THE ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH MEKANE YESUS AND ITS UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAM AND ITS APPROACHES TO MUSLIMS IN ETHIOPIA FROM 1969-2004.

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C O N T E N T

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Method and aim

1.1. Method

a) Clarification of the subject and intended approach to the same

The understanding of <u>Islam in Ethiopia</u> has been a field of research for some time, both for foreign and Ethiopian scholars, and comprises many fields, such as history, archaeology, sociology, linguistics, and ethnography, amongst others. Studies about interreligious relations and perceptions in Ethiopia, however, have remained scarce.

The main concern of this study is concentrated on one of the biggest protestant churches in Ethiopia, the <u>Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)</u>. The attitude towards Islam within this church has been examined only peripherally or within other major subjects by different authors[1]. The prevailing understanding of Ethiopian Islam and Muslims, from the grass-roots of the church members and ministers, of the various organs, officials, leaders and teaching institutions of the EECMY has not been seriously studied to date. Certainly no research has been carried out resulting in an authoritative publication, despite their being some efforts in this direction[2]. This research therefore can be seen as a contribution to these efforts. The term <u>understanding</u> comprises both knowledge and thorough reflections from many perspectives, including the experience with and the reception of Islam and Muslims. It is connected with religious and cultural patterns, with historical and political developments, and intersects with sociological and ethnographic features, as well as others. It is therefore necessary to shed some light on the wider background of the analysis, which shall be carried out in the second chapter. After that the third chapter will evaluate the understanding of Ethiopian Islam within the EECMY.

While understanding is understood as a more passive process, the active counterpart is expressed by the <u>approaches</u> the EECMY carries out <u>towards Muslims in Ethiopia</u>. The demand of communicating the Gospel to all human beings is one of the most crucial tasks and integral to the church, as stated in the constitution of the EECMY by following the order to outreach or mission by Jesus Christ himself[3]. Approaches are depending on the one to whom they are directed, and therefore they become contextual and vary from case to case.

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[1] Arén; Bakke; Eide; Grenstedt; Hasselblatt; Launhardt; Ostebo; Peter; Tolo; and others.

[2] Especially within the EECMY Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS), Degree Program in Christian-Muslim Relations, under the responsibility of Dr. Peter Ford, see PS 1.3.6.2.

[3] Matthew 28:19-20, EECMY, Constitution, Article V, Section 4: "To awaken, establish, co-ordinate and effectively supervise and direct her energies in a united endeavour to extend the kingdom of God by: a) Preaching the Gospel to those who have not heard it", see also Saveras, Church, 170.

Understanding must be seen as a prerequisite, and the quality of an approach depends on it. The understanding in many cases is reflected and expressed in the teachings, through the teachers, teaching institutions and available teaching material, including literature. The EECMY offers a variety in this respect, which will be referred to in chapter three. Evangelical approaches tend to result in witness and conversion. The strength of this tendency will be considered in chapter three, and shall be critically questioned. The alternatives of other approaches that are not leading necessarily to conversion, but give witness, have to be presented and discussed as well. Approaches in developed stages are going out from strategies that are based on experience and on an increase of understanding. They give orientation and guidance, and help to avoid wrong attitudes, misunderstandings and harmful approaches. The development of some strategies shall be discussed before the end of chapter three. Guidelines are to be seen as a result of this process and often remain in a changing condition depending on the context and contemporary influences. At the end of chapter three, the EECMY's understanding of Islam and its approaches to Muslims shall be placed within a wider context, including ecumenical and interreligious efforts.

The years 1969-2004 represent a selection based on two criteria. The EECMY has seriously begun to engage in Christian-Muslim Relations (CMR) with the arrival of an adviser of the Ethiopian Area Committee (AC) for the Islam-in-Africa-Project (IAP), the later Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), in the year 1969. The participation in this project has been continued until the present time, only with a timely interruption inbetween[4], which was caused mainly by political reasons. In March 2004, two important workshops dealt with CMR, one held in Addis Ababa and one in Hossana, which were organized by the EECMY. These left the author of this study, since he is working in a Muslim dominated outreach area of one of the EECMY's synods, with the desire to deepen his knowledge and understanding, and to continue to support the EECMY in the quest for an appropriate understanding of Islam and witness to Muslims in Ethiopia. The participants of the workshop in Addis Ababa prepared a communiqué and recommendations on CMR on March 5, 2004, which was presented to the EECMY Evangelism and Theological Commission[5]. It became clear that an official declaration of position by the EECMY, comparable to guidelines produced for example the Lutheran churches in Germany[6] or other countries, concerning the relationship to Ethiopian Muslims, as well as guidelines on CMR

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[4] According to the documents from 1978-1988. See also chapter III, 1.2.b) of this study.
[5] PS 1.3.8.3.
[6] Rat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, Zusammenleben, and Kirchenleitung der Selbständigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche (SELK), Wegweisung.

including approaches to Muslims in Ethiopia have only partly been officially prepared so far. This may be due to the sensibility of this subject in Ethiopia and to the fear of an exposition open to critique. However, it remains a desideratum, to which this study hopes to give a hand to.

b) Research material

The Primary Sources (PS) were found and collected at the EECMY Central Office (CO) library and archive, and at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS) library and archive, both in Addis Ababa, in the second half of the year 2004. They include seventy-seven official letters from the files (PS L), documents from the organs of the EECMY (PS 1.1.), the EECMY IAP/PROCMURA Area Committee documents (PS 1.2.), and other important papers and documents by the EECMY, relevant to Islam and CMR in Ethiopia (PS 1.3.). The latter (PS 1.3.) includes documents of different persons related to the subject, of the EECMY Evangelism Department/Gospel Ministry Department (GMD), today's Department for Mission and Theology (DMT), documents without indication of an author, documents in relation to the training programs and teaching material, documents from workshops and other available materials. Documents in relation to the IAP/PROCMURA including the PROCMURA newsletters form another section (1.4.). A few documents related to other seminars and consultations (1.5.), and documents on inter-religious matters (1.6.) complete the available documents of the primary sources.

Nevertheless, the documents from these library and archive rooms, on which this study is mainly based on, are not complete. Rather they have been selected by intention for the purpose of the subject. The documents of PS 1.1., for example, have been found in the archive room. However, the almost complete minutes of or documents related to the General Assemblies, the Executive Committees, and the Church Officers Meetings, are most possibly available in other office rooms. Most of the older documents were deposited in up to twenty (cardboard) boxes together with others. Even if almost all were seen, it may be possible that additional documents can be found in other places. For example, the PROCMURA newsletters are obviously not complete. However, they were the only ones that have been found by the author of this study in the CO library and archive room. The fact that the CO was confiscated by the Provisional Military Administrative Council (Derg) in 1979 eventually may have contributed to the loss of some documents. Therefore, this research relies only on the material at hand at this time. With exception of the documents written by Yonas Deressa (PS 1.3.3.), the teaching material for the MYTS, the material of the

Theological Education by Extension (TEE), the Seminaries and Bible Schools, and other (PS 1.3.7.), which were found in the MYTS, all other documents were found in the CO. Some of the documents have been written in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia. All given quotations from these documents are translations by the author of this study. The same occurs, when German documents were used and an English translation was not available. As for the spelling of some of the Amharic and other specific terms, the mode given in the primary and secondary sources will be used primarily. This refers also to the spelling of the Arabic terms used in the sources, to which in addition the spelling of the Concise Encyclopedia of Islam[7] may be given if deemed necessary. However, the spelling of these terms is indicated in the cursive script.

The Secondary Literature shall help to clarify the background of the analysis and to enter the discussion about the understanding of Ethiopian Islam. As mentioned above, since this subject has not yet become a focus of scholarly interest, according to the author's knowledge and as could be seen in publications, it is not possible to give an overview on the state of the latest research with regard to the EECMY and its perception of Islam and approaches to Muslims. However, the material which tends towards the development of the subject will be discussed in place. As this study has been carried out for the benefit of the EECMY, the author consciously considered the requirement to include many important quotations from the primary and secondary sources, since many Ethiopians and others will not have had the opportunity to find and read the sources. The same refers to the bibliography, i.e. the secondary sources, which contain more books and articles than practically used in this study, in order to equip any reader with a wider context of literature. Therefore, this study has to be seen as a kind of resource book.

1.2. Aim

The aim of this study is to provide the EECMY with an overview on the development and features of its understanding of Islam, and its evangelical approaches towards Muslims in Ethiopia, carried out from 1969-2004. This could possibly help towards a declaration of position by the EECMY. Further, in the conclusion some suggestions for guidelines concerning CMR in Ethiopia shall be presented.

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[7] Gibb, Concise.

II. THE BACKGROUND OF THE ANALYSIS

1. History and typology of Ethiopian Islam

The conditions before the rise of Islam and the development of Islam in today's Ethiopia enable an historical overview of the different stages and processes which led to the present condition of Ethiopian Islam as an integral feature and component of today's Ethiopia. The expressions "Islam in Ethiopia" and "Ethiopian Islam", or "Muslims in Ethiopia" and "Ethiopian Muslims" indicate a conflict and tension discovered in recent research, mainly observed by Ethiopians (Muslims)[8], who are concerned about the reception of Islam as a part of and the Muslims as contributors to Ethiopia, or who are embarassed about the view that Islam and Muslims are seen as a foreign component or influence (mainly from the perspective of some scholars and Ethiopian Christians). This discussion will occur at various places. In this study, however, Ethiopian Islam shall describe the result of the historical development of Islam in Ethiopia as present in contemporary Ethiopia. It shall express at the same time a respect towards Ethiopian Muslims.

Another important precondition on how history in Ethiopia is to be described rests on the question whether one takes a stance on Christian, Muslim or other interests and perspectives. A balanced view or objective evaluation is mandatory to appropriate research. However, since this study can only partly be carried out with original sources, namely those of the EECMY and consequently from a Christian's point of view, and since other original sources like Arabic manuscripts or documents in the old Ethiopian language *Geez*, or Amharic and other vernacular were not available, the author of this study in this regard depends mainly on secondary literature. He is aware of this conflict and dilemma, as well as afraid of not keeping a balanced view. In this respect the overviews can be compared to a "high wire act".

The term 'Ethiopia' itself has been officially used mainly during the 20th century until the present time. Other former terms have been the "Aksumite Kingdom", used to describe the period until medieval times (until the "Gondarine Kingdom"), and *Habashat* or "Abyssinia" or "Abyssinian Kingdom", which have been used more generally, because of their early origins. For the sake of convenience, the more general term, Abyssinia will be employed here to designate the time before the 20th century and Ethiopia for the time afterwards. Since

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[8] H. Ahmed, Wollo, XIV. H. Ahmed wanted to "assess the role of Islam in the development of the overall Ethiopian culture, and the necessity of questioning the validity of the prevailing scholarly approach which has so far tended to perceive and interpret the presence of Islam as an ephemeral political phenomenon and a source of perennial threats to Ethiopia's national existence". See also XX: "the recognition of Islam as a positive and constructive historical and cultural phenomenon" is still in need and was carried out by H. Ahmed with regard to the Wollo region.

Abyssinia has been only a part of today's Ethiopia, located in today's northern part, the historical overview has to differentiate between Abyssinia proper and the wider region, the Horn of Africa which includes states like Eritrea, Somalia, and others.

The phenomenology and various features of contemporary Ethiopian Islam, as a result of the historical development, shall be presented in the themed overview, i.e. in the typology. Here again, as far as possible, the question "What is Ethiopian in Ethiopian Islam?" shall be the guiding question, since this is of crucial importance for any understanding and contextual approach. Both overviews shall contain summaries at the end, in order to extract the main lines and features necessary to the subject.

1.1. Historical Overview

1.1.1. Early relations between the Horn of Africa and Abyssinia and southern Arabia and Yemen from ancient times on (1st millennium BC)

Relations between the southern Arabs and the East African coastal nations reach back into antiquity and biblical times, prior to the first millennium before Christ (BC). Traditions associated with the Queen of Sheba are common in both the Ethiopian and Yemeni cultures. Separated only by a narrow strip of water between southern Arabia and the Horn of Africa, people who lived on both sides of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden had not only very close geographical and climatic links, but also at times strong cultural and religious ties[9].

