual boundaries, the missiological paradigms of both Islam and Christianity are somewhat parallel.

Table 1 Compare Missiological Paradigms of Islam and Christianity

	Islam	Christianity
The initiator of da’wa/mission	Allah	God
A significant character bridging between supernatural being and humankind	Muhammad (the Prophet)	Jesus + the Holy Spirit
The da’wa/missionary agent for the world	The Muslim community (<i>Umma</i>)	The church

Such a missiological paradigm within Islam certainly indicates that Islam is a missionary religion, just as Christianity is. Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, and all Muslims are *da’wah* who invite non-believers to embrace the truth they believe. Walker argues that *da’wa* and Islam can be never separated, but must be “viewed as a single concept.”⁶⁰ The purpose of being Muslim is to propagate their faith to the world.

In his article, “Da’wah: Qur’anic Concept,” Walker interprets *da’wa* as passive mission activities by comparing it to another missiological term, *tabligh*, which is also used in Islamic tradition.

Unlike the term *tabligh*, meaning to “fulfill” or “implement” a mission—that is, to cause or bring about a given task, or to convey successfully a specific message—which is an active requirement, *da’wah* is a passive invitation, a summons, a call, or a prayer. It is perfectly possible, therefore, to speak of the “implementation” of the *da’wah* that is, *tabligh al-da’wah*.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Walker, 345.

⁶¹ Ibid, 345.

Egdunas Raciūnas opposes Walker's above argument because historically, Muhammad did not hesitate in propagating the revelation to his family, relatives, and neighbors.⁶² Of course, his methodology for proclaiming the message was peaceful and passive in the early Meccan period. However, his preaching then became passionate toward his opponents who persecuted him and his followers in Mecca. Furthermore, when the Muslims moved to Medina in order to be safe from the persecution of their antagonists, his religious group aggressively approached neighboring tribes, making them convert to Islam.⁶³ Muhammad's da'wa methods thus transferred from passive to active. While he carefully approached to his family and friends in the early Meccan Period, Muhammad had an enthusiasm about propagating the message of Allah in the late Meccan era as well as in the Medinan era. Therefore, in terms of the whole of the Qur'anic texts, Muhammad's attitudes toward da'wa were both passive and active at different times.⁶⁴

As referred to above by Walker, another missiological term in Islamic studies, *tabligh* means "to make someone reach, to communicate, or to report."⁶⁵ The word does not directly appear in the Qur'an, but its verbal forms work alongside of missiological terms such as *balagh al-da'wa*, which means communicating a message successfully, or fulfilling a mission. However, *balagh* is just proclaiming beliefs toward non-believers. It is insufficient for the fulfillment of da'wa. According to Surah 3. 20 and 6. 106, Muslim

⁶² Egdunas Raciūnas, "The Multiple Nature of the Islamic Da'wa" (Academic Dissertation, The University of Helsinki, 2004), 36.

⁶³ Swartley, 17-23.

⁶⁴ Raciūnas, 36.

⁶⁵ Muhammad Khalid Masud, "Tabligh," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. I, 162.

evangelists do not have responsibility for making Muslims converts.⁶⁶ Their duty is sharing the message: Allah, the day of judge, and afterlife. The result of da'wa depends on the audience. This attitude is clearly passive, but in history the faithful Muslim actively approached non-believers. If anyone interrupts their da'wa movements, the Qur'an allows Muslims to use armed force and promises that the warriors for da'wa would be blessed in heaven. Thus, in terms of the Qur'an, the missiological attitude of Muslims toward non-Muslim is possible in two ways, both peaceful and aggressive, according to the various views of the interpreters reading the Qur'an. While some focus on the peaceful propagating movements of Muhammad, others are concerned about radically expanding their spiritual territories within the concept of *jihad*. I will specifically explore such different understandings of da'wa in the next theological section.

II. Theological Approaches to Da'wa

A. Da'wa toward Non-Muslims or/and Unfaithful Ones?

As an Islamic missiological term, da'wa has been interpreted to mean inviting non-Muslims to Allah (Surah 12:108) and guiding them to the right path (Surah 16:125). Since numerous verses in the Qur'an command all believers, including the Prophet Muhammad, to perform da'wa, Muslims have sought to proclaim Allah's message to people through diverse ways. At the beginning of its history, Muhammad's religious movement was not very successful, but his followers gradually increased in number. As his first convert, the Prophet's wife, Khadija, became a Muslim after her husband

⁶⁶ Ibid, 162.

received revelations from Allah. Muhammad then expanded his efforts, converting his family, relatives, and the marginalized of his society. Next, he carefully began public preaching three years after the first revelation.⁶⁷ Since, in his preaching, Muhammad strongly condemned the city's unfair social structure, in addition to the idolatries of the people, the upper class of the Meccans showed hatred for the new religious movement.

Although Muhammad and his followers had been scoffed at and even persecuted by the people of his hometown, his missionary concern in the early Meccan period was only for his tribe, the Quraysh.⁶⁸ However, when his religious group moved to Yathrib in order to have religious freedom, their da'wa target turned from Meccans only to include other Arab tribes, and even to adherents of other religions, including Christians and Jews. In particular, Muhammad's approach to those two monotheistic religions in the early Medina period was friendly, because of their monotheistic faith. He identified the three monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—as being in one tradition. In response, however, the Jewish and Christian people's reactions were indifferent. When he detected such apathetic attitudes toward his religious movement, Muhammad criticized them on the basis that the Creator, Allah, revealed himself to these peoples, but they had distorted the revelations throughout their long histories. Then the Muslim attitudes toward them turned from hospitality to hostility, and Jews and Christians were classified as the objects of da'wa.⁶⁹ Allah's revelations concerning “the people of the Book” were transformed,

⁶⁷ William Montgomery Watt, *A Short History of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1996), 17.

⁶⁸ Robert Payne, *The History of Islam* (New York: Dorset Press, 1990), 18-19.

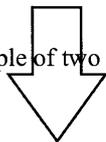
⁶⁹ Swartley, 20-21, 36-37.

Those who believe (in the Quran), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians—any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (Surah 2:62).

... and nearest among them in love to the believers will you find those who say, “We are Christians:” because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant (Surah 5:82).

O you who believe! Be you helpers of Allah: as said Jesus the son of Mary to the Disciples, “who will be My helpers to (the work of) Allah?” Said the Disciples, “We are Allah’s helpers!” Then a portion of the Children of Israel believed, and a portion disbelieved: But We gave power to those who believed, against their enemies, and they became the ones that prevailed (Surah 61:14).

New revelations toward the people of two monotheistic religions in the Qur’an



If only they had stood fast by the law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that was sent to them from their Lord, they would have enjoyed happiness from every side. There is from among them a party on the right course: but many of them follow a course that is evil. (Surah 5:66)

The Jews call ‘Uzayr a son of God, and the Christians call Christ the son of God. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah’s curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the Truth! They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah, and (they take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but One God; There is no god but He. Praise and glory to Him: (far is He) from having the partners they associate (with Him) (Surah 9:30).

O people of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: nor say of Allah aught but the Truth. Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit Proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not “Trinity:” desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is One God: glory be to Him: (far Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs. (Surah 4:171)

Thus, at the beginning of his religious movement, Muhammad and his followers focused on inviting all non-Muslims including Arabs, Jews, and Christians to Islamic faith, confessing Allah as the One God and acknowledging Muhammad as the last prophet. Since, according to Surah 3: 14, the responsibility of “inviting to all that is good” is on the whole Muslim community, Muslims have reached out to non-believers throughout their history.⁷⁰ In the Muslim faith, the way of non-Muslim’s salvation is not a single path. There are seven different ways in Islamic soteriology: the divine will, the divine mercy, faith, faith and work, intercession, the mystical way, and community membership. Muslims believe that although salvation is “from above, not from below,” human responsibility is also important in their soteriology. In other words, faithful Muslims who can be saved must have right conduct and forbid iniquity, as well as believe and confess. “The action authenticates the confession.”⁷¹ In terms of the Qur’an,⁷² the faithful Islamic community is genuine in the world. Muslims are strongly convinced that their religious group will solely and rightly teach the One God and will guide people to ways of “enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong.” That is why throughout history all Muslims have sought to invite everyone to their faithful community, called the *umma*.⁷³ This is the traditional perspective on doing da’wa towards non-Muslims in Islamic missiology.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Roest Crolius, “Mission and Morality,” in *Studia Missionalia*, No. 27 (1978): 265.

⁷¹ Roland E. Miller, *Muslims and the Gospel: Bridging the Gap* (Minnesota: Lutheran University Press, 2005), 83-84.

⁷² Surah 3:10, “You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the people of the Book had faith, it were best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.”

⁷³ This is regarded as a religious community united by its belief in the One True God (e. g., Surah 10:47), one to which a messenger has been sent (Surah 23:44), and more particularly,

Even though there is no direct mention in their sacred texts about performing da'wa toward fellow Muslims, Muslim leaders have also been seriously concerned about teaching non-authentic Muslims to make them faithful.⁷⁵ Roland E. Miller classifies unfaithful Muslims into three groups: “nominal, lukewarm, and greatly-sinning believers.”⁷⁶ Those who are born in Muslim countries automatically become Muslims without making a personal confession. Among them, a number of people just identify their religion as Islam because their ancestors have been Muslims. Although they dress, live, and work like faithful Muslims, they neither go to mosques for religious practices nor confess “shahada” in their heart. They are just cultural Muslims, not reborn in Islamic faith. In his article “Messianic Muslim followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations,” John Travis reports that there are a number of this kind of Muslims in Muslim countries.⁷⁷ They are called nominal Muslims by faithful believers and are considered as the object of intra-da'wa.⁷⁸

Lukewarm Muslims are different from the nominal. They identify themselves in this way, “Now I am only a fifty-percent Muslim. When I get old like my father. I will be a hundred-percent Muslim.”⁷⁹ In other words, they are “secularized Muslims” who are between the secular and the Islamic worlds. Fundamentalist Muslims argue that people

the community of the Muslims, described in Surah 3:110 as “the best of communities that has been raised up for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and having faith in God.”

⁷⁴ Kerr, 152-153.

⁷⁵ Kerr, 154; Raciuss, 149-150.

⁷⁶ Miller (2005), 98-100.

⁷⁷ John Travis, “Messianic Muslim followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations,” in *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 17:1 (Spring, 2000): 55.

⁷⁸ In his dissertation, Raciuss separates Islamic missional movements to intra- and extra-da'wa. While the former is da'wa toward fellow Muslims, the later is inviting non-Muslims to Islamic faith. He argues that both da'wa movements have co-existed in history.

⁷⁹ Miller (2005), 99.

must be deeply involved into the life of a truly faithful community in order to have salvation.

Finally, *khatibs* (Muslim preachers) often point out in their preaching the serious faults of “greatly-sinning Muslims.” That kind of Muslim has performed the five pillars, confessing, praying, fasting, giving alms, and pilgrimaging, however, they do not enjoin what is right and rather produce what is to be rejected. Their crimes are serious. In terms of the Qur’an, they cannot be regarded as good Muslims. Nevertheless, Muslims believe that the unfaithful Muslim will have salvation because they are the followers of Allah.

Without specific Qur’anic sanction, the idea developed that unworthy Muslims could enter Paradise after a period of purgative punishment in Hell. Their faces will be black as coal, but at some point they will be taken to the river at the gates of Paradise where they will be cleansed and will be admitted to its pleasures. In the end, there being Muslims will save them.⁸⁰

Thus, Muslim communities are concerned not only about inviting non-Muslims to their faithful communities but also about revitalizing unfaithful believers. In his book, *Da’wah Among Non-Muslims in the West: Some Conceptual and Methodological Aspects*, Khurram Murad, who is one of the contemporary theologians studying Islamic missiology, stresses not only performing intra-da’wa but also preaching Islamic faith to non-believers.

Da’wah has to be addressed to the ‘self’ as well as to the ‘other,’ to the individual as well as to the society, to the black as well as to the white, to the Muslim as well as to the non-Muslim. It cannot be restricted to any race, colour, community, or religion.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Ibid, 99.

⁸¹ Khurram Murad, *Da’wah Among Non-Muslims in the West: Some Conceptual and Methodological Aspects* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 1986), 13

Historically, the major da'wa concern of Muslim countries was mainly expanding their religious territories through applying imperialistic methodologies, until this ceased under Western colonialism. They colonized non-Muslim countries first and then sought to transplant their faith into the new lands. This was a type of extra-da'wa movement. However, since the time of the Islamic revivalism led by al-Wahhab in the eighteenth century,⁸² a number of Muslim theologians have become involved in developing da'wa strategies toward fellow Muslims, such as nominal, lukewarm, and the greatly-sinning believers, in addition to effectively spreading their faith to non-Islamic countries.⁸³ While the Wahhab movements were radical, the *Ahmadiyya*, and *Tablighi Jama'at* movements which took place in Asian Muslim countries advocated peaceful approaches to Muslims who were not entrenched in Islamic faith, seeking to guide them from cultural Islam to becoming good or great Muslims.⁸⁴

In sum, da'wa movements have been concerned not only with the external expansion of Islam's religious territory but also with internal religious revival among Muslims. In their early religious movement, Muhammad and his followers sought primarily to invite non-believers to their faithful group. However, after Muslim communities had gained power in the Arabian Peninsula and spread their faith to the world through Islamic colonization, the religion began to spawn cultural, nominal, and apostate Muslims. In such contexts, faithful Muslims had an additional responsibility to

⁸² In around the 1740s, Al-Wahhab led his renewing movements among Muslim communities through hybridizing politics and militant power. As a result, some Muslim scholars criticize the extreme nature of his religious movements and regard it as one of the minor radical Muslims sects. I believe, however, that he ignited rehabilitating Islamicity among fellow Muslims.

⁸³ Kerr, 254.

⁸⁴ Racijs, 157-159.

guide those Muslim fellows to what is right and to forbid what is wrong. This has become another da'wa movement in Islamic society, alongside of guiding non-Muslims to Allah. Modern Muslims recognize that both types of missionary movements are significant, not only because there are still a number of non-Muslims in the world, but also because the number of nominal and cultural Muslims has dramatically increased, especially with the influence of post-modernism and secularism.

B. Is *Jihad* the Qur'anic Method or not?

All Muslims agree that they have a responsibility to invite non-Muslims to Islamic faith. Diverse missionary methodologies for fulfilling the commitment of Allah have been developed in Islamic history, but some of these da'wa strategies have been hotly debated in terms of whether or not the methods are based on the philosophy and the spirit of the Qur'an. In particular, the term, *jihad*, has been one of the most seriously polemical issues in Islamic missiology. Historically, while radical Muslims have applied this method for effectively performing their mission, other Muslims have criticized their aggressive approaches toward non-believers. The latter have argued that they have to change their imperialistic da'wa toward non-Muslims because Islam is a religion for making peace rather than for advocating conflict and fighting.⁸⁵ In this section, I will explore how Muslims interpret differently the sacred texts which mention the polemical term *jihad*.

The Qur'an and Hadith both clearly suggest that aggressive approaches toward non-Muslim communities are recommended, so that Muslims can make them converts to

⁸⁵ Ibid, 49-50.

Islam and defend their faithful community from its enemies. In addition, many verses in the sacred texts give Muslims who strive for spreading their faith by armed jihad the promise that they will have great rewards in the afterlife.⁸⁶

Fighting is prescribed for you, and you dislike it. But, it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knows, and you know not. (Surah 2:216)

Fight them [non-believers], and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of Believers. (Surah 9:14)

Those who did not go forth (in the Tabuk expedition) rejoiced in their inaction behind the back of the Messenger of Allah: they hated to strive and fight, with their goods and their persons, in the Cause of Allah... (Surah 9:81)

Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords (al-Bukhari, 3:208)

Mujahid [the one who strives in God's path with his self and his wealth] is the best among the people (al-Bukhari, 3:201)

Radical Muslim leaders, such as Hasan al-Banna (1928-1949) and Abu El Fadl (1963-present), strongly support the extreme opinions on da'wa which advocate forcefully spreading their faith to non-believers in accordance with the above texts.⁸⁷ They believe that the method of dialogue and proclamation is the proper way for da'wa, inviting people to Islamic faith and its communities, but that method is not the best way all the time.⁸⁸ In history, such peaceful missionary approaches were not effective to fulfill

⁸⁶ Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17.

⁸⁷ Hasan Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Bannā' (1906-1949) : a selection from the Majmū'at rasā'il al-Imām al-shahīd Hasan al-Bannā'* (Berkeley : University of California Press, c1978), 155; Abu El Fadl, "Greater and Lesser Jihad," in *Nida'ul Islam*, No. 26 (Apr.-May, 1999) at: <http://muslimvillage.com/forums/topic/966-the-greater-lesser-jihad> (Last Accessed on Jan. 23, 2013).

⁸⁸ Racijs, 59-61.

Allah's commission, guiding non-Muslims to the truth. Rather, the missionary strategies of preaching and dialogue have been serious obstacles to successfully accomplishing the mission. Moreover, radical Muslims regard peaceful approaches such as proclaiming the message and showing exemplary behaviors as passively performing da'wa. They argue that since armed struggle for da'wa is based on Qur'anic philosophy, Muslims have to employ the more active method in order to effectively spread their faith to the world.

He [Allah] commanded them to strive to their utmost for God's sake, by broadcasting the mission and propagating it among men with argument and proof. But if they should persist in rash acts, outrages, and rebellion, then with the sword and the spear! But if men abjure proof and stray from the path, then war more avails upon earth than peace. How wise was the man who said: "Force is the surest way of implementing the right, and how beautiful it is that force and right should march side by side. This striving to broadcast the Islamic mission, quite apart from preserving the hallowed precepts of Islam, is another religious duty imposed by God on the Muslims, just as he imposed fasting, prayer, pilgrimage, alms, and the doing of good and abandonment of evil, upon them. He imposed it upon them, and delegated them to do it."⁸⁹

Since da'wa is one of Allah's important commandments toward all Muslims, propagating their faith to people must be their duty. Whoever is in the faith has to seek to invite non-believers to the truth. According the sacred texts of Muslims, the Islamic fighter will be glorified in paradise and will have great rewards for their sacrificial life for Allah, not only on the earth but also in the afterlife. Radical Muslim activists often emphasize that the martyr would be rewarded the best in heaven in order to motivate people to participate in their radical movements. In his book, *On the Path of Da'wah*, Mustafa Mashhour, who is one of these extreme Muslims and a fervent follower of al-Banna, argues, "The Qur'an is our law... Jihad is our way. He incited others to endeavor

⁸⁹ Al-Banna, 80.

on the path of *jihad*, and encouraged them to win the Shahadah (martyrdom), while saying: ‘Dying in the way of Allah is our height hope.’⁹⁰ The radical believers in Islam have strongly sought to convince other Muslims that their missionary strategy is rooted in the Qur’anic perspective, and that this is an effective way to completely fulfill their mission given by Allah.

Reuven Firestone, Michael Bonner, and Rudolph Peters have a negative stance toward directly connecting *jihad* with ‘the holy war.’ For them, it is incorrect and resented that *jihad* is understood only as forceful striving to transplant the Muslim faith into non-believers. They argue that *jihad*’s literal meaning is “effort, struggle, strain, and exertion.”⁹¹ There are no direct inferences to armed struggle in the semantic meaning of the Arabic term, *jihad*. In their books, *Muslim Friends* and *Islam and Colonialism*, Miller and Peters introduce two broad meanings on *jihad*: the greater *jihad* (*al-jihad al-akbar*) and the lesser *jihad* (*al-jihad al-asghar*). The former is striving personally to overcome bad inclinations, seduction, and enticement, and efforts to spread their faith through educational ways such as teaching and witness. The latter, on the other hand, is using armed struggle against oppressors and non-believers.⁹²

Charis Waddy clarifies the two different meanings of *jihad*.

The greater Jihad is fighting one’s animal tendencies. It is internal rather than external: striving in the path of God to overcome one’s animal side. Man shares with animals certain characteristics which, if let loose, make him a very dangerous beast. To bring these passions under control, that is

⁹⁰ Mustafa Mashhour, *On the Path of Da’wah* (Cairo: al-Falah Foundation, 1999), XIII.

⁹¹ Firestone, 17; Michael Bonner, *Jihad in Islamic History: Doctrines and Practices* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 2-3; and Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History* (Paris and New York: Mouton Publishers, 1979), 118-119.

⁹² Roland E. Miller, *Muslim Friends: Their Faith and Feeling, an Introduction to Islam* (St. Louis: Concordia Publish House, 1995), 245-246; Peters, 118.

what Jihad means. Man has a tendency to overestimate himself and to underestimate his spiritual potential. He has a tendency to control and exploit his environment and other human beings. Jihad is essential against such tendencies. ... The Lesser Jihad—fighting on behalf of the community, in its defense—is a duty incumbent on a Muslim provided he is attacked. A man has the right to defend his life, his property, and he has to organize himself along these lines. Of course, one can produce incidents in history and ask whether in fact the principle of self-defense applies. It is true that Muslims have waged wars; wars of conquest, wars in the ordinary sense, often not at all related to religion or faith. But this indicates that some Muslims have not exercised the Greater Jihad.⁹³

Whereas the greater *jihad* involves internal fighting to become faithful Muslims and peacefully seeking to invite people to their community, the lesser focuses on aggressively expanding Muslim religious territories throughout the world. The sacred texts of the Muslim faith emphasize both kinds of *jihad*, but prefer turning from the lesser *jihad* to the greater *jihad*.⁹⁴ Peters calls the greater “home mission” and the lesser “external mission.”⁹⁵ The radical Muslims have overlooked the home mission and have rather overemphasized only the external mission.

Those who totally reject radical Muslim activities argue that the texts supporting the colonizing forces are post-Qur’anic. Allah did not give the Prophet Muhammad the term *jihad* as a military activity in the early revelation of Allah. After the death of Muhammad, once his successors finalized the Qur’an and hadith, they added military *jihad* and emphasized offensive da’wa methods in order to justify their colonial mission strategy.⁹⁶ An extreme Muslim activist, Mashhour also agrees that *jihad*’s initial meaning was not armed struggle against people of other religions.

⁹³ Charis Waddy, *The Muslim Mind* (London, NY: Longman, 1976), 95.

⁹⁴ Firestone, 139-140.

⁹⁵ Peters, 119.

⁹⁶ Racijs, 57-58.

The authentic understanding of the meaning of *jihad* at that stage of the Revelation was represented as endurance in face of oppression, steadfastness in upholding the Truth, and insistence on proclaiming the Da'wah.⁹⁷

However, Mashhour acknowledges that using armed struggle for da'wa is valid in terms of the Qur'an's theology and Islam's early history. Muhammad often approached non-Muslims radically with revelations of Allah in history. Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), a well-known and outstanding Egyptian Muslim scholar, supports Mashhour's perspective, the chronological transformation of Muhammad's attitudes toward other religious people. He asserts that there are four steps in developing the concept of *jihad*.

1. For thirteen years after the beginning of his Messengership, Allah only allows Muhammad to inform Islamic faith through preaching without fighting. By this revelation, Muslims must restrain themselves from anger and rage against adversaries.
2. When fleeing to Medina, Allah permits using arms against their oppressors to the faithful.
3. According to revelation, the leader of Islamic religious movement, Muhammad, commands his followers to fight those fighting them.
4. In last message about *jihad*, Allah commands aggressive approaches against all polytheists to Muhammad.⁹⁸

Radical Muslim scholars, such as Al-Banna, Qutb, and Mashhour, agree that armed struggles are based on Qur'anic theology even though the early revelation of the *jihad* never meant radical activities against antagonists. Since the final revelations of Allah include a number of verses both allowing and commanding Muslims to fight against non-believers, aggressive approaches can now be employed as the great strategy for performing da'wa.

⁹⁷ Mashhour, 58-60.

⁹⁸ Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Cedar Raids: Unity Publishing Co. 1980), 53.

Unlike the extreme Islamic leaders emphasizing the lesser *jihad* rather than the greater, Ali Nadwi asserts that *jihad*, fighting, must come after using peaceful means, such as preaching, teaching or dialoguing. Although the Qur'an and Hadith allow and command fighting with non-believers, the order of *jihad* must be the greater first and then, when it fails, Muslims reluctantly have to use armed struggles. Nadwi has confidence that according to the Qur'anic reading on the idea of *jihad*, the order must not be reversed.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, Isma'il al-Faruqi, who was one of the outstanding Muslim theologians in the twentieth century, totally denies employing the lesser *jihad* as a means for fulfilling Allah's commandment to invite people to Islamic faith. In his article, "On the Nature of Islamic D'wah," al-Faruqi declares, "Calling is certainly not coercing." By Surah 2:256, "Let there be no compulsion in religion," he considers coercive Islamic movements as being the heretic running out of the Qur'anic philosophy. As a faithful Muslim, he also agrees that the Muslim must seek to guide their friends and family members to the truth and never give up performing Allah's missionary commandment. However, he does not approve of Muslims' using armed force to make people convert to Islam when non-Muslims do not want to change their religious identities to Islam.

If the non-Muslim is still not convinced, the Muslim is to rest his case with God. The Prophet himself allowed those Christians who were not convinced by his own presentation of Islam to keep their faith and return home in dignity.¹⁰⁰

Pacifistic Muslims want to dissociate themselves from radical Muslim groups, which

⁹⁹ Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *Muslims in the West: The Message and Mission* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1983), 126.

¹⁰⁰ Isma'il Al-Faruqi, "On the Nature of Islamic Da'wah," in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXV, No. 260 (Oct. 1976): 391.

have led violent da'wa movements.¹⁰¹ In particular, al-Faruqi argues that the best Qura'nic method for fulfilling da'wa is intellectual dialogue, not imperialistic mission. He insists that genuine faith cannot be retained by coercion. Even though people confess "shahada" and become Muslims by the Islamic societal order, they might not have salvation if they fail to profoundly understand Allah and faithfully perform their religious practices. Since Allah gave human beings freedom and consciousness to recognize what is right and wrong, they should heartily confess 'shahada' after seriously striving "to think, debate, and argue" about the truth with faithful Muslims.¹⁰² In his article, he does not directly criticize aggressive and radical approaches toward non-believers, but he continually emphasizes the statement, "Da'wah is not coercive."

"Calling" is certainly not coercing. Allah (s.w.t.) has commanded "No coercion in religion (2 : 256)." It is an invitation whose objective can be fulfilled only with the free consent of the called. Since the objective is an exercise by the called of his own judgment that Allah is his Creator, Master, Lord and Judge, a forced judgment is a *contradictio in adjecto* and hence punishable with *jahannam*. Humanistic ethic regards coerced da'wah as a grave violation of the human person, second only to homicide, if not equal to it. That is why the Holy Qur'an specified the means of persuasion to be used. "Argue the cause with them [the non-Muslims] with the more comely arguments" (16: 125). If they are not convinced, they must be left alone (5: 108; 3: 176-177; 47: 32).¹⁰³

In sum, there are definitely tensions in interpreting the concept of *jihad*. Radical Muslim missiologists and leaders focus on the Qur'anic texts, Surah 4:95, 9:20, 17:19, 3:78, 25:52, and 29:6, and the Hadith's verses describing *jihad* as armed struggle. Because of these sacred texts, they have confidence that even though the greater *jihad* can be used for performing da'wa, as a missionary method, it is not the best way. History

¹⁰¹ Racijs, 65.

¹⁰² Al-Faruqi, 391-395.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 391.

proves that the lesser *jihad* has led to the expansion of Islamic territories with more success than the greater method. On the other hand, pacifists point out the problem of colonizing mission. It is true that imperialistic governors of Islam prepared the ground for rapidly spreading their faith to the world in the medieval period.¹⁰⁴ However, as a missionary method, it also produced ill side-effects. Importantly, as a result, there are a number of cultural Muslims. People who become Muslims by threat of bloodshed transfer their religious identities to Islam, but they are not faithful. They do not perform religious duties as Muslims. As a result, modern Muslim leaders have sought to perform da'wa toward their Muslim fellows by using intellectual and educational means rather than coercive ones. For these pacifist Muslims, Surah 16:25, 2:256, and 47:37 would be the main verses from the Qur'an supporting their assertion.

In debating whether or not fighting for da'wa is based on the Qur'anic philosophy, the serious issue is that the Qur'an supports the arguments of both radical and pacifist Muslims. Moderate Muslims such as al-Nadwi, suggest a mid-way between them: that first must be the greater *jihad*, and then the lesser may be applied. However, this position does not satisfy those at either extreme, because while the greater *jihad* is considered a passive attitude to the radical, the movement of the lesser *jihad* is not in harmony with the slogan that Islam is a peaceful religion. I partially agree with Qutb's theory on *Jihad*: its revelations were chronologically developed:¹⁰⁵

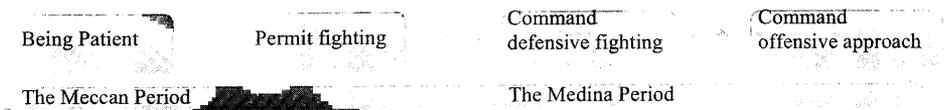


Figure 2 Qutb's Theory on *Jihad*

¹⁰⁴ Poston, 13-14.

¹⁰⁵ Qutb, 53.

However, the serious problem of this theory lies in the incongruent texts about *jihad* in the Qur'an, because Allah did not abrogate the initial revelation. As a result, both radical and pacifist Muslims have interpreted the concept of *jihad* from their own perspectives. Moreover, the moderate Muslims have sought to develop a complete *jihad* theology from the Qur'an, but the texts cannot be easily harmonized to satisfy all Muslims. It is impossible for the debating to cease without modifying the discordant texts of the Qur'an.

C. Da'wa in Sufism?

Above, I discussed the reasons why Islam is classified as one of the missionary religions, along with Buddhism and Christianity. As a missiological term in Islam, da'wa often occurs in the Qur'an and in the book of Hadith. From the beginning of the Muslim religious movement, Muslims have sought to invite unbelievers to Islamic faith by performing da'wa. While its method was peaceful in the early Meccan period, Muhammad turned his methodology to aggression using force if necessary. By the latter missionary strategy, Islam radically expanded its religious influence and territorial boundaries throughout the world in the seventh century. However, Sufism, one of Islam's branches, denies the concept of da'wa.

Sufi mission, defying political claims, simply were in no need for propaganda, or even Qur'anic justification. In short, it did not need the concept of da'wa.¹⁰⁶

After the death of Muhammad, the Caliphate system established and developed early Islamic civilization. This system was, however, unstable because while Muhammad

¹⁰⁶ Janson (2011), 378.

had complete power as political and religious authority, the successors only played the roles of political leaders in Muslim society. In particular, when the Caliphs carried out their politicizing over the public, there were severe tensions between religious obligations and political needs. Due to these conflicts, the religious community divided, and factions arose against each other. The Muslim authorities were eager to maintain their own vested rights in the Muslim community, even though the empire had begun in and was established on the Islamic faith. In such contexts, some Muslim groups—merchants, artisans, teachers, and scholars— were interested in discovering Islamic identity rather than in having power in the Muslim society. Although they had no political positions in the society, the private religious scholars and their followers were proud of having a reputation for their knowledge of the faith and its practice. They had different concerns about Islamic identity. Some (the *qurra*) read the Qur’an, studied the scripture, and recollected the teaching of Prophet Muhammad; others (religious scholars) sought to enact Islamic laws based on the sacred texts. The ascetics, Sufis,¹⁰⁷ explored Islamic mysticism, what they said the founder of Islam, Muhammad, had experienced himself. The Muslim masses filled their religious thirst by “drinking” from these groups, not from the Caliphs.¹⁰⁸ While the first two groups focused on rational approaches toward the truth and the monotheistic deity, Allah, those who belonged to the Sufi movement emphasized the mystical encounter with the transcendental being, often through ascetic lifestyles. The

¹⁰⁷ The term *Suf*, comes from an Arabic word *suf*. It means wool. The self-denying mystics in the deserts of the Near East wore rough clothes and lived in monasteries together. They developed Sufism after accepting Islamic faith. See, Stephen Schwartz, *The Other Islam: Sufism and the Road to Global Harmony* (NY, London, Toronto, Sydney, and Auckland: Doubleday, 2008), 35-36; Andrew Rippen, *The Islamic World* (London and NY: Routledge, 2008), 212.

¹⁰⁸ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, NY, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 98-100.

latter felt spiritually thirsty when Muslim powers fought with each other over the issue of their legitimacy. They regarded the political debate as worthless in the Islamic faith and completely opposed the worldly life.

The early ascetic piety, with its emphasis on the interiorization of the motive, was a reaction to the external development of the law. During the ninth and tenth centuries, Sufism developed a doctrine of “gnosis,” of an inner experiential knowledge (*marifah*), which it progressively came to oppose to the intellectual knowledge (*ilm*) of theology, which developed during the same period.¹⁰⁹

Michael Nazir Ali points out that this movement of Muslims was influenced by the Christian monasticism of the Middle East.¹¹⁰ The Sufis attempted to originally imitate the spiritual experience of the prophet Muhammad and his successors. In the early period of the movement, they believed that stoicism was the best way to have such a mystical encounter with Allah. Sahqiq al-Balkhi was the first Sufi to develop four stages in order to access Allah.¹¹¹ Later, Abu Said Kharraz expanded the four steps to seven.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), 392.

¹¹⁰ Michael Nazir Ali, *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1987), 22.

¹¹¹ Lapidus, 111.

¹¹² John A. Subhan, *Sufism: Its Saints and Shrines* (Lucknow, India: Lucknow Publishing House, 1938), 1-4.

The four stages

1. Renunciation of the appetites of the body
2. Fear of God and constant humility
3. Yearning for paradise
4. Love of God

The seven steps

1. Repentance from sin
2. Love the name of Allah exclusively
3. Renunciation of all worldly desires
4. Knowledge about the nature, attributes, and works of Allah
5. Ecstasy by remembering and reciting the names and attributes of Allah
6. Reality completely being faithful in Allah
7. Union seeing the Ultimate being face-to-face

In Sufism, the inner experiences of the individual are very important. Allah is the transcendent being, but God comes down to the human reality, immanently when people practice self-discipline. The ultimate purpose of their religious practices is the annihilation of self and their absorption into the nature of Allah.¹¹³ In a sense, da'wa in Sufism emphasized individual devotion and respect for authority, unlike Sunni and Shi'a performance of da'wa based on "religio-political propaganda."¹¹⁴ In Sufi missionary theology, it is only necessary that Muslims prepare the ambience for mystical connections with the ultimate being, Allah. Ismail al-Faruqi completely objects to such da'wa movement of Sufis.

... transport of emotion and enthusiasm, a sort of "trip," is not Islamic da'wah. Da'wah, therefore, is not the work of magic, of illusion, of excitement, of any kind of psychotropia. ... Under the tremendous impact of revelation itself, the Prophet's consciousness neither lapsed nor became

¹¹³ Swatley, 219.

¹¹⁴ Janson, 377.

vague as in a mystical experience, but continued to function normally and was even enhanced in its clarity and perception.¹¹⁵

In his article, “On the Nature of Islamic Da’wah,” he argues that Islam is a rational religion. Allah presented the intellect to the human reality. When people endeavor to find Allah’s straight way in the world through approaching with human rationality only, not by experiencing mystical encounters, it is certain that they recognize the being of the ultimate.¹¹⁶

In sum, Sufism has been driven by the teaching and revelation of the Prophet, Muhammad, just as Sunnis and Shias, but the latter consider the mystical religious movement of the Sufis as a heresy. Since Islamic faith is logical and is clarified by the rationality of the human being, da’wa emphasizing mystical experience has departed too far from the orthodox Islamic tradition. Sufis claim, on the other hand, that Muslims must not ignore the mystical experiences of the Prophet Muhammad. Stoicism and self-discipline will lead people to mystical experiences with Allah and will guide them to paradise as beings joined with the divine being. Sufis thus connect the spiritual encounter to soteriology. Although such ideas of Sufism are considered as heresy in the majority Muslim community, these spiritual movements have continually spread through the world.

¹¹⁵ al-Faruqi (1976), 392-393.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 394-395.

II. Historical Approaches to Da'wa

Islam began in a small village on the Arabian Peninsula. No one knew that Islamic faith would spread out to the world beyond the obscure town.

It is different to prove that Muhammad intended to found a world-encompassing faith superseding the religions of Christianity and Judaism. His original aim appears to have rather been the establishment of a succinctly Arab brand of Monotheism, ...¹¹⁷

Although Muhammad did not expect that his religious movement would strike the world, it is true that Islam, evolving from his Arab people, has become one of the largest religious groups. In this section, I will explore da'wa through a historical lens starting from its beginning, moving to the growth of its religious movement in the seventh century, and then looking at its history from the medieval period through the current da'wa movements. Muslims have developed their missionary methodologies according to changing missionary contexts. This section will research the chronological transformation of da'wa movements from the beginning to the present.

A. Peaceful Movements of *Da'wa* in the Early Meccan Period

The life of Muhammad ibn-Adbullah, the founder of Islam, was tough and stormy. He never met his father, who had died before he was born. His mother also passed away early. He was raised by his grandfather for a while, and then after the grandfather's death, he went to live with his uncle, Abu-Talib. He married a determined, noble, intelligent, and even wealthy widow named Kadhija. Muhammad seemed to be happy with the economic stability that his wife brought, but this was temporary. Severe

¹¹⁷ Poston, 12.

grief came to them from losing two infant sons, Qasim and ‘Abdullah. Three of their four daughters also died before Muhammad passed away. Only one daughter survived until six months after Muhammad’s death.¹¹⁸ Within such unimaginable and terrible experiences, Muhammad had actively sought religious encounters in order to find the reasons why he had to endure these adversities in his life. William Montgomery Watt argues that Muhammad became “a thoughtful person” and spiritually hungry while living such a stormy life. He often asked himself questions about life, death, the Creator, power, evil, and curses. He also sought periodically to have a spiritual retreat, going to a cave on Mount Hira.¹¹⁹ His spiritual journey began while growing up amidst the pluralistic Arabian traditional religions, but he totally rejected such idolatrous worship because their religious pluralism did not satisfy his spiritual inquiries.¹²⁰ On the other hand, Muhammad was greatly interested in monotheistic religious movements, Christianity, Judaism, and *hanifs*, in the early and pre-Islamic periods. In particular, the story is told that when he was twelve years old, he traveled to Syria along with his uncle’s merchant caravan and met a Nestorian monk named by Bahira. The monk, who possessed a vast stock of knowledge about Christianity, gave him a warm welcome and is said to have prophesied before the public that Muhammad would be a spiritual person. Then, Bahira told Muhammad’s legal guardian, Abu Talib:

Take your nephew back to his country and guard him carefully against the Jews, for by Allah! If they see him and know about him what I know, they

¹¹⁸ Adil Salahi, *Muhammad: Man and Prophet—a complete study of the life of the Prophet of Islam* (Leicester: Islamic Foundation, 2002), 23-24; 29-33; and 44-46.

¹¹⁹ Watt (1996), 12.

¹²⁰ Yahiya Emeric, *The Life and Work of Muhammad* (Indianapolis: Alpha, 2002), 37.

will do him evil; a great future lies before this nephew of yours, so take him home quickly.¹²¹

Through incidents such as this, Christianity could have become an attractive religion to Muhammad in the pre-Islamic period. Muslim scholars consider that this event verifies that Christianity approved Muhammad's apostleship. However, this mystic story has been suspect among Christians and Jews as to whether it based on fact, because Muhammad was very favorable toward the Jews in the earlier years. In addition, while having a relationship with his wife's cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who was said to be a full-fledged Christian scholar, Muhammad began to be concerned with the monotheistic faith of Christianity.¹²²

Muhammad also learned about monotheistic religion from Jews. In the seventh century, there were a number of diaspora Jews in the Arabian Peninsula. Although the Jews rarely taught their faith to others, their religious influence reached into Arabian society. They shared their monotheistic tradition with their neighbors. In his book, *The Life and Work of Muhammad*, Yahiya Emerick argues that the oral traditions of Judaism were not sufficient to draw Arabs to their faith, but they influenced their spiritual formation.¹²³ Since Jewish communities were materially rich, the Arabians, who were relatively poor, were envious of them and wanted to learn the religious practices which

¹²¹ A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (Lahore: Pakistan Branch, Oxford University Press, 1955), 81.

¹²² Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment* (London: Cass, 1926), 57; Kenneth Cragg, *Muhammad and the Christian: A Question of Response* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984), 18.

¹²³ Emerick, *The Life and Work of Muhammad* (Indiana: Alpha, 2002), 27-28.

were causing their blessed life. Some of the Arabs believed that the Jews' monotheistic God provided material blessings for the followers.¹²⁴

Meanwhile, there were other monotheistic believers living among Arabs in the seventh century. These were called *hanifs*. Scholars do not know the origin of this term, but this group consisted of intelligent people who completely rejected polytheism, just as Christians and Jews did. The term *hanif* might mean “declining” or “turning away from.”¹²⁵ In other words, those who belonged to the group of *hanifs* turned aside from the idolatrous worship of their community. They recognized the characteristics of a supernatural, supreme, and unique being and believed in only one such divine being, called Allah. This religious movement was not a major one in Arab communities, but a few intellectual and spiritual persons were interested in such new ideas. Later on, some of the *hanifs* became Christians, but others also converted to Islam. For example, while Waraqaah, a prominent *hanif*, is said to have been baptized by a Christian priest, Muhammad created a new monotheistic religion, Islam.¹²⁶

Thus, although Muhammad grew up in pluralistic religious contexts, his religious identity was attracted to monotheism. These monotheistic religious movements greatly influenced Muhammad's spiritual growth. In particular, Christian scholars such as Richard Bell and Kenneth Cragg insist that Islam was born within the framework of basic Christian faith and theologies. Muhammad's personal deep devotion that he periodically had in his spiritual journeys to the Hira cave might have been structured along the lines of

¹²⁴ William Miller, “How Islam Began,” in *Encountering Islam*, 12-13; S. A. Nigosian, *Islam: Its History, Teaching, and Practices* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 5.

