

Factors Affecting Discipleship of Christian Believers from Muslim Background in Selected Baptist Churches in Kampala District, Uganda

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Abstract

In the recent past, there has been an increased response from Muslims to the gospel, resulting in many converting to Christianity. However, churches have not given adequate attention to the discipleship of Christian Believers from Muslim Backgrounds (BMB). Yet, the focus of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) is to evangelize and make disciples. This study investigated factors affecting discipleship among Christian Believers from Muslim Backgrounds in selected Baptist churches in Kampala District, Uganda. The research provides helpful information on the church leaders' perception of Islam and Muslims, discipleship practices, church discipleship structure, and church resources for the discipleship of Christian believers from Muslim backgrounds. The qualitative research reveals a negative perception of the pastors and the church leaders about Islam and Muslims, the lack of inclusion of Muslims in the church vision for the Great Commission, and the lack of discipleship practices, structure, and resources for the BMBs' discipleship.

Keywords: Muslim Background Believers; BMBs; Great Commission; Discipleship.

Introduction

The mandate of discipleship in the Great Commission encompasses all nations, including persons from Muslim backgrounds. The essence of mission endeavor in any community or nation is to make disciples for Christ. Discipleship is a task for the church that the believers must carry out in obedience to Christ's commission for His church. Every convert, including converts from a Muslim background, must be a disciple. Discipleship is the main reason for preaching the gospel and conversion to the Christian faith. Muslims encounter the gospel



through missionaries' activities and spiritual encounters like signs and wonders, dreams, and visions.¹ Miller and Johnstone report that since the 1960s, substantial numbers of Muslims have become believers in Christ globally.² Thousands of Iranians have witnessed massive conversion to Christianity.³ Jayson Casper reported a new 2020 survey by Gamaan of 50,000 Iranians, and 90 percent of these Iranians reside in Iran, and 1.5 percent are Christian. According to the study, the number of Christians in Iran is "without doubt in the order of magnitude of several hundreds of thousands and growing beyond a million."⁴ This conversion of Iranian Muslims to the Christian faith has ranked Iran's evangelical church as the fastest-growing church in the world.⁵

In Uganda, Muslims have been receptive to the gospel through crusades, evangelism outreaches, and prayer meetings, but this needs to be supported with customized discipleship. These converts coming from Muslim backgrounds are often isolated; thus, they need to be discipled and integrated into the church.⁶ They need spiritual, psychological, and emotional support to avoid them falling back to Islam.

Most churches find it challenging to disciple believers from a Muslim background.⁷ Yeghnazar suggests how the Iranian converts can engage in discipleship through "virtual discipleship."⁸ Korwen and Julie, missionaries among Muslims in Arua, Uganda, state that there are no discipleship programs focused on converts from a Muslim background.⁹

As one of the leading evangelical churches in Uganda, the Baptist church of Uganda is widely spread over in Kampala. Two of these selected churches are in the city centers:

¹Rick Love, "Discipling All Muslim Peoples in the Twenty-First Century," *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 17:4 (Winter 2000), 12 (p. 7).

²Duane Alexander Miller (St. Mary's University) and Patrick Johnstone (WEC International), "Believers in Christ from a Muslim Background: A Global Census," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, Article 10, Volume 11 (2015), p. 19 (p. 2).

³David Yeghnazar, "Can Technology Help Disciple Iran's New Believers?" *Lausanne*, Evaluating the Effectiveness of Virtual Discipleship, 8.1 (2019), p. 9 (p. 1).

⁴Jayson Casper, "Researchers Find Christians in Iran Approaching 1 Million," *Christian Today International*, 3 September 2020 <<https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/september/iran-christian-conversion-gamaan-religion-survey.html>> [accessed 2 April 2024].

⁵Patrick J. St G. Johnstone, *Operation World: A Day-to-Day Guide to Praying for the World*, 4th ed (STL Books ; WEC Publications, 1986).

⁶Yeghnazar, 9.

⁷Oscar Osindo, "Discipling Muslim Insiders: A Working Framework," *Digital Commons*, Andrew University, 12 [2016], No. 2, Art. 18 (2016), 220-41 (p. 220).

⁸David Yeghnazar, 'Can Technology Help Disciple Iran's New Believers?' p. 1.

