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ABSTRACT

PLANTING ADVENTIST COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AMONG MUSLIMS IN
UNENTERED AREAS OF THE BALKANS

by

Milan Bajic

Advisers: Bruce L. Bauer,
Rudi Maier

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: PLANTING ADVENTIST COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AMONG MUSLIMS IN
UNENTERED AREAS OF THE BALKANS

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Name and degree of faculty advisers: Bruce L. Bauer, D.Miss.; Rudi Maier, Ph.D.

Date completed: June 2005

Problem

The purpose of this research was to develop and equip the church for the implementation of a workable strategy for reaching a large population of about eight million secular Muslims in the Balkans who have never been systematically confronted with the gospel.

Method

This study describes the history, culture, and religion of the Balkans, analyzes socio-economic and political developments of its Muslim population, examines methods of evangelism and suggests a strategy based on sound biblical and missiological principles for work among the Balkan Muslims.

Results

The outcome of this project will be the development of a contextualized method for evangelizing secular Muslims in the Balkans, and the establishment of an Adventist Muslim Relations Initiatives. Contextualized Bible studies for secular Muslims will be produced. Change agents will be trained and prepared to form Bible study groups and establish contextualized Adventist communities of faith. Sensitivity among Adventists towards people of other faiths will be enhanced through awareness seminars. The initial project will continue for at least five years.

Conclusions

The proposed strategy has been designed for work in unentered areas of the Balkans. It uses cultural elements to communicate the gospel especially among Muslim populations.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

PLANTING ADVENTIST COMMUNITIES OF FAITH AMONG MUSLIMS
IN UNENTERED AREAS OF THE BALKANS

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Milan Bajic
June 2005

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MUSLIMS IN UNENTERED AREAS OF THE BALKANS

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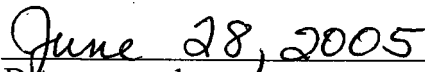
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| ADRA | Adventist Development and Relief Agency |
| AMR | Adventist Muslims Relations |
| AUC | Adriatic Union Conference |
| GC | General Conference |
| GM | Global Mission |
| LCWE | Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization |
| LFA | Logical Framework Approach |
| MNO | Muslim National Organization |
| SDA | Seventh-day Adventist |
| SEE | Southeast Europe |
| SEEUC | South-East European Union Conference |
| TED | Trans-European Division |

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I have been asked on many occasions to explain why I chose to deal with the question of working in unentered areas among Muslims, and who influenced me. My answer is that the whole project of carrying out evangelism among unreached people in a cross-cultural setting came into being, not through human initiation but through divine inspiration, and in response to a call at a specific time and for a particular reason.

Statement of the Problem

There is a large population of about eight million indigenous Muslims in the Balkans. They have never been systematically confronted with the gospel. Seventh-day Adventists have never committed the financial or human resources needed for reaching these people. Nor have Adventists given serious attention to the culture of the area or to the methods needed to introduce the population to Jesus. I have had to ask myself what kind of Adventist mission would fulfill its task among Muslims in the Balkans.

Statement of the Task

The task to be undertaken in this project is to understand the religious background and the culture of secular Muslims in the Balkans and to develop and implement a workable strategy for reaching them.

Justification of the Project

The special significance of this project is that it will:

1. Focus the attention of Seventh-day Adventists on the existence of Muslims in the unentered areas of the Balkans and help them to understand that the biblical mandate of Matt 24:14 applies to them;
2. Provide the two Unions in the Balkans with new strategies for preaching the gospel to secular Muslims;
3. Help Muslims in the Balkans to understand God's love and allow them to make a decision for Him and become followers of Jesus Christ;
4. Reduce the extent of the large unentered areas in the Unions, and
5. Enhance the sensitivity of the Church's administration and of church members toward unreached people and breathe life into the activities of local churches throughout the Unions.

Definition of Terms

Balkanization: This term as applied to southeastern Europe, describes one of the highest levels of ethnic fragmentation in the world, and has come to mean the division of a place or country into several small political units, often unfriendly to one another.

Bosniaks: A designation for Bosnian Muslims.

Community of faith: Culture-neutral term for a local church.

Contextualization: Method of a meaningful and appropriate cross-cultural transmission of biblical truth which is faithful to its original intent and also sensitive to culture.

Global Mission: A special initiative within Seventh-day Adventism, established at

the 1990 General Conference Session to support the planting of new Adventist communities of faith among unreached population segments of a million people.

Global Mission Pioneers: People who volunteer for at least a year to help establish a congregation in an unentered area.

Indigenous Muslims in the Balkans: The Islamicization of the local Albanian and Bosnian populations occurred in the second half of the fifteenth century. Islam became rooted in their culture and acquired the characteristics of an indigenous faith, thus becoming a permanent feature of the Balkan way of life.

Logframe: An organized and concise outline of the main concepts and features described in chapter 4, structured in a simple and fluent way.

Unentered areas: Those parts of the world, the remotest rural areas as well as towns and neighborhoods, where there are no believers in Jesus Christ and where the truth about God has been forgotten.

Unreached people groups: Group of people culturally and socially isolated from their neighboring Christians and thus unable to hear the gospel from them.

Limitation of the Project

Due to the pioneering nature of the work with Muslims in the Balkans during its initial phase, and because of an absence of an organized structure for that work as well as a lack, on the part of the author, of practical experience in developing the proposed strategy, this study is not the final word on the subject.

This dissertation will not deal with those lesser Muslim minorities who are small in number, and who therefore do not play a significant role as Islamic communities in the

Balkans. Special emphasis will be given to the Albanians, especially to Bosniaks, because they carry the legacy of Islam in Europe.

A systematic or global overview of Islamic beliefs, convictions and rituals lies beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Description of the Project

Chapter 1 provides introductory material. Chapter 2 gives my personal background relevant to the study and lays out a theological foundation for planting Adventist communities in unentered areas, deals with the meaning and role of the church, the worldwide perspective of Seventh-day Adventism, and its mission and ministry in the twenty-first century. Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the geographical, historical, political, and socio-cultural background of the Balkans and examines the cultural and religious characteristics of Albanians and Bosniaks. Chapter 4 examines methods appropriate to the intended evangelism and offers a suggested structure for the implementation of a strategy for establishing an Adventist presence among secular Muslims in the Balkans. Chapter 5 summarizes the dissertation, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations.

Methodology

Current literature was reviewed, including books and articles dealing with Islam. An overview of Muslims in the Balkans was briefly presented. Deterrents and bridges to evangelism were examined. Sound biblical and missiological principles were followed for implementing a strategy for creating an Adventist presence among the Balkan Muslims. The findings of the study will be put into practice in the field after the completion of the dissertation.

CHAPTER II

PERSONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR MINISTRY IN UNENTERED AREAS

Introduction

This chapter will cover three main considerations that underlie the basic assumption of this project and which influence my ministry. The first of these factors is my personal biographical background. This has had a significant impact on the development of my passion for reaching unentered areas for the gospel, and, more specifically, on my interest in working with and for Muslims, as well as on the spiritual basis for my ministry. In the next part I shall explain my understanding of the theology and biblical *raison d'être* for planting Adventist communities of faith in unentered areas—with contextualization as the chosen theological method for explaining and interpreting the meaning of the gospel in a specific cultural context. Finally I shall reflect on my understanding of the meaning and role of the church, and on the Adventist perspective on mission and ministry in the twenty-first century.

Personal and Spiritual Basis for Ministry

Biographical Background and Ministry

Everyone's life and work is shaped largely by experience gained in those early formative years throughout which God leads in order to prepare that individual for future ministry. According to Mezirow, "the justification for much of what we know and believe,

our values and our feelings, depends on the context—biographical, historical, cultural—in which they are embedded.”¹ I would therefore like to share some features of my life’s journey, which may clarify how God has shaped my heart, and directed my future ministry.²

I was born into a pastor's family as a fourth-generation Adventist with a three generation history of pastoral work. From my early years, most topics that I heard discussed in my home were connected to pastoral work. My grandfather, on my mother’s side of the family, and my father were real missionaries who moved from one place to another. Although from the northern part of the former Yugoslavia, Vojvodina, they were at the forefront of the work of the Adventist Church throughout the whole country. My grandfather established many churches and groups in eastern Croatia (Slavonia) and was the pioneer of Adventism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he worked for most of his life.

My life’s journey developed in various parts of the former Yugoslavia. In my early formative years my parents lived in unentered areas of the various republics that are now independent states. My father was the first and only resident minister in Podgorica, capital of multinational Montenegro, at that time the strongest communist fortress in the whole of the former Yugoslavia. He pioneered the work of the church in the entire republic. Then we moved to Bosanska Gradiška (Gradishka) and Mostar, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where I lived in a community of both Christians and Muslims who co-existed in peace at that time.

During my early formative years, I was exposed to intercultural and

¹Jack Mezirow, “Learning to Think Like and Adult” in *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Process*, eds. Jack Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2000), 3.

²Reggie A. McNeal, *Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass, 2000), xi.

interdenominational influences. Confronted in both republics—Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina—with two religions, Christianity (Orthodox and Catholic) and Islam, I learned to live in diverse cultural and national environments that inevitably left a mark on me. I was encouraged to have a spirit of understanding and acceptance towards different religions and cultural backgrounds, and I was also influenced by them. As a result, I was prepared to understand and work, not only with Christians, but also with Muslims.

The pivotal point in fulfilling the mission of God by a minister is the assurance that God's call is burning within. Ministry is primarily being and only secondarily the work that we perform. A "sense of destiny," as Robert Clinton describes it, is "a key insight into leadership effectiveness."¹ This assurance that God has chosen and destined a minister for specific work is that person's main driving force and serves as a beacon throughout all the turbulence of life. God's call is the anchor that allows a minister "to engage culture in order to transform it."²

Very early in my life I sensed God's call and was aware of it. An unfulfilled part of my soul and my ambition was, as Paul says in Rom 15:20, "to preach the gospel where Christ was not known."³ My goal now is to understand the religious background and the culture of Muslims, and to develop and implement a workable strategy for reaching them.

Spirituality and Ministry

What is spirituality? According to Robert Mulholland, spirituality is "a process of

¹As quoted by McNeal, 4.

²Ibid., 91.

³All Bible quotations taken from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.

being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others.”¹ Many people view spirituality as a quality or degree of dedication to God. To some extent this is true.

However human beings do not know the quality of any individual's relationship to God. The only way to know it is to see it. Therefore, spirituality or our religion is not a private matter. We do not live alone, or for ourselves. Everything we do must be salted with spirituality. Spirituality is our visible response to God's grace. Our “grace experience” can be the most effective tool for leading others to find healing for their brokenness. Our success depends to a great extent on how God's character is reflected in us.

Reaching the unreached on the “front line” is difficult work that needs special spiritual preparation and God's guidance. Several aspects of this work will be emphasized as being indispensable for pioneering evangelism.

The first factor in assurance that God is sending us and leading us is unrelenting prayer. The apostle Peter was a man of prayer. “About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray” (Acts 10:9). While he was praying, the Holy Spirit informed him about a deputation from Caesarea and about what he must do about it. Somewhat similarly, looking at the perversions in Corinth and at the very real obstacles he was facing, the apostle Paul planned to leave that unentered city. He was uncertain about the decision and while he was trying to come to terms with his duty, God told him one night in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no-one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city” (Acts 18:9, 10). Only the Almighty knew what was happening in Caesarea, or the number of truth-seeking people in Corinth.

¹Robert M. Mulholland, Jr., *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 15.

On the other hand, if Peter had not prayed, or if Paul had not asked for guidance, God would not have revealed His will to them. The work of preparation for special ministry begins in the faithful performance of the work we are doing now. "The disciples were to begin their work where they were. The hardest and most unpromising field was not to be passed by. So every one of Christ's workers is to begin where he is."¹ If we use the opportunities that we have, God will open doors.

Very often the New Testament implies the principle of the open door (Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3; Rev 3:8), suggesting that even without effort on our part, God removes obstacles and gives opportunities to undertake work in special places. Sometimes the Holy Spirit does not allow the work that humans plan and instead shuts the door, as Paul experienced when he planned to evangelize Bithynia (Acts 6:7). That power is called providence. The more we are ready to follow His guidance through providence, the better the results will be in our ministry.

Theological Understanding of Ministry

Biblical Mandate

At the end of his earthly ministry Christ walked for the last time with his disciples without telling them that this would be their final opportunity for such companionship. His teaching method was the best one possible; He was a role model, available for His disciples to imitate. During His last meeting with His followers, He gave a mandate to them, which is set out in Matt 28:19, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The meaning of the phrase

¹Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1940), 822.

“nations” is very often applied to “nation states” or “countries.” But the Greek word for nation in this text can support another meaning. The word *ethne*, rendered as “nations” in the Great Commission and also used in Matt 24:14 and Rev 14:6, is the plural form of the word *ethnos* and means “ethnic group” or “people group.”¹ When Jesus used the phrase *panta ta ethne*, “all the nations,” He “was not referring at all to countries or nation-states. The wording he chose (the Greek word *ethne*) instead points to the ethnicities, the languages and the extended families which constitute the peoples of the earth.”² This means that Jesus’ Commission has a worldwide, universal scope, reaching “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The promise given to Abraham in Gen 12:1-3 that “all peoples of earth will be blessed through you” and reiterated in Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4, was again echoed in the Great Commission spoken by Jesus to His disciples. “All nations,” the translation of the Hebrew phrase *Kol goiey* in Gen 18:18, 22:18 and 26:4 is rendered in the Septuagint³ by the Greek term used in the Great Commission, *panta ta ethne*. However the phrase “all peoples” in Gen 12:3, meaning “all families,” is the rendering of the Hebrew *Koll mishpahot*, meaning “all families.” *Mishpahot* is the grammatical form of *mishpaha*, usually translated as “social unit smaller than a tribe”⁴ and so the use of this term shows God’s intention to bless all people groups, clans and extended families through Abraham.

¹For a detailed study of *ethnos* see John Piper, “The Supremacy of God Among all the Nations,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 9 (July 1992), 81-98.

²Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, “Advancing Strategies of Closure, Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 19, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 16.

³Greek translation of the Old Testament.

⁴Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “*ethnos*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, ed. Gerard Kittel and Gerald Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 1:364-69.

The final fulfillment of God's promise given to humankind is described in Rev 7:9, 10 by John: "After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!'"

Jesus clearly said, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt 24:14). This is the last sign, the biggest event before Christ's return. Everyone will hear about the crucified Savior although not all will accept Him. His "Good News" will be heard, not only where there are established churches, but in places where the truth has never been proclaimed, even in the remotest parts of the world.

Theology of Unentered Areas

The biblical understanding of "unentered areas" is of all places where the truth about God has been forgotten. They include the remotest parts of the world as well as towns and neighborhoods of every great metropolis. Unentered areas can also mean those parts of the world where there are no believers in Jesus Christ.¹ The worldwide scope of the Great Commission, preaching the good news of the crucified and risen Savior, pervades every page of the Bible. The whole Bible is one inspired report of success and failure on the part of God's people who were sent to proclaim God's love towards the unreached.

The first call to humans to leave home and go into an unentered area was given to

¹The Seventh-day Adventist Church has established work in all but 24 out of 228 countries and areas in the world. "Global Mission: Welcome/Facts," April 2004; based on official statistics as of 31 December 2000, reported in the 2000 Annual Statistical Report. Updated May 2002, <http://www.global-mission.org/htdocs/html/welcome.html> (3 July 2004).

Abraham: "The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you'" (Gen 12:1). In the verses which follow, the reason is given for the special mission assigned to him; it was to impart blessings to all the peoples of the earth. Joseph had to leave his father's home so that Egyptians could make a decision to accept the true God through him and his descendants. Israel settled down in Palestine in order to be a blessing to other nations and so that God's name could be known in all the earth. For missiological reasons they inherited the best geo-political position (Deut 7:6-8; Isa 49:6). One unknown girl, living far away from her home, served Naaman's wife and fulfilled the role that God gave Israel as a nation. Jonah was sent as a missionary to an unentered area and his work finally yielded a harvest, in the conversion of the entire city of Nineveh.

When Israel turned from God, and was scattered among other nations, not only did they learn a very important lesson about obedience towards God; in exile they introduced many gentiles to the living God. Mighty sovereigns like Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Darius came to recognize that Israel's God is "the God of God's and the Lord of kings" (Dan 2:47).

Jesus Christ, the greatest missionary, "went throughout Galilee" (Matt 4:23), worked in Judea, preached to a Samaritan woman, and entered the unentered areas of Tyre, Sidon, Decapolis, and Perea. After the first success of the apostolic church, when thousands of Jews were moved by the Holy Spirit and accepted Jesus Christ, the members of the new church were in danger of staying in Jerusalem to enjoy mutual fellowship. They were at risk of neglecting Jesus' command to go into the whole world and preach the gospel to everyone. God allowed great persecution to break out against the church. After that, "Those

who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went" (Acts 8:4).

The apostle Paul was an exceptional figure who was obedient to a call to action that came when he was praying in the temple in Jerusalem. God commanded, "Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). Paul then journeyed from place to place, establishing churches: "So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone's foundation" (Rom 15:19, 20). He fulfilled his greatest ambition, proclaiming Jesus Christ in unentered areas.

God unceasingly reminds his people, through nature and through object lessons in his Word, of the necessity and urgency of bringing the message of hope and healing to unreached people. Natural processes and simple biblical illustrations speak directly about and are applicable to ministry in unentered areas.

Plants of various kinds, when planted close to each other, cannot grow properly; they hinder each other's development. In the same way, members of churches cannot grow spiritually unless they are scattered. Fisher-folk who fish from the shore cannot expect full nets. Those who do not dare to sail in deeper waters remain without satisfactory catches of fish. Similarly, the best places in which to proclaim the truth are places with plenty of people who do not know present truth. Both examples demonstrate the importance of leaving big groups of truth keepers and sailing into dark places that are promising.

In His object lessons, Christ emphasized the importance of reaching the unreached. He compared God's people with salt: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men" (Matt 5:13). The salt metaphor is one which can be

understood anywhere and in any time period. Salt is useless if it is simply piled up.¹ In fact, it can be damaging in large quantities. When it is taken out of the sea and refined, it should be scattered in order to give taste to food. If the gospel is not spread abroad, or scattered, in order to reach people, it will do harm to its keeper.

Another metaphor frequently used in reference to evangelism is that of the army of God. Members of the Church learn how to use the armor of God (Eph 6:10-20) but all too often, do not leave their camps. No wonder that they fight each other in their spiritual barracks.² The Bible calls for the use of the armor of God on the "battlefield", in order to reach the unreached. Paul says: "Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore" (Heb 13:13).

Yet another metaphor employed in the cause of spreading the Gospel is that of the harvest. Harvesting is done in the fields, not in barns (John 4:34-38). The problem today is that church members concentrate on barn-based activities, rather than on equipping and sending out field-workers. The church has to move to an apostolic model designed to help Christians enter the huge, unentered areas of the world.³

Communicating God's Message

In order to apply the most suitable method for reaching the unreached in any unentered area, we must understand culture, for a culture's characteristics will be vital in the process of gospel communication.

¹Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission Possible: The Challenge of Mission Today* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), 113-16.

²Oosterwal, 111.

³Eddie Gibbs and Ian Coffey, *Church Next, Quantum Changes in Christian Ministry* (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 181.

Cross-cultural Communication

Culture plays an important part in the communication process. According to A. E. Hoebel culture “is the integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance.”¹ More succinctly, Clyde Kluckhohn says, “culture is a design for living.”² Cultural patterns are not genetically transmitted from one generation to another; they have to be learned.³

The basic, very simplified concept of culture, called the “iceberg model” consists of two levels, an invisible one which represents values and a visible one that represents outward behavior. However, a more elaborate concept of culture may be very clearly illustrated by an onion.⁴ The outer layer stands for customs and artifacts—things that are visible or audible, such as dress, manners, speech, etc. The layer under that represents institutions, such as government, marriage, justice systems, etc. The next layer shows the value system of a society, and the very center presents its ideology, religion and worldview. The working paradigm is that the inner always affects the outer.

¹Adamson E. Hoebel, *Anthropology: The Study of Man*, 3d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 5.

²Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), 17.

³Bruce J. Nichols, *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 11.

⁴Hofstede (1991) proposes a culture model like an onion which is the extended outer layer of the ‘iceberg model’ of culture. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) develop the very basic layer, while Spencer-Oatey (2000) combines basic assumptions and values in one segment of the culture. See G. Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (New York: Mc Graw-Hill, 1991), 5-8; F. Trompenaars and C. Hampden-Turner, *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business* (London: Nicholas Brearley, 1997); Helen Spenser-Oatey, *Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport in Talk Across Cultures* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001), 4.

The deepest layer is the worldview. The worldview is made up of basic, core, foundational concepts that underlie all we think and do, mostly unconsciously.¹ Answers to basic questions determine our worldview. How we structure intrinsically basic assumptions, values, and allegiances, and interpret and process them, is the way in which we form our worldview.

Effective cross-cultural communication must take these factors into account. A process of conversion must affect the deepest layer of culture, and the convert's worldview. It is the person's worldview, and his or her values, allegiances, and assumptions that must be changed when that individual grows spiritually. If the message alters only outward behavior without transforming the person's basic layer or worldview, the communication of the message has been insufficient and the conversion superficial.² Therefore insight into culture may help missionaries who work in a cross-cultural setting to translate the Bible that was written in the milieu of the first century into the language and culture of the people group they want to reach.

Besides body language, the only real tool for conveying thought is language. Kraft defines language as "a system of arbitrary vocal symbols employed by the members of a society for a variety of inter- and intra-personal purposes such as: formulating and communicating ideas, inducing others to action, attracting pity, instilling fear, and

¹James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door. A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity-Press, 1997), 16.