¹²⁵ Bell, 59.

¹²⁶ Emerick, 28-31; Miller, 12; F. E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 48.

the religious practices of Christian monks in that regard.¹²⁷ He struggled to find the answer to the causes of his stormy life and how they may have been sent from the unique and supreme Being. While taking his annual spiritual journey to the Hira cave in AD 610, Muhammad received the first revelation through the angel Gabriel. This experience fascinated him, but it was also troubling. He was not convinced that Allah was calling him as his messenger. As a result, although he received the revelation through Gabriel, he hesitated about sharing his experiences with others for the first two years. However, when his effort to persuade his wife to the truth of the new doctrine of what Allah revealed was successful, he acquired confidence about spreading the revelation further. Khadija became the first fruit of Muhammad's missionary activity. After this event, he had confidence and sought to expand the religious conversion to Islam throughout his family. By his da'wa endeavors, his young cousin Ali, who was a member of his family and later became his son-in-law, and his adopted child, Zaid, accepted Muhammad's preaching.¹²⁸ Moreover, Abu Bakr, who was not Muhammad's relative, converted to Islam by the Prophet's proclamation. He was a wealthy merchant and was respected by his friends and neighbors. After becoming a Muslim, he eagerly spread Islamic faith to his colleagues. His efforts produced five important converts—Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, al-Zubayrb. Al-'Awwam, Talhah, Abd al-Rahman b. 'Awf, and Uthman, who later became the third caliph in the early Islamic period.¹²⁹ He was one of the significant contributors to expand the new religious movement led by Muhammad. Finally, he became the first successor caliph of the Islamic religious movement after Muhammad.

¹²⁷ Bell, 71; Cragg, 53.

¹²⁸ Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (NY: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2000), 4.

¹²⁹ Arnold, 13.

The beginning of Muhammad's mission toward the public occurred on the streets. He proclaimed the message which he had received from Allah. His early audiences were mostly the marginalized people in Arab society such as slaves, poor persons, and women, and he evangelized them to the new faith.¹³⁰ In his preaching, he criticized the polytheistic traditions of the Meccan communities and proclaimed that the monotheistic divinity, Allah, is the only truth. The followers of the message would possess happiness in this world and in the life to come. The preaching was good news to the people experiencing poverty and unhappiness of life under the unequal social structures in Mecca. They began to accept the fresh message of Muhammad and became members of the new religious movement guided by the revelation of Allah. During the first three years of his da'wa movement, his missionary efforts toward the lower classes of the Arabian society were successful. At this point, his missionary method was only passionate preaching. Then, when his religious movement became a success, Muhammad turned his missionary concern from the marginalized to the upper classes of the society where he lived. He pointed out the social, economic, political, and religious problems of the town. However, these members of the society scoffed and held him in contempt. Leaders of Mecca even persecuted him and his followers, because his preaching seriously sought to subordinate the social, economic, and religious elite of Meccan society.¹³¹ He highlighted four issues in his preaching: the oneness of God, the goodness and power of God, the moral responsibility of humans toward God, and the judgment awaiting humanity on the day of resurrection. In terms of his message, the Meccan majority was called to repent from idolatry and their unjust social structures. He was not only a leader

¹³⁰ Armstrong, 4.

¹³¹ Robert Payne, *The History of Islam* (New York: Dorset Press, 1990), 18-19.

of new religious movement but also a social reformer.¹³² The method of spreading his faith to others was peaceful in the beginning, but his preaching was passionate. The Meccan higher class regarded Muhammad as an insurgent, destroying their traditional social and religious structures. Since the power of his religious group was not strong enough to protect the community from harassment, loss of property, torture, and even murder by antagonists, Muhammad chose some Muslims and sent them to Abyssinia, a Christian country, in order to avoid persecution. The Abyssinians welcomed the refugees, and it was there that Muslims first contacted non-Meccan people and proclaimed the Qur'anic messages to them.¹³³ Unintentionally, the Islamic faith spread beyond its birthplace to Abyssinia because of the Meccan oppression.

For ten years of his mission, Muhammad preached exclusively to Arabs, both settled and nomadic, but his ministry was not as successful as he had expected. Furthermore, after the death of his protector, Abu Talib, his religious group could no longer endure and resist their opponents. When he recognized that he was unable to make further progress in Mecca, Muhammad decided to move to a more favorable location, Medina, which was a city 280 miles north of Mecca.¹³⁴ In this new missionary context, his missionary targets turned from Meccans to others. He preached not only to the people of Medina, but also to Jews and Christians. However, while many Arabs were interested in Islamic faith and joined the new religious group because of political and sociological

¹³² H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1969) 17.

¹³³ Miller (2005), 128-129.

¹³⁴ Watt, 25-26

issues,¹³⁵ his efforts did not produce fruit from the people of the monotheistic religions.¹³⁶ William M. Miller argues that Muhammad expected warm hospitality from Jews and Christians because he believed that the three religions originated from the same deity, but reality was different. Whereas a few were interested in his preaching, most were indifferent or cold toward him. When he received this unkind treatment from Christians and Jews, he changed his attitude toward them from being friendly to being antagonistic.¹³⁷

According to Poston, it is not certain that Muhammad sought to create a new kind of religion substituting for Christianity and Judaism. In the early Meccan period, he focused on changing the small Arab societies from being unstable and unjust to being grounded in the Islamic faith through applying the revelation that he received.¹³⁸ In order to spread Islamic faith to non-Muslims, he employed a proclaiming method not only because Islam is not a coercive religion according to Quran 2:256, but also because his religious group did not have power against their antagonists in the early missionary era. Thus, his initial da'wa methodology in Mecca was peaceful, though not passive. The passion to share his faith with his family, relatives, friends, and neighbors was very intensive and impressive.

¹³⁵ When Muhammad decided to move from Mecca to Medina, the political and social contexts of the city were unstable. Arab clans of Medina battled with each other. They allied themselves with other clans to survive when fighting, but easily broke these contracts and made other alliances with other clans. There was no peace in Medina for a long. Those who lived in such unstable political circumstance expected a new leader to be able to mediate between warring factions and to restore complete peace. They thought that the new religious leader, Muhammad, might solve these political issues. Furthermore, sociologically, there was much suffering from disintegrating social regulations in Medina. They also expected that the Islamic law would be a remedy for such disordering of the society. See, W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), chapters IV and V.

¹³⁶ Poston, 12.

¹³⁷ William M. "How Islam Began," in *Encountering the World of Islam*, 19-21.

¹³⁸ Poston, 12.

B. Transforming the *Da'wa* Strategy from *Hijra* to *Jihad*

Before Muhammad reached the city of Yathrib, there were already seventy-five Muslims in the city. When these people made their pilgrimage to Mecca, they encountered the religious group led by Muhammad and transferred their religious identities from polytheism to monotheism. The converts attempted to evangelize other Medinans to Islamic faith after they came back to Yathrib. As a result, numerous people of Yathrib already knew about the Prophet and warmly welcomed him and his adherents.¹³⁹ All Muslims cooperated to build a mosque on a site which was the first dwelling place of the Prophet in Yathrib. They worshipped together and began to perform the daily prayers in the mosque. Although emigrant Muslims and native Muslims of Medina had conflicts while becoming united in Islamic faith in the early period, they sought to evangelize their neighbors to the Islamic faith.¹⁴⁰

The Prophet Muhammad was considered a good religious leader to the people of Medina because he gave pastoral care to them and sought to reconcile political conflicts among the Arab clans. First of all, he became a friendly minister for the people of Medina,¹⁴¹ not a traitor against their social and religious traditions.

After the morning session, it was the Prophet's habit to inquire if anyone was sick, and to go and visit those who were. If anyone had died he helped to wrap the corpse and would conduct the funeral prayer; or if anyone had been upset by a dream he would sit down, listen and interpret it for them.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Swartley, 18-19.

¹⁴⁰ Daniel C. Peterson, *Muhammad: Prophet of God* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2007), 89-90.

¹⁴¹ Yathrib named the city (*madina*) of the Prophet, or simply Medina.

¹⁴² Barnaby Rogerson, *The Prophet Muhammad: A Biography* (N.J.: HiddenSpring, c2003), 128.

Furthermore, when Muhammad settled down in the new missionary setting, he played an important role as an arbitrator in political feuding between the clans of Aws and Khazraj in the city. Then, he sought to maintain peace with other rival factions in the town and to confederate all the groups who lived in Medina under Muhammad's political power.¹⁴³ As a result, his personal prestige became high among the Medinans. Through the efforts of Muhammad and all Muslims, those who converted to Islam gradually increased in Medina, unlike, in Mecca.

In Mecca, Muhammad's missions were partially successful only among the marginalized and his family and relatives, but the majority of his own town rejected his preaching because his religious movement radically sought to break the social order and to challenge the destructive traditional religions of his town.¹⁴⁴ In contrast, the Islamic faith spread rapidly in Medina during only a short period of time. Thomas Arnold addresses three reasons for the dramatic growth of Islam in Medina. First of all, the people of Medina were familiar with the idea of monotheism because of the Jewish population who lived in the city, a larger population than in Mecca. When Muhammad proclaimed Allah's revelation, the natives of Medina easily accepted the new faith because they had heard similar messages by Jewish people who lived in Medina. Second, Muhammad was an excellent leader, solving political conflicts among rival clans and confederating all the clan groups into the Islamic community, the *Umma*. Accordingly, numerous Medinans followed him as a political and spiritual leader. Finally, thoughtful citizens in Medina were interested in Islamic law. It gave them a stable morality instead of their disintegrating social-norms. They wanted to adopt a new religious law rather than

¹⁴³ Peterson 92.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 66.

keeping their unstable tradition which was unable to solve their social problems.¹⁴⁵

Barnaby Rogerson adds one more reason. It is Muhammad's pastoral care toward ordinary Medians. He took care of the powerless and lower classes through visiting them, listening their sufferings, and providing appropriate messages from Allah.¹⁴⁶ Unlike the barren soil of Mecca, where it was difficult to spread Islamic faith, these religious, political, social, and pastoral contexts in Medina provided foundations for dramatically diffusing the Islamic faith throughout the city.

Since Muhammad's religious group had acquired power in the Medina period, there were two possible options available to them for coming against their antagonists: *hijra* and *jihad*. Just as the initiate Muslims left Mecca in order to avoid the severe persecutions of their adversaries, the first option, *hijra*, was migrating to a place where they could practice religious ceremonies with freedom. On the other hand, the second option was based on Surah 2.216, 9.14, and 9.73. These revelations of Allah allowed believers to involve themselves in "an active effort (*jihad*)" when they encountered authorities disturbing their religious duty, *da'wa*. They were able to legally use armed force according to the revelation of Allah.¹⁴⁷ After the battle of Badr, they had confidence in fighting and realized that power was more effective to make people convert to Islam than a peaceful invitation. Muhammad enlarged their military strength in the Arabian peninsula and, in AD 630, conquered Mecca, where the majority of the city had persecuted him and his followers. The Meccans surrendered to the great power of

¹⁴⁵ Arnold, 20-21.

¹⁴⁶ Barnaby, 128-130.

¹⁴⁷ Janson (2001), 368.

Muhammad's religious group without any resistance.¹⁴⁸ After the death of Muhammad, his successors applied this da'wa strategy of aggressive force to the expansion of their territorial boundaries and religious influence to the world beyond the Arabian Peninsula. They believed that *jihad* was the best way to perform Allah's commandment to invite non-Muslims to the faith.

This imperialistic methodology for da'wa radically propelled the expansion of the Muslim community from the Arabian Peninsula to the other countries such as Syria, Palestine, Persia, Egypt, and North Africa. Muslims also attempted to conquer the countries of Europe with irresistible force in the Umayyad (AD 661-750) and Abbasid (750-1258) periods, but the Muslim warriors did not go beyond the edge of Western Europe, Spain. They failed in attempting to invade France because of the strong resistance of Charles Martel's troops.¹⁴⁹ The Crusades, the advent of Mongol empire, and splits within the previously united Muslim group made the overwhelming power of the Islamic empire slow its advance. However, the Ottoman Empire later arose to wield the influence of Islamic power over the world from the middle of the thirteenth century. The Osman Turks occupied Antioch in 1268, Syria in 1291, and Constantinople in 1453. Furthermore, their influence reached to North Africa, such as to Algeria and Tunisia, and as far as Hungary in the Balkan states. The power of the Ottoman Empire continued until the early twentieth century.¹⁵⁰

In the era of their great power, the Islamic empires colonized the lesser powers and then sought to make the people of the countries convert to Islam, because the

¹⁴⁸ Swartley, 22-24.

¹⁴⁹ Armstrong, 50,62.

¹⁵⁰ Watt, 44-45.

ultimate motive of Muslims' military and political expansion was guiding unbelievers to the one God. John Taylor, a Christian scholar of Islam, reports that the residents of the conquered countries spontaneously became Muslims rather than being coerced, even though it was sometimes a century later.¹⁵¹ Colin Chapman also claims, "It is a dangerous oversimplification to say that Islam was spread by the sword," because in several cases, non-Muslims, including Christians and Jews, warmly welcomed Islamic order and control over their lands.¹⁵² For example, when the Muslim troops overthrew the power of the Byzantines in Syria and Egypt, the indigenous people celebrated the Muslim victory along with Muslims. Many natives of those countries voluntarily became Muslims.¹⁵³ Muslims strongly insist that Islam is not a coercive religion, saying that Muslims have never forced unbelievers to change their religious identities through using military pressure.¹⁵⁴ Poston disagrees, however, with this argument because although Muslims never forcefully persecuted the indigenous people into converting to Islam, the circumstances of the colonized made non-Muslims reluctantly change their religious identities to the conquerors' religion, Islam.¹⁵⁵ In his book, *Islam in Focus*, Hammudah Abdalati, a Muslim scholar, states how difficult it was for the colonized people to keep their religious identities in the Islamic empire.

Those who rejected Islam and refused to pay tributes, in collaboration with other sectors to support their state made it hard for themselves. They resorted to a hostile course from the beginning, and meant to create trouble, not so much for the new Muslim comers as for the new Muslim converts and their compatriots, the tribute-payers. In a national sense, that

¹⁵¹ John Taylor, *Introducing Islam* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1971), 33.

¹⁵² Colin Chapman, "Expansion of Islam," in *Encountering the World of Islam* edited by Keith E. Swartley, 52.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 52; Watt, 37.

¹⁵⁴ al-Faruqi, 391.

¹⁵⁵ Poston, 14.

attitude was treacherous; in a human sense, mean; in a social sense, careless; and in a military sense, pro-vocative. But in a practical sense it needed suppression, not so much for the comfort of the newcomers as for the sake of the state in which these very traitors were living. This is the only time force was applied to bring such people to their senses and make them realize their responsibilities: either as Muslims by accepting Islam freely, or as loyal citizens by being tribute-payers, capable of living with their Muslim compatriots and sharing with them equal rights and duties ¹⁵⁶

Muslim warriors gave opportunities to make free decisions between Islam and their non-Muslim religious traditions. However, all people who reside in Muslim-dominated territories had heavy duties such as *kahraj* (a land tax) and *jizyah* (a poll tax) unless they changed their religious identities to Islam. The economic burdens pushed people to accepting the new faith, Islam.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, since the Qur'an allows believers to use armed force toward those who resist their da'wa movements, non-Muslims are not able to impudently oppose the Islamic faith in public. Accepting the conquerors' religion, Islam, was the best way to have peace in the Islamic empire.¹⁵⁸ In such a milieu, most of the indigenous people gave up their religious traditions and reluctantly became Muslims in order to avoid the burden and slaughter. It is true, of course, that Muslim traders and the spiritual movements of the Sufis played an important role in reviving Islam in the medieval period. However, I think that the rapid growth of Islam in the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman empires was certainly due to close relationships between the political, military, and religious factors.

¹⁵⁶ Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in Focus* (London: World Assembly of Muslim Youth, 1980), 150.

¹⁵⁷ Poston, 23.

¹⁵⁸ Albrecht Hauser, "Da'wah: Islamic Mission and Its Current Implications," in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Issue 36:4 (Oct. 2012): 190.

The radical growth of Islam by the imperialistic da'wa strategy began to decline from the seventeenth century onward. The influence of the Ottoman Empire no longer expanded, due to its corruption and bureaucracy. The frequent public revolts, economic regression, and military defeats caused the decentralization and disintegration of the great empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Finally, after World War I, the Ottoman name disappeared.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, Muslims were forced to give up territories to European countries such France, England, Germany and so forth in the colonial era. Another crusade came to the Muslim countries, and Muslim political and religious power declined from the seventeenth century.¹⁶⁰ In the changing political circumstance of the world, Muslims had to formulate new missionary methods in order for the religion of Islam to survive in the modern and post-modern period.

C. The Quiet Revolution for Islamizing the World in the Post-Modern Period

In the post-colonial era, Muslims have no longer sought to Islamcize the world through applying imperialistic missionary methodologies to non-Islamic countries. Their missionary trends have transformed from the military revolution to a quiet strategy. Since the cessation of colonialism, Muslims have sought to develop diverse missionary methods fitting to modern and post-modern society.

¹⁵⁹ Lapidus, 335-343.

¹⁶⁰ Tamara Sonn, *A Brief History of Islam* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K. and Maldon, MA : Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 105-106.

a. Immigration

Muslim immigration has emerged as the most effective method of globalizing the faith. Muslim businessmen, scholars, and workers have spread and settled down in new regions of the world today. In particular, the Muslim population has dramatically grown in Europe and North America. Since a number of Muslims have immigrated to these regions with their high birth rates, Europeans and Americans have worried that their countries are becoming Islamicized through explosive Muslim populations. Some sociologists predict that since the Muslim population has more than doubled in the past 30 years, it will double again by 2015, in Europe and North America.¹⁶¹

The 2001 census revealed that there are roughly 1.6 million Muslims currently living in Britain, 2.7% of the overall population. This population is “a fast growing and young population,” with 60% being below 30 years old. The cities with the largest Muslim populations are: London (607,000), Birmingham (140,000), Greater Manchester (125,000), Bradford (75,000) and Kirklees (39,000). Although roughly 50% of Muslims living in Britain are of either Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, Britain’s Muslim community is ethnically diverse: “Britain’s Muslims are of varied ethnic backgrounds: two thirds are of South Asian origin but about 8 per cent are of African origin and about 12 per cent are white.”¹⁶²

Similar phenomena are seen in Korea. Since the beginning of the 1990s, when the Korean government first allowed foreign laborers to come into Korea, the Muslim population has continually increased in Korea.¹⁶³ Most Muslims in Korea are foreign laborers rather than Koreans, but recently, the number of Korean Muslims has rapidly increased. Not only have Korean Muslim organizations strategically reached Koreans and

¹⁶¹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/5994047/Muslim-Europe-the-demographic-time-bomb-transforming-our-continent.html> (Last accessed on Oct. 3, 2012).

¹⁶² <http://www.euro-islam.info/country-profiles/united-kingdom> (Last accessed on Oct. 3, 2012).

¹⁶³ <http://blog.daum.net/snuec/8068485> (Last accessed on Oct. 3, 2012).

evangelized them to Islam, but foreign Muslims have also married Koreans. In 2011, 6,254 foreign Muslims officially settled down in Korea with Korean spouses, according to registrations of their marriages.¹⁶⁴ In such a mixed marriage, most Koreans become Muslims, and then the Korean Muslims also evangelize their spouse's family, relatives, and close friends. Moreover, these Muslim couples are prolific. The natural growth of the Koslim has become a significant issue in Korean society in addition to the increase in the Muslim population through conversion. This methodology—immigration, inter-marriage and the growth of the second generation—has been effective in spreading the Islamic faith in Korea today.¹⁶⁵

b. Education

The Muslim Student Association is probably the most active Islamic organization in America. Their stated objectives are: ... producing and disseminating Islamic knowledge, establishing Islamic institutions, providing daily requirements, initiating *da'wah* (the propagation of the faith), recruiting and training personnel, and promoting and nourishing the unity of Muslims.¹⁶⁶

Islamic countries have sent a number of students to the universities and colleges of the world. It is one of Muslims' current missionary methods. Marsha Snulligan Haney reports that there were over eleven hundred Muslim students coming from twenty-five

¹⁶⁴ Korea Immigration Service Ministry of Justice, *KIS Statistics 2010* (Seoul: The Korean Government, 2011), 575.

¹⁶⁵ http://cafe.naver.com/pup21.cafe?iframe_url=/ArticleRead.nhn%3Farticleid=2451 (Last accessed on Oct. 3, 2012).

¹⁶⁶ Joseph Gudel, "Islam's Worldwide Revival," in *Forward* (Fall, 1985): 22.

Islamic countries in the city of Los Angeles at the end of twentieth century.¹⁶⁷ The number of Muslim students has continually increased in the USA. They have performed da'wa quietly toward not only Americans but also other foreign students. While many of them return back to their home countries after graduation, others have scattered and settled down all across the United States of America. They have created religious communities and built their worship places, masjid, around their localities.¹⁶⁸

In particular, The Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada (MSA) is well known as a missionary institution of Muslims. Their mission statement is:

The Muslim Students Association of the U.S. & Canada (MSA National) continues to serve Muslim students during their college and university careers by facilitating their efforts to establish, maintain and develop local MSA chapters. Towards that end, we aim to create a strong, diverse network of students who are conscious of their Islamic identity, well-trained and committed to serving Islam and Muslims both in North America and around the world.¹⁶⁹

Their ultimate aim is expanding the Islamic community to the world. Individually, the Muslim students have made Islam a familiar image to their friends and neighbors through dialoguing about Islamic faith and showing their pious lifestyles. Collectively, the association has held a number of public lectures in their colleges and universities in order to inform others about their religious faith and to correct misunderstandings about

¹⁶⁷ Marsha Snulligan Haney, *Islam and Protestant African-American Churches: Responses and Challenges to Religious Pluralism* (San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1998), 134-135.

¹⁶⁸ William Wagner, *How Islam Plans to Change the World* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2012), 50-51.

¹⁶⁹ http://www.msanational.org/MSA_Content/Resources/starter_guide/chapter_starter_guide.pdf (Last accessed in Oct. 3, 2012)

Islam.¹⁷⁰ This da'wa method has been effective in Western society for spreading Islamic faith.

c. The Marginalized

Muslims have been concerned about carrying out da'wa toward the marginalized people in society. First of all, they target prisoners, especially in the United States. In the film, *Malcolm X*, Malcolm has an opportunity to learn the religion of Islam and become a Muslim while in prison. This film documents how Muslims have sought to make prisoners converts in the American context. According to Jane Smith, "It is estimated that more than three hundred thousand prisoners are converts to Islam and that the rate of conversion may be more than thirty thousand each year."¹⁷¹ According to William Wagner, Muslims have an institution, The Junior Association of Muslim Men, for mission to prisoners. This missionary team focuses on converting young adult criminals to Islam. When the new converts are released from prison, Muslim communities welcome them into to their religious community and prepare new lives for the new believers.¹⁷² This da'wa method is being applied in the Korean context also. When I was doing research in Korea, I went to a mosque located in Daejeon. The Imam and members of the mosque have visited prisons regularly for da'wa. Although they haven't yet seen the fruit of their activities at the prison, they have continued for several years. They have confidence that their endeavors for da'wa will soon produce converts because some have shown interest in the religion of Islam.

¹⁷⁰ Racijs, 92.

¹⁷¹ Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 67.

¹⁷² Wagner, 77.

When Islam expanded rapidly to America, the concern of Muslims was also with the minority groups of society, such as the African-Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics. They have lived as the marginalized in a predominantly white Christian environment. Not only have Muslims taken care of them spiritually, but they also have materially supported the estranged people of American society. In particular, the message of Islam—egalitarianism, a sense of brotherhood, and an emphasis on self-discipline and devotion—has been attractive to people who have experienced discrimination in the USA. Since World War II, many have converted to Islam. While the growth rate of the white American Muslim population is small, the Muslim community among African-Americans is the largest in the States.¹⁷³

In the Korean context, Muslims led their successful growth through engaging in social work. After the Korean War, there were many widows and orphans in Korean society.¹⁷⁴ The Korea Muslim Federation was concerned about taking care of these powerless people through the mosque. Korean Muslims dedicated themselves to serve them and recruited volunteers to help the victims of the Korean War. Both volunteers and orphans were inspired by the spirit of the Muslims' self-sacrifice. Then, many of them decided spontaneously to become Muslims. As a result, the Korean Muslim population continually increased in 1960s and 1970s.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Smith, 66-68, 78-79, 120-121; Kambiz G. Bassiri, *A History of Islam in America* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 324-326.

¹⁷⁴ Hyunhee Lee, *Hankukui Yeoksa 19 [The History of Korea 19]* (Seoul: Hankuk Kyoyouk Moonwhasa, 1994), 234-246.

¹⁷⁵ Yoonkyung Sun, "Islam in Korea," (Ph. D. Diss., Hartford, 1971), 95-96.

d. Mass Media

In the early twenty-first century, Muslims have recognized that face-to-face meetings have limited effectiveness for powerfully propagating their faith worldwide. Therefore, they have employed the internet, the publishing of books and articles, and using mass media such as TV or radio.¹⁷⁶ Since the number of cyber-users has increased rapidly throughout the world, internet websites and social networks have become very important in informing people about Islam. According to the March 2011 statistics of internetworldstats.com, the number of internet users worldwide is 1,016,799,076. This number is 26.2% higher than in the early 2000s.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, it is inevitable that Islam, one of the missionary religions, would employ the internet as a missionary means. There are numerous sites and blogs on the internet where *da'wa* is given various degrees of attention. On many of these sites, both the organization maintaining the site and the authors writing for it are clearly identified. Non-Muslims can easily access these websites and learn what Islam is.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, Muslims and non-Muslims have been wired in diverse social network systems. They share all information that they need with each other. Faithful Muslims eagerly post their daily lives on their blogs and are able to immediately respond to questions from their non-Muslim friends about their faith. Such a *da'wa* method has created new Muslim communities in cyber-space. Gary Bunt calls this kind of Muslim, “iMuslim.”¹⁷⁹ The virtual space of Muslims has been recognized as the

¹⁷⁶ Smith, 89.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm> (Last accessed on Oct. 2012)

¹⁷⁸ Heeyoung Jeon and Heesun Cho, “Islamui Gasanggonggan Internetgwa e-Muslimui Jungchesungae Gwanhan Youngoo [A Study on Islamic Cyberspace and the Identity of e-Muslim],” in *Hankuk Jungdonghakhui Nonchong* No. 32 (2012): 147-154.

¹⁷⁹ Gary Bunt, *Muslim: Rewiring the House of Islam* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1; 7-19; 48-49.

cyber-mosque in the twenty-first century not only because they provide diverse information and religious services, but also because the websites and social networking sites have connected all Muslim brothers and sisters together in cyber-space.¹⁸⁰ Faithful Muslims have been concerned about iMuslims' religious identities because although they categorize themselves as Muslims, many of them never go to the mosque and perform religious practices as Muslims in their daily lives. They just approach Islam intellectually, but not wholeheartedly.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, Mohammed el-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis, and Heidi A. Campbell emphasize the importance of cyber-methods for performing da'wa in the twenty-first century. Accordingly in today's globalized world, Muslims rapidly move from one place to another. When people encounter difficult milieus for keeping their beliefs and performing religious ceremonies in their new contexts, e-Muslim communities¹⁸² help the diaspora Muslims to live within the Islamic faith. They gather the scattered believers in non-Islamic countries to one place to worship together and to connect with each other as Muslim brothers and sisters in unfamiliar contexts. Moreover, the e-Muslim communities have worked well for inviting non-Muslims to the Islamic faith. The websites and social networking systems are open to everyone. iMuslims/e-Muslims have actively inter-connected with people and have guided them to Islamic

¹⁸⁰ Heeyoung Jeon and Heesun Cho, 145.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 158-161.

¹⁸² I used a prefix, e, to Muslim communities. The prefix is the abbreviated of "electronic." In Korean society, the prefix, e, has been used with Internet or electronic communications i. e. e-learning, e-government, and e-chatting. See Heeyoung Jeon and Heesun Cho, 161.

ways. In a sense, el-Nawawy and Khamis, and Campbell foresee that the cyber-mosque is the best method for da'wa in the twenty-first century.¹⁸³

In addition to the above da'wa methods, Larry A. Poston and Carl F. Ellis address other diverse missionary methods of Muslims: open-air preaching, holistic outreach programs, group-oriented activities, summer training camps, radio and television programming, and literature distribution.¹⁸⁴ While some Muslims indirectly perform da'wa through lifestyle evangelism, others have developed "para-mosque" organizations in order to systemically spread their faith in non-Islamic societies.¹⁸⁵ Abdullah Al-Araby adds one more da'wa strategy to the current missionary methods of Muslims: terror.¹⁸⁶ However, this cannot be regarded as an appropriate way for da'wa in the current world. The majority of Muslim societies criticize the radical Muslim movement as heretical because the terroristic movements plant distorted perspectives of Islam in non-Muslims. Terroristic Muslims never help the expansion of the Islamic community today.

In his book, Khurram Murad argues that there are three levels for Islamizing non-Muslim communities.

1. The macro level: the level of overall *ummah* and Muslim societies and states.
2. The intermediate level: the level of very large groups, institutions, and structures.
3. The micro level: the level of the individual person and small organization.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Mohammed el-nawawy and Sahar Khamis, *Islam dot com: contemporary Islamic discourses in cyberspace* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 118; Heidi Campbell, *Religious Meets New Media* (London and NY: Routledge, 2010), 184.

¹⁸⁴ Larry A. Poston and Carl F. Ellis, *The Changing Face of Islam in America* (Camp Hill, Pennsylvania: Horizon Book, 2000), 57-63.

¹⁸⁵ Poston (1992), 93-122.

¹⁸⁶ Abdullah Al-Araby, *Islamization of America: The Islamic Strategies and the Christian Response* (California: The Pen vs. The Sword), 71-85.

¹⁸⁷ Murad, 9.

In most cases, the third level is the beginning point for inviting unbelievers to Allah, either in or outside of Islamic countries. Muslims evangelize people through their pious lifestyles and interpersonal relationships. Then, when the indigenous Muslim group grows in the society, the Muslims use the system of ‘para-mosques’ in order to effectively propagate their faith to others. While Korea has been turning from the third level to the second, America is in the second level. According to Poston, the movements of para-mosques are very active in the United States, such as The Muslim Student Association, The Islamic Society of North America, Islamic Medical Association, The Islamic Circle of North America, The Islamic Information Center of America and so forth.¹⁸⁸ Those organizations are positively engaged in inviting Americans to the world of Islam and making nominal Muslims into faithful ones. On the other hand, numerous books and papers are warning about the Islamicizing of the Europe’s countries, because France, Germany, and the United Kingdom are going to the first level. Not only is the Muslim population dramatically growing in those countries, but also Muslim leaders of the countries have quietly propagated Islamic faith in European society and have created new Muslim communities, *umma*, in the local communities.¹⁸⁹

In conclusion, as a missionary religion, Islam has continually expanded from the city of Mecca to the world. In the beginning, the da’wa method was just proclaiming the revelation and defensively performing jihad toward others. When Muhammad’s religious group moved their missionary focus to Medina, however, they recognized that the lesser jihad is the most effective method in order to accomplish Allah’s commandment,

¹⁸⁸ Poston, 99-122.

¹⁸⁹ Robert J. Pauly, JR., *Islam in Europe: Integration or Marginalization?* (Aldershot and Hants, England; Burlington, VT : Ashgate, 2004), 136-154.

recruiting people from darkness to the light of Islamic faith. The influence of Islamic power rapidly extended throughout the world by applying imperialistic da'wa methods until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In the post-colonial period, most Muslims have transformed their missionary methods from radical to peaceful again except a few radical groups. They have quietly propagated their faith in the twenty-first century. Muslims have no longer displayed their military power to non-Islamic countries. Nevertheless, Europe, North America, and even Korea are being Islamicized. In the next chapter, I will explore the history of Islam in Korea and the missionary methods by which Muslims have interconnected with Korean society for spreading their faith into Korea.

CHAPTER 3

ISLAM IN KOREA

I surveyed 327 Korean seminarians about Muslim da'wa movements taking place in Korea. One of the questions in my research was "Do you know how long the history of Islam in Korea has been?" Most respondents answered that it might be less than fifty years. However, this response is incorrect. Muslims first reached Koreans over thirteen hundred years ago. In Korean history, the *Koryosa*¹⁹⁰ provides the first records of the visitation of foreign Muslims to Korea. As recorded in this book, Al-Razi visited the Koryo dynasty with one hundred caravans in AD 1025. A decade later, Hassan, Razi and Bakara arrived in Korea again for economic purposes.¹⁹¹ Heesoo Lee¹⁹² argues, however, that the initial history of Islam in Korea must be traced back to the era of the Unified Shilla (AD 668-917) because the first encounter between Muslims and Koreans was not in Korea, but in China. Korean scholars, businessmen, and students who were sent by the

¹⁹⁰ This is a book about the history of the Koryo dynasty (AD 918-1392). Jongseo Kim, Inji Jung, and Sunjae Lee began to write the book about the previous dynasty by the order of the king of Sejong in 1449. They finished the work two years later. In this historical book, the three scholars dealt with all parts of the Koryo dynasty such as economy, society, culture, religion, and even the main politicians of the government. It is the basic material for studying the Koryo dynasty.

¹⁹¹ Youngjoon Jeon, "Koryosidae Palgwanhuiui Seulhanggungwa Kukjaemunwhagyoryu [The tradition of Palgwangui and international culture intercourse]," in *Damunhwa Contents Youngoo* No. 3 (2010): 210.

¹⁹² Heesoo Lee is the most famous Korean Muslim and is known as a Muslim da'i. He said in an interview with a public newspaper that he would be a da'i to spread Islamic faith into Korea. He graduated from Istanbul University, and his dissertation was on the history of Islam in Korea. As an eager Muslim da'i, he wrote a number of books in order to present Islam to Koreans.

Shilla government to the Tang dynasty had chances to encounter Muslim caravans, and they began to influence each other.¹⁹³

I. The First Advent of Islamic Faith in Korea

A. Islam in China

China has played an important role as a bridge between Koreans and Muslims, having had close relationships with Arab countries from early on. There are several arguments debating the point of first contact between the countries of the Middle East and China: from the late sixth-century to the fifteenth century. The authenticity of the assumptions of the relationship's beginning as early the late sixth century and the early seventh-century has been doubted because these reports relied only on oral traditions.¹⁹⁴ Heesoo points out that it is possible that people have embellished the oral traditions beyond historical fact.¹⁹⁵ Official and reliable documents have more credibility than oral, and most scholars acknowledge that the *Gudangseo*,¹⁹⁶ a Chinese history book, is the first documented record of an official meeting between Arabs and Chinese in AD 651.

¹⁹³ Heesoo Lee, *Islam and Korean Culture: History of Intercommunication from Gulf to Kyungju over 1200 years* (Seoul: Chungah Publication, 2012), 60.

¹⁹⁴ Marshall Broomhall introduces some Chinese Mohammedan traditions in his book, *Islam in China*. Among the diverse oral traditions, two legends are popular for Chinese Muslims, but the stories are mythical, not reliable. For example, the Prophet Muhammad wearing a turban appeared in the Tang emperor's dream and worshiped toward Mecca. Then, he suddenly vanished before the emperor; See Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China* (NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007), 62-67; Raphael Israeli, *Islam in China: Religion, Ethnicity, Culture, and Politics* (England: Lexington Books, 2002), 78-85.

¹⁹⁵ Heesoo (2012), 27.

¹⁹⁶ This book authentically describes the history of the Tang dynasty. It's writing had begun in AD 940 and was then completed five years later. The book constituted two hundred volumes. The authors sought to vividly portray the common life of the society, economic conditions, and both domestic and international politic situations. In this literature, we are able to find Islamic movements taking place in China and political and economic relationships with other countries including Korea.

In this year, the Arabian king sent the first envoy to the Tang Dynasty and reported that the Arabian dynasty had been governed by three kings for the last thirty four years.¹⁹⁷

Though this first officially recorded event occurred in AD 651, such personal and business meetings would have likely also occurred earlier than 651. Lee insists that both the Chinese and Arabs interchanged their economies, cultures, and even religions through the *silk road*¹⁹⁸ and marine routes from the pre-Islamic era in the late sixth century.¹⁹⁹

In the beginning of this relationship, both Arabs and Chinese were concerned only about economic exchange. However, the tie between them developed into a political union in the middle of the eighth century. In particular, when the Tang dynasty²⁰⁰ had a military coup d'état led by Lushan An in AD 755, the Abbasid Caliphate dispatched troops in order to suppress rioters against the Chinese government. Their attacks were successful. Because of the Muslims' support, peace came to the Tang government, and based on this political friendship, Chinese governors showed great hospitality to Muslims and even allowed intermarriage between Chinese and Arabs. They welcomed the influx of Arabs and helped them to settle in several Chinese cities. As a result, Islamic faith and culture began to spread dramatically into the inland of China.²⁰¹ The military aid of

¹⁹⁷ “Daesikjun, in *Gudangseo*, Chapter 4.

¹⁹⁸ This term comes from F. von Richthofen, a German geographer. It is a compound word, *Seidenstraße* (seiden: silk + strabe: road). After traveling throughout China in the late nineteenth century, he wrote a book which he simply titled *China*. In this book, he used the term *Silk Road* to describe the interlinking trade routes between the Western and Eastern worlds, largely because Chinese caravans often brought lucrative silk into the Middle East and Europe. See Sooil Jeong, *SilkRoadhak [Theology of Silk-Road]* (Seoul: Changjakgua Beepyung, 2001), 35.

¹⁹⁹ Heesoo Lee, “Islamgyoung JungkukJeonibgwa Huijokgongdongcheui Taedong [The Early Spread of Islam to China and Formation of the Hui-Hui Muslim Community],” in *Minjok and Munhwa* (1997): 91-92.

²⁰⁰ This was the Chinese government in AD 618-907.

²⁰¹ Lee (2012), 44-45.

Muslims provided an opportunity to expand their economic and spiritual outreach in the land of China.

Arab Muslims preferred to settle in areas along the southeastern coast of China because those regions were the main routes for their maritime trade.²⁰² The Chinese government accepted their petition and set aside residence space in that location for the Muslims. In time, as the Arab Muslim immigration increased, the number of Arabians in the region came to outnumber the indigenous Chinese. The Muslims built mosques which established cultural and religious centers in their resident cities such as Quanzhou, Guangdong, and Hangzhou. Among the mosques, *Hoysungsa* of Guangdong is the best-known building from early Islamic history in East Asia. The mosques gathered together immigrant Muslims for their religious ceremonies, and helped their friends and relatives to settle in an unfamiliar cultural area. Furthermore, the immigrant Muslims began to perform da'wa toward the indigenous people of the cities by introducing their faith to the Chinese. Since Muslim culture and religious life were not a contradiction to the Chinese way of life, except for the prohibition of pork and wine, Arabs were able to avoid severe conflicts and rejection by the indigenous people. Rather, Chinese writers were interested in the strangers' activities and wrote positive descriptions of their lifestyle and culture in their books.²⁰³

The territory of the *Taesik*²⁰⁴ includes Old Persian areas. The male has a long nose and black beard. They are always armed with a silver dagger

²⁰² Heesoo Lee, "Islam in Korea," in *The Institution of Islamic Culture*, No. 1 (1997): 60.

²⁰³ Heesoo (2012), 46-47.

²⁰⁴ *Taesik* was the nickname for Arab Muslims in the Tang and Song Dynasties. The Chinese in those dynasties called the Arabian countries *Taesikguk*. It is a compound word: *Taesik* + *guk*. The suffix means a country. There are three reasons that Muslims have that nickname. First, Marshall argues that the Chinese transliteration of *Taesik* comes from a Persian word, *Tajir*, which means a trader. Chinese created the nickname for Muslim caravans from the Persian term.

and its sheath. They neither drink alcohol nor are interested in listening to music. On the other hand, the female's skin color is white, but they veil their face when they go outside. They have their own worship place. On every seventh day, their leader stands in the pulpit located in the highest place of the temple and proclaims, "Those who died in battle will be resurrected in the heaven. Furthermore, brave warriors killing our enemies will be blessed." With this message, all *Taesiks* are considered to be special. They have prayer five times in a day.²⁰⁵

At the commencement of the Tang dynasty there came to Canton a considerable number of strangers, natives of the kingdoms of Annam,²⁰⁶ of Cambodia, of Media and several other countries. These strangers worshipped heaven [T'ien] and had no statues, idols, or images in their temple. The kingdom of Medina is near to that of India, and it is in this kingdom that the religion of these strangers, which is very different from that of Buddha, originated. They do not eat pork nor drink wine, and regard as impure the flesh of every animal not slain by themselves. They are known at the present time by name of *Hui Hui*.²⁰⁷ ... They have a temple called the Temple of Holy Remembrance, which was built at the commencement of the Tang dynasty. At the side of the temple is a grand tower, called Kwang Tah (the tower without ornament), round, and about 160 feet (Chinese) high. These strangers go every day to their temple to

See Marshall, 13. Another origin of the nickname is that *Tashi* is derived from the word which Persians used to call an Arab tribe, *Tazi*. See Muhammad Kansu, *Shilla Dongseogyoryusa [The Intercourse History between Shilla Dynasty and Western]*, (Seoul: Danguk University Press, 1992), 80-81. The last theory of the Muslims' Chinese nickname is based on the historical relationship between China and the Arab countries. In AD 650, Arab armies strived to expand their territories toward the west of China. The Chinese scoffed at the strangers by calling them *Tashi* (大食), which means a greedy fellow. See Yoonkyung Sun, "Islam in Korea," (Ph. D. Diss., Hartford, 1971), 6-7.