⁹"Exploring Aruwa" (29 July 2019) <<https://www.housetohouseuganda.org/blog/category/disciple+making>> [accessed 2 July 2021].



Kampala Baptist and Agape Baptist. The other three selected Baptist churches were in the suburbs of Kampala city: Choice Baptist church, Lugoba Baptist church, and Lubaga Baptist church. All these churches have no discipleship programs targeted to believers from a Muslim background, as observed by the researcher.

Literature Review

A literature review examines what scholars and researchers have published on a topic.¹⁰ It "discusses published information in a particular subject area, and sometimes information in a particular subject area within a certain time period."¹¹ Further, it demonstrates a familiarity with existing knowledge from the past to the present. This study reviews the literature on discipleship practices and factors that affect discipleship.

Oscar Osindo discusses the insider movement's cultural context in the BMBs' Discipleship. He approaches the socio-cultural factors from the argument of the Insider Movement's practices of discipling the BMBs. Responding to the critics of the Insider Movements, he states that "one way of discipleship is the Insider model which allows BMBs to retain aspects of their Muslim identity and to grow in Christ within their Muslim culture." He highlights the need for the church as a social environment for the BMBs to slightly modify the church concept regarding insider movement methods. He argues, "Insider Movement is a church implant where families become the church while a church plant is a composition of new believers who are unknown to each other that is formed into a new social entity, a church."¹²

Similarly, S. P. Schlorff, in *Discipleship in Islamic Society*, discusses how to disciple men and women within the cultural context of the Muslim community. Schlorff argued that the church is the social environment of the BMBs, and the church's fellowship is the corporate and social environment of the discipleship. The social factor is gathering the new converts together as a community of believers for fellowship and commitment to the local church ministry. In contrast, the cultural factor is the environment where this community of

¹⁰Ramdhani, et. al., "Writing A Literature Review Research Paper: A Step-by Step Approach," *International Journal of Basic and Applied Science*, 03 (2014), pp. 47-56.

¹¹Abubakar Sani, "Literature Review in Content: Substance and Procedures," *European Journal of Social Science Studies*, 2.9 (2017), p. 13.

¹²Osindo, 223.



believers gathered for fellowship. These two factors play a vital role in the discipleship practice of the Christian believer from a Muslim background.

Seckler reviewed the Insider Movement practice in the discipleship of the BMBs and various academic debates and interviewed some BMBs to explore their own opinions of the insider movement. He amplifies the voice of the BMBs as a vital perspective as insiders themselves in the practice. He observed that foundational issues are associated with the Insider Movement. Some of these foundational issues include, first, "the assessment of Islam and its prophet Muhammad" that the BMBs cannot hold two "dual" allegiances as a followers of Christ.¹³

The second observation is that of the various views of the BMBs themselves on the different aspects of the insider movement practice of the discipleship of the BMBs. The BMBs also have other areas of preference regarding insider movement practice. The third observation is the issue of conviction from the scripture. Their faith shapes each BMB by studying the word of God. The final observation is the issue of the diversity of biblical hermeneutics, which follows the rule of "context" and the application of the scripture to daily life.

In his article *Disciple-Making Movements among Muslim People*, Linda Smith discusses a missiological approach based on the "missional activity of God among every nation, tribe, language, and people group."¹⁴ God wants all people to be saved; he saves one person to save others. Smith discusses the effect of biased perception of Islam and Muslims as it affects the discipleship practices of the BMBs. This biased perception of Islam as a "false, heretic, satanic, anti-Christ, and violent" religion¹⁵ has made people believe that Muslim converts should be removed from their socio-cultural background before they can be effective disciples. He disagrees with the idea that the BMBs should reject their Islamic socio-religious and cultural heritage.

It has also been noted that discipleship needs a structure and a system. The pastor should establish a church structure that facilitates effective discipleship. Chad Harrington

¹³Tom W. Seckler, "Majority World Theologizing: Muslim Background Believer Perspectives Regarding Insider Movements," *Missiology: An International Review*, 46.1 (2018), pp. 86-98 (p. 94), doi:10.1177/0091829617738228.

¹⁴Linda Smith, "Disciple-Making Movements among Muslim People: Missiological Considerations," *Published by Digital Commons, Andrews University*, 2016, 12 no. 2 (2016), pp. 261-76 (p. 261).