²Nichols, 12.

expressing oneself, as in letting off steam, showing off, and the like.”¹

Language is primarily vocal communication. It is always unique, and never simple because the communicative level of so-called primitive languages contains between twenty to thirty thousand items.² Language, as the first of the subsystems of culture, is learned along with culture and is therefore a mirror of culture. Consequently words, grammar, phrases and idioms are embedded in a collective realm, which is determined by the experience within a given culture. Language impacts thought, just as thoughts have an impact on language.³

However, effective communication involves far more than exchanging information. The story goes that two people looked searchingly at a tree. One said, “Wonderful!” and the other, “Useless!” The first man, who was an artist, considered the tree a wonderful motif for a painting. The second man, a forester, saw this particular tree as being useless material. The difference came from the different perspectives from which the men assessed the object in front of them. Before a message from a sender reaches the receiver it passes through numerous filters or interpretive lenses.⁴ Perception of reality is organized into mental maps or models forming a construction or picture in the mind.⁵ In the process of learning, maps of reality are developed and through these we perceive the world, understand it and behave accordingly. However, human mental maps are relative, not

¹Charles Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 238.

²Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 238, 242-43.

³*Ibid.*, 239-40, 245.

⁴*Ibid.*, 19.

⁵*Ibid.*, 14-16.

absolute, in terms of perception of reality. People construct individual pictures and interpret meanings.¹ When new information and understanding comes, it moves the old mental picture and we adjust and change it accordingly. The more models or schemes we have, the better communication is likely to be.

Theological Formation

The example of the “tree” mentioned before is simple; but the communication of abstract thoughts to people of other cultures and religions may be more complex. Concepts such as “conversion,” “salvation,” “grace,” or “Trinity” are intended to transmit spiritual content but their meaning may be unknown to the recipients. Comprehension of these terms is determined by the context and experience of the people in the sender’s culture. When applied in a cross-cultural setting, these words may carry other meanings that differ from those formed within the Judeo-Christian context.

Every person looks at life in his or her own way, through many different filters—cultural, temperamental, attitudinal. The final product in this cognitive process is his or her worldview. It is temporal, human, not final or unchangeable. In the same way, we look at Scripture through many filters and see things differently. We read, interpret, and apply the Scriptures through the “glasses” of our respective worldviews, as our context, or even tradition, determines. The final view that is formed is our theology.

This means that our theology is our own understanding of the Scriptures, looked at through the glasses of culture, temperament, worldview, and God’s impact on a human life. The Bible is inspired, but theology is the human way of interpreting and formulating God’s

¹Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 17-29.

message, “culturally conditioned”¹ and therefore subject to change. Paul says in 1 Cor 13:12 that we see things as through a window, imperfectly. In other words, we do not always see things as God sees them. People of another environment or culture may perceive certain circumstances or phenomena differently. The personal worldview of a human being determines that individual’s understanding of theology. Stanley Grenz, an evangelical theologian, argues that the gospel is reincarnated in every culture.² However, the Bible remains its basis. John Stott says, “Without the Bible, world evangelization would be not only impossible but actually inconceivable.”³ The Bible asserts divine inspiration and as such is an authoritative base for our theology.

Theology arises out of the mission that we have. When theology is understood as a set of predefined ideas, touching only cognitive processes, it is formal theology. What we think, what we say and accept, but may or may not practice, is “head and mouth theology.” Real theology is what we truly believe and practice or how we behave in relation to what we believe.

Does theology formation occur in a similar or dissimilar way in the Adventist church? Seventh-day Adventism was established at a time when the world was being confronted with technological and social changes that were leading society into the modern era. Our theology was formulated in terms understandable to that industrial, modern age. Today we live in a postmodern period in which cognitive faith is not welcomed, although an

¹Nichols, 38.

²Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 108.

³John R. W. Stott, “The Bible in World Evangelization,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 3.

incarnational belief system is more readily understood.¹ In addition, the terminology used in Adventist theology is stated in the vocabulary of the modern age and the church is therefore not prepared to face the challenges of the new era. As Felipe Tan says: "The gospel message is 'alien' to the Asian mind. The Church looks up to Western theology for a concrete expression of the faith. Difficulties crop up because the questions western theology confronted do not relate to the problems facing the Church in Asia today."²

The dilemma that has been identified concerns Adventist theology. Should we, as a Church, redefine our theology? We do not need to change our theology for the sake of theology. If it has to be revised, it must be only for the sake of mission that will make a difference in ministry. The truth is everlasting, unchanging; but the glasses that we use need to be, not mono-focal but multi-focal in order to make the gospel acceptable to other cultures. All mission work must ultimately lead people to meet Jesus.

Seventh-day Adventist theology uses a cognitive approach, an expository type of teaching, particularly in stating special doctrines like the Sabbath, the second advent, and the sanctuary. However, a biblical style of teaching through stories and by employing a meta-narrative is closer to the eastern mind. The mind is better prepared for reception of the truth, if a biblical method of teaching is used. The experiential side of our doctrines needs to be given more emphasis, so that we can lead people to know God. Personal experience with God cannot be disputed. Prayer answered in manifold ways will move the heart and initiate the cognitive process. Our theology has to relate facts to real life in order to permeate

¹See Graig van Gelder, "Postmodernism and Evangelicals: A Unigue Missiological Challenge" in *Missiology: An International Review* 30, no. 4 (October 2002): 491-504.

²Felipe Tan, Jr. "Contextualizing the Gospel Message in Asia: an Adventist Approach" (paper presented at the International Faith and Learning Seminar, Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, AIAS, Silang, Philippines, September 1993), Leslie Hardinge Library, 212.

society. If people today do not see relevance in the distinctive message of the Adventist Church, they will not believe it. It is also true that post-modernity and an eastern setting characteristically replace individualism with corporate thinking and give more importance to social and communal welfare than to personal advantage.

Contemporary people cannot understand the gospel in terms of individualism. Grenz uses the term 'theology of community versus the kingdom theology'.¹ For too long Adventists have used the imagery of war in which to cast our descriptions of evangelism. We need to refrain from using terms like "target" groups, "crusade" and "campaign" and become more culturally sensitive.² We must also "reframe" the contents of the "mission package" so that it presents truth accurately to the non-western mind. Theology is only really useful when it responds to the question of which theological method can help make the gospel acceptable to another culture.

Contextualization

The Great Commission given to Jesus' disciples requires that the gospel be preached to people groups in every culture. The challenge of how to present biblical truth to every people group, in both domestic and cross-cultural settings, is a question of theological method. For the gospel message to be understood, it is vital that the changeless truth should become meaningful and relevant to the recipient culture. A theological method that

¹Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology*, 109-136.

²Jerald Whitehouse, "God's Footprints in the Rubble. Adventist-Muslim Relations during Crisis," *Review and Herald*, 12 September 2002, 8-13.

communicates the supra-cultural¹ message so that the people within the cultural context can understand it is defined as contextualization.

The verb “contextualize” comes from the word “context” and relates to the circumstances in which a particular event occurs. Contextualization² is a meaningful and appropriate cross-cultural transmission of biblical truth which is faithful to its original intent and sensitive to culture.³ Gilliland aptly explains that this theological method “takes into account the widest range of factors—religious, cultural, social political, and so on—all of which must be considered within the framework of biblical revelation.”⁴

Biblical Basis for Contextualization

Although the word “contextualize” does not appear in the Bible, its concept exists. Throughout the whole Bible God repeatedly reveals Himself and His message to the entire world. But He does not only impart intellectual truth to humankind in the form of information. In both the Old and the New Testaments God constantly conveys His truth by appearing in the human cultural context in familiar and understandable ways. Kraft says that God “communicates in familiar, expected ways by means of participation with human

¹Nichols explains supra-cultural as “the phenomena of cultural belief and behavior that have their source outside of human culture.” Nichols, 13.

²The word contextualization began to be used in 1972 by Shoki Coe and Aharon Sapsezian, directors of the World Council of Churches’ Theological Education Fund in their report, “Ministry in Context.” See World Council of Churches, *Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund, 1970-77* (Bromley, UK: TEF Fund, 1972).

³David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods and Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 31.

⁴Dean S. Gilliland, *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1989), 12.

beings in specific situations to which the revelation is immediately applicable.”¹

The Old Testament is an inspired record of events in which God communicates His message about His coming in a way that can be understood in the cultural context of that time. When God asked Abraham to offer animal sacrifices, Abraham “cut them in two, and arranged the halves opposite each other” (Gen 15:10). He did precisely what God wanted him to do and God confirmed what Abraham had done by providing a smoking fire that passed between the two sides (Gen 15:17).

The purpose of this event was to establish a covenant between God and Abraham (Gen 15:18). How the covenant was made was well known and the method was widely practiced in lower Mesopotamia in the days of the Sumerians.² Being part of that culture, Abraham was well acquainted with its practices and ways of making covenants. Besides this, God met Abraham on ground that was familiar to him and revealed Himself in the context of his culture. God’s revelation in the Old Testament was always contextual. His plan of salvation was conveyed through language and symbols which were known at that time.

In the New Testament we find the best example of contextualization, when God Himself became incarnate (Phil 2:5-11). By becoming a man through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, God crossed a “cultural gap,” identified Himself with man and revealed

¹Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture. A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 215.

²J. Arthur Thompson, “Covenant (OT),” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE)*, rev. ed. (1979), 1:790-92.

Himself in a truly contextual way. He broke through barriers which had kept man from having a relationship with Him. God in human form left the universe and took on cultural patterns, practices, frailty, and mind processes. He entered into our world, broke through the barriers of sin, and died on the cross, so that we could be forgiven and know Him personally.

The Council of Jerusalem is another example of New Testament contextualization. It was convened when a controversy began between a group of ethnocentric Jewish Christians and the nationally mixed church in Antioch. "Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). For them, their culture was an inseparable feature of the gospel and had to be observed. After much discussion, the Council decided that the messenger culture should not be an obstacle to the Gentile believers' acceptance of the gospel. As Gilliland concludes, "The expansion of the gospel into the Gentile world demanded new symbols for communication and careful attention to local situations while maintaining a consistent, essential gospel."¹

Paul's cross-cultural ministry is an outstanding illustration of contextualization. With a multicultural and multilingual background, the apostle Paul was comfortable in several cultural settings. His life's ambition was to preach the gospel in a cross-cultural setting, which he achieved. Børge Schantz points to the fact that Paul knew how to make a difference between the timeless content of the gospel message and cultural variables.² But he never compromised on fundamentals. Thus, Paul could say, "I have become all things to

¹Gilliland, 4.

²Børge Schantz, "One Message—Many Cultures: How Do We Cope?" *Ministry*, June 1992, 10.

all men, that I might all by means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” (1 Cor 9:22, 23)

The religious terms used in the New Testament represent contextualized models of communication. New Testament writers used words like *kyrios* (lord), or *logos* (word) which were familiar to Hellenistic philosophy and to the Septuagint, and at the same time in harmony with the Hebrew usage. Other words widely used in Hellenistic culture were changed and given another meaning. The Greek word *mysterion* (mystery) was utilized in pagan cultic initiation practices and in the experience of identification with the deity. Paul changed this when describing the secret plan of salvation that was revealed after the fall and announced through Old Testament writings (Eph 1:9; 3:3; 6:19; Col 1:26-27).¹

Ellen G. White and Contextualization

Ellen White, co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist church, advocated anthropological principles that in her time had not yet been formulated by missiologists: “Human wisdom, familiarity with the language of different nations, is a help in the missionary work. An understanding of the customs of the people, of the location and time of events, is practical knowledge; for it aids in making the figures of the Bible clear, in bringing out the force of Christ’s teaching so way-faring man may find the pathway cast up for the ransomed to walk in, and there will be no excuse found for anyone who perishes through misapprehension of the Scriptures.”²

She highlighted some very important cross-cultural principles:

¹Nichols, 48.

²Ellen G. White, “The Science of Salvation the First of Sciences,” *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, 1 December 1891, 737-38.

The worker in foreign fields will come in contact with all classes of people and all varieties of minds, and he will find that different methods of labor are required to meet the needs of the people. A sense of his own inefficiency will drive him to God and to the Bible for light and strength and knowledge. The methods and means by which we reach certain ends are not always the same. The missionary must use reason and judgment. Experience will indicate the wisest choice to follow under existing circumstances. It is often the case that the customs and climate of a country make a condition of things that would not be tolerated in another country. Changes for the better must be made, but it is best not to be too abrupt. Let not controversy arise over trifles.¹

Ellen White also drew attention to the contextualization model, although this term was not coined during her lifetime:

Paul did not approach the Jews in such a way as to arouse their prejudices. He did not first tell them that they must believe in Jesus of Nazareth; but dwelt upon the prophecies that spoke of Christ, his mission and his work. Step by step he led his hearers on, showing the importance of honoring the law of God. He gave due honor to the ceremonial law, showing that it was Christ who instituted the Jewish economy and sacrificial service. Then he brought them down to the first advent of the Redeemer, showed that in the life and death of Christ every specification of the sacrificial service had been fulfilled. The Gentiles he approached by exalting Christ, and then presenting the binding claims of the law. . . Thus the apostle varied his manner of labor, shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed.²

In her writings she points out the need to understand culture in foreign fields and to be ready to practice sound contextualization:

I have been shown that we need to move with the greatest wisdom that we shall not in anything create prejudice by giving the impression that Americans feel themselves superior to people of other nations. There have been two errors—one error in seeking in our words and actions to exalt foreign national customs above our own American habits and practices and suiting our American stamp to adapt it to foreign countries which will bring us no influence. Then there has been still another error of extolling in conversation and in the labor for souls American practices as far above those of other nations. We need to be constantly guarded on every point. The religion of these nations they think superior to all others, and are exceedingly jealous on this point. They send their missionaries to the uncivilized heathen, and to bear on the front in our approach to them that we are sent to this

¹Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1915), 468.

²*Ibid.*, 118.

country from America as missionaries, will create the suspicion and jealousy at once that [they] are regarded as heathen. . . . This is missionary ground; we are doing missionary work, but the peculiar prejudice will be stirred against us if we put it just as it truly is.¹

Today's slogan in evangelism, "Identifying with the people," was formulated by Ellen White in the following way: "Christ drew the hearts of His hearers to Him by the manifestations of His love, and then, little by little, as they were able to bear it, He unfolded to them the great truths of the kingdom. We also must learn to adapt our labors to the condition of the people—to meet them where they are."²

She concludes by stating principles of a contextualized method needed by everyone who wants to work cross-culturally: "God's workmen must be many-sided men; that is they must have breadth of character. They are not to be one-idea men, stereotyped in their manner of working, unable to see that their advocacy must vary with the class of people among whom they work and the circumstances they have to meet."³

Critical Contextualization versus Global Contextualization

A question arises as to the proper approach in contextualizing the gospel. Biblical truth is unchangeable and cannot be compromised. But the best ways of expressing and applying it in different cultures can vary. As Paul Hiebert says, "In missions we must study the Scriptures and also the socio-cultural context of the people we serve, so that we can communicate the gospel to them in ways they understand."⁴ He calls his method "critical

¹Ellen G. White, MS 8, 1990, Ellen G. White Research Center, Newbold College, Bracknell, UK.

²Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1974), 57.

³White, *Gospel Workers*, 119.

⁴Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI:

contextualization," a method that preserves the Bible as the infallible revelation of God's will and at the same time attempts to relate the message to the cultural context.

Paul Hiebert proposes four steps in the process of contextualization:¹

(1) *Exegesis of the Culture*

This has to involve phenomenological research of the local culture and particular practices, something which is done by local people with the help of change agents.² At this stage the culture is described and analyzed without final judgment in order to understand its meaning and function. Culture, as a human enterprise cannot be completely good or bad. Every culture is exposed to the great controversy between God and Satan. As Nichols says, "Every culture reflects this conflict."³ So cultures are as good or bad as the accuracy or inaccuracy of their reflection of God's image and his purpose for humankind.

(2) *Exegesis of Scripture and the Hermeneutical Bridge*

In this phase the change agent helps local people research local belief or practice. This leads to factual knowledge that will facilitate incorporating biblical knowledge in the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of a cultural context. The change agent serves as the "hermeneutical bridge" in this situation.

(3) *Critical response*

Next, the local people as a group, evaluate the local custom and respond with an alternative practice in the new light of the Scriptures. However the authority of the Bible

Baker Books, 1994), 10.

¹Paul G. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11, no. 3 (1987), 109-10.

²Change agents are people, laymen, or paid workers who work in unentered areas.

³Nichols, 15.

maintains a higher position than that of the background culture. Nichols fittingly points out that “the gospel is never the guest of any culture; it is always its judge and redeemer.”¹ The believer will change his or her practice in accordance with the new light. Some of the practices that are not contrary to the revealed Word need not to be discarded and will be retained.

(4) *New Contextualized Practices*

The final step is that of building new practices which convey the meaning of the Bible and which are contextualized so that people can understand them.

The negative term used to describe contextualization is syncretism. David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen express this fittingly: “There are two dangers in approaching the task of contextualization, the fear of irrelevance if contextualization is not attempted, and the fear of compromise and syncretism if it is taken too far.”²

Finally, the task of contextualizing is imperative and inevitable. The gospel message must be preached to every culture and people group, and needs to be relevant in different cultural contexts and yet still prove that “there is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph 4:5, 6). The challenge of His body, manifested and defined as a church, lies in how well its diverse, but unified members can fulfill its purpose in a multicultural world.

¹Ibid.

²Hesselgrave and Rommen, 55.

An Adventist Contextualized Ministry

The Three Angels' Messages of Rev that Seventh-day Adventists proclaim has not taken root in the Muslim-populated areas of the Balkans. The traditional evangelistic approach among Christians has proved unsuccessful among Muslims because it has often given little attention to the Muslim context. Ellen White wrote that "many efforts, though made at great expense have been in large measure unsuccessful because they do not meet the wants of the time and place."¹ This lack of contextualized understanding hindered the church to be a relevant and credible witness.

In light of this evidence, the method of sharing the gospel with Muslims, which is proposed as appropriate, consists of three contextualized elements: (1) bridging the unknown by means of the known by using the Qur'an as an entering wedge, (2) direct contact by having people living among people, (3) contextualization of the carrier of the message and the message itself.² Jesus met people where they were. Ellen White pointed out, "Christ drew the hearts of His hearers to Him by the manifestations of His love, and then, little by little, as they were able to bear it, He unfolded to them the great truths of the kingdom. We also must learn to adapt our labors to the condition of the people—to meet them where they are."³

Contextualization has been defined as "the effort to understand and take seriously the specific context of each human group and person on its own terms and in all its dimensions—cultural, religious, social, political, economic—and to discern what the gospel

¹White, *Gospel Workers*, 97.

²Wolfgang Lepke, "An Evaluation of the Contextual Witnessing Project Within a Resistant People Group" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2001), 206.

³White, *Evangelism*, 57.

says to people in that context.”¹ In the document “Contextualization and Syncretism”² contextualization is presented as “the intentional and discriminating attempt to communicate the gospel message in a culturally meaningful way. Seventh-day Adventist contextualization is motivated by the serious responsibility to fulfill the gospel commission in a very diverse world.”³

Contextualization has its foundation in Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It communicates biblical truth in a culturally relevant way and is faithful to Scripture as well as meaningful to the indigenous people with whom the missionary is working. All cultures are judged by the gospel. As Bill Musk writes, “Mission to Muslims is not a war against a particular cultural pattern, but a commitment to battle within a cultural pattern, against the spiritual forces that bind men, women and children, and keep them at a distance from their Creator.”⁴

In preaching the everlasting gospel, contextualization as a method always plays a crucial role. “Intentional contextualization of the way we communicate our faith and practice is biblical, legitimate, and necessary. Without it the Church faces the dangers of miscommunication and misunderstandings, loss of identity, and syncretism. Historically, adaptation has taken place around the world as a crucial part of spreading the three angels’

¹Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 32.

²General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “Guidelines for Engaging in Global Mission,” a section entitled “Contextualization and Syncretism,” June 10, 2003, http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/guidelines/main_guide7.html (3 July 2004).

³Ibid.

⁴Bill Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam. Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims at Street Level* (London: Monarch Book, 2003), 262.

messages to every kindred, nation, tribe, and people. This will continue to happen."¹

However, there is a danger of syncretism in the process of contextualization, which appears when, as Parshall states, "the critical and basic elements of the Gospel are lost."²

Because of the danger of over-contextualization that neglects or distorts eternal biblical truths, critical contextualization has to be applied. The following guidelines have been established by the General Conference to guard against syncretism in planting communities of faith in unentered areas:

a. Because uncritical contextualization is as dangerous as non-contextualization, it is not to be done at a distance, but within the specific cultural situation.

b. Contextualization is a process that should involve world Church leaders, theologians, missiologists, local people, and ministers. These individuals should have a clear understanding of the core elements of the biblical worldview in order to be able to distinguish between truth and error.

c. The examination of the specific cultural element would necessitate an especially careful analysis by cultural insiders of the significance of the particular cultural element in question.

d. The examination of all the Scripture says about the issue or related issues is indispensable. The implications of scriptural teachings and principles should be carefully thought through and factored into proposed strategies.

e. In the context of reflection and prayer, scriptural insights are normative and must be applied to the specific cultural element in question. The analysis could lead to one of the following results: 1) The particular cultural element is accepted, because it is compatible with scriptural principles; 2) The particular cultural element is modified to make it compatible with Christian principles; 3) The particular cultural element is rejected, because it contradicts the principles of Scripture.

f. The particular cultural element that was accepted or modified is carefully implemented.

¹"Contextualization and Syncretism."

²Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*, 46.

g. After a period of trial it may be necessary to evaluate the decision made and determined whether it should be discontinued, modified, or retained.

In the end, all true contextualization must be subject to biblical truth and bear results for God's kingdom. The unity of the global Church requires regular exposure to each other, each other's culture, and each other's insights that "together with all the saints we may grasp the breadth, length, height, and depth of Christ's love."—Eph 3:18¹

The following is a summary of practical steps in the process of contextualization relevant to the gospel worker in unentered areas: (1) understand the Bible and its principles, (2) understand yourself and your own culture, and (3) understand the recipient's language and culture. Application is made by: (1) identifying positive, negative, and neutral elements in the culture according to biblical principles, and (2) choosing cultural values and practices that can be used in evangelism, worship, and everyday life.