²⁰⁵ This description is in "Seoyokjeon," *Shindanseon* (AD 1060). This book is one of the classic books recording the history of the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907).

²⁰⁶ The Chinese called Vietnamese Annam in the seventh century. Historically, when China occupied the city of Hanoi, Vietnam in AD 679, the Chinese government had a political station there and called it "Annamdohoboo." This department was established by China for governing the city. Since the late seventh century, therefore, Annam became the Chinese nickname for the Vietnamese.

²⁰⁷ *Hui Hui* is another title for calling Muslims in China. The nickname comes from the influence of the Uyghur people. By the ninth century, the Uyghur had been reached by Muslims and began to accept Islamic faith. They were adjacent to the northern part of China and spread their faith to the Chinese. The people of China called the Uyghur Hau-hui, Hui-ho, Han-ho, Hu, Hui-hu, or Hui-Hui. Then, the religion believed by the Hui-Hui was named Hui-HuiGyo or HuiGyo. *Gyo* means teaching. See, M. A. Czaplicka, *The Turks of Central Asia in history and at the present day, an ethnological inquiry into the Pan-Turanian problem, and bibliographical material relating to the early Turks and the present Turks of Central Asia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), 67; Muhammad Kansu, 120-131.

perform their religious ceremonies. Having asked and obtained from the Emperor an authorization to reside at Canton, they built magnificent houses of an architecture different from that of our country. They were very rich and governed by a chief chosen by themselves.²⁰⁸

Since the Tang governors did not enact strict regulations about immigration law, the Muslim population gradually increased in China. While a few Muslims who had Chinese wives lived within their wife's culture, most Muslim immigrants created new communities for themselves in several places, i.e. the city of Quanzhou, of Yangzhou and of Tianjiu, which were designated by the government. Those regions became special residential districts for Muslims. They were called *Fan Fang*, which means "a particular fence for Arabs." The Chinese government never interfered with the residents unless Muslims caused quarrels engaging indigenous people.²⁰⁹ They were totally extraterritorial places in China. The social and spiritual leaders of the communities were elected by the Muslims themselves. Then, the Chinese government acknowledged them as the privileged class for the society. Their regions were run by a self-governing system of Arab Muslims. Conflicts and strife taking place in the *Fan Fang* were governed by the Qur'an, *Sharia*, and Islam. The Muslims truly organized an *Umma* in China. They kept their traditional clothes, food laws, and even language in the communities. The cities were parts of an Islamic country located in China.²¹⁰ Joouk, a Chinese historian of the

²⁰⁸ It is from the Annals of Kwangtung. I directly quote this part from Broomhall's book (2007), 71-72.

²⁰⁹ Heesso Lee, (1997), 97-98.

²¹⁰ Heesso Lee, *The Advent of Islam in Korea* (Istanbul: Research Center for Islamic History, Art, and Culture, 1997), 18-19.

Song dynasty (AD 960-1279), described the unfamiliar people well in his book,

Pyungjoogadam.²¹¹

Fanin's [Arab Muslims] dressing style is so different from the Chinese. They never eat pork. Moreover, unless they slaughter animals by themselves, Islamic law does not allow them to eat our six representative animals [horse, cow, sheep, pig, dog, and chicken].²¹² [my translation]

B. The First Encounter between Muslims and Koreans

Under the generous attitude of the Tang dynasty toward other ethnic groups, Arab Muslims became completely rooted into Chinese society and began to expand their business influence, not only to inland China but also to other coastal regions. As time passed, Arab Muslims traveled out of the district of *Fan Fang* in order to trade their goods with other Chinese and with other foreigners who lived in China. Until Hwangso, a Chinese salt trader, led a revolt²¹³ and persecuted Arab-Persian Muslims who lived in the

²¹¹ The author's father, Joobok, was a bureaucrat in the Song dynasty. As a government official, he often traveled throughout China and shared the diverse stories of what he observed, listened to, and experienced. Those resources were an important basis for writing this book. In particular, the author portrayed the common life of *Fan Fang*'s people in detail.

²¹² Joouk, *Pyngjoogadam*. Chapter 2.

²¹³ Hwangso had political ambition at the end of the Tang dynasty, but he had often failed the exam to be appointed to government office. There is no way to go to the highest class in the government without passing the exam. At that moment, the political situation of the Tang government was unstable. The people had severe complaints toward the governors about their forced labor and economic exploitation. Hwangso began to instigate the marginalized of society to fight the majority of the dynasty and expanded the riot from the west to the capital, Xi'an. This movement became a rebellion toward the vested government. The resultant insurgents came down to Quanzhou, one of the Muslim communities, plundering and massacring the Muslim residents, because the foreigners had accumulated wealth under the aegis of the Chinese government. Through these attacks, more than one hundred thousand Muslim emigrants were slaughtered. This persecution was the first ordeal for Arab Muslims who had lived in China. Because of this persecution, a number of Muslims moved out of China to such places as India, Malay, and Indonesia. Heesoo raises the possibility that some Muslims might have crossed the Yellow Sea and reached Shilla in order to escape from the massacre. See, Heesoo (2012), 52; Heeyoung Kim, *Jungkuk Yeoksa II (The history of China II)*, (Seoul: Chungah, 2006), 481-492; Broomhall, 50.

city of Quanzhou during the ninth century, Islamic culture and faith spread throughout China from the seventh century to the ninth.²¹⁴

Those Arab Muslims who scattered and lived throughout China under such close relationships between the Tang dynasty and Arab countries had opportunities to contact foreigners including Japanese and Koreans in the eighth century. Since the Shilla dynasty regarded China as a great country and had a close relationship with it, it depended on China in politics, philosophy, economics, culture, and even religion. The Shilla government sent a number of their envoys, students, religious leaders, and businessmen to the neighboring country. Through such dynamic political, economic, and religious relationships with the Tang dynasty, the people of Shilla were able to first encounter the new ethnic group of Arab Muslims. They often had cultural and business transactions with the Arab caravans, and even observed new religious phenomena performed by the foreigners.

a. Politics

Shilla regularly sent delegates to China several times each year. According to E. Reischauer, Chinese historical books often mention that the grand delegate of the Shilla government had come to several annual events of the Tang government. This occurred over forty-six times between AD 703-738.²¹⁵ Since Arab countries also dispatched their officials to the Tang dynasty during that time,²¹⁶ there was a definite possibility that both Muslims and Koreans met together at the Tang Imperial Household.

²¹⁴ Heesoo, 51-53.

²¹⁵ E. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), 277.

²¹⁶ Goodangseo, Chapter IV. *Chakeboowongoo*.

b. Education

The Shilla government also provided a number of students with full scholarships to study in China because it considered Chinese civilization and philosophy as superior to their own. The governors expected that the students would contribute to the development of Korean society and of education when they returned from China. For more than ten years, the Chinese government trained them at *Gookjagam* [National Educational Institution of the Tang dynasty] and sent them back to Korea. Those who had educational opportunities in China were promptly promoted to high political positions in Korea. Therefore, the government officers of Shilla privately sent their own children to China. The number of these students was quite high in the eighth century. They also had the opportunity to meet Muslim scholars who were dispatched from Arab countries at *Gookjagam*. Heesoo insists that the Shilla's outstanding architecture, such as dome ceilings, the development of precision in mathematics, and the manufacturing of astronomical observation equipment were due to exchanges with Arab Muslims in China. The students sought to appropriate the advanced civilization of the Muslims and the Chinese into the Korean context.²¹⁷

c. Religious leaders

Along with the students, numerous Korean Buddhist monks also crossed the border into China. According to Byungik Go, hundreds of Buddhist priests took the long journey to the Tang dynasty in order to learn Chinese Buddhism and the classic books of Buddhism during the Shilla dynasty. Moreover, Byungik affirms that Ennin, a Japanese

²¹⁷ Heesoo (2012), 62-63.

Buddhist, recorded that he met numerous Buddhists from Shilla throughout China while staying in China more than ten years.²¹⁸ The Buddhists had opportunities to hear the story of Arab Muslims, including their culture and faith, even though they did not directly meet them. Some among the Buddhists sought to reach India because they considered this to be a sacred place. They had two options to facilitate travel to India: either walking the *Silk Road* or using sea routes. At that time, since Arab Muslims ruled over the southern sea of China, if the Buddhists wanted to take sea routes, they had to use the Arabian trading ships. In such historical, political, and economical contexts, encounters between Arab Muslims and Shilla Buddhists were inevitable.²¹⁹ In particular, Hyecho, one Buddhist priest who traveled in China, visited an Islamic country in the eighth century. This was before Muslims had reached the Korean peninsula. When he stayed at the city of Quanzhou, he met his teacher, *Guemganggi*.²²⁰ While learning from his master about new Buddhist movements taking place in India, he had a hope to visit there, in addition to visiting the far western regions. In accordance with his teacher's guidance, Hyecho traveled to India, the sacred place of Buddhism, by using a Muslim caravan ship in AD 723. After stopping in India, he then had a long journey toward the far western world, i.e. Central Asia, Persia, Arabia, and Byzantium. He returned to the city of Chang'an at China in AD 727 and wrote a book based on his travel observations, titled *Wang-o-chon-*

²¹⁸ Byungik Go, *Dong Asia Gyosub Youngoo* [*The interaction studies in East Asia*], (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1980), 48-49.

²¹⁹ Reischauer, 278.

²²⁰ *Guemganggi* was an Indian Buddhist monk (AD 671- 741). When he became 42 years old, he left India and began to travel to Sri Lanka and Srivijaya to spread the teaching of a Vajrayāna tradition, distinguishing it from the teaching of Nālandā. He arrived in China in AD 716 and taught Esoteric Buddhism to Buddhists. At that time, he met Hyecho and transmitted the new Buddhist movements.

chuk-kuk-chon.²²¹ Hyecho first arrived in the Islamic world and portrayed its life and religious practices well in three volumes.²²²

Taesik conquered Persia, and her king lived in its capital, *Solimbulkuk*.²²³ ... The people of Taesik and of Solimbulkuk believed in a god, but they haven't yet recognized the teaching of Buddha. ... In the country of Taesik, the king and people dressed the same, and they ate the food together. There were no discriminations between the low and high classes. They cooked in one place and shared equally. They never fell on the knee in order to express respect for elders.²²⁴ [my translation]

Heesoo claims that there is no doubt that this book is based on Hyecho's direct adventure, because it was very well-structured chronologically, was coherent in its content, and vividly described Muslims' common life and religious beliefs.²²⁵ Moreover, Sooil Jung insists that this travel report is one of the oldest travel books in the world and a priceless one along with *The Travels of Marco Polo* and *A Gift to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Traveling* by Ibn Battuta. Hyecho's adventure contributes not only to the development of world geographical works but also introduces Islamic faith and Muslim culture to East Asia.²²⁶ Hyecho was the first Korean reaching Arab countries and introducing the Islamic world in the eighth century.

²²¹ This book was discovered in 1908 by Paul Pelliot, a French archaeologist. When it was found, scholars assumed that the author might be a Chinese Buddhist. However, seven years later, a Japanese scholar, Gonamsoonchaboo, proved that Hyecho was a Buddhist monk of Shilla through finding a Japanese historical book, *Youloh-chun-chuk-kuk-chon*. Hyecho stayed in China for learning Buddhism and traveled in India and the Islamic world for four years.

²²² Muhammad Kansu, 348-354.

²²³ This place is Syria today. Umayyad Caliphate (661-750) moved their capital to Damascus and lived in the city. Hyecho correctly described the political context.

²²⁴ Heesoo (2012), 64. He extracted this paragraph from Sooil Jung's dissertation, "*The Study of Relationship between Shilla and Arabs-Islam*" (Ph. D. Diss., Dankuk University, 1990), 158-173.

²²⁵ Heesoo (2012), 64.

²²⁶ Sooil Jung, *Munmyungdamron and Munmyunggeoryu* [*Discourse and Intercourse of Civilization*] (Seoul: Salim, 2009), 257.

d. Business

International trading in the Tang dynasty led to natural contact points between Koreans and Muslims. The Shilla governors regularly brought tributes to the Tang emperor because of Chinese hegemony. As a result, there was also active private business being done beyond the national level. In particular, the officials of the Shilla dynasty imported the advanced international culture and goods from China because they experienced a radical improvement in their quality of life and culture after encountering the new civilization of the Chinese and the Muslims. Due to this economic context, many Koreans engaged in transit trade between the Chinese, Muslims and Shilla. A number of Shilla businessmen visited or immigrated to China. In order to increase the influx of the Shilla people, the Chinese government also set aside some places for the Shilla caravans to assemble together in China. These were located on the coastline of Shantung and around the Yangtze River. These cities became special districts for the people of Shilla just as those created for the Arabs. They were called *Shilla Fang*. The communities were run by the self-government system of the Shilla. The Chinese government appointed Shilla political leaders to leadership positions in the *Fangs* and permitted them to build Buddhist temples for the residents. In these districts, the Shilla immigrants used their own language and could keep their own culture.²²⁷ They seemed like districts of Shilla belonging to China.

In the middle of the eighth century, many Arab Muslims sought to move out to the northeastern coastline to expand their businesses, and then settled in the same city as

²²⁷Seoungyoung Lee, “Jangbogo Jeungshin and Mooyoktaegu Jaehyun [Bogo Jang’s Spirit and Recovering the Grate Country on Marine Trade],” in *The Studies of International trade* No. 7 (2002): 213.

many Shilla. In their book, *The Historical Studies of Cultural Intercourse in East Asia*, Sanggi Kim and Changsun Kim are confident that Muslim businessmen and the caravans of Shilla coexisted in some areas, such as in the cities of Yangzhou, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Myoungzhou, and Taizhou. Both groups were actively trading their indigenous products in those locations.²²⁸ While exporting swords, perfumery, silk, herbal medicine, Jin-sang, pottery, porcelain, and writing brushes,²²⁹ the Shilla businessmen imported glass, gems and jewelry, diverse scents, woolen fabric, carpets, and so forth.²³⁰ The Shilla merchants who lived in *Shilla Fang* carried on transit trade between the Shilla and the Arab caravans.²³¹ In particular, the people of Shilla preferred buying luxury items and extravagant things from the Arabs. They regarded possessing such foreign goods as symbols of their wealth and power. However, the King of Shilla, Heungduk, promulgated an ordinance due to the high consumption and uncontrolled imports of the people.

The hordes who favor luxury exotic souvenirs have dramatically increased in recent times. They have rejected our indigenous goods. Such trends have made our society promiscuous. Therefore, I proclaim a special order prohibiting luxury imports. Whoever disobeys this new law, I will subject to severe punishment.²³² [my translation]

²²⁸ Sanggi Kim, *Dongbangmunhwageoryusayoungoo* [*The Historical Studies of Cultural Intercourse in East Asia*] (Seoul: Elumunhwasa, 1984), 16. Heesoo (2012), 67; Changsuk Kim, "Muslims' intercourse with Shilla and its background from the eighth century to the tenth century," in *Ancient History Studies of Korea*, No. 44 (Dec. 2006): 98-101.

²²⁹ Namsoo Park, "9 sheki Shillaui Daeoe Kyoyeokmoolpoomgwa Gue Sungkuk [Shilla's Trading Goods and Its Characteristics in the Ninth Century]," in *Sahak Youngoo*, No. 94 (2009): 3-4.

²³⁰ Seoungyoung, 218; Heesoo Lee, "Islam Munwhahyungungaeseo Sassancho Persiaui Yekhalgwa Dongasiawoui Gyoryu [The Cultural Role of the Sassandi Perisa in the Early Islamic Period and the Spread of Persian Culture to the East Asia]," in *Hankuk Jungdong Hakhui Nonchong*, No. 30 (2009): 20-24.

²³¹ Seoungyoung 217.

²³² *Samkuksagi*, Chapter 33

In spite of this ordinance, however, Arab caravans did not give up on carrying on trade with the Shilla. Not only did the Arabs need to have Shilla's precious souvenirs, but also the elite class of the Shilla dynasty had made secret deals with Shilla's businessmen for dressing in luxury. While engaging in such an active international trade between Arabs and Shilla, Koreans naturally had opportunities to observe Muslim culture and their religious performance.

e. Marine Trades

In his article, "Bogo Jang's Spirit and Recovering the Great Country in Maritime Trade," Seoungyoung Lee argues for another point of contact—Shilla trading ships in the ninth century. Whereas the Arabs had monopolized the sea trade in areas such as the Arabian peninsula, India, South-east Asia, and the southern part of China, Bogo Jang, an overseas admiral of Shilla, was able to suppress their commercial power in East Asia, including the northeast of China, Korea, and Japan. Whenever the Arabs engaged in maritime trade with Japan or Shilla, they had to request Bogo Jang's permission and use his trading ships. He played the role of a transit trader between Arab countries, China, Korea, and Japan. All caravans on the sea had to change to his ships in East Asian regions in order to reach their destinations. Therefore, Koreans again had opportunities to encounter Muslims and their religion, Islam.²³³

²³³ Seoungyoung, 213-220; Heesoo (2012), 67-69

C. Shilla Portrayed by Ancient Muslims

Although both Muslims and Koreans had trade with one another from the eighth century onward, there is no definite evidence in Korean and Chinese historical documents that Muslims directly encountered the people of Shilla or immigrated to the Korean peninsula during the Shilla dynasty. However, numerous ancient Arab-Persian scholars mention Shilla in their historical, geographic, and encyclopedic books.²³⁴ First of all, in his book, *General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms*,²³⁵ Ibn Khurdadhibah, an Arab geographer, describes the country of Shilla as such:

Beyond China, across from Qansu, there is a country with many mountains called Shilla. It abounds in gold. Muslims who happened upon it were fascinated by the charm of the environment and tended to settle there for good. There is no way of knowing what lies beyond it...²³⁶
[my translation]

According to this book, Muslims had already recognized the country of Shilla and settled down in it because of its four seasons, its fresh air, pure water, fertile ground, abundant resources, the benefits of trade, and so forth. Shilla was an attractive place to Arabs who had lived in the deadly desert and desolated grassland regions. Some of the Arab writers portrayed Shilla as a Utopia, 'Forever and Lucky Islands' or 'Atlantis.'²³⁷

²³⁴ Heesoo Lee, *Han-Islam Gyorusa [The Intercourse History of Korea with Islam]* (Seoul: Munduksa, 1991), 282-299.

²³⁵ This book was written in the middle of the ninth century. It is valuable for Korea because this book was the first mention of Shilla's geographical location, even though it was inaccurate. By Ibn Khurdadhiban, Korea began to be known to the world. See, Heesoo Lee, "Islamkwonui Hankuksa Kwanryunjaryo Sokae [Introduction of resources about the Islam history of Korea]," in *Yeoksa and Hyunsil* No 8 (1992): 328.

²³⁶ Heesoo translated the text into Korean. Then, I translated the Korean into English. See Heesoo (1997), 49.

²³⁷ Heesoo (1992), 378-379.

Sulaiman al-Tajr, on the other hand, takes exception with Khurdadhibah's report that Muslims immigrated to Shilla in the ninth century.²³⁸

The islands of ad-Sila enclose the sea. Her residents' complexion is close to white. They brought a tribute to the Chinese emperor. They believe that unless they express respect toward China, heaven will allow them to be subject to drought. No one among Arab caravans tells me about secret places and people. Furthermore, no Arabs have lived in the islands. I just heard that there are white eagles in these islands.²³⁹

These statements about the settlement of Muslims in Shilla are contradictory. While the former reports that some Muslims lived in this Utopia, the latter had never heard that Arabs had immigrated to this place. Scholars suggest two ways to explain the reason why these books disagree. First, these documents may not be contradictory because both authors have different ethnic identities. Khurdadhibah was a Persian geographer, but Sulaiman was an Arab caravan traveler. In his statements, 'no one visited and lived in Shilla among us,' he meant that Arabs never reached this land, not Persians. On the other hand, Khurdadhibah's report, 'some Muslims permanently settled in the place,' indicates only Persian Muslims, not Arabs. In a sense, there is no discrepancy in both historical documents. It is true that Muslims lived in Shilla, but they came from Persia, not Arabia. Another theory is that Sulaiman's book has more credibility than Khurdadhibah because *General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms* has some incorrect information about Shilla's culture, place names, and indigenous products. Jungwi Kim

²³⁸ As part of an Arabian caravan, Sulaiman wrote a book, which was named *Reports on China and India* in the middle of the ninth century. This book contemporary with Ibn Khurdadhibah's *General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms*, but its detailed statements about Shilla are a little different. See Changsuk Kim, "8-10sheki Islam Jaejongjokui Shilla Raewanggwa Gue Baekyung [The Traffic of Muslim Tribes to Silla and Its Backgrounds in the 8-10th. Century]," in *Hankuk Kodaesa Youngoo*, No. 44 (Dec. 2006): 98-101.

²³⁹ Adapted from Changsuk Kim's translation. See Changsuk, 98.

criticizes the inaccuracy of the book saying that the writer just relied on indirect resources and sought to portray Shilla as a Utopia. As a result, Khurdadhibah might have added his expectations as being facts. There is no possibility that Arabs permanently resided in Shilla, but it could be that the Arab businessmen were temporarily in Shilla for their business dealings. Furthermore, if Arabs did settle down in Shilla, a number of Shilla historical documents might report the foreigner's arrival, their culture and religion.²⁴⁰ On the other hand, Sulaiman was in a caravan directly adventuring in India and China a few times. Since his reports were based on his travels, Sulaiman's statement on the relationship between the Shilla and Muslims has more credibility with scholars.²⁴¹

In their book and article, Heesoo and Muhammad Kansu also introduce diverse historical records mentioning Shilla. All the documents were written by Arab scholars.²⁴²

There is a country at the end of China. It is named *Shilla*. (Ibn Rustah)

We do not know what there is beyond the Chinese coastline, but we only heard that there exists Shilla and some islands belong to it. (Mas'udi)

Shilla is located in the east end of China. It is in contrast to an island of the west end. While the later is an uninhabited island, the former is not. The last island's name to Shilla's east is Sankai. A monument carving a statement, "There is no longer a road beyond here" stands in the island. It is located in the 180th degree of east longitude. The southern part of Shilla has a golden island mentioned by Ptolemy. (Ibn Sa'sid)

Shilla-gundo²⁴³ and Ustikun²⁴⁴ are located beyond the east sea of China. According to Ptolemaios and other scholars, Shilla-gundo composes six islands and is close nearby the eastern coast of China. (Dimashiqi)

²⁴⁰ Jungwee Kim, "The Korean history reflecting in Arabian literatures in the medieval era," in *Jungdong Munwha Yongooso*, No. 16, (1992): 48.

²⁴¹ Changsuk, 100-101.

²⁴² According to Muhammad Kansu and Heesoo, seventeen Arab-Persian Scholars published twenty-two books beginning in the middle of the ninth century. Muhammad (1990), 11-22; Heesoo (2012), 110-114, 140-141; Seongmin Hong, "The Middle East and Its Trade with Far Eastern Countries in Medieval Age," in *HankukJungdonghakhui*, No. 10 (1989): 87-89.

Whoever visits Shilla never wants to leave the paradise because it has abundant resources. First of all, there is gold everywhere. The residents never make chains for dogs or monkeys out of gold. They also weave clothes and sell them. (al-Idrisi)

Shilla is the most excellent country in the world. Since it has fresh air, pure water, and fertile ground, all people of Shilla are healthy. There are no disabled in the country. If people sprinkle water at the house, ambergris fully fills with it. Not only are contagious diseases and maladies rare, but there are also less flies and thirst than elsewhere. Anyone who has been sick recovers soon after moving to this country. (al-Qazwini)

William Brice's historical map also supports the assertion that Arabs had already contacted and recognized the country of Shilla. According to his book, *An Historical Atlas of Islam Maps*, the part of "The World on the Eve of The Muslims Conquests AD 660" marks the name of the "Silla" on it. We can also find the same name on the map of "The Umayyad Caliphate AD 750," again. Korea's name was changed from Silla to Kaoli on later Maps made in AD 900 and AD 1100. However, the title was misspelled. In the Map of the Muslim World AD 1300, the wrong title of Korea is corrected by naming it "Koryo."²⁴⁵ Al-Idrisi's World Map, considered to be one of the classical maps made in AD 1154, also inserted the location of Shilla and explained its location and the people's common life.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ *Gundo* means having a group of islands. When the early Arab scholars collected resources about Shilla, Muslim merchants explained that the country of Shilla has numerous islands. See Muhammad Kansu, "Jungse Arab-Muslim Shillagawn: Shilla Inmoonjirieu jungsimeuro [Arab Muslims' Perspectives on Shilla in the Middle Age]," in *Hankuk Jungdong Hakhye Chongron*, No. 11 (1990): 140.

²⁴⁴ This name has not yet been identified. However, Heesoo assumes that it might be an island country between China and Korea. See Heesoo (2012), 143.

²⁴⁵ William C. Brice, *An Historical Atlas of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 6-11.

²⁴⁶ Muhammad Kansu, "Al-Idrisi's World Map and Shilla," in *Hankuk Islamhakhye Nonchong*, No 3. (1993): 200-202.

In sum, it is certainly reasonable to suppose that not only did both Koreans and Muslims have active exchanges involving politics, economics, education, and the arts during the Shilla dynasty (AD 668-935), but also that some knowledge of the Islamic faith reached Koreans in that period. However, there is no evidence of how much Muslims made efforts to spread their faith among Koreans. Historical documents about the Shilla dynasty never report such encounters between them, nor of making Koreans converts to Islam. They just provide definite clues that the people of Shilla and Arabs first encountered each other in China. Some scholars argue that Muslim caravans might have immigrated and settled down in the city of Shilla, but this is just a hypothesis. Nothing clearly supports such an argument. It is sure, however, that Arabs yearned to live in the country of Shilla, which Arab scholars described as a paradise. In the period of the Shilla dynasty, Muslims had active relationships with Koreans for carrying out business, rather than for evangelizing. Nevertheless, the first contact became a key milestone so that Muslims and their faith could be rooted later in the Koryo dynasty.

II. The Revival Period of Islamic Faith in Korea

A. Islam in The Yuan Dynasty²⁴⁷

If China contributed to the advent of Islamic civilization in the Shilla dynasty, Genghis Khan played a significant role in the blossoming of Muslim culture and in the introduction of Islamic faith to Korea from the late thirteenth century to the early fifteenth century. This history began when Genghis Khan made a slow ascent to become the great leader of the Mongols in the late twelfth century. Born and reared in the central

²⁴⁷ This was the Mongolian government in AD 1279-1368.

Asian plateau, Genghis Kahn's life was of the elite while under his father's power.²⁴⁸ This prosperous life was, however, only for a while. After his father was assassinated by the Tatars, a neighboring tribe, Genghis experienced severe difficulties until he married Borte, a daughter of the Onggirat's family.²⁴⁹ Unfortunately, right after getting married to Genghis Kahn, Borte was kidnapped by the Merkit, which was one of the five major tribal confederations. This event started Genghis Kahn's transformation into a warrior fighting against his antagonists. He was able to rescue his new fiancée with the help of colleagues. Then, he became involved in making a union of several confederations, such as the Naimans, the Merkits, the Tatars, the Khangmag Mongols, and the Keraites, along with his blood brother, Jamukha. Genghis Khan, his followers, and his supporters had suppressed conflicts between tribes and had united a small Mongol confederation in AD 1190.²⁵⁰ At that point, his leadership began to extend not only to neighboring tribes but also to the Arabian Peninsula, Eastern Europe, China, and even Korea. Genghis Khan expected to construct a Mongol Empire in the world and achieve a Pax-Mongolica in his generation.²⁵¹

As Genghis Khan and his descendants sought to carry out such great dreams, Muslims played a significant role in their world-conquering history. From the late twelfth

²⁴⁸ Genghis Kahn was born in Yesugei's family. His family belonged to one descendent among the Mongol major confederations in the twelfth century. He was the third-oldest son among seven. His father, Yesugei passed away when he returned back from making marriage arrangements for Genghis Khan. Due to this tragedy, Genghis Khan's childhood was tough.

²⁴⁹ Francis Woodman Cleaves, *The secret history of the Mongols: for the first time done into English out of the original tongue and provided with an exegetical commentary* (London: Harvard University Press, 1982), 192.

²⁵⁰ Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* (NY: Crown, 20004), 43-45.

²⁵¹ Heesoo Lee, "Islam Munhwai Dong Asia Jeonpa Guajung [The Propagation process of Islamic Culture in the East Asia]" in *Hanguk Jungdon Hakgui Nonchong* 10 (1989): 248.

century, the Mongol empire quickly expanded their territorial boundary to include vast regions across Asia, including China. They soon recognized that their political system needed to change from their simple nomadic tribal structure to a bureaucratic organization so that the Mongols could effectively govern what was becoming a gigantic empire. In particular, the Mongol governors were concerned about the Chinese who were superior to them in both the quality of their culture and the quantity of their population. The Mongol nomadic social, politic, and economic organizations were not able to control the great country, China. During this time, Muslims, who had proven themselves to be outstanding in law, administration, finance, taxes, and diverse academic departments such as astronomy, algebra, physical science, and medicine, became great advisors as the Mongols were building a new empire, the Yuan dynasty, in the thirteenth century. In such a transitional period, the Mongol government employed a number of intellectual, political, and commercial Muslims coming from Uighur, Tibet, Iran, and other Muslim countries, giving them major positions in the new government.²⁵²

In his empire's early stages, when he first began to expand his territory, Genghis Khan desperately needed Muslim caravans, because their geographical knowledge was very useful as his armies invaded neighbor countries. The Muslim merchants provided Genghis Khan with information regarding the significant resources of other tribes and countries for his battles. This included details of their cultures, religions, and political systems, in addition to their social, economic and even military resources. Muslim businessmen financially supported the new defacto power of central Asia. In return, they needed Genghis Khan to protect their trade routes. He accepted their offer and became

²⁵² Heesoo (2012), 152-153.

their protector during their trade journies. Muslim caravans and Genghis Khan's armies had thus developed a symbiotic relationship by the early thirteenth century.²⁵³

After the death of Genghis Khan, it was necessary for his descendants to quickly establish effective financial and administrative systems due to the rapid expansion of their territory to all quarters. Therefore, Ogedei Khan, the second leader of the Mongol empire, gladly deployed Muslims in diverse departments of the government. Abdul Rahman, Fatima, and Ahmad were the most popular Muslim administrators working with the second Khan, Ogedei. In particular, since they were specialists in making and using money, the Mongol bureaucrats completely relied on these Muslim officials to manage the financial aspects of the government. The Muslim officials devised ways to increase the government's finances through introducing a dual tax system. As a result, Ogedei's governors acknowledged their abilities and provided further opportunities to Muslims for working in the government. Moreover, the Mongols showed positive attitudes toward the Muslims and respected their religious and cultural lives, except when Muslims opposed their political influence. Even though the Muslims and Mongolians had different religions, the Mongols allowed the Muslims to keep their faith and to perform their religious ceremonies.²⁵⁴ Therefore, not only did Muslims have power in the Yuan dynasty, but they also were able to spread their faith among the Mongols and the colonized peoples.

When Kubilay Khan, the grandson of Genghis Khan, led great campaigns throughout the north and south of China in AD 1251 -1279, at least two of the three commanders were Arab Muslims: Amid Sayyid Bayan and Amid Sayyid Adjall Shams

²⁵³ H. D. Martin, *The Rise of Chingis Khan and His Conquest of North China* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1950), 122-23.

²⁵⁴ M. Rossabi, *The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty: China under Mongol Rule* (NJ: Princeton, 1981), 265-267.

al-Din ‘Umar. Both warriors and their military troops achieved brilliant military victories. Because of the Arab Muslims’ leadership in these battles, they became the semi-governing classes beneath the Mongol aristocratic class.²⁵⁵ In addition, Kubilay, the substantial founder of the Yuan dynasty, warmly welcomed diverse Muslim groups such as caraveeners, technicians, artisans, artists, and scholars coming from Central Asia and Arab countries. They were significant resources for effectively governing the great empire and upgrading the nomadic civilization for further advances. When the emperor of the Yuan dynasty employed them, the society was radically changed and reformed in finance, taxation, architecture, science, art, food, culture, and even military training. Their employment succeeded overwhelmingly while Kubilay expanded the great empire and applied the new political, economic, and social systems to its people. In such a strong relationship with the Mongol authorities, Muslims easily settled into Mongol society and were appointed to powerful positions, not only in the Yuan dynasty but also in colonized countries including China, Japan, and even Korea.²⁵⁶

B. Islam in the Koryo Dynasty

The Mongol warriors had already continually battled the people of the Koryo dynasty in order to make them their dependents since the period of Ogedei Khan. They attacked Koryo seven times in thirty years.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the Koryo resisted the great power as much as they were able to. In the conquering history of the Mongol empire,

²⁵⁵ Israeli, 288.

²⁵⁶ Heesoo (2012), 157-170.

²⁵⁷ Miji Lee, “1231/1232Nyun DaeMong Pyeomuneul Tonghae Bon Koyroui Mongoae Daehan Woegyoejeok Daeung [Re-reading the Koryo Letters of the Early 1230’s to Mongol],” in *KoyroSahakhui*, No. 36 (2009): 235-236.

there were no struggles as persistent as those against Koryo.²⁵⁸ However, the Koryo regime was finally no longer able to resist the Mongol military power, and it reluctantly acknowledged Mongol sovereignty over Korea in AD 1270. Koryo became one of several annexed districts of the Yuan dynasty. Kubilay allowed the Koryo government to keep its kingship system, but the king of the Koryo dynasty had to work together with the Mongol envoys. Moreover, the Yuan governor forced the Koryo to sign a number of unfair treaties, including the performance of a political marriage system which required the royal family of Koryo to receive the princess of the Mongols as a queen. By the terms of this treaty, imposed by the King of Chungyul (AD 1274-1308), five kings married seven Mongol princesses through such unequal agreements across one hundred years.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, after children were born through these marriages, the Mongols coerced the new princes to stay in the Mongol Royal Family House for several years in order to teach them the Mongolian culture and language. This step was implemented for imposing Mongolianization on Koryo. As a result, it became required that Koryo royalty adopt Mongol names, dress in Mongol traditional clothing, speak Mongolian, and wear Mongol hairstyles even within the Koryo imperial house. Heesoo argues that the princes might

²⁵⁸ Jongwoo Na, "KoyroMuin Jungkwonui Molrakgwa Sambyulchoui Chundohangmong [The Downfall of the Koryo Military Officials' Power, and the Sambyulcho's Resistance Moving the Seat Government against the Mongols]," in *Wonkwangсахак*, No. 4 (1986): 81-103; Ikjoo Lee, "Koyrohoogi Mongochimibgwa Minjoonghangjangui Sungkyuk [The Mongo's Invasion in the Koyro Dynasty and the characteristics of the mass struggle]," in *Youksabipyung*, No. 24 (1994): 258-272.

²⁵⁹ Jungwee Kim, "Koyromal Huigolinui Gyuihwawa Islamui Hanbando Deungjang [The Naturalization of Muslims in the late Koyro dynasty and the appearance of Islam in Korea]," in *Baeksanhakhui*, No. 91 (2011): 177-183, 196.

have had opportunities to observe Islamic faith and culture through the high Muslim officials exerting pressure throughout the Mongol empire.²⁶⁰

a. Muslim Politicians

Before the Yuan dynasty controlled the Koryo dynasty, Muslim activities in Korea were extremely limited. They were possible only through two ways: through Arab envoys visiting the imperial house of Koryo or through Muslim caravans trading goods with Koryo peddlers in China, rather than on the Korean mainland. However, after the Mongol princesses began to marry Koryo princes in the late thirteenth century, the influence of Muslims dramatically increased in Korea. Beginning at that time, Muslims were able to directly influence Korean society in terms of politics, economics, and culture. First of all, when the daughter of Kubilay, Che-Kuk, came to Koryo for marriage, the Mongol government sent four chamberlains: Inhoo, Chashin, Jangsoonryong, and Noyoung. Among the four Mongol officials, Jangsoonryong was an Uyghur Muslim. His Mongolian name was Samga, but when he acquired a Korean wife and was naturalized as a Koryo in the thirteenth century, the government bestowed a new name, Jangsoonryong. The historical book, *Koryosa*, and the genealogy of his family describes him in detail from his family background to his life in Koryo.

Jangsoonryong was originally a Muslim. He was called Samga by the Mongolians. His father worked at the Yuan government in a great political position. He played a significant role in sending Jangsoonryong to Koryo. When Jangsoonryong followed the Mongol princess as a chamberlain, the King of Koryo offered the position of Nangjang to him.²⁶¹ Then he was

²⁶⁰ Heesoo (1991), 104-114, 117.

²⁶¹ This position was that of a military leader in the Koryo dynasty. He had two hundred subordinates and was given the mission of protecting the royal house.

gradually promoted to Janggun.²⁶² ... When he was forty-four, he passed away.²⁶³ [my translation]

After naturalization in Korea, Jangsoonryong acquired credentials from the King of Koryo because of his outstanding diplomatic ability in working with both the Yuan and Koryo dynasties. Since he was able to speak Mongolian and Korean, he succeeded in his work as a diplomatic arbitrator between both countries. As a result, the King of Chugyoul appointed him to a high official position in Koryo. As a result, his descendants were well-rooted in Korean society through the Koryo and Chosun dynasties.

In addition, a man named Minbo is often mentioned as a Muslim in the historical books about Koryo, such as *Koryosa*, *Koryosajeulyo*,²⁶⁴ and *Yeosajaekang*.²⁶⁵ Although those documents do not report his detailed information, including his Islamic or Mongolian names, his hometown, or the reason for his naturalization, they make clear that he was a Muslim coming from the Yuan dynasty who became a Korean by transferring his national identity from Yuan to Koryo. As a Mongol official, he also exerted his influence in one of Yuan's dependencies, Koryo. Minbo worked as a high-ranking bureaucrat for a long time.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Janggun was the rank of Great General. It is the third military degree in the Koryo dynasty.

²⁶³ *Koryosa*, Chapter 36, "Youljeon."

²⁶⁴ This book is one of the popular books with *Koryosa*. However, while the latter is written by major events and about diverse information of the Koryo dynasty, the former is a chronicle book about Koryo. This book, prepared by numerous scholars of the Chosun dynasty, was finished in 1452.

²⁶⁵ *Yeosajaekang* is another historical book about Koryo. This book was the last one reporting about Koryo. Just as in *Koryosajeulyo*, scholars in this book chronologically describe the history of the Koryo dynasty. Published in the seventeenth century, it depended heavily on the story of *Koryosa*.

²⁶⁶ Namsun Choi, *ChosunsangsikMundab [Questions and Answers about the Chosun Dynasty]* (Seoul: SamsungMunwhajaedan, 1985), 249.

Thus, a number of Muslim authorities dispatched from the Yuan dynasty were able to reach high ranking positions within the Koryo regime under the protection of Mongol masters. They preferred to settle permanently in Korea, which had many benefits, such as an agreeable climate, the guarantee of power, and a stable income. In fact, many of them sought to change their nationalities from Yuan to Koryo through taking Korean wives. Therefore, although the historical documents do not report conversion stories of Korean Muslims in the Koryo dynasty, it would be probable that Muslims who were naturalized in Korea might seek to evangelize their wives and their families to Islamic faith.²⁶⁷ The Muslims lived together in and around the Koryo Royal Family House and sometimes invited the king to the great banquet hosted by the high class Muslims. In so doing, they maintained a good relationship with Koryo's governors. "All Muslims held a feast at their temple for the king of Koryo."²⁶⁸ In such festivals, Muslims were actively promoting their culture and faith to high class Koreans.

b. Inter-Marriage

The Yuan dynasty also took a number of "Gongnyeo"²⁶⁹ from the late Koryo dynasty through the early Chosun dynasty (AD 1392-1897). According to the official record, the King of Chungyeul sent ten virgins to the Mongols in AD 1275. Through such offerings, numerous Korean women were transferred to the Mongols. While most of them experienced distress from having to survive as maids in a foreign country, a few Koryo women married Mongol princes and enjoyed wealth and power under their guardians in

²⁶⁷ Heesoo (2012), 180-181.

²⁶⁸ *Koryosa*, chapter 48.

²⁶⁹ Gongnyeo is the system whereby a less powerful country presents its females to a great power. This was a kind of tribute of Koryo toward the Mongols.

the Yuan dynasty.²⁷⁰ Kubilay requested Koryo females so that both countries, Koryo and Yuan, would build a close friendship. The fundamental reason, however, was that there were not enough women in the Mongol royal family. Therefore, although the Koryo governors had petitioned the Mongol royalty to stop demanding Koryo women, the emperor took virgins by force from the less powerful country.²⁷¹ As a result, Koryo women filled half of the Mongol Imperial household in the late Yuan dynasty.²⁷²

In addition, powerful bureaucrats, including Muslim politicians, accepted Koryo women as second wives. According to *Koryosa*, when one Mongol official, Ahmad, searched for a beautiful woman in Koryo, Inkyung Jang offered his daughter to him. Jang then received a high government appointment in the Yuan dynasty. The Koryo people criticized him by saying that he obtained power through selling his child.²⁷³ Nevertheless, many people of Koryo sent their daughters to the Mongols in order to escape the life of the lower class. Therefore, Jungwee warned that the Koryo women who married Muslim officials of the Yuan dynasty might become Muslims. Moreover, their family might also be influenced by the Muslim husband and convert to Islam.²⁷⁴ This was one of many ways Koreans became Muslims during the Koryo dynasty. The Muslim ambassadors sent to Korea by the Yuan governors and the Muslim officials who married gongnyeo probably contributed to creating Islamic communities in Korea, establishing Muslim communities within the Koryo society. Since they were closely connected to the

²⁷⁰ Hongryul You, "Koryoui Yuanaie Daehan Gongnyeo [Presentation of Women from Koryo to Yuan court]," in *Jindanhakbo*, No. 18 (1957): 25-29.