> "An intimate relationship between Ethiopia and Yemen in ancient times has also been postulated from the fact that several place and clan names, as well as inscriptions in the South Arabian language Sabaean, are found in both countries"[10].

The name Abyssinia originated from *Habashat*, an Arabic term used to designate a people of Sabaean (Yemenite) origin in northern Ethiopia, who settled there, and together with local people shared related civilizations from the beginning and during the second half of the first millennium BC. Until today, Arabs call Ethiopia *Habash*[11].

It eventually was this combined civilization that contributed to the development of the Aksumite kingdom that emerged in the early first century AD. The steady growth of this empire was a result of the commercial links the Abyssinian and the Yemeni regions had to the outside world and to each other, reaching via the northern route as far as Egypt and onto

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[9] Pankhurst, Let's look, I and VIII: Compare descriptions of the temple of Yeha in honour of the sun and moon gods worshiped both in Yemen and Ethiopia.
[10] Ib., I, 1.
[11] Ullendorf, HABASH, 2; Irvine, HABASHAT, 9f.

the southern route as far as India[12]. Several posts on the African and Arabian coasts served for an exchange of a variety of goods and formed:

"an inter-continental nexus of commerce"[13].

The pre-dominantly Arab traders and agents of commerce, who were familiar with the country and language through residence and inter-marriage, in connection with the trade routes and market places, contributed to a development in which the Arabian influence slowly took its roots within the neighboring areas of and within the Abyssinian society. Vice versa the Abyssinian influence in Southern Arabia grew throughout the period of contacts.

For more than a millennium the relationship with and the residence of Arabs in northern Abyssinia contributed essentially to the origin of the Aksumite kingdom. Therefore, the Arab culture mixed with local traditions and patterns of life, formed a new homogeneous civilization at the beginning of the first millennium AD. Arabs were more than partly able to feel at home in Abyssinia, and Abyssinians were not totally unfamiliar with the conditions they found in Yemen. It is this fusion that rests at the very bottom of the history of Abyssinia with its relations to the Arab and outside world, that later incorporated the coming Christianity and Islam. Therefore, the Arabic influence in Abyssinia is not peripheral or an alien element but substantial for its being. The

"pre-Islamic, South Arabian Semitic migrations of large groups of agriculturalists together with their women put down deep and permanent roots … and thereby created a social and cultural order which endures to this day"[14].

This common background before the introduction of Christianity and Islam to Abyssinia, may serve for CMR, *inter alia* (i.a.) with regard to the discussion of "Ethiopianism", *id est* (i.e.) the being an Ethiopian above religious, ethnical or other conditions, as an umbrella synonym for an homogeneous Ethiopia, comprising both Christian and Muslim components, that were introduced later.

1.1.2. The period before the rise of Islam (1st half of the 1st millennium AD)

The local consolidation processes[15] and the success of commercial activities resulted in a steady growth of the Aksumite kingdom, whose political influence reached out into the closer and wider vicinities. The boundaries extended constantly during the first three centuries AD.

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[12] Pankhurst, ib., II, 1.
[13] Ib., see a detailed list of goods that were exported and imported.
[14] Trimingham, Ethiopia, 34. It should be noted, that it is not yet clear whether the influence of Arabs was dominant, or if the influence of Abyssinians in southern Arabia was a dominant feature.
[15] Ib., 34f.

Conflicts were resolved in military expeditions, in order to gain control. Such campaigns reached as far as southern Arabia. They reflect the self-confidence and strength of a growing independence which led to a paramount position Aksum had held by the beginning of the third century. Two important campaigns into southern Arabia and a presence of Aksumites in the fourth (300-378 AD) and the sixth (beginning from around 520 AD) centuries were discovered in inscriptions and give testimony to these occurrences[16].

Meanwhile, Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia[17].

> "Within the life time of Frumentius and 'Ezana [from about 330 on and during the second half of the fourth century AD[18]] Christianity became the official religion of Axum[19] … [and Abyssinia] a recognized member of the circle of Christian powers[20] … [because the] official conversion of Axum under 'Ezana constituted a political link with the Byzantine Empire"[21].

However, it took more than one hundred years until the arrival of the monastic movement at about 480, which brought forms of the Alexandrian monophysitic doctrine and rituals to Abyssinia that enabled the transition from old local beliefs to Christianity and made it the leading (state) religion.

Around 520,

> "when the renowned Aksumite king Kaleb invaded Yemen … to oust a Jewish Himyarite king … accused of persecuting his Christian subjects … a major settlement in the interior of what is now Southern Saudi Arabia"[22],

took place. The Himyarite king, who converted to the Jewish religion, took measures against Christians in consequence of the persecution the Jews suffered in the Byzantine kingdom[23]. After that the influence of Aksum with a vice-royalty in Yemen lasted for about half a century. It is worth to mention that the

> "Aksumite kingdom and much of Yemen had by the later fifth or early sixth century both accepted Christianity … [and there were] 'everywhere churches of the

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[16] Ib., 36.
[17] It is not possible to give a partially full account of the establishment of Christianity in Abyssinia here.
[18] Irvine, ib., 10.
[19] Trimingham, ib., 39.
[20] Ib., 41.
[21] Ib., 40.
[22] Pankhurst, ib., III, 2; see also Trimingham, ib. 41.
[23] "Emperor Justin called upon the Nadjashi [i.e. the Ethiopian king, see also n. 32] Kaleb to intervene in South Arabia on behalf of the persecuted Christians there", Irvine, ib., 10.

Christians, and bishops, martyrs, monks and recluses, where the Gospel of Christ is proclaimed"[24].

According to a Muslim tradition, collected in *Surah* 105 of the Qur'an, Kaleb's viceroy Abraha launched

"an expedition, which included a number of elephants, to destroy Mecca … [which] plays a great part in later Muslim tradition: the year of the Prophet's birth, for instance, is called 'the year of the elephant', though this does not agree with the chronological facts"[25].

This expedition, however, initiated the decline of the Aksumite's "golden age", because the Persians intervened, conquered the whole of Arabia and gained control even over the Red Sea trade routes;

"until its conquest by the Muslims in the eighth year of the *hijra* (A.D. 629/30)"[26].

A commercial treaty, however, between the Arabs and the Abyssinian king was established, and a caravan was commuting between Mecca and Abyssinia every winter. The tradition, that Muhammad, the later Prophet, looked friendly upon Abyssinia, may have originated with these relations[27].

The first half of the first millennium AD saw both the Abyssinian and the Arab (Yemeni) region open to "higher" religions. The struggle between local beliefs and emerging "higher" religions, Judaism and Christianity, resulted in separating movements on both sides of the Red Sea, but at times converging. Whereas Arabia remained in a stronger religious vacuum (which Muhammad should respond to later on), Abyssinia embraced Christianity in such a way that it should influence the course of its history immensely.

It is to be observed here, that political and religious ambitions appear in a mixture apparent in king Ezana's time as well as in king Kaleb's expeditions. One wonders what would have happened, if instead heading with elephants against Mecca, Abyssinia's Christian outreach ambitions or settlement initiatives[28] would have had been stronger, in order to convince Mecca with the Bible. But history took another course.

Trade and commercial activities played a major role throughout this period, a bridgehead not only for material goods, but also for religious contents as shall become clear in the next sections.

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[24] Pankhurst, ib. III, 2; see also Trimingham, ib., 40, n. 4.
[25] Trimingham, ib. 41.
[26] Ib. 42.
[27] Irvine, ib. 10.
[28] See the example of the church at San'a, Pankhurst, ib. III, 2.

1.1.3. The rise of Islam and its first contacts with Ethiopia

Caravans, as mentioned above, left from Mecca for Abyssinia every year at the beginning of the seventh century. Muhammad's grandfather Abdal Muttalib was one of the traders who participated in these trading enterprises. The commercial shipments included Ethiopian slaves. At Mecca and in other parts of Arabia, a sizable Ethiopian community settled by this way.

> "The best known of its members at this time was Bilal, who will ever be remembered
> as Muhammad's *muezzin*, who called the early Muslims to prayer, and was referred to
> by the Prophet as 'the first fruit of Abyssinia'"[29].

Since Muhammad's nursemaid, Baraka Umm Ayman, had been an Ethiopian woman, and he had been brought up by his maternal grandfather Abdal Muttalib, it is obvious that the Prophet was not unfamiliar with the Abyssinian country. A number of Abyssinians were living as slaves or as former slaves and traders in Mecca. Bilal ibn Rabah, one of Muhammad's first converts, a freed slave of Abyssinian origin who had been born in Mecca, was only one of them. In addition, the

> "number of Ethiopic words in the Qur'an shows that Muhammad himself must have
> been in contact with the Axumite traders, artisans, and soldiers resident in Mecca"[30].

The Quraish, who were both economically and politically the ruling tribe in Mecca, were not in favor of Muhammad's message, since he preached against the adoration of many gods and unjust practices. Muhammad and his followers were then persecuted, because they were considered a threat to the Quraish dominance. Since he was sympathetic for Christianity and Abyssinia when looking for a place for refuge - for himself he later found sanctuary in Medina - he called his followers and told them, according to the Muslim tradition;

> "Over there lies a country where no one is wronged. Go there, and stay there until it
> pleases the Lord to open the way for you!"[31].

In the fifth year of his call (615), the first refugees and the Prophet's most trusted supporters made their way to Axum. This is recalled by Muslims as the Axumite *hijra*, i.e. emigration. The king of Axum (according to Ethiopian historiography king Armah and according to Arabian tradition *Najāshī*[32]) gave them asylum, even though the Quraish sent messengers

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[29] Pankhurst, Trade, 1, 3. It would be of considerable value to unfold a history of Abyssinians / Ethiopians who lived in todays South Arabia and Yemen in relation to Chrisitan-Muslim Relations.

[30] Trimingham, ib., 44, n. 1. Relations to Abyssinia mentioned in the Qur'an could be further elaborated.

[31] Pankhurst, Ethiopia, 52. Trimingham, ib., quoting Ibn Hisham, *Sīra* (Cairo edn. 1937).

[32] It remains still under discussion amongst Muslims and Christians, whether the king (name: Ashama ibn Abjar) converted to Islam or not. Beside of a painting, no historical evidence has been found as a proof. See Trimingham, ib., 45, n. 1 and 46, n. 2 and 4; Hiskett, Course, 137.

who came with costly presents in order to demand the deportation of the refugees. The king listened to both parties and decided that the Muslims, who explained their faith by using partly Christian images[33] not unfamiliar to the religion of the Abyssinians, could stay. To the messengers he replied;

> "Even if you were to offer me a mountain of gold, I would not surrender these
> people who have sought refuge with me"[34].

These Muslims stayed for a certain time until most of them returned. Very few of them converted to the Christian faith and stayed in Abyssinia. One of those who returned to Muhammad was Umm Habiba[35], the ex-wife of 'Ubaid Allah b. Jahsh, who converted from Islam to Christianity. She later married Muhammad. It is said that the Abyssinian king provided a dowry for this wedding[36]. It remains unclear if she converted. However, she told the Prophet of the beauty of Abyssinia's most important worship place, the church of St. Mary of Seyon[37].

Such good relations are concentrated in a statement of Muhammad which he gave to his followers as instructions, as based on a particular *hadith*;

> "'Leave the Abyssinians in peace … so long as they do not take the offensive'"[38].

He therefore created, beside the *dar al-Islam* (realm or abode of Islam) and the *dar al-harb* (realm or abode of war) or *jihad* for the unbelievers beyond the borders of Islamic countries, a third realm, the *dar al-hiyat*[39] (realm or abode of neutrality) for Abyssinia. Indeed, Abyssinia had not been conquered during the early Muslim expansion with its fast spread of Islam to Syria and Egypt. The 16th century' *jihad* in Abyssinia and Egypt's attempt on gaining a foothold in Abyssinia in the 19th century have to be judged on the ground of this *hadith*. However, still in present time the *hadith* is respected by Arab nations and Ethiopia remained mainly untouched[40].