Theological Understanding of Church and Mission

Biblical Foundation of the Church

The word "church" is very often misunderstood. What people generally think of is what they find in popular dictionaries or encyclopedias—the church as a Christian religious community, or building.² But this usage does not always reflect the genuine biblical meaning. The New Testament uses the Greek word *ecclesia* that means "called out." It is rendered in English as "church." It is the continuation of the Hebrew word *qahal* used in

¹"Contextualization and syncretism."

²*The New Encyclopedia Britannica (NEB)*, 1977 rev. ed., s.v. "Church."

the Old Testament to mean gathering, congregation or assembly.¹ The New Testament *ecclesia* is the fulfillment of the Old Testament *qahal*.

As an eschatological people of God, a church is not a human establishment. It is a group of people gathered locally, globally or universally.² “The New Testament Christians viewed the church as neither hierarchy nor edifice, but people—people brought together by the Spirit to belong to God through Christ.”³ The church is one large family which focuses on God and on people. Therefore the usage of the word in the Bible is always associated with a community of people who lived in a saved relationship with God and is not a word to signify buildings. “The church of Jesus is the men and women who, even when they are unaware of it, are linked inseparably to the living God, formed by His Spirit into one body, and who as His body are called to live increasingly in a responsive relationship with their Lord.”⁴

The Bible describes the church metaphorically in several different ways: as a body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), as Christ’s bride (Eph 5:25), as a structure (1 Cor 3:9-11; Eph 2:20) and as a depositary or citadel of the everlasting truth (1 Tim 3:15). If the church does not teach and spread biblical truth, it is not the church.

All of these metaphors stress the main characteristic of the church—seen as a body under the headship of Christ, a bride belonging to the Bridegroom who is the Lord, or living

¹*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTT)*, 1997, s.v., “Qahal.”

²Walter Kreck, *Grundfragen der Ekklesiologie* (München, Germany: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1981), 18-19.

³Grenz, 171.

⁴Lawrence O. Richards and Clyde Hoeldtke, *Church Leadership: Following the Example of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), 76.

stones that are built into a structure with Jesus as the chief living stone. "In seeing Christ as head, we must take seriously the notion that He is not head 'emeritus.' He is not some titular 'chairman of the board' who is given nodding acknowledgement while others run His organization. He is not the retired founder of the firm. No, God has appointed Jesus to 'be the *head* over everything for the church, which is his body' (Eph 1:22-23; emphasis added).¹

The first church came into existence as the result of mission. Jesus came to this world, became one of us, chose His disciples, lived with them, gave them the Great Command and sent them out into the world. In this way the first church was established. Mission gives church a sense of identity. Jon Dybdahl says: "Mission is central to our identity. Jesus did not create a church and then give mission as one of its tasks. The divine sending plan comes prior to the church. Mission gives birth to the church and is its mother. The very essence or nature of church is mission. If the church ceases to be missionary, it has not simply failed in its task, but has actually ceased being the church. It becomes only a religiously oriented social organization."²

This is the paradigm that still exists. The reason for the existence of the church is the fulfillment of the Great commission, the declaration of "the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9).

The church as the body of Christ does not exist for itself. When the church is gathered, its focus may be on the internal life and growth of the body. But when it is scattered—when in touch with the world—the body of Christ exists to carry out the continuing mission of Jesus. Because the church is the body of Christ and through it Jesus touches the lives of those we touch, the incarnation of Christ has a continuing form. Our key to understanding the body in mission is to hear the

¹Richards and Hoeldtke, 14.

²Jon Dybdahl, "Adventist Mission Today—Taking the Pulse," in *Adventist Mission in the 21st Century: The Joys and Challenges of Presenting Jesus to a Diverse World* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1999), 17-18.

words of Jesus to the Father: 'As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world' John 17:18. And 'I in them and you in me' (John 17:23).¹

The mission of the church is defined by the way in which it performs its role in the world: as the "fortress model", or the "salt model"². Eddie Gibbs and Ian Coffey describe three models of ministry towards the world.³ The first is called "judgmental isolation"; adherents believe that "the world is under divine judgment and that the church must call it to repentance."⁴ The theology of preservation says that we have to resist change and to keep to the status quo. The question is: are we merely vaccinating ourselves or are we interested in healing the world?

A protective separation is the stance of the church that guards its own integrity and builds a high wall around its fellowship. Before individuals are permitted to enter, they must not only clean up their lives, but also undergo cultural indoctrination and initiation. The question is: should Seventh-day Adventists convert non-Christians to Christianity, or direct them to the faith of their forefathers, into Adventism?

The church demonstrates its calling within every culture through its missionary engagement and recognizes not only its distinctive identity in the gospel but also its calling within a specific culture.⁵ The church is essentially missionary and its work must lead people to encounter Jesus. When the church ceases to be a missionary organization, it ceases to be a church.

¹Richards and Hoeldtke, 60.

²Jon Paulien, *Present Truth in the Real World. The Adventist Struggle to Keep and Share Faith in a Secular Society* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 80-88.

³Gibbs and Coffey, *Church Next. Quantum Changes in Christian Ministry*, 46

⁴Ibid., 46.

⁵Ibid., 46.

The litmus test of knowing whether or not the church is fulfilling its mission is seen in the interest shown by the people. Ellen White says: "All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow men. For this work the church was established and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ"¹.

The early Christian example, as described in Acts 2:42-47, provides a structural model for effective church growth: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

The time has come to make a paradigm shift. If the church wants to fulfill its missionary purpose, if it wants to think big, it has to think in terms of small groups.² Big churches should be reorganized³ because small churches can grow faster than large ones. Home groups are the place for fellowship, as well as the ideal places to introduce people to Jesus. People are more willing to cross the threshold of a friend's home than the threshold

¹White, *Desire of Ages*, 822.

²See David Cox, *Think Big, Think Small Groups: a Guide to Understanding and Developing Small Group Ministry in Adventist Churches* (Watford, UK: South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Department of Personal Ministries, 1998).

³See William A. Beckham, *The Second Reformation* (Houston, TX: TOUCH Publication, 1997), 59-80.

of that person's church. If the church is to be a growing church, let it be a missionary church first and foremost. Its institutional aspect can be dealt with as a secondary consideration.¹

A great responsibility rests upon church leaders to advance the mission of the Church. They are confronted with a very important question: why are so many places neglected, passed by, forgotten? "We need wise nurserymen who will transplant trees to different localities and give them advantages, that they may grow. It is the positive duty of God's people to go into the regions beyond."² People who are elected, or who are going to be elected, as leaders at all levels of church organization are directly responsible for the advancement of the gospel in unentered areas.³

In all areas people are needed who are suited to the gospel ministry. Administration requires capable people as well. Church leaders are directly responsible for the allocation of ministers and there is a constant danger that they may appoint talented and well qualified ministers to administrative posts when they could be the very best workers to present the truths of God's word to secular and unreached people.⁴ Many pastors would be more successful in the field than in administration.

The most natural way to reach the unreached is through the life and work of lay people. Self-supporting church members in unentered areas are in most cases more

¹Jon L. Dybdahl. "Mission Faces the 21st Century," in *Re-visioning Adventist Mission in Europe*, ed. Erich W. Baumgartner (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 10.

²White, *Evangelism*, 60.

³White, *Medical Ministry* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1963), 240.

⁴White, *Evangelism*, 22-23.

successful than salaried ministers.¹ Consecrated people, respected, not alone but familial, are the best missionaries in many places that are out of reach for paid church workers.

The advancement of God's cause depends directly on financial means. Entering unentered areas demands more gospel workers who should be sent into fields where Providence has opened the way. The number of global mission pioneers should not be reduced, but enlarged.² "How do we find the resources for these fields?" is the question that remains.

There is growing pressure to erect large church buildings. However, finances should be invested primarily in evangelism, not buildings. When people in unentered areas make the decision for Christ, finances will flow abundantly for the needs in their fields and even for those in other places.³

Challenges in Mission

People Groups

When working in different unentered areas of the world, missionaries have found that not all groups of people respond to the gospel in the same way. This has led to the development of the "people group" concept.

At the First International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974 (also known as the Lausanne Congress, referred to hereafter in this text as LCWE) Ralph Winter presented a paper entitled, "The Highest Priority: Cross-

¹Beckham, 105-13; Oosterwal 103-18.

²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 391.

³White, *Evangelism*, 55.

Cultural Evangelism," in which he called attention to God's interest in saving people as members of their culture.¹ He emphasized that globally 16,750 people groups² are culturally and socially isolated from their neighboring Christians and are thus unable to hear the gospel from them. In order to reach these groups by the year 2000, cross-cultural evangelism was imperative.

Since that time, missiologists have produced differing statistics of unreached people groups which have bewildered mission leaders. Nonetheless, more important than the precise numbers, has been the growing awareness among church leaders of the significance of using the "people group" approach in planning to evangelize culturally and socially separated, unreached people. Since that time it has also become clear that it is more effective to choose a people group or block to work in, than to attempt to work within a heterogeneous segment of the population.

In the course of time definitions have arisen concerning the term "unreached peoples." Ralph Winter employed the term "hidden people," first proposed by Robert Coleman,³ but this term was altered at the mission conference in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1980 to "frontier peoples"⁴ and two further definitions emerged at the LCWE near Chicago

¹Ralph Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, "The New Macedonian: A Revolutionary New Era in Missions Begins," in *Perspectives on the World Mission Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey, 1981): 293-311.

²Ibid.

³Ralph Winter, "Unreached Peoples: The Development of the Concept," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 1 (1984): 151.

⁴Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association Frontier Peoples Committee agreed in February 24, 1982, to use this definition for all three phrases—unreached peoples, hidden peoples, and frontier peoples. In Ralph D. Winter, "What is World Evangelization and Is it Possible to Achieve," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 4 (July 1987): n.p.

in March, 1982. An unreached people group finally was defined as "a people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group."¹ This definition has become standard and a starting point for missiologists who endeavor to reach unreached people groups.

In order to facilitate the development and implementation of strategies for reaching the unreached, mission leaders have, in the course of time, made a clearer distinction between different categories in the concept of people groups so that "unreached peoples" have been grouped along the major cultural lines:² (1) blocks of peoples, according to predominant religion, with three major blocks, Muslims, Hindu, and Buddhist, (2) ethnolinguistic peoples, distinguished by common descent, history, customs and language, (3) a unimax people, the maximum sized group within larger ethnolinguistic peoples in complex societies, or small geographically remote peoples sufficiently unified to be evangelized with no significant barriers of either understanding or acceptance to stop the spread of the gospel.³

Reaching Muslims

Twelve years passed after the Lausanne Congress before the Seventh-day Adventist Church agreed to an initiative, at the 1986 Autumn Council in Rio de Janeiro, to develop an outreach program based on the people group concept. In 1989 the world population was divided by Adventist researchers into segments of one million people. It was estimated that

¹See Winter and Koch, 17-18.

²Ibid., 17-18.

³Another category is sociopeoples, a relatively small association of peers who have an affinity for one another based upon a shared interest, activity, or occupation. Ibid.

there were about 1,800 population segments of one million people with no Adventist presence out of a total of approximately 5,269 population groups of one million people in the world.¹ At the 1990 General Conference Session, the Global Mission (GM) program was set up as a special initiative to support the planting of new Adventist communities of faith among unreached population segments of a million people.² Seventh-day Adventists have, to date, established worldwide work in all but 24 out of 228 countries and areas, but many countries still have large numbers of unreached peoples untouched by the Adventist Church.³

The Adventist Church in the Balkans has grown considerably but only in Christian areas. Christian areas include two-thirds of the population, but one third of the Balkan region, populated by Muslims, has not been entered. It is clear that growth and success cannot be measured only through general church-membership growth but also in relation to the faithfulness to the gospel commission that requires preaching to every people group.

Since it was possible to evangelize in the former Yugoslavia (only Albania was an access-restricted country), the Balkans were not placed in the category of unentered areas. However, after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, two unreached groups emerged, comprised of several million Muslims who have not been touched by the gospel: Albanians dispersed in the countries of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, and Bosniaks, living in

¹Kit Watts, "Progress Toward the Global Strategy," *Review and Herald*, August 1989, 8-10.

²"Voted: To accept and enthusiastically endorse the concept of Global Strategy, as adopted by the 1989 Annual Council and to mobilize every believer and all church organizations and institutions in achieving our Global Mission." General Conference of SDA, "Session Action Article 3:10," *Review and Herald*, 9 July 1990, 10.

³General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Global Mission: Welcome/Facts."

Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Sandzak region, who *de facto*, though not *de jure* belong to the 10/40 window.

Despite the presence of Adventists in the Balkans in general, these non-Christian cultures have not been evangelized. There has been what Ralph Winter calls a “people blindness,”¹ unawareness by Christians of the existence of separate people groups in the same country. The gospel has not been preached to the Balkan Muslims by “near-neighbor evangelism”² for the reason that Muslims are not culturally near-neighbors of Christians. Even though they live in the same country, and are secular like their Christians neighbors, they have very different religious backgrounds and traditions. They are Muslims. Their Christian neighbors are neither willing, nor prepared to adapt their culture and witnessing approaches to their Muslim countrymen. It is therefore necessary for a different strategy to be designed and implemented to meet the needs for cross-religio-cultural evangelism.

The Muslim communities constitute the largest unentered areas of the world. So, church planting in Muslim societies presents a major challenge among unreached people. There are at present 1,271,884,000 Muslims in the world.³ Approximately one out of every five people in our world is a Muslim. Muslims also have a high birth rate so the Muslim portion of the world’s population is increasing. Muslims constitute the largest block of unreached people in today’s world making up more than 930 major unreached ethno-

¹Winter and Hawthorne, 302.

²Ibid., 293.

³David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2004,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (January 2004): 25.

linguistic groups.¹ Thirty-eight countries view themselves as Muslim because they have Muslim populations of over fifty per cent. In these areas Islam is the dominant religion where the evangelizing efforts of non-Muslims are restricted. In another twenty-five countries, at least ten per cent of the population is Muslim.² Significant numbers of Muslim immigrants live in the western part of the world. Forty-six out of eighty-one countries in the 10/40 Window are predominantly Muslim, with the population in many of them more than 90 percent Muslim.³

The major barriers to witnessing to Muslims are attributable to historical, cultural, and theological factors. In his presentation at the 1976 conference on "The World of Islam Today," John Anderson reviewed the historical and modern barriers between Christian and Muslim communities. In the sixth and seventh centuries, at the time of Muhammad, the Christian church in Arabia was divided into Greek Orthodox, Nestorian and Monophysite sects, which gave Muhammad a vague picture of Christianity. The crusades, supported by the medieval church, created hostility against Christians who attempted to conquer Islam by the sword. Missionaries in the nineteenth century who tried to evangelize Muslims, attacked Islam and were insensitive to Muslim culture. After World War II, western countries unreservedly supported the State of Israel. Missionary enterprises in the twentieth century generally evaded the Muslim world and worked in more promising fields.⁴ Islam

¹Robert C. Douglas, "Ongoing Strategy Debate in Muslim Missions," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 11, no. 2 (April 1994): 72-73.

²Ibid.

³General Conference, "Global Mission: Welcome/Facts."

⁴John D. C. Anderson, "Our Approach to Islam: Christian or Cultic?" *Muslim World Pulse* 6, no. 1 (1977): 2.

was and is the most studied and least evangelized religion. The church cannot reap a rich harvest until it exerts much more prayer and effort in Muslim lands than it has exerted in other "difficult" territories.¹

Many Muslims, although theologically convinced of the truthfulness of the Bible, cannot adjust to the social and cultural differences between Islam and Christianity. "Since we do not expect God to overrule when we go against natural laws, why do we expect Him to overrule when we go against cultural or behavioral laws."² Contributing to the challenge of reaching Muslims are the theological differences which are shown in the following table:³

Table 1: Seventh-day Adventist and Muslim Worldviews

| | Adventists | Muslims |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| God's Revelation | God has revealed Himself in created works, Scripture, through the prophets, and in Jesus. | God has sent messages of guidance through His messengers who wrote in the Tawrat, Zaboor, Injil and Qur'an, the final message being given through Muhammad, the last prop. |
| History | There is a Great Controversy between good and evil. God is in control over history and He is working out His eternal purpose. | God does as He wills in history. There is a battle between good and evil, and God provides protection for the faithful. |
| Creation | God is Creator of all things, and His perfect creation was defiled by the fall of man. | God is Creator of all things, and a perfect world was lost through the mistakes of Adam and Eve. |
| Resolving Sin | God solved the problem of sin through Jesus' sacrifice, reconciling us to Himself. Freedom is given to individuals to give or withhold loyalty to Him. | God solves the problem of mistakes by forgiving the repentant and submissive believer, and judging on the Day of Judgment. |
| Future Life | After the Second Coming and the millennium in Heaven, sin and sinful people will be eradicated, a new earth created and eternity given to the righteous. | God will establish the rule of righteousness, the earth will be cleaned from unbelief and an eternity of righteousness ushered in. |

¹Greg Livingstone, *Planting Churches in Muslim Cities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), 179.

²S. A. Grunlan, and M. K. Myers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 20.

³Jerald Whitehouse, "Comparative Chart of SDA and Muslims Worldview," Washington DC: General Conference Adventist Muslim Relations, n.d., photocopied.

The present situation in the Muslim world is unique. Since 1800 Islam has been passing through tremendous changes due to the end of its isolation from the wider world. Exploding population levels, economic upheaval, religious revival, urbanization, modernization, and secularization, and on the other hand poverty, religious ignorance, and widespread illiteracy are some of the transformations happening in Muslim societies.

Muslim guest workers, students, and immigrants in the West, widespread mass communications and Muslim literature written by open-minded writers, are introducing the gospel to many areas of the Muslim world. Young Muslims are very keen to have a knowledge of the contents of the Bible.¹ Therefore, there are today unparalleled opportunities to reach Muslims for Christ.

At the same time there is a growing worldwide interest among Christians to engage in Muslim evangelism.² Mission agencies have been designing a variety of strategies for reaching very diverse Muslim groups. Although there is unity among them that Muslims need Jesus Christ, the strategy of how to do that is very diverse. Different approaches have been used at different times. Five models or approaches can be identified.³

1. A confrontational approach was used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when some missionaries, such as Henry Martyn, Karl Pfander and St. Clair Tidall, tried to

¹ Akbar S. Ahmed and Hastings Donnan, *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 1-20.

² Stan Guthrie, "Doors into Islam," *Christianity Today*, 9 September 2002, 34.

³ John Mark Terry, "Approaches to the Evangelization of Muslims." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (April 1996): 168-73.

win Muslims by public debates.¹ This approach was never very successful in winning souls to Christ, and it usually increased Muslim aversion towards Christianity.

2. Another evangelical model was advocated by Samuel Zwemer (1867-1952), who emphasized the atonement and mediation of Christ, the need for repentance and submission by Muslim converts, the convert's involvement in the church, and, later in his life, incarnational ministry to individuals and small groups.² This approach has resulted in Western-style churches detached from Muslim culture, and has not yielded a large number of converts.

3. The third approach developed by denominational missions have tried to win Muslims through institutions such as hospitals, schools and orphanages, with the assumption that exemplified love and compassion will overcome prejudice and open the way for the hearing of the gospel.³ This approach has often faced difficult times because governments have taken over many of their services, and inflation makes it hard to maintain them. However, in some countries, these institutions are the only Christian presence allowed.

4. The dialogic approach was introduced by Temple Gairdner (1873-1928) and developed more fully by Kenneth Cragg. In this approach the missionary is inspired by a sincere love of Muslims and tries, through dialog to help Muslims understand Christianity and win them for Christ.⁴

¹Terry, 168-73.

²Lyle Vander Werff, "Our Muslim Neighbors: The Contribution of Samuel Zwemer to Christian Mission," *Missiology* 10 (April 1982): 191-195.

³C. George Fry and James R. King, *Islam: A Survey of the Muslim Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 133.

⁴Ray G. Register, Jr., *Dialogue and Interfaith Witness With Muslims* (Fort Washington, PA: Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, 1979), 11-12.

5. In the contextualized approach, missionaries try to present the gospel in religious and cultural forms that Muslims can identify with. This model does not forget "the offense of the gospel," but seeks to avoid objectionable factors.¹ It calls for changes in missionary lifestyle, worship forms, theological terms, and strategy.

Seventh-day Adventists and Mission

Jesus called his disciples and established the first church. It was a movement, not an institution. The Bible writers foresaw that before His second coming there will be called into existence a worldwide movement which will fulfill the Great Commission (Rev 12:13-17). The Advent movement grew out of the conviction that it has a special message to the world to proclaim the "eternal gospel . . . to every nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev 14:6).

The everlasting gospel is the call to worship God as Creator and to observe the seventh-day Sabbath as a memorial of His creation. The message is one of hope that Jesus, as a personal Savior, resolves the problem of sin and serves as a mediator. It is also a warning message that the end of time is near, of the imminent return of Jesus, and the day of judgment when evil will be eradicated. It is a promise of eternal life without evil and pain, and a call to all peoples to come out and become part of a great gathering of God's last-day family. Seventh-day Adventists are not one church among many others, not a Protestant denomination but a movement foretold as having a vital role to play at the end of time—

¹Bashir Abdol Massih, "Incarnational Witness to Muslims: The Models of Jesus, Paul, and the Early Church," *World Pulse*, 12 September 1982, 1-8.

God's last-day people called to prepare the world for Jesus' second coming.¹ According to Jack Provonsha: "The term 'movement' emphasizes the spontaneous, unstructured vitality and inner fire of a group experiencing its first love. By contrast, a 'church' is likely to be spending a disproportionate amount of its time and energy looking after its institutional business and fanning yesterday's embers."²

Rev 12:17 says that: "the devil was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her Seed" (KJV). The remnant in this verse arose in the context of Europe, like the church in the wilderness, and of the United States, when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the waters, giving religious freedom to the persecuted church. However, every movement that God initiates has its geographical beginning, but does not stay in one place. The first Christian church began in Palestine but was not intended to remain a geographically limited movement. In the same way, Seventh-day Adventism, as a remnant, had its own geographical "birthplace" but was not intended to remain a remnant of Europe and the United States. Even in the Old Testament³ God had, besides the remnant among the Israelites (Isa 10:20-22), remnant people from Edom, a remnant from Egypt, from Assyria, from Damascus (Isa 17:3), and from many nations.