²⁷¹ Wongil Park, *Chosun and Mongol* (Seoul: Sonamu, 2010), 130; Byungik, 130-131.

²⁷² Heesoo (2012), 173.

²⁷³ *Koryosa*, chapter 29.

²⁷⁴ Jungwee (2011), 209-210.

government of Koryo, this group of Muslims was able to build their own mosque in Korea and often prayed for the King of Koryo and the people.

Traditionally, Muslims had begun to have their own communities in Korea since the Yuan dynasty. They lived together in several local places around Hanyang [today, it is called Seoul] until the Chosun dynasty. They wore their traditional clothes and never changed their faith while staying in Korea. There was a Yegung in the community. It might be a worship place for Muslims. They might have prayed for the Koryo governors.²⁷⁵

Yegung was the first mosque constructed in Korea. Not only did the Muslim politicians worship together in that place, but they also would have invited their Korean friends.²⁷⁶ It also could have functioned as a da'wa center for spreading Islamic faith in Korea. In particular, the servants who served Muslim officials had to follow their masters and had opportunities to observe their religious performance. Jungwee insists that some of them might have converted to Islam and become the first generation of Muslims in Korea.²⁷⁷

c. Business

In addition, there were other Muslim groups settling in Korea during the Koryo dynasty. These were the Muslim caravaneers. They considered Korea to be one of the paradises of the world. Moreover, Koryo was the best market for business. Muslim merchants yearned to visit and live in the country of Koryo. After securing a trading route from the Mongols, Muslim caravans often traveled to Koryo and established trade relationships with the royal family of Koryo. They showed excellent trading abilities and

²⁷⁵ Neunghwa Lee, *Chosuntongbulsa V* [The history of Chuson's Buddhism V], (Seoul: Dongkuk University Publish, 2010), 426

²⁷⁶ Hongryul, 30-31.

²⁷⁷ Jungwee (2011), 205

provided much information about neighboring countries to the King of Koryo. Since Muslims were good advisers in the declining economy of the Koryo government,²⁷⁸ there was no reason that the governors should reject Muslim caravans' coming to conduct their business in Koryo society. In addition, the governing class was fond of wearing the luxury gems and jewels of westerners. Therefore, the King of Chunghye warmly welcomed the caravans which brought them and actively recommended that people of Koryo buy their goods. Through these ties, Muslim businessmen and the Koryo government had a close relationship during the fourteenth century.²⁷⁹

d. Collecting Jewels

The Mongols were very interested in collecting crystals and pearls from the Korean peninsula. They dispatched envoys to Korea in order to gather up the precious stones. Koryo historical books report such expeditions by the Yuan government in detail.

In a bissextile month, the Yuan regime sent Yimyougan and Al-Samaria to Koryo. They collected glass beads, pearls, and gems in Tamra [this is Jeju island today].²⁸⁰

Yimyougan did not gather beads in the province of Tamra, but he snatched one hundred precious stones from the people and returned back to Yuan.²⁸¹ [my translations]

²⁷⁸ Koryo had had a bad economy for a long time because it had fought against the Mongols for thirty years. The Koryo people's properties were destroyed, and their lands were devastated while they were battling. As a result, the income of the Koryo government was radically cut down. Moreover, after conquering Koryo, the Mongol government began not only to plunder the people's possessions, but also to burden the King of Koryo by requesting absurd tributes. This context put a double economic burden on the Koryo government and its people. See, Hyeok Lee, *14segi Koryoui jungchiwa Sahui* [The politics and society of the Koryo dynasty in the fourteenth century], (Seoul: Minuems, 1994), 205.

²⁷⁹ Heeso (2010), 195.

²⁸⁰ *Koryosajeuljeolyo*, Chapter 3.

²⁸¹ *Koryosa*, Chapter 19.

The people of both Yuan and Koryo enjoyed dressing with beautiful jewels. Therefore, both the Mongol and Koryo governments employed jewelry experts. Since Muslims were qualified experts in jewelry appraisal and its craftsmanship, they worked at the royal houses of both Yuan and Koryo. For example, Doro, a Muslim coming from Central Asia, was a specialist dealing with precious stones. When he visited Koryo in the fourteenth century, he offered diverse jewels and rubies to the King of Koryo. As a result, he was quickly established in Korean society and received excessive rewards both economically and socially from helping the Koryo government.²⁸²

e. Eungbang

Eungbang, a government department concerned with breeding falcons, was another route that Muslims used to settle down in the Koryo dynasty. The Mongols, who liked hunting, requested that Koryo send falcons to their country. Moreover, the Yuan officials who were dispatched to Koryo had often enjoyed hunting in Korea. However, the number of hunting falcons was judged to be insufficient. The Koryo government thus established a special department and began to raise birds for hunting, Eungbang. The Yuan government then sent some officials to Koryo in order to manage Eungbang itself, and Koryo had full responsibility for their accommodations.²⁸³ Among the managers, Muslims were included.

²⁸² Uisub Sim and Jungkwan Kim, "Monggo Gansubgiui Koryo-sahuie Natanan Islam Gyeongjesasang [The Ideology of Islamic Economy taking place in Koryo]" in *Gyeongjehakui Yeoksawa Sasang*, No. 1 (1998): 304.

²⁸³ Jungwee (2011), 217-218; Heesoo (2012), 199-200

Yuan dispatched seven managers including Mizari²⁸⁴ for Eungbang to Koryo. Accordingly, the king of Koryo must prepare their house and servants.²⁸⁵ [my translation]

C. Muslims' Influence in Korean Society

As discussed above, a number of Muslims came and settled down in Korea in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Most of them worked as envoys, managers, translators, historical reporters, chamberlains, and military officers in the Koryo government.²⁸⁶ Reports about these Muslims are often found in historical documents such as *Koryosa* and *Koryosajeulyo*. However, apart from those mentioned in these books, numerous commoner Muslims also visited and stayed during the Koryo dynasty. They were easily able to sink their roots into Korean society under the protection of Yuan's power. They created their own communities around the city of Gyungseong, the capital of Koryo, and kept their traditional clothes and religious performances. Their village became an extraterritorial place.²⁸⁷

a. Astronomy

These Muslims introduced new aspects of their civilization to Koreans. The Koryo government actively accommodated and developed these aspects, fitting them into the Korean contexts. As a result, Korean culture, economy, and science began to change in the fourteenth century. First of all, the astronomy of the Muslims contributed to the development of a lunar calendar. In the ninth century, Korea used Chinese calendars such

²⁸⁴ Heesoo argues that the name of Mizari was Islamic. He might be a Muslim coming from the Yuan dynasty. See Heesoo (2012), 200.

²⁸⁵ *Koryosajeulyo*, Chapter 19.

²⁸⁶ Uisub and Jungkwan, 317.

²⁸⁷ Heesoo (2012), 204.

as Sunmyungryeok and Soosiryeok for their agriculture, though these did not explain the principles of solar and lunar eclipses. Muslim astronomers, on the other hand, were able to make clear the celestial secrets. Based on Muslim astronomy, the lunar calendar became very useful for Koreans living in a farming culture.²⁸⁸

b. Mathematics

Muslims' outstanding influence in mathematics led to the invention of "Cheukwoogi," which is a rain gauge. This was about two hundred years before the western "invention" by an Italian scientist, B. Castelli. The gauge's shape was a circle and was made of iron. Its size was a length 23.6 inches, with a diameter of 94.5 inches. This measurement helped farmers in checking rainfall every year.²⁸⁹

c. Wine

When Muslims came to Korea, they brought new inventions, customs, foods, and arts into Korean society. In particular, "Soju," one of the popular wines in Korea at present, was developed by the Arabs. Ironically, although Islam prohibits drinking alcohol, Muslims produced Soju, a distilled liquor, through the joint efforts of chemistry and distilling. It has been called "Arak" in the Middle East. Today, some Arabians and Turks drink the distilled liquor as their indigenous wine. Muslims sent from the Mongols

²⁸⁸ Uisbu and Junkan, 319; Heesoo (2012), 217.

²⁸⁹ Gibeak Lee, *Hankuksashinryon [The new theories of Korean history]* (Seoul:Ilchogak, 1999), 235-236.

brought and shared it with Koreans. Soju has become the most popular wine among Koreans.²⁹⁰

d. Art

Muslims also introduced their particular pigments to Korean artists. When the color blue was not common for Korean potters in the fourteenth century, Muslim caravans traded attractive blue paint with Koreans. Then the potters used this special pigment on ceramic ware and created a unique color and design on their pottery. It was called “Chungwhabeakja.” The Mongol aristocratic class imported such masterpieces from Koryo’s artists in the fourteenth century, and the Muslim caravans spread the fame of Korean artists throughout the world.²⁹¹

In conclusion, while the Yuan dynasty dominated Koryo from the late thirteenth century to the early fifteenth century, a number of Muslim officials and caravaners immigrated to Korea during that time. Under the power of the Mongols, they were appointed to high political positions by the Koryo and Yuan governors. Not only did they have their own worship place in the capital area of Koryo, but they were also able to keep their traditions and religious customs. Their mosque could have played an important role in attracting Koreans to convert to Islam. Some Muslims had Korean wives and transferred their national identities from Yuan to Koryo. They may have also sought to guide their wives’ families to Islamic faith. Under these circumstances, the Korean

²⁹⁰ Sooil Jung, *Hankuksokui Sekye Ha [The world in Korea II]*, (Seoul: Changbi, 2005), 140.

²⁹¹ Heesoo (2012), 230

Muslim community would have begun to organize in the fourteenth century. Ironically, however, the historical documents about Koryo rarely mention any stories about Koreans converting to become Muslims. Jungwee argues that the report of a Korean converting to Islam was only recorded one time in the *Koryosa*.

Woo [The king of the Koryo dynasty] went to Kimbihuihui's house and commanded him to give his daughter to Woo as a wife. However, the request had been rejected. ... Woo brought huihui's son as his servant.²⁹² [my translation]

Kimbihuihui is neither a Mongolian name nor Muslim. It is a mixed nickname for a Korean Muslim. Kim was one of the popular last names in the society of the Koryo dynasty, and huihui was a label used to refer to Muslims. Kimbihuihui thus indicates a person who had the last name, Kim, but was a Muslim. In a sense, Jungwee considers that he was one of the early Korean Muslims in the Koryo dynasty.²⁹³

Heesoo found another Koryo Muslim name on a tombstone discovered in China in 1985. Qur'an verses 3.185 and 2. 235 are inscribed on the front face in Arabic. Then, both sides provide information regarding the deceased.

Ramadan is a Koryo person and owner of the Ching-huyn-guan pavilion in Tatu [Beijing today]. His age is 38, now appointed Darugachi of Young-chou country of Gaung Xi Province. He died on the 23th of March 1349 and was buried at the garden in Guang-chou on the 18th of August, and a stone was erected for him.²⁹⁴ [my translation]

²⁹² *Koryosa*, chapter 4.

²⁹³ Jungwee (2011), 206-207.

²⁹⁴ Heesoo, "Jungkuk 'Guang-chou' aeseo Balgyeondeon Koryoin Ramadan Bimoonae Deahan Han Haesuk [A Study on the Tomb Stone of 1349 belonging to a Koryo People Ramadan, Found in Guang-chou in China]," in *HankukIslamhakhuinonchong*, No 17. (2007): 64. Heesoo translated the Chinese inscription of above tombstone into Korean, and I again translated the Korean version into English.

Although the tombstone does not give any more detailed information about his Koryo name and his conversion story, it is clear that Ramadan was a Korean Muslim who lived in China in the fourteenth century. He had power and wealth in the Yuan dynasty and might have been a wealthy merchant. The Yuan government appointed him to the position of Darugachi, managing international business.²⁹⁵

Apart from these two Korean Muslims, there is no evidence that Koreans converted to Islam in the Koryo dynasty. Although Muslims exerted their power and wealth in the Koryo society under the Yuan dynasty, they failed to transplant their religion into Korea. This may have been because the Muslims of Koryo were not concerned about being with the common people of Koryo. Most of them had high positions in the Koryo government and ruled over the people. They abused their political and economic power over Koryo. Moreover, they did not contextualize their tradition and religious customs into the Koryo society. Since Muslims saw themselves as superior to the people of Koryo, they would have forced people to change their whole lives in order to become Muslims. They were political leaders in the Yuan and Koryo dynasties, but they did not become effective guides for the people of Koryo. Because of these reasons, Muslims often appeared in the satirical literature of the Koryo dynasty. “Ssanghwajeom” was the most popular satirical song among the Koryo people. The song severely criticized the life of Muslims who lived in the Koryo society.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Ibid78-79; Jungwee, 207-208.

²⁹⁶ Youngjun Kim, “Ssangwhajeom Hyungsungae Kwanyeohan Woiraeyeok Yoso [On the External Factors Involved in the Creation of Ssanghwajeom],” in *Dongseo Bikyo Mungak Jeonnyeol* No. 14 (2006): 20-23; Chanwook Lee and Seongmoon Kim, “Koryosokyo, Ssangwahjeomae Sooyoungdyeon Damoonwhajeok Yoso [Multicultural Requisite Of Koryosokyo, Ssangwhajeom], in *Damunhwa Contents Youngoo*, No. 12 (2012): 214-217.

When I went to Ssangwhajeom²⁹⁷ in order to purchase Shangwha,
 Huihuiabi [A Muslim owner of the store] took my hands into my house.

....

I was also on his bed too.

But, it was a terrible experience in my life.²⁹⁸ [my translation]

The image of Muslims was too negative for the people of Koryo. They were recognized as one of the corrupt social classes, along with Buddhist priests, in Koryo society. The Muslims' political influence also increased the economic burden of the people. In such a social context, Islam was not able to provide any attractiveness for the Koryo people. Although Muslims influenced the developing Koryo civilization, their faith was not attractive to Koreans in the fourteenth century. I think that it was a great risk that the Yuan dynasty colonized Korea, and that Muslims were employed as elite officials in the Koryo dynasty, thus allowing Islamic culture and faith to dominate Korean society. However, the Muslims' political ambitions and immoral behavior ultimately led to their failure in spreading their faith to Koreans in the fourteenth century.

III. The Dark Age of Islamic Faith in Korea

In AD 1392, the Koryo dynasty was brought down by Sungkye Lee. It was a political coup d'état rejecting the weaknesses of the Koryo government. He was successful in his reform movement and became the first king of the new regime, Chosun. Thus, the political context of the early Chosun dynasty was chaos. The new governor expelled the officials of the pro-Yuan dynasty from the Chosun dynasty; however, he did not interfere with Muslim businessmen and individual immigrants. They sought to win

²⁹⁷ Some of Muslims who came from the Yuan dynasty opened a store selling their indigenous food and goods in the capital city of Koryo. The name of the business was Ssangwhajum.

²⁹⁸ *Koryosa*, Chapter 38.

the favor of the new governor by visiting him, offering him their precious goods, and praying for the new leader of the Chosun dynasty.

Abdullah Chih-hui, Bayan Timur, Aha-orang-ha-ch'on-ho, and Doro visited the new government and offered their indigenous products. The king enjoyed meeting them and commanded his vassals, "Prepare a banquet for the Muslims."²⁹⁹

Dressing in special cloth, the king performed Mangqualrye³⁰⁰ with his sons and vassals. After he put on the crown for the king and Kangsapo [a special dress only for the king], he received greetings from the people, including Olryanghap [Manchuiran] and Huihuseungdo [Muslim leaders].³⁰¹

Although the regime of Korea changed at the end of the fourteenth century, Muslims were able to maintain their influence in the new Chosun society by having a close relationship with the new governor. In some cases, Muslims received lands, houses, servants, and even salaries from the Korean government.

The king granted rice Dasuksum to Doro, a religious leader of Islam.³⁰²

In AD 1407, Doro, a Muslim leader, came to Chosun with his family and asked permission to stay in Korea. The king allowed him to live in Chosun and even offered a house for his family. After that, Doro met the king again and presented the king some precious stones collected from throughout Korea.³⁰³

Hojoe [An official of the Chosun dynasty] advised the king, "I think we have to cut down the payment toward Waein [Japanese] and Huihui in order to maintain our finances," The king accepted his advice.³⁰⁴
[my translations]

²⁹⁹ *Sejongshilrok*. in Oct, the second year.

³⁰⁰ This performance was held a few times in a year. Since the king met all his servants, when he stood on the east side of the royal castle, people come and bowed down to the king as an expression of respect.

³⁰¹ *Sejongshilrok*, in Nov. the eighth year.

³⁰² *Ibid*, in Feb, the fourth year. "Rice Dasuksum" was one month's salary for a lower class official in the Chosun dynasty. Therefore, the present was not insignificant for the Muslim leader.

³⁰³ *Taejongshilrok*, chapter 23.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, chapter 31.

In the Korean peninsula, Muslims had power and wealth until the early fifteenth century. They lived together in their own communities and performed their religious and cultural traditions freely.³⁰⁵ However, such hospitality of the Chosun dynasty was brought to an end by a royal order of King Sejong, proclaimed in AD 1427.

Yejo [One of the political positions in the Chosun dynasty] reports to the king, “The people of Chosun do not want to get married with the Muslims because their clothes and customs are too strange to us. Even though they transfer their national identity to Chosun, they adhere to their traditions. It is impossible that they integrate with us. Moreover, it is right to prohibit them from participating in Daejohui.³⁰⁶” The king agreed with the vassal’s announcement.³⁰⁷ [my translation]

According to this prohibitive decree, the Muslims were no longer able keep their traditional culture and religious faith. They must assimilate to Korean culture if they wanted to stay in this place of paradise. After this order, unlike the previous regime, the Chosun dynasty closed its doors to foreigners. Although the Koryo government had actively welcomed their neighbors and carried on international business with westerners in order to develop Koryo culture, economy, and politics, the new political leader locked the doors to others because they had suffered trauma from outside powers. For one hundred and fifty years, Koreans had had to defend themselves against the invasions of their antagonists. In such a context, they no longer trusted other countries. Furthermore, Confucianism dominated Chosun society. Its traditions were consistent and promoted closeness. Confucians were never concerned with changing and developing the society

³⁰⁵ Heesoo (2012), 204-205.

³⁰⁶ It was a regular banquet for officials. The Chosun king invited his vassals two times each month: on the first day of the month and in the middle of the month.

³⁰⁷ *Sejongshilrok*, in Apr., the ninth year.

through accepting other civilizations.³⁰⁸ In this context, Muslims were no longer able to exert their influence on Korean society. In the Chosun dynasty, the new government rarely allowed them to visit and stay. It became possible only for Korean traders, travelers, and envoys to have opportunities to meet Muslims outside of Korea. From AD 1427 until the early twentieth century, there is no report about Muslims in the historical books of the Chosun dynasty. Islam entered its Dark Age in Korea.

IV. Revitalizing Islam in Korea

A. The First Stage: the 1900 - 1910s

Because of the isolationism of the Chosun dynasty, relationships between Koreans and Muslims were completely disconnected for around five hundred years. The silence was broken when the Osman Empire sought to expand their power to East Asia in the early twentieth century. At that time, the Osman Empire and Japan bonded together against Russia. Each of them dispatched ambassadors to the surrounding countries and pledged cooperation when they battled against Russia. In such an international context, Abdul Rashid Ibrahim, a Turkestan Muslim, stopped by Korea when he traveled to Japan as an envoy in June of 1909. After returning to Turkey, he published a book about his travels, *Aleim-I Islam*. In this book, he used a chapter to describe the Chosun dynasty. He reported chronologically his Korean travels from his arrival till his departure. He perceptively observed the context of Korea and described well Korea's education, social ethics, cultural assets, social classes, Christian missionary activities in the Korean society, and so forth. This report is valuable because it was the first to describe Korea to the

³⁰⁸ Heesoo (2012), 240-243.

Osman Empire and other Islamic countries.³⁰⁹ Of course, since he was a traveler, Abdul Rashid was not concerned about spreading the Muslim faith in Korea. However, he opened a door so that Muslims could step into Korea again for the first time since the prohibitive decree of King Sejong in AD 1427.

B. The Second Stage: the 1920-1940s

In the early twentieth century, Russian Muslim Turks often came down and settled in Korea. Since they were a minority group living under the Russian government, they experienced economic and political oppression in Russian society. Moreover, they had been placed in forced labor camps for railroad construction around Manchuria, which was a border area between China and Korea. Many of them crossed the border seeking freedom and began to settle in the northern area of Korea.³¹⁰ During World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution,³¹¹ the Turks sought to immigrate to the regions of Eastern Asia including Korea. Although they had to pay ¥1500 for a visa to enter the Japanese area,³¹² numerous Turkish Muslims moved and settled down in Korea in 1933-1942.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, 269-316.

³¹⁰ A. Y. Kim, "The Muslim Presence in Korea and Its Implication for Korean Evangelical Missiology," (Ph. D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2003), 276.

³¹¹ The Bolsheviks were a faction based on the Marxist Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Founded by Vladimir Lenin and Alexander Bogdanov, the Bolsheviks led a violent revolution in 1917. The movement became a success and created the Communist party of the Soviet Union. During this coup d'état, a number of minority people groups moved to East Asia in order to avoid political persecution by Russians.

³¹² Japan colonized Korea in the early twentieth century. Therefore, Japan managed the immigration of foreigners coming to Korea. Without the Japanese minister's consent, no one was able to migrate from other countries to Korea.

Heesoo presumes that the number was around two hundred fifty. They created their own communities and scattered throughout Korea.³¹³

The first Turkish immigrants began to work as peddlers selling cloth, blankets, textiles, and so forth. Since they were diligent and had wide experience in trading, the Muslims quickly succeeded in Korean society. They opened their own businesses in several cities of Korea such as Seoul, Busan, Inchun, Taejeon, and Pyungyang. The stores imported resources from Japan and Manchuria. Then, they manufactured high-quality products and sold them to Koreans. They had Japanese cloth, fabrics, cosmetics, accessories, watches, spoons, and Russian wool, leather, and cotton products. Based on the syndicate system,³¹⁴ their businesses became the largest income earners in Korean society. The Turkish Muslims' stores quickly expanded to the whole country of Korea and easily accumulated wealth. In the 1930s and 1940s, while Koreans experienced economic difficulties because of Japanese plundering, the foreign immigrants had wealth. Moreover, they maintained close relationships with influential Japanese leaders, military authorities, and the Chusonchongdogbu³¹⁵ in order to improve their social and political position in Korean society.³¹⁶

After safely settling down in Korea, the Muslims became concerned about creating their own ethnic communities in Korea and revitalizing their unique culture and

³¹³ Heesoo (2012), 323-324.

³¹⁴ A syndicate allowed businessmen to receive products without first making a deposit to pay for them. Based on a trust contract, the businessmen were able to pay money for the products they received after they had them to others. Thus, it was possible for the Turkish Muslims to run their businesses without large capital.

³¹⁵ This was the government-general of Japan located in Korea. After making Korea a colony in 1910, Japan dispatched generals in order to control the Chuson dynasty for thirty-five years. They held power in Korea until they were defeated in World War II.

³¹⁶ Youngnam Kim, "Yilbonui Islam [Islam in Japan]," in *Asian Muslim Community* (Seoul: Korean Islamic Study Institution, 2003), 101-102.

traditions. First of all, they were eager to perform their religious practices together as Muslims in Korea. In 1926, Turkish leaders who lived in Korea had a meeting to organize an association for developing their community activities and religious practices. This was the first Muslim federation established in Korea. Kerim Sulaiman, Abdullah Nurmuhhammad, Ishak Bagdad, and Inayetullah Murat were presidents of the organization. The Turks created Muslim communities, ‘Mahall-I Islamiyeh [Islamic village]’ in the cities of Seoul, Busan, and Teagu. They bought a building in the central area of Seoul for carrying out the functions of an Islamic cultural center. They used it for multiple purposes: worship, education, weddings, traditional carnivals, meetings on their national holidays, and so forth. The Turkish Muslims gathered into the center on Fridays for Jumu’ah, often had wedding ceremonies in it, and taught twenty students using the Islamic system of education.³¹⁷

Heesoo evaluates these Turks as faithful Muslims. Being careful in how they applied the incompatible aspects of their culture within the Korean society, they sought to preserve Islamic cultural practices in Korea such as naming, circumcision, weddings, and worship. They also bought a burial ground in Seoul and proceeded to practice funeral ceremonies according to Islamic ways. In addition, Seoul and Japanese Muslim organizations raised funds for publishing the Arabic Qur’an and distributed the sacred scripture to the Turkish Muslims in 1934.³¹⁸

Through these Muslim immigrants, Koreans became been informed about Islam from the early twentieth century. The Turks sought to evangelize their Korean neighbors

³¹⁷ Sooil Jeong, *Islam Moonmyung [Islam Civilization]* (Seoul: Changjakgwa Beepyung, 2002), 374; Heesoo (2012), 330-331.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, 333-334.

to the Islamic faith. As a result, some Koreans became interested and converted to Islam, but not in large numbers. Jaesung Park was a clerk at a Muslim tailor shop. He began to study Islam at the recommendation of its owner and confessed shahada in 1932. He was the first Korean Muslim in modern times. He took on an Islamic name, Shamil, and married a Turkish woman.³¹⁹ Dooyoung Youn and Jingyu Kim, who worked for a Japanese company in Manchuria, also became Muslims in the 1930s and 1940s. While conducting business in Manchuria, they were influenced by Muslims and then converted to Islam.³²⁰ However, the Korean converts were only a few. This was not only because the Turkish Muslims were relatively high class compared to the common Koreans, but also because they had a tight relationship with the Japanese government, which was the oppressor nation over Korea. Whereas Christianity, being one with Koreans and actively helping Korea's independence movements, became one of the major religions in Korea,³²¹ Islam, the Japanese sympathizers' religion, was not attractive to Koreans. After the defeat of Japan in World War II, the Koreans expelled the invaders, who surrendered and left Korea. As a result, the Turkish Muslims, too, were no longer able to stay in Korea and moved to North America, Australia, and Turkey in 1945-1950. Only the few

³¹⁹ Ibid, 336-337.

³²⁰ Sun, 41-42.

³²¹ Christianity stepped to Korea in the late nineteenth century and played an important role in Koreans' escaping from the internally and externally insecure situations of the society caused by the destruction of the Choson dynasty and the loss of sovereignty to Japan. In these disordered socio-political contexts, Christian messages encouraged Koreans that if they believed in the Christian faith, God would bless Korea. Practically, Christian leaders also sought to restore the humanity of the people who had been ignored in Confucianism through activating the YMCA and YWCA, advancing liberation movements for females who had been oppressed by a patriarchal system, importing new educational systems for illiterate people, providing medical services, and spreading the gospel. See Dongsik You, *Korean religion and Christianity* (Seoul: Korean Christian Publish, 1965), 121-122.

Korean converts maintained their faith and played a significant role in starting new Islamic movements in Korea after the Korean War.³²²

C. The Third Stage: the 1950 - 1960s

In the 1950s, Muslims had a significant opportunity to expand the Islamic faith into Korea, although most Koreans remembered these years as terrible. The cause was the Korean War that began when North Korea invaded South Korea during the early morning of June 25, 1950. After Korea became independent from Japan in 1945, American and Russian administrators divided it into two different countries along the 38th parallel. While US military forces controlled the southern end of the peninsula, the northern was occupied by the Soviet military. Although North and South Korea sought to be a union, this failed because political differences were not able to be reconciled. North Korea broke the peace treaty made between both countries and went to war with South Korea in 1950. Ilsung Kim, the leader of North Korea, intended to reunite both Korea through military force.³²³ In the face of such aggression, the president of the Republic of Korea, Seungman Lee, immediately requested military aid from the Security Council of the United Nations (UN). The council decided to assist South Korea, unilaterally confronting the armed attack. The UN strongly recommended that all countries send military troops to the Korean War for the sake of world peace.³²⁴ By the order of the UN, the government

³²² Jiyeon Kwon, "Hankukui Islam [Islam in Korea]," in *Muslim-Christian Encounter* No. 2 (2009): 55-56; Korea Muslim Federation (KMF), *Islam in Korea* (Seoul: Korea Muslim Federation, 2008), 3.

³²³ Joonman Kang, *Hankuk Hyundeasa Sanchaek I: 1950 Nyundeae [The Review of Korea's Modern History: 1950s I]* (Seoul: Inmoolkwa Sasangsa, 2006), 43.

³²⁴ Changhoon Kim, *Hankuk Oikyu Eojeawa Oneul [Diplomatic Relations of Korea Today and Past]* (Seoul: Darakwon, 2002), 50-51.

of Turkey sent forty-five hundred troops to Korea in August 1950. This unit was a brigade and was the second largest foreign force, after the United States forces. All Koreans warmly welcomed their arrival. The Turkish soldiers came to Korea not only to contribute to the peace and freedom of the world, but also to spread their faith to a non-Muslim country, Korea.³²⁵

Korean Muslims who converted to Islam in the 1930s and 1940s had opportunities to have relationships with the Turkish brigade because the Turks needed translators for working together with the Korean soldiers. The domestic and foreign Muslims worked together during the Korean War and prepared a worship place at the Turkish army base in Seoul for the Muslim military forces. As an Imam among these Turkish soldiers, Abdulgafur Karaismailoglu led Friday worship services and started teaching Islam to Koreans who were interested in the new faith and often visited the Turkish base camp. He was a great da'i who had a passion for spreading Islamic faith to others. Although Korean audiences did not understand his lectures, the Imam steadily invited them to the base and provided diverse lectures about Islam to the Koreans. As a result of his da'wa activities, ten Koreans converted to Islam,³²⁶ and Duyoung Yoon was appointed as the first Korean Imam at the "Inauguration Service of Korean Islam," September 15, 1955.³²⁷ With this inauguration service, a Korean Muslim community was started. Imam Zuveyir K. O. C.³²⁸ fully supported Korean Muslims from their financial issues to religious ceremonies. First of all, he helped establish a tent mosque for Korean

³²⁵ KMF, 6.

³²⁶ Changkyuo Kim, Chansu Kim, Duyoung Yoon, Iljo Kim, Janghee We, Jinkyou Kim, Paikhyun Shin, Sungjao Paik, Youngkul Cho, and Youngkyou Kim.

³²⁷ Sun, 47.

³²⁸ He was a Turkish army imam. The government of Turk sent him in 1953 so that Muslim soldiers performed their religious practices in a non-Islamic country, Korea.

Muslims at Yi-Moon Dong, Dongdae-Moon Ku, Seoul. The first Korean Imam, Duyoung Yoon, began to lead Islamic worship services at the tent.³²⁹

A number of foreign Muslims including members of the Turkish military were dedicated to revitalizing the Islamic movement in Korea. There were three well-known Muslim missionaries working in Korea in the 1950s and 1960s. The first was Al-Fathil Maulana Syed Mohammed Jamil, the president of the “Holy Qur’an Society of Pakistan.” In 1966, he visited Korea and stayed forty days. He was an eager Muslim evangelist. While spending time in Korea, he taught Islamic doctrine not only to Korean Muslims, but also outside of the Muslim community. He presented a lecture “What is Islam?” at the YMCA and even at a Christian school, Myoungji University. Five hundred students were interested in his speaking at these venues. As a result of his efforts, he guided ninety Korean students to Islamic faith and helped establish the Myoungji Muslim Union organized by the students of the college. The Korean Islamic Herald (KIH) reported his missionary activities in detail.³³⁰ After the first visit, his concern toward Islamizing Korea was radically increased. Two years later, he again came to Korea and argued that the Korean Muslim community needed three things in order to effectively spread Islamic faith to Korean society.

1. The imperative need for leadership training of Korean Muslims.
2. Procurement of more permanent worship facilities
3. The establishment of communication between the nascent Korean Muslim community and Japanese and Chinese Muslims³³¹

³²⁹ Ibid, 47-48.

³³⁰ The Korean Islamic Herald (KIH), Jun. 25, 1967, p 1, 4.

³³¹ Sun, 53.

For the leadership training, he selected a few Korean Muslims and sent them to Pakistan to study Islam. As a result, they became the leadership group of the Korean Muslim Community in the 1990s. For the second issue, he researched the context of Korean Islamic movements. Then, he wrote a letter to all Islamic countries that their financial gifts would greatly contribute to building the Islamic world in Korea. For the last need, Jamil took a Korean Muslim, Haji Sabri Jungkil Suh, to Japan and introduced him to the Japanese Muslim Association. It was the first meeting between Muslims of both countries.³³²

Another foreign Muslim who contributed to the development of the Korean Muslim community was a Pakistani medical doctor, Mohammed Iliyas. When he was in Korea (1968) as an advisor to the World Health Organization and a professor of Public Health at Seoul National University, he participated in the Friday worship service and often led Jumu'ah for Korean Muslims. In a distinctive role for him, no one among the Koreans was able to perform the Tarawih prayers³³³ during the holy month of Ramadan in 1969. He volunteered to teach Korean Muslims how to lead the prayers and act as Imam for the times of prayer. In addition, Iliyas provided diverse lectures about Hadith, the reading of the Holy Qur'an, the five principal obligations of Islam, and so forth to the leadership group of Korean Muslims. KIH estimated that his efforts promoted the spiritual growth of Korean Muslims.³³⁴

³³² A. Y. Kim, 280.

³³³ The Tarawih prayers are performed by Muslims in the nights of the month of Ramadan. Such prayer times are not required, but many faithful Muslims participate in the evening prayer in the holy month of Ramadan.

³³⁴ KIH, Dec. 25, 1968, p. 1.

Another foreign Muslim who was interested in Korea's Islamicization, was Mohammed Tewfic Oweida, the Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, United Arab Republic. He visited Korea in 1967 by the request of a Korean Muslim, Haji Muhammad Janghee We. These men had met before in Cairo and had a close friendship. Janghee asked him to visit to Korea to help develop the Islamic movement. In a lecture, Oweida made clear some misunderstandings about Islam among Koreans. He emphasized that Islam is a religion of love, peace, co-operation, and practical living. He also sought to translate not only the Arabic Qur'an but also English and Arabic literature into Korean. He delivered a number of copies of the Qur'an and other books relating to Islam to the Korean Muslim community.³³⁵

Many Muslim countries—Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Libya, and United Arab Republic—were interested and involved in promoting the revival of Islamic faith in Korea.³³⁶ Since the late 1960s, they actively approached Koreans through diplomatic, business, and educational channels. The Muslim countries' activities were based on Islamic da'wa movements. While having relationships with Koreans, they often sought to persuade non-Muslims to convert to Islam. By their efforts, the Korean Muslim population gradually increased in 1950s and 1960s. However, the community encountered financial difficulties and internal divisions at the same time. At that moment, the leadership group of Korean Muslims gathered all the scattered Muslims to Seoul's central mosque under the motto of "Unity and Mutual Encouragement" in 1965. They reorganized their meetings and renamed the organization, "Korea Muslim Federation."³³⁷

³³⁵ Sun, 58-61.

³³⁶ Ibid, 63-86.

³³⁷ KIH, Oct. 25, 1968, p 1.

Then they planned seven specific strategies in order to diffuse their religious movement throughout Korea:

1. Every month, every Muslim is to bring at least three persons to prayer services.
2. Muslims shall visit non-Muslim friends' homes for the manifest purpose of persuading them to become Muslims.
3. Passages from the Qur'an and Hadith and news from the Muslim world are to be printed and distributed to Muslims.
4. Bawany's book, *Islam: The Misunderstood Religion*,³³⁸ is to be translated into Korean and distributed as widely as possible.
5. A one-hour seminar is to be held at the mosque every Sunday, with discussion being led by foreign Muslims.
6. An Arabic class is to be held at the mosque every Sunday.
7. Information about Islam is to be released to the various news media.³³⁹

a. Education

Based on those missionary plans, Korean Muslims sought in various ways to expand their religious influence to Koreans. First of all, the Muslim leaders were concerned about nurturing intelligent young Muslims. Although they had become the leaders of the Korean Muslim community, they themselves did not possess the abilities to professionally teach the Islamic faith to other Muslims and non-Muslims. They selected young Muslims and sent them to several Islamic countries to be trained as Muslim scholars. The foreign Muslim missionaries—Al-Fathil Malana Syed Mohammed Jamil, Mohammed Iliyas, and Mohammed Tewfic Oweida—recommended the Korean students to leading Islamic countries. Fortunately, the Islamic governments allowed the Korean Muslims to study in these Islamic countries and fully supported them.³⁴⁰ In the 1970s, the young Muslim scholars returned back to Korea and had opportunities to teach the Arabic

³³⁸ According to KIH, this book was written by Ibrahim Bawany. However, I couldn't find the book any more in the library.

³³⁹ KIH, Jun. 25, 1968, p 3.

³⁴⁰ KIH, Oct. 25, 1968, p 2; KIH, Aug. 25, 1967, p 1; KIH, Dec. 25, 1967 p. 2.

language, Islamic classes and Middle Eastern cultures at Myoungji University and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Moreover, they opened several seminars and lectures to Muslims and non-Muslims about diverse issues in Islamic theology. Later, Muslim leaders asked Jungkil Suh to publish his book, *Islamkyo Gibon Kyoseupseo [The Principal Training of Islam]*. The Korea Muslim Federation also held membership classes several times a year. All Muslims had to attend those classes in order to keep their memberships.³⁴¹

b. Social Issues

Another missionary approach of the Korea Muslim Federation in the late 1960s involved social issues. After the Korean War, the most significant problem in Korean society was taking care of orphans. The war produced over two hundred thousand widows and countless war orphans.³⁴² Above all, it was important to serve food, to provide clothes, and to provide shelter for the children. The Korean Muslim community immediately responded to the orphan issue through organizing a Muslim community center in Seoul. The Muslim brothers brought children to the center and began to take care of them, providing their best for them. Numerous Korean college students, inspired by such merciful activities of Korean Muslims toward the marginalized, made decisions to become Muslims, and spent time with the kids. While staying in the center, the orphans were also influenced by the Islamic culture and faith.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Sun, 93.

³⁴² Hyunhee Lee, *Hankukui Yeoksa 19 [The History of Korea 19]* (Seoul: Hankuk Kyoyouk Moonwhasa, 1994), 234-246.

³⁴³ Sun, 95-96.

The Korea Muslim Federation was also concerned about unemployment issues. In the late 1960s, the Korean labor market was overpopulated. There was a large number of jobless in Korean society, even though the Koreans were skilled laborers.³⁴⁴ The Korea Muslim Federation established contacts in Islamic countries through letters and inquired about their employing the outstanding technicians of Korea as a means of performing *da'wa*.

Dear Muslims brothers,
 In Korea, doctors, nurses, barbers, electrical experts, drivers, vehicle constructors, dyeing experts, weavers, carpenters, iron-workers, miners, knitting-workers, shoe-makers, other various producing experts and peasants having skills to farm poultry, want to advance into their brother's countries, to show their best abilities, and to experience the life of Islam. Authorities of Islamic States government, businessmen and other brothers! Let us invite Korean Muslim technical experts and make the best use of them.
 Please inquire to "the Korea Muslim Federation" about the kinds of skills, required numbers, sex distinctions, salaries, return air tickets, and length of service if you want to invite them.³⁴⁵

A positive image of Islam became prominent among Koreans through the Muslim pattern of being deeply involved in diverse social issues important in Korean society. Many unemployed Koreans visited the central mosque in order to search for jobs from the offers coming from Middle Eastern countries. Before leaving for Islamic countries, they had to learn Muslim culture and faith intensively at the mosque. After studying Islam, it was hoped that they would convert to Islam through confessing the "shahada" before a Korean Imam. Such

³⁴⁴ Soojong Cho, "Joondong Gunsyul Soochulae Daehan Jaechomyoung [Lighting to the Korean Construction Export toward the Middle East Countries] in *Jungdonghakhuinonchong*, No. 8 (1987): 2-3.

³⁴⁵ KIH, Dec. 25, 1967, p 2.

efforts caused a major increase in the population of Korean Muslims in the 1970s.³⁴⁶

c. Publications

The intellectual Muslims who had opportunities to study in Islamic countries were interested in translation work, including translating the Arabic Qur'an and English materials about Islam into Korean. In particular, Jungkil Suh was involved in such work for a long time. As a result, he produced a Korean version of the holy Qur'an and also diverse Islamic literatures for Korean Muslims.³⁴⁷ "The Korea Islam Herald" also played a significant role in spreading Islamic faith to Koreans since it was first printed on June 25, 1967. The Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) sent this paper to all segments of Korean society, including colleges and universities, and other public places.³⁴⁸

Through such da'wa movements of both foreign and domestic Muslims, Islamic faith gradually permeated into Korean society. While the number of Korean Muslims was only eleven at the Inauguration Service of Korean Islam on Sep. 15, 1955, the population soon became three hundred times greater than it was at that first meeting. Since there was only one mosque in the 1950s and 1960s, in Seoul, most Muslims lived in the capital city. Although they participated in worship services only once or twice a year, they kept their religious identities as Muslims. Only around five hundred Muslims were active members, and these

³⁴⁶ Hangrye Lee (A retired Imam at Seoul Jungang Sungwon[mosque]), interview by Sungsu Park, May 21, 2012.

³⁴⁷ Sun, 100.

³⁴⁸ KIH, Dec. 25, 1967, p 1.

were young adult students. They often visited the mosque and had circle meetings at their schools.³⁴⁹

D. The Fourth Stage: the 1970 - 1980s

With this increasing number of Korean Muslims, Islamic leaders, both foreign and Korean, acknowledged that the use of a tent mosque was not the best way to revive Islam in Korea. By the middle of the 1950s, Mohammed Jamil had already realized the necessity of building a permanent mosque for Korean Muslims, since they had begun to worship in a temporary mosque. So, he sought to reach several Islamic countries' leaders in order to collect funds for building a mosque.³⁵⁰ Due to his appeal, numerous Muslims became interested in missions to Korea and directly visited this mission field. In particular, Muslims in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Nigeria were strongly concerned about making Korea an Islamic country. Not only did they invite a number of Korean Muslim students to their countries with full support, but they also became major sponsors for constructing a worship place for Korean Muslims.³⁵¹ Furthermore, the president Junghee Park donated government property, 1.23 acres, to KMF, because Muslim countries had greatly contributed to improving the Korean economy after the Korean War. Through such donations, the Korean government and Islamic countries established a close relationship.³⁵² When the land was ready for building a mosque, Korean Muslim leaders became fully involved in fund-raising for its

³⁴⁹ Sun, 120-123.