When in the year 698;

> "Abyssinian pirates raided and sacked Jidda and caused such a scare in Mecca that
> the Muslims were forced into taking active measures against them … [and] in order

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[33] Trimingham, ib. 45.

[34] Pankhurst, ib.

[35] Zwemer, 11f.

[36] Pankhurst, ib.

[37] Trimingham, ib., 46, n.1; Zwemer, Islam 11f.

[38] Ib., 46, see n. 3 for the source. "*utruku al-habasha ma tarakukum*". This *hadith* is not found in the two main collections of *hadith*, but in two other collections. Even if Muhammad did not say so, it was an accepted idea amongst Muslims.

[39] PS 1.3.7.6. b): "dar-al-hiyat' meaning neutral land, where Islam is not to intervene".

[40] Haggai, Ethiopia, 637f. During the period of Pan-Arabism, many Arab nations did not want to conquer or touch Ethiopia. There was never that much interest in Ethiopia because of this *hadith*. Ethiopia was "left alone".

to protect the Red Sea commerce … [they] occupied the Dahlak archipelago … Thus Islam established the first bridgehead which was to lead to the occupation of other coastal bases and the gradual penetration of Islam into East Africa"[41].

The seventh century and the rise of Islam have been postulated by historians[42] as a "turning point" in the history and in relations between peoples of the Horn of Africa and the Arabs. It caused a division between the inhabitants of southern Arabia and Abyssinia into different and antagonistic religions. The declaration of the "realm of neutrality", the "*utruku al-Habasha*", caused an "Ignoration-Syndrome" that led to the isolation of Abyssinia and the Muslims. It was for a time cut off from the powers that once made it strong. Besides some attempts at expansion in the southern regions, Abyssinia remained in the mountain districts of Tigrai[43].

The Muslim's occupation of the Dahlak archipelago prepared the way for a slow but steady infiltration into the coastal areas of the Horn of Africa, which then moved more and more inland and created settlements along the trade routes between the coastal areas and south of Abyssinia proper, and later led to the establishment of Islamic principalities and sultanates, as shall be shown in the next period.

1.1.4. The expansion of Ethiopian Islam until the 15th century

a) 7th – 11th century

The spread of Islam into Abyssinia was mainly connected with commerce across the Red Sea and The Gulf of Aden. The Ummayad dynasty[44] took control over the Red Sea trade route by strengthening their outposts on the Dahlak islands as well as from Zayla southwards at the end of the seventh and at the beginning of the eighth century. Muslim Arabs from Yemen and the Hijaz (today's Saudi Arabia) acted as traders and preachers and Islam spread inland from the northern coast (Dahlak) and the southern point (Zayla, which grew more and more in importance for the spread[45]).

"The immediate consequences of these activities were the founding of commercial settlements and the conversion of the local people in increasing numbers"[46].

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[41] Trimingham, 46f. See Hiskett, Course, 137: „It [the Dahlak archipelago] later developed into an important Islamic sultanate that reached its cultural apogee from the 11th cent. To about 1250 after which it began to decline".
[42] Pankhurst, Let's look, III, 2-3; Trimingham, ib., 42 (heading).
[43] Trimingham, ib., 47f.
[44] Ib. 47, n. 1.
[45] Hiskett, ib. 137.
[46] H. Ahmed, Wallo, 56f.

The inhabitants of the coastline area (Dankali, Somali, Afar), and the vast semi-desert area between the coast and the edge of the Abyssinian plateau[47] were mainly pastoral people (nomads) and non-Christians. Islam spread amongst them, because Muslim traders and with them preachers operated freely even throughout the Christian kingdom[48]. These Muslim communities and traders were tributary to the Christian empire[49]. In the 9th century, the Abyssinian kingdom must have regained prosperity in the wider area and controlled even the coast areas including Dahlak in the year 872[50]. In 889 strong commercial relations with Iraq and Yemen brought many Arab traders to Abyssinia[51]. A treaty of friendship existed between Abyssinia and Yemen around 935[52]. By this time;

> "there had come into existence viable and well-organized Muslim communities in eastern Shawa. The founding of the Makhzumi dynasty of Shawa … was a result of this rapid progress"[53].

The establishment of this dynasty was i.a. a result of the lucrative slave trade[54], which contributed to the diffusion of Islam, since conversion was a means to escape slavery[55]. The shipment of slaves, not unknown in the previous centuries-old trade relations[56], flourished in the tenth and eleventh centuries, outnumbering many thousands[57]. Arabs came along the trade routes and market places to collect Abyssinian and Nubian slaves, because they had the reputation of being beautiful and submissive. Since there was a huge demand for slaves in Arabia, India and elsewhere, the slave markets grew. The traders meanwhile established good relations with the local population, placed their agents at the settlements, encouraged by local officials and leaders who even protected them because of the profitable commerce. Among these agents were also *Sufi* preachers traveling inwards with missionary zeal. These preachers and Muslim residents (immigrant families) at the small trading settlements had an impact on the local population and were the main contributors to the spread of Islam. The 10th century saw the rise of some influential Muslim families or clan groups[58]. One of the pioneers of islamization was Ismail Jabarti (10th/11th century), who reached as far as to the

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[47] Trimingham, ib. 50; mentioning the Beja people at 831 AD.
[48] T. Tamrat, Church, 43.
[49] Hiskett, 137; Trimingham 50f.
[50] Trimingham, ib. 50.
[51] T. Tamrat, ib. 44.
[52] Pankhurst, Let's look, III, 3.
[53] H. Ahmed, ib. 57; also Trimingham ib., 58, dates the existence at around 896/7.
[54] Trimingham, ib. 61.
[55] Ullendorf, HABASH, 2.
[56] Pankhurst, ib. IV, 2, gives the year 575 as the earliest date that could be proved.
[57] Pankhurst, Medieval, 1, 3.
[58] Hiskett, ib., 137f.

Awash-river. He claimed to be a descendant of Muhammad and became a famous saint with high veneration among the population. It had been such preachers who adapted the local customs and traditional religious features and combined them with Islam. This syncretism resulted in a successful expansion of religious Islam. However;

> "complete freedom of worship was not granted to the Muslims within the Christian provinces"[59].

Both, the slave trade and the propagation of Islam by foreign and indigenous clerics at trading centres formed an organic unity. The establishment of small states and sultanates and the indirect control of these areas by Muslims created Islamic bridgeheads and established Islam as a political[60] and religious factor in the Horn of Africa from the eleventh century on. A long struggle between the rising power of Islam and the Abyssinian Christians began.

b) 12th – 15th centuries

The Fatimid caliphate with almost absolute power in Egypt in 969 shifted the centre of gravity of Islam from the region of ancient Mesopotamia to the delta of the river Nile. Islam in Ethiopia profited from this development, but grew particularly militant after the tenth century[61]. The steady revival of the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia was a side-effect of the rapid expansion of Islam[62]. Around 1150, an expansionist Christian dynasty known as Zagwe emerged and lasted until 1270. It set up diplomatic relations with Sultan Saladin of Egypt[63]. The Fatimids protected the Muslim inland traders. Since the orthodox metropolitan of Ethiopia was an Egyptian candidate, the Fatimids also interfered in the actual selection. The influence of Egypt therefore was strong on the development of Islam in Ethiopia. However, it did not constitute a crucial factor, since the economic strength was their own[64].

It was a parallel development of both a leading and governing expansion especially into the south by the Christian kingdom, and the growing of Islam and Muslim principalities, whereas the latter remained as a second-rate power under Christian control[65];

> "The period from the twelfth to the fourteenth century was one of further expansion mainly in the areas south and west of the Awash basin leading to the emergence of a series of Muslim principalities such as Ifat, Dawaro, Bali and Hadya"[66].

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[59] T. Tamrat, ib. 44.
[60] Ib., 43, the conversion of the Gbbah (jubbah, eventually the Argobba), most probably by people of an Islamic sultanate of the eastern Shawa plateau in the Harar region, at the end of the year 1108, shows that Islam was becoming an important political factor in the area. See Trimingham, ib., 62; Hiskett, ib. 138f.
[61] Hiskett, ib., 136.
[62] T. Tamrat, ib., 44f.
[63] Hiskett, ib.; Trimingham, ib., 55, dates it at 1137.
[64] T. Tamrat, ib. 46.50.
[65] Ib., 53.

By 1270 the Salomonid dynasty with Yekuno Amlak had arisen with another period of expansion[67]. The Shawan sultanate was overthrown in 1285 and absorbed by Ifat (1285-1445), one of seven other Islamic sultanates of Abyssinia[68], under the Walasma dynasty, which became the focus of Islamic expansion in Abyssinia. The second most important sultanate was that of Adal on the Dankali and Somali coast, connected to Zayla[69] and at times part and later absorbent of the state of Ifat. The Dawaro kingdom, west of Ifat (today's Arsi region) bordered to the Bali sultanate, and the Hadiya state was the most westerly Muslim principality. All these sultanates stood in a war of attrition along the eastern and southern fringes of the Abyssinian plateau[70]. The interest of the Muslims in the south was due to the commercial riches of those areas. Since the Christian expansion strived in the same southern direction, a long struggle for control of southern Abyssinia began[71]. Therefore the 12th century saw an;

"active Muslim proselytization in southern Ethiopia"[72].

Emperor 'Amda Sion (1314-1344) attacked Ifat in 1328 and defeated it and afterwards Hadiya, Fatajara and Dawaro, who became tributary to Abyssinia[73]. This happened due to the lack of political cohesion and communication problems of the sultanates.

"Victory brought mass conversions to Christianity in its wake; many monasteries and churches were founded at that time"[74].

Politically all people of Abyssinia were subordinated to the Abyssinian empire until 1529, which controlled them through military colonists and soldiers. Around 1400 Muslim communities grew up in and around Harar, whereto the power centre of the sultanate of Adal has shifted in the 15th century. After the defeat by Amda Sion the so-called Zayla-confederation consisted of seven states, namely Ifat, Dawaro, Arababui, Hadiya, Sharkha, Bale and Dara.

During the climax of the Christian empire under emperor Yeshak (1413/14-1429/30) and Ya'qob (1434-68)[75], the Harar plateau was partly controlled and the Christian empire advanced as far as Zayla. But the colonists and soldiers only controlled pockets and never

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[66] H. Ahmed, ib. 57.
[67] Hiskett, ib.; Trimingham, ib., 57.
[68] Trimingham, ib., 62, recorded by the Arab writer al-'Umari, during the first half of the 14th century; Hiskett, ib. 139.
[69] Trimingham, ib., 66-69.76. See general description on the Muslim sultanate.
[70] Ullendorf, ib., 3.
[71] T. Tamrat, ib. 51f.
[72] Ib., 52.
[73] Trimingham, ib., 71.
[74] Ullendorf, ib.; Trimingham, ib., 72, gives the example of the Zeway lake's island monastery.
[75] Trimingham, ib., 75.

endangered the Islamic position connected to trade in the east. Adal was ruled 1480 by the *Amir* Mahfuz. It constantly pressed by attacks against the Christian frontiers.

This period saw the earliest outbreak of conflicts with the medieval Christian kingdom, concentrated mostly on the control of trade and commerce. The parallelism between the Christian and Islamic expansions is striving, and confrontations were unavoidable. The struggle between them was not a war of religion, but of political predominance. The Muslims were mostly tributaries to the Christian empire, but in their own arena their independence, based on their economic backbone, was not seriously endangered and challenged.

Even if it seems that Islam appeared only as a political factor, one should not take out of consideration the spread of religious Islam that contributed much to the creation of new cultural patterns, as was seen with Ismail Jabarti. The absence of more data on how Islam spread among the people should not lead to the opinion that it was not deeply entrenched.