¹B. F. Snook, "The Great Missionary Society," *Review and Herald*, 7 July 1863, 46.

²Jack W. Provonsha, *A Remnant in Crisis* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1993), 50-51.

³The first appearance of the remnant doctrine is found in the book of Isaiah. Later was it developed by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. See Rufus M. Jones, *The Remnant* (London: The Swarthmore Press, 1920), 15-17; Gerhard F. Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah*, Andrews University Monographs, no. 5, Studies in Religion. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1975), 1-40.

The last Remnant is to be one with a capital R composed of many remnants from every nation and people group (Rev 10:11; 14:6). It will be more than a remnant from Europe and the United States. Every people group will have its own remnant as part of the Last Remnant. Under Christ's banner, raised on high, the remnants of the nations will join the march forming a great gathering of peoples, and become the final Remnant (Isa 11:10-11).¹

Seventh-day Adventism has a unique role in the end-time, as a last-day movement that is connected to a unique prophecy known as "The Three Angels' Messages" that defines its mission, gives it special identity, and consequently a vital role in the world (Rev 14:6-12). God brought forth Adventism as a main vehicle or channel for communicating a final message to the world, the message of God's sovereignty over the whole universe (expressed in Sabbath-keeping) and the message of His imminent second coming. Those who accept the Sabbath as a visible sign of God's creative power, and prepare themselves for the second coming of Jesus, belong to the last remnant. Seventh-day Adventists fulfill a unique mission in proclaiming the gospel as expressed in the first of the three angels' messages. John "saw another angel flying in mid-air, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people" (Rev 14:6). The identity of the last-day movement is defined by its mission. First, Seventh-day Adventism is designated as a world movement. Since the term "church" is burdened by association with a history of wars and crusades connected with Christians and has become historico-cultural in connotation, it is inappropriate and imprecise as a universal name for

¹Darnell, Robert, "Peopling the Earth," lecture presented, Loma Linda, CA, August 4, 1996

God's people. Therefore the word "movement" is more appropriate, not so much in ecclesiological terms as in a practical sense.

Secondly, Seventh-day Adventism does not identify itself as a Christian denomination, either as an offshoot of Protestantism or as the legacy of the "people of God" throughout history, from the patriarchs and prophets and the apostles to the last days (Eph 2:20-22). This makes Adventist identity adaptable to every context, suitable for all remnants among nations, Christian, as well as non-Christian. Jon Dybdahl aptly notes that: "the Remnant concept, by its very nature, should expand rather than contract our vision and our mission. Has the time come to see Adventism as a reform movement among rather than out of other world religions? Should we look at ourselves as a world religion rather than a branch of Protestantism? The time has come for bold, creative work in these areas."¹

Finally, the proclamation of the unique message of God's ownership of the world through the observance of the Sabbath and Jesus' imminent return are features by which the uniqueness of Seventh-day Adventism is identified. The Seventh-day Adventist specific, unique role is reflected in its name.² The story of Seventh-day Adventists reveals inspired wisdom and long-range vision in giving the movement the official name "Seventh-day Adventist."³ The terms "Church" and "Christian" were purposely excluded so that the work of Adventism might be acceptable to non-Christians such as Muslims and Jews. "The name

¹Dybdahl, 56.

²http://www.adventist.org/world_church/name_mission/index.html.en (26 June 2004).

³The name "Seventh-day Adventist" appeared first in the *Review and Herald* of August 18, 1859, in a letter from a woman, P. Lewes, addressed to U. Smith. She refers to Seventh-day Adventists as a church she would like to join by baptism. That name was officially adopted in 1860, even though the General Conference was organized only on May 21, 1963. Letter P. Lewis to Uriah Smith, *Review and Herald*, 18 August 1859, 103; see Andrew Gordon Mustard, *James White and SDA Organization: Historical Development, 1844-1881*, Andrews University Monographs, no. 11 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1988), 147.

Seventh-day Adventist carries the true features of our faith in front and will convict the inquiring mind.”¹

Today, in worldwide terms, Seventh-day Adventists are culturally diverse. This diversity will expand until the mission that Jesus gave to find remnants from every people group has been fulfilled.

Closing Remarks

This chapter developed the theological basis for working in unentered areas and presented contextualization as a theological method that explains and interprets the meaning of the gospel in a specific cultural context. In addition, personal biographical information pertaining to my life and work is included in order to highlight my passion for unentered areas and my interest in working with and for Muslims.

In the next chapter I shall present a geographical, historical, political, and socio-cultural analysis of the Balkans in general and of indigenous Balkan Muslims in particular. Balkan Muslims form a significant percentage of the population in their respective countries. Understanding these people and their background will be vital to the development of strategies for reaching them.

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 1 (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association), 224.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL, RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS OF INDIGENOUS MUSLIMS IN THE BALKANS

Introduction

The cultural and religious analysis of Muslims in the Balkans presented in this chapter is closely related to the theological foundations for ministry developed in the previous chapter. The theology of working in unentered areas is further examined and contextualization, as a theological method that explains and interprets the meaning of the gospel in a specific cultural context, is also developed.

This chapter explores the Balkan region, especially the West Balkans, as both a crossroad of religions and cultures and a bridge between East and West. With its variety of nationalities and religions, it has always been a focal point of interest to the great political and economic powers of the world.

In order to present a cultural and religious analysis of Muslims in the Balkans, an overall picture of the area will be presented, focusing on the West Balkans, including its historical and political developments, an assessment of social and cultural interaction, and a description of the indigenous Muslims who live in the West Balkans—Albanians and Bosniaks.¹ Albania and the states of the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro,

¹Those Bosnians, who accepted Islam have been given the name Bosniaks.

Macedonia and Kosovo) belong to the West Balkans and are politically designated as Southeast Europe.

A detailed analysis of the causes and motives behind the Balkan conflicts will not be discussed. This is due to the complexity of the problem, to the diametrically opposed interpretations of it that still exist in the Balkans, and to the danger of being perceived as siding with one of the parties in the conflict.

Geo-political Development

Geography

The Balkans is the southeastern part of Europe that is also called the Balkan Peninsula. Its geography is shaped largely by mountain ranges, the chief being the Old Mountains,¹ positioned east-west across Bulgaria. The Rhodope mountains continue to expand out of the Balkan area, along the Greek-Bulgarian border, while the Pindus mountain range occupies central Greece and the Dinaric range runs from Albania northwards along the Adriatic coast.²

The term "Balkan"³ came into use in the mid nineteenth century and originally designated the land lying south of the Stara Planina, a mountain range in Bulgaria which the Turks identified with the Balkan Mountains. After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the earlier term "Turkey-in-Europe" was replaced by the word "Balkans." This

¹In the Bulgarian language these mountains are called *Stara planina* and in Latin *Haemus*.

²L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453* (London: Hurst and Company, 2001), 2-3.

³The word "Balkan" is Turkish and means "Mountain."

became a synonym for the European parts of the Ottoman Empire, including some areas formerly within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russia.¹ These mountain ranges have a significant influence on the climate of the peninsula and on communication in some areas.

The term "Balkanization"² has been applied to southeastern Europe to describe one of the highest levels of ethnic fragmentation in the world. The term refers to the division of the newly created Balkan states by their own numerous ethnic groups, so that they resemble the "Shattered Belt" the term used for the map of this area in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century. The origin of this fragmentation is found in the Balkans' mountainous terrain and in the history of settlement in the region by various peoples who intermingled over some 3,000 years.

The Balkan countries have acquired a reputation for backwardness, conflicts, political division, national exclusivity, and marginality with respect to European civilization. According to Mazower, "From the very start the Balkans was more than a geographical concept. The term, unlike its predecessors, was loaded with negative connotations—of violence, savagery, primitivism—to an extent for which it is hard to find a parallel."³ Consequently it has always been difficult for geographers and historians to establish definite boundaries for the Balkan region.

¹Mark Mazower, *The Balkans* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000), 2-4.

²The term has come to mean the division of a place or country into several small political units, often unfriendly to one another. The term *balkanization* comes from the name of the Balkan Peninsula, which was divided into a number of small nations in the early twentieth century. "Balkanization," *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, 3rd ed. (2002) <http://www.bartleby.com/59/13/balkanizatio.html> (12 August 2002); Mazower, 3.

³Mazower, 4.

In contemporary usage the term “Balkans” signifies the territory of the states of Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (see fig. 1). Croatia belongs geographically to the Balkan region, but not historically and politically.

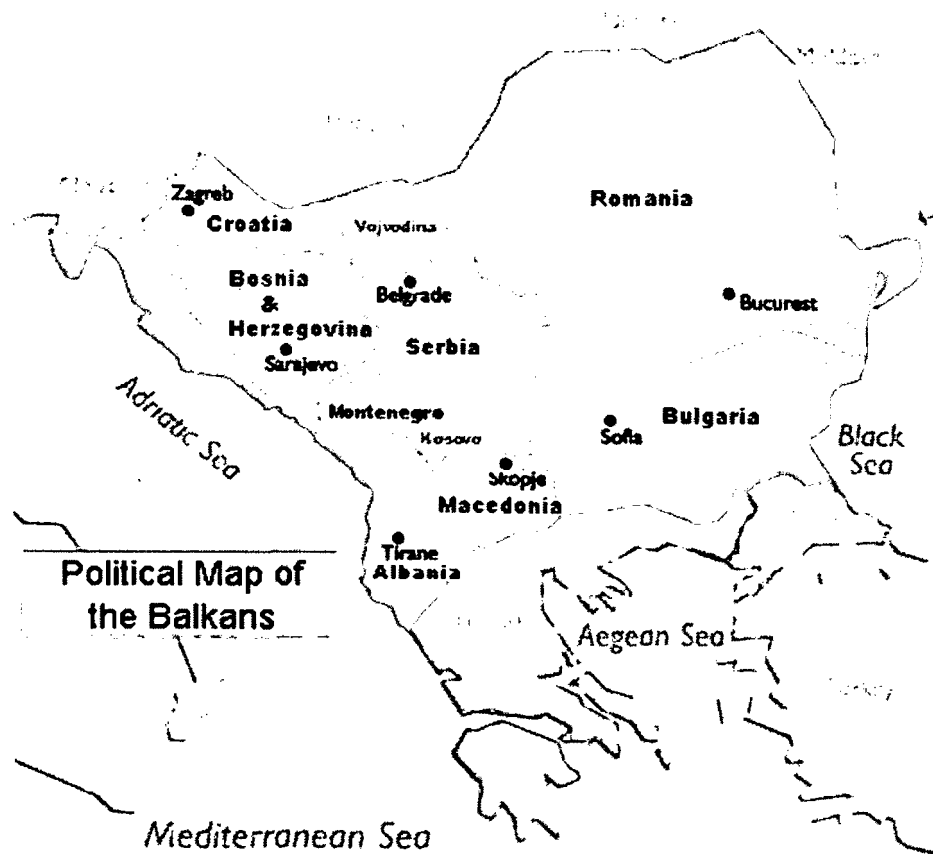


Fig. 1. Political Map of the Balkans

The Balkans is divided into two parts, the “East Balkans” including Rumania, and Bulgaria, and the “West Balkans,” politically identified as Southeast Europe with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo¹ (see fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Political Map of the West Balkans

People and Languages

With a population of more than 53 million,² the Balkan Peninsula has been a region of migration and mixing of peoples for many centuries. The resultant ethnic diversity has

¹See http://europe.eu.int/comm/external_relations/sec/index.htm (17 February 2004).

²“Balkan Peninsula,” <http://www.phatnav.com/wiki/wiki.phtml?title=Balkans> (17 February 2004).

come to be one of its most characteristic social and political features. Religion also imparts a significant measure of diversity. The largest of the groups are those of the South Slavs, who form the majority of the population in Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia.

The Slavs of Bulgaria and Macedonia speak their own Slavic languages,¹ while Bosnians, Croatians, Montenegrins and Serbians speak dialectal forms of a Croatian and Serbian language. These languages are known as Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian. Under the influence of the Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches, the South Slavic languages have been written in either the Latin script, in parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia, or in the Cyrillic script, in Bulgaria, Serbia, parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Albanians speak an ancient language of their own, while Romanians use a Latin-based tongue.²

History and Politics

Early History³

The earliest people recorded in the Balkans belonged to three tribal groups—Illyrians, Thracians, and Dacians. The Illyrians, ancestors of the Albanians, lived in the west of the peninsula, extending through the Dinaric range and adjacent mountains. They are believed

¹Slovenes, sharing a border with Croatia, also speak a Slavic language and use the Latin script.

²Traian Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds: The First and Last Europe* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 122-130.

³From the seventh century B.C. to the fifth century A.D.

to have originated in the eastern Alps and to have moved south into the western Balkans, establishing contact with Greek commercial colonies on the Adriatic coast as early as the seventh century B.C. Some Illyrian tribes were assimilated by later Slavic migrations, but others moved south into present-day Albania, where they kept their identity and language.¹

The Thracians settled in the Rhodope and other mountains of what is now southern Bulgaria, and probably mixed with Bulgar tribes that migrated into the peninsula after the fall of Rome.² The Dacians, ancestors of the Romanians, occupied territory north of the River Danube. In A.D. 395 the Roman Empire was divided into two parts and the Balkans were split into eastern and western sections as a result.³

Medieval States and South Slavs

During the sixth and seventh centuries Slav tribes crossed the River Danube and began to settle in the Balkans, spreading as far south as northern Greece. South Slav groups moved into three distinct areas: the Slovenes into the valleys of the upper Sava River; the Croatians to the middle Sava region, between the Drava river and the Adriatic; and the Serbs into the mountains of the upper Ibar River, between the Adriatic and the Danube.⁴ The Bulgars were an Asiatic group who arrived from the Volga region in the seventh century.⁵ They gradually adopted a Slavic language and culture in the process of establishing a

¹Stavrianos, 8, 17, 24. chap. I passim.

²Ibid., 8-9.

³Ibid., 21-22.

⁴See John Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor, MI : The University of Michigan Press, 1991), 683.

⁵They were of a Turkic tribe that was eventually absorbed by Slavs who had already settled in the eastern Balkans, Stavrianos, 24.

medieval empire north of the Balkan Mountains and south of the Danube.

A number of viable Slav states were created in the Western Balkans during the medieval period. In the fourteenth century the famous Kingdom of Bulgaria was overshadowed by the rising power of Serbia. Stefan Dušan (Dushan), the greatest of Serbian monarchs, who attempted the seizure of Constantinople but was not successful, left behind a legal code and a legacy of conquest.¹ The Croats established their own kingdom in the tenth century under Tomislav but, in 1102, agreed to become part of the Hungarian monarchy.² In the fourteenth century there was a short-lived Bosnian kingdom under the Kotromanić (Kotromanich) dynasty, but it also became united with Hungary.³

Ottoman Conquest and Rule

The Ottoman Turks began their advance into the Balkans while the various states in the area were fighting among themselves for regional dominance. This conquest was made easier by divisions between the Western and Eastern Christians and among the Orthodox peoples. Serbia fell to the Turks after the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, Bulgaria in 1396, Constantinople in 1453, Bosnia in 1463, Herzegovina in 1482, and Albania in 1468.⁴ The Turks often invaded Montenegro but did not succeed in conquering it permanently.⁵

The Ottomans ruled much of the Balkans for the next 400 years. At first the

¹"Stefan Dusan," <http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Stefan-Dusan> (17 February 2004).

²"Croatia 802-1102," <http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/balkans/croat8021102.html> (17 February 2004).

³Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History* (London: Pan Books, 2002), 13.

⁴Stavrianos, 45-46, 63.

⁵*Ibid.*, 63.

religious toleration and the administrative efficiency shown by the Turks compared favorably with the situation during the regime of their predecessors. However, the Ottomans failed to make the transition to a settled order and by the end of the eighteenth century their expansion had been halted.¹

Formation of Nation-states

The dominant feature of the nineteenth century was the creation of independent nation-states in what had been Ottoman territory. One of the important characteristics of the Balkans is that external factors played the ultimate role in their achievement of independence.² However, the emergence of a national consciousness and the creation of nation-states were conditioned by local factors, so that each nation evolved in an individual way.

The state of Serbia was formed in 1830. An uprising against Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875 ended with the defeat of the Ottomans. Peace treaties concluded at San Stefano and revised at the Congress of Berlin (1878), resulted in the enlargement of Serbia and Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina was placed under Austro-Hungarian administration. Of the Balkan states, only Macedonia and Albania remained under Turkish control.³

The First Balkan War broke out in 1912 when Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and

¹"Ottoman Empire: Decline," <http://www.encyclopedia4u.com/o/ottoman-empire.html> (7 February 2004).

²Mazover, 90-92.

³Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920. A History of East Central Europe*, vol. 8 (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1977), 358.

Montenegro formed an alliance against Turkey and ended Ottoman rule in Europe. Albania was made an independent state under a German prince and Macedonia was to be divided among the Balkan allies. The Second Balkan War began in the same year when Serbia, Greece, and Romania disagreed with Bulgaria over the division of Macedonia. The Bulgarians were defeated, Greece and Serbia divided most of Macedonia between themselves, and Serbia gained the Kosovo region. A peace treaty was signed by the combatants on August 10, 1913.¹ Large numbers of Albanians in Kosovo who had moved into the region after Serbs, under Turkish pressure, left their old homeland in the fifteenth century, found themselves separated from Albania.²

The disappearance of the Turkish empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the establishment of new states, was followed by a resurgence of nationalism, which had been repressed under the Turks. It became impossible to draw state boundaries which entirely coincided with ethnic divisions, and this aggravated ethnic problems and brought about further ethnic relocation—a phenomenon which had not been common in western Europe since the tenth century. Difficulties for minorities developed; these were to plague local and international politicians for generations.³

Religion played an integral part in preserving national identity in the Balkans. Even in the first, violent years of the Ottoman conquest, Turks seldom interfered with the monasteries, with their relics, icons, books, and other cultural treasures. Churches provided

¹“The Treaty of London, 1913,” <http://mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/boshtml/bos145.htm> (17 February 2004).

²Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki, eds., *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State* (London: Hurst and Company, 1997), 139-40.

³Mazover, 107-09.

continuity for the ancient liturgies and guarded the national identity of the conquered Christian nations.¹ After the post-Ottoman creation of the nation-states, Muslims left in large numbers. Some of these people were driven out by force during or immediately after the creation of the nations-states, but far more left voluntarily in the following decades.

Two World Wars

Although the borders drawn in 1913 provided outlines for the modern map of the Balkans, instability continued in the region. The increased tensions in the area reached their climax in World War I. The assassination of the Austrian heir-apparent, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, in Sarajevo, Bosnia, by a young Serbian revolutionary on June 28, 1914, resulted in Austria declaring war on Serbia. Because of interrelating military alliances throughout Europe, this precipitated World War I.

The defeat of Austria-Hungary in that war resulted in yet another redrawing of the map of the Balkans. Slovenia, Croatia, and Vojvodina,² which were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were joined with Serbia and Montenegro to form a Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In 1929 this became "Yugoslavia."³

Albania re-emerged after the end of World War I and in December 1920, for the first time, won international recognition as a sovereign independent state.⁴ At the start of the

¹Stavrianos, 105-17.

²Autonomous region of Austro-Hungary, stretching to the Serbian border near Belgrade; today the northern Province of Serbia.

³Barbara Jelavich, *History of Balkans. Twentieth Century*, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 476.

⁴At the Paris Peace Conference after the war, the extinction of Albania was averted largely through the efforts of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, who vetoed a plan by Britain, France, and Italy to partition Albania among its neighbors. Stavrianos, 712-13.

1920s, Albanian society was politically divided by two opposing forces. One of these was made up mainly of deeply conservative landowning *beys*¹ who were tied to the Ottoman and feudal past and led by Ahmed Bey Zogu, while the other consisted of liberal intellectuals and democratic politicians, led by Fan S. Noli, who looked to the West and wanted to modernize Albania. In the unusually open and free political, social, and cultural climate which prevailed in Albania between 1920 and 1924, the liberal forces established control after a mid-1924 popular revolt. Six months later Noli was overthrown by an armed assault led by Zogu. He began his 14-year reign in Albania as President (1925–28), then consolidated his position as King Zog I (1928–39). With the support of Italian financial relief, a vast oriental-style bureaucracy, an efficient police force, and a dictatorial regime, Albania gained a large measure of stability.²

The problems of integrating many diverse nations into one larger state were made much more complex by the fact that the new state could not completely follow ethnic lines of division. Vojvodina was very mixed in ethnic composition, and there were Albanians living in sizeable numbers in Kosovo, which had been detached from Albania since 1912. While under the Byzantines and Turks, most Balkan societies had been isolated from Western development for almost two millennia and they preserved a feudal social structure that persisted until World War I.

The territories brought under the umbrella of Yugoslavia had developed differently. Those states which had just emerged from Ottoman domination—Serbia and Montenegro—

¹The governor of a district or province in the Ottoman Empire; also in some places a prince or nobleman.

²See Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians. A Modern History* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1995), 53-76.

were backward and poor. With them were now merged the former Austro-Hungarian territories, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vojvodina, some of which were more advanced. Slovenia, Croatia, and Vojvodina had more developed intelligentsias, more efficient and honest bureaucracies, an emerging economic infrastructure, and extensive and frequently profitable trade links. These relatively prosperous and advanced areas were now subjected to being asked to cooperate with less sophisticated ones, which were more inclined to centralism rather than to the devolution that the other new provinces would have preferred. This led to dissatisfaction and conflicts within the newly created state.¹ During World War II the Balkan Peninsula once more became a field on which larger European interests fought for control. Germany occupied Yugoslavia and Italy annexed Albania.