³⁵⁰ Sun, 54.

³⁵¹ Ibid, 63-87.

³⁵² Kwon, 57-58.

construction. They traveled to Muslim countries, reported about Islamic movements taking place in Korea, and requested donations for developing the Korean Muslim community. From these efforts, they collected \$400,000 for building the mosque. In Oct. 1974, they began construction on its foundation. Then, two years later, this first place of worship was completely finished. Fifty Muslim leaders coming from the whole Muslim world participated in its opening ceremonies and had a great celebration on May 21, 1976. After the ceremony, Muslim scholars provided a seminar with the title, “Sosoo Muslim Kukgaeseoui Islam Seonkyeo [The Islamic Da’wa movement in Muslim Minority Countries].”³⁵³

This first mosque, located in the city of Seoul, significantly served the growing population of Korean Muslims in the 1970s and the 1980s. First of all, the Korean workers who got jobs in the Middle East had to come to the masjid and study Islamic culture and faith in order to have permission to enter Islamic countries. Korean Muslims who had studied in Arabic universities provided lectures about Arabic and Islam. At that time, a number of Korean workers became Muslims by confessing “shahada.” The Korean Muslim population dramatically increased. However, a retired Imam, Sulaiman Hangrye Lee, argued that the reasons for their conversions were not genuine. These workers just changed their religious identities for convenience, not because of their belief. This context produced numerous nominal Muslims in Korea. In fact, when they

³⁵³ KMF, 11.

returned back from the Middle East, most of them never visited the worship place again.³⁵⁴

Second, the masjid was active at informing people of their religion by producing diverse documents about Islam. From 1976 on, Korean Muslim scholars who had studied in Islamic countries began to write books such as *How to Be a Muslim*, *Guide to Prayer*, *Polygamy in Islamic Law*, *Jihad in Islam*, and so forth. They also published two journals: Muslim Joobo [Muslim Bulletins] and Al-Islam [Islam].³⁵⁵ Those materials were effective for introducing Islam to Koreans since they were published in the Korean language. Moreover, Youngsun Kim and Youngkil Choi worked to translate the Qur'an into Korean in the late 1980s.³⁵⁶ Most Korean Muslims have warmly welcomed having the sacred book in Korean, but some were worried about the misinterpretation of the sacred Qur'an.

Third, the Korean Islamic center launched a plan to build an Islamic University in Korea. Muslim leaders argued that it had been fruitful having intelligent Korean Muslims getting educated in Islamic countries. However, it was time to nurture Korean Muslim leaders in Korea for the further growth of Korean Islam. They organized a committee for building an educational center in Korea and sought to inform Islamic countries of their need. In 1979, H. R. H. Prince Naif, the Interior Minister of Saudi Arabia, visited Korea and agreed with its necessity. As a result, he promised to provide funds for its construction.

³⁵⁴ Hangrye Lee (A retired Imam at Seoul Jungang Sungwon[mosque]), interview by Sungsu Park, May 21, 2012.

³⁵⁵ While the former has been printed by weekly, the later was a monthly journal.

³⁵⁶ A. Y. Kim, 284.

Fortunately, the economic situation of Korea also helped propel the plan. In 1979, the Korean government requested Saudi Arabia to supply oil. The issue of importing oil was important for improving the Korean economy at that time. The Saudi government accepted the request and asked the Korean government to donate land for starting an Islamic university. The president, Kyuha Choi, agreed to their request and provided a national property of 106 acres located in the city of Yongin.³⁵⁷ But, even though KMF performed the groundbreaking ceremony of the Korea Islamic University and prepared enough funds in the 1980s, the university has not yet been built.

In addition to these efforts, the mosque and the leadership group of Korean Muslims led other da'wa movements in the 1980s. The da'wa methods were peaceful, but the Muslims were very active. They organized a meeting for young adult groups. These met every week and had seminars about the doctrine and theology of Islam. Young Muslims made lecture tours to each college. They recommended their faith to non-Muslims and guided them to Allah. They also held a regular exhibition on Islamic culture in Seoul in order to correct distorted perspectives toward Islam.³⁵⁸

The 1970s and 1980s were a revival period for Islam in Korea. The population increased dramatically. While Korean Muslims numbered around three thousand in the late 1960s,³⁵⁹ the population doubled after building the Seoul mosque, Jungang Sungwon. The masjid led to the radical growth of Korean Islam.

³⁵⁷ KMF, 13.

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 13.

³⁵⁹ Sun, 120.

In addition, Korean economic contexts helped Islam first settle into and then revive in Korean society. In the 1970s, Koreans considered going to the Middle East to be the same as the American dream because the salaries were quite different compared to the Korean market. Many Islamic countries—the UAE, Jordan, Kuwait, Nigeria, Malawi, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Oman, Yemen, and so forth—wanted to employ Korean workers to improve their construction industries. The Korean workers' wage was comparatively low, but their work was of high quality.³⁶⁰ In such a context, many Koreans worked in Muslim communities in order to achieve their dreams. Before leaving for the Islamic region, they had to take Islamic classes offered by the mosque, and a large number of the workers became Muslims. According to KMF, the number of converts was eight thousand in 1978 and three thousand in 1984.³⁶¹

Apart from the Seoul central mosque, Korean Muslims started religious meetings in several other major cities in Korea such as Busan, Jeonjoo, and Anyang in the 1970s and 1980s. They rented buildings for Friday worship for a while. A few years later they constructed four more mosques in Korea with the help again of donations from Korean Muslims and Islamic countries. In particular, the Anyang masjid had been a Christian church before. Husain Changshik Yoo purchased the closed church, remodeled it and transformed it to a worship place for Muslims.³⁶²

³⁶⁰ Uisup Shim, "Korea's Participation in the Middle East Construction market: An Introduction," in *Hankuk Jungdong Hakhui Nonchong*, No. 4 (1984): 84-86.

³⁶¹ KMF, 16.

³⁶² Kwon, 59.

E. The Fifth Stage: the 1990s

a. Academic

The 1990s were a transitional period for Korean Islam, shifting from the first generation to the second. The older leadership of Korean Muslims—Muhammad Dooyoung Youn, Sabri Jeongkil Seo, and Yusuf Hounggoo Youn—passed away in the 1980s. New leaders were needed to develop Korean Islam at that time. The second generation, who had studied in Arabic universities and returned back to Korea, led the Islamic movements in new ways. Intelligent Muslims often gave lectures and seminars directed both toward Muslims and non-Muslims. They intended to recommend Islam to Koreans through academic methods. In 1997, Rabita, the World Muslim Federation, held an international seminar in Seoul. They gathered twenty foreign Muslim scholars and invited people who wanted to understand Islam more deeply. Under the main theme, “Islam and East Asia—History and Cultural Harmony,” the theologians presented Islamic history and culture. While holding the seminar, young Korean Muslims carried out the opening ceremony of the Korea Institute of Islamic Culture (KIIC). This institution had the goal of correcting the wrong and distorted perspectives on Islam among Koreans. They published diverse books and pamphlets for non-Muslims. In 2001, several scholars worked together to produce a book, *Islam*, directed to Korean society. After the 9/11 terror event, this book became the best seller for several months.³⁶³

³⁶³ KMF, 20.

b. Huge Influx of Foreign Muslims

Another characteristic of the Islamic movements in the 1990s was the influx of foreign Muslim workers into Korea. In the late 1980s, small-scale enterprises began to employ relatively lower paid laborers coming from China and the Philippine Islands. There were arguments among businessmen about the problems of hiring the foreign workers, but many enterprises continually imported the cheap manpower from Asian countries and Middle Eastern regions in order to survive in times of serious competition. In order to increase the foreign labor force, the Korean government allowed such workers to be legally employed in 3D types³⁶⁴ of industry in the 1990s.³⁶⁵ With such a change in regulation, the number of such immigrant workers increased dramatically in Korean society. In particular, the countries of origin of most of the labors were mostly Islamic ones. Thus, the Muslim population rose to more than 100,000 in the 1990s. The workers lived in the cities of Ansan, Anyang, Kwangjoo, Pajoo, Pochun, Kimpo, and Uijungboo. They were allowed to spend a few hours for worship at masjid every Friday. The KMF was concerned about taking care of the workers' needs from their basic life to their spiritual needs. Korean Muslims prepared temporary worship places for them and collected money for building other mosques around the cities where Muslims workers lived. As a result, they constructed three more mosques, in

³⁶⁴ As an economic term, this means Dirty, Dangerous and Demeaning or, alternately, Dirty, Dangerous, and Difficult. Traditionally, those who engage in the 3D professions are well paid because of the undesirable nature of the positions. Their demographic backgrounds are mostly the uneducated, unskilled, or marginalized. Since the 1990s, those positions within Korean industry have been taken by foreign workers.

³⁶⁵ Eunyoul Huh, *Damunwha Sahuiwa Seongyojeok Kwanjeomaeseo Bon Kunknae Muslim Gongdongchae [Domestic Muslim Community Seeing in Multicultural Society and Missional Perspective]* (Seoul: Daeseo, 2012), 65-66.

Pajoo, Ansan, and Pochon, and also rented rooms in order to use them as Musalla for foreign Muslim workers. There were more than sixty temporary worship places throughout Korea.³⁶⁶

c. Stagnation

The 1990s transformed the da'wa methodology of Korean Islam from practical to intellectual. The leadership groups participated in academic teaching for Koreans rather than being involved in social issues in Korean society. As a result, while the theological foundation of Korean Muslims was strengthened, the numerical growth of the Korean Muslim community became stagnant. Nevertheless, the Muslim population as a whole increased because of the massive influx of the foreign Muslim laborers. According to *Dongah Ilbo* [a daily newspaper], the Muslim population of Korea in 2001 was 130,000. This included domestic and foreign Muslims. Within this number, Korean converts were around thirty thousand.³⁶⁷ These Muslims scattered to the major cities of Korea and created new Muslim communities. Through this spread, non-Muslims in Korea were exposed to Islamic culture through their Muslim neighbors, several mosques, and Islamic cultural centers located throughout Korea. Although the Korean Muslim community grew slowly in the 1990s, the period prepared the ground for another revitalization of Islamic movements in the 2000s.

³⁶⁶ KMF, 17-18.

³⁶⁷ Sungkyu Kim, *Dongah Ilbo* 27 July 2001, A. 14.

F. The Sixth Stage: the 2000s – Present

The 9/11 terror act by radical Muslims in 2001 was a turning point that increased Koreans' concern with the religion of Islam. Since 2001, numerous books dealing with Islam have had high sales in bookstores of Korea. I mentioned above that one book, *Islam*, became a best seller after the terrible violation of 9/11. Ironically, although radical Muslims led the attack as an act of terrorism, this event pushed Koreans to become informed about what the religion of Islam is really like, and after people studied the true Islam, its image became better than before.³⁶⁸ The KMF criticized the terror attack as something done by distorted Muslims, though performed in the name of Allah. The KMF emphasized that true Islam pursues peace-making. The terrorists were heretics, not faithful Muslims. So Korean Muslims have sought to perform da'wa through applying diverse strategies fitting the context of the twenty-first century.

a. Publications

Since the 9/11 event, Korean Muslim leaders have been concerned about correcting misunderstandings about Islam. They ordered books to be published about the basic theology and practices of Islam by the Muslim scholars who had studied in Islamic countries and had taught in universities. The professor groups spontaneously became more dedicated to the Korean Islamic movements. Since 2001, a number of books and pamphlets have been produced for Koreans. KMF has provided diverse free materials for visitors to the mosques. When I visited at the Seoul Central Mosque, KMF gave me several da'wa pamphlets:

³⁶⁸ Heesoo Lee, "The 9.11 Event and New Approach to Islam and the Middle East in Korean Society" in *Hankuk Islam Hakhui Nonchong*, No. 16 (2006): 244-247.

- Islamic Guidance 1: *The Basics of Islam*
 Islamic Guidance 2: *Concept of God in Islam*
 Islamic Guidance 3: *Human Rights in Islam*
 Islamic Guidance 4: *Islam: The Blessing for Woman*
 Islamic Guidance 5: *Qur'an: The Living Miracle*
 Islamic Guidance 6: *What do they say about Muhammad?*

Those pamphlets help non-Muslims to easily understand Islam. Although each pamphlet is very simple and short, the documents address all questions about Islam from its basic faith to Muslims' practical lives. When I went to several mosques in Korea, I interviewed thirty visitors about the materials: "How useful are the materials for understanding Islam?" Twenty-five interviewees answered that they have come to know Islam well by the pamphlets. Whenever visitors become interested in Islam after reading the Islamic guidance series, KMF provides other materials presenting the religion of Islam more deeply.

The Principles of Islam. Seoul: KMF, 2006.

Guide to Prayer. Seoul: KMF 2006.

What is Islam? Seoul: KMF 2006.

Ramadan and Fasting. Seoul: KMF 2008.

Why Islam Forbids Pork? Seoul: KMF, 2011.

Those free materials have contributed greatly to spreading Islamic faith to Koreans and to guiding non-Muslims to the world of Islam.³⁶⁹ When I had an interview with Joowha Lee, the Imam of KMF, he said, "The pamphlets and books have been made to inform Koreans about true Islam. I think these materials would help Koreans to have

³⁶⁹ Shin Ahn, "Hankuk Islamgwa Kidokgyeoe Daehan Jonggyeohyunsanghakjeok Youngoo [A Phenomenological Study on Korean Islam and Christianity: Cross-Cultural Mission and Literature Mission of Korean Muslims]," in *Jongkyeowa Moonwha*, No. 18 (2010): 99-111.

right perspectives on Islam. If they know Islam from reading the books and pamphlets, Koreans can remove their bias against Islam. Islam is a peaceful religion in the world.”³⁷⁰

Moreover, Muslim professors have produced numerous books about Islam, Muslims, and the culture and history of the Middle East. They approach and analyze Islam using anthropological, historical, and comparative religions perspectives. In particular, Heesoo Lee and Younggil Choi are actively involved in spreading Islam in Korean society through writing books. Since 2001, they have published numerous books about Islamic theology, history, and culture. First of all, Heesoo has sought to spread Islam not only to adult groups but also to children and teenagers. In 2009, he began to portray Islam with cartoons for helping children understand Islam and published three books about Islam for children. He intended that Korean youth groups learn Islam from the right perspectives of Muslims, because he says many books written by Christians have distorted the truth of Islam. Thus, Muslim intellectuals have played a significant role in revitalizing Islam in the 2000s. In terms of Islamic da’wa, their missions have sought to change the image of Islam from violent to peaceful. The number of publications produced in the 2000s has been ten times greater than the number of those produced in the previous fifty years. The KMF possesses its own bookstores and a publishing company. They have used such literature extensively for da’wa in the Korean context.

b. Mass Media

Mass media has become another useful methodology for Islamic da’wa movements in Korean society. Since 2001, Islam has often appeared in public

³⁷⁰ Joowha Lee, Interview by author, Seoul Korea, Apr. 27, 2012.

broadcasting. MBC, one of the public broadcasters, first introduced Islam in four episodes. These programs dealt with the strange aspects of Islamic cultures for Koreans, Muslims' religious performances, and the history of Islam in Korea. This was televised right before and after the 9/11 terror event. Two years later, another broadcaster, EBS, produced "Islam Munwahkihng [The Journey of Islamic Culture]" and reported the world of Islam in more detail than the first series. The broadcast televised thirteen episodes about Muslims and their religion, Islam. In addition, KMF has worked to advertise Islam through other broadcast companies in 2005, 2008, 2009, and 2011. They have filtered out the distorted and wrong views of Islam and stressed the fact that Islam is not a terroristic religion.³⁷¹ In all of these programs, the KMF has adopted mass communications to help change the image of Islam from one of terrorism.

c. Internet

According to data from December 2011, thirty percent of the world population accesses the internet for diverse purposes such as business, study, social networking, and so forth. Asian countries have the largest numbers of internet users in the world,³⁷² and Koreans are the world's best in using the internet. Two thirds of the Korean population have used the internet.³⁷³ Since the middle of the 1990s, the Internet has been a significant channel in spreading belief to non-religious persons or persons of other religious in the Korean context. All religions have considered cyber-space as an

³⁷¹ Chungsoon Lee, "1970nyundae Yihoo Hankukinui Islam Kaejong Yoin Youngoo [The Study of Korean Muslims' conversion motifs since 1970s]," in *Bokeumgwa Seongyo*, No. 16 (2011): 96.

³⁷² See www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm, (last accessed on Sep. 18, 2012).

³⁷³ See <http://www.ikoreanspirit.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=3215>, (Last accessed on Sep. 18, 2012).

important method to effectively expand their spiritual territories in the world.³⁷⁴ Korean Muslims have also developed websites not only for Muslims but also for non-Muslims, for example:

<http://www.koreaislam.com>
<http://blog.daum.net/islamkorea>
<http://cafe.daum.net/islamforkorean>
<http://chatislamonline.org/ko>
<http://blog.naver.com/eunsuya>
<https://www.facebook.com/islamkorea>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/islamkorea>
<https://www.twitter.com/islamkorea>
<http://www.facebook.com/IslamicLectureKorea>
<http://www.youtube.com/user/IslamicLectureKorea>
<http://www.koreaislam.com>
<http://cafe.daum.net/islamforkorean>

For Muslims, cyberspace has become an e-umma community. They have shared their lives and helped each other. Faithful and intelligent Muslims have posted diverse information about Islamic culture and beliefs, based on the Qur'an and Hadith, in order to guide pre-Muslims or Muslim beginners to the true Islamic world. On Youtube, Dongshin Park, who recently converted to Islam and proclaimed that he would be a Muslim da'i in Korea, uploaded several video clips about the basic beliefs of Islam, da'wa, the divergent understandings about Jesus in Islam and Christianity, and so forth.³⁷⁵ He also took part in opening another website, <http://www.chatislamonline.com>. It provides opportunities for communication between Muslims and non-Muslims. Six

³⁷⁴ Heeyoung Jeon and Heesun Cho, "Islamui Gasanggonggan Internetgwa e-Muslimui Jungchesungae Gwanhan Youngoo [A Study on Islamic Cyberspace and the Identity of e-Muslim]," in *Hankuk Jungdonghakhui Nonchong*, No. 32 (2012): 144-145.

³⁷⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/user/IslamicLectureKorea> (Last accessed on Dec. 12, 2012).

Muslim evangelists are ready to communicate with non-Muslims about Islam and other religious beliefs. Since 2010, the number of visits to this website have been over a million. These efforts have been effective to reach youth and young adults. Within the results of my research, most of the young interviewees first contacted Islam by the internet and responded that the e-umma community helped them become Muslims. Cyberspace has become one of the most useful da'wa methodologies for spreading Islamic faith in the Korean context of the twenty-first century.

d. Education

Education has been another the important way to spread the faith and to nurture new Muslim leaders. Since the beginning of the Korean Muslim community, Islamic countries often have invited Koreans to come to their universities in order to learn Islam. The foreign Muslim community provided full scholarships for the Korean students. Such opportunities have been very attractive to Koreans who experienced serious poverty in the 1970-80s. Many of these Koreans converted to Islam, had chances to study in Arab countries, and have since become professors at Korean universities. When I conducted my research in Korea, I met two Korean Muslim scholars who had gone to Egypt and Qatar in 1970s and 1980s to study Islam. They had changed their religious identities to Islam, but they honestly answered that they were not faithful. Their conversion was for achieving their individual dreams. After returning, some of those students have kept their faith, but some have not. Some of them have opened various courses at universities and have taught Islam along with Arab business, politics, and anthropology. According to the syllabi of their classes, it is strongly recommended that students go to the mosque at least

one time in the semester. This has become one of the ways of making the religion of Islam familiar to Koreans.

Recently, many universities in Korea have allowed foreigners to study in their schools not only because of globalization, but also to help the schools' finances. Among these foreign students, Muslims account for a lot of tuition. In 2007, Yonsei University admitted ten Saudi Arabian students, but this number later rose to 80. The Saudi government now has a plan to send up to 500 Muslim students to the university.³⁷⁶ Moreover, the Korean government announced that it would increase the number of the foreign students allowed to one hundred thousand. In particular, the Korean government has been interested in inviting students to come from Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey. The Korean government even gave scholarships to 837 Muslim students in 2008. This will be soon increased to three thousand Muslims.³⁷⁷

Within Korean universities, Muslims have begun to organize Islamic communities on campus, to invite Korean friends to their regular meetings, and to teach not only their culture, but also their faith. Muslim students have also asked the universities to provide worship places for them on campus. Seoul National University, KAIST, Hanyang University, and Kookmin University have prepared facilities for the religious ceremonies of their Muslim students.³⁷⁸ This educational movement is one of the da'wa activities in the Korean context. In 2012, the KMF started "Salaam Nuri." It is a monthly meeting for Muslims and non-Muslims to learn the religion of Islam together. I attended three times from April to June, 2012. There were almost seventy participants in each seminar. While

³⁷⁶ Jaehyuk Choi, *Chosunilbo* 28, May 2007, A12.

³⁷⁷ Chungsoon, 83.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 83-84.

a few of them were Korean Muslims, most were foreign Muslim students and their Korean friends. The non-Muslims had close friendships with the Muslims and had learned about their friends' religion by this regular meeting. This is another way of making Koreans familiar with Islam and Muslim culture.

The KMF has also approached youth through providing Arabic classes. Since 2002, Arabic has become one of the second languages that a high school student can take an exam in to qualify for entrance to college. It has been relatively easier to have a high score in Arabic than in other languages such as Chinese, Japanese, or German. The number of students who take the Arabic as the second language exam has radically increased. Since 2005, Arabic has been the most favored second language for students, even though they do not have opportunities to learn Arabic in schools. The KMF has provided Arabic classes for teenagers and taught Arabic through reading the Qur'an, the sacred text. In 2011, forty five percent of the total Suneung applicants³⁷⁹ took Arabic as their second language.³⁸⁰

Another approach of KMF toward youth is summer camps. Since 1983, they have held yearly Muslim Training Camps at the Seoul Central Mosque, except for nine years from 1989 to 1998. This conference is international. All young Muslims and non-Muslims who live in East Asia are invited to gather together at this meeting and learn about Islam intensively. The WAMY (World Assembly of Muslim Youth) has financially

³⁷⁹ This is an important test in order to have an admission at colleges. Senior students of the Korean high school take this exam before applying to undergraduate schools. This test is similar to the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) in the United States, but Suneung applicants can take it only one time per year, unlike the SAT, which can be taken multiple times.

³⁸⁰ http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/12/08/2010120800024.html (Last accessed on Sep. 19, 2012).

supported these camps and has expected that they would motivate teenagers to be familiar with Muslim culture and Islamic beliefs.

The KMF started the “Prince Sultan Islamic School” with the financial support of a Saudi Arabian prince, H.R.H. Abdullah Ibn Abdul Aziz, in 2001. When he visited Seoul, he donated \$3,000,000 for education and emphasized teaching children for the future of Korean Islam. In 2001, KMF began to run after-school programs teaching English, art, math, Islam, the Qur’an and Arabic. This school’s curriculum requires all students to participate in Friday worship services together.³⁸¹ They registered the school with the Korean government and have run it as a preschool and kindergarten since 2005. All classes are taught by English-speaking teachers. Most students of the school are Muslims, but non-Muslim Korean parents can also take their children to the school in order to provide them with the opportunity to learn English. These parents do not seriously consider that the school would teach Islamic faith and culture. Their only focus is the hope that their children learn to speak English well because this has been one of the important requirements to be successful in Korean society. Some children attending the school have become interested in the religion of Islam and have become Muslims.

A foreign Islamic educational institution, Fethullah Gülen Cemaati, also has been concerned with spreading Islamic faith into Korea through the educational system. Fethullah Gülen was born in a Muslim family under the genealogy of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. He was a Turkish Muslim and served a mosque at the city of Edirne as a preacher. His vocation was nurturing faithful youth and young adults within a secularizing society. In order to perform this mission, since the 1980s, he established a

³⁸¹ KMF (2007), 24-25.

number of private schools throughout the world, based on Islamic theology, including schools in central Asia and even North America.³⁸² One of the Islamic educational institutions supported by Fethullah Gülen Cemaati was founded in the central part of Seoul in 2007. It is called the Rainbow International School. It never forces its students to believe in Allah. The school curriculum does not include taking an Islam class, but it often introduces Islamic culture and teaches its history to students.³⁸³ Under its mission statement, “Tolerance, Integration, Success, and Diversity,”³⁸⁴ this school has the goal that Islamic faith quietly permeates Korean society.³⁸⁵

e. Mosques and Islamic Institutions

After building the first masjid at Seoul in 1976, the mosque has played an important role not only in gathering Muslims for worship together and having fellowship with other Muslims, but also systematically performing da’wa toward non-Muslims. Since these functions of the mosque have led to the revival of Islam in Korea, KMF has sought to construct mosques throughout the Korean peninsula. In order to increase the number of Korean Muslims in the 1980s, KMF recommended as a first step to hold regular meetings at temporary places and to collect funds from Islamic countries for expanding the number of more permanent sacred places in Korea. They constructed or remodeled buildings as worship places for Muslims. In the 1980s, KMF established four

³⁸² Sungwoon Kim, “Islamui Hankuk Jeonpaae Daehan Youngoo: Turkey Fetullah Güllen Cmaatireul Jungshimeuro [The Study of propagating Islam into Korea: Turkey Fetullah Güllen Cemaati’s activities],” in *Jinliwa Hakmoonui Segye*, No 21. (2010): 147-149.

³⁸³ Chungsoon, 82.

³⁸⁴ See <http://www.rischool.org> (Last accessed on Sep. 20, 2012)

³⁸⁵ Sungwoon, 159.

mosques in the cities of Busan, Kwangjoo, Jeonjoo, and Anyang.³⁸⁶ After the influx of foreign Muslim laborers in the late 1980s, the necessity of masjids for Muslim workers diffused throughout the whole country. The Muslims simply started worship in their residences and began donating money for building a masjid. As a result of the KMF, donations from other Muslim countries, and the workers collecting money together, eleven masjids and six Islamic centers have now been established in Korea today.³⁸⁷ Each masjid has either Korean or foreign Imams and provides Friday prayer services. During Ramadan, they stay together at the mosques and perform the religious ceremonies for the sacred month such as prayer, fasting, and feasting until the end of the month. Most Muslims regard the mosque as their spiritual shelter in the foreign country. They often visit, pray, and have fellowship together with other Muslim brothers. The masjids and centers have also been concerned about helping new Muslim workers settle into Korean society. Under the Islamic faith, Muslims believe that all brothers must be united in the name of God. They help each other when their brothers encounter difficulties in the foreign country. Since the masjids connect the Muslim workers to newcomers, the foreign Muslims naturally gather to these spiritual centers while staying in Korea.

The large Muslim community growing in Korean society has also influenced other Koreans. The Muslims' diligent and frugal lifestyle has been attractive to their Korean friends. Moreover, Muslims' religious performances awaken curiosity in the secularized Korean. The Muslim workers often invite their bosses or Korean fellow workers to their residences and worship places. Then, when non-Muslims inquire about

³⁸⁶ James Huntley Grayson, *Korea—A Religious History* (NY and Abingdon: Routledge Curzon, 2002), 196.

³⁸⁷ KMF, *Joogan Muslim [The Muslim Weekly Newsletter]* No. 1091, (Sep. 21, 2012), p 12.

the strange religion, foreign Muslims explain their religious life and culture based on the Qur'an and Hadith. I have met a Korean Muslim whose Islamic name is Umar. He said, "I converted to Islam because of my Muslim brothers. They come from Pakistan. I was curious about their life and religion. They were so nice and faithful. Even though I was a Buddhist before converting, I have never seen a religious person like my Muslim brothers. I think that their beliefs are true. I believe in Allah."³⁸⁸

Today most members of the masjids are, of course, foreign Muslims, not Koreans. However, the KMF has organized a regular meeting per month in each mosque for Korean Muslims. They gather the scattered Korean Muslims and work together with the foreign workers for revitalizing Islam in Korea. When the Muslim laborers invite Koreans to their mosque, Korean Muslim leaders provide lectures about the basis of Islamic faith and guide non-Muslims to God. This is another form of da'wa taking place in Korea.

f. Muslim Du'ah

Some Korean Muslims are evangelists for Islam in Korea. For example, Heesoo Lee studied the history of Islam at Istanbul and took a professor position at Hanyang University in Korea. He proclaimed that he would be a da'i spreading Islamic faith to Koreans. In order to effectively propagate Islam in Korea, he founded the KIIC (Korea Institute of Islamic Culture) in 1997. Heesoo recruited Muslim scholars who had studied in Islamic countries to the KIIC and worked together in publishing numerous books about

³⁸⁸ Umar, Interview by author, Incheon Korea, Apr. 28, 2012.

Islam, holding regular seminars, teaching Arabic and so forth.³⁸⁹ KIIC has contributed to building the academic basis of Islamic faith in the Korean Muslim society.

Another Muslim evangelist is Dongshin Park. He was a Christian, but after studying Islam, he became a Muslim. In 2011, he started the Islamic Information Center at the front of the Seoul Central Mosque and started to evangelize non-Muslim visitors to Islamic faith. According to him, “Since numerous Koreans have become interested in Islamic faith, I opened an Islamic Information Center in Seoul. Since then, I have met at least twenty visitors per day. All of them visit to study Islam. Among the visitors, forty people confessed ‘shahada’ in four months. Most of them were young adults, intelligent, and converts who come from different beliefs.”³⁹⁰ When I researched in Korea, I often stopped by this information center. It was a very active place. Numerous Koreans visited this center and were interested in the religion of Islam. It has become an evangelistic center for Islam in Korea today.

g. Immigrants and Marriage

According to the statistics of the Korean government, immigrants made up 2.7% of the total Korean population as of December 31, 2011, coming to a total of 1,395,077 immigrants. The Muslim population is 10% of these foreigners,³⁹¹ most of them coming from Southeast Asia. The remainder of these Muslims comes from Central Asia, South Asia, and Arabia. In the late 1980s, the influx of foreign workers began to increase

³⁸⁹ Chungsoon, 90.

³⁹⁰ <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/SERIES/298/478656.html> (Last accessed on Dec. 12, 2012).

³⁹¹ Huh, 13.

because highly educated Koreans no longer wanted to engage in 3D jobs.³⁹² As a result, the inexpensive laborers of Bangladesh and Indonesia came to Korea. Most were Muslims. In the early 1990s, their number was less than ten thousand. However, the Muslim immigrants are more than one hundred twenty thousand at the present time. Although they are inconvenienced in their Muslim lifestyles by living within the Korean community, their number has continually increased. In Korea, the majority of Muslims are foreigners, not Koreans, but they have influenced the Korean community as a whole. They stay together in the major cities of Korea and begin to create new cultural and religious villages. Most workers have to leave Korea within five years, since the Korean government does not allow foreigners to have the right of permanent residence. But it is possible that they stay legally in Korea if they marry Koreans. So the number of married immigrants has increased yearly.

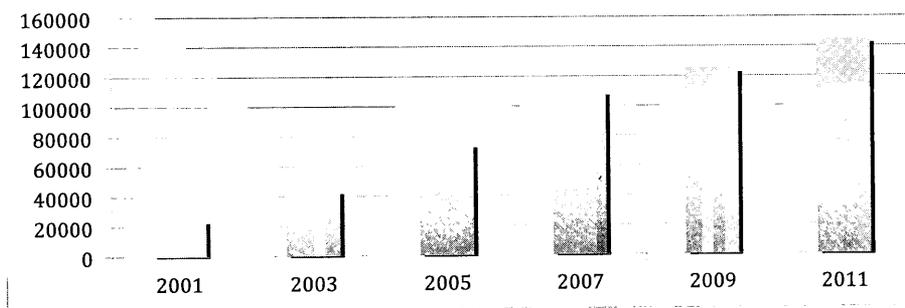


Figure 3 The Statistics of Married Immigrants³⁹³

³⁹² Seokwon Jung, "Oekukin Nodongjadeului Hyunshil [The Life of Foreign Workers in the Korean society]," in *Kyoyoukgwa Beopyung*, No. 10 (2002): 170-172.

³⁹³ Korea Immigration Service Ministry of Justice, *KIS Statistics 2009* (Seoul: The Korean Government, 2010), 695; Korea Immigration Service Ministry of Justice, *KIS Statistics 2010* (Seoul: The Korean Government, 2011), 574.



Figure 4 The Statistics of Married Muslim Immigrants³⁹⁴

Nations	The naturalized		
	2007	2009	2011
Central Asian	350	1,848	4,365
Uzbekistan	234	1,437	1,840
Kazakhstan	49	147	213
Kirgizstan	83	253	452
Turkmenistan	1	4	0
Azerbaijan	1	0	0
Tajikistan	5	7	7
Afghanistan	0	0	5

Nation	The naturalized		
	2007	2009	2011
Qatar	0	0	0
Morocco	21	31	42
Egypt	7	23	29
Ethiopia	0	0	42
Sudan	1	0	2
Libya	2	2	2
Southeast Asian	98	446	601
Indonesia	86	397	507

³⁹⁴ Korea Immigration Service Ministry of Justice (2010), 695; Korea Immigration Service Ministry of Justice (2012), 575.

Arab	54	71	140
Jordan	9	5	8
Iraq	1	4	3
Lebanon	4	1	3
Yemen	1	4	5
Syria	4	1	2
Saudi	1	0	2
Kuwait	0	0	0

Malaysia	12	49	94
South Asian	512	1,059	1,112
Pakistan	376	642	720
Bangladesh	136	417	392
The Middle East	40	118	167
Turkey	12	37	62
Iran	28	81	105
Total	1,054	3,096	6,245

Figure 5 The Statistics of National naturalized³⁹⁵

Even though the number of Muslim married immigrants is relatively small compared to the total population of married immigrants, Muslim couples have been steadily increasing in Korean society. Since the Muslims make their fiancé/fiancée convert to Islam and extend their religious influence to their family, relatives, and friends, such da'wa methodology is very effective. Moreover, the Muslim couples have had many babies, in contrast to the decline in Korea's birthrate. This causes the natural growth of the Muslim population in Korea. Immigration and inter-marriage have been the most effective means of spreading the Islamic faith in Korean society today.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ Korea Immigration Service Ministry of Justice (2010), 696-697; Korea Immigration Service Ministry of Justice (2012), 580-586; Heesun Cho, Daesung Kim, Jungkuk Ahn, Jongjin Oh, and Hyojung Kim, "Hankuk Yijoo Muslimui Honinhyunwanggwwa Jeongchakgwajung Youngoo [Muslim Immigrants in Korea: There Inter-marriage with the Koreans and the Settlement]," in *Jijunghae Giyeok Youngoo* No. 11 (2009), 89.

³⁹⁶ http://cafe.naver.com/pup21.cafe?iframe_url=/ArticleRead.nhn%3Farticleid=2451 (Last accessed on Sep. 30, 2013).

In conclusion, the history of Islam in Korea has extended across more than thirteen hundred years. Since the beginning of the religious movement led by Muhammad in the seventh century, Muslims reached Korea continually until the early fifteenth century. As a result, they began to make Koreans convert to Islam, but the number of converts was few because the Muslims conspired with the political and economic authorities of the Mongols colonizing Korea. They squeezed money out of the common Koreans in order to maintain their political power and material riches while they were staying in the Korean society. These Muslim officials did not give a favorable impression to most Koreans. Just a few governors and the servants of Muslim officials were interested in Islam and became Muslims, according to historical documents. The Muslims certainly influenced Korean society in terms of culture, economics, politics, arts, and mathematics, but not with their religion. Since the late nineteenth century, Muslims have knocked again at the door of Korea for performing da'wa. Their efforts often failed because Muslims politically and economically held hands with Japan, who exerted sovereignty over Korea. In this context, their religion, Islam, did not leave a favorable impression to Koreans. However, during the Korean War in which Turkish Muslims participated as Korea's allied troops, Islam became a more attractive religion. Furthermore, Islamic countries provided opportunities to improve the Korean economy in the 1970s and 80s through employing skillful Koreans in their construction markets. Because of this exposure, the Korean government has built favorable relationships with Middle Eastern countries. The government has provided national properties to the KMF for building a mosque and an Islamic university. The da'wa context of Islam in Korea has improved. As a result, the population of Muslims increased radically in the 1970s – 80s.

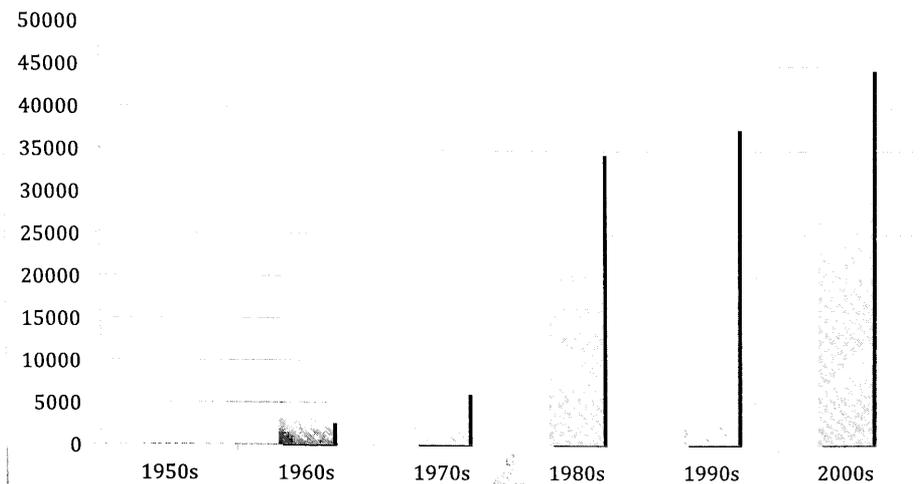


Figure 6 The Growth of Korean Muslim Population ³⁹⁷

Although the growth of the Korean Muslim population was stagnant in the 1990s due to the transition from the first Korean Muslim generation to the second generation, Korean Muslim scholars established the intellectual foundation of Korean Islam in that period. Since then, the Muslim population has again increased through applying diverse da'wa methodologies, fitted to the Korean context of the twenty-first century.

³⁹⁷ Sun, 120, 47; KMF (2007), 11, 13; Hepzibah Cho, "Muslim Namsunggwa Hankuk Yeosunggwau Gylhon [The Inter-marriage between Female Muslims and Korean women]," in *Sangmyungnamoo*, No. 325 (2008): 38.

CHAPTER 4

A STUDY OF MOTIFS OF KOREAN MUSLIM CONVERTS

As a missionary religion, Islam has knocked on the door of Korea for more than thirteen hundred years. Although there was a disconnected period during the isolationism of the Chosun dynasty, Muslims did not cease performing da'wa toward the Korean society. After falling down Chosun to the government, Islamic civilization re-entered Korean society through the Muslim diaspora in the early twentieth century. It began to fully settle into the Korean community when Turkish soldiers participated in the Korean War as part of the allied army. Ever since the Turks opened the gate for mission to Korea, Muslims have attempted in various ways to expand their religious influence in Korean society. As a result, Islam is growing rapidly in Korea today, just as the Protestant churches did in 1970s and 80s. The total Muslim population of Korea is about two hundred thousand in 2010.³⁹⁸ The number of foreign Muslims is, of course, higher than that of domestic Muslims. While the former is one hundred thirty thousand, Korean Muslim converts are a third of the total (35,000). However, the rate of Koreans converting to Islam has increased. In last decade, the numbers have doubled.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ <http://rpress.or.kr/xe/26109> (Last accessed on Oct. 15, 2012)

³⁹⁹ <http://www.kscoramdeo.com/news/read.php?idxn0=5663&rsec=MAIN> (Last accessed on Oct. 15, 2012)

This research focuses on the growth of these Korean Muslim converts taking place in the Korean society of the twenty-first century. In particular, this chapter will seek to identify the converts' demographic and religious characteristics and to find the major reasons why many Koreans are interested in the religion of Islam and in changing their religious identities to Islam. Three Muslim scholars have already researched this issue in the last decade: Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Heonchoul Kim, and Tamer Musa. Their research papers are related to Korean Muslim converts. I will review the results of these previous studies. Then, I will analyze the data from my field research according to various theological theories of religious conversion. Larry Poston and Ali Köse's studies also play an important role in analyzing the data because these writers also deal with the issue of Muslim converts, although their contexts and concerns are slightly different from my research.

The following six conversion motifs of John Lofland and Norman Skonovd comprise the major theological method for classifying the conversion reasons of the Korean Muslim.

1. In intellectual conversion, the person seeks knowledge about religious or spiritual issues via books, television, articles, lectures, and other media that do not involve significant social contact. The person actively seeks out and explores alternatives. Belief generally occurs prior to active participation in religious rituals and organizations.
2. Mystical conversion is considered by some to be the prototypical conversion, as in the case of Saul of Tarsus. Mystical conversion is generally a sudden and traumatic burst of insight, induced by visions, voices, or other paranormal experiences.
3. Experimental conversion has emerged as a major avenue of conversion in the twentieth century because of greater religious freedom and a multiplicity of available religious experiences. Experimental conversion involves active exploration of religious options. The potential convert has a "show me" mentality, essentially saying, "I'll pursue this possibility and see what spiritual benefits it may provide to me." Many groups encourage this mode by welcoming a quasi-scientific stance. Potential converts are

urge to take nothing on faith but to try the theology, ritual, and organization for themselves and discover if the system is true (that is beneficial or supportive) for them.