The late fifteenth century then witnessed the arrival of Vasco da Gama 1499 at Mogadishu. The Portuguese entered the scene, landed in 1517 at Zayla, burnt it, and established their own control along the seaboard of the Horn of Africa. In the same year the Ottomans took Cairo, from where they started to challenge the Portuguese. A new world-wide power struggle began, which affected Abyssinia and the Muslims leading probably to its most sincere confrontation never seen before or afterwards.

1.1.5. The 16th century and the *jihad* led by Ahmad ibn Ibrahim

The arrival of the Portuguese and Ottomans in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region, and with them fire-arms, cannons and matchlock men, enforced the antagonism between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. The control of trade routes gave motivations to bitterly violent confrontations and rivalries.

The Abyssinian Empire acquired a vast territory with outlying Muslim regions bound to the king by a certain loyalty and by paying tributes. The king had trouble maintaining control along the borders of Muslim regions, in which Muslim governors were appointed but were relatively independent. Under *Amir* Mahfuz, ruler of the port of Zayla and later of Adal, Adal was pressing constantly against the Abyssinian borders and Muslim raids were carried out continuously[76]. When he had been killed in 1516, Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Gazi, his son-in-law, nicknamed Ahmad Gragn, because he was a left-hander, arose. He drew Somalis and others

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[76] Trimingham, ib., 82.

together into the sultanate of Adal and consolidated his forces. He intensified the annual slave raids previously practiced by his father-in-law;

"The looting of slaves, gold, and their dispatch to Yemen, was militarily important to Imam Ahmad, for it helped him purchase a small, but invaluable, number of cannon, as well as many rifles and swords"[77].

The religious title *Imam*, i.e. prayer leader, in Abyssinia used to denote "the elected one"[78], besides the feudal title *Amir*, should support functionally his military and political ambitions by adding religious authority. This enabled him to declare *jihad*, i.e. "Holy War", the duty to spread Islam by force, against the offending Christians in a long awaited vacuum. The motives are difficult to explain. On one side there were internal problems, two parties in the Harar state, one militaristic, one aristocratic, who were struggling with each other[79]. In the story of Ahmad's campaigns, told by his Yemeni scribe known as 'Arab Faqih in his chronicle "Futuh al-Habasa", i.e. literally "Conquest of Abyssinia", written around 1559, the *Imam* was described as a keeper of the path of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna* against forbidden and illicit acts[80], and as a ruler who saw to it;

"that truth prevailed and corruption ceased"[81].

It remains unclear, if religious Islam was misused by Gragn to strengthen his military and political aspirations, or how much it was integral to his belief. The main motive and aim of Gragn, however, as seen among many historians;

"was to root out and destroy Christianity in the area and to end the Solomonid monarchy"[82].

Gragn enjoyed the support of well-armed military volunteers from Mahra in South Arabia and recruited soldiers from Yemen[83]. The *jihad* firstly saw border raids, then Gragn penetrated further into the Christian Empire, seized its territory and appointed Muslim governors[84]. In 1529 he defeated king Lebna Dengel in a battle at Shembera Kore and occupied the Shawan plateau. During the conquest almost all of the old Christian empire fell into his hands. Brutal raids, including shipments of slaves, killings and an indescribable

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[77] Pankhurst, Let's look, V, 3f.
[78] Trimingham, ib., 80.
[79] Ib., 80f.
[80] Sihab, Futuh, 10.
[81] Ib. 16.
[82] Abbink, Historical, 114.
[83] Pankhurst, ib., VI, 1.
[84] Hiskett, ib., 141.

account of destruction of churches, monasteries, church properties and the like accompanied this *jihad*[85]. Mass conversions, at times forceful, took place, but were not continuous.

The Portuguese, who were called for help by the Empress Helena firstly in 1509[86], and later in 1535[87], finally arrived in 1541 under Christopher da Gama with about 400 men by landing at Massawa. They engaged Gragn, who in turn called the Ottomans for support and with it he first drew the Portuguese back. But in 1543, the rest of the European invaders (about 200), together with king Galawdewos marched against *Imam* Ahmad, and at Wayna-Daga near Lake Tana, the battle ended for him with his life[88].

After he was killed and his army defeated, the Adal state rapidly fell apart, and the Christians recovered most of the territories[89]. Even though the successor of Gragn, Nur ibn al-Mujahid continued fighting until his death in 1568, he was not successful[90]. The defeat was a dramatic set-back for the Muslims, who never recovered fully. The coast-area Muslims and settlements remained strong, mainly due to the presence of the Ottomans who occupied Massawa in 1557[91]. However;

> "until the late eighteenth century the power of the Muslims of the interior declined"[92].

Feudalism returned and regional loyalties were reestablished. Harar was slowly dying and in no state to resist the forthcoming Oromo incursions[93]. In the aftermath of the *jihad* which left both Christians and Muslims exhausted, the Oromo expansion from the south from about 1540 on arrested the re-orientation of Muslims. The Oromo were heading north and then stretched to the East and West. They absorbed the existing conditions and people both ethnically and culturally. Even the religious absorption slowly has taken place. The assimilation of tribes like the Bali, Arsi, Hadiya-Sidama and Harari into their own cultural system (oromocization) later gave room for the islamization of them, another major feature of the centuries to come.

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[85] Sihab, ib., XVII (Pankhurst): "included the conversion to Islam, albeit in many cases only temporary … the virtual collapse of the traditional Christian Ethiopian empire … heavy loss of life, by combatants and civilians alike; the capture, and despatch to Arabia (and also to India) of innumerable slaves … quantities of gold … for the purchase of fire-arms and other weapons".
[86] Trimingham ib., 82f.
[87] Ib., 87.
[88] Ib., 89.
[89] Hiskett, ib., 141.
[90] Trimingham, ib., 91; Abbink, ib., 114.
[91] Ib., 92.
[92] Hiskett, ib., 142.
[93] Trimingham, ib., 95-98.

The *jihad* constituted the second major turning-point in the history of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa[94]. The roots of the conflict had been once again the control of trade with its importance for economic growth and political survival[95]. The power play of the European Portuguese and the Ottomans brought this conflict into a wider tension and may have nurtured the spirit of radical and brutal *jihad* and the readiness to put it into practice by violent means. The consequences of this war were immense. They;

> "long shaped the Christian perception of Muslims as the 'danger from within'"[96],

and led to a "Gragn-trauma"[97] or "the Gragn-syndrome"[98] with the Christians, i.e. the view that Muslims and Islam represented a permanent threat to Christianity in Ethiopia. This trauma or syndrome due to the fact that the *jihad* failed, may have remained also with the Muslims[99].

Conversions to Islam and later to Christianity were not seriously religiously motivated, but grew out of political and functional reasons. They created a back-and-forth shoving, and therefore a tendency of superfluous and at times superficial adherence to religion, i.e. the ability to change from one to another religion by keeping a certain stable form of general or traditional religiousness.

But what did the failure of the *jihad* create in the minds of Muslims, and what did it contribute to the development of Islam in Ethiopia? The failure of *jihad* with its political aspiration was severe. A process of isolation and concentration on survival, the paradox being of *dhimmis*, i.e. normally people under Muslim protection in Islamic states, but in Abyssinia and its vicinity ironically protected Muslims under Christian governance, began. The keeping of tradition and identity in remote and hidden places may have started here. This may have developed into resistance and reinforcement centers or sub-centers. Islam then grew stronger from his inner motivations and religious strengths. The effects of the conquest and re-conquest leading to a permanent control of Abyssinian Christians, still needs further research[100], even in psychological and socio-religious terms.

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[94] Sihab, ib., XVII (Pankhurst).

[95] Pankhurst, History of trade, 7: Trade was largely monopolized by Muslims. Abyssinia established a "religious division of labour in which the dominant Christian population tended to shun trade". Christians were not or only partly allowed to go to the Arabian sea-ports, thus prevented from access to the ports and main trade centers. Therefore, Christians were seldom experts in merchandising, and Muslims were more welcomed in matters of commerce.

[96] Abbink, ib.

[97] Erlich, Cross, 204f.

[98] Erlich, Ethiopia, 636.

[99] Erlich, Cross, ib.

[100] Trimingham, ib., 89-91.

1.1.6.   The 17th and 18th centuries and the steady expansion of Ethiopian Islam

abide of the set-back after the defeat of Gragn;

> "Islam made remarkable progress in the north/central plateau while the Christian
> state was faced with internal problems, mainly the decline of the central authority of
> the monarchy"[101].

During the time of internal religious strife the Christians had with the latinizing Jesuits as remnants of the Portuguese intervention, who were later expelled[102], Islam began to recover its equilibrium[103]. Abyssinia and Yemen again entered political relations in the early 17th century[104]. Both countries opposed to the Ottoman Turks and their naval power in the Red Sea[105], and were looking for ways to reengage in trade relations via a new port called Baylul. A letter of correspondence from 1642-1651/2, in which both rulers had different interests, gives testimony about these developments. The Yemenis thought that emperor Fasiladas would convert to Islam[106]. Fasiladas moved the imperial capital to Gondar, and the emperor's policy;

> "was one of tolerance vis-à-vis Muslim traders and middlemen, but also reservations
> against employing them in important positions in the Christian-dominated state
> service and in the army"[107].

Emperor Yohannes I became famous for his initiative of calling a church council in 1668 to promulgate an edict of religious discrimination, in which he declared that;

> "Muslims, who could not be expelled because they were an essential part of the
> economic life of the country, were forbidden to live with Christians and must inhabit
> separate villages or separate quarters in the towns"[108].

Treated in a similar way like the Jews in Europe, the long established principle of urban separation resulted in the official ghettoization of the Muslims (and the Jewish *Felasha*) in Gondar[109]. Renewed in 1678 the decrees made it impossible for Muslims to own land, the hereditary land-right called *rist*, which was a core element of Abyssinian Christian culture

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[101] H. Ahmed, ib., 59.

[102] Trimingham, ib., 100: "Further attempts on the part of Rome to send Fench Capuchins caused Fasiladas to make an agreement in 1648 with the pashas of Sawakin and Massawa' to execute all priests who tried to enter the country". This may have affected the fate of Peter Heyling, the first German envoy of the Gospel to Ethiopia, when he was killed in Suakin (Sawakin), according to some historical accounts, in 1652.

[103] Trimingham, ib., 99-101.

[104] Pankhurst, Let's look, VI, 1.

[105] Hiskett, ib., 142.

[106] Pankhurst, ib.

[107] Abbink, ib., 114.

[108] Trimingham, ib., 102. Also Pankhurst, Muslim, 118.

[109] Pankurst, ib., 120: „The Muslim settlement at Gondar consisted … of about 3,000 houses … [and] a few thousand families".

among the people of Amhara and Tigray, and therefore they were not able to become active in agriculture[110]. The anti-Islamism tendency left the Muslims to concentrate again on commerce and handicraft. A close relation between subjected people in Abyssinia, like the Falasha, Sidama, Oromo, Shanqela, and others, bound by social ostracism, evolved, and was bridged by Islam;

> "Islam caused a slow social and religious fermentation amongst these peoples"[111].

As Gondar brought timely centralization, the regions with their slow decay made their own ways towards separation. The period of the regional sovereigns from 1769-1855 replaced the Gondarine central authority[112]. Islam gained political importance under regional dynasties. Meanwhile, in the course of the 18th century, Islam gained a foothold among the Oromo[113], and Islamic Oromo provincial lords in Wollo, Warra Himano and Yajju (northern Abyssinia) grew particularly strong[114]. The Oromo kept their identity, while penetrating the highlands and adopting Islam during the 18th century[115].

All these three elements, social discrimination, the evolvement of sub-group identities, and a growing opposition to the ruling classes, combined with Islam and partly oromoization, brought to the fore a new culture which grew in resistance forces. An extensive and commercially important network of Muslim towns existed in the 18th century[116]. The *Sufi*-orders, which had begun to reach Ethiopia at this time, i.e. the 18th century, influenced the course of Islam in Ethiopia. The Muslim communities, in matters of religious law, were accorded autonomy[117]. The mainstream policy of coexistence;

> "was maintained with minor modifications until the reign of Emperor Tewodros (r.
> 1855-1868), who tried to restore authority after a period of disunity in the so called
> 'Era of Princes' where regional lords were quasi-independent"[118].