¹⁵Linda Smith, 261.



argues that "many churches are not set up" for disciple-making; they are not intentional and organized; hence, discipleship is random and haphazard. Pastors must take responsibility for developing the structure for disciple-making.¹⁶ The human resources for this ministry should also be adequately equipped. Witness through the lives of the people involved in this ministry is essential. Discipleship is best achieved through a life-to-life transfer relationship.¹⁷ This type of life is described by Quashie as "Incarnational life." Discipleship is more caught through life-to-life relationships than just through teaching; the teacher lives the life walking the teaching before the disciple.¹⁸

Methodology

The researcher used a qualitative design approach, utilizing interviews and passive observation to collect data from the selected Baptist churches. The respondents, identified through purposeful sampling, were pastors, church leaders, and Christian Believers from Muslim Backgrounds (BMBs) in the Baptist churches of Kampala District, Uganda.

The targeted population for this research was drawn from the ten branches within the five divisions that make up the Kampala District: Kampala Central, Nakawa Division, Kawempe Division, Makindye Division, and Rubaga Division. The 25 respondents' sample size included one pastor, two church leaders, and two BMBs from each branch church in each division. Data collection was through participant observation and in-depth interviews. The researcher was a passive participant and used open-ended structured questions to conduct the interview.

Findings

Understanding Perceptions

Prasad defines perceptions as "mental formations based on the five senses for vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, and a so-called sixth sense that is a fusion of the five unique senses. Human perceptions are driven by facts, myths, traditions, customs, and beliefs, and a sense of reasoning that helps to align the conscious attributes towards the desired vision. He argues,

¹⁶Chad Harrington, "How Pastors Can Build Church Structure for Disciple Making," *Pastoral Discipleship in the Church* <<https://discipleship.org/pastoral-discipleship/church-structure-for-disciple-making/>> [accessed 7 March 2022].

¹⁷Joshua Y J Su, "Effective Disciple-Making," *Academia.Edu*, p. 13 (p. 2).

¹⁸John Abedu Quashie, "The Mandate Of Making Disciple: Teaching As Incarnational Ministry," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (EHASS)*, 1 (2020), pp. 68-77 (p. 75), doi:<http://doi.org/10.38159/chass.2020063>.



"Recognizing that seeing is believing and that everything has a cause and an effect, one must see facts to assure the truth-value in decision making."¹⁹ Anders et al. defines perceptions as "justifying beliefs without themselves requiring justification, a privilege rarely extended to mere beliefs. Perception has been held to enable reference to particulars or provide content to certain concepts."²⁰ The level of awareness and insight of the church leaders on the discipleship of the BMBs will determine the kind of vision and belief they will project before the church. The better the perception of the church leaders about Islam and Muslims, the better the church's vision and involvement in the discipleship of the BMBs.

Leaders Perception

Perception About Islam

Question: *What is the perception of church leaders of the selected Baptist churches towards the discipleship of Christian believers from a Muslim background?* All the responses about Islam were almost similar. The ten elders out of fifteen church leaders from the five churches, in their opinion, believe that Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions. The respondents' perception of Islam is both positive and negative, and they shape and influence their perceptions about Muslims.

Perception About Muslims

Some respondents gave some mild positive responses about Muslims, that they are serious and committed people to their faith but isolate themselves from other religions. Some see Muslims as "ritualistic, discriminatory about Christians." Some of the respondents hold highly negative views about Muslims, that they are aggressive, violent, self-centered, stubborn, and full of hatred toward Christians. Therefore, the perception of the selected Baptist church leaders and pastors of Muslims is also both positive and negative, like that of Islam. These perspectives influence the discipleship focus of the church leaders for the BMBs.

Importance of Discipleship of the BMBs

¹⁹Nadipuram R. Prasad, "Perception and Reality," in *Statistical and Fuzzy Approaches to Data Processing, with Applications to Econometrics and Other Areas*, ed. by Vladik Kreinovich, *Studies in Computational Intelligence* (Springer International Publishing, 2021), DCCCXCII, 193-218 (p. pg.195), doi:10.1007/978-3-030-45619-1_15.

²⁰Anders Nes, Kristoffer Sundberg, and Sebastian Watzl, "The Perception/Cognition Distinction," *Inquiry*, 66.2 (2023), pp. 165-95 (p. pg.166), doi:10.1080/0020174X.2021.1926317.