4. Affectional motif stresses interpersonal bonds as an important factor in the conversion process. Central to it is the direct, personal experience of being loved, nurtured, and affirmed by a group and its leaders.

5. Revivalist type of conversion uses crowd conformity to induce behavior. Individuals are emotionally aroused and new behaviors and beliefs are promoted by the pressures exerted. For instance, revival meetings feature emotionally powerful music and preaching. In addition to the group experience, individuals are sometimes sought out by family members and friends to exert direct influence on the potential convert.

6. Coercive is the last conversion motif. Because specific conditions need to be present in order for such conversion to occur, Lofland and Skonovd believe that this type of conversion is relatively rare. Brainwashing, coercive persuasion, thought reform, and programming are other labels for such a process. A conversion is more or less coercive according to the level of intense pressure exerted on the person to participate, conform, and confess. Deprivation of food and sleep may render the person unable to resist the pressure to surrender to the group's ideology and submissive life-style. Fear and, some allege, physical torture and other forms of psychological terror are deployed to gain control over the person's life. ⁴⁰⁰

This research will also seek to analyze the post-conversion lives of Korean Muslims. After converting to Islam, some Muslims become truly faithful. They actively participate in not only the five pillars⁴⁰¹ required for Muslims but also study Arabic in order to directly read the holy texts, the Qur'an. On the other hand, other Muslims do not faithfully transform their religious identity although they confess shahada. Marc David Baer I will also employ another theological framework in order to examine the conversion status of the interviewees— i.e., whether or not they truly became Muslims.

⁴⁰⁰ I directly quote summarLewis Rambo' summary of the six conversion motifs of Lofland and Skonovd. See Rambo (1993), 14-15; John Lofland and Norman Skonovd , "Conversion Motifs" in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Vol. 20 (1981): 373-385.

⁴⁰¹ Belief, Worship, Charitable giving, Fasting during the month of Ramadan, and Pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime.

This is Marc David Baer's conversion process theory. He categorizes converts into four types: acculturation, adhesion or hybridity, syncretism, and transformation.

Acculturation is when religious change accompanies the incorporation of a people and its territory into a conquering empire or socio-economic system. Adhesion or hybridity is when the person or group adopts new beliefs and practices alongside the old. Syncretism occurs when the convert(s) reconcile or fuse old and new beliefs and practices to create a new religious synthesis. Transformation is when converts attempt to completely replace the old with the new.⁴⁰²

Baer's theological frame will be a useful means to analyze the faithfulness status of Korean Muslim converts. In this chapter, I will classify my interviewees' cases according to these four conversion patterns and find whether any other important categories exist.

I. A Review of Antecedent Studies about Korean Muslim Converts

A. The First Study on Conversion Motifs of Korean Muslims in 2002

In 2002, two Muslim scholars, Ali Ulvi Mehmedoglu and Heonchoul Kim, published an article in the *Journal of Academic Studies* with the title, "Conversion Motifs: A Study of Present-day South Korean Converts to Islam." In this research, they studied 27 interviewees who had transferred their religious statuses from Christianity, Buddhism, or Confucianism to Islam. Their socio-demographic backgrounds are below:⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² Marc David Baer, "Historical Perspective on Processes of Religious conversion and their Effects," in Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, editors, *Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2013), 1-2.

⁴⁰³ Ali Mehmedoglu and Heonchoul Kim, "Conversion Motifs: A Study of Present-day South Korean Converts to Islam," in *Journal of Academic Studies*, Vol. 4 (2002): 126-127.

Table 2 The Socio-demographic Factors of Mehmedoglu and Kim's Research

	27 Interviewees
Gender	Males: 75% (20), Females: 26% (7)
Educational Backgrounds	Less than college: 3.7% (1), Bachelor 62.9% (17), Graduate degree: 7.4% (2)
Socioeconomic status	Middle Class: 92.5% (25), Lower Class: 7.4 % (2)
Marital Status	Single: 81.4% (22), Married: 18.6% (5)

With respect to gender, the number of Korean male Muslims in their study was more than females, just as in the context of America and Europe, according to Poston. When he researched American and European Muslim converts, of the 72 individuals he interviewed, 69% were male.⁴⁰⁴ Ali Köse had same result as the studies of Poston, and Mehmedoglu and Kim. He interviewed 70 native British converts to Islam. Male Muslims were 71.4% of the total interviewees.⁴⁰⁵ Since Islam was founded and developed in patriarchal systems, Poston argues, males have been more attracted to Islam than females.⁴⁰⁶

In Mehmedoglu and Kim's article, most of the Korean Muslim converts were well-educated and were members of the middle class of Korean society. Eleven interviewees owned their own businesses. Only two of them were not employed. Thus, they did not convert to Islam due to illiteracy or because of the financial support of Muslim communities. The authors employed Lofland and Skonovd's six conversion motifs for their research. According to their results, the case of intellectual converts is outstanding. Seventy percent of the Korean Muslim converts answered that they became Muslims

⁴⁰⁴ Poston, 163-164.

⁴⁰⁵ Ali Köse, *Conversion to Islam* (London and NY: Kegan Paul International, 1996), 80.

⁴⁰⁶ Poston, 163.

because Islamic faith is best for its “reasonableness and rationality.”⁴⁰⁷ There were no revivalist or coercive motifs in the research. Only three converts became Muslims after mystical experiences. They had “visions,” “voices,” “bright lights,” or “tinglings,” and so forth while they prayed or dreamed. These special experiences led them to Islam.⁴⁰⁸ The rest of them were experimental (7) and affectional (9) patterns of conversion.

Sixty-six percent of the converts were Christians before they became Muslims. To the converts of Christian background, Islam was not strange, because it has some similarities to their previous beliefs. The converts naturally compared the doctrines of both religions and decided on what they regarded as the better and ideal religion for their spiritual lives.⁴⁰⁹

Most Korean Muslim converts answered that they first encountered Islam through Muslim friends or by traveling in Islamic countries. This is related to the fact that the world has become globalized. Islamic countries have sent a number of students throughout the world in order to have academic interaction with the world and to perform da'wa, spreading their faith to non-Islamic communities. While staying in non-Muslim countries, they attempt to invite their indigenous neighbors and friends to Islamic faith. Some of the converts became Muslims through such methods of da'wa. Moreover, increasing international business and travel spurs the growth of the Korean Muslim community. In a globalized world and because of the development of Korea's economy, Koreans are now actively involved in having cultural and religious exchange with the world, including Islamic countries. In this context, they now have various opportunities

⁴⁰⁷ Mehme голу and Kim, 131.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 133.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, 127.

to contact Muslims and learn more about Islam than they had experienced before, when Koreans studied Islam only through literature. Such economic change and a global political milieu have produced the recent growth of the Korean Muslim population.

B. The Second Research Project about Korean Muslims (2006)

As a Muslim student who studied at Seoul National University, Tamer Musa wrote a thesis titled, “Hankukaeseo Muslimeuro Salahgagi: Hankuk Muslimui Islamhwa Kwajungae Kwanhan Yongoo [Living as a Muslim in the Korean Society: A Study about the Islamicization of Korean Muslims].” This research project targeted Korean Muslim converts even though the author did not directly focus on conversion motifs. He was interested in describing the difficulties of Korean Muslims living in a non-Muslim country. He met sixteen Korean Muslims, both married and single. In this case, the researcher targeted an even number of eight male Muslims and eight females. The interviewees were almost all young adults. Of the sixteen individuals interviewed, only two were in their 40s and 60s; the others were in their 20s or 30s. In terms of his research, while the conversion of the older generation of Muslims was related to the economic context of Korea in the 1970s and 80s, the young Muslims converted to Islam within the context of globalization.⁴¹⁰ The former had experience working in Muslim countries for at least three years. In a previous chapter, I already mentioned the relationship between the difficult economic context of Korea and the growth of Islam in those decades. A number of Korean professional technicians had been employed in the

⁴¹⁰ Tamer Musa, “Hankukaeseo Muslimeuro Salahgagi: Hankuk Muslimui Islamhwa Kwajungae Kwanhan Yongoo [Living a Muslim in the Korean Society: The Study about Islamization of Korean Muslims],” (MA. Thesis, Seoul National University, 2006), 27-30.

construction businesses of the Middle East when the labor market of Korea was declining during the 1970s and 80s. Before leaving for these Muslim countries, the workers had to learn Islamic culture and teachings from the Seoul Jungang mosque for a month. In this process, Koreans changed their religious identities to Islam; not only were they attracted to the new religious belief system, but they also knew that they would have a number of benefits in Islamic countries if they became Muslims. The two older Muslims belonged to this group. After returning back to Korea, they kept their religious identities as Muslims.

In contrast, the context of the latter group was different. Since the late twentieth century, the world has been moving towards globalization. All aspects of life, politics, culture, business, education, and even religion, have been shared together in a globalized world. Because of this change, young Korean adults now have opportunities to learn Muslim culture and the religion of Islam through several channels, such as studying at Muslim schools and traveling to Muslim countries. Moreover, international marriage has become more common in Korean society. Numerous Korean females have married foreign Muslims. According to the results of Tamer's study, the conversions of the wives were closely related to the globalization of the world.⁴¹¹

His research is a valuable work in terms of the study of Korean Muslims. However, the focal point of his study was not finding the motifs of the Korean Muslim convert. Instead, he briefly analyzes the background of their conversion. In a sense, his contribution is limited for answering my study's research questions.

⁴¹¹ Ibid, 30.

II. This Study of Korean Converts to Islam in 2012

A. Research Methodology

This present study is based on the results of research questionnaires acquired from 49 Korean Muslim converts. In this research, I had wanted to cooperate with Korean Muslim leaders because I thought that they would definitely have an interest in the major question of this study, “Why are Koreans interested in and convert to Islam?” I met them and explained what my purpose was in the research. Then I requested their help in introducing me to Korean Muslim converts for interviewing. However, they disapproved of my project of writing this dissertation about the Korean Muslim community, wondering why I, as a Christian scholar, would want to interview Korean Muslims. They often questioned me about the purpose of this research. Although I had first approached the leadership group of the Korean Muslim community for working together, my efforts failed. Most Christian researchers have experienced similar difficulties when they have sought to collect data from Muslims, as is evident from the following reports from other projects:

Some mosques were reluctant to cooperate, and others simply refused, out of fear of misuse or distortion of the information. Many immigrants are suspicious of researchers because they come from countries where the only people asking questions are government agents or spies. One of the major difficulties we encountered in collecting our research was that of establishing sufficient trust that our questions could be answered openly and honestly. Assurance of anonymity was helpful, but the bitter experience that some in the Muslim community have had in the American context made many of those interviewed suspicious of our motives and watchful of our methods⁴¹²

You probably will not find too many Muslims who would respond to your inquiries simply because of trust. Muslims during the last few years have

⁴¹² Yvonne Haddad, Byron Haines, and Ellison Findly, *The Islamic Impact* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), 9-10.

become the target of a very cruel, systematic, well-organized, funded and publicized campaign aiming at discrediting them and their beliefs. For this reason, and for others, Muslims have become more cautious, withdrawn and alerted than ever before. They would not trust their own Muslim brethren unless they know them for a lengthy period of time.⁴¹³

I attempted different ways to have interviews with Korean Muslim converts. First of all, I visited the first and largest mosque in Korea, Seoul Jungang Sungwon. I met several Korean Muslims participating in *salat*, and in *Jumah* worship on Fridays. When I asked them, some consented to the interview request, though many of them hesitated or decisively rejected my request. Those who opened their minds to a Christian researcher introduced other Muslim friends. This personal networking research method produced a result of 37 interviewees.

I sent the research questionnaires by e-mail to 35 Korean Muslims who hesitated in having a face-to-face interview. The result was disappointing because only two of them returned the interview questionnaires. Using the telephone and chatting online were other ways of trying to reach Korean Muslims. I was able to have six interviews by phone and online. Finally, a recently published book was also employed for this research. Husain Jang, a foreign Muslim, compiled the conversion stories of fifty-one Muslim converts⁴¹⁴ and published them in a book with the title, *Stories of People Who Have Chosen Islam*. In this book, eleven stories come from Korean converts, but since six of

⁴¹³ Poston, 161.

⁴¹⁴ They come from England, United States, Australia, France, India, German, Russia, Austria, Japan, Poland, Sweden, Canada, Ukraine, China, and Korea.

the cases overlapped with people I had interviewed, I collected five more conversion stories from the book for this research.⁴¹⁵

In sum, there was not just one channel used to collect data for analyzing the reasons why Koreans had become Muslims. I sought to approach Korean converts through multiple routes: face-to-face, e-mail, phone calls, online chatting, and literature. As a result, I encountered 49 Korean converts. This research is based on their responses.

B. Analysis of Research of 49 Korean Muslim Converts

a. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Gender

Just as in the results of the previous studies about Muslim converts, more male Muslims participated in this research than females. Of the 49 interviewees examined, 65% (32) were male and 35% (17) were female. Since Islamic culture does not allow Muslim women to meet unknown men face-to-face, it was difficult to get female Muslims' testimonies. Islamic theologians often emphasize egalitarianism between female and male as one of attractive characteristics of Islam, but the reality is different. Islamic society is definitely founded on androcentrism. Muslim women rarely have official positions of leadership in the Muslim community. Moreover, they seem to like their marginalized role in the community. While female Muslims have passive attitudes in their communities, males completely control their society.⁴¹⁶ Because of this characteristic of the Islamic community's milieu, many females are secluded from the

⁴¹⁵ Husain Jang, *Stories of People Who Have Chosen Islam* (Seoul: Jannahmumin books, 2012), 137.

⁴¹⁶ Poston, 164.

world. It was hard to encounter traditional female Muslims in the Korean context. The few female subjects of this research were modernized Muslims who are working freely in the Korean society and participate in *Jumah* on Fridays.

Table 3 Interviewees according to Gender (n=49)

Males	32 (65%)
Females	17 (35%)

- Educational levels and socioeconomic statuses

Just as in Mehmedoglu and Kim's research, the Korean Muslim converts were well-educated. According to Table 4 below, 69 % (35) of interviewees had bachelors or advanced graduate degrees. The uneducated Muslim converts were from the older generations. Since most of them were born right after the Korean War, they rarely had opportunities to go to school. During the economic poverty of Korea at that time, their major concern was surviving rather than studying. Except for some children of the elite class, most Koreans were able to read and write only through self-education. However, the three males having post-graduate degrees were old generation Muslims. They had a chance to study at college through support from Islamic funds in the 1970s and 1980s. When the young men converted to Islam, the Korea Muslim Federation offered them the opportunity to study Islam in Islamic countries with full scholarships. The Korean Muslim leadership group intended to nurture indigenous Muslim leaders for the future of Islam in Korea. The young Muslims accepted the offers and spent a long time studying Islam and Muslim traditions. Since returning back to Korea, they have worked for the expansion of the Korean Muslim community as an Imam, a professor, and a leader of the Jeju Islamic institution.

Table 4 Levels of completed Education (n=49)

	Male (n=32)	Female (n=17)	Total (n=49)
Less than College	12 (24%)	3 (6%)	15 (31%)
College (BA/BSc)	14 (29%)	12 (24%)	26 (53%)
Master Degree (MA/MSc)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	5 (10%)
PhD	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	3 (6%)

The well-educated status of Korean Muslim converts is related to their socioeconomic level. The interviewees reported that they are in the middle classes in Korean society. Although there are no upper class people among the interviewees, 90% (44) categorizes themselves as middle class economically. Their occupations are diverse: businessmen, professors, white collar, Imam, and students. Only 10 (20%) interviewees were unemployed.

Table 5 Social Class (n=49)

	Male (n=32)	Female (n=17)	Total (n=49)
Working Class	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	5 (10%)
Lower Middle Class	8 (16%)	6 (12%)	14 (29%)
Middle Class	15 (31%)	7 (15%)	22 (45%)
Upper Middle Class	5 (10 %)	3 (6%)	8 (16 %)
Upper Class	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

A few among the interviewees have dedicated their lives to be Islamic evangelists. Fatima, a woman, has worked at the “Islamic Information Center for Koreans,” located in front of the Seoul Jungang Sungwon since January 2012. Nadir, a young male Muslim, has focused on spreading Islamic faith to Korean society through writing books. He is working on several books and even beginning to translate the Arabic Qur’an into Korean. He argues that since the current translated version of the Qur’an in

Korean has some errors, it needs to be corrected by retranslating. He has sought to deliver vividly the message of Allah to the Korean with the corrected version. Another faithful Muslim is Dongshin Park, Abdul-Rashid. He publicly proclaimed, “I will be a Muslim evangelist toward the Korean. Islam is the only true religion. Allah gave me such a commission.”⁴¹⁷ He runs several websites for young Muslims and pre-converts and has uploaded numerous video clips about Islamic traditions and comparisons between Christianity and Islam.⁴¹⁸ He left for Medina in January 2012 in order to profoundly study the Qur’an and Islamic traditions in the heartland of Islamic faith. After he returns back to Korea, he will contribute to the growth of the Korean Muslim community, he assured me.

- Conversion Age

In the early twentieth century, psychologists who were interested in religious conversion—Edwin Starbuck, George Coe, and Granville Stanley Hall—concluded that conversion is a phenomenon normally taking place in adolescence. According to their research, most religious converts answered that they changed their religious identities in the teenage period. The average age of over fifteen thousand converts was fifteen years

⁴¹⁷ Dongshin Park, interview by Sungsu Park, Jun. 12, 2012.

⁴¹⁸ I link few webpages running by Dongshin Park in below.

<http://cafe.naver.com/islamworld>; <http://koreaislam.com/islamsite>;
<http://chatislamonline.org/ko>; <http://www.abdurrashid.com>; <http://www.islamkorea.com>;
<http://www.facebook.com/islamicdawahkorea>.

He also made numerous video clips for da’wa.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqGgZEFv0>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7af7Vg44CTA&feature=plcp>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOWHZyKrm6U>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbtUXFtz5Dc>.

old.⁴¹⁹ When teenagers begin to form an ego and to experience the crisis of mental turmoil, spiritual influences decisively impact their lives. Religious conversion normally occurs in the period of that psychological chaos. This assertion was supported by several scholars later. In his book, *Religious Consciousness: A Psychological Study*, James Pratt states, "... the whole moral and religious process of the adolescent period may well be called conversion."⁴²⁰ Raymond F. Paloutzian, one of today's modern psychologists, also agrees with the results of the previous studies on religious conversion. In his book, *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion*, he identifies youth as "the ripe age" for conversion. The adolescents who experience crises of identity, searching for purpose, or emotional changes may design their lives with diverse religious beliefs or philosophies.⁴²¹

In contrast, Köse recently published a different result. In the early 1990s, he researched seventy native British converts to Islam. Within his study, the average conversion age of interviewees was 29.7. Only one Muslim converted in their teenage years. 61.5% of his total interviewees reported that they changed their religious identity when they were between 23-45 years old.⁴²² In his research, youth was not a ripe age for religious conversion.

⁴¹⁹ Edwin Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion* (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1908), 38; George Coe, *The Psychology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1917), 163; Granville Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and its Relations to Physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education* (London: Appleton and Company, 1915), 288-292.

⁴²⁰ James Pratt, *Religious Consciousness: A Psychological Study* (NY: Macmillan, 1926), 122.

⁴²¹ Raymond F. Paloutzian, *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (Ill: Scott, Foresman, and Co., 1983), 99-100.

⁴²² Köse, 47.

Table 6 Conversion Age Group

	Male (n=32)	Female (n=17)	Total (n=49)
10-19	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
20-29	16 (33%)	8 (16%)	24 (49%)
30-39	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	9 (18%)
40-49	6 (12%)	4 (8%)	10 (21%)
Over 50	3 (6%)	1 (2%)	4 (8%)

The result of my research supports Köse's assertion. Of the 49 converts, just two became Muslims when they were teenagers. The rest of them changed their religious identities to Islam after passing adolescence. Half of the total interviewees accepted Islamic faith between 20 and 29 years old. The average conversion age in this research is older than in Köse's case. However, neither Köse nor my research follows the results of the previous psychologists' studies. Poston also aligns with the above two cases. When he surveyed 72 Muslim converts, their average conversion age was 31.4 years.⁴²³ According to these three researchers, it is not easy to make a conclusion that adolescents are the ripe age for religious conversion.

- Marital Status

Of the 49 testimonies examined, 32 (65%) were married: twenty males and twelve females. Twelve of the converts had inter-married with foreign Muslims, but they did not agree that their spouses had influenced them to change their religious identities to Islam. Only three of the Muslim women converted to Islam after marriage. The remaining fifteen Korean Muslim married couples reported that they were both already Muslims

⁴²³ Poston, 166.

before meeting their spouses, except for one. On the other hand, five married Muslims had not yet made their spouses convert to Islam. In these families, there exist two different religions, such as Islam and Catholicism, Islam and Protestantism, or Islam and Buddhism. They have sought to guide their family, spouses and children to the world of Islamic faith, but their efforts have often failed. I met a male Muslim named Muhammad. He divorced a couple of years ago because of religious conflicts in the family. Another Muslim man confessed, “I never tell my family about my religious conversion because they consider Islam as a terroristic religion. If I reveal my religious identity to my wife and kids, they will kick me out of my family.”⁴²⁴ Thus, there are only four cases reported where the event of marriage influenced spouses to change their religious identities to Islam.

The other 17 interviewees were single Muslims. They insisted that their previous requisites for future spouses were wealth, honor, or authority, but they totally changed after becoming Muslims. Now religion was the most important requisite for a marriage. They never acknowledge that two beliefs could coexist in one family. They are searching for a Muslim fiancé/fiancée.

b. Religious Background of Converts to Islam

According to the research of Köse, Poston, and Mehmedoglu and Kim, it is clear that Christians have been the primary object of Islamic da’wa movements. Large numbers of their interviewees answered that their previous religion was Christianity before converting.

⁴²⁴ Abdullah interviewed by Sungsu Park, May 12, 2012.

Table 7 Compare the Previous Studies about the Religious Backgrounds of the Muslim Convert⁴²⁵

Köse's study		Poston's research		Mehmedoglu and Kim's case	
Previous Religion	n =70	Previous Religion	n = 72	Previous Religion	n = 27
Church of England	51 (73%)	Christian		Protestant	16(60%)
Catholic	12 (17%)	Roman Catholic	10 (4%)	Catholic	2(7%)
Jewish	4 (6%)	Protestant	8 (11%)	Buddhist	2(7%)
Methodist	3 (4%)	Non-denomination	23(32%)	Confucian	1(4%)
		Total	41(57%)	No Religion	6(22%)
		Jewish	5 (7%)		
		Hindu	1(1%)		
		Agnostic	2 (3%)		
		No Indication	23(32%)		

Although their research questionnaires asking about the converts' religious backgrounds are a little bit different, the results are similar. In most cases, Muslim converts had Christian backgrounds before converting to Islam. Since Köse targeted native British Muslims, all converts were born and grew up with monotheistic backgrounds: Church of England, Catholic, Jewish, and Methodist. 46% of the respondents reported that they had been nominal Christians or Jews. Their testimonies affirmed that these people were able to count how many times they had gone to the church or synagogue in their lives. Nevertheless, they had never doubted their faith about the one God. When they first had contact with Islam, at between 23-45 years old, Islamic beliefs and Muslims' religious ceremonies became more impressive to them than those of Christianity or Judaism. So, they turned from their traditional religions to Islam.

On the other hand, North Americans and Europeans living in the United States had more opportunities to have diverse religions of origin than in the British context. Most converts, of course, had Christian backgrounds. However, some of them were

⁴²⁵ Köse, 67; Poston, 166; Mehmedoglu and Kim, 127.

Hindus or Jews, or agnostics before converting.⁴²⁶ In the Korean context, Buddhism is the largest religion. The Buddhist population in Korea represents 23.2%, but ironically just two Buddhists had converted to Islam within Mehmedoglu and Kim's research. However, 60% of 27 Korean Muslim converts had belonged to the Protestant church. Christians were the most likely to transfer their religious identities to Islam.

Table 8 Religious Backgrounds of Converts to Islam

Religions	Male (n=32)	Female (n=17)	Total (n=49)
Protestant			
Methodist	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
- Presbyterian	17 (35%)	9 (18%)	26 (53%)
- Pentecostal	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
- Total	19 (39%)	9 (18%)	28 (57%)
Catholic	5 (10%)	3 (6%)	8 (16%)
Buddhism	1 (2%)	3 (6%)	4 (8%)
Muslim	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
No Religious affiliation	6 (12%)	2 (4%)	8 (16%)

This research supports the results of the previous studies about Muslim converts' religious backgrounds. A total of 73% of forty-nine were Christians (Protestant + Catholic) before converting to Islam. Most converts had attended the Presbyterian Church. The number of Christian conversions to Islam outnumbers all other religious people's conversions. In particular, I met a born Muslim, Ibrahim. His parents were the first generation of Korean Muslims.

When I was born, my parents were already Muslims. I have naturally become a Muslim without a conversion experience. My father worked for 40 years at Seoul Joongang Sungwon after converting to Islam in the

⁴²⁶ Poston, 166.

1970s. When I was in my childhood, he often took me to the mosque and gave me opportunities to play with Muslim friends. I observed Muslims' religious ceremonies being performed at the masjid and imitated the posture of my father's prayer. Islamic faith, traditions, and culture were familiar to me. I did not confess "shahada" just as other Muslim converts to become a Muslim, but I think I have been a Muslim since I was born. I believe that Allah is the monotheistic divine and that Muhammad is the last prophet of Allah. This belief has been initiated by my father. He was one of the faithful Muslims in Korea.⁴²⁷

In the Korean context, parents decisively influence their children's lives until they get married. Korean parents are used to interfering in their children's private lives including their religious faith. This is a reason why the age of converting is late 20s rather than adolescence. Parents' religions become their kids' beliefs. The 24 parents of the interviewees pressured their children to follow their families' religious tradition of Christianity. However, when these interviewees later had conflict with their parents, they deviated radically from their parents' ethical, economic, and even religious influences. At that moment, they decided to change their religion to Islam.

Table 9 The Parents' Religion of Converts

Religions	Total (n=49)
Protestant	24 (49%)
Catholic	5 (10%)
Buddhism	5 (10%)
Confucianism	4 (8%)
Muslim	1 (2%)
No religion	10 (21%)

⁴²⁷ Ibrahim, interview by Sungsu Park, May 28, 2012.

According to Köse's research, 46% of the converts were nominal or weak religious persons prior to conversion. While 11% were deeply involved in their previous religion, 16 interviewees answered that they had never participated in religious services before.⁴²⁸ This is very similar to the results of my research. When I asked the converts, "How serious was your practice in your previous religion?" they reported as below.

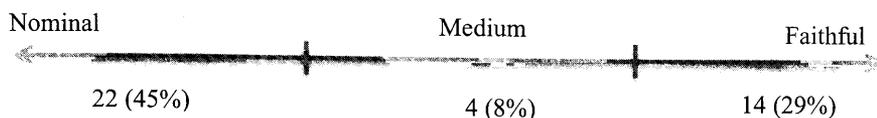


Figure 7 Converts' Religious Passion Prior to Conversion

Of the total, 45% of 49 converts responded that they were nominal Christians, Catholics, or Buddhists. They rarely attended religious ceremonies or had fellowship with other believers. They had gone to church or the Buddhist temple a few times per year, such as on Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Buddha's birthday. They did not have much knowledge about their previous religion. Their religious commitments are similar in the religion of Islam. Even though they converted to Islam 4-5 years ago, they confess that they are baby Muslims. Most of them never read the Qur'an except for several verses used in praying. They try to keep the five prayer times daily, but other duties as Muslims have been ignored. They argue that Allah would excuse them for not following all the Muslim traditions, because Korea is a non-Muslim context.

On the other hand, 14 converts regarded themselves as faithful persons in the previous religion. Not only were they actively involved in the church or Buddhist temple programs, but they also participated in studying the doctrine and policies of the religion.

⁴²⁸ Köse, 68.

They partly agreed with Christian theologies and Buddhist philosophies. However, neither religion provided clear answers about the Trinity, original sin, monotheism, salvation, and so forth. Therefore, they were searching other religions for their spiritual lives. At that time, they met a strange religion, Islam, but it became interesting to them. Just as they did in the previous religion, the pre-converts were passionate to study Islamic faith and theologies. Furthermore, they actively participated in religious ceremonies and the activities of Muslim communities. They spent at least one year learning the new religious system and structure. Then, they affirmed that Islam is the best and truest religion in the world. They were careful in changing their religious identities from one to another.

c. Conversion Process and Motifs

- First Contact with Islam

Table 10 First Contact with Islam

	Male (n=32)	Female (n=17)	Total (n=49)
Visiting mosque	11 (23%)	2 (4%)	13 (27%)
Traveling	10 (20%)	6 (12%)	16 (33%)
Muslim friends	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	11 (22%)
Islamic literature	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	3 (6%)
Internet	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	6 (12%)

I asked the converts, “How did you first encounter the religion of Islam?” Of these respondents, 16 interviewees (33%) initially contacted Islam through traveling. When they took a trip to Islamic countries, they were introduced to the Islamic culture and Muslims’ religious traditions. They honestly shared that their first impression of

Islam was not favorable. The traditions and belief system were unfamiliar to them. However, by spending time in the Islamic countries, Muslims' lives and religious ceremonies became very impressive and curious to the Korean travelers. They carefully observed Muslims' lifestyles and began to learn about Islamic faith and traditions, not through literature, but through their Muslim friends and neighbors. Some of them decided to seriously approach Islam when they came back to Korea.

Another 27% of the converts had their first contact with Islam by visiting mosques. In Korea, there are nine masjids and two Islamic worship/cultural centers. Moreover, the Korea Muslim Federation runs more than 60 small places of prayer throughout Korea. All Koreans can easily reach these Islamic places today if they want. In particular, Seoul Joongang Sungwon has been important as a center for da'wa. Since it is located in Seoul, the capital of Korea, and is one of the popular attractions recommended by the city government of Seoul, numerous people, both Koreans and foreigners, have visited the mosque. Juwah Lee, the Imam of the masjid, said that the average number of Korean visitors per week might be at least seven hundred. Moreover, in recent years, middle and high school students have come by this place on school field trips. When they learn of world religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, students have opportunities not only to indirectly study the religions through their textbooks, but also to directly observe the religious practices by visiting their religious places. I interviewed a teenage Muslim, Isra. When she first came to the Seoul Joongang masjid for her school's field trip, Isra never forgot her impression of the Muslim prayer ceremonies.

When I was here the first time a couple of years ago, it was for the Friday worship service. Everything was very strange to me who grew up in a

Christian background. Most of the Muslim believers were foreigners. All the Muslim believers worshipped together facing toward one place at the same time. The experience was not only a special event but also spiritual to me. When the Qur'an reverberated at the top of masjid, the verses touched my heart. It was spiritual voices to me. Even though I was a Christian, I never felt that kind of spirituality before at the church. I think the field trip became a turning point in my life. After the visit to the mosque, I focused on studying Islam and changed my religious identity from Christianity to Islam. I believed that Islam is the only true religion in the world.⁴²⁹

Table 11 The Results of Mehmedoglu and Kim's Study about First Contact with Islam⁴³⁰

	Male (n=20)	Female (n=7)	Total (n=27)
Through a Muslim friend	7 (26%)	2 (7%)	9 (33%)
Travel to a Muslim country	4 (15%)	1 (4%)	5 (19%)
Visiting a mosque in Korea	3 (11%)	1 (4%)	4 (15%)
Reading Islamic literature	3 (11%)	1 (4%)	4 (15%)
Participating in Islamic activity	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	3 (11%)
Through a university lecture	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)

Table 12 The Result of Köse's Research about First Contact with Islam⁴³¹

	Total (n=70)
Travel to a Muslim country	16 (23%)
Conversation with a Muslim /s	26 (37%)
Reading literature	16 (23%)
Male-female relationship	10 (14%)
Family members or relatives	2 (3%)

⁴²⁹ Isra, Interview by Sungsu Park, May 26, 2012.

⁴³⁰ Mehmedoglu and Kim, 128.

⁴³¹ Köse, 112.

In their article, “The Convert as a Social Type,” David Snow and Richard Machalek emphasize that social networking is a very important element when people change their religious identity to another religion.⁴³² The results of Mehmedoglu and Kim, Köse, and this research support their statement. The three research projects show that inter-personal connections between Muslims and non-Muslims play an important role in making conversions. In Mehmedoglu and Kim’s study, 33% converts first met the religion of Islam through their Muslim friends; 54% of Köse’s interviewees also had an initial introduction to Islam through their Muslim neighbors, friends, family, or relatives. The Muslims kept in touch with their non-Muslim friends and neighbors until their confession, “shahada.” In my research, 52% of interviewees also answered that they heard about Islam from their close Muslim friends or Muslim guides while traveling. After their first contact with Islam, the converts spent much time researching the new religion, Islam, before changing their religious identities.

In the twenty-first century, information technology has been a significant instrument for Islamic da’wa in the world. In order to reach the users of the internet and smart phones, Muslims have sought to develop web pages and smart phone apps. Unlike Köse and Mehmedoglu and Kim’s research, 12% of my interviewees were first touched by Islam not by traveling to a Muslim country or through inter-personal relationships with Muslim friends, but through the internet. One female convert first met a Muslim friend through online chatting. The Muslim was an Indonesian. When they had their first meeting online, they just shared their own cultures and personal lives. Then, the conversation developed further and they discussed religion in depth. While chatting with

⁴³² David Snow and Richard Machalek “The Convert as a Social Type,” in *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 1 (1983): 259-289.

the foreign Muslim for a month, the Korean woman began to have an interest in the religion of Islam. She visited a masjid located in Seoul, conversed at length with Korean Muslims, and then decided to become a Muslim herself. I met four Muslims who had converted in similar ways. This type of religious conversion will increase. I have observed several websites run by Korean Muslims; numerous non-Muslims have visited those webpages and have gained an interest in Islam. Recently, I watched six new converts to Islam on the website: <http://cafe.naver.com/islamworld>. They had contacted Islam through the internet and had further relationships with Muslims online. Then they recently joined the Korean Muslim community.

The First Impressions of Islam

Table 13 First Impressions of Islam

	Male (n=32)	Female (n=17)	Total (n=49)
Negative	24 (49%)	9 (18%)	33 (67%)
Positive	6 (12%)	5 (10%)	11 (23%)
Neutral	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	5 (10%)

When converts had their first contact with Islam, their image of the religion was mostly negative. For example, 67% of interviewees reported that when they first encountered the religion of Islam and Muslims, they were scared because they had learned that Islam was a terroristic religion. Only 23% felt comfortable with the Islamic faith and with Muslim friends at the first meeting. However, the negative images of Islam were resolved quickly when the converts started to know Islam through Muslims' theological and historical perspectives. Muslims argue that because public textbooks and mass media give wrong perspectives, many Koreans have misunderstood Islamic beliefs

and Muslim traditions. The distorted portions should be revised. A Korean Muslim scholar, Heesoo Lee, has sought since 2001 to make corrections to the erroneous portrayals of Islamic history and theology in the schools' textbooks. He has been screening middle and high school texts and has revised the distorted and ignored sections of Islamic traditions and faiths. Moreover, he highly recommends that middle and high school teachers visit mosques directly in order to better understand the religion of Islam.⁴³³

- Conversion Motifs

Mehmedoglu and Kim had their interviews of 27 Korean Muslim converts ten years later than Poston and Köse. All four scholars were concerned about researching Muslim converts. However, Poston approached Muslim converts differently from the other three writers. He focused on converts' psychological perspectives: conversion timing and process. On the other hand, Köse, Mehmedoglu and Kim employed a theological lens in order to analyze converts' motivations. This drew from Lofland and Skonovd's theory of six conversion patterns: intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalist, and coercive. Since this research also applies the same theological framework as Köse, Mehmedoglu and Kim, I will review the results of my study along with these antecedent researchers and also compare the differences and similarities between the studies.

⁴³³ Heesoo Lee, "Hankuk Gyugaseoui Tamoowha Waegok: Islamknowneul Jungshimeuro (Distortion of Other Culture in the Korean Textbooks: Focused on Islamic Culture)," in *Hankukjungdonhakhuinonchong*, No. 22 (2001): 82-102.

Table 14 Köse's, Mehmedoglu and Kim's, and My Researches about Conversion Patterns⁴³⁴

	Köse	Mehmedoglu and Kim	My Research
Motifs	Total (n=70)	Total (n=27)	Total (n=49)
Intellectual	50 (71%)	19 (70%)	39 (80%)
Mystical	10 (14%)	3 (11%)	2 (4%)
Experimental	42 (60%)	7 (26%)	33 (67%)
Affectional	46 (66%)	9 (33%)	32 (65%)
Revivalistic	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Coercive	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

In all three studies, conversion takes place not only through one motif, but by several motifs working together. First of all, the intellectual conversion pattern is overwhelming when compared to others. Over 70% of the interviewees of the previous researchers reported that after their first contact with Islam, they spent much time in learning the religion of Islam and Muslim traditions. Then, they decided to confess 'shahada' before other Muslims.

In my research, the intellectual type of conversion is also a large number; 39 converts changed their religious identities to Islam because Islam is based on reasonable beliefs. Most converts had negative images of Islam when they first encountered Islamic faith and Muslims, but they said that it was due to the bias coming from distorted teachings about Islam. The more they studied Islam in depth, the more their faith became firm in Islam.

My name is Raila. Before converting to Islam, I was a Christian. I became a Muslim last November. Let me tell you about my conversion. When I studied in the United States, I had a boyfriend who came from an Islamic country. He was a Muslim. Even though we had different religions, we

⁴³⁴ Köse, 98; Mehmedoglu and Kim, 131.

had a close relationship in the United States. In the early period of our dating time, we never talked about the issue of religion. However, when I was disappointed about the Christian faith and confused about whether Christian theologies were true or manipulated, my boyfriend led me to a mosque. I observed Muslims' prayer performance. This was very spiritual to me. I felt the salat rituals were definitely unlike routine and boring Christian worship. It was an impressive experience in my life. After the first encounter, I was interested in the religion of Islam. I often asked my boyfriend questions about my unsolved Christian beliefs such as the concept of the Trinity, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the term of 'original sin,' or Jesus' death on cross and resurrection. As well as he knew, he sought to make clear the abstract beliefs and contradictory theories of Christianity compared to Islamic faith and traditions. His responses were reasonable. I thought that Islam might be one among the true religions, but I was not sure yet. I spent much time getting to know the religion of Islam from its history and various theological issues. After studying, I confirmed that Islam is the only one unique religion telling us about the Truth. I think one of Islam's characteristics is rationality.⁴³⁵

In the first contact point with Islam, the affectional factor partially made Raila's heart move to her close friend's religion, Islam. Since Muslim religious practices gave her spiritual impressions, she started studying Islam. In her conversion, affectional and experimental motifs worked together. Nevertheless, her intellectual approaches to Islam decisively influenced her choice to become a Muslim. Several motifs were utilized in her conversion process, but the most significant reason for her conversion was that she regarded Islamic faith as rationally clear.

On the other hand, a male Muslim, Muhammad, studied several religions comparatively and then became a Muslim because he had confidence that Islamic faith is the best in the world. Muhammad was born in a Catholic family. His parents transmitted their faith traditions to him when he was a child. Until his late 20s, he believed that Catholic beliefs were orthodox and that Protestant churches were heretical communities

⁴³⁵ Raila, Interview by Sungsu Park, May 26, 2012.

split from the true Catholic faith. He considered Islam to be a radical religious movement because he had not had any chance to learn Islamic traditions rightly. However, when he read a book about monotheistic religions, he first recognized that Judaism, Catholic Christianity, and Islam are built on the same faith roots. He realized that he did not know much about world religions. Then, he bought numerous books about various religious beliefs such as Buddhism, Hindu, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. After reading those books, his conclusion was that Buddhism is a religion manipulated by humans, and pluralistic faith was not an option. His faith was firmly founded in monotheism. Therefore, he devoted his energy to study deeply the monotheistic religions: Judaism, Catholic and Protestant Christianity, and Islam later. He became a serious religious person. As a result of his comparative studies on the Abrahamic traditions, he concluded that Islam is the best religion over the other monotheistic beliefs. He pointed out that if Judaism is a true religion, God is divine only for Jews. Moreover, he said that Jews do not believe in an afterlife. They were complete realists. He also denied Christianity's discrepant theologies and the understanding of Jesus' death as atonement for the sins of humanity. Since Christians created these beliefs, he insisted, Christianity is not a revealed religion. He believed that the latest version of God's words, the Qur'an, perfectly solves all the problems. "I have never doubted whether Islamic faith is right or wrong. Furthermore, Islam is not just theory, but is also very practical. It is a joy to live as Muslims in the world."⁴³⁶ In his case, only the intellectual motif was working on his conversion process. There was neither social pressure nor religious experience. He just studied the theologies of several religions and decided to become a Muslim.

⁴³⁶ Muhammad, Interview by Sungsu Park, May 23, 2012.

Along with the intellectual pattern, the affectional factor also played a significant role in the conversion process of Muslim converts. In the three research projects, this was the second top reason why people changed their religious identities to Islam. While in Mehmedoglu and Kim's research, 33% of 27 converts reported that they converted to Islam due to their Muslim friends, relatives, and neighbors, Kōse's research and mine record that over 60% of the interviewees became Muslims through strong impressions of Muslims' behaviors and opinions.