Communism and Its Collapse

After the war Albania and Yugoslavia became communist countries, adopting the communist ideology which seemingly united the Balkans.² After 1948 Tito, president of Yugoslavia, developed a distinctively liberal form of communism (rather than the hard-line position of many other eastern European governments) and a non-aligned stance in international affairs, while Albania was left isolated under the regime of Enver Hoxha.³

After the collapse of communist regimes throughout the region in 1989, the ruling communist parties in Yugoslavia and Albania were displaced. In most countries of the region, reconstructed socialist parties managed to survive within new democratic systems

¹Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 452

²R. J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century—and After* (London: Routledge, 1997), 211-17.

³*Ibid.*, 255-61.

and discovered possibilities for real political change. However, democratic reconstruction was endangered by the lack of a tradition of political involvement by the general public, and also by technological backwardness, lack of modern managerial skills, shortage of investment, the loss of traditional markets, and real practical and legal difficulties involved in programs of privatization.¹

Resurgent nationalist movements in the former Yugoslavia led to a bloody and bitter war and finally to the disintegration of the country. When the former Yugoslavia broke up in 1991, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were transformed into independent states.² In 1992 Serbia and Montenegro formed the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia³ which was subsequently transformed, in 2003, into yet another political entity, The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, within the same borders.⁴ Albania passed the transitional period without major conflicts.

The history of the Balkans is one of ethnic fragmentation and constant change. There are, however, some features of its history that have remained constant. First, the Balkan peoples have never been united except during the Roman Empire. Second, unique traditions and customs have been preserved for long periods of time, thanks to the variety of religious backgrounds and to the mountainous nature of the Balkan Peninsula which has allowed many groups of people to isolate themselves from other cultures. Third, these

¹Milica Z. Bookman, *The Political Economy of Discontinuous Development* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 267.

²Lenard J. Cohen, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia," *Current History* 91 (November 1992): 369-75; see Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the War for Kosovo*, 3d ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

³John F. Burns, "Confirming Split, Last 2 Republics Proclaim a Small New Yugoslavia," *New York Times*, 28 April 1992, A1:3-4; A8.

⁴"Jugoslavije više nema," *Blic*, 5 February 2003.

factors have led to the inability of the peoples of the region to agree and cooperate among themselves. In the fourth place, the influence of foreign powers has been crucial.

Socio-religious Developments

Christianity

In the second half of the 3rd century A.D. the Roman Empire showed symptoms of decline. In 330 the imperial capital was moved to Byzantium, so that any tribe intent on attacking the seat of Roman power and wealth would thenceforth move through the Balkans.¹ In 391 Christianity became the official religion, and in 395 the empire was separated into two parts. The dividing line ran through the Balkans. Illyricum² was given to the western part, under Rome and the remainder went to the eastern half and was ruled from Byzantium.³

In the second half of the ninth century A.D., Christianity was adopted by the Bulgarians and the Serbs, both of whom chose the Byzantine rather than the Roman variant of the new religion. To the north of the Danube, the Romanians, though not Slavs, made the same choice, while the Croats and Slovenes, together with most of the rest of what had been the Roman Empire, became members of the western Christian community. The Albanians, isolated behind mountains, were not much affected by either branch of Christianity.⁴ The divisions and competition between Rome and Constantinople in 1054 intensified their separation. The Croats and Slovenes became an integral part of Roman Catholic Europe

¹Stavrianos, 22.

²A province of the Roman Empire lying east and northeast of the Adriatic Sea.

³Ibid., 2.

⁴Mazower, 47-49.

and the Serbs, Bulgarians, and Romanians established their adherence to Eastern Orthodoxy.¹

Before the coming of the Ottomans, the western periphery of the Balkans was open to the ideas later generated by the Reformation. The Bogomils, reformed Christians² in the Balkans, were persecuted by Orthodoxy as well as by Catholicism.³ The adherents of the reformed Bosnian Church were “known not only for . . . [their] tolerance, but as dissidents and heretics. The Bosnian Church was considered so heretical that Martin Luther called it ‘proto-Reformist’.”⁴ The Reformation did not succeed in these areas of the Balkans.

The Ottomans conquered the peninsula in the fifteenth century, and made it part of their empire for five centuries. They naturally affected the religious landscape of the Balkans, bringing complete social and political change.

The Croats, who inhabit Croatia and part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also the Slovenes, are predominantly Roman Catholic, as are a minority of the Albanians. Churches of the Eastern Orthodox tradition predominate in Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and in parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Albania.⁵ Islam is adhered to by Bosniaks, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandžak⁶ (Sanjak) and by the majority of Albanians in

¹Stavrianos, 12.

²Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans*, 48-62; Malcolm, 27-42.

³Stavrianos, 41.

⁴Haris Silajdzic, “Islam: the Postman of Civilization,” *New Perspectives Quarterly. A Journal of Social and Political Thought* 19, no. 1 (2002): 44-45.

⁵“Field Listing—religions,” <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/fields/2122.html> (18 February 2004).

⁶Straddling the border between Serbia and Montenegro, elaborated on later in this chapter.

Albania, Kosovo and in parts of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.¹

Muslims

The presence of Muslims in the Balkans dates back to the period of the Turkish conquest of the region in the fourteenth century, when the conversion to Islam began among the indigenous Slavic and Albanian population. The Ottomans² rarely converted Christians to Islam by force, but there were material privileges to be gained for those who did adopt the Muslim faith, such as ownership of land and lower taxes.³

The Islamization of Albanians occurred in the second half of the fifteenth century although the process was not completed until the seventeenth century.⁴ However, many Bosnians became Muslims *en masse*⁵ after the final conquest of the country in the middle of the fifteenth century. Consequently, Islam became rooted in Bosnian culture and gave identity to the Bosnian people, in much the same way as Catholicism did in Croatian culture and Orthodoxy in Serbian tradition. Islam thus acquired the characteristics of an indigenous faith for the Bosnians, becoming established as a permanent feature of the Balkan landscape. Finally, Bosniaks became the inheritors of a rich Islamic heritage and have carried on the legacy of Islam cultivated under the 500-year-long Turkish rule. In that sense,

¹H. T. Norris, *Islam In the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: Hurst, 1993), 35-42.

²The Ottoman dynasty was established by Othman, first empire-builder. Wilbur W. White, *The Process of the Change in the Ottoman Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937), 6-7.

³Poulton and Taji-Farouki, 16-17.

⁴Stavrianos, 64; Bata, 159-160.

⁵Vatro Murvar, *Nation and Religion in Central Europe and the Western Balkans—The Muslims in Bosna, Hercegovina and Sandžak: A Sociological Analysis* (Brookfield, WI: FSSSN Colloquia and Symposia University of Wisconsin, 1989), 12-14.

Bosniaks, together with Albanians, constitute the indigenous Islamic communities in the Balkans.¹

These are currently divided into six states made up of Bosniaks in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro, and Albanians in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia.



Fig. 3. Muslims in the West Balkans

“The most westerly of the European Muslims”² live in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see figure 3). The Muslims in Bosnia account for 48 percent of a total of almost 4 million

¹Ghulam M. Haniff, “The Balkanization of Yugoslavia’s Islam,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 19, no. 1 (April 1999): 125.

²Murvar, viii

people.¹ The second largest group of Bosniaks is located in Sandžak (Sanjak), the border region between Serbia and Montenegro, where they number almost a quarter of a million.²

Large concentrations of Muslims are found in Albania, with a majority of 70 percent out of over 3,5 million people.³ In Kosovo, Albanian Muslims constitute 90 percent out of the 88 percent Albanian population in a country with 2.4 million people.⁴ The Republic of Macedonia is the third area with a Muslim Albanian population, numbering more than half a million in a country of 2 million people.⁵

Albanians

Following the separation of the Eastern and Western Christianity in 1054, the Albanians divided along religious lines, into Catholic and Orthodox.⁶ Islam began to exert its influence in Albania, following the Ottoman occupation of the country after 1468.⁷

Initially the Turks maintained an attitude of religious tolerance and did not enforce religious conversion. Nonetheless, conversion to Islam was viewed rather favorably by the

¹"Bosnia and Herzegovina," May 2003, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bk.html> (18 February 2004).

²According to the census in Serbia in 2002, and Montenegro 2003; Republic of Serbia Statistical Office, "Final Results of the Census 2002," LII, no. 295, (24 December 2002): 10; "Nezvanični rezultati izbora u Crnoj Gori," *Vijesti*, 19 December 2003.

³"Albania," April 2001, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html> (18 February 2004). "The Muslims of Yugoslavia," September 2003, <http://www.wakeup.org/anadolu/01/3/muslims-of-yugoslavia.html> (18 February 2004).

⁴Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, "Population," "Geographical and Ethnic Distribution," <http://www.grida.no/enrin/htmls/kosovo/SoE/popullat.htm> (18 February 2004).

⁵"2002 Census Data," Republic of Macedonia, State Statistical Office, http://www.stat.gov.mk/english/glavna_eng.asp?br=18 (27 November 2004).

⁶Antonia Young, "Religion and Society in Present-Day Albania," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 14 (January 1999): 7.

⁷Ibid.

Ottoman administration and whenever it occurred material profit was increased. The feudal lords were the first to convert to Islam and to accept the new religion. Part of the population followed their example.¹

An increase in popular opposition led to Ottoman attempts to expand the social basis of their domination by enforcing the Islamization of the Albanian population. By the end of the sixteenth century, in order to neutralize the constant threat of insurrection, the Turks began a systematic campaign to convert the Albanian population to Islam, using economic advantages as a lure. This process reached its high point during the seventeenth century² when two thirds of the Albanian population were converted to Islam.³ Albanians changed their faith, either because they were forced to do so, or for economic reasons, but not out of religious conviction. For them religion was a way of life, transmitted through customs and rites, rather than a matter of faith. Even before the Turkish occupation, the Albanian feudal lords led a fluctuating religious life, moving from Catholicism to Orthodoxy and vice versa, in accordance with their political and economic interests.⁴

While the Albanian National Movement was active in the nineteenth century,⁵ religion did not play the part it had previously played in similar movements among other Balkan peoples who had fought against Ottoman rule, not only on behalf of their own

¹Josef Bata, "Das Verhältnis von Christentum und Islam bei den Albanern in Geschichte und Gegenwart," in *Religion und Gesellschaft in Südosteuropa*, ed. Hans-Dieter Döpman (München, Germany: Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, 1997), 159-60.

²Ramadan Marmullaku, *Albania and the Albanians* (London: C. Hurst and Co., 1975), 16.

³Bata, 159-160.

⁴Peter Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1977), 55.

⁵"The Rise of Albanian Nationalism [SRC: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS]," <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze7b2yg/id38.html> (18 Feb 2004).

national interests, but also on behalf of their Christian faith, and in opposition to the Islamic faith of their rulers. In seeking to strengthen the national unity of the Albanian people in the struggle against foreign invaders, the greatest representatives of the Albanian National Movement, notwithstanding the diversity among them in terms of religious faith, adopted as their main credo a statement made by the Roman Catholic intellectual, publicist and writer, Vasa Pashko (1825-92): "The religion of the Albanians is Albanianism."¹ Albania emerged from Turkish domination in 1912 as a predominantly Muslim nation. However, independent Albania did not adopt a state religion. Instead, all religions were respected, and religious liberty was assured.²

Of the two main divisions of Islam,³ the Sunni faith has become the most dominant in Albania, as well as among Kosovan and Macedonian Albanians.⁴ In addition, another movement called Bektashism⁵ has emerged, preaching universal charity and abstinence from violence. It orders its followers not to differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims and allows for members of non-Islamic religions to be admitted into the order. The Bektashis are also permitted more liberty in terms of daily observances, such as the veiling of women and abstinence from strong drink. Instead of Ramadan, Bektashis keep the less rigorous Persian fast. Bektashism also supports the idea of national independence,

¹Young, 6.

²Vickers, 15.

³Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York, London: Macmillan, 1985), 135-36, 228-38.

⁴Poulton and Taji-Farouki, 131-32.

⁵Ibid., 115.

and as such has played a prominent role in the movement for national independence.¹ Sunni Islam has developed in a different way, at the expense of the Bektashi community, largely through lack of foreign backing.

The existence of a variety of religious traditions in Albania has not caused any inter-religious conflicts. Relations amongst people of different religions are good, and mixed marriages are not uncommon. With the same ethnic origin and living in the same territory, Albanians engage in mixed marriages without regard to religion. Inter-faith family ties remain stable.²

Under the communists in Albania religion was officially forbidden. Hostile attitudes towards religion and the infringement of freedom of conscience reached their climax in the mid 1960s when a mass youth revolutionary movement led indirectly to the total collapse of religion and of its institutions. Albania declared itself to be an atheist state and churches and mosques were destroyed, clerics sent to jail or killed, and religious schools closed.³

The democratic changes that have taken place in post-communist Albania have paved the way for freedom of conscience, thought, and religion. However, those generations of Albanians born and educated as atheists under communism have practically no concept of religion. The majority of the population has never been inside the door of a

¹George G. Amakis, "The Role of Religion in the Development of Balkan Nationalism," in *The Balkans in Transition*, eds. Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1974), 115.

²Vickers, 16-17.

³Ibid., 119.

church or a mosque.¹ The reinstatement of institutional religion in Albania is also hindered by the total absence of trained clergy.

Throughout the forty years of communist oppression, religious practices were preserved by many people, in secrecy, within the family, in the form of various customs and rites which now appear to be experiencing a revival.² On the other hand, despite the fact that every religious body intensified its activities, very often with help from abroad, and that religious activities and mosque or church attendance have increased, Albanian society remains tolerant but largely secular.

Bosniaks

The Bosniaks, or Bosnian Muslims, were internationally identified as a national group in the last decade of the twentieth century. The world became aware that a fairly large group of indigenous Muslims reside in central Europe and that they have a history that is specific to their group, along with an awareness of national identity and even a unique way of practicing their Islamic faith.³ Most Bosniaks are Sunni Muslim.

Ancestors of today's Bosnian Muslims came to the Balkan Peninsula in the sixth and seventh centuries,⁴ as part of the Croat/Serb migration; they were originally from the same gene pool as today's Croats and Serbs. Thus, contemporary claims that the Bosnian Muslims are "Turks" or "foreigners" are certainly not accurate.⁵ The various theories about

¹Ibid., 123.

²Ibid., 120.

³Murvar, 1.

⁴Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans*, 56.

⁵Malcolm, 54.

the origins of the Bosnian Muslims can be reduced to two basic views.

The most intriguing of the theories is that the forebears of the Bosnian Muslims were affiliated to the same religious movement as the Bogomils¹ in Bulgaria and that their alleged heresy was synonymous with that of the Bosnian Church which supposedly held a dualist doctrine.² They were fiercely attacked by the Roman Catholic majority of the area after the independent medieval Bosnian state fell to Hungary in the thirteenth century.³ However, evidence supporting this view had been drawn almost exclusively from papal documents, and promulgated by ruling ecclesiastical authorities. This material was utilized by the noted Renaissance humanist Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini, better known as Pope Pius II (1458-1464).⁴ According to this view, the adherents of the Bosnian Church were the ancestors of the present-day Bosnian Muslims.

Another explanation of the origin of the Bosnian Muslims is that most of their forebears were in reality reformed Catholics, adherents of the Church of Bosnia. Some scholars, led by John V. A. Fine,⁵ claim to have found proof in Bosnian domestic charters, the heretofore unknown Turkish archives, and in the diplomatic records of Dubrovnik, that

¹"This was a Bulgarian heretical movement, founded in the tenth century by a priest called 'Bogumil' ('beloved by God'), which spread in subsequent centuries into Constantinople and other areas of the Balkans, including Macedonia and parts of Serbia." Malcolm, 27.

²Ibid., 27-32.

³Ibid., 13-16.

⁴John V. A. Fine, *The Bosnian Church: A New Interpretation. A Study of the Bosnian Church and Its Place in State and Society from the 13th to the 15th Centuries* (Boulder, CO: East European Quarterly, 1975), 48-64.

⁵For a concise explanation of Fine's thesis consult "The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Modern Bosnian Society," in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, ed. Mark Pinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1-21.

Bosnians who were members of the Bosnian Church accepted a variety of biblical teachings and practices that were foreign to the dualism they were accused of having practiced, according to the Roman Catholic documents in reference to the Bosnian heretics.¹

Hungary made an attempt to establish its sovereignty over Bosnia by declaring it a region of heretics and by waging wars to save the area for Christendom. One form of Bosnian resistance was to support a separate church, called the Bosnian Church. It grew out of a Catholic monastic order which, probably in the middle of the thirteenth century, broke away from international Catholicism. Its leaders never established a secular clergy or any sort of territorial organization. They also used their Slavic language, rather than Latin. No sources suggest that any change in theology occurred at the time of the schism with Rome, so the Bosnian Church cannot be considered among the first protestant movements in Europe. "In total absolute contradiction to the foreign sources," stresses Murvar, "the believers of the *Crkva bosanska*² throughout their entire history professed pure orthodox theology and called themselves plainly only Christians, *Kr'stiani*."³

The Bosnian Church was tolerated by the state, even after the 1340s when a Franciscan mission was established within Bosnia⁴ and the rulers became Catholic. One of Bosnia's main differences from the other Balkan lands lay in the fact that no church played a

¹Malcolm, 30-42; Murvar, 6-9.

²The Bosnian Church.

³Murvar, 6.

⁴In March 25, 1291 Pope Nicholas IV, in his letter *Prae cunctis nostra mentis*, ordered the head of the *provinciae Slavoniae* to send to Bosnia, as investigators of heresies, two Franciscan friars. This is the first record that mentions Franciscans in Bosnia. Malcolm, 14, 17.

central role in the life of the state or of the nobility.¹ The existence of three faiths in Bosnia prevented the development of a national church and blocked any church institution from acquiring a major role in the state.

Members of all three faiths—Bosnian, Catholic and Orthodox—included noblemen. In medieval Bosnia one's position in the community was not dependent on sharing a common belief system. Formal religion was not important to the Bosnian noblemen. They freely associated with and allied themselves with nobles of other faiths. Religious tolerance marked Bosnian society until the very last years of the monarchy, when papal pressure finally forced King Stefan Tomas to turn to persecutions.²

The Bosnian Church disappeared shortly after the Ottoman conquest of the area in the fifteenth century,³ when some of its members, as well as other Catholic and Orthodox inhabitants of Bosnia, converted to Islam. This, then, was the origin of the Bosnian Muslims; they were indigenous adherents of the Church of Bosnia, as well as Roman Catholics and members of the Orthodox Church, who converted to Islam for economic, spiritual, or political reasons.

The reasons for the conversion of the Bosnians to Islam under the Turks constitute a very controversial topic in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first view

¹The Catholic Church in Bosnia was represented solely by a limited number of Franciscans, who were also confined to a small number of monasteries. The Catholics also had no territorial organization in Bosnia and played no role there. The Orthodox Church, existing in Hum and the region west of the Drina, was not a major institution in Bosnia either. Malcolm, 13-26; John Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 175-79.

²In 1459, under papal pressure to obtain Western aid to combat the Turkish threat, King Stefan Tomas ordered Bosnian Churchmen to accept Catholicism or to leave. The majority converted, but a minority accepted asylum from Herceg Stefan. Fine, *The Bosnian Church*, 332-333.

³Paul Coles, *The Ottoman Impact on Europe* (London: Thames and Huston, 1968), 110.

emphasizes that the Bosnian aristocracy chose Islam in order to protect their economic privileges and to save their families' property. Because Islam was the state religion, those professing that religion were more often favored in the Ottoman Empire.¹ The second view asserts that the old conflicts between Catholics and the adherents of the Bosnian church contributed to the Islamization process.² The third view points to the similarities between Islam and the reformed Bosnian Church, a church that had already declined as a result of persecution under king Stefan Tomas in 1459.³

The Ottomans referred to the Bosnian Muslims as *Bosnaklar*, *Bosnak taifesi*, *Bosnali takimi* or *Bosnali kavmi*.⁴ The Bosnian Muslims differentiated between themselves and the Ottoman Turks by referring to themselves as *Turci* (Turks) or *Bošnjaci* (Bosniaks) in contrast to the *Turkus* (the Turkish name for Turks). From 1863 onwards, during the Austro-Hungarian period, the Muslims often described themselves in various official documents submitted to the government officials as *islamski narod* (Muslim nation), *islamski millet* (Muslim millet). Another common term was *Musliman* (Muslim). The journal *Bošnjak* (Bosniak) used both terms, *Musliman* and *Bošnjak*. Though these terms and descriptions had primarily religious origins, they constituted the starting points for the

¹Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, Jr., *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 78.

²Stavrianos, 63; Edgar Hosch, *Geschichte der Balkanlander. Von der Frühzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (München, Germany: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1988), 83. For the Islamization process, see H. Mehmed Handzic, *Islamizacija Bosne i Hercegovine i porijeklo bosanskohercegovačkih Muslimana* (Sarajevo, Yugoslavia: Islamska dionička štamparija, 1940); Srećko M. Džaja, *Die "Bosnische Kirche" und das Islamisierungsproblem Bosniens und der Herzegowina in den Forschungen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (München, Germany: Rudolf Trofenik, 1978).

³Fine, *The Bosnian Church*, 378.

⁴Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka* (Sarajevo, Bosnia: Bošnjačka zajednica kulture Preporod, 1998), 13.

later political and national development of the Bosnian Muslims.¹ The Muslims used these terms to stress their distinctiveness as an ethnic group and their difference from the Serbs and Croats.

Under the Ottomans the Bosnian Muslims referred to their own language as the "Bosnian language." This was a dialectal variant of the Croatian and Serbian language, with the addition of a variety of words of Turkish origin, local idioms, and the long, drawn-out nasal form of expression common to much of Bosnia.² It was also the official name of the language of Bosnia and Herzegovina until 1907, during the Austro-Hungarian regime.³ In 1993 the "Bosnian language" was recognized as an independent language.⁴

Bosniaks in Sandžak

Bosniaks in the region of Sandžak experienced different developments, particularly in the twentieth century. The region of Sandžak is a mountainous area of 8,687 square kilometers⁵ with a specific geo-strategic position. It links Serbia and Montenegro, and connects Bosnia and Herzegovina with Kosovo and Albania. Novi Pazar is the administrative, cultural, and economic seat of Sandžak.