The respondents were not aware of the discipleship of Christian believers from a Muslim background. Regarding discipleship of the Christian believer from a Muslim background, P₁ stated that "the BMBs need to be discipled because their spiritual needs need to be met." P₂ opines that "we need to be deliberate and intentional about the discipleship of the BMBs." P₁, the Kampala Baptist union chairperson, stated, "I haven't heard of any church in Kampala that has programs designed to disciple believers from a Muslim background." Then P₄ from ABC concurred with P₁'s opinion but expressed a worry, "We have people who are converting from a Muslim background but are not discipled, and therefore, it is easier for them to slip back." He notes that the current teachers have not been equipped to disciple BMBs. ELD₄ agrees with P₁: "When a Muslim comes to Christ, it becomes hard and difficult because of their mindset, perception, assumption, and doctrine." ELD₃, the discipleship committee chairperson of KBC, affirms that the BMBs need to be discipled

The study showed that 22 out of 25 of the respondents could not differentiate between Islam and Muslims. Also, their perception of Islam and Muslims is experiential due to their encounter with Muslims. Their perceptions are shaped by their relationship with Muslims; 10 out of 25 of the participants hold two perceptions, both positive and negative perception. In contrast, 15 out of 25 respondents held strong negative perceptions about Islam and Muslims. All the respondents were unfamiliar with the fundamental teachings and practices of Islam.

All five pastors consented and affirmed in their responses the need for discipleship to raise Christians who would obey the Great Commission. Apart from their positive affirmation of discipleship, the pastors need to know more about the discipleship of the BMBs. The church leaders and the pastors had no vision and program specifically to reach out to the Muslims. The perception of the church leaders plays a significant role and affects the discipleship of Christian believers from Muslim backgrounds in the church. It determines the discipleship structure set up in the church and the discipleship practice of the BMBs.

BMB Discipleship Practice

Discipleship Practice in the Church

The researcher noted that each church adopted the best discipleship practices suitable for them. In Baptist Church Uganda, there is autonomy among the churches; each church is given autonomy in operation. In the discipleship practices, there is unity but no uniformity. In unity, there are discipleship practices in one form or another in all the five selected Baptist churches



in the Kampala district. In uniformity, each church adopted practices that were best suited for them. Some churches practice formal and informal discipleship, while others practice only formal ones.

Formal Discipleship Practices

Formal discipleship practice is common in all five selected Baptist churches in Kampala, Uganda. These formal discipleship practices involved majorly formal settings of teaching classes on Sunday mornings before worship service began. According to the respondents, Bible study, seminars, preaching, and Christian book reading are the formal methods in operation.

Informal Discipleship Practices

According to ELD₄, informal discipleship practices occur in family settings, homes, recreation centers, offices, and ministry departments in the church, and we encourage every member to engage in informal discipleship. Informal discipleship involves friendship, accountability partners, praying together, mentorship, and a relationship between a mature believer and a convert. It is a life-to-life transfer, a way to share life. P₆ of ABC opined that "discipleship is a lifestyle through fellowship and not limited to class." Informal discipleship is a practice in the church among all the five selected Baptist churches.

BMB Method of Discipleship

All the church leaders from P₁-P₅ and EDL₁- ELD₁₀ concurred that they do general discipleship, and there is no separate or particular class for the BMBs; hence, the same method of discipleship is used for all. In a more pointed word, ELD₅ said, "It is something we have not been so keen on doing. Many people come, and we train them, and they go away." While ELD₄ said, "We have ignored the BMBs; we haven't focused on them as a church, but some individual in the church." It has shown that the church is not deliberate and intentional in developing a suitable method that will adequately take care of the BMBs based on their previous faith, belief systems, and religious background. Although the churches have discipleship programs for Christian believers from other faith backgrounds, they have no deliberate discipleship practice for the BMBs. The P₁, who spoke in his capacity as the pastor of CBC and chairperson of the Baptist churches in Kampala district, claimed that he was unaware of any church in Kampala that has programs designed for BMBs. The findings



highlight the struggle of the five selected Baptist churches in the discipleship of the BMBs. It harmonizes with Osindo's claim that the Christian church struggles with the discipleship of believers from a Muslim background.²¹ There is a need for an equipping process that considers their socio-cultural context, religious background, religious identity, Islamic doctrine, and ideology.