1.1.7. The 19th century and Menelik II's campaign (1800-1935)

The last centuries with their process of disintegration and separation carried out by the Christian empire since the emergence of the imperial state, accumulated in the persisting problem of national integration[119], i.e;

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[110] Abbink, ib.
[111] Trimingham, ib., 103.
[112] For the „Era of Princes", see M. Abir, Ethiopia.
[113] Hiskett, ib., 142.
[114] Abbink, ib., 115, see also for other settlements; H. Ahmed, ib., 59.
[115] Trimingham, ib., 107.
[116] Pankhurst, ib., 118.
[117] Abbink, ib. 114.
[118] Ib., 115.

"central monarchial rule and its extension over steadily increasing areas with diverse religious and ethnocultural groups increased the challenge of a unitary discourse and an overarching national identity. This issue was never resolved but only controlled and managed, with violent means if need be"[120].

The empire as a confederation of principalities with a "king of kings" at its head was a functioning system against the Solomonid's centralization. Backboned by the commercial dominance and monopoly of the slave trade, Muslims increased the spread of Islam and the growing number of Muslim settlements and markets did much underpin the entire Abyssinian system of commerce[121].

Supported by the Islamic revival in counter-reaction to the Western imperialism, through the influence of Wahhabism at the beginning of the 19th century[122], and the expansion of mystical orders both in central and southern Abyssinia[123] gave in different ways stimulating effects on Islam in the Horn of Africa. It led in Sudan to a fanatical Mahdist revolt led by M. Ahmad who declared himself being the *Mahdi* in 1881 (Mahdism, Mahdiyya)[124].

The period of regionalism and a level of anarchy resulted in numerous conversions[125] amongst the tribal people, but moreover amongst the Oromo, who reinforced their independence during the 18th and 19th centuries by largely adopting Islam. The Oromo of the eastern highlands (Wollo, Yajju, Raya) and in the Harar region expanded at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, whereas the Oromo of south-western Abyssinia (Jimma, Gira, Gomma, Limmu Enarya, Guma) and those of the south and west (Arusi, Borana, Leqa) increased beginning from 1850 onwards[126].

The change in the political scenery;

"began in 1853 when the Muslim-Galla [old name, today not longer tolerated] supremacy was brought to an end by Kasa … [who] once more reunited Abyssinia, and, breaking with the Solomonid tradition, became the king of kings as Theodore III in 1855"[127].

Tewodros (1855-1868) and later Yohannes IV (1872-1889) attempted to formally proscribe the practice of Islamic religion ready to use forced mass conversion to Christianity in order to

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[119] Trimingham, ib., 106.
[120] Abbink, ib., 115.
[121] Pankhurst, ib., 122f.130.
[122] Trimingham, ib., 112.116f.
[123] H. Ahmed, ib., 59.
[124] Trimmingham, ib., 117.123f.
[125] Hiskett, ib., 143.
[126] Trimingham, ib., 109.
[127] Ib., 108.

achieve national unity. When Tewodros failed in his attempts to convert the Muslims by force, he issued a decree in 1864 declaring that all Muslim who would not convert were rebels[128]. Yohannes;

> "1878 after his Shoan expedition he called a council of the Church at Borumieda (north of Dessie) to try to settle the doctrinal disputes … [and] promulgated an edict … [that] non-Ethiopian Christians, Muslims, Jews, Galla, Qamant, and pagans were ordered to join the national Church … [but] such enforced conversions was merely to increase the hatred of Galla and Muslims for the Christians"[129].

The resistance of Muslims, Oromo and others enforced the formation process of new diffusion centers in Oromo and lowland areas.

In the wider region of the Horn of Africa the Turco-Egyptian conquest of Sudan brought an political Egyptian influence under Muhammad 'Ali along the coast areas, which also brought the Western colonist powers, the British, Italian, and French, into the plan[130]. A new international power struggle evolved. The Egyptians occupied Harar in 1875 and held it until 1884/85. This had a major effect on the spread of Islam, especially among the south-eastern Oromo.

> "Fekis were encouraged to travel in all directions to teach the social discipline of Islam, and the performance of the Islamic prayer was made obligatory under penalty of confiscation of property"[131].

The Abyssinians meanwhile were under Egyptian pressure and did not recover until the coming of emperor Menelik II in 1889. When he firstly restored a nominally religious freedom and political independence in 1889, it did not take long to discover that he had another strategy for unification in store. The conquests from 1883-1935 brought an extensive expansion of Abyssinia, now, after the borders had been secured internationally, to be called Ethiopia[132]. He again decided for centralization. The Muslim and pagan regions were reincorporated into the Ethiopian empire, but not without opposition.

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[128] Ib., 118, n. 1: Tewodros believed in "an old prophecy that a king of that [i.e. Tewodros] name would appear to destroy Islam and reconquer Jerusalem"; Abbink, ib., 115.
[129] Trimingham, ib., 122f.: "The attempt to impose a religion by political means always fails unless it is backed up by genuine religious feeling", ib.
[130] Hiskett, ib., 142; Trimmingham, ib., 124f.
[131] Trimingham, ib., 121.
[132] Ib., 126, see map, and descriptions 127-129. Hiskett, ib., 144: "The independence of Ethiopia had been formally recognised by the League of Nations in 1923".

> "His campaign was carried out with substantial help from the European powers, especially Britain … to subdue the several Islamic enclaves, mainly in the Harar region, that resisted this Christian initiative"[133].

Together with the centralization came the amharization. Muslim chiefs were forced by coercion to accept Christianity and by adoption of Amharic names. Much land called *gabar* previously held by Muslims was distributed to Christian-Amharic settlers or colonists called *naftanjas*, or to the Orthodox Church. Military colonies were established at important centers, and territories with their trade routes were secured militarily. Local people were subdued ideologically under this Amharic-Christian umbrella[134].

> "The 'christianization' campaign provoked a number of Islamic '*jihads*' against Menelik from the end of the nineteenth century AD onwards"[135].

The underground-resistance, nurtured over the last centuries and decades, now consolidated by Islam, was directed actively against the Christian overlords. Finally, the revolts emerged into the Italian invasion of 1935, which brought a timely end to Haile Selassie's reign, which shall be seen in the next period.

Islam in Ethiopia had no defining but a partly contributing role in the formation of national identity, even with substantial contributions in sub-national and regional identities[136]. However, in Christian-ruling eyes they remained second-class people, even though some restrictions on them were lifted.

> "Islam was recognized in the south-western Muslim kingdoms which, with the exception of Jimma Abba Jifar, were organized as provinces. Muslims were not interfered within the exercise of their religion, and Islamic courts were recognized as part of the juridical structure"[137].

1.1.8. The 20th century with the reign of Haile Selassie and the Provisional Military Administrative Council (Derg) until 1991

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[133] Hiskett, ib., 144.

[134] Ib.; Trimingham, ib., 129, n.

[135] Abbink, ib., 115, see the Arsi Oromo described here as a case point, ib., 116: "The Arssi Oromo … seen by Emperor Minilik first as a target of huge cattle raids in the early 1880s, their country was conquered in a violent campaign, during which the Arssi – who until then had had their own traditional religion – came to identify 'Christianity' … with looting, cruelty, gross injustice and oppression. In their search for an overarching collective identity beyond their local belief system, Islam was attractive, as it forged links with groups further removed from them (Somali) but known to have a tradition of successful armed resistance to invading foes"; see Trimingham, ib., 127. For other examples of resistance see Hiskett, 144.

[136] Here against Abbink, ib., 116.

[137] Trimingham, ib., 129.

Paralyzed in 1907, Menelik appointed his grandson Lij Iyasu to be his successor, which had been officially proclaimed in 1909, when he was 11 years old. He adopted Islam openly by dressing and other customs, being the son of a Muslim lord of Wollo who converted to Christianity. He built mosques at Dire Dawa and Jijiga.

> "In 1916 he officially placed Abyssinia in religious dependence upon Turkey …
> entered into negotiations with Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah, the Mahdi of the Ogaden
> … issued summons to all Somalis … to follow him in a *jihad* against the Christians
> … [until] the *abuna* declared Menelik's daughter Zawditu empress, with Ras Tafari,
> son of Ras Makonnen, as regent and heir to the throne"[138].

Lij Iyasu tried to integrate Muslims into the Ethiopian nation-state-building process. However, his sympathy with Islam was not acceptable to the Christian empire.

In 1930 after Zawditu died, Tafari ascended the throne as king of kings under the throne name of Haile Selassie. He abolished the former decrees and proclaimed religious liberty[139]. Muslims were, however, excluded from official public posts and political life. They lived under a formal but simple tolerance, while;

> "social prejudice, however, tended to make the position of Muslims under Ethiopian
> rule inferior to that of the Christians … [but they] can acquire land in most parts;
> they hold important positions in all regions where Islam is the predominant
> religion"[140].

During the Italian occupation (1936-1941) Muslims were encouraged to actively participate in social and political matters. Italians supported Muslim leaders financially, built mosques for them, and *Qadis*, i.e. jurors, were appointed. Arabic was introduced into all Muslim schools. The Italians also ended the *gabbar*-system, which was seen as a great liberation in rural areas[141]. However, the Italians were driven out of Ethiopia after the British General Wavell's East African campaign (1939-1940), and Hayle Sellasie was restored to power in 1941[142].

Haile Selassie continued his policy of a repressive tolerance, which only partially granted some rights to the Muslims, from 1941-1974[143]. When he abrogated the Federal Constitution

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[138] Ib., 131f.; Abbink, ib., 116.
[139] Trimingham, ib., 135f.
[140] Ib., 136.
[141] Abbink, ib., 117.
[142] Hiskett, ib. 147.
[143] Abbink, ib., 117. See also the Arsi case, 116: In Arsi, Haile Selelassie's "conquest sowed the seeds of the failure of the modern Ethiopian nation-state project, despite 40 years of tactical manoeuvring by Emperor Haile Sellassie … (r. [reigned] 1930-1974) to develop a modern, inclusivist state drawing in the different ethnic groups under a programme of Amharization".

and annexed Eritrea in 1962 as a province of Ethiopia, especially the Eritrean Muslims launched armed struggles and brought a civil war. Together with a famine this conflict brought to an end his reign and he was overthrown and captured in 1974, where he probably died in 1975[144].

The Provisional Military Administrative Council (Derg) brought about some changes during their socialist-republic and military regime, based on Marxist-Leninist principles, from 1974-1991.

The Marxist one-party state was led beginning from 1977 by Mengistu Haile Mariam. He continued the fights with the Eritrean nationalists, who brought him to an end in 1991, when his regime was overthrown by the rebel movement, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and he was replaced by the present Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

> "For the first time the Muslims were allowed to call themselves 'Ethiopian Muslims' instead of the traditional 'Muslims residing in Ethiopia'"[145].

During the Derg-time, there was a general active discouragement of religions in all forms,

> "and both Christianity and Islam were the target of state propaganda and subversion … [but] the deep-rooted religiosity of most Ethiopians was a social factor which could not be ignored by the regime, so it settled for a policy of co-existence and co-option. It rhetorically granted … Islam, a new public status and equal rights, recognized … Islamic religious festivals as public holidays, and tried to give ceremonial recognition to the two communities, e.g. by making their leaders appear at state occasions. But the practical exercise of religion and the social basis of religion among the population at large was discouraged and sidetracked in many ways"[146].

The *hajji* to Mecca, however, was restricted, and all religious activities were closely watched by the regime[147].