This territory is unique in having a mixed population of Bosniaks, who are Muslims, and Serbian and Montenegrin people of Orthodox faith. Sandžak is inhabited by almost

¹For the role of the descriptions of "Bosniak" and "Muslim" in the later national development of Bosnian Muslims, see Aydin Babuna, "Zur Entwicklung der nationalen Identität der bosnischen Muslim," *Osteuropa* 4 (1996): 331-42.

²M. Hadžijahic, *Od tradicije do identiteta* (Sarajevo, Yugoslavia: 1974), 24-31.

³The Muslims were permitted to use this term for their language after 1907 within their community. Imamović, 15-16.

⁴Ibid., 17.

⁵<http://www.sandzak.co.yu/položaj.htm> (15 February 2004).

420,000 people, 52.4 percent of whom are Muslims.¹ They are of Bosniak nationality, like Bosnian Muslims, and share their ethnic, cultural, and other characteristics of national identity. The ethnic structure of the population of the Sandžak region draws its complexity from its historical, political, and ethnic development.

Until 1912 and the first Balkan War, Sandžak belonged to the Ottoman Empire. During the centuries of Turkish rule, the Sandžak of Novi Pazar, which was its full name at that time, was a part of Bosnia. In October 1912 Sandžak² was divided into two parts, between the independent kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. It was never again given regional status.³ After World War I, Sandžak was included in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Emigration of Sandžak Bosniaks, mostly to Turkey, started soon after the withdrawal of the Turkish army and the establishment of Serbian and Montenegrin regional governments. Some of these Bosniaks were driven out by force during or immediately after the political change, but far more left voluntarily in subsequent decades. Many of them could not adapt to a system which confronted them with a Christianized lifestyle. In the new nation-states they were conscripted into the new armies, in which, even if they did not have to wear the cross on their uniforms, they could not escape having to celebrate Christian holidays or eat Christian food.⁴

¹Republic of Serbia Statistical Office, "Final Results of the Census 2002," LII, no. 295 (24 December 2002): 10; "Nezvanični rezultati izbora u Crnoj Gori," *Vijesti*, 19 December 2003.

²Formerly known as Raška, for Serbs the historical cradle of Serbian statehood. See Poulton and Taji-Farouki, 172-73.

³Its only, short-lived, period as an autonomous province lasted from 1943 to 1945. "The Sandzak Region," *Balkan Institute Background Brief*, No. 4, 1996, <http://www.balkaninstitute.org/reference/Bb4snjk.html> (27 September 2003).

⁴Poulton and Taji-Farouki, 173; Imamović, 454-59.

The Role of Religion

Islam is the religion of the majority of the Sandžak population, the others (Serbs and Montenegrins) being Eastern Orthodox Christians. In the national identity of Sandžak Bosniaks, religion has played an important role, especially after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. The national and religious consciousness of Muslims in Sandžak has grown considerably since then and this has led to the strengthening of the Islamic community and its activities.

The *Mashihat* of Sandžak¹ was organized in Novi Pazar in October 1993. This is the highest body of Sandžak Muslims, a branch of the larger Islamic community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From the very beginning, the *Mashihat* has had a special concern to promote an Islamic worldview in every aspect of life. The Islamic Library² was established in 1995, and a publishing house, *El-Kalimeh*³ in 1993. The first Islamic newspaper, *The Voice of Islam*, a monthly publication, was issued in January 1997. A *Madressa*⁴ was opened in Novi Pazar in 1995 and a separate Girls' *Madressa* in 1996, a *Mektab*⁵ with an integrated curriculum,⁶ in 1998, and an Islamic Pedagogical Academy in Novi Pazar in

¹The highest body of the religious community.

²Named by the founder of Novi Pazar, Gazi-Isabeg. Ejup Mušović and Slavica Vujović, *Džamije u Novom Pazaru* (Belgrade, Yugoslavia: Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture, 1992), 32-33.

³"El-Kalimeh" subsequently (at the end of 1995 and the beginning of 1996) distributed 20,000 copies of the Qur'an which were gifts from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia "Izdavacka djelatnost," <http://www.Sandzak-islamic.org/izdavacka.htm> (27 June 2003).

⁴Islamic secondary school.

⁵Islamic preschool institution for children between 7 and 11 years of age.

⁶Includes general knowledge, associated with elements of Islamic education.

2001.¹ Muslims in Sandžak are predominantly of the Sunni branch.

Religion is not deeply rooted in the everyday life of the people. They are similar to Western secular believers who do not regularly attend religious services. However, they have turned to their religious traditions and to old customs of folk religion, in order to strengthen their national identity.² The *Mashihat* also promotes a healthy lifestyle without pork or alcohol, according to the teachings of the Qur'an. The sale and consumption of these items is allowed, although not likely to be seen, either in public, or in private life. Polygamy is not practiced, either in urban or in rural families.

Economics, Cultural and Social Life

When Ottoman Turkey seized the western Balkans in the late fourteenth century and subsequently built up Bosnia as a giant arrowhead-shaped protrusion pointed at the heart of Europe, Sandžak became a commercial crossroads for merchants from all over the western Balkans.³ Novi Pazar, situated on busy trade routes, became one of the most important centers of trade and commerce in the Balkans, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Today it is an important commercial center particularly for textile and shoe production.

The mercantile spirit of the residents of Novi Pazar has contributed to a diverse social life, and to centuries-long tolerance. The busy street life and people's behavior resemble that of Bosnia and Kosovo; they have similar social and cultural characteristics.

¹<http://www.Sandzak-islamic.org>; Internet; (27 June 2003).

²Poulton and Taji-Farouki, 4-9, 13-14.

³Mustafa Memić, "Bošnjaci Sandžaka i Bošnjačko nacionalno bice" (paper presented at the conference "Bosnian Paradigm," Sarajevo, Bosnia, November 1998), 1.

No specially prescribed Islamic attire is worn in the streets. Occasionally the *dimije*¹ is worn by women in rural areas. The folk music in this corner of the Balkans is similar to that heard in Bosnia, Serbia, and Albania.

Bosnian National Identity

Ottoman Empire

The Ottomans occupied Bosnia in 1463 and Herzegovina twenty years later.² One of the main characteristics of this period was the acceptance of Islam by the indigenous inhabitants of these conquered regions, and the intensive Islamization process, which was gradual and usually not achieved by force. It affected not only the urban aristocracy but also the rural population. As cultural centers, the cities played an important role in the spread of the Islamic religion outwards into the rural population.³ The conversion of one group of south Slavs denoted the beginning of the national evolution of Bosnian Muslims.⁴

The Turks did not define population according to national groups. They identified people and divided territory according to religious affiliation, with the result that religion and nationality were synonymous. Bosnian Muslims identified themselves with the state, to a greater extent than the Serbs and the Croats did, and religion played a significant role in

¹Something like broad trousers resembling training clothes, tied at the end of the trouser leg to the ankle.

²Coles, 110.

³Colin Heywood, "Bosnia under Ottoman Rule, 1463-1800," in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, ed. Mark Pinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 22-53.

⁴W. G. Lockwood, "Living Legacy of the Ottoman Empire: The Serbo-Croatian speaking Moslems of Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern*, ed. A. Ascher, T. Halasi-Kun and B. K. Kiraly (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 209.

the development of a common culture among the Muslims and an even more important role in their national development.¹

From the end of the seventeenth century onwards the Ottoman Empire began to decline,² and until the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1863, the Bosnian Muslims took an active part in the defense of the Empire and suffered many casualties. Despite certain features of cultural distinctiveness that distinguished the Bosnian Muslims from their Christian neighbors, the Bosnian Muslims had no strong national consciousness. There was no aggression between Muslims and Christians, as was the case with the nineteenth-century Christian communities in the Balkans.

On the other hand, following the rise of Serbian and Croatian nationalism in the nineteenth century, the conflict between these nations and the Bosnian Muslims eventually assumed the character of a struggle between Islam and Christendom. The situation may be best summed up by Francine Friedman: "The Ottoman period may have encouraged a consolidation of Bosnian Muslim interests and the decline of the Ottoman Empire may have fostered an understanding by Bosnian Muslim landowners that their best interests lay with local patriotism rather than with continued loyalty to the Porte."³

The Turks introduced their own administrative system that was based on *millet*

¹The uprisings of the Bosnian landlords against the reforms of the Sultan Mahmut II, stressed their "Bosniak" identity, while their conflict with the Christians strengthened their "Muslim" identity, Srecko Dzaja, *Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens und der Herzegowina. Voremanzipatorische Phase 1463-1804* (München, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1984), 100.

²Coles, 159-67.

³Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 46.

territory organization, in which every religious group governed its own *millet*.¹ The religious leaders collected taxes and maintained order within the religious community. The landowners of Bosnia and Herzegovina were largely Muslims. As a part of the Muslim *millet*, to which the bureaucratic elite of the Empire belonged, they enjoyed a prestigious position and identified themselves with the Ottoman Empire.

Orthodox Christians living in Christian *millets* paid an occasional levy on male children; this was called *devshirme*. Boys were taken away, converted to Islam, trained as members of the administrative elite of the empire, and included in the military units named *Janissary*. Children who were brought up in these high social positions in the Empire and who served in various capacities (even as prime-ministers), showed favors to their native areas later in their careers.² The special status of the Muslim landowners and elite contributed to the development of Bosnian Muslim self-consciousness.

Austro-Hungarian Empire

The Austro-Hungarian period is of particular importance for the national and political development of Bosnian Muslims. Bosnia-Herzegovina was occupied by the Austro-Hungarians in accordance with the decisions of the Berlin Congress of 1878, and placed under the direct control of Vienna.³ Initially Muslims strongly opposed the political, economic, and social changes taking place after the occupation.⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina was ruled from 1882 to 1903 by the Austro-Hungarian government, under the Joint Minister

¹*Millet* means nation in the Arabic and Turkish languages. Poulton and Taji-Farouki, 16-18.

²Malcolm, 45-46.

³Ibid., 134.

⁴Robert Donia, *Islam under the Double Eagle: Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina 1878-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 31.

of Finance, Benjamin Kallay. He wanted to establish a well-organized state that would reflect, in his opinion, one of the most important differences between western and oriental culture.¹

Austrians followed a cautious policy in terms of nationalism in multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, wishing to create a territorially based Bosnian nation, unified as a Bosnian civil community. This would be formed around the increasingly secularized Bosnian Muslims who were free of national self-identification. It was hoped that the new state would be attractive to Christians and that they would feel encouraged to fight against Serbian and Croatian nationalism, and to combat the idea of the South Slav state, which was growing both within and beyond the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the 19th century.² Even though the concept of a "Bosnian nation" did not attract significant support outside the Bosnian Muslim community or achieve political success, it played an historical role in the formation of Bosnian national identity. Bosnian Muslims had begun to identify their national identity by their religious and cultural differentiation.³

The Muslim campaign of opposition in Bosnia, from 1899 to 1902,⁴ constituted the turning point in the emergence of Muslim national identity and led to the foundation of the

¹Ferdinand Hauptmann, "Privreda i društvo Bosne i Hercegovine u doba austro-ugarske vladavine (1878-1918)," in *Prilozi za istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine 2*, ed. Enver Redžić (Sarajevo, Yugoslavia: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 1987), 197.

²Friedman, 64.

³Ibid.

⁴The conversion of a Muslim girl, Fata Omanovic, from the village of Kuti, near Mostar, in 1899 united rival Muslim groups in Mostar. They took joint action against the government and held them responsible for the area's religious, social, and cultural backwardness. Appealing to the religious feelings of Muslims, they used the conversion incident as an opportunity to turn individual Muslim actions into a province-wide organized movement. Nusret Sehić, *Autonomni pokret Muslimana za vrijeme Austrougarske uprave u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo, Yugoslavia: Svjetlost, 1980), 56-57.

first Muslim political party. The growth of national ideology among the Muslims came to be discussed in the Muslim press as an issue separate from religion.¹ The first Muslim party,² *Muslimanska narodna organizacija* (Muslim National Organization), was founded in 1906³ and reflected Muslim ethnic and cultural distinctiveness. The two stages of national formation, the development from an ethnic group to ethnic community and from ethnic community to consciousness of nationality, emerged in approximately the same period (1899-1909) under the Austro-Hungarians.

The approach of World War I threw the Bosnian Muslim population into a dilemma. The Austro-Hungarian wing desired continued Habsburg governance, with Bosnia becoming autonomous, while the South Slav wing saw the political unity of the South Slavs as a solution to Muslim difficulties. Serbs and Croats attempted to win the Bosnian Muslims for their own sides, with the result that their Muslim supporters declared a Serbian or a Croatian national affiliation.⁴ Nevertheless, there was little interest, even among the last group, in rejecting their Muslim religious identification, demonstrated by their holding to tight community ties, even while Islamic ritual was not always practiced.⁵

¹Musavat, 5 (13 November 1906), 1.

²The Muslim National Organization (MNO) was not only the first Muslim party but also the first political party in Bosnia and Herzegovina to experiment with a party-system.

³Donia, 169-75.

⁴Donia, 177.

⁵Malcolm, 152.

Yugoslavia

First Yugoslavia¹

After World War I, on December 1, 1918, representatives of all the South Slav lands established the independent state known as the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.² The Bosnian Muslim community remained an extra-national minority group within the nationalistically aroused Serb and Croat-dominated Bosnia. The post-war Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was renamed in 1929 as Yugoslavia, "land of the South Slavs." In 1929 historic geographic boundaries were removed and, for the first time in its modern history, Bosnia did not maintain territorial integrity.³ The Bosnian Muslim community split and the Serb-Croat battle for Bosnia and for the loyalty of the Bosnian Muslims created pro-Serb and pro-Croat blocs. Most of the Muslim elite responded to a call for an organization that would represent all Muslims. They formed the Yugoslav Muslim Organization which was intended to protect Muslim interests.⁴

The Bosnian Muslims suffered during World War II, as did all other national groups within Yugoslavia.⁵ Forced to integrate, along with most of the rest of Bosnia, into the fascist-dominated Independent State of Croatia, Bosnian Muslims were wooed by Croatian

¹Unofficial name for Yugoslavia after World War I.

²See, V. Dedijer, I. Božić, S. Ćirkovic, and M. Ekmečić, *History of Yugoslavia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

³Malcolm, 169.

⁴Atif Purivatra, *Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija u političkom životu Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Sarajevo, Yugoslavia: Svjetlost, 1974), 74.

⁵Ivo Banac says that of the more than one million people killed in Yugoslavia during World War II, the Serbs lost 6.9 percent of their population, Croats 5.4 percent, Bosnian Muslims 6.8 percent, and Jews 77.9 percent. Joel Kruegler, ed. "Yugoslavia," *The Oxford Companion to World Politics* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993), 999.

nationalists and called "the purest of all Croats."¹ For the nationalists, the Bosnian Muslim problem was solved by simply considering them to be Croats and treating Islam with the same respect given to any other Croatian religion.

While a minority of Bosnian Muslims went so far as to join the SS-sponsored Hanjar (Scimitar) military division that fought viciously against Serbs and other enemies of fascism such as Jews and Gypsies, most others were so revolted by the fascists' actions that they denounced them and began to participate in the anti-fascist resistance by joining Tito's multinational partisans.²

"Second Yugoslavia"³

In 1945 the "second Yugoslavia," ruled by Communists, was formed. It was composed of six republics and two autonomous regions.⁴ Five of those republics were named after the majority national group within their borders. The exception was Bosnia and Herzegovina which was a blend of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. In 1968 the Bosnian Muslims were recognized as a nation under the name Muslims.⁵ The next (1971) census officially reflected this new status.⁶ The following censuses began to reflect the national

¹Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: The Chetniks* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 105.

²Malcolm, 185-91.

³Unofficial name for Yugoslavia after World War II.

⁴Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, and autonomous regions within the borders of Serbia, Kosovo, and Vojvodina.

⁵Friedman, 159.

⁶W. Höpken, "Die Jugoslawischen Kommunisten und die bosnische Muslime," in *Die Muslime in der Sowjetunion und in Jugoslawien; Identität, Politik, Widerstand*, ed. A. Kappeler, G. Simon and G. Brunner (Köln, Germany, 1989), 200.

consciousness of the Bosnian Muslims, until in the 1981 census almost two million people within Bosnia were shown to have identified themselves as Muslims, in the national, not merely the religious sense.¹ From that time the Bosnian Muslim representation on the domestic and the international scene began to increase significantly.²

Independent Bosnia

After Tito's death in 1980 the economic and political system of the Yugoslav Federation failed. Deepening divisions led to the demise of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1990.³ When the first post-communist elections brought into office representatives of the various nationalistically oriented parties, multinational Yugoslavia began to disintegrate. After the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia in 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina was transformed into an independent state, recognized by the European Community on 6 April 1992.⁴ Memories of World War II atrocities and of old fears were repeatedly revived by the nationalist-controlled media and led to a bloody war. Tolerance of the various religions and of national units disappeared and much of Yugoslavia became a battlefield. The Bosnian Muslims were the major, although not the only, victims of the Yugoslav war, suffering at the hands of both the Serbs and the Croats.

It is obvious that the Bosnian Muslim situation would not have been so perilous had their national identity not taken on a religious character. Suddenly the Christian inhabitants

¹Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 1981: stanovništvo po naseljenim mjestima. Sarajevo: Socijalistička Republika Bosna i Hercegovina, Republički zavod za statistiku, 1983.

²S. Balić, "Der bosnisch-herzegowinische Islam," *Der Islam* 44 (1968), 125.

³Malcolm, 213-15.

⁴Ibid., 234.

of Bosnia thought of the Bosnian Muslims as "Turks," not as Bosnian or Slavic brothers, despite the fact that the origin of the Bosnian Muslims, the Serbs and the Croats had been identical and that the same ancestors had settled the Balkans around the sixth century.

During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina an "Assembly of Bosnian Muslims" was convened in Sarajevo in September 1993. The delegates at this assembly accepted the description of "Bosniak" as the national name of the Bosnian Muslims.¹ This conclusion represented a return to an old tradition and an important step in the secularization of the national development of the Bosnian Muslims. After the Dayton agreement, and the cessation of the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina was established as a democratic country with equal rights for everybody.

The recognition of the Bosnian Muslims as a nation did not seem to alter drastically the overwhelmingly secular nature of the Bosnian Muslim community. Decades of secular education under the Communists, intermarriage, and effects of Bosnian urbanization ensured a largely secular Muslim population in Bosnia and Herzegovina.² Polygamy, although allowed under Islam, is not practiced, either in urban, or in rural settings.

On the other hand, the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina are beginning to become aware of their Islamic heritage. A degree of Islamization is gradually being re-introduced into Bosnian Muslim society in regard to lifestyle. For example, the sale of *halal* and *non-halal*³ meat in separate shops in Sarajevo is noticeable, as is the prohibition of the sale of alcohol in the vicinity of mosques. However the most important step taken in this

¹Imamović, 17.

²Malcolm, 221-22.

³*Halal* is lawful in Islam; see Jusuf el'Qaradawi, *Halal i Haram u Islamu* (Novi Pazar, Yugoslavia: El kelimeh, 1997).

direction has been the introduction of Islamic religious instruction in the education of Muslim children.¹ On the other hand, awareness of their religion does not mean that most Bosnian Muslims study the Qur'an, practice it in everyday life, and attend mosques. Today, the majority of Muslims in Bosnia want a civil, democratic society.²

Closing Remarks

In moving toward a strategy for reaching Muslims in the Balkans, an overall picture of the area has been given, along with a cultural and religious analysis of indigenous Muslims in the West Balkans. Historical and political developments in the region have been outlined.

The next chapter will develop strategies for establishing an Adventist presence in areas of southeast Europe populated by Muslims. An Adventist Muslim Relations initiative (AMR) is to be set up, with a definite plan of action.

Appropriate literature, a Bible Correspondence School, Bible studies and a user-friendly magazine for Muslims are to be prepared and issued. This plan projects a contextualized ministry to the Muslim communities in southeast Europe, with change agents, or global mission pioneers, who will live and work among these communities. Training seminars for the people are being planned.

Regular monitoring and an end-of-project evaluation have both been allowed for.

¹Haniff, 125-26.

²"Bosnia's Islamic Heritage," May 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking-point/3104130.stm>; (19 February 2004).

The purpose is to ensure adherence to the plan of action and continuation or alterations in the plan.

CHAPTER IV

STRATEGIES FOR REACHING SECULAR MUSLIMS IN THE BALKANS

Introduction

After the collapse of communism in Yugoslavia and Albania and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, the Balkan Muslims of indigenous origin, Bosniaks and Albanians, became increasingly aware of their religion. This was reflected in the introduction of religious teaching in the schools. However, the people of the area remained predominantly “secular Muslims” who do not attend the mosque or read the Qur’an on a regular basis. For Bosniaks, although not for Albanians, religion is related to national identity.

This chapter suggests a strategy to plant Adventist communities among secular Muslims in unentered areas of the Balkans. A detailed plan of the proposed activities is given below, along with a plan for enhancing sensitivity among Seventh-day Adventists towards people of other faiths.

The main tool used in planning, managing and evaluating this project is called a Logical Framework Approach (LFA), or logframe. A logframe establishes an organized and concise outline of the main concepts and features described in the whole chapter, structured in a simple and fluent way. According to its designers: “The LFA is an effective technique for enabling stakeholders to identify and analyze problems and to define objectives and activities which should be undertaken to resolve these problems. Using the

logframe structure, planners test the design of a proposed project to ensure its relevance, feasibility and sustainability. In addition to its role during programme and project preparation, the LFA is also a key management tool during implementation and evaluation. It provides the basis for the preparation of action plans and the development of a monitoring system, and a framework for evaluation.”¹ I have chosen the logframe in order to make clear to the reader the full purpose of the plan described in this chapter (see table 1, 2, 3), including the goal and the means by which it can be achieved.