The Church Vision

The success of every vision depends on the structure built for the vision. A vision without a structure has no future. The structure is the vehicle that will deliver the vision. All the five pastors and the church elders of the five selected Baptist churches responded to the question of their church vision.

They all gave different versions of their church vision. The study revealed that the vision differs from one selected Baptist church to another. Five churches have a structure for discipleship based on their vision. KBC, ABC, and CBC have suitable structures that enhance their discipleship process. In contrast, LGB₁ and LGB₂ have weak structures because of improper harmonization and lack of clarity of the church vision. The researcher observed that the vision relates to the church's discipleship structure.

The Church Discipleship Structure

Three of the five selected Baptist churches in the Kampala district, KBC, ABC, and CBC, have an established functional structure that plays a significant role in effective discipleship in the church. The two primary structures of the churches are organic and organizational. The organic structure deals with the discipleship process of the church's members, from converts to mature believers in Christ (disciples). The organic structure refers to the discipleship structure of the church. Fifteen participants responded to the question, *What is your church structure for discipleship?* Three significant structures emerge from their responses. The three structures are Sunday school, Bible study, and small groups. All the selected Baptist churches operate with these three discipleship structures, and the main dominant among the three is the Sunday school structure. According to the researcher's interview and observation, the KBC and ABC churches are the two churches that have the Sunday school, Bible study, and small group discipleship structure operating effectively for discipleship. CBC and LGB₁ have a

²¹Osindo, 220.



Bible study structure for their discipleship, while LGB₂ has only Bible study and no structure for discipleship. The P₄ of LGB₂ confessed, "We don't have structure yet for discipleship; we only have the teacher who teaches the students in the Sunday School." ELD₈ of CBC stated, "We don't have a discipleship department handling discipleship for BMBs."

The researcher participated in Sunday's KBC and ABC Sunday school classes to observe their discipleship structure. The researcher discovered that the discipleship structure is for the general class, divided into small classes according to age. Despite the excellent structure for the Sunday school classes, there is no separate class provision for the BMBs. The organizational structure deals with the different parts of the church functioning together to form a single unit. The KBC, ABC, and CBC structure starts with the congregation's annual general meeting (AGM), then the elders' board, followed by the deacon's board. The congregation is the church's decision-making body, but the elder board ratifies the decision. LGB₁ and LGB₂ do not have a clear and established structure for the church, as testified by P₃ of LGB₁ and P₄ of LGB₂; "this is a young local church; we are still growing church." The researcher discovered from the interview that KBC and ABC have organic and organizational structures that help them in their discipleship.

BMBs Discipleship Structure

The Pastors and the Elders of the five selected Baptist churches were asked about their church structure for BMBs' discipleship. The responses of all the P₁- P₅ and the ELD₁ – ELD₁₀ were all in the same affirmative, "we don't have a separate structure for the discipleship of the BMBs; all the converts are discipled together in one structure." All the pastors and elders agreed that it is a challenge to be considered, "As a church, we have not thought of it, and we have not been deliberate and strategic about the discipleship of the BMBs."

The discipleship structure for the BMBs does not exist in all the five selected Baptist churches in Kampala district, Uganda. Despite the general disciple structure in KBC and ABC churches, there are no provisions for the discipleship structure for the BMBs. The researcher discovered that the BMBs are not inclusive in the vision and the church discipleship structure. The reason for the effective structure is to achieve set goals and vision.

As stated earlier, "many churches are not set up" for disciple-making; they are not intentional and organized. Hence, discipleship is random and haphazard, as in the case of CBC, LGB₁, and LGB₂ churches. Hence the question for pastors is, *How can churches create*



structures for disciple-making? Oates opines that it is crucial to have a discipleship model because if there's no organized model or strategy to accomplish discipleship, it will not happen. Developing a church structure will help the church allocate resources effectively and adequately for the discipleship of the BMBs in the church. Allocated resources help an organization achieve its objectives. Resources can be money, workers, or equipment for supporting an institution or a business.²² God had endowed his church with various resources, ranging from spiritual gifts, talents, divine wisdom, the Bible, and anointed men and women for the work of the ministry. These resources can be harnessed to promote the vision of the church.