1.1.9. The post-1991 time and contemporary Ethiopian Islam

The post-1991 regime liberalized the political, economic and cultural climate of the country, and restored religious freedom largely, but at the cost of political loyalty, making religious leaders often loyalists[148]. Autonomy was but restricted to some ethnic groups. The Amhara

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[144] Hiskett, ib.
[145] Ostebo, Creating, 426.
[146] Abbink, ib., 117.
[147] Ostebo, ib. 426.
[148] Abbink, ib., 118.

dominance was replaced by Tigrayans. Ethnicity dominated politics. The ethnic loyalties among Muslims have always been stronger than religion.

> "As long as ethnic division plays such a vital role, Islam cannot serve as a unifying political force for Muslims in Ethiopia but, instead, will only contribute to further disintegration for both Ethiopia and Islam"[149].

Ethnic identity is therefore the determinant of all aspects of political life in Ethiopia, and recognition of diversity only can lead to unifying and homogenizing tendencies in the future. A good beginning into this direction was made, since with the new government a more pluralistic society developed, both ethnically and religiously[150].

The new Constitution came into force in 1994 declaring the freedom and equality of religions. The freedom included for the Muslims the right to go for the *hajji*, the ritual pilgrimage to Mecca, without restriction of traveling. The freedom put an end to the censorship and lifted the ban on the import of religious texts, especially the *Qur'an*, and enhanced the propagation of religion. The freedom of the press provided an opportunity for the publication of a number of magazines, newspapers, and the like. The magazine "Bilal"[151] started in September 1993 and created an enormous awareness of Ethiopian Muslims, and;

> "the articles in Bilal also stress the ethnic relationship with the Arabic world … [and underlined the] supra-national character of the religion"[152].

The self-confidence of being proud to be an Ethiopian Muslim and the consciousness about the history was strengthened with such publications. Ethiopian Muslims developed the desire to live as Ethiopians with their religion and culture as integral to Ethiopia as that of Christianity.

Muslims started to get involved in political activities in public through demonstrations for example[153].

Contacts with foreign Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Libya and others were developed. Influences from abroad entered the Ethiopian scene, i.e. religious reform movements like the *Wahhabism*, with strong missionary activities. The influence of foreign cultures became visible, like the veiling of the women. Ethiopian Muslims also went abroad

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[149] Ostebo, ib., 440; Abbink brings it with other words to the point: "One is not Muslim or Christian but one is Oromo or Afar Muslim and Amhara or Gurage Christian", ib. 121.

[150] Ib., 427.

[151] Bilal, in Amharic and Arabic languages, was a free Islamic newspaper printed every month in 1993 and 1994, see secondary Amharic sources, periodicals. Unfortunately, a review of the seven numbers of the 1st year, which dealt especially with the history of Islam in Ethiopia cannot be conducted here, since the space is limited.

[152] Ib., 445.

[153] Abbink, ib., 122, mentioned the big demonstration on 28th November 1994.

for religious studies. Vice versa foreign training institutions and scholars from the Middle East took up their work in Ethiopia[154]. A;

> "trans-national religious identity will develop"[155].

The organization of Ethiopian Islam was enforced and many institutions came to the surface, of which the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (SCIA), also called Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC), which was legalized in 1991, is the most important[156]. Within the SCIA internal conflicts between rival fractions developed and in 1992 the leadership of the council was discharged[157]. In a violent incident as a result of internal tensions that took place on February 21, 1995, within the compound of the al-Anwar Mosque in Addis Ababa, nine people were killed. The government quickly intervened. This strengthened the position of the regime's loyalists[158] and caused a strict supervision by the government after its new election. The aim of EIASC was reported to be;

> "to spread Islam to all parts in Ethiopia, by constructing new mosques and Koranic
> schools. This would be in close co-operation with certain Arabic states, such as
> Saudi-Arabia"[159].

The latest developments are showing a growing number of Islamic fundamentalist activities. The fundamentalism debate appeared in Ethiopian newspapers at various times over the last years, and shall be considered in the next section when dealing with the typology of Ethiopian Islam.

1.1.10. Evaluation

The historical overview began with the early relations between the Horn of Africa and Abyssinia with southern Arabia and Yemen, and showed that the relations were of such an extent, that both sides shared their civilizations with one another. The Arabian influence became substantial for the area of today's Ethiopia, that even nowadays Muslims and Christians share a common heritage under the umbrella synonym "Ethiopianism". This nationalism and heritage can serve as a common ground in CMR. Before the rise of Islam both sides remained in a vacuum open to the coming of the higher religions, Christianity and

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[154] Ib., 122.
[155] Ib.
[156] Ostebo, ib., 428, the SCIA has offices in most regions "to co-ordinate the different activities in Muslim society … organizing the hajj, administrating mosques, and establishing Koran schools"; he listed some other institutions; see Schröder, Äthiopien.
[157] Ib., 429.
[158] Abbink, ib., 118.
[159] Ostebo, ib., 430.

Islam, while commercial and political aspirations indicated a continuous power struggle. Political and religious ambitions mixed, resulting in an infrastructure, in which both elements could have been transported. The rise of Islam and the first contacts of Muslims with Abyssinia, which footed on Muhammad's strong relations with the Abyssinians, used this history of relations and the infrastructure. At this turning point the Aksumite *hijra* and the *"utruku al-habasha"* proved to develop long-lasting effects on the history of CMR in Abyssina. It caused the so called "Ignoration syndrome" that gave Abyssina a special status for Muslims and made it a *dar al-hiyat*, a neutral realm. The expansion of Islam until the 15th century therefore happened mainly peacefully and through way of commerce, on which the religious agents of Islam, clerics and *Sufi* preachers and teachers slowly but steadily infiltrated the coastline nations and reached inland to the borders of Abyssinia. With it came the establishment of growing Muslim principalities and the power struggle between them and Abyssinia led to the second turning point in the history of CMR, the Gragn campaign in the 16th century. The "Gragn syndrome" again led to the Christian reception of Islam as of a permanent threat. In the following centuries, therefore, the Abyssinians developed policies which should control the threat, but at the same time the profit through the Muslims commercial activities, an important backbone for the Abyssinian and Ethiopian welfare, had to be used. A balancing but ambivalent relationship developed, in which the Muslims remained a second-class people, who had to suffer restrictions. This situation gave room for the Muslims to develop a sub-existence, in which a network of Muslim centers, which incorporated the religious reform movements with its Islamic teachings, could be developed. It is from this point of view, that Islam in Abyssinia/Ethiopia grew strong from within and created self-confidence, since resistance forces and the sub-existent network moulded it into a strong identity. The Oromo for example played a special role in this transformation periods, since they contributed i.a. to sub-national and regional identities in the 18th and 19th centuries against centralization and amharization. The 20th century saw the process in which the restrictions were lifted gradually, thus giving the Muslims more recognition and, especially in the post-1991 time, the growing freedom to exercise their religion. Relations to other Islamic countries vitalized the old traditional patterns on one side, but led to the coming of reform movements like the fundamentalist Wahhabi from Saudi Arabia, that should criticise just the folk-religious fundament in Ethiopia's Islam, on the other side. However, the Muslims and the Christians continued to exercise their ambivalent relationship, characterized by the "Ignoration syndrome" and the "Gragn trauma". Adherents of both religions live in a *modus vivendi* (arrangement for living together), in which one can tolerate the other, in which both

live in separate but astonishingly similar patterns as shall be seen later, and in which suspicion prevailed. This ambivalent relationship of tolerance and suspicion rests at the very bottom of CMR in Ethiopia and is the most important feature to understand resulting from the historical overview.

1.2. Typological Overview

In the overview of the various forms and appearances of Islam, a guiding line can be traced, which starts from the introduction of Orthodox Islam in its *Sunni* form that includes the schools of law existing in Ethiopia, of which again the *Shafi'yya* with its *shafism* is the most important one. *Sufi-Islam* (*sufism*) as a mystical and revivalist (reformist) expression of the Orthodox Islam appears within the wider frame of *Sunni*-Islam, and with it the various orders, of which again the *Qadiriyya* is the most important one[160]. In almost all cases the lines end up in popular Folk-Islam, which again provokes new fundamentalist and reform movements.

On the other hand, the examination of Islam not from within, but from its outward appearance in the more global, regional and local processes, leads to other major features. The expansionist Islam and with it mainly political-functional schemes, result in the various forms of settlement Islam has taken or is still taking in Ethiopia. The socio-cultural and religious forms of Islam are predominant when Islam settles or is settled.

With all descriptions it should be made clear, that only a rough overview can be given here, to indicate some main features of Ethiopian Islam, which may help to understand Islam in the Ethiopian context.

1.2.1. *Sunni*-Islam (Orthodox Islam) and orthodox scholars (clerics)

a) Most Muslims worldwide follow the *Sunni*[161] form of the religion, and therefore are part of Orthodox Islam with its sense of unity as a universal religious community, i.e. *umma*. Guided in every aspect of daily life by the *Shari'a*, the divine law, *Sunni*-Islam in Ethiopia is widespread;

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[160] It is questionable, if it is possible to separate traditional orthodox Islam from esoteric (sufistic) Islam and to describe the first one as "yet been very weak", see Trimingham, ib., 225. Sufi-Islam understands itself as part of Sunni-Islam, which is simply the greater umbrella for many facets.

[161] From "SUNNA (A.), custom, use and wont, statute … Observance of the sunna might in a way be called: 'Imitatio Muhammadis'", see Gibb, Concise, 552, often understood as traditions of the Prophet.

> "where numerically significant Muslim communities had been well-established, whether in towns or in the countryside"[162].

Since the interaction between the various Muslim communities of Ethiopia has been hindered by geographical, cultural and political factors;

> "there was no opportunity or possibility to nurture and develop a corporate sense of belonging to a national Islamic community"[163].

However, personal interactions through trade, religious festivals, pilgrimages to and visits of local holy places and other, and through the;

> "diffusion of Islamic education offered at well-known Sufi and teaching centres"[164]

were numerous. *Sunni*-Islam was introduced and settled in different ways through traders, scholars and rural Islamic, multi-purpose *Sufi* centers of education[165]. For details on the outward appearance of Orthodox *Sunni* Islam in Ethiopia, regarding religious duties, religious functionaries, religious education, communal and individual life, the position of women, chewing *chat*, Ramadan, pilgrimages, festival celebrations, and many other, a long list can be presented[166]. Orthodox Islam is represented by the agent of the traditional scholar or cleric, who often;

> "had no strong appeal for ordinary men because of his narrow intellectual pursuits and the social distance he maintained between himself and the commoner"[167].

This group of agents forms the traditional Islamic wing of Ethiopian Islam.

b) Schools of law

Unique in itself, probably all four canonical schools of Islamic jurisprudence can be found in Ethiopia, introduced at different times by scholars with formal religious training in the Islamic law.

The *Shafi'iyya* was introduced from Arabia (the Hijaz and Yemen) in the 12th century and;

> "is associated with the ancestors of the Argobba of Ifat. The Muslims of Ifat, Harar,
> Bale and Arsi, and most of the Wallo, are predominantly followers of this school, as

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[162] H. Ahmed, Wollo, 63, citing Trimingham, Ethiopia, 227. See also Trimingham, 225: "The aim of orthodox Islam is the maintaining of Muslim solidarity by the formation of a collective mentality", by outward observance such as prayers, fasting, and the pilgrimage, ib. 226.
[163] Ib., 64.
[164] Ib.
[165] Ib., 71.
[166] Trimmingham, ib., 225-230.
[167] H. Ahmed, ib., 81.

are the Afar and the Oromo of south west Ethiopia. The school's dominant position

is a consequence of its being the first to be introduced into the country"[168].

In areas dominated by the *Shafi'iyya* order, Muslims and other people speak of Shafism, to express what is meant to be a follower of this school, but moreover to indicate what it means to belong to *Sunni*, i.e. Orthodox Islam.

The *Hanafiyya*, introduced again from the Hijaz[169] and Yemen, is the second strongest rite and has many followers in Wallo and the coastal areas, among the Muslims in Begemder and Gojjam, and some in Jimma and Harar.