The LFA itself consists of a table with four columns, each one divided into four horizontal rows. The Intervention Logic column presents the overall goal as an outcome of the clearly defined purpose. Implemented activities lead to results or outputs helping to highlight the purpose and achieve the final goal.

Verifiable indicators in the second column help to evaluate the whole process, while the next column lists sources of verification. The last column presents assumptions, or external factors upon which the expectations are built which may influence the accomplishment of the whole project. The explanation of terms used in the horizontal column of LFA are as follows:

The **Intervention Logic** explains different levels of the project and structural steps leading to achievement, expressed through goal, purpose, outputs and activities.

The **Objectively verifiable indicators** are measurable means of giving “the basis for designing an appropriate monitoring system.”²

¹European Commission, *Project Cycle Management Training Courses Handbook*, version 1.1 (Hassocks, West Sussex, UK: ITAED Ltd., 2001), 13.

²Ibid., 72.

Sources of verification present information by which the indicators are “recorded and made available to project management or to those evaluating project performance.”¹

Assumptions are “external factors which could affect the progress or success of the project,”² which are not under the direct control of the project management.

The vertical row of the LFA uses the following terms:³

- Goal:** The overall, supreme result to which the project is designed to contribute—the impact of the project.
 - Purpose:** The desired change when the project outputs are achieved—the effect of the project.
 - Outputs:** The specifically intended results of the project activities—accomplished at various stages during the life of the project.
 - Activities:** The actual tasks required to produce the desired outputs, as shown in tables 2 and 3
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¹Ibid., 73.

²Ibid., 69.

³BOND, “Logical Framework Analysis,” Guidance Notes, no. 4 (London, UK: BOND, 2003), 2.

Table 2: Logframe Activity

| | Intervention Logic | Verifiable Indicators | Sources of Verifications | Assumptions |
|-------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Overall Goal | To plant Adventist communities of faith in unentered areas of the Balkans | Three new communities of faith established by the end of 2009 | Annual report of the AMR Department to the Union | The Balkan Muslims will respond in the same way as other Muslim spiritual seekers |
| Project Purpose | Contextualized ministries developed and implemented to reach secular Muslims. | Three new change agents will have established networks of 50 contacts, using contextualized materials, by the end of 2007 | Monthly reports from the change agents | Contextualized ministries will result in planting Adventist communities of faith |
| Results / Outputs | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concepts in Contextualized Methods developed 2. Support for Adventist Muslim Relations Ministries established 3. Contextualized Ministries among Muslims implemented 4. Sensitivity among Adventists towards people of other faiths enhanced | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document produced and endorsed by AM-GC, TED, and Union-by the end of 2005 2. AMR coordinator appointed, and SEE AMR Initiatives and Center established by the end of 2005, 5 contextualized resources produced and change agents trained by the end of 2006 3. In each new community a friendship network of 50 people established in the 1st year, 3 community seminars conducted each year and a Bible study commenced in the 2d year 4. Increased financial and prayer support established by existing churches for the ministry among Muslims | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minutes and actions of the AMR committees 2. Report by the AMR Center 3. Monthly report by the change agents 4. Financial records of donations to AMR ministries and the list of people who receive the electronic prayer ministry letter | <p>Financial support for AMR work in the Balkans will be provided</p> <p>The church leadership in the Balkans will be open to using new approaches in ministry</p> <p>Project will continue for at least 5 years</p> |
| Activities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Develop contextual approach for planting Adventist communities among secular Muslims 2.1. Establish SEE AMR 2.2. Organize human resources 2.3. Prepare written materials 3.1. Undertake planning and prayer 3.2. Organize public events 3.3. Achieve spiritual formation 3.4. Form Adventist communities of faith 3.5. Secure nurture and witnessing 4.1 Hold seminars for Adventists to enhance sensitivity towards people of other faiths | <p>Inputs (See activity and resource schedules)</p> | | |

Table 3: Monthly Activity Schedule: First Year

| Activities | 1 st Qtr | | | 2 nd Qtr | | | 3 rd Qtr | | | 4 th Qtr | | |
|--|--|---|---|---------------------|---|---|---------------------|---|---|---------------------|----|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Result: 1. Concepts in contextualized methods developed | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Develop contextualized approach for planting Adventist communities among secular Muslims | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| 1.1.1 Develop concept of planting Adventist communities among secular Muslims | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Result: 2. Support for AMR ministries established | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities: | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Establish SEE AMR Initiative | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| 2.2 Organize human resources | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | 3 |
| 2.2.1 Appoint Adventist Muslim Relations Coordinator | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2.2 Recruit & train change agents | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3 Prepare written material for Muslims | | | | | | | | | | | | 4 |
| 2.3.1 Prepare study guides | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.1 Start preparing pamphlets and books | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.2 Publish user-friendly magazine and web site | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.3 Establish/operate Bible correspondence school | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Result: 3. Contextualized ministries implemented | | | | | | | | | | 7 | | |
| Activities: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 Start planning and prayer | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.1 Research unentered area | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.2 Ask for Providential guidance | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2 Organize public events | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.1 Conduct public lectures/seminars | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.2 Become involved in community work/ADRA | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.3 Organize electronic media, radio/TV | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3 Achieve spiritual formation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.1 Increase interest in the Holy Scriptures | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.2 Examine Great Controversy themes | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.3 Teach about experience of salvation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.4 Help to practice obedience to God | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.5 Explain sharing in the Body of Christ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.5 Form communities of believers | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.6 Secure nurture and witnessing of the new believers | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Result: 4. Sensitivity among Adventists toward people of other faiths enhanced | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities: | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Hold seminars to enhance sensitivity toward other | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1.1 Present subject to pastors | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1.1 Visit churches on a regular basis | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Milestones: 1 = Conceptualized approach prepared 2 = AMR Coordinator appointed and AMR established 3 = Change agents recruited and trained 4 = Study guides completed | 5 = User-friendly magazine for Muslims published 6 = Bible correspondence school for Muslims established 7 = Communities of believers formed 8 = Subject presented to pastors | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 4: Quarterly Activity Schedule: Four Year

| Activities | 2006 | | | | 2007 | | | | 2008 | | | | 2009 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Result: 1. Concepts in contextualized methods developed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Develop contextualized approach for planting Adventist communities among secular Muslims | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.2 Develop concept of planting Adventist communities among secular Muslims | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Result: 2. Support for AMR ministries established | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Establish SEE AMR Initiative | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2 Organize human resources | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2.1 Appoint Adventist Muslim Relations Coordinator | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2.2 Recruit & Train Change Agents | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3 Prepare written material For Muslims | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.1 Prepare study guides | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.2 Start preparing pamphlets and books | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.3 Prepare quarterly magazine and web site | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.3.4 Establish/operate Bible correspondence school | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Result: 3. Contextualized ministries implemented | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 Start planning and prayer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.1 Research unentered area | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.2 Ask for Providential guidance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2 Organize public events | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.1 Conduct public lectures/seminars | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.2 Become involved in community work/ADRA | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.3 Organize electronic media, radio/TV | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3 Achieve spiritual formation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.1 Increase interest in the Holy Scriptures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.2 Examine Great Controversy themes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.3 Teach about experience of salvation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.4 Help to practice obedience to God | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4.5 Explain sharing in the Body of Christ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.4 Form communities of believers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.5.1 Integrate Muslims into a community of believers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.5 Secure nurture and witnessing of the new believers | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Result: 4. Sensitivity among Adventists toward people of other faiths enhanced | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Hold seminars to enhance sensitivity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1.1 Present subject to pastors twice yearly | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1.1 Visit churches on a regular basis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Milestones | 5 = User--friendly magazine for Muslims published 6 = Bible correspondence school for Muslims established 7 = Communities of believers formed 8 = Subject presented to pastors | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Overview of Project

The overall goal of this project is to plant Adventist communities of faith among secular Muslims in unentered areas of the Balkans. Since these areas are mostly populated by Muslims who remained unreached, this project will help the Adventist Church to build communities of faith among Muslims.

During the past one hundred years since the Seventh-day Adventist Church was first introduced in the Balkans, Muslims have never been systematically confronted with the gospel. Adventists have never seriously studied the culture and methods needed to bring Muslims to Jesus. Nor has the Adventist Church committed the financial and human resources needed for reaching these people, although the church in general has adopted a mission statement that involves preaching the gospel to every nation and especially to unreached people groups. The present strategic plan has a dual purpose: to provide the church with workable strategies for preaching the gospel to Muslims, and to establish Adventist communities of faith in unentered areas of the Balkans.

The major objectively verifiable indicator in measuring achievement is the establishment of three new communities of faith in unentered areas of the Balkans by the end of 2009. The purpose of this project is to develop and implement contextualized ministries to secular Muslims in the Balkans. New, appropriate materials for secular Islamic communities will be developed and used in different places by three change agents who will each establish a network of fifty contacts by the end of 2007.

As a result of such a ministry four initiatives will be undertaken:

1. Concepts in contextualized methods among secular Muslims will be developed.
2. Support for AMR ministries will be established to produce five contextualized

resources and to train three change agents by the end of 2006.

3. Contextualized ministries among secular Muslims will be implemented. In each new community of faith a friendship network of fifty people will be established in the first year and each year three community seminars will be conducted. In the second year change agents will form Bible study groups.

4. Sensitivity among Adventists towards people of other faiths will be enhanced. This will be achieved through training sessions, sermons and social programs which will highlight the importance of presenting the gospel to everyone in appropriate milieu.

Development and Implementation of Strategy

In order to plant Adventist communities of faith in unentered areas of the Balkans in the five-year period, the following approach and strategy will be developed to the secular Muslims in the Balkans.

Adventist Muslim Relations Initiative

In 1966, the General Conference established the Institute of World Mission,¹ a training center for the preparation of missionaries. In order to develop and implement strategies in non-Christian areas, a number of study centers were established around the world to help develop and implement more effective methods of sharing the gospel about Jesus.² The General Conference Adventist Muslim Study Center, organized in 1995, specializes in preparing strategies for reaching Muslims for Jesus Christ and resourcing fields with workable models of work.

¹Stenio Gungadoo, "Seventh-day Adventist Tentmakers—the Key to Evangelizing Restricted-access Countries and Unentered Areas," (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, 1993), 119.

²General Conference, "Global Mission: Welcome/Facts."

This project proposes to establish an initiative in the southeast European context to develop strategies to reach secular Muslims. The reason for such a separate initiative is the fact that a strategy developed for Arab or Asian Muslims is not applicable to the secular, European Muslims in the Balkans. Muslims in the Balkans are different from Arab or Asian Muslims. After years under communism and European influences Balkan Muslims are quite secular in nature. Their Muslim identity, especially Bosniak is more political and national, than religious as it is with Arab Muslims. Theological issues are not a major concern for Balkan Muslims but only traditional forms and rites.

Christians in the Balkans are also different from Arab or Asian Christians. Asian Christian-Muslim relations are influenced by social factors, Christians mainly come from low castes, tribal people or of from minority groups. Arab Christian-Muslim relations are influenced by history of the crusades and especially the Western nation's attitude towards the Israeli-Palestinian question. Relations between Christians and Muslims in the Balkans are influenced more by political and national developments.

Therefore, an approach for reaching Muslims in the Balkans should be contextualized in form and political correctness. Administrative locality of an AMR initiative should be established in a Muslim area that is recognized as a center of Islam in the Balkans, such as Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Language used in publications, place of publishing, style of publications, and personnel involved in Muslim ministries all need to be politically and nationally correct. Forms of worship and sacred structures need to be adapted and contextualized to the Balkan Muslim context.

It is widely believed that local churches will fulfill the Great Commission. It would be ideal if local churches developed into places for recruiting and training, but unfortunately

this is not happening. Even the Adventist church structure in the Balkans is lagging behind in strategic planning for reaching the unreached, particularly non-Christians. As Ralph Winter points out, "Many Christian organizations ranging widely from the World Council of Churches to many U.S. denominations, even some evangelical groups, have rushed to the conclusion that we may now abandon traditional missionary strategy and count on local Christians everywhere to finish the job."¹ Christians are often people-blind to the unreached people all around them, doing little to witness to them, and often avoiding them.

Another reason for a local training center is that the majority of the global mission pioneers in our territory cannot avail themselves of the opportunity to attend a Division training course, because of their lack of English language skills. Therefore, a separate SEE AMR Center must take responsibility for adapting and implementing suitable strategies, recruiting bi-vocational missionaries, equipping people for service through intensive courses and for supporting them and their work in the field. Under the proposed plan, a regular newsletter would be sent to administrators, pastors, and church members to keep people informed, and activities would be carried out under the guidance of the Center and the AMR Coordinator.

Before the development and implementation of a ministry, a detailed investigation of the territory and its people groups should be undertaken. Only then will the time be right to lay the proposal before God. He knows where He has, through His providential work, opened the door, provided opportunities, and prepared the people and the way. Ellen White comments: "If His people are watching the indications of His providence and stand ready to cooperate with him, they will see a great work accomplished. Their efforts, rightly directed,

¹Winter and Hawthorne, 294.

will produce a hundredfold greater results than can be accomplished with the same means and facilities in another channel where God is not manifestly working.”¹ The Holy Spirit works in advance in places which may look unpromising, to human eyes.

After these important preliminaries, the decision has to be made as to where and how to proceed. The following steps should be taken into consideration when planning work in unentered areas:

1. Make a list of the obstacles—cultural, practical, or caused by unfounded bias—that may hinder you from reaching Islamic people.
2. Describe how Adventism is generally perceived by Muslims in the area and how Adventists generally perceive Muslims.
3. List any believers with an Islamic heritage who could go back to their own people.
4. List any believers from non-Muslim backgrounds who might be interested in planting communities of faith among Muslims.
5. What institutions or individuals could be used as bridges to approach Muslims?
6. What are the potential financial resources for AMR activities?
7. What AMR ministries have already been initiated in the area?²

Lay this prepared implementation plan before God and allow His Spirit to guide the whole process. Prayer groups should be organized in homes and churches which will pray for all aspects of the work throughout the entire Muslim territory and for specific projects. It

¹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 24.

²Adapted from Jerald Whitehouse, “People Group Field Research Outline,” Washington, DC: General Conference Adventist Muslim Relations, n.d., photocopied.

is important that all church members become prayer warriors. God answers prayers regarding opening up new work.

Human Resources

Adventist Muslim Relations Coordinator

The AMR Coordinator, who will also be in charge of the SEE AMR Center, should be appointed with clear objectives to:

1. Adapt and implement a strategy for making the gospel perceivable by Muslims
2. Interact administratively with the Union
3. Cooperate departmentally with the Division and GCAMR
4. Organize human resources
 - a. Recruit, train and foster the work of change agents
 - b. Conduct on-going educational and working meetings for change agents
 - c. Provide resource people (lecturers) for public events
5. Prepare printed materials
 - a. Spiritual formation study guide
 - b. Pamphlets, books and other printed materials
6. Issue, on a regular basis, a missionary user friendly magazine for Muslims
7. Establish and operate a Bible correspondence school for Muslims
8. Organize public work
 - a. Conduct public lectures/seminars
 - b. Become involved in community work/ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)

- c. Prepare culturally sensitive material for electronic media, radio, TV, and the internet
 - d. Organize canvassing work
9. Produce a regular newsletter for the center
10. Organize awareness seminars for pastors and church members

Global Mission Pioneers

A number of terms are in use to identify people who volunteer for at least a year to help establish a congregation in an unentered area¹. They are sometimes called tentmakers, global mission pioneers, or change agents. Despite the different definitions given for "tentmakers," the one coined during Lausanne II in Manila by Don Hamilton has become the standard among missiologists: "A Christian who works in a cross-cultural situation, who is recognized by the members of the host country as someone other than a "religious professional" and yet, in terms of his or her commitment, calling, motivation or training is a missionary in every way."²

So tentmakers are bi-vocational, lay people who use their employment experience and professional skills to establish communities of faith, mainly in a cross-cultural setting or unentered areas.³ They work alongside people and, by their example and through the power of their testimony, turn people to Christ. Global mission pioneers do not work necessarily in cross-cultural areas. They are "laypeople who have the advantage of knowing the culture, speaking the language, blending with the local people—and being far less expensive than

¹"Global Mission: Welcome/Facts"

²Don Hamilton, *Tentmakers Speak* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1989), 7.

³Gungadoo, 87.

overseas missionaries.”¹ These people will be identified in the present chapter interchangeably as global mission pioneers or change agents. Christian workers need to remember that “tentmaking” is biblical and was essential in spreading the gospel for many centuries. In essence there are two categories of change agents:

1. A person of non-Muslim background who is of similar or close ethnicity. Since such a person understands the Muslim community and culture, he/she can be easily integrated into the Muslim community and can adapt to Muslim culture. If the credibility of a godly person is established, the way will be opened for deeper spirituality.

2. A Muslim background believer. Such a worker remains a cultural Muslim, identifying as a Muslim because of heritage, and functions as an accepted member of the community. People of this kind are well known as spiritual and trustworthy people.

Preparation of Global Mission Pioneers

Special training is required for those who will take up work as global mission pioneers in unentered areas. Intensive preparation training seminars, before the work begins, are prerequisites for successful ministry. Since the work in unentered areas is difficult and often involves isolation, regular quarterly meetings are needed to enhance productivity and serve as a means of support.² Training seminars will need to be prepared by the AMR Center on topics such as spiritual formation, biblical perspectives on work in unentered areas, work ethics and behavior, major characteristics of Islamic culture and

¹“Global Mission: Welcome/Facts.”

²Lepke, 132-34.

Islam, witnessing in a Muslim world, and incarnational ministry.¹ Global mission pioneers should meet the following requirements before entering a new field:

Theological. Change agents, as bridge-builders, need to develop a thorough knowledge of the Bible.

Communicational. Communicational, or lingual requirements are indispensable for a contextual missionary, because without language effective communication of the gospel is very difficult.² People also regard the mastering of their language or dialect differences of the region as a sign of honor and as a complement to them. Misunderstandings and even offences are avoided through proper language usage. And finally, the level of readiness of the people to listen and to accept the message is higher when the language is understood.³

Attitudinal. There are certain attitudinal requirements for those who are sent to reach Muslims. Global mission pioneers should "abandon triumphalism and develop sincere respect, appreciation and sensitivity for all Muslim persons, for their faith and for their way of life,"⁴ not because they consider the Islamic faith as a saving one, but because, by showing respect, the respect of the people is gained. In adopting cultural elements, such as dress or food, which do not contradict biblical faith, a barrier is removed and access gained for spiritual truths.⁵

Methodological. Global mission pioneers have to know the best way to meet the

¹Gungadoo, 132.

²Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 250-53.

³Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*, 105-07.

⁴Charles R. Taber, "Contextualization: Indigenization and/or Transformation," in *The Gospel and Islam, A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979), 150.

⁵Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*, 112-16.

physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of the people. However, to address these needs they must have taken the time to investigate and learn as much as possible about the people they are going to.¹

Establishing Credibility

Reaching Muslims goes beyond the matter of approach. Whatever model used, work for the people must be characterized by love and prayer. Samuel Zwemer said: "What is needed is not simply new methods, but new men and this happens only as men encounter Jesus Christ."² This term men is gender inclusive because in many places only women can reach Muslim women who then will influence members of their families.

To ensure effective communication, the change agent must understand and identify with the people. Ellen White is worth quoting: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"³ This approach is called the "incarnational model" in which the change agent adopts the dress, housing, language, food, and customs of the people with whom they are living. In order to reach people, the frontier evangelist lives in similar circumstances, wearing similar clothes, not rejecting local food, and showing empathy towards people.⁴ The change agent must become a respected person in the community, and

¹Tan, 225.

²Don Eenigenburg, "The Pros and Cons of Islamicized Contextualization," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (July 1997): 260.

³Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942), 143.

⁴Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*, 1980, 98.

that can be only achieved through genuine spirituality that is seen and heard. One culturally appropriate way of developing relationships and supportive fellowships in the Balkans is using the "tea fellowship" model. People meet together and socialize, usually in the evening by drinking tea or coffee. Conversions happen, not only through exposure to dogmas but through identification of the carrier of the message with the message itself and with love towards people.¹

Prayer represents a very important aspect of the work of establishing credibility and cultural identification. Prayer is, for Muslims, a pillar of faith² and a means of achieving salvation. If Muslims never see believers in Jesus pray, they may conclude that Christians are not pious. Fasting is another pillar³ of Islam. During Ramadan, the ninth month of the *Hijrah* calendar, Muslims do not eat between dawn and sunset and devote more time than usual to social and spiritual activities. Global mission pioneers must not give an impression to their Muslim neighbors that Adventists are spiritually weak. By also not eating during the day in the month of Ramadan witnesses can win appreciation from their Muslim friends and acquaintances. However, even more important than public exercise of spirituality, is prayer with and for individuals and families in order to meet their personal needs. The power of Jesus Christ through an answered prayer cannot be debated and denied, and it opens doors for deeper spiritual inquiry. Change agents must present themselves as spiritually active and mature members of the community.

¹Frank Khair-Ullah, "Evangelism Among Muslims," in *Let the World Hear His Voice*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1975), 824.

²Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 105-24.

³Ibid.

Credibility is also established through extending a sensible helping hand towards the needy. "There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit."¹

Alms-giving² is also an important part of Muslim culture and religion. Practical generosity and compassion in dealings with those in need reflects God's love (1 John 3:17, 18). Giving in the name of Jesus may be an important way of establishing credibility in the community.

Global mission pioneers need constant support, lest they fall into discouragement, the most insidious weapon of Satan. Don Hamilton writes: "Even if you have the deepest commitment to the Lord, daily devotions, a regular prayer life, and more Scripture knowledge than the best seminary professor, you still need human aid if you are to stay on track as a tentmaker, and avoid the paralysis of discouragement."³

Jesus mentored His disciples, advising, supervising, and assisting them, and left us His example in dealing with frontier workers.⁴ Just as the disciples reported what they did,

¹White, *Ministry of Healing*, 143.

²Another pillar of Islam.

³Hamilton, 46.