Resources for Discipleship

Church Financial Resources for Discipleship

The researcher asked the church leaders about the financial resources the church set aside for discipleship. Two of five selected Baptist churches, KBC and ABC, operate a discipleship budget. In most cases, the church's income does not fund the budget to meet up with the discipleship process. ELD₅ of ABC and ELD₃ of KBC affirmed that the budget is small, but they found a creative way to carry out fundraising. ELD₃ of KBC stated that volunteers do most of their work.

The other three churches out of five selected Baptist churches reported a lack of resources and no budget for discipleship. P₁ of CBC and P₄ of LGB₂ confirmed that "We don't have a budget for discipleship," EDL₁ of LGB₁ said, "The church is poor in terms of financial resources." The study noted that all five selected Baptist churches in the Kampala district of Uganda are struggling and do not have adequate financial resources for the discipleship of BMBs. It is potent to say that the lack of setting aside finance for the discipleship of the BMBs is an indicator of the factor that affects the discipleship of the BMBs.

Educational Resources for Discipleship

Having relevant materials for the discipleship of the BMBs is of great importance. The researcher interviewed the church leaders about the material resources the church set aside for the discipleship and the discipleship of the BMBs. Responding to this question, the

²²Macmillan Dictionary, <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/resource_1> [accessed 12 March 2022].



respondents reveal that all five selected churches have no materials for the discipleship of the BMBs in the church. ELD₃ of KBC declared, "Previously, we have been using borrowed materials. Recently, we have been able to develop our own material, which is currently going through review and editing." However, "Currently, we don't have materials for the BMBs separate from other general materials."

The primary material that all other churches depend on is the Bible. According to P₃ of LGB₁, "We usually use the Bible for discipleship." At the same time, the other three churches, ABC, LGB₂, and CBC, use discipleship books and the Bible for discipleship, despite the church's efforts to source materials for general church discipleship, including books. There are no materials for the discipleship of the BMBs among the five selected Baptist churches in Kampala district, Uganda.

Human Resources for Discipleship

It requires a disciple to produce a disciple. God uses people to do his work on earth; without human resources, it will be difficult to make disciples. The researcher asked the respondents about the human resources the church set aside for the discipleship and the discipleship of the BMBs.

In response to the question on the people involved in discipleship and the discipleship of the BMBs in the church, ELD₃, the chairperson of the discipleship committee of KBC, affirmed the availability of teachers both for the formal and informal discipleship. For the discipleship of the BMBs, he said, "No one of the teachers is handling the BMBs." In the other four selected Baptist churches, no human resources (single teacher) are set aside for the discipleship of the BMBs in the church. All the pastors and church leaders stated that they do not have specific teachers for the BMBs. All five selected Baptist churches have no human resources as a teacher or discipler trained and dedicated to the discipleship of the BMBs in the church. This agrees with the earlier assertion that most people who engage in the discipleship of the BMBs have little or no experience in discipleship or have not gone through any training on discipling the BMB.

The BMBs Opinion

The researcher considered the opinion of the BMBs very crucial to triangulating the data collected from the church leaders and the Pastors. The BMBs are at the center of the focus of this research; hence, their voice and opinion on this research work are critical. The BMB's



contribution is essential based on their religious background, conversion, salvation experience, discipleship experience, and new faith within the church and Christian community. The researcher interviewed the BMBs on four items.

Religious Background

The five BMBs responded to the question about their religious background. The central theme that emerged from the question is the nominal Islamic background. All the BMBs revealed that their parents are not from Muslim backgrounds; the families are of mixed faith, with Muslim and Christian parents.

Nominal Islam

The study revealed that all the BMBs in the church are from nominal Muslim backgrounds. For instance, their mothers were married to a Muslim man and converted to Islam. BMB₂ and BMB₄ were brought up by a Christian mother and a Muslim father in an Islamic environment. Their background does not translate to their level of Islamic practice as a Muslim.

Level of Involvement in Islam

The researcher further interviewed the BMBs on their level of involvement in Islam. The researcher discovered that all the BMBs were not practicing Muslims, even though they had an Islamic background. They grew up in a mixed-faith environment at the family and school levels. Three of the five BMBs testify of their double allegiance to the two religions and their preference and early practice of the Christian faith before their final conversion to Christianity. The salvation of these BMBs further reveals that they have a nominal Islamic background.