The *Malikiyya* has apparently the smallest number of followers in Ethiopia. They came from the eastern Sudan, and are present in northwestern Eritrea and in the borderlands to Sudan[170].

The *Hanbaliyya* are represented by the growing number of the *Wahhabiya* in Ethiopia, who;

"regard themselves as Sunnis, following the school of Ibn Hanbal"[171].

It is not possible to give an overview of the contents or a comparison of the different schools here. It is also difficult to give any data about the regional distribution and the statistics on how many followers each school has, since it was not yet given the importance for distinguishing them by the governmental and other officials who could present statistics.

Another problem exists in the differentiation between the use firstly of the Islamic law, secondly customary or traditional codes, and thirdly official governmental laws. The question of dominance within these three influences one of the appearances of Ethiopian Islam. However, it is not possible here to give any assessment[172].

1.2.2. *Sufi*-Islam and *Sufi shaykhs*

a) The development of *Sufism* in the wider region of Ethiopia began and took its roots not so much by the stages of natural asceticism, mysticism or scholarly *Sufism*, but by the;

"'expansion of the spiritual influence of eminent Sufis'"[173],

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[168] Ib., 65, Trimmingham, ib., 231f., adds the Gurage then with the Silti, nowadays the Silti have their own zone in Ethiopia. He also adds the Somali in general, and the Bani Shanqul, today Beni-Shangul.

[169] Ib., 66, but see Trimingham, ib., 232, who stated that the Egyptians introduced their official *Hanafite* code during their brief occupation of Eritrea.

[170] Ib., Trimmingham, ib., 233, who includes the Wayto of Lake Tana.

[171] Gibb, ib., 618, against H. Ahmed, ib., 66, who states that the *Hanbaliyya* "is not represented in the country".

[172] Trimingham, ib., 230, states that the *shari'a* "is subordinate to the local custom". See also on the role of Islamic Law and *Shari'at* Courts in Ethiopia: Idris, Freedom, 155, who reported that the official governmental law "had no substantial effect on them [i.e. the Muslims in the countryside] effect on their traditional family practices", and therefore the question of the role of existing *Shari'at* Courts in Ethiopia should be dealt with sensitively.

[173] H. Ahmed, ib., 77.

which is believed to have led to the emergence of the orders. They were only firstly introduced by foreign scholars mainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but soon developed by indigenous clerics through pilgrimages or;

> "through visits to other centres of Sufi activity … [because] the urge and the initiative to acquire training in the mystical way, and the will to disseminate it locally, remained with the indigenous Muslim scholars"[174].

The vitality of the local Muslims, who were familiar with local customs and traditions, helps to explain the success and peaceful coexistence of the many orders. In three ways the Sufi leaders found support: through contributions and gifts, allowances in grain and presents from traders, and by cultivation of *waqf*-lands (i.e. pious endowment) with the help of their students and the community[175].

The revivalist aspect given by the *Sufi shaykhs* and the orders was based on providing educational establishments with the development and transmission of literacy and scholarship, besides spiritual orientation, and by the significant contribution given by the *Sufi* leaders. The latter included in terms of piety the reciting and study of *dhikr* in religious meetings, as a way to salvation as understood in Islam. In their conduct they set moral and behavioral standards that contributed much to the formation of solidarity (Muslim collectivity) and identity[176].

> "Had it not been for these men, Islam in Ethiopia would not have been able to stand on its own feet"[177].

It is for this reason that many of these *Sufi* leaders later turned into saints mostly venerated.

> "To the life of piety and sanctity, and the power to transmit *baraka*, attributed to the Sufi scholars, was therefore added their reputation as reformers and defenders of orthodoxy through offering standard Islamic education"[178],

which was obligatory in order to become a member of an order.

b) Orders

> "The basis of the religious orders (*turuq*, sing., *tariqa*, 'path') in Islam is the belief that the believer who desires to attain communion with God needs the guidance of one who is experienced in the 'path' thereto, one who has been blessed by God on earth with special virtue (*baraka*), and who can act as an intermediary between the disciple

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[174] Ib., 78.
[175] Ib., 79, see on *waqf*: Trimmingham, ib., 233.
[176] Ib., 80.
[177] Ib. 81, a quotation given by *Shaykh* Muhammad Taj al-Din.
[178] Ib., 80.

and God. The founders of the *tariqas* were such guides and their spiritual descendants inherit their *baraka* and continue their function to this day"[179].

The chain of genealogy (*silsila*) and the initiation litany (*wird*), which is going to be passed on to the local Muslim community (*'ulama'*) are two important contents[180] with the proof of their authenticity and authority.

Besides the *Qadiriyya* (spread almost in all areas where Muslims reside in Ethiopia[181]) other orders that were introduced to Ethiopia are the *Shadhiliyya* (in Borana and Begemder), *Sammaniyya* (Jimma), *Mirghaniyya* or *Khatmiyya* (almost foreign to Ethiopia or at the borderlands to Eritrea and Sudan), *Tijaniyya* (Wollega, Jimma, Gojjam and Gondar), *Ahmadiyya* (Massawa), and others with little numbers[182].

c) *Qadiriyya*

"The first order to be introduced into Ethiopia, and the one which presently has the largest number of adherents, is the Qadiriyya whose founding is attributed to the Hanbali jurist, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166) … it was first brought to Harar by Abu Bakr b. 'Abdallah al-'Aydarus (d. [died] 1503) in the sixteenth century"[183].

"It has remained essentially a teaching order, whose members seek primarily the *dhikr*-ecstasy. It has no centralized organization and only a few agricultural settlements. The shaikhs of the order attract around themselves groups of students which often break up at their death, when the students attach themselves to other leaders or to the most outstanding of their pupils"[184].

d) Holy Men and Holy Places:

The Muslim expresses his spiritual needs in two ways: towards his saint(s), who possess *baraka*[185] (or towards the Prophet), and by visiting (*ziyara*) the shrines and holy places (*bayan* or *maqam*). The saints are regarded as objects of worship[186]. After their death their tombs develop into cult centers[187] and pilgrimages on the anniversaries of their birth or death are carried out. The visits have rituals which have general Islamic practical character, as well

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[179] Trimingham, ib., 233.
[180] H. Ahmed, ib., 69, see Trimingham, ib., 237, mentioned *silsilat al-baraka* and *silsilat al-wird*.
[181] Trimingham, ib., 240f, for detailed regional spread.
[182] Ib., 70f.
[183] Ib., 68, quoting Trimingham, ib., 234, 239f.
[184] Trimingham, ib., 238-241.
[185] For description of the meaning and variety of *baraka*, "or wonder-working powers", see Trimmingham, ib. 247-249.
[186] Ib., 247.
[187] Ib., "The saints are men believed to have been specially favoured by God during their earthly life, who continue after their death to provide a link between Him and the material world. They are believed still to inhabit the places where they died and also to visit other places where they have signified their presence by appearing to the believer in a dream".

as specific local forms of veneration[188]. Descendants of saints often continue the line of *baraka* and form holy families. It is not possible to give an overview of the most important saints and shrines or holy places, which are spread all over Ethiopia, here[189]. The growing veneration of these people and places, however, had a great influence on orthodox Islam, popular Folk-Islam and reformist Islam:

> "Local centres of pilgrimage proliferated and the reformist and scholarly features of the 'mother centres' started to give way to the ritualistic, thaumaturgic and para-liturgical aspects of saint veneration"[190].

The resurgence of traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices then took the upper hand and absorbed the orthodox and revivalist foundations, melting into Folk-Islam.

1.2.3. Folk-Islam

a) Traditional-popular Islam

Folk-Islam always seems to be a melting pot, in which the former "purer" and reformist forms of Islam used to end up and are overwhelmed. What has then emerged into Folk-Islam and overshadowed by the many traditional-religious and socio-cultural elements, is today again the focus for fundamentalists and reformists.

The remnants of old traditional beliefs and practices that brings its power to the fore, can but only by thoroughly study, mainly through ethno-historical and ethno-religious studies, be discovered. The melting pot has also often been labeled syncretism.

b) Features of religious syncretism

Before people became adherents to Islam in Ethiopia, most of them possessed a religion and a system of socio-cultural and religious elements. When Islam became their religion, these elements were not abolished at once, but were kept and incorporated into the new religion or vice versa. These elements

> "can by the Islamic process of syncretism be in some way reconciled with the sovereignty of Allah … [However, the] unity of God must be preserved at all costs"[191].

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[188] Ib., 249. For the importance of the pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Shaikh Husain in Bale, see Trimingham, ib., 253-256.
[189] Ib., 249-253.
[190] H. Ahmed, 80.
[191] Trimingham, ib., 256.

To these elements[192] can be counted the beliefs associated with the ancestors, the spirit-world, the belief in life after death, the *rites de passage*, transitional rites that are belonging to sacred spheres, fetish beliefs, the conceptions of higher and lesser deities, the *zar*-cultus, which has

> "inherent powers of syncretism"[193],

the *buda*, mostly known as the evil eye, and some others. It is not possible to give detailed information on all the aspects mentioned here. However, especially in rural areas they still are used to explain many phenomena that are not to be explained by other means.

The role of the former magician, sorcerer, or priests, was then taken over by the Muslim *shaykh*, whose performances included the ritual slaughtering of animals, the making of amulets for protection against evil forces and other items and forms in which divine power is present, the divination or control by fore-knowledge, healing rituals, to call upon spirits and ancestors, reading of fortunes in the rosary, funeral rites, caring for the cycle of seed-time and harvest, rain ceremonies, milk rituals, oath takings, and others[194].

Different levels or stages can be observed, in which Islam as a religion proceeds and gains ground within the former socio-cultural and religious settings. Since these stages are intersecting, it is rather difficult to be in favor for one or another[195]. However, it is questionable and still not far enough studied, in which form transitions should be conducted, or how much value the traditional settings have. An evaluation cannot be given here.

1.2.4. Reform-Islam and *jihadists*

In the 19th century three forms of Islamic militant movement have become influential to Ethiopia, namely the *Wahhabism*, the *Mahdism* and the *Tariqa* revival. Of these only the last was responded to positively by Ethiopian Muslims[196]. The reformist movements resulted

> "in the expansion and consolidation of the mystical orders, and in the establishment
>
> of centres of Islamic education and local pilgrimage"[197].

However, due to the process mentioned above, that "purer" forms of Islam seemed to be absorbed by ordinary people into popular Folk-Islam, it does not take wonder that the former

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[192] Trimmingham, ib., 256-262, gives an overview.
[193] Ib., 258.
[194] Ib., 262-269.
[195] Ib., 271, has three stages: firstly someone "adopts superficially certain elements of the material culture of Muslims", secondly "the assimilation of actual religious elements of Islamic culture", and thirdly "a genuine belief in the effacy of Islamic sanctions, and [which] involves actual change in custom and habitual conduct".
[196] H. Ahmed, ib., 73.
[197] Ib.

reformist movement ended up in Folk-Islam, which again is the focal point for new fundamentalist and reform movements in the 20th and 21st centuries.

a) Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism as a return to the fundaments as original sources in dealing with the present time has become a feature for many religions and other religious groups. Each fundamentalism has to be defined among the many fundamentalisms.

"The use of the term 'fundamentalism' is, therefore, misleading"[198].

However, in its general meaning, fundamentalism is a global response to modernism or secularism, a reaction against scientific and secular culture that endangers the fundaments[199], thus creating a counter-culture, even though some fundamentalist movements have a symbiotic relationship with modernity[200]. It has been called neo-fundamentalism, when describing features that concentrated on political forms, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries. Along with fundamentalism goes a quest for religious identity in changing times. At times this may lead to extreme or militant expressions for the realization of the fundamentalists' ideas. The Islamic fundamentalism is better to be defined as Islamism because it concentrates on fundamentalism within Islam.

b) Islamism, *Jihadism* and the *jihadists*

The aim of Islamism, and in its extreme form of *Jihadism*[201], besides the innerislamic re-islamization as a return to the purer Islamic fundaments, is an attempt to create an Islamic state and society, in which Islam can be carried out in relation to the fundaments, i.e. by

"reinterpretation of the sacred texts (*ijtihad*) in the modern context"[202].