⁴Gungadoo, 128.

global mission pioneers should give regular reports of their work.¹

Written Material

The educational system in the Balkans under the communists required everyone to pass through a compulsory eight-grade primary school system that minimized illiteracy among the population. The Holy Scriptures are available in the Albanian and Bosnian languages and therefore, are accessible to people in their own tongues.

Guidelines for Publications

Some people may ask if secular Muslims read religious literature. Secular Muslims are open to anything that is appealing or that helps in solving their everyday problems. But, terminology, form and layout, language and style should be adapted to Muslim cultural background and mindset, printed in a Muslim city, and prepared in an appealing way for Muslims.

There is an urgent need for a written material that is not classified as Christian, or designated for Christians. However, no serious attempt has been made by Adventists to provide written material for Muslims. Adequate material and literature for secular Muslims in both languages need to be prepared so that change agents have the opportunity to use literature more fully.

Type of Publications

Three types of publications should be prepared for secular Muslims: introductory ones which are intended to be used as entering wedges for contacting Muslims, materials that deal with spiritual issues and enhance spiritual hunger, and publications which share

¹See *Project Cycle Management Training Course Handbook*, 59-61.

biblical doctrine and present Adventist beliefs. The following written materials should be prepared, and then produced:¹

Introductory Publications. Some of the classics written by Ellen G. White and other titles could be adapted for a secular Muslim audience.

1. Family books like an *Adventist Home*, re-titled *Happy Family; Education*, under the title *Wisdom for Life*
2. Health Books like *Ministry of Healing*, re-titled *Healthy Family*
3. Mass-circulation, user friendly magazine to be distributed to Muslims

Spiritual Awakening. Materials that develop spirituality.

1. Conflict of the Ages series, particularly *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and *Prophets and Kings*
2. *Christ's Object Lessons*, under the new title *Lessons for Life*

Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs. These publications should share biblical doctrine and present Adventist beliefs.

1. Who are Adventists? (leaflet or tract material)
2. Bible correspondence lessons
4. Study Guides

Study Guides

Special importance is to be paid to the development of the study guides for secular Muslims. In the new study guides, progression will be built, not merely on the doctrinal

¹Recommendations voted by Islamic Literature Coordinating Committee Meeting, Athens, Greece, 21-23 January 2003.

level but on the experiential level in relation to Jesus Christ.¹ The study guides will be sensitive to Muslim ways of thinking, will involve learning experiences, and will replace traditional Bible studies used among Christians. The topics will start with the Holy Scriptures, then explain Great Controversy themes, will lead into the doctrine of salvation, obedience to God and his Law, and finally what it means to belong to the body of Christ and being part of the end-time Seventh-day Adventist movement.

In working with Muslims, inevitably the question will arise related to the use of the Qur'an and other Muslim sacred writings.² Although Muslims in the Balkans do not read the Qur'an on a regular basis, they still observe Muslim rituals and traditions, and regard the Qur'an as a sacred book. Since the Qur'an has elements of truth, there is common ground on which to build, and it may be used in the study guides as a bridge, and a reference point for developing the full truth. The following guidelines will be used when quoting the Qur'an in biblical witness:

- a. The Bible should be recognized as the teaching instrument and source of authority to be used in leading a person to Christ and to a life of faith in a society where another religion is dominant.
- b. The Church should not use language that may give the impression that it recognizes or accepts the nature and authority assigned to the "sacred writings" by the followers of specific non-Christian religions.
- c. Those using "sacred writings" as outlined above should develop or create a plan indicating how the transfer of allegiance to the Bible will take place.
- d. The nurture and spiritual growth of new believers in non-Christian societies shall be accomplished on the basis of the Bible and its exclusive authority.³

¹Lepke, 258.

²"Contextualization and Syncretism."

³Ibid.

Public Events

Two important features characterize Islamic societies in the Balkans: secular and moderate. There is also a strong tendency towards Euro-Atlantic integration, and widespread acceptance of values born of belief in freedom and democracy. Therefore public activities originating in, or organized by Western inspired agencies are welcomed. This openness allows for all sorts of public activities, which will prepare hearts for spiritual formation and for accepting Jesus Christ:

Health Ministry: teaching the health aspects of the gospel message including release from tobacco and drug addiction.

Community Development and Relief Services: as supplied through ADRA and welfare programs.

Educational Activities: family seminars including education of children and marriage guidance.

Media: radio¹, TV broadcasting, and web pages.

At this stage very little needs to be communicated about the meaning of biblical faith. The initial focus is on meeting the physical and social needs of the people. However, such activities are prerequisites for the conduct of public lectures, seminars, and other spiritually oriented events since such events are recognized and understood by secular Muslims and acceptable to them.

Adventist Communities of Faith

The term "religion" refers primarily to faith allegiance that is intrinsically not value neutral. However, throughout history, the primary definition of religion has been

¹Adventist Radio in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina already exists.

encumbered by various layers of meaning, which have assigned to the term another connotation, so that it has become value neutral, equated with cultural systems.¹ The designation "Christian" bears in the minds of many Muslims cultural rather than religious identification, so that, according to Charles Kraft, "any competition between religious structures labeled Christian and those labeled Muslim is simply surface-level cultural competition between one group's preferred structures and those of another group."²

Furthermore, the biblical term "church" or *ekklesia* denotes "a gathering of the people" unified in one body, who worship God. However, the primary meaning is inlaid with an historico-political legacy of Greco-Roman Christianity and has been changed to bear institutional connotations.³ For most Muslims the meaning of church is institutional rather than biblical and therefore negative.

New terminology is needed because of the confusion mentioned above. Instead of "Christian," the term "Adventist" will be used in the plan being developed in this dissertation since the term Adventist is historically and culturally neutral, allowing people from different cultural backgrounds (Muslim, Jewish and Christian) to be part of God's end-time movement.⁴ For the same reason the term "church" has been altered and replaced by the culture-neutral term "community of faith." Seventh-day Adventists in the Balkans do not have such a strong Christian connotation as do other denominations, because traditional

¹Charles H. Kraft, "Dynamic Equivalence Churches in Muslim Society," in *The Gospel and Islam*, ed. D. M. McCurry (Monrovia CA: MARC, 1979), 50-51.

²Ibid., 117.

³Ibid., 115.

⁴Jon L. Dybdahl, "Mission Faces the 21st Century," in *Re-visioning Adventist Mission in Europe*, ed. Erich W. Baumgartner (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 56.

churches deny the right to Adventists to call themselves "church," giving them the designation "community" instead.

Models of Communities of Faith

Any model or strategy that is not "church-oriented," that does not bring new converts into a nurturing church, is sure to fail. "No man comes into a churchless Christ."¹ However, we need to ask what kind of church is appropriate for secular Muslims in the Balkans?

There are six models used in planting churches in the Muslim context.²

C1 Model: Traditional church: non-indigenous language.

C2 Model: Traditional church: indigenous language.

C3 Model: Contextualized communities: indigenous language and non-Islamic cultural forms.

C3 Model: Contextualized communities: indigenous language and non-Islamic cultural forms.

C4 Model: Contextualized communities: non-Islamic cultural forms and biblically permissible Islamic forms.

C5 Model: Communities of followers of Jesus: Muslim identity retained.

C6 Model: Secret, underground believers.

The C1 and C2 models represent ethnic Christian churches isolated from indigenous Muslim culture, with the only difference being that C2 uses indigenous language. C3, as a

¹Kenneth Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 143.

²J. Travis, "The C1-C6 Spectrum: A Practical Tool for Defining Six Types of 'Christ-centered Communities' ('C') found in the Muslim Context," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (April 1998): 411-15.

moderately contextualized model, accommodates non-religious elements of Islamic culture, but not religious elements. Believers are mostly of Muslim background, do not call themselves Muslims, and worship in a church or a more religiously neutral place. C4 is much like C3, except that it follows those Muslim practices which do not contradict the Bible. C4 communities of faith that are composed almost entirely of people of Muslim background, do not call themselves Christian. Though contextualized, C4 believers are not, however, seen as Muslims by the Muslim community.

C5 believers are often called Messianic Muslims, because they have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, remain within the Islamic community and retain Muslim identity. Islamic religious elements incongruent with the Bible are rejected or, if possible, reinterpreted. A "Messianic mosque" may be established so that believers can share their faith freely. C5 is obviously the only model that is questionable in missiological circles.¹ C6 adherents are secret believers who live in extremely hostile, isolated countries. C6 believers are not active in sharing their faith, some suffer imprisonment, or even martyrdom. This model is transitional and not one to be adopted as part of a long-term strategy.

Since the Balkan culture and language, in Albanian and Bosnian, is identical, the most fitting model for the Balkan countries is a modified C4 approach, with Muslim Adventist identification. They remain cultural Muslims, do not take either nominal, or cultural Christian identity, and become part of the "end time" Adventist movement. They

¹"Contextualization and Syncretism."

have a scriptural orientation, but use culturally adapted worship forms that do not contradict the Bible (such as removing shoes) could be adopted.

Forms of Houses of Prayer

The New Testament does not prescribe any design for the form or structure of a house of prayer. Since the Scriptures do not give architectural drawings of places of worship, it is very important to construct contextualized sacred structures where converts can remain Muslims culturally. In the Balkans churches are built in Gothic or Byzantine style, characteristic for Catholic or Orthodox milieus. In the Muslim populated areas houses of prayer have to be erected in the Oriental style, without crosses on them. Buildings should be neat and clean, free from excessive adornment, and simple. In this kind of environment new believers can feel comfortable about sharing the gospel with their countrymen.

Forms of Worship

As the three-angels' messages spread to culturally diverse areas, calling people to worship only God, the question of forms of worship becomes very relevant. The essence of worship is to glorify God. So to know the proper form of worship in traditionally non-Christian areas is of great importance. Since the last battle in the great controversy concerns the matter of allegiance, or the true object of worship, these matters should be given serious thought in attempts to contextualize Adventist worship:

- a. God is at the very center of worship as its supreme object. When we approach God in adoration we come in contact with the very source of life, our Creator, and with the One who in an act of grace redeemed us through the sacrificial death of His beloved Son. No human being should usurp that divine right.
- b. Corporate worship is God's people coming into His presence as the Body of Christ in reverence and humility to honor and give homage to Him through

adoration, confession, prayer, thanksgiving, and singing. Believers come together to listen to the Word, for fellowship, for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, for service to all, and to be equipped for the proclamation of the gospel. Our faith invites wholehearted and highly participatory worship where the Word of God is central, prayer is fervent, music is heartfelt, and fellowship in faith is palpable. These elements of worship are indispensable in Adventist worship services around the world and should be part of any attempt to contextualize an Adventist worship.

c. We are complex creatures in which reason and emotions play a significant role. True worship expresses itself through our body, mind, spirit, and emotions. The Adventist Church calls for a proper balance of the involvement of these aspects of our personality in worship. It is important to keep in mind that any element of the worship service that tends to place humans at its center must be rejected. The extent to which the body participates in worship will vary from culture to culture, but whatever is done should be done under discipline and self-control, keeping in mind that the central aspect of the worship service is the proclamation of the Word and its call to serve God and others.

d. Adventist worship should draw on the treasure trove of Seventh-day Adventist theology to proclaim with exuberance and joy the communion and unity of believers in Christ and the grand theme of God's infinite love as seen in creation, the plan of redemption, the life of Christ, His high priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary, and His soon return in glory.

e. Music should be used to praise Him and not as a means to overstimulate emotions that will simply make individuals "feel good" about themselves. Through it worshippers should express their deepest feelings of gratitude and joy to the Lord in a spirit of holiness and reverence. Adventist worship is to celebrate God's creative and redemptive power. If the need to contextualize the form of worship in a particular culture arises, the guidelines provided in the document entitled "Contextualization and Syncretism" should be followed.¹

Most of the rituals performed by Western churches are culture-oriented. Since the Scripture has not prescribed any particular liturgy, Muslim converts are given the freedom and right to develop their own forms of worship according to the principles noted above. Muslim converts whose deepest experience of worshipping Jesus is in prostrating themselves may be free to worship that way. Similarly, Muslim love of recitation can be used in memorizing and reciting verses from the Bible.

¹"Contextualization and Syncretism."

Nurture of and Witnessing by the New Community

A new community of faith will continue to develop provided that new believers receive spiritual nurture, remain within their cultural context, and continue to witness to their people. Members of the newly planted community will become living role models for those surrounding them, though some of them may be marginalized by friends and relatives because of their new faith. The body of Christ must be able to help marginalized believers to meet potentially hostile reactions, including the loss of jobs because of Sabbath observance, and even the loss of basic physical and social needs. In order to grow spiritually, a new community of faith must be provided with necessary resources and equipped for service and witnessing.

The best time for God's people to reach people in the community for Christ is the period following their conversion. Working within the broader family, or within close associates' or Muslim neighbors' social structures, new believers become active witnesses, living out biblical faith and giving distinct evidence of the gospel's truth. Unselfishness in Jesus' name will change stereotypes and give others a new understanding of biblical faith. Living witness opens doors for effective verbal witness and additional acceptance of Jesus Christ in the community.

Awareness Seminars

Since the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Balkans, financial and human resources for reaching people have been invested where the door was open. The vast majority of local churches and pastors are in Christian populated areas. The aim of this project is to enhance the sensitivity of church members towards unreached people everywhere in general and among the Balkan Muslims in particular, helping

members to gain a better understanding of Muslim culture and religion, to learn appropriate evangelistic methods needed to introduce Muslims to Jesus, and to breathe life into the activities in local churches throughout the whole Balkans.

In order to achieve these goals, seminars need to be presented to pastors during ministerial meetings once yearly, which will help them to internalize the kind of Adventist mission that will fulfill its task among Muslims and create an Adventist presence in Muslim communities. In implementing the plan outlined above, existing Seventh-day Adventist churches will be visited on a regular basis and seminars held to prepare the Adventist constituency to be perceived as God's last-day people within their Christian cultural heritage, and to find prospective change agents who will become effective witnesses outside their cultural milieu.

Evaluation

It will be important to undertake periodical assessment of the project to see how it is keeping up with its stated goals. Activities and their results will be analyzed, progress checked, activities revised, and outputs updated if needed, with the lessons learned being duly noted.

The overall goal and project purpose will be measured by means of verifiable indicators, as stated in the logframe: three new communities of faith will be established by the end of 2009, three new change agents will have established networks of fifty contacts, and three change agents will have used prepared contextualized materials by the end of 2007.

Four outcomes of the activities will be evaluated: the concept in contextualized methods by documents produced and endorsed by the AMR, the GC, the TED, and the

Unions by the end of 2005; support for the Adventist Muslim Relations Ministries by the appointment of an AMR coordinator by the end of 2005, five contextualized resources produced and three change agents trained by the end of 2006; contextualized ministries by establishing in each new community a friendship network of fifty people in the first year, by conducting three community seminars each year, and by commencing a Bible study group in the second year; and increased financial and prayer support by existing churches for ministry in unentered Muslim areas.

Regular monitoring will be secured through sources of verification: the overall goal by the Annual Report of the AMR coordinator to the SEEUC and AUC Adriatic Union Conference); the project purpose by monthly reports by the change agents; and outputs by a document produced by the AMR committees and the actions of these committees, as well as by reports from the coordinator and from the change agents.

An end of the project evaluation will be judged, based on the assumptions that Muslims in the Balkans will respond in the same way as spiritual seekers in the other parts of the world, that contextualized ministries will result in planting Adventist communities of faith, and that the church leadership in the Balkans will be open to using new approaches to ministry and to providing financial support for the AMR work in the Balkans in order to continue the project for at least five years.

Closing Remarks

This chapter has developed and proposed contextualized ministries to plant Adventist communities of faith among secular Muslims in unentered areas of the Balkans. A contextualized approach that employs cultural elements as a bridge in communicating the gospel message and transmits the gospel in a specific cultural context has been explained.

Through the working of the Holy Spirit and the influence of the gospel workers, the gospel message will be presented as an answer to the present-day needs of the people at various levels. Fulfilling the gospel commission will undoubtedly require great sacrifice. However, because Adventists sense a responsibility in the "end-time," they have a unique opportunity to lead Muslims to a faith that saves and prepares them for the second coming of Jesus.

Today's Muslim world is shaken by economic problems and mismanagement, by huge gaps between rich and poor, by the threat of globalization, and by frustration due to failed hopes. Yet these troubles have resulted in a new willingness to question and an openness to the gospel. In many places people have rising expectations. I personally want to see more investment of human and financial resources, more action, and less hesitation and indecision. Although the task of evangelizing the Muslim world looks difficult, its challenge will continue into the future until the Lord's commission is fulfilled (Matt 28:18).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of two main parts. The first section presents an evaluative summary of the findings drawn from the research. The second part offers recommendations for the implementation of the findings and provides the final conclusion of the entire project.

Evaluative Conclusions

Findings of the Research and Lessons Learned

An exegetical study of the relevant Bible texts suggests that the findings of this research rest upon sound biblical foundations. The Great Commission, a call to evangelize the world, is universal in scope. God's Good News is intended to be spread throughout unentered areas. It will find its fulfillment in the "end time" and applies to everyone, including the Muslims of the Balkans. As a theological method, critical contextualization plays a crucial role in conveying the Bible message. The gospel takes culture into consideration, preserving its worthwhile aspects, discarding those features of it that are opposed to biblical principles, and often modifying those that are neutral.

Having given attention to historical and political developments in the region and having made a cultural and religious analysis of indigenous Muslims in the West Balkans, I made the assessment that European Muslims are secular, tolerant, and moderate, and therefore accessible in terms of the gospel. Muslims in the Balkans will respond to the

gospel just as readily as spiritual seekers in any other parts of the world if the Christian witness is sensitive to the cultural setting.

It has been found that public evangelistic work is possible among Muslims in the Balkans. However, the credibility of the change agents (and the initiative that they show) is of the highest importance for the advancement of the gospel. Cell groups are indispensable for helping Muslims continue to experience spiritual growth.

Relevance of the Project

The majority of Muslim countries in the Balkans are at a transitional stage, shaken by economic problems. People struggle every day to achieve better living standards and in this process risk being swept away by a wave of secularism. Traditionally these Muslims are well disposed towards the kind of social activities, fellowship and friendships that may open the door for the gospel message as an answer to need. A new approach to secular Muslims has been suggested which is contextualized, employs cultural elements as a bridge in communicating and transmits that gospel most positively in the specific cultural milieu.

The relevance of Seventh-day Adventism as a movement today is immeasurable. Its unique characteristics place upon it special responsibility in the "end time." Adventists have unparalleled opportunities to lead Muslims to a faith that saves people and prepares them for the Second Coming of Jesus. Theirs is the task of gathering remnants among believers to form one big Remnant.

Impact of the Project

This project research has been about the fulfillment of Adventist global mission. It has developed and proposed a contextualized ministry that will be implemented in planting

Adventist communities of faith among Muslims in unentered areas of the Balkans. New change agents will be called, trained, and sent to establish a network of contacts with local people. Contextualized resources, such as a new set of Bible studies, will be used. In addition, a user-friendly magazine and booklets suitable for Muslims will be published and widely circulated, with the aim of opening many doors.

The contextualized ministries proposed in the project will result in the planting of new communities of faith. This will be the major impact of the project. Unentered areas in the Balkans will shrink in size. A new organizational structure is suggested for working with Muslims, along lines developed in the AMR Center.

Consciousness, on the part of both the church administration and of members, of the fact of the Muslim presence in their neighborhood will be created, in order to nurture a readiness on the part of current congregations to witness to their Muslim neighbors in an appropriate way. This will be accomplished through awareness seminars held for pastors and lay members.

Financial Sustainability of the Project

Acceptance by the Church's administration of the proposal set out in this project will bring with it the promise of financial support for the work of the AMR in the Balkans, guaranteeing money for a program of outreach that is projected to continue for at least five years. The work will also depend on increased financial support from existing churches for the ministry in unentered Muslim areas. After one or two years, it is anticipated that financing will flow from the new converts themselves.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations developed from the conclusions:

1. Since local churches are not yet ready to be centers for the recruitment and training of global mission pioneers, and since the potential global mission pioneers do not know English sufficiently well to attend training seminars at the Division AMR Center, it will be necessary to open an AMR Center in the Balkans. All the activities connected with the projected outreach to Muslims in the region should be performed under the guidance of the Center and the AMR Coordinator.
2. SEE AMRC should adapt and implement the most suitable strategies for working in unentered areas among Muslims, recruiting global mission pioneers, equipping them for service through intensive courses and supporting them and their work in the field.
3. The church leadership in the Balkans should be open to accepting and applying new approaches to ministry and to providing financial support for the work in the Balkans in order to sustain the project for at least five years.
4. Under the proposed plan, the AMR Center should send a regular newsletter to the administration, pastors, and church members.
5. Forms of worship need to be adapted to the Muslim context.
6. Buildings should be erected in an Oriental, not Christian style
7. The term Christian Adventist Church, that is used as the official name of the SDA Church throughout the Balkans, should be changed and the label avoided in the future in Muslim areas.

8. Religious terminology and expressions (traditional "jargon" within the SDA Church) that may not be acceptable in a Muslim context, should be replaced by more suitable substitutes and the style of places of worship modified in accordance with local tastes and expectations.
9. The local native language, Albanian or Bosnian, rather than Serbian or Croatian, should be used in their respective areas, and publications should be issued in these locally used languages.
10. New Bible studies, user friendly magazines, and new books should be prepared in the Albanian and Bosnian languages.
11. The mass media, the internet, radio and TV-channels of communication which are accessible to everyone—should be utilized as fully as possible, within budget limitations.

In summary, taking on new responsibilities and responding to new situations requires more than a vote by a committee. This project also needs more than money. It needs the contribution of dedicated workers, of people with spiritual commitment, and with love for their fellow human beings. These pioneers also need to be men and women with physical stamina and with the imagination necessary in people who will be called upon to improvise in terms of words and actions, as circumstances demand. The whole Church must pray for field workers of the right caliber.

My final recommendation is that, in order to witness a great revival among Muslims, who have up until now not experienced the blessings of salvation, we should unhesitatingly engage all available resources and step forward decisively, so that this task of leading all people to Christ may be fulfilled.

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