Umar's conversion story is based on the affectional relationship with his Muslim friends. He is a businessman delivering milk from house to house. He first met Muslim friends five years ago while working in his business. They were Pakistanis who were working at Korean factories in a rural area. Since he was interested in meeting foreign workers in Korea, Umar often visited their homes. Even though he did not communicate well verbally with them, the foreigners were attractive to him. They were very friendly, kind, and tolerant towards him, unlike other materialistic and selfish religious persons. In addition, their religious ceremonies were spiritually inspiring to him. For Umar, everything about them was unfamiliar, but he was curious. They shared their culture, traditions, and beliefs and introduced the religion of Islam. Having grown up in a Buddhist family, Umar had never heard of that kind of religion before, but he accepted Islam because of his Muslim friends' behaviors and spiritual lives. He converted to Islam three years after his first meeting with them. He has spent much time with these Pakistanis and has learned about the Islamic world. Umar confesses, "Honestly, I do not know well what Islam is. I have a confidence that my friends and I definitely believe in a true religion, Islam. I think joining the Muslim brotherhood was the best decision in my

life.”⁴³⁷ In his conversion, there was no social or political pressure. The loving and spiritual community of Muslims stimulated his heart, moving him into Islamic faith.

In Köse’s study, inter-religious marriage is an affective factor in conversion. Fourteen (20%) reported that they had converted to Islam through getting married to Muslim fiancés/fiancées. The affectional factors influenced their conversion, but there is a gender issue. After marriage, females change their religious identities to Islam more easily than men.⁴³⁸ This phenomenon is the same in the Korean context. In my research, 27 out of 32 married couples answered that their spouses’ religion is also Islam, but most of them converted before marriage, except for four couples. These four cases were all women. They were non-Muslims before encountering their spouses, and their first contact with Islam was through their husbands, beginning with attending the prayer times with them, and then confessing ‘shahada.’

The next type of conversion pattern is experimental. Lofland and Sknonovd define it by stating, “Experimental conversion involves a relatively low degree of social pressure to participate since the recruit takes on a ‘try-it-out’ posture.”⁴³⁹ The potential converts have an attitude of ‘show me’ before changing their religious identities. Moreover, the prospective converts actively participate in Muslims’ religious practices and group activities in order to verify the religion’s credibility and validity.⁴⁴⁰ Of my interviewees, 67% specifically researched the religion of Islam before converting through reading literature and participating in Muslims’ religious ceremonies and regular community meetings.

⁴³⁷ Umar, Interview by Sungsu Park, May 26, 2012.

⁴³⁸ Köse, 103.

⁴³⁹ Lofland and Skonovd, 378.

⁴⁴⁰ Köse, 96-97.

Table 15 Length of Conversion Process from the First Contact with Islam

	Male (n=32)	Female (n=17)	Total (n=49)
Less than 3 months	3 (6%)	10 (20%)	13 (27%)
3-6 months	6 (12%)	3 (6%)	9 (18%)
6-12 months	19 (39%)	2 (4%)	21 (43%)
1-2 years	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	5 (10%)
Over 2 years	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)

Within my research, instant conversion was described in only two cases. These interviewees had mystical experiences and promptly decided to become Muslims.

My Muslim name is Habibullah. I am a baby Muslim. I need to trace back to my high school story in order to introduce my conversion history. I was in Hankuk Yeasul Hakgyeo (an artist's school). My major was music. I had opportunities to hear diverse music genres while studying. In particular, Arabic songs were very interesting to me. When I listened to that kind of music, I often felt that the songs touched my heart. Later, I learned that Arabic music is based on the religion of Islam, but I was a Christian, though not passionate about the faith. One day in August 2010, I had a fascinating dream. During the dream, I met someone who said, "Be a faithful Muslim." After such a special event, I immediately went to Seoul Jongang Sungwon and confessed 'shahada.'⁴⁴¹

I am Sahara. It was a mystical event when I converted to Islam. I was a stewardess at an airline company for a few years, but Saudi Arabian Airlines offered a better position and salary to me than the first job. I hesitated to decide because I never had been to the Middle East. I had no information about Islamic countries. However, I thought this would be a great challenge for me for a successful life. So, I transferred to that airline company. In 1985, when I arrived at King Fahd International Airport, I first heard the reciting of the Qur'an at the airport. The message of Allah made me feel so strange. The words were permeating my heart. I stopped for a while at the corner of the airport and got out of there immediately. I took a taxi and went to a local mosque. Then, I became a Muslim. If you ask me, "Why did you become a Muslim?" I might just answer, "Because of the mystical event." I think the religion of Islam is for me.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ Habibullah, Interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 21, 2012

⁴⁴² Sahara, Interview by Sungsu Park, May 9, 2012

Except the above two cases, most interviewees spent much time observing Muslims' religious ceremonies and studying Islamic theology after their first contact with Islam. In terms of Table 15, male Muslims were more careful than females in making a religious conversion. While 19 (38%) male Muslims converted to Islam at least a half a year later from first encountering Islam, 10 (20%) out of 17 female Muslims converted in less than three months. Nevertheless, most converts reported that they had invested enough energy and time in order to analyze the new religion, Islam, through various experimental lenses. Their conversion was not an emotional response, they strongly argued. While worshipping together with Muslims and becoming involved in other activities, the prospective converts were convinced that Islam was a true religion. Then, they fully embraced all Islamic belief, cultures, and traditions.

Unlike in the Korean context, Köse's research reports that of the 70 British Muslim testimonies examined, three converts answered that the coercive motif was involved in their conversion histories. Their conversion involved not only the coercive motif, but also the affectional motif. The three cases are closely related to marriage events. The first process for conversion started with the affectional motif. Then, the spouses strongly influenced the changing of their partner's religion to Islam.⁴⁴³ During the conversion process, most converts have experienced two or more conversion factors. In the Korean context, the Muslim couples never responded that their fiancées/fiancés became a coercive factor in their conversions. Some of the interviewees were already Muslims before marriage. They unanimously said, "I became a Muslim spontaneously. In

⁴⁴³ Köse, 98, 114-115.

my conversion story, there is no compulsion. Look the Qur'an 2:256; Islam is not a coercive religion.”

Finally, the revival motif was never a factor in all three research reports. Revivalism prevailed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, Lofland and Skonvd are skeptical that the revival motif has mobilized the hearts of pre-converts in the twentieth century. In particular, it is hard to find this pattern of conversion in the context of non-Islamic countries, the United Kingdom and Korea.

- Post-conversion Events

In religious studies, the sudden vs. gradual conversion process has been a hotly debated issue among scholars. While some converts experience a total change of life after a conversion event, just as the apostle Paul did, others report that they have needed much more time for the completed conversion. In my research, only two cases reported an instantaneous transformation. Both had mystical experiences before converting. After the events, they became completely involved in the Islamic faith and Muslim traditions. On the other hand, the rest of the 46 interviewees, belonged to the latter conversion type, except for one, who a born Muslim. Although they had confessed shahada years ago, some of them have experienced re-conversion later.

I was a Christian, but became a Muslim three years ago. One of my close friends introduced to me this religion when I was disappointed in the corruption of the Protestant church. At that time, I thought Islam was a better religion than Christianity. So, I converted to Islam with a verbal confession, shahada. Even though I did not know much about Islam, I participated in the prayer times and read the Qur'an regularly. One day, when I prayed at a masjid with my Muslim brothers, Muhammad's message came to my heart. I could not resist the word of Allah. I repented of my unfaithfulness and bowed down. Although I had converted to Islam

physically before, now I heartily confessed the shahada: *lā 'ilāha 'illā l-Lāh, Muḥammadur rasūlu l-Lāh.*⁴⁴⁴

In terms of Marc David Baer's theory, the above type of conversion would be categorized as a "transformation conversion process." D. Nock defines that transformation as "taking of a new way of life in place of the old ... deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right."⁴⁴⁵ Of 49 interviewees, 15 (31%) had experiences of reconversion and complete dedication of their lives to the religion of Islam. They want to be a leadership group for Korean Muslim communities. After conversion, they have regularly attended *Jumah* worship on Fridays and are positively involved in the masjid's activities. Moreover, they spontaneously participate in da'wa, proclaiming the message of the Qur'an to their friends, relatives, and families. These nine converts became completely Muslim families through their efforts. They totally turned from their previous religious system to a new faithful axis of Islam.

Of course, all converts do not have the reconversion event; six testimonies (12%) called themselves "secularized Muslims." They converted a couple of decades ago. Their conversion was for their own economic advantage rather than for faith. In the 1970-80s, when the Korean economic context was bad, they voluntarily changed their religious identities to Islam in order to have jobs offered from Middle Eastern countries. Since Muslims receive distinctive treatment in the Islamic countries, many Korean workers

⁴⁴⁴ Basir, Interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 21, 2012

⁴⁴⁵ D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 7.

converted to Islam by their will. Moreover, some students had chances to study in Islamic universities with full scholarships if they promised to become faithful Muslims.

Conversion to Islam was the pre-requisite for such great opportunities. With those attractions, many Koreans became Muslims physically. They had been faithful to Islam for a few years while staying with Muslims. However, when they returned back to Korea, they did not practice their faith in a non-Islamic country. They never went to the mosque for worshipping together even though they considered themselves to be Muslims. They were not concerned about following the five pillars of Muslims, but they said, "I am a Muslim." They are outside of Baer's conversion categorizations. They can be considered nominal Muslims.

Eight converts are in the adhesion process of conversion. Although they had confessed the shahada, their religious habits did not change. They still go to the church or the Buddhist temple. Since they do not yet have strong confirmation in their Islamic faith, they are still examining the religious system of Islam, and are keeping within their previous faith. Some of them said, "After converting to Islam, I did not inform my family of my conversion because they are not ready to accept the news of my conversion. I do not want to destroy my family with religious conflict. Since I have become Muslim, I still regularly go to the church with family."⁴⁴⁶

Of the 49 testimonies examined, 20 interviewees (41%) are categorized as being in the syncretism status in conversion. They were mostly Christians: Protestants and Catholics who confuse Islamic and Christian beliefs. They have studied Islam consistently after conversion. However, there are not enough resources translated into

⁴⁴⁶ The convert wanted to have the interview anonymously.

Korean in bookstores. Because of this reason, most converts learn about Islam through oral traditions rather than through written documents. The syncretistic converts' knowledge about Islam was generally coming from their Muslim friends. This approach to Islam makes them sometimes misunderstand the religion of Islam. For example, some of the interviewees believe that Muhammad is a messiah just as Jesus Christ of Christianity. Jesus was a false apostle, but Muhammad was true. Even one of them asked me, "Is not Muhammad a son of God?" He believed that salvation is possible to those affiliated with Islam. They reviewed Islamic beliefs through their previous theological lens and their reasoning. Then, they created new beliefs, mixing Islamic traditions and others. I think they are far from the orthodoxy of Islam. Nevertheless, they believe they are faithful Muslims.

Moreover, 24 (49%) of the interviewees argued that all religions believe in the same divinity even though they belong to different religions.

I think every religion is good. People believe in one divinity, but approach in different ways. All religions teach us how to be great. It is the ultimate purpose of all religions. So, I think we do not need to criticize other religious systems and people. We need to respect each other and can learn other aspects of the divine from other religions. I think we do not need to evangelize other religious people to Islam. I am going my way, but they are going their ways. If someone asks me about my religion, I am sure to introduce my faith, but I will not push him/her to my religion, Islam. I know that Islam is not an exclusive religion.⁴⁴⁷

Ironically, the half of interviewees had such a pluralistic theology of religions although Islamic theology is certainly founded on exclusivist monotheistic ideas. They are mingling their thoughts and previous religious beliefs with Islamic traditions. While

⁴⁴⁷ Khalid, Interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 21, 2012

conducting the interviews, I wondered whether some of them really knew what they believed.

From my research, one of my hypotheses was proven: Koreans have since the late twentieth century become interested in and have converted to Islam. In such a context, my research question was “Why?” Why do they want to become Muslims? What characteristics do the converts have? By analyzing the research data of this study, I have identified the converts’ general characteristics and conversion motifs below.

1. Demographically, Korean Muslim converts were well-educated and were considered middle class in Korean society.
2. The average age of conversion was the late 20s rather than adolescence.
3. Inter-marriage with Muslim spouses did not affect conversion in the Korean context. Most cases of Muslim couples show conversion before marriage, except in the cases of four Muslim women.
4. The conversion of Christians was the objective for the da’wa movements; 74% of Korean converts transferred their religious identities from Protestantism or Catholicism to Islam.
5. The previous religious traditions did not theologically and spiritually satisfy the converts who had problems with their religion.
6. Globalization and the development of IT instigated Islam’s expansion to Korean society. Muslims reached Koreans through diverse channels. In particular, the internet has been a new and effective da’wa method in the twenty-first century. Unlike in Köse, and Mehmedoglu and Kim’s research, 12% of the interviewees

first came into contact with Islamic traditions through the internet. The internet may become the best method for Islamic da'wa in the Korean context.

7. Before converting, most Korean converts did not have much information about Islam. They may have had a negative image of Islamic faith, but after learning about it, they realized that they had misunderstood the religion. The converts came to believe that Islam is the only true religion.
8. The intellectual motif is the main reason why they change their religious identities from the previous religion to Islam. Other motifs work together at the same time or at different times during people's conversion process.
9. The converts spent much time researching the religion of Islam before transferring their religious identity. After clearly understanding Islamic faith, they converted to Islam. However, some of them still had wrong information about Islam. Over 50% of the interviewees had incorrect faith understandings about Islam, although they identified themselves as Muslims. Their beliefs seemed to lean toward syncretism.

Among those nine characteristics of Korean Muslims' conversions, three factors are unexpected or unique. First, the converts tended to be older than expected. Second, the conversions of Korean Muslims came through intellectual/theological channels. Finally, a large number of the interviewees transferred their religious identities from Christianity to Islam. I will explore these three characteristics of Korean Muslim converts specifically in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

THE UNIQUENESS OF KOREAN MUSLIM CONVERTS

This chapter will present the three most surprising characteristics of Korean Muslim converts—their conversion age, the intellectual conversion motif, and their Christian backgrounds.

I. Conversion Age

A. Young Generation

With several psychologists—James Pratt, Edwin Starbuck, George Coe, and Granville Stanley Hall—Raymond F. Paloutzian categorizes the teenage years as “the ripe age” for conversion.⁴⁴⁸ According to the results of their research, it is often those who belong to this age group who change their religious identity from one to another. Similarly, one of the Muslim evangelists, Dongshin Park, reported that a number of young adults have been interested in and converted to Islam. “Recently, four converts confessed shahada before him in a month. All these new Muslims were young adults.”⁴⁴⁹ As a result, before starting this research, I expected that my research would target young Korean converts. However, while seeking Korean Muslims for interviews, I had to modify the age range of the interview objective because there were not enough young

⁴⁴⁸ Paloutzian, 99-100.

⁴⁴⁹ <http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/SERIES/298/478656.html> (Last accessed on Nov. 23, 2012).

Muslim converts in the Korean context. It is true that a number of teenagers and young adults have been curious about the religion of Islam. In my research, I counted the number of young adults who visited an Islamic da'wa center located at the front of Seoul Joongang Sungwon. There was an average of twenty visitors per day. Of those visiting the center, 88% of them were either in their late teens or early 20s. Muslim evangelists including Dongshin and Fatima introduce the Islamic faith and traditions to members of these younger generations. As a result, some of them showed significant interest in the religion of Islam. They visited again and again to learn about Islam and Muslim communities. According to this research, the pre-converts spent at least three months learning the new religion, Islam, before converting. They were very cautious concerning conversion. When they decided to change their religious identities to Islam, they confessed the "shahada" before the evangelists and thus became Muslims. However, I found that although they consciously made the decision to convert, these new, young Muslims easily discarded their new religious tradition, since it was incredibly difficult to live as Muslims in a non-Muslim country. After converting, they often encountered religious discrimination from family members or close friends. Below are testimonies of the situations I have described.

I am a religious person. I have been to churches, Buddhist temples, and shamans' houses. However, they did not clearly answer my questions about my religious curiosities. When I was on a spiritual journey, I first met the religion of Islam through mass media and wanted to learn its religious faith and practices. The Islamic faith and traditions were very interesting to me and attractive, which made me want to change my religious identity to Islam. So, I became a Muslim after visiting the da'wa center several times. However, when I shared this religious tradition with my close friends, they made me feel isolated and distanced themselves from me. They no longer wanted to have a relationship with me because they considered Islam a terrorist religion. To me, friends were more

important than keeping my faith so I have never gone to a mosque again. I was a Muslim, but I am not now.⁴⁵⁰

I am a student of a Christian theological seminary. I was born in a Christian family and was raised with a Christian background. I never had opportunities to learn about other religious faiths before. However, the seminary provided me the chance to learn about the world and other religions such as Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Islam. The study was very exciting, but I was only able to partially learn those religions because Christian scholars taught the faiths and practices from a Christian perspective. I wanted to directly hear the voices of other religious people about their faith. In particular, I was interested in the religion of Islam. In some respects, it is very similar to Christianity, but on the other hand, Islam has totally different theological perspectives. I learned a lot from the da'wa center. It is a very useful and helpful place to study the truth about Islam. After visiting this place, I realized that I had learned about Islam from the very distorted perspectives of Christian professors. Islam is very practical and an attractive religion to me. Honestly, I want to convert to Islam, but I hesitate to change my religious identity because of my family. Becoming a Muslim would definitely cause serious conflict with my mom and dad.⁴⁵¹

I am a member of an online Muslim community, but I did not yet convert to Islam. I just have fellowship with Muslims online. I think Muslim brothers and sisters are very thoughtful and kind. All my Muslim friends share in Allah's love. I have had relationships with them online, but these days I have had the chance to have friendships with them face-to-face. It is a great experience to be with them. I think I will confess shahada soon in order to be a part of the community. However, I am wondering how difficult it will be, as a Muslim, to live in Korea, a non-Islamic community.⁴⁵²

For Muslims, the Korean context is not optimal. Although Islam is currently undergoing revival in Korea, Korean Muslims are still a small minority in the Korean context. They have experienced various biases and delusions from their immediate family, relatives, friends, and institutions. For example, a young Korean Muslim whom I

⁴⁵⁰ The interviewee was early 20s. She did not want to reveal her personal identity to the public. She asked me to use the interview anonymously.

⁴⁵¹ Jiyoung Kim, interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 22, 2012.

⁴⁵² Minhwan Park, interview by Sungsu Park, May 5, 2012.

interviewed made an apartment contract with a landlord. However, the owner drove her out of the apartment when he saw her wearing a hijab because he was a faithful Christian. It was due only to a religious reason that he broke the contract. In another case, while serving at a Korean military camp, fellow soldiers bullied a young, male Muslim. The only cause was that he belonged to an Arab religion, Islam. He never ate food cooked with pork, nor did he salute the national flag. Moreover, as drinking alcohol is a popular part of culture among young Korean adults, it is not easy to refuse this drinking culture because the young generation considers friendship as highly valued. The food culture is another barrier to Korean Muslims in keeping their Islamic faith. Since Muslims eat halal food, their diet has to be totally⁴⁵³ changed after converting to Islam. However, pork⁴⁵³ is a common ingredient in Korean food. Korean cooks popularly mix pieces of pork in many foods. When new Muslims learn the strict food regulations of the Islamic tradition, they struggle due to being seriously concerned about whether they can keep their religious faith or not due to the inconvenience of living in Korean society as Muslims. Thus, for those reasons, although they are interested in the religion of Islam, young Koreans are not willing to convert easily. Even young adults who verbally confess “shahada” have turned back on their decisions when they encounter those problems in Korean society.

B. Older Korean Muslim Generations I: Converting to Islam over 25 years ago

Seventy-six percent of my interview subjects transferred their religious identities when they were in their late 20s. Half of the converts were between 40 and 50 years old.

⁴⁵³ Along with alcohol and alcoholic beverages, bacon, cider, cocaine, codeine, collagen, ham, insulin, lard, pepsin, pork are Haram to Islam. In Islamic law, those items, are categorized as prohibited.

This conversion age group is older than I expected. Their conversion motifs are diverse. Six Koreans who converted to Islam over 25 years ago changed their religious identities because of their living situations.

When I was a teenager, I hoped to have three meals a day. Although my parents worked hard every day as blue-collar workers, the food was never enough for our family. I hated being hungry. I wanted to be a rich man. At that time, I found a way to earn a lot of money. It was by going to the construction field of the Middle East. I applied for a job and was admitted. Before leaving, the Korean government sent me to the Seoul Joongang Sungwon in order to learn the religion of Islam and Muslims' culture so I would know what I would encounter in the Middle East. I had never heard of Islam before. Furthermore, growing up with a Buddhist background, the Islamic faith and traditions were unfamiliar. However, I converted to Islam because conversion was a pre-requisite in order to go to Arabic countries. Honestly, I did not care what religion I was. My main concern was having enough money by working in a foreign country. While staying in a Muslim community, Islam came into my heart slowly. When I felt loneliness, I went to a mosque with my Muslim brothers and performed prayer rituals together. At that time, I often had strange feelings in my heart while praying. Reciting the Qur'an made my turbulent heart calm. I thought Islam is the religion for me. After returning to Korea, I have kept my faith.⁴⁵⁴

After high school, fortunately, I had an opportunity to study at college while most of my friends worked in primary or secondary industries to survive. In the 1980s, the study of Arabic was strange to me, but the Korean government positively recommended this major and employed those who studied the language, sending them to the Middle East as translators. I thought it would be a great opportunity for my future to study the Arabic language and culture in college. Islam was a basic requirement in learning Arabic, because the textbook was the Qur'an. I naturally learned about the Islamic faith and Muslim traditions while studying in college. Then, an Islamic university offered me the chance for further study of the Arabic language and culture with a full scholarship. By accepting the offer, I spent five years learning Arabic and Islamic traditions. The more I dug into Islam, the more I was attracted to the religion. I hope this great religion will spread more, throughout Korean society.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁴ Khalid, interview by Sungsu Park, May 1, 2012.

⁴⁵⁵ Basir, interview by Sungsu Park, June 1, 2012.

In the beginning of their conversions, the main motif of their religious conversion was economic benefits. Such a phenomenon was not unusual during that period of Korean history. Due to Korea's severe economic problems, the country could not easily ignore the economic support of Islamic countries. In such an economic context, Korean workers and students accepted the Islamic faith and became Muslims. They did not know much about Islam when they converted. However, they fell into the religion of Islam while spending time in an Islamic environment. Korean Muslims who converted to Islam over 25 years ago first encountered Islam in such contexts and became faithful while staying with Muslim brothers and sisters in Islamic countries for several years.

C. Older Korean Muslim Generations II: Converting to Islam less than 10 years ago

The other members of the older generations, those between the ages 40 and 50 who transferred their religious identities to Islam less than ten years ago, have different conversion factors compared to those who converted over 25 years ago. These Muslim converts had experienced serious crises such as divorce, dismissal, or bankruptcy, when they first encountered the Islamic faith.

I divorced my wife in 2007. There were diverse reasons for the separation, but religion was an important aspect. I was not a religious person, while my wife was a faithful Christian. She went to church all the time. Sometimes she did not take care of our children due to participating in church activities. Furthermore, she forced me into going to her church with her. Because of those experiences, I had a negative attitude toward Christianity. In addition, we had incompatibility of temperament and economic problems. In the end, we decided to divorce. When I was struggling during all this, my friends brought me to a meeting of foreign Muslim brothers. I observed their religious performance and fellowship. They fully enjoyed their life and relied on their religion, Islam. The experience inspired me to change my religious identity to Islam.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁶ Muhammad, interview by Sungsu Park, May 28, 2012

I first encountered Islam in Indonesia. When I received a dismissal notice from my previous company, I was very disappointed. I did not know what I should do for my family. I had never stopped working after graduating college. I put all of my life into my job, but I lost everything when I was fired. I cleaned up my desk and took a trip to Indonesia for a while. The place was totally different from Korea, where I was born and grew up. In particular, I stayed in a small village for five days. The town was a Muslim community. There were no fences between the houses. Lives of the villagers were simple, but respectable. Through the attractiveness of that Muslim town, I visited a mosque when I came back to Korea. I spent one year learning about Islamic faith and traditions and then transferred my religion to Islam. I think Islam is the best religion in the world.⁴⁵⁷

I had been in business for a long time, but I filed for bankruptcy with Korea's International Monetary Fund in 1998. I lost my factories, houses, friends, and even family. My life was hopeless. At that time, I met some foreign Muslim brothers and sisters. They had come to Korea with the "Korean Dream." However, their circumstances were terrible. They experienced discrimination while living in Korea. Nevertheless, they kept smiles on their faces at all times. The Muslims believed Allah would supply the best for them if they kept their faith in all circumstances. Moreover, they showed me their kindness. When I became homeless, they shared their property and food with me. It was so impactful. I researched the origin of their optimism and positivism. It was based on their faith. I did not know theoretically what Islam was, but I knew Islam was a great religion. I have learned the religion through my Muslim brothers and sisters.⁴⁵⁸

In his book, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, Lewis Rambo proposes a sequential stage model of conversion. "Conversion is a process of change over time, generally exhibiting a sequence of processes, although there is sometimes a spiraling effect a going back and forth between stages."⁴⁵⁹ Crisis is located in the second stage of the whole conversion process.

⁴⁵⁷ Muhammad, interview by Sungsu Park, May 25, 2012

⁴⁵⁸ Shabill, interview by Sungsu Park, June 22, 2012

⁴⁵⁹ Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1993), 16-17.

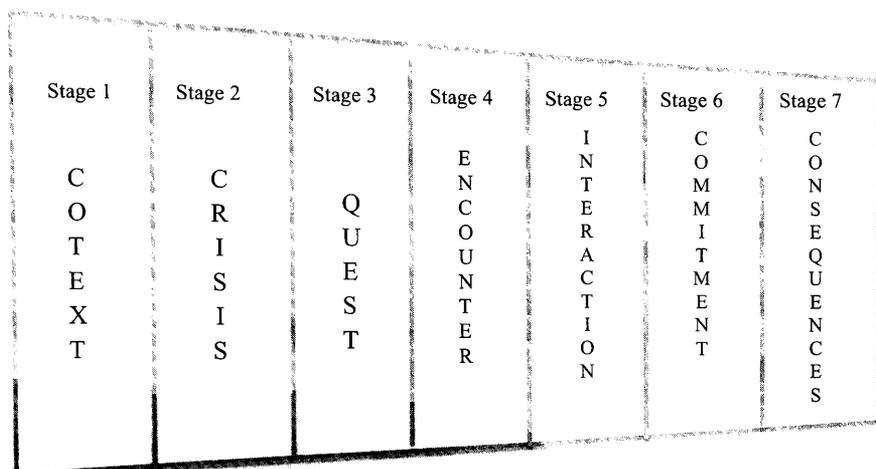


Figure 8 Lewis Rambo's A Sequential Stage Model

Of course, the order of these stages is flexible, but most potential converts encounter the crisis stage before transferring their religious identity from one to another. According to John Lofland and Rodney Stark, crisis is a “felt discrepancy between some imaginary ideal state of affairs and the circumstances in which these people saw themselves caught up.”⁴⁶⁰ The contours of the crisis are diverse: mild or severe, brief or prolonged, limited or extensive, internal or external, and continuous or discontinuous.⁴⁶¹ When people meet those kinds of crises, most of them are used to relying on religious power and theory. However, if the religion does not provide appropriate responses for them, people would search for another religion. Many Korean Muslim converts belong to those cases.

⁴⁶⁰ John Lofland and Rodney Stark, “Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective,” in *American Sociological Review* 30 (1965): 864.

⁴⁶¹ Rambo, 46-47.

In the Korean context, those in their 40s and 50s are part of a psychologically, physically, and economically unstable age as compared to others. Those in that age group often experience divorce, losing their jobs, or becoming bankrupt. They live in a time of diverse crisis circumstances in Korea. When such crises visit their lives, they easily collapse psychologically and physically. In those moments, the renewed Islam in Korea in the twenty-first century strategically reaches them through multiple da'wa methods. In this Korean context and with the efforts of Muslims for da'wa, the conversion of this older generation has increased in Korea.

Another reason why older generations of Koreans are interested in and converting to Islam in the twenty-first century is due to the increasing influx of the foreign Muslim population. The number of foreigners who live in Korea was reported as 1,410,000 in 2012. In accordance with the changing Korean view toward globalization, Koreans in their 40s and 50s have started to open businesses targeting foreigners. In particular, since about 10% of the total number of foreigners are Muslims coming from Southeast Asia and Arab countries, Korean businessmen are interested in opening stores and services for Muslims such as travel agencies, car dealerships, cell phone stores, and so forth. The businessmen must study and learn about the Islamic traditions and Muslim cultures in order to successfully run their businesses. For this, they often visit a mosque and go to the da'wa center. Then, some of them convert to Islam heartily, apart from their original business purpose.

My Muslim name is Abdullah. I am a car dealer. I have been doing this kind of work since 1997. My main customers were Koreans until 2005. At that time, I focused on foreign Muslims coming from Indonesia and Bangladesh because their populations have steadily increased in Korea since 2000. Today, my business only targets Muslims. When I turned my business focus to them, I realized I needed to study Islam for my business

because I struggled to understand my customers, Muslims. For example, one day, I met a Muslim who ran a large store in Korea. He wanted to buy several cars for his business. Since I recognized he was an important customer, I took him to a restaurant and ordered for him. However, he showed me disapproval because of the food I ordered. It was mixed with pieces of pork. I never saw him again. I realized I must spend time learning my patrons' religion in order to work well with Muslims. I started to visit the Seoul Joongang Sungwon with my Muslim friends and took several classes offered by the mosque. Honestly, the Islamic faith and culture was uncomfortable to me in the beginning. I did not know why they performed prayer five times per day at the mosque. However, studying Islam and observing Muslim communities for a long time made me change my mind. I think Islam is the best and perfect religion in the world. Why don't you convert to Islam? Come and see.⁴⁶²

II. The Major Conversion Motif of the Korean Muslims: Intellectual

In 2010, two Christian leaders, Mansyuk Lee and Paul Choi, sought to provoke Korean Christians' attention about da'wa movements taking place in South Korea. They lectured at a number of churches with the title, "Islamic Phobia: A Muslim Tsunami is coming to Korea." The two missiologists argued that Muslim countries have sent lay missionaries to South Korea. These foreign Muslims have sought to marry Korean women and bear many Muslim children in Korea. Furthermore, they taught that Muslims have forced their spouses' family members and relatives to convert to Islam. Therefore, the Muslim population would rapidly increase in Korea very soon. Lee and Choi explained that this is a popular da'wa method employed by Muslims to expand their religious power to Korea.⁴⁶³ They emphasized that an affectional motif has instigated the revival of Islam in Korea. However, according to my research, the intellectual factor is the most important, rather than the affectional when Korean Muslim converts transfer

⁴⁶² Abdullah, interview by Sungsu Park, June 12, 2012

⁴⁶³ Matthew Chung, "Korean Evangelicals' responses toward Muslims who live in Korea compared with the Context in England," in *The 36th Korean Missiological Forum* (May, 28, 2010): 1.

their religious identities. Over 80% (39) of my interviewees answered that Islam became their favored religion because of its rationality. Of course, other motifs such as a mystic motif, affectional, and experimental factors, worked together in the conversion processes of the Korean Muslims. Nevertheless, the rational belief system of Islam served to be a point of great attractiveness to Korean Muslims, even though their religious paradigms totally changed. There are two reasons why a Korean approaches Islam intellectually: the well-educated context of Korea and the realization of Islamic theology's rationality.

A. The Emphasis on Education in Korea

When Christianity grew dramatically in Korea, a mystic motif played a significant role in Korean Christian history. The rapid growth of the Korean church took place in the 1900s and again in the 1960-80s.

Korean Protestantism has had a history of revivalism, the most notable being the Wonsan revival of 1903 and the 'Korean Pentecost' that commenced at a meeting of Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries at Pyongyang in 1907. In 1906-10, 80,000 Koreans became Christians. ... The most remarkable growth of a single congregation ever recorded took place under the ministry of David (formerly Paul) Yonggi Cho (1936-) and his future mother-in-law Jashil Choi (1915-89), who began a small tent church in a slum area of Seoul in 1958 with five members. By 1962, this congregation had grown to 800 and in 1964, Cho built a sanctuary to seat 2,000 people. He bought property in Yoido in 1969 and dedicated a new 10,000-seat auditorium there in 1973. This Full Gospel Central church as it was then known, was now receiving international attention.⁴⁶⁴

In those decades, Pentecostalism led the revival of Korean Christianity. Through revival movements, mystical experiences such as hearts being strangely warmed, demons being driven out, and diseases being healed, guided many Koreans to the church. The

⁴⁶⁴ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge and NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 136-137.

early Korean Christians did not know much about complicated Christian theologies and doctrines. Most of them did not read Scripture directly because they were illiterate. Most Koreans rarely had a chance to study in schools. To those Korean Christians, conversion by intellectual approaches to Christianity could not be expected. However, in the twenty-first century, the Korean context has completely changed. Since 1985, elementary and middle schools have become compulsory. Korean parents have no longer allowed their children to be illiterate as they once were. Koreans have boldly invested in a quality education for their offspring and developed effective systems. As a result, 79% of Korean high school students were admitted to colleges in 2010. The rate has constantly increased since the 1990s. In such a context, 69% (34) of my interviewees graduated from college, graduate, or post-graduate schools.

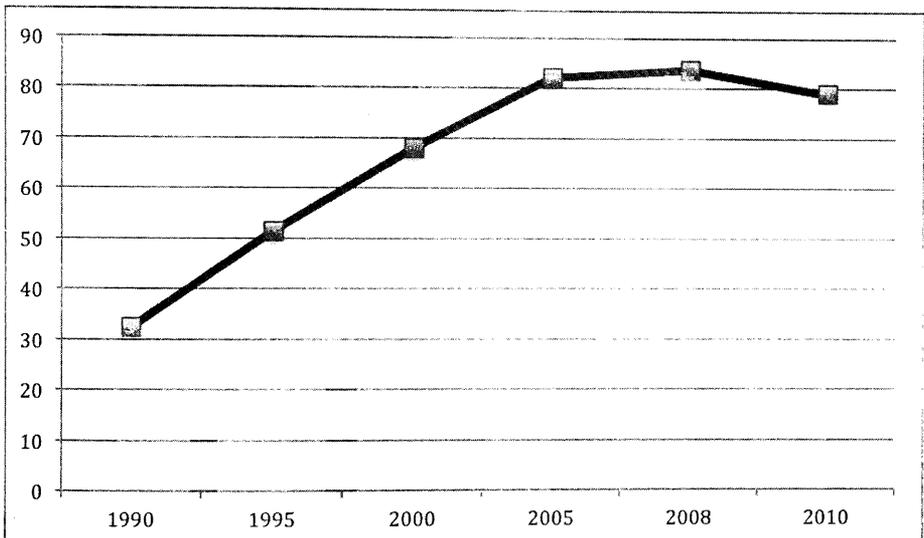


Figure 9 The Rate of College Admissions

Koreans who have grown up in a highly educated culture have begun in the twenty-first century to approach religion intellectually. Conversion cases involving instant mystical experiences are rare today. Well-educated Koreans sufficiently research religions they are interested in and carefully decide whether or not to transfer their religious roots from one to another. In my research, Korean Muslim converts also spent much time studying the Islamic faith and traditions before converting. Except for two interviewees, all of the potential converts observed and participated in Muslims' religious ceremonies, and listened to several lectures about Islamic theology and doctrines offered by the mosque. They spontaneously explored Islam through books, magazines, television, the internet, Muslim friends, and so forth for at least six months.

My name is Osman. I am a religious person. Although I was born and grew up in a Catholic family, I was interested in studying other religions. I wondered which religion was true and which were wrong. I wanted to be a religious scholar, but my parents opposed my dream. As a result, I became a businessman. However, I began religious studies lately. I bought numerous books about religions and studied world religions and folk religions for a few years. In the conclusion of my studies, while folk religions and Buddhism are manipulated religions by human beings, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are revealed religions. I think the last religion, Islam, has the best credibility because Muslims preserve the original scripture of the Qur'an.⁴⁶⁵

Not only do most Korean Muslims criticize Christian leaders' emphasis on spiritual experiences, but they also regard Muslims who convert through mystical experiences as a heretical religious group, divergent from true Islamic tradition. They highlight Islam as a rational religion.

⁴⁶⁵ Osman, interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 30, 2012.

B. The Emphasis on Islam as a Rational Religion.

Islamic da'wah is therefore the presentation of rational, i.e. critical, truth. It is not the proclamation of an event, or even of a truth (idea), but the presentation, for critical assessment as to truth value, of a proposition, a factum, which has theoretical (metaphysical) and practical (ethical) relevance for man. ... That da'wah is rationally necessary is implied by the fact that in presenting its case, Islam presents it as natural or rational truth. "Rational" here means "critical." Men differ in their use of reason but there would be no point to our dialogue unless we assume the truth to be knowable, that is, unless we believe it possible to arrive at principles, which overarch our differences. Therefore, the standpoint of Islam is not an "act of faith," but one of "conviction." It is one of knowledge, of trust in the human power to know.⁴⁶⁶

When I interviewed three Korean Imams, they agreed with al-Faruqi's assertion. They were all proud of believing in a historic and scientific religion. The major reason they became Muslims and leaders of the Korean Muslim community was also the attractiveness of Islamic theology's rationality.

I certainly believe in the existence of a supernatural being transcending this world. However, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism do not acknowledge that fact. They are parts of philosophies, but not religions. On the other hand, Hindus worship multiple gods. I do not think pluralistic gods exist in the world; this is an idea made by religious persons later. I believe in a monotheistic faith, so I studied the three monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—before converting to Islam. As a result of the research, I found faults of the first two religions. Jews understood that God's love being confined to a particular ethnic group, the Jews. In terms of Judaism, God is not universal. He is an ethnic divine being. This does not make sense to me as a non-Jew. Also, I could not agree with the Christians' trinity. How can a supernatural being be three different beings yet still be one? If Jesus was a Son of God, how did God's son die on the cross? On the other hand, the last monotheistic religion, Islam, makes sense to me concerning those uncertain theologies of the other two religions. The Qur'an and Hadith are very useful to understand the distorted histories and doctrines of Judaism and Christianity. Moreover, the scriptures easily introduce eschatology, judgments of Allah, and

⁴⁶⁶ al-Faruqi, 394-395.

eternal life. I hope to go to paradise by having Islamic faith and accumulating good deeds in the world.⁴⁶⁷

The faith of the Korean Muslim evangelists is based on the rationality of Islamic faith and theology. Therefore, when they guide non-Muslims to the Islamic world, they approach them by various intellectual channels as below.

a. Opening an Islamic Book Center

Sheikh Muneer Ahmad opened a bookstore a few years ago. This is the first and only store to sell Islamic literature in Korea. The book center provides diverse academic materials about Islam not only to foreign Muslims, but also to Koreans. In particular, it distributes several free books—*What is the Purpose of Life, Faith of Islam, Why Islam Forbids Pork, Shahada, Introduction to the Holy Qur'an and Hadith* and *The True Message of Jesus Christ*—for da'wa to Korean visitors who are interested in Islam. Those books are translated into Korean. Since the owner is an intelligent Muslim from Pakistan, visitors also have opportunities to learn Islamic faith and theology through dialoguing with him.

b. Publishing Books

Korean Muslim scholars who were sent to Islamic countries in order to study Islam and Muslim communities began to return to Korea in the early 1990s and resettled in Korean society. Not only do they teach at universities about the culture and religion of the Middle East, but they also have published numerous articles and books about Islam.

⁴⁶⁷ This interviewee did not want to share personal information.

In particular, since the terror event of 9/11, intelligent Korean Muslims have actively worked on writing books in order to introduce Islam to Koreans with truer perspectives. As a result, Koreans are now more easily able to approach Islam if they are interested.

c. Using Websites for Intellectual Communication with Non-Muslims

In 2010, the Korean Muslim community joined the website “Chat Islam Online,” run by the world e-umma community. Six Korean Muslims have been working on the online chat site for Koreans who are curious about Islam. Potential converts are able to ask whatever questions they have about Islam. I have visited this website and spent time chatting with them about Islam. The responses were very kind and sought to make clear the questions that I had. Numerous Koreans have visited this website in order to know more about the religion of Islam.

Korean Muslim communities have also communicated with other Muslim brothers and sisters through several websites: <http://cafe.naver.com/islamworld>, <http://blog.naver.com/eunsuya>, <http://islaminkorea.or.kr>, and so forth. Korean Muslims share their difficulties in living in Korea as Muslims with other Korean Muslims. As people post inquires about Islamic traditions and religious practices on the websites, other faithful and intelligent Muslims search the Qur’an and Hadiths, and seek to give satisfying answers to the questioners’ intellectual requests. Since they are open to everyone, the internet websites are used for the purpose of da’wa.

d. Inviting Potential Converts to Public Lectures

In 2012, the young Korean Muslim community worked with foreign Muslim students to invite their Korean colleagues to “Salaam Nuri,” which means “peaceful world.” Since May 2012, they have opened public lectures for their non-Muslim Korean brothers and sisters. In these seminars, young and well-educated Muslims introduce the history of Islam, the background of Islam’s beginnings, significant doctrines in the Qur’an, the basic faith of Muslims, their religious practices, and so forth. The Korean visitors who are invited by foreign Muslim students are generally very interested in their friends’ religion. Previously, they had only learned about Islam from textbooks at school. This was strange to them, but through these meetings, the visitors recognized how the Korean textbooks had distorted Islamic history and theology. Some of them reported that these lectures were very informative to help them know more about Islam.

Thus, the reason why Koreans converted to Islam through the intellectual motif is due to the changing educational background in Korea from illiteracy to a high emphasis on education. Moreover, Korean Muslim communities have constantly developed diverse intellectual da’wa methods aimed at well-educated Koreans.