Salvation Experience

All five BMBs from the five selected Baptist churches gave their salvation experience. BMB₁ and BMB₃ of ABC church had similar salvation experiences through compassion organization. Also, BMB₄ and BMB₅ got saved through individual personal evangelism, while BMB₂ encountered Christ through radio evangelism with the help of his mother.

The researcher discovered that three out of the five BMB salvations were not through the direct evangelical effort of the church. BMB₂’ salvation is peculiar because of his background; though he is from a Muslim background, his mother’s faith and efforts led him to Christ through a radio evangelist in Kampala. BMB₁ and BMB₃ experience salvation through



a Christian NGO, Compassion Organization, which supports less privileged students who cannot pay their school fees. They organized fellowship time with students and then shared the gospel with them. The other 2 BMBs had their salvation through the personal witness of the church's members. The study also reveals that the five selected Baptist churches in Kampala district have no plan and vision for Muslims in their efforts to fulfill the great commission. The lack of vision and focus for Muslims among the five selected Baptist churches in Kampala affects the conversion experience of the BMBs.

Conversion Experience

The researcher interviewed the BMBs on their conversion experience after their salvation. BMB₁ is the only one among the 5 BMBs that has practiced Islam to a certain level, and he narrated his salvation experience, his struggle for two years because it was required of him "to pray five times a day, and also participate in the fasting period of Ramadan." His response affirms Yeghnazar's position that the BMBs have a lot of unresolved issues in their life that have made most of these converts drawback to Islam. In his article, he states, "Wherever they are, they have fallen in love with Jesus and have decided to follow him. However, they are trying to learn 'follow-ship' under familiar, social, and political pressure working against them."²³

The researcher found that the level of involvement in Islam determines each BMB's conversion experience after their salvation. BMB₂ – BMB₅ have similar conversion experiences because of their level of Islamic practice before converting to Christianity. They did not experience any pressure after conversion because they were not deeply involved in Islamic practices and were more familiar with the Christian environment than the Islamic environment before their salvation.

The BMB's conversion experience and their level of involvement in Islam before their salvation determine to a greater extent the kind of discipleship practice of the church and the type of discipleship experience the BMBs will have in the church. The BMBs that are nominal Muslim before conversion may fit into general discipleship practices, as in the case of the BMBs in the selected Baptist Churches, while the BMBs practicing Muslim before conversion might need more attention from the church in their discipleship process. The

²³Yeghnazar, 3.



BMB's discipleship experience will determine their spiritual growth, their relationship with the church, and their total allegiance to follow and be obedient to Christ daily.

Discipleship Experience

The study found that only two out of the five BMBs from the five selected Baptist churches in Kampala had been discipleship. Three of the five BMBs have gone through general formal discipleship, but not discipleship peculiar to BMBs. Two of the BMBs in the five selected Baptist churches have not gone through any form of discipleship, either general formal and informal discipleship or discipleship for the BMBs in the church. Discipleship helps the BMBs to be appropriately integrated into the church community for the relationship and effective participation of the BMBs in the life and ministry of the local church.

BMB Relationship with the Life and Ministry of the Church

To validate the effectiveness of the church structure for discipleship, the researcher interviewed the BMBs on their relationship with the church. The researcher asked the BMBs about their relationship and participation in the church's life and ministry. Only three out of the five BMBs from the five selected Baptist churches that have gone through general formal discipleship responded effectively to this question. The other two BMBs from LGB₂ could only react to their fellowship relationship with the church and had no experience in participation in the ministry of the church.

The study reveals that only three out of the five selected BMBs are involved in the ministry life of the church. These three BMBs are from two of the five selected Baptist churches in Kampala district, Uganda. The study validates the church structure's effect on the BMBs' discipleship, revealing the differences between CBC, LGB₁, and LGB₂ and KBC and ABC churches. The discipleship structure of the KBC and ABC churches helps the BMBs to be appropriately integrated into the church life and ministry compared with the BMBs from CBC, LGB₁, and LGB₂, who cannot give an account of the BMBs in the church.