III. Korean Muslim Converts Coming from the Korean Church

According to the studies of Köse and Poston, most converts belonged to a major religion within their context before changing to Islam. In the case of Köse’s research, since the Church of England was the main denomination in the British context, 71% of his interviewees were born and raised in that religious background.⁴⁶⁸ Poston’s study had

⁴⁶⁸ Köse, 67.

a similar result as Köse's study. He interviewed 72 North Americans and Europeans living in the United States. When he asked them about their religious background before converting, 41 (57%) reported that they were Christians.⁴⁶⁹ However, the Korean context was different from those two cases. Although Buddhism is the largest religion in Korea, most converts transferred their religious identities from Christianity to Islam rather than from Buddhism. In 2002, when Mehmedoglu and Kim researched 27 Korean Muslims, the result was that 18 interviewees (67%) had been previously either Protestant or Catholic.⁴⁷⁰ This study supports Mehmedoglu and Kim's research. I interviewed 49 Korean Muslim converts. Of the total research population, 73% (36) had Christian backgrounds. Only four interviewees answered that they were Buddhists before becoming Muslims. The phenomenon is unique to Korea when compared to the contexts of England and North American. Why are Korean Christians leaving the church to become Muslims? Three major reasons can be posited: ethical corruption in the Korean church, the complicated theology of Christianity, and the exclusiveness of the Korean Christian church toward other religions.

A. Christianity vs. Islam: Ethics

Korean Christianity has grown radically in the last century. Numerous charismatic leaders have led the revival of the church in Korea. The major problem is that some Christian leaders have regarded the church as their private property. They have not been open with church members about the church's financial records and have secretly saved resources for their lives after retiring. Many pastors also practice authoritarianism rather

⁴⁶⁹ Poston, 166.

⁴⁷⁰ Mehmedoglu and Kim, 127.

than servant leadership in the church. Lay members of the church have criticized the church's hierarchical structure. Furthermore, in recent years, several Christian leaders have revealed their sexual immorality. Due to those corruptions in the church, numerous Christians have left the church to head to the mosque.

I was a born-again Christian. I had never gone to other places on Sunday other than church before converting to Islam. I think I was a faithful Christian along with my parents. However, I was disappointed with Christianity when I observed that my pastor caused friction among the church members due to the church's finances. If he believed in the Christian God, he would not create such serious problems in the church. Moreover, if the Christian God is true, He should intervene in the disputes and make them stop. I felt that the Christian God already died. However, when I met a Muslim Imam, his life was totally different from the church's leaders. He was content to live in honest poverty. He was very kind to me. I also liked the egalitarianism in Islamic theology. I fully accepted into the appeal of Islamic faith and theology when I transferred my religious identity from Christianity to Islam.⁴⁷¹

When I was young, one of my friends guided me to the church and helped me get baptized. I became a Christian. Although I was attending church regularly, I don't think I was a good Christian; I was nominal. However, I stopped going to the church when I heard that the pastor sexually assaulted a church member. I could not believe that this happened in the church. How did this sacred person make such a serious mistake? I have never gone to the church again and searched for another religion to belong to. I chose the religion of Islam. As a woman, I wanted to become a Muslim because Islam is for women. Wearing a hijab protects me from any sexual violation. In terms of the Qur'an, a sexual criminal must be condemned to death. I think Islamic faith and theology guides Muslims to more ethical ways.⁴⁷²

B. Christianity vs. Islam: Theological Clarity

The second reason why most Korean Muslim converts are coming from Christianity is the ambiguity of Christian theology. When I was doing this research, I

⁴⁷¹ Emir, interview by Sungsu Park, May 14, 2012.

⁴⁷² The interviewee does not want to open her personal information.

asked the Korean Muslims who were Christians before converting, “How serious was your practice in your previous religion?” While 16 interviewees (33%) reported they had not participated in religious services of the church, 25% of the Korean Muslims (12) answered they had had great passion in their Christian faith. However, the latter were not satisfied in their intellectual and spiritual desires in Christianity even though they were actively involved in studying the doctrine and polity of their churches and participated in many programs. In particular, there were two interviewees who emphasized this. One of them was a male, Muslim graduate from Chongshin Theological Seminary, one of the popular Presbyterian theological schools in Korea. Another is a Muslim woman. Her father had served in the Korean military as a Christian Chaplain for several years. Both had great passion for Christianity prior to their conversions, but live as faithful Muslims today.

I am a Muslim, but I was a passionate Christian before converting to Islam. Let me introduce my conversion story. God had called me as a minister in high school. For the vocation, I decided to go to a theological seminary in order to deeply encounter God and learn about the faith. I spent four years at the school learning theology, the doctrines of Calvinism, and the polity of the Korean Presbyterian Church. However, this study did not give me satisfaction for my intellectual thirst about the supernatural. After graduating, I served foreign Muslims as a social worker from the late 1990s. In the 2000s, the influx of foreigners to Korea radically increased. Fortunately, I have often worked with Muslims coming from Southeast Asian countries such as Bangladesh and Indonesia. As an efficient social worker, I sought to open their minds in order to be work with them well, but it was impossible to have a good relationship without knowing their culture and religion. So I started learning about Islamic faith and Muslim traditions in order to effectively perform my work. I never knew that Islam had the same spiritual roots as Judaism and Christianity. While learning about Islam, I realized that Islamic theology were clearer than Christian theology and very practical. Moreover, I met various Muslim friends while working as a social worker. Their religious lives were respectable. They struggled to keep their religious identity in Korea, a non-Islamic country. I started studying Islam for my social work ministry, but the clear theology of Islam and the lives of Muslims attracted

me. I realized that Islam is theologically, practically, and ethically better than Christianity, a religion I had believed forever, so I recently decided to be a Muslim.⁴⁷³

My name is Fatima. I was born in a Christian family. My father was a pastor serving in the military. My childhood and teenage years were filled with church. I actively participated in church activities as a pastor's kid and voluntarily participated in Bible studies. Church life was fun and interesting to me, but its theology was so complicated. I especially could not understand the doctrine of Trinity. How can the Father be Son and Spirit? They are all different. Christians believe that they all have different characteristics, but they are one and the same. I also cannot believe the events of Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection. By Christian faith, God sent his son, Jesus, to the world and died for humanity's sin. If Jesus was the Son of God, how could a divine child be cursed on the cross? Christian beliefs never made sense to me. Moreover, I was disappointed by my father's hypocritical life. While he was a kind pastor in the church, when he returned home, he took his good mask as a pastor off and was outrageous toward my mother, sister, and me. He had two faces before God. I think the God my father believes in is not true. If it is genuine, God must punish his life. In such a context, I was looking for a true religion. At that moment, I met the man who is now my husband, a Muslim. He introduced me to the sacred book of Islam, the Qur'an. It was very similar to the stories of the Christian scriptures. The more I read the word of Allah, the more I wanted to become a Muslim, but I was a Christian. My father is a Christian pastor. I was confused about which faith is true. I started studying the religion of Islam for one and half years and finally realized that I had misunderstood Islam and Christianity. I realized that Islam is the true religion. Allah is the only one true God, and Muhammad is the last Prophet. I confessed "‘ilāhā ’illā l-Lāh, Muḥammadur rasūlu l-Lāh."⁴⁷⁴

These converts repeatedly highlighted that Islam is a rational religion. When they approached Christianity through intellectual perspectives, they were not fully satisfied by Christian theology because its doctrines and beliefs are based on mystical and

⁴⁷³ Dohyun Ban, interview by Sungsu Park, May 13, 2012. His Muslim name is Abdullah. After he converted to Islam, he opened a masjid in the city of Kimpo and has played the role of Imam for the foreign Muslim workers.

⁴⁷⁴ Fatima, interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 16, 2012. She was the first interviewee for this research. Her husband is a foreign Muslim. The inter-marriage influenced her conversion to Islam. She has been working at a part time job at the "Islamic Information Center for Koreans" nearby Seoul Joongang Sungwon. Each week she meets about fifty Koreans who are interested in Islam. She has dedicated her life to spreading the Islamic faith to Koreans.

spiritual realities such as Jesus' birth, resurrection, and redemption. They just sought to understand beliefs with their brains, not in their hearts or by their spirits. In contrast, they argue that Muslims' explanations are clear on the mystic events of Christian scripture. Fatima says, "Islamic faith is reasonable while Christianity is superficial and illogical." The most faithful people were attracted to the intellectual characteristics of Islam. In addition, unlike those who were nominal or weak believers in their previous religion, the twelve Muslims noted have spent much time studying Islam professionally. Nine of them have gone on to Islamic institutions or universities for further study in the religion of Islam. They have contributed greatly in developing Islamic theology in Korea and the Korean Muslim community.

C. Christianity vs. Islam: Generosity

Those who changed their religious identities from Christianity to Islam pointed out the extreme exclusive attitudes of the church as a serious negative image of Korean Christianity. Shamefully, it is true that most Korean Christians are radical in their stance against other religions. For example, some fundamentalist Christians have gone to Buddhist temples and scribbled on the walls of their scared places. Another Christian group vandalized a statue of Tan-gun⁴⁷⁵ at an elementary school. When I visited the Seoul Jungang Sungwon, I met several Christians who were walking around the mosque, just as Joshua did in order to destroy the walls of Jericho. The Muslim converts criticized those behaviors of Christians as impoliteness toward other religious people.

⁴⁷⁵ Tan-gun is known as the founding father of Korea. In the historical books about Korea, such as Samkukyousa, Jaewangwoongi, and Saejongshilrok, he is often mentioned as the first person in Korean society. Some Koreans apotheosize and worship him.

I was a Christian, but I left the church because of the impertinence of radical Christians. They proclaimed the Christian gospel in public places such as in the subway, on the street, in front of neighbors' porches and so forth. Some of them even invaded the sacred places of other religions and then worshipped in their own ways. By those actions, I was disappointed that I was also a Christian. On the other hand, Islam is a peaceful religion. Of course, Islamic terrorists are heretical groups, divergent from true Islamic traditions. Orthodox Muslims have sought to make peace in the world. They never force non-Muslims to change their religious identities to Islam. Muslims' da'wa methods are totally peaceful. They respect other religious people and seek to help them understand the truth of Islam. I am thankful for the generosity of Muslims.⁴⁷⁶

Ironically, although Islamic theology is based on monotheism and exclusiveness toward other religious faiths, many Korean Muslims do not recognize the true nature of Islam correctly. 49% (24) of the 49 interviewees had pluralistic or universalistic attitudes toward people of other religions. Some of them said that all religions lead to the one supernatural being. They believe the ways of reaching the eternal are the only things that are different. On the other hand, others argue that all people find salvation through their religious faith. Therefore, a religious person does not need to force people of other religions into their beliefs in order to lead them to salvation. All people have to respect whatever others believe. The Korean converts who have such a theology of religions strongly criticize the exclusive attitudes of Christians towards other religions. They are proud of that they are belonging to a peaceful religion, Islam.

I really dislike Christians because I often observed their impolite behaviors towards non-believers. When I took a subway, for instance, I met a Christian evangelist. She had a picket on which she had written an evangelical phrase: Jesus=Heaven, No Jesus=Hell. It was a disgusting statement to me who do not believe in Christ. If God loves people, how does the loving God make a hell? Furthermore, Christians absolutely regard other religions as Satanic. I don't agree with the Christian theology of religions. I think each religion has salvation by their own ways.

⁴⁷⁶ Saad, interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 21, 2012.

Therefore, people must not blame other religions. We have to respect other religious faiths and to seek to work together in order to make a better world. I believe that Islam is a peaceful religion and has positive attitudes to other religions. We Muslims are also involved in diverse social works and cooperating with other religions for solving the social issues of Korean society. Islam is very generous to others, unlike Christians. That's the reason why I became a Muslim.⁴⁷⁷

In summary, Islam is a religion in revival in twenty-first century Korea. While Christianity is stagnating and declining, Korean Muslim communities rightly target specific people: those in their 40s and 50s who have experienced a variety of crises in the middle years of their life, well-educated Koreans, and Christians disappointed by the corruption of the church and Christian leaders. All of the above groups are pre-converts who might be willing to change their religious identities from one to another. When they encounter Islam through the various da'wa methods advanced by Korean Muslims, the pre-converts readily join the Korean umma community. The Korean Christian church must recognize the changing social and religious contexts of Korea and prepare for God's mission toward the potential converts and Korean Muslims. In the next chapter, I will address Korean Christian responses to the Islamic da'wa movements.

⁴⁷⁷ Khalid, Interview by Sungsu Park, Apr. 21, 2012

CHAPTER 6

THE KOREAN CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO ISLAMIC DA'WA IN KOREA

This research started with an assumption: Islam is a missionary religion. Unlike non-missionary religions, since salvation is open to everyone in the missionary religions of Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, people belonging to these religions have been diligent about guiding non-believers into their faiths. All three missionary religions have mission statements:

Go ye forth for the good of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of compassion for the world. Let no two of you go in the same direction, teach the Dhamma that is beautiful in the beginning, middle and end, expound both the spirit and the letter of the holy life completely fulfilled, perfectly pure. There are beings with but little dust in their eyes, who not hearing the Dhamma will decline but who, if they do hear it will grow.
(Buddhism: The Book of Wisdom chapter 2, 11)

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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
(Christianity: Matt. 28:19-20a)

Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.
(Islam: Surah 16.125)

According to above three statements, it seems that while the mission of the first two, Buddhism and Christianity, is a “sending,” Islam is different from them. In Islam, the missiological term, da’wa means to “invite” or “call.” However, Islamic da’wa is also based on “sending.” By the missional commitment of Allah, the founder of Islam, Muhammad, went out to public places in order to guide Meccans, non-believers,

to the way of Allah. Moreover, in accordance with several revelations of the ultimate being, he also sent his followers to people of other faiths for performing da'wa. Islamic da'wa theology propels believers to the world so that they can help non-Muslims to have salvation. Thus, Muslims' da'wa movements also focus on qualitative and quantitative growth just as in the other missionary religions, Buddhism and Christianity.

In the early Meccan period, Muhammad and his followers' movements were non-violent. Muhammad employed the method of simply proclaiming the message in order to persuade people to come to Islamic faith. He peacefully attempted to reform the corrupt, unjust, and unstable Meccan society through Allah's message. However, these efforts often failed. Finally, he found an effective strategy for da'wa within a revelation of Allah at Medina,

O Prophet! Strive Hard Against the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be firm against them. Their abode is Hell—an evil refuge indeed.
(Surah 9:78)

By the message above, his religious group began to use military force for achieving Allah's missionary commandment. Their religious expansion proceeded radically with this imperialistic da'wa method. The religious movement which started at the small Meccan village of the Arabian Peninsula grew progressively. A few years later, Muhammad was not just a religious leader, but also played a role as an autocrat over the Arabian tribes. After he passed away, his first four successors sought to expand their religious and political influence in all directions beyond the Arabian Peninsula, to Jerusalem, to the Persians, to the Egyptians and so forth. Such expansions took place in the late seventh century.

At that time, Islamic influence initially reached Korea. A number of Arabian caravans had been actively encountering the Chinese through the *Silk Road* commerce even before Muhammad created the new religion. After the Arabs were under Islam, they brought their indigenous products and also introduced their new religious beliefs to China. Since Korean peddlers, too, had often visited China in the late seventh century, they had the chance to encounter Islamic civilization through the Muslim traders. In particular, Arabian products and civilization were attractive to the elite class of Korean society. In that way, Islamic cultures and traditions were welcomed to Korea. The Koryo dynasty actively sought to invite Muslim caravans to Korea and began to have direct business with the Arab Muslims. Moreover, the political context helped spread Islamic faith into Korea from the late thirteenth century to the early fifteenth century. When the Koryo dynasty was colonized by the Mongol government, central Asian Muslims were dispatched to Korea as high officials to enforce tribute to the great Mongol government. Since Muslims contributed greatly to the territorial expansion of the Mongol Empire, the governors employed Muslims in the various political and economic positions throughout the Empire. As a result, Islamic influence was great in the Koryo dynasty during this period. It has been proven that Yegung, the first mosque of Korea, was built near the royal palace of the Koryo dynasty. Some foreign Muslims transferred their national identities to Korea through having Korean spouses and then performed da'wa toward their wives' families. In other cases, the Korean servants of Muslim ambassadors had become interested in their employers' religion, Islam, and some of them became Muslims. Those converts were the first Korean Muslim convert group. However, the Islamic faith failed to permeate deeply into Korean society because the Muslim officers

economically exploited the common Koreans and politically pressured the Koryo government to pay its tribute to the Mongol Empire power. Thus, Islam was not regarded favorably by the Koreans during the colonial era of the Mongol Empire.

Later, Islamic influence became completely disconnected from the Korean community because of the isolationism of the Chosun dynasty for five hundred years. Then, Russian Muslim Turks again had opportunities to introduce and establish Islamic faith and traditions in Korea in the early twentieth century. They were diaspora Muslims escaping from the persecution of the Russians and migrated to Korea. Their immigration to Korea was allowed by the Japanese government, since Korea from 1910 was subject to Japanese sovereignty. After migrating to Korea, the economic influence of the diaspora Muslims grew rapidly in Korean society. They began to run small businesses, and they expanded quickly under the protection and active assistance of the Japanese government. The Turks also financially supported the Japanese government. Thus, the Turks and Japanese were joined in a mutually beneficial relationship. As a result, the Muslim population increased in Korea during that time. Moreover, Korean converts to Islam appeared again in the 1920s. These were businessmen who were working with the Turks or were clerks in the Muslims' stores. However, this Islamic movement ceased with the defeat of Japan at the end of World War II. The Korean government expelled the Muslim diaspora which had a close relationship with their aggressor nation, Japan.

Historically, Muslims had two opportunities to spread their faith and settle down in Korean society, but they lost both da'wa chances because they had established alliances with invaders, rather than with the Korean people. However, in the 1950s, during the Korean War, Korean attitudes toward Muslims changed. The Turkish Muslim

military force responded to the United Nations' appeal, and arrived at Korea to assist South Korea in the war. Numerous Muslim soldiers died for Korea. Their sacrifice made the Koreans' attitude toward Islam turn from negative to positive. After the Korean War, Islamic countries actively supported the recovery of the Korean economy. In addition, they strategically approached the Korean community for performing da'wa by sending missionaries, nurturing indigenous Muslim leaders, building masjids in the major cities of Korea, taking care of the marginalized people in Seoul, and so forth. Through these efforts, the Korean Muslim population increased dramatically in the 1970s and 80s. The Muslim arrivals, however, were still unable to be competitive with the Korean Christians. While Korean churches were countless in those decades, Muslim masjids/mosques were constructed only in three places, the cities of Seoul, Busan, and Jeonju.

The second successful period of growth of Korean Islam in the twentieth century took place in late 1980s. There were two reasons why this growth revived the Islamic movements of Korea. The first was the influx of numerous foreign Muslim workers into Korea. The second was that intelligent Korean workers had volunteered to prepare themselves through language study and Islam identification in order to take employment in major Islamic countries. They now began to return to Korea. They wrote and published a number of books about Islam. Many also taught Arabic and Islam in the universities. These Korean converts were persuasive in teaching about Islamic traditions and culture. With these factors, the Muslim population, including both Koreans and foreigners, increased from less than thirty-five thousand in the 1980s to a hundred thousand in the 1990s.

In the Arab post-colonial era, Muslims have no longer employed the method of da'wa which relies on imperialistic force. They have developed new missionary strategies for globalizing and becoming post-modern. These include intermarriage, immigration, books and literature, use of the internet, mass media, and so forth. The Korean Muslim community has approached non-believers through employing all of these diverse methods. They have regularly sponsored public lectures attracting Koreans. Korean Muslim scholars have published a number of books and articles about Islam in the Korean language. The World Assembly of Muslim Youth and the Korea Muslim Federation have held camps for youth since 1989. Through these efforts, Islam has become more familiar to the Korean population than before. Numerous Koreans have become interested in and converted to Islam. The Korean Muslim population has doubled in the last five years. Most converts to Islam had been Protestants or Catholics before converting. They left the church for the masjid/mosque. Nevertheless, Korean Christian leaders have not seriously considered the growing Muslim population in Korea. They assume that since Islam is not only a terroristic but also a heretical religion incorporating only some of the traditions of Judaism and Christianity, well-educated Koreans would never change their religious identities to Islam. Moreover, Korean pastors have believed that the growth of Korean Muslims is caused by the intermarriage of native Koreans with foreign Muslim workers. However, their hypotheses are shown to be wrong. According to this research project, these Korean Muslim converts were not illiterate, lower class, or the marginalized. Of the 49 testimonies I examined, 70% had bachelors, masters, or doctoral degrees. Forty-five of my interviewees (90%) reported that they lived above the middle class level in Korean society. Strikingly, 70% of the cases reported that their

religious conversion took place from intellectual motifs rather than affectional reasons. Most Korean Muslim converts declare with confidence that their Islamic faith, compared to others, is a true, practical, and rational religion.

In my research, I focused not only on identifying the religious conversion motifs of Korean Muslim converts, but also on the responses from the Korean Christian churches about the growing Islamic population in Korea today. For this latter purpose, I surveyed 327 candidate Christian leaders at the theological seminaries of Korean Christian churches.⁴⁷⁸

Table 16 Socio - Religious Backgrounds of the Seminary Survey Participants

Gender		Male	Female	Total
		227 (69%)	100 (31%)	n = 327
Age	20-25	78 (24 %)	33 (10%)	111 (34%)
	25-30	64 (20%)	35 (11%)	99 (31%)
	30-40	59 (18%)	26 (8 %)	85 (26 %)
	Over 40	26 (8 %)	6 (2 %)	32 (10%)
Missionary Experience	Yes	138 (42 %)	34 (10 %)	172 (53 %)
	No	89 (27 %)	66 (20 %)	155 (47%)
Denominations	Methodist	52 (16 %)	20 (6 %)	72 (22 %)
	Evangelical Presbyterian	15 (5 %)	17 (5 %)	32 (10 %)
	Conservative Presbyterian	57 (17 %)	19 (6 %)	76 (23 %)

⁴⁷⁸ I visited several theological seminaries in Korea for this research. The surveyed schools are Methodist Theological University, Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary, Seoul Theological University, Baekseok University, Chongshin University, Daehan Theological University, and Hansei University. The denominations of those seminaries include Methodist, Evangelical Presbyterian, Conservative Presbyterian, Evangelical Holiness, and Pentecostal. Since those denominations are the majority of the Korean Christian churches, their schools were used in this research.

	Evangelical Holiness	28 (9 %)	13 (4 %)	41 (13 %)
	Pentecostal	62 (19 %)	44 (14 %)	106 (32%)

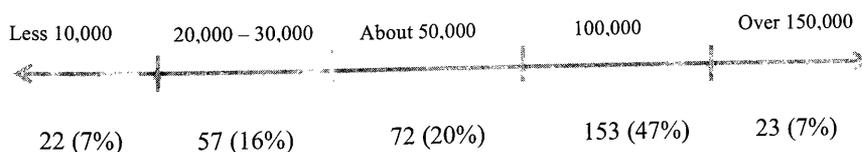
The responses were from theological students who would be expected to be ordained as pastors and in a few years would be ministers in local Korean churches. Since their pastoral concerns are directly related to the future of the Korean Christianity, I targeted their responses for this research. In my survey, I asked intensively about the history of Islamic da'wa toward Korea and their targeting of Christians to become Korean Muslims. Since Islam is one of the world religions, all seminarians had previously heard about the religion of Islam. However, they did not know much about the Islamic movements that had taken place historically and which are now taking place in Korea.

Table 17 The History of Islam in Korea

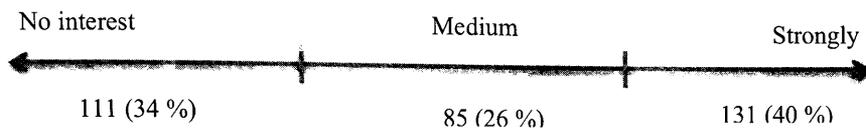
The History of Islam in Korea



Table 18 Answers about the Muslim Population in Korea



Although Islamic civilization was first encountered in Korea thirteen hundred years ago, 77 % (205) of the surveyed students answered that Islam might have first reached Korea in 1950. In addition, they did not have correct information about the Korean Muslim community. When I asked, “Do you know how large the Muslim population is in Korea today?” only 7 % rightly knew the number is more than 150,000. The largest group (47%) thought that the number of Muslims including Koreans and foreigners might be about 100,000. Interestingly, 7% of the seminarians also responded that they thought the number of Korean Muslims would be less than 10,000. The domestic Korean Muslim community was above 70,000 in 2010. Recently, the convert population became double that of 2005. Most of the surveyed students also assumed that the previous religious background of the Korean Muslims might have been Shamanism or Buddhism. They wrongly assumed that conversion motifs were inter-marriage or strong financial support provided to the marginalized people of Korea. According to this research, the young students preparing for Christian ministry in Korean churches hold hypotheses about Korean Muslims that are incorrect. Of 49 Korean Muslim converts, 71% were attracted by Islamic theology’s rationality and practical religious ceremonies rather than other motifs. This intellectual motif is the strongest reason appealing to the Korean Muslim group. Moreover, it is an important fact that more than half of the Muslim converts were born or grew up within Christian backgrounds. Unfortunately, most candidate leaders of the Korean Christian churches did not recognize the phenomenon that Muslims have actively performed da’wa directed to attract Koreans. Nevertheless, their concerns about doing missions to Muslims were great.

Table 19 Interest in mission to Muslims

More than 1/3 of the seminary students surveyed had no interest in outreach to Muslims. Note that 131 seminary students (40 %) reported that they are strongly interested in ministering for Muslims. Another 26 % (85) responded that if they have the opportunity to serve Korean Muslims as missionaries, they would be willing to dedicate their lives for this mission work. Those who were positively considering missions to Muslims had previously experienced short or long term missions in cross-cultural contexts. These missionary experiences became motivations for devoting themselves to be missionaries toward Korean Muslims. Eighteen candidate Christian leaders (5%) said that they are ready to go to mission fields. They have studied Islam for a few years and have worked in the Muslim context. They said, "I would like to carry out missions toward Muslims whoever they are, Koreans or foreigners."

From this research, I had hypotheses confirmed and some findings which documented certain conclusions.

1. Islam is a missionary religion.

As one of the missionary religions of the world, Islam started in the Arabian Peninsula and expanded its religious influence to the world during its long history. Muslims who believe that da'wa is a major theme in the Qur'an have developed diverse methods to effectively spread their faith to the non-Muslim world. Through their

passionate efforts, Islam has surely become a world religion along with Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and so forth.

2. Islam is becoming one of the mainstream religions in Korea today.

Muslims have been in touch with Korea since thirteen hundred years ago. They sought to make roots in Korean communities. Their efforts to be established in the Korean environment frequently failed because of political and material ambitions. In the twentieth century, the Korean War gave Muslims a chance to make Islam an acceptable religion to the Korean people. Since the second half of the twentieth century, both Korean and foreign Muslims have approached Koreans through various ways to effectively spread their faith. As a result, Islam has become a revival religion in the Korean context, whereas other religions have become stagnant or have declined in the twenty-first century. Not only has the population of foreign Muslims increased, but the Korean Muslim community has also expanded.

3. Islamic theology and Muslim communities are attractive to Koreans.

Most converts to Islam reported that they became Muslims because of Islam's intellectual attractiveness. Although they enjoyed being in Islam with their Muslim friends or family, the most important motif of the Koreans' conversion was the authenticity of Islamic theology. They pointed out a number of faults in other religions theologically and practically. However, Islam is different for them. They believe that Islam is faultless. Islamic theology, ethics, and traditions are clear and perfect. In particular, numerous converts transferred their religious identities from Christianity to

Islam because of the complicated, discrepant, and distorted theories of Christianity. Moreover, when they shared their conversion stories, they emphasized the loving and peaceful brotherhood of the Muslim community. They confessed that they had never experienced such kindness, acceptance, and love in other religious communities.

4. Korean Christian churches are not ready to carry on missions to Muslims.

Unfortunately, although Muslims have actively performed da'wa toward the Korean community, and Islam is a growing religion in Korea, the future leaders of the Korean Christian churches do not very well recognize the changing religious context of Korea. Neither do they know Islam's history and the background of its revival and growth in the Korean context, nor do some of them consider that the issue is urgent for Korean Christian churches. Nevertheless, numerous seminary students have interest in a vocation of being a missionary to Muslims.

In the religious context of Korea, I want to suggest three points in order to effectively perform God's mission to Korean Muslims.

I. Prepare and Send Professional Missionaries for Reaching Domestic Muslims

First of all, Korean Christian churches need to prepare and send career missionaries to work with Korean Muslims and pre-converts to Islam within the church, just as they have sent numerous missionaries to other countries. According to the report of the Korea World Missions Association, the number of Korean Christian missionaries who serve for non-believers in other countries was 23,331 in 2011. Today, they are

spreading the gospel in 177 different countries.⁴⁷⁹ However, Korea has also become a mission field since the late 1990s. In his book, *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, Harold Netland diagnoses the changes in world Christianity populations taking place in the twenty-first century.

Whereas in 1900 the majority of Christians were in Europe and North America, and Christianity was identified as a Western religion, today most Christians reside in the non-Western world, and Christianity is in decline in much of Europe.⁴⁸⁰

The axis of world Christianity has been shifting from the western world to the global south. The western world is no longer the center of gravity for performing God's mission. Modern missiologists are regarding Europe and North America as important mission fields in the world today, because the church there has been in stagnation or decline for a long time.⁴⁸¹ I think the context of the Korean Church is also similar to that of the western world. Until the 1950s, Korea was a country needing missionaries. The context of the Korean Christian church turned from needing missionaries to sending missionaries, since the radical growth of the church in 1960s. The Protestant churches of Korea have been sending out the second highest number of missionaries all over the world today.⁴⁸² However, the context has turned again in the twenty-first century. The number of Protestants in Korea has been gradually declining since 1995. Therefore,

⁴⁷⁹ www.kwma.org (Last accessed on Nov. 23, 2012).

⁴⁸⁰ Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland ed. *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2006), 14.

⁴⁸¹ Todd M. Johnson and Sun Young Chung, "Tracking Global Christianity's Statistical Centre of Gravity, AD 33-AD 2100," in *International Review of Mission* 95 (Apr. 2004): 166-181.

⁴⁸² Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (Michigan: Zondervan and Grand Rapid, 2004), 254.

Korea has become one of the important mission fields alongside North America and Europe.

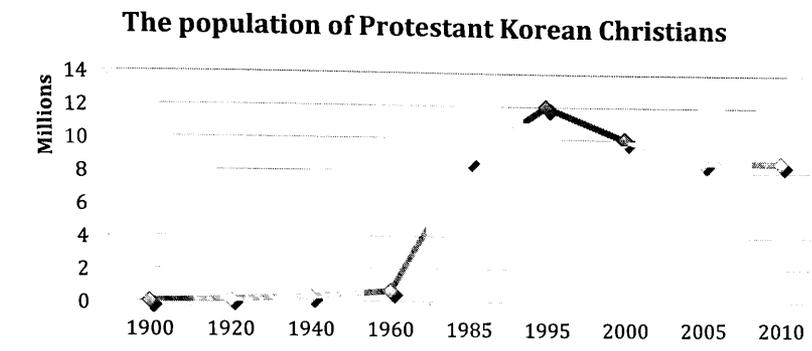


Figure 10 The Growth of Korean Christianity⁴⁸³

According to this study, a number of Christians have left the church and have become Muslims in recent decades. The Korean church must consider this issue seriously. Although the Muslim population is minor in Korean society and is still relatively small, Giwon Hong, a Korean sociologist of religion, forecasts that since the population of the Korean and foreign Muslims will continually grow, Islam will shortly be one of the mainstream religions in Korea.⁴⁸⁴ However, Korean Christians have not been concerned about the dramatically growing Korean Muslim community. In Korea, there are four Christian mission institutions for evangelizing Muslims: Intercep, Interserve Korea, Middle East Team, and Torch Trinity Center for Islamic Studies. They have trained missionaries and have sent them to Muslim countries, but have not developed

⁴⁸³ Hyunseo Choi, *Hyundae Kyuhyoioiui Sungjangkwa Yeehae [Understanding Growth of Korean Church]*, (Taejeon Korea: Chimryeshinhakdaehak Publish, 2008), 1-15; <http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=103&oid=005&aid=0000246360> (Last accessed in Apr. 10, 2013).

⁴⁸⁴ Hong, 23.

programs to prepare special missionaries to reach Korean Muslims. No one before this research has addressed the agenda of Korean Muslim conversion.

In order to protect against Christians' religious transfer to Islam, it is necessary first to have missionaries for pre-converts to Islam. They need to teach lay people in the local churches about the religion of Islam, present comparative studies of Islam and Christianity, and inform Christians about the Muslim da'wa movement. In terms of this research project, it was evident that many converts to Islam did not have opportunities to learn about Islamic traditions and cultures from the church objectively and correctly. Numerous Christian leaders have prohibited their church members from learning about other religions. Instead, they have taught other religions from a negative perspective. They not only consider non-Christian beliefs as satanic, but also they do not have much knowledge about other religious traditions.

I was a Christian. I never heard about other religions at the church because this had been regarded as unnecessary for my Christian faith. Sometimes, my pastor mentioned a little about Islam, but it was not helpful to me. When I started to study Islam from Muslim friends and an Imam, I realized the Christian pastor had distorted the Islamic faith too much.⁴⁸⁵

If she had had a chance to learn about the religion of Islam from well-informed, genuine Christian perspectives, the convert might not been so vulnerable to changing her religious identity to Islam, because the gospel of Christianity has power and would have been clearer than before. Definitely, through the chance to have such education, the pre-converts to Islam would learn how Islam has distorted the Christian faith in history. However, the ability of local pastors is not enough to comparatively introduce Islam and Christianity, because they did not study Islam at seminary, nor are Muslims a major

⁴⁸⁵ Raila, Interview by Sungsu Park, May 26, 2012.

concern in their ministry. Professionally trained missionaries' lectures would be more useful and effective to laypersons of the church than the local pastors.

Moreover, the trained missionaries for Muslims would appropriately approach Korean Muslims who have Christian backgrounds. In my experience, Korean converts to Islam do not want to spend time with Christian evangelists who do not have knowledge of Islam, because debating with them is endless. However, when I met interviewees, I opened my religious identity as a Christian to them and started conversations with the stories of the Qur'an and Islamic worldviews. As a result, many of them were interested in this research and shared their conversion stories with me. In this sense, missionary training for reaching Korean Muslims is necessary. In this research, more than 85% of the seminary interviewees agreed about the urgency of the missionary issue of preparing missions to the Korean Muslim community. At a personal level, only (16%) of seminarians reported that they were strongly interested in working as a missionary for Korean Muslims and the pre-converts to Islam in the local church. However, 27 % (88) of the interviewees answered that if they had the chance to serve those people, they would be willing to be evangelists to them. Therefore, the Korean Christian churches need to concern themselves seriously about developing a training school for missionaries to provide for working with the pre-Muslims in the church and Muslim converts.

II. Teaching Islam in Theological Seminaries as a Compulsory Class

Theological seminaries should give candidate Christian leaders chances to study Islam before working in the local church because they will often encounter pre-Muslims

who are interested in and who have potential to convert to Islam in the local context. I have researched ten graduate schools teaching Christian theology in Korea about whether they offer classes about Islam: Choshin University (CU), Busan Presbyterian University (BPU), Hanse University (HU), Sungkyul University (SU), Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary (PCTS), Hanshin University Graduate Schools (HUGS), Seoul Theological University (STU), Methodist Theological University (MTU), Yonsei University: United School of Theology (YN), and Korea Baptist Theological Seminary (KBTS). Except for CU and SU, eight of these schools are currently teaching comparative theologies of world religions, but their major concerns are not with mission to Islam as a revival religion in the twenty-first century Korean context. Rather, the Korean religious theologians have offered lectures such as “Christianity and Orientalism.” Although the oriental religions and philosophies—Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism—are historic and significant in Korean society, their religious appeal to Koreans has declined in the twenty-first century. Since young adult groups are no longer under their direct influence, the young seminarians rarely register for those classes as elective studies. On the other hand, in my research, 185 future Christian leaders (57%) responded that they would certainly take Islamic classes if offered at their schools because Islam is a growing religion in the Korean context of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, just three of the ten schools—HU, STU, and KBTS—provide classes about Islamic theology and practices, but these seminaries do not offer them regularly each year. The theological seminaries of Korea should respond to the needs of the Korean missionary context.

III. Publishing Literature about Islam for Lay Christian Leaders

Finally, Korean Christian scholars need to produce diverse writings about Islam and Christianity. Numerous intellectual Korean Christians want to study the religion of Islam. However, the local church does not provide lectures about Islam, nor are there adequate books and literature about Islam written by Christian scholars. While Korean Muslims, who studied at Islamic universities in 1970s or 80s, have devoted themselves to publishing books and articles in order to spread their faith and their religious traditions to Korean society, Christian leaders have not appropriately responded to those Islamic da'wa of the Korean Muslim community. Those who have worked as missionaries in Islamic countries have not actively sought to inform themselves about the religion of Islam and their da'wa movements toward the Korean Christian community. Moreover, many missionaries' perspectives are unduly polemical and very negative about Islam. They also need to develop academic approaches in order to objectively compare both Islam and Christianity in Korea. It is necessary that Christian theologians clearly give the similarities and differences between Islamic and Christian theologies to the members of the local church on such issues as the Trinity, Jesus, Salvation, Scriptures, God and Allah, and so forth. On the Christian side, scholars have written and published books about Islamic history and civilization, but have not dealt with contemporary Korean issues. Since literature would easily help meet the diverse curiosity of pre-converts to Islam, Christian scholars should write books and articles about the above issues for God's mission toward the growing Korean Muslim community.

IV. Recommendations for Further Study

This research focused on the Korean Muslim community is a pioneering work in the history of Korean Christian missions. Since this is an urgent missionary issue in the Korean context of the twenty-first century, the study can be valuable. However, my research target was fixed on converted-Muslims rather than born-Muslims. I have met only one naturally-born Muslim in my research. Since inter-married Muslim couples have increased and have produced a growing number of born-Muslims in Korean society, researching their religious community and developing mission strategies for them will soon be another important concern for missiological agendas in Korea.

Another recommendation for further study is researching re-converts from Islam to other religions. During my research, I encountered a Catholic man who had been a Muslim a couple of years ago. He reconverted to Catholicism again because of the issue of affectional motif. After his conversion to Islam, his family separated from him. Then, he returned to his previous religion. However, he often visited mosques even though he did not perform religious practices with his Muslim brothers. He said that he knows several re-conversion stories of people recently changing their religious identities from Islam to other religions. Their religious conversion motifs are diverse. Loftland and Sknovid's theory would again be useful to this study.

Finally, I found an interesting issue regarding religious conversion during my research. It is that Korean Christians who have become disappointed with the corruption within the Korean church are becoming interested in and are converting to Islam, rather than to Buddhism, the largest religion in Korea. I wondered why they are preferring to

become Muslims, rather than going to the Buddhist temples. This question represents another important issue to be examined by future researchers.

Appendix A

Interview for Korean Muslims who had changed their religious identities from another religion to Islam.

Date and Place of Interview:

1. Background of Interviewee:

- 1.1 Gender:
- 1.2 Age:
- 1.3 Educational Background:
- 1.4 Socio-Economic status (social class and job):
- 1.5 Previous Religion:
- 1.6 Parents' Religion(s):
- 1.7 Marital Status:
- 1.8 If married, your spouse's religion:
- 1.9 Did he/she convert before/at/after the time of marriage?

2. Questions for Korean Muslim Converts

- 2.1 When and how did you first learn about the religion of Islam?
- 2.2 How did you first feel about Islam at that time? Then, can you describe how your feelings changed about Islamic faith and practices?
- 2.3 What was your religion before becoming Muslim?
- 2.4 How serious was your practice?
- 2.4 Why did you look at new religions? What happened in your life?
- 2.5 How would you describe differences between your previous religion and Islam?
- 2.6 What attraction did Muslim communities and Islamic faith have for you?
- 2.7 What was the most important reason you decided to become a Muslim?
- 2.8 How has Islam changed your life?
- 2.9 How did your family respond when you became a Muslim?
- 2.10 Did they also change their religious identity to Islam?
- 2.11 Do you have any difficulty living as a Muslim in Korean society?
- 2.12 Have you tried to influence your family, relatives, or friends to convert to Islam?
- 2.13 How many times do you pray in a day and read the "Qur'an"?
- 2.14 Are you actively involved in Muslim Friday worship and activities?
- 2.15 Do you consider that you are a faithful Muslim?

Appendix B

Interview for candidate Christian leaders of the Korean church about missions to Muslims

Date and Place of Interview:

1. Background of Interviewee:

- 1.1 Name of interviewee:
- 1.2 Name of the church:
- 1.3 Denomination:
- 1.4 Age:
- 1.5 Missionary experiences (Short or long term):
- 1.6 Tel./E-mail:

2. Questions

- 2.1 Have you heard that Islam has been dramatically growing in Korea since the early twenty-first century?
 - 2.1.1 If so, when and how did you learn about Muslims movements taking place in Korea?
- 2.2 How did you respond as a Christian leader to the increasing Muslim population in Korea?
- 2.3 How many Muslims do you think live in Korea?
- 2.4 Have you met Muslim immigrants in Korea before? What about Korean-born Muslims?
- 2.5 Have you sought to evangelize Muslims to Christian faith?
- 2.6 Do you think that missions to foreign Muslims in Korea are important today?
 - 2.6.1 If so, what does the Korean Christian church need to do to initiate effective outreach to them?
- 2.7 Did you know that numerous Korean Christians have converted to Islam?
- 2.8 Why do you think they transformed their religious identities from Christian to Islam?

- 2.9 What can the Christian church can do to influence those who are interested in and want to convert to Islam?
- 2.10 How much do you know about the religion of Islam? Have you studied Islamic faith and practices? Do you think Christian leaders need to the study basic doctrine of Islam and Muslim cultures?
- 2.11 How important is preparing and equipping professional missionaries for reaching out to the increasing Muslim population in Korea? Would you yourself be willing to be involved in doing missions to Muslims who live in Korea?
- 2.12 Have you known any person(s) who has converted from Christianity to Islam?

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