Summary of the Findings

The research highlights the high level of the church's ignorance about the Islamic faith and Muslims. The church is not adequately prepared to disciple BMB, as reflected in the church leaders' perceptions of Islam and Muslims. The church leader's perception is a limitation for the evangelization of Muslims and the discipleship of the BMB.



The research further highlighted the lack of vision and plan for BMB in the Kampala district. Irrespective of their positive perspective about Muslims, it does not reflect in the discipleship of the BMBs in the church. Despite their innovative and multidimensional approach to discipleship, the five selected churches have no specific discipleship practice for the BMBs. On the church discipleship structures for the discipleship of the BMBs, the five selected Baptist churches have different visions, mission statements, strategies, and discipleship structures for their respective local churches. They have no structure for the discipleship of the BMBs because Muslims and the BMBs are not included in the church's vision, mission, strategies, and discipleship structure. Discipleship does not happen by preaching a sermon series but through a deliberately organized structure that will create an environment for discipleship. It was also found that the five selected Baptist churches are grossly lacking in financial, materials, and human resources for the discipleship of the BMBs. The churches do not have any human resources specifically for the discipleship of the BMBs. The available human resources for discipleship are for general discipleship in the church.

Discussion

Missiological Implication

The Great Commission deals with making disciples from all nations and different backgrounds; "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."²⁴ It is the responsibility and task of the church to preach the gospel to every creature and raise disciples for Jesus worldwide. The church needs to have a broader mindset concerning the Great Commission and be all-inclusive in obedience to the Great Commission.

The church must be intentional, strategic, and purposeful about the discipleship of the BMBs. If the BMBs are well-discipled, they will become a great asset to the church and instruments in the hands of the Lord to reach out to the Muslims in their community. The church should develop a structure that will enhance the discipleship of the BMBs. The church's success in mission among the Muslims and the Islamic nations depends mainly on the effective discipleship of the BMBs.

²⁴Mark 6:15-16, NIV.



The Baptist church and the Christian community in Kampala and Uganda must find a strategic way to respond to the growth of Islam in Kampala and Uganda.²⁵ One of the ways to do this is to focus on the discipleship of BMB.

Conclusion

The Baptist Union is the leading evangelical in Kampala, Uganda, and is widespread in the five divisions in the Kampala district. The Baptist church is the fastest growing church among the evangelicals in Kampala, Uganda, and the five selected Baptist churches are committed to the great commission and the discipleship of believers. Despite the churches' commitment to evangelism and outreaches, the vision for Muslim evangelism and discipleship of the BMBs is lacking.

The study examined the church leaders' perception of Islam and Muslim, the church structure for discipleship, discipleship practices, and resources for discipleship. The perceptions of Islam and Muslims as fearful and violent people, aggressive, stubborn, pretentious, deceitful, and hostile greatly affected their vision of the inclusiveness of Muslims and the discipleship of the BMBs in the church. The study highlighted the lack of a clear vision and inadequate resources and structures for this ministry, something that the church should institute a corrective measure.

Recommendations for The Churches

First, the Baptist church and the leadership of churches should seek to understand Islam and the world of Muslims for effective ministry. The church leaders must enlighten and educate the Christians in their local churches. Second, the Baptist churches should review their discipleship structure, practice, and methodology in consideration of BMBs. Informal discipleship practice, small group fellowship, and mentorship are recommended substitute methods for the Insider Movement. Third, the church should commit resources for the discipleship of the BMBs. The church needs to make available materials and human resources relevant to the discipleship of the BMBs. These materials should address their former Islamic doctrinal beliefs, Christian doctrines, and the distorted Old Testament Bible stories in the Quran. It should also include an apologetic study to enable them to contend for their faith when meeting with fellow Muslims. Lastly, the church invested in the human resources that

²⁵Godfrey Olukoya, 'Ugandan Muslims Move from Makeshift to Cozy Mosques', 2021 <<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/ugandan-muslims-move-from-makeshift-to-cozy-mosques/2355462>>.



disciple the BMBs. The church should sponsor teachers for relevant training. Discipleship cannot happen without another disciple; the success of discipleship of BMBs depends on the quality and commitment of other disciples in the church.²⁶

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²⁶Heath Rogers, *Portraits of Discipleship* (One Stone; Illustrated edition, 2012), p. 34 <<https://www.amazon.com/Portraits-Discipleship-Heath-Rogers/dp/098549381X>>.



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