However, attempts in East Africa to realize this political aim, often failed[203]. Re-islamization in a political sense means a turn back to the political and economic orders that were i.a. developed in the medieval times, or the radical return to the mechanisms of society and

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[198] Armstrong, Battle, X.
[199] Ib., XVI: "Fundamentalists feel that they are battling against forces that threaten their most sacred values", see p. 40: "It was only when Western modernity replaced the backward-looking mythical way of life with a future-oriented rationalism that some Muslims would begin to find Europe alien", i.a.
[200] Ib., XI.
[201] To define *Jihadism* precisely, a study of *jihad* has to be carried out, which lies out of the scope of this study. See De Waal, Islamism, 7-10: "The core Islamist theory of *jihad* is transcendental: victory is provided by God alone, rather than being an obligation on the *mujahid*", ib., 7.
[202] De Waal, ib., 5. The principles of Islamism, including *ijtihad*, the new and independent interpretation of the sources including Qur'an and Sharia and the refusal of all other sources, *tawhid*, the concept of a unique Allah in opposition to innovations (*bida*), *jahiliyya*, the ignorance of not "real" Muslims (for example traditional Sufi adherents), and the *tahara*, the ritual purity, which prohibits the encounter with Christians, for example. All these features can be only mentioned briefly here. See PS 1.3.7.9., 38f.
[203] De Waal, ib., 1: "The failures of political Islam in the region must also be seen in tandem with the failures of alternative social and political projects, notably leftist revolutionary militarism, which rose and fell in parallel with the Islamist project".

political institutions of the early Medina, as expressed in the Qur'an and the *Sunna*. Among the religious adversaries, besides the threats described above, is the popular Folk-Islam, i.e. mostly *Sufi* sects and orders with their abundance of traditional-religious elements[204]. The demand of purification means i.a. the elimination of laws and conducts of life that were added to the "original" Islam. The renaissance of Islam, both in a political and religious sense, leads therefore back to a "purer" Islam.

The extreme form for the realization of these political and religious aims is *Jihadism*. As for Ethiopia estimation for the chances of *Jihadist*s had been given:

> "As for the jihadist, because he employed coercion and threats in promoting the expansion of Islam, his chances of success were very limited and no thorough Islamization could be achieved by such means"[205].

In Ethiopia after 1991, the growth of Islamism and its critique to modernism became more effective. The new wave of modernism, norms and values from the "West", new fashions, movies, modern education, articles, consume, and the like competed with the traditions and traditional culture of Ethiopia. Combined with backwardness, poverty, the widening gap between the rich and the poor and with unemployment as chronic features leading into permanent crisis, a search for an identity in the minds of young Ethiopian Muslims led to an openess for Islamism. They found a way to create a religious identity in movements like the *Wahhabism* with its modern attractions that came along by its Saudi-Arabian connection, in contrast to the chaos of features in modern Ethiopia. The Islamists offered the "right path" and right answers for all problems. Amongst them the *Wahhabi* had a major influence.

c) *Wahhabism*

> "A non-African revivalist movement that has recently had a major impact on Islam
>
> in Africa is the Wahhabi movement of eighteenth century Arabia"[206].

The aim of this movement was to revitalize the religious practice and political situation of the time of Muhammad, considered as the ideal era. Besides the strictly return to the origins, it is strictly moralistic and militant. It offers a new interpretation of Islam facing the influences of modernism, having a financial strong background and back-donors in Saudi-Arabia, allowing

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[204] Ib., 3: „This selective focus has its dangers, for example in that it neglects the rich complexity of Islams in Ethiopia and Kenya".

[205] A. Hussein, ib., 81.

[206] De Waal, ib., 4: „This was a puritanical reformist movement characterized by a certain intellectual rigour and adherence to cerservative Bedouin social practice. The Wahhabis sought to return to the original Islamic sources for inspiration, trying to emulate the first generation of Muslims, the Salaf. They were militant and through the military victory of Saud family they almost conquered the Arabian peninsula with extreme violence …
Wahhabism is one of the earliest forms of modern Muslim fundamentalism, and subsequent revivalists of widely differing ideological colours have described themselves as Salafi".

them to run projects (i.a. construction of mosques) and supporting activities in various respects (i.a. in education and training centers). Their self-confidence is therefore very strong and attracts many, especially young Muslims. It is a visible movement, because of its special forms of dressing, i.e. women are dressed in black robes covering the whole body, men wear white robes, head-scarfs, etc.

d) Liberation from syncretism

The innerislamic aim of reformist Islamism, as has been indicated as an example with the *Wahhabi* movement, is concerning religious Islam, the "de-syncretism", i.e. the liberation of Islam from any additional influence, in Ethiopia largely meaning the influence of traditional socio-cultural and religious elements.

Tensions within Ethiopian Islam, i.e. for example between the *Wahhabi* and the orthodox and traditional-popular Islam (*Sufism*) are a common feature of present Ethiopian Islam. They have different mosques for themselves and adhere to different Islamic organizations. An expression of these tensions is reflected in a discussion of a newspaper about *Wahhabism* during the last years[207]. It is difficult to foresee the effects of these movements on the culture of Islam and Ethiopia in general. However, the movement has its logical right and place in the innerislamic system.

1.2.5. Expansionist Islam and settlement of Islam

Expansion and settlement express two features of Islam that became important for Ethiopia. While expansion is a moving and active process, settlement indicates the final stage of the expansion process, even though it may still remain in the process of changing.

Distinctions between various forms of Islam have always been undertaken, but many

> "fail to distinguish between the rise of Islam as a *political factor* which, as Taddesse remarked, was a post-tenth century development, from its earlier and largely pacific penetration and entrenchment as a *religion and a culture*"[208].

While in the expansionist phase of Islam the political-functional type comes more to the fore, even though it may be partly religiously motivated, in the settlement of Islam the socio-cultural and religious Islam predominates.

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[207] Alem Zelalem, Saudi, and many other articles that came as reactions.
[208] A. Hussein, ib., 32. A. Hussein has not given the explanation which he defines as political and religious or cultural factors. However, his distinction is helpful, even though one has to question T. Tamrat's statement, since political factors between the 7th and 10th centuries may well have been exercised.

The history of Ethiopian Islam can be examined with the premises of expansion and settlement of Islam, by making a differentiation between the political-functional and socio-cultural and religious processes[209].

a) Political-functional Islam

The first Muslims in quest for asylum entered Abyssinia for a political-functional reason, i.e. due the fact of persecution and survival, which may be considered as a political phenomenon, because the Quraish feared that their dominance could diminish with Muhammad's religion, and the Axumite king rejected the Quraish demand. Since then the expansion firstly carried out through trade and commerce was in many, if not in the most cases the dominant factor, which developed in different waves and appearances, in which Islam as a political-functional factor grew in the wider region of East Africa, because the trade affected politics and the course of nations and peoples. The slave trade brought with it many conversions, since this was a way to escape it, thus it became a functional kind of Islam, which of course, in the later forms, when Islam settled, could have had developed socio-cultural and religious features. If a local chief was driven to Islam by political loyalty or by force, his whole family or clan followed him functionally. Here the motive is not a religious conviction, but for political-functional reasons. To participate or to advance in commerce, and thus in prosperity and development, one uses Islam nominally, and thereby functional. The same happens if one sees any advantage or profit in educational and other senses. The political-functional aspect of Islam appears even in the settlement period, in order to use a sub-group identity to resist political restrictions and other. Islam could be used even in a religious sense functionally, in order to conserve old traditions and cultural pattern, as we shall see later. This however, intersects and belongs to socio-cultural and religious Islam. The political-functional adherence to Islam is then nominal, yet without much penetration into religious matters.

The Islam that came via traders and clerics with their settlements and establishment of principalities then led to the conflict with the Abyssinian Christians and found its climax in the Ahmad Gragn *jihad*. The war between the Abyssinian Christians and Gragn and his Muslims, has to be examined in the light of political circumstances that affected the whole region, i.e. the power struggle for trade which brought even the Portuguese and the Ottomans on the plan. The *jihad* is a form of stabilizing Islam both in defensive and in offensive actions, at times nurtured by expansionist motives of trade. When the *jihad* failed, Islam

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[209] The difference between political and popular Islam has been used also by De Waal, ib., 4. According to him, *Sufism* supported popular, i.e. Folk-Islam, and Reform-Islam, as expressed through the *Wahhabi* movement, has a political connotation.

decreased in its political-functional appearance, but nevertheless continued and re-appeared in other periods, like in that of the Egyptian advances into Abyssinia. It is this political-functional Islam that became a threat to the Christians, especially in its outward aggressive forms[210]. The decline of this more outward power within expansionist Islam in Ethiopia was supported by the influence of the European powers and the decline of the Ottomans influence. It brought Islam into a periphery existence and at times into an inferior status in view of the Christians, where it politically remained ever since in sub-groups with their identities. Islam was tolerated as a contributor in trade and commerce, and Muslims in a kind of "reverse *dhimmis*" could practice their religious and cultural identity and traditions in silent ways. However, restrictions should safeguard the control of political Islam with its expansion tendencies. As has been indicated in the historical overview, the political tendency of Islam expressed itself in underground activities of resistance and revolts. However, these never had dominant influence. The balance between tolerance and restrictions became an important feature for the Abyssinian Empire and Ethiopian governments, who were looking for a united country and thus had to integrate somehow the high proportion of Ethiopian Muslims.

In this situation the religious reform movements of Islam, as well as other religious influences, which were directed to the settlement forms of Islam, came in a position of growing influence towards a revival of Islam.

b) Socio-cultural and religious Islam

Islam was and is many times introduced as an orthodox religion which soon develops into popular-traditional forms, in which through the process of syncretism the so called "higher" religion absorbs previous patterns of socio-cultural-religious beliefs and practices, or in the other way around, the traditional socio-cultural and religious system absorbs Islam. However, Islam had the capacity to adapt easily traditional cultural and religious elements, since it offers a wide range of concepts which covers all aspects of life, in which especially the African and with it the East African nations with their closeness to the Arabian culture have easier access to.

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[210] Zwemer, Islam, 13: „Whenever Islamic influence became political and turned into real attempts at invasion of the ancient Christian centers, the rulers and the people revolted against the intruders of an alien faith". The expression "alien faith" again gives the prejudice that Islam was and is not Ethiopian, therefore it needs to be carefully read.

"The more the human media of diffusion move away from established centres of religious training, the stronger the impact of the local environment on the institutional framework, beliefs and practices of Islam tends to become"[211].

In order to find support, the Islamic clerics and agents adopted customs and traditional religious beliefs to broaden and to safeguard their support system. Sufi teachers by this process grew less interested in correct doctrine but more in local features of spirituality that found acceptance by the local people on which they were dependent. This syncretism brought them at times even beyond the tolerance lines of strict orthodox Islam. Therefore, during the settlement, the socio-cultural and religious arrangement between Islam and local traditions develops its own forms and resulted in popular Folk-Islam.

c) Traders and clerics

It must be said, that sharp distinction is not always possible, and both the political-functional and the socio-cultural and religious activities may intersect, as can be seen with traders and clerics. It is difficult to give traders a more political-functional role, even though the tendency of expansion prevails with them. However, clerics clearly have a more socio-cultural-religious role in the expansion and settlement of Islam in Ethiopia.

"While traders did bring some elements of Islamic material culture and commodities from the Arab world, and probably also combined their commercial activities with some preaching, it was the *'ulama'*, at first of foreign origin, but gradually and increasingly from amongst the local converts, who expounded the doctrines and practices of Islam, and who planted and cultivated it on indigenous soil. Therefore, it was the *zawiyya* or rural Islamic centres of education, and later on, with the expansion of the Sufi orders, the various centres of local pilgrimage, rather than the trading stations and markets, which recruited converts to Islam, and laid the basis for the emergence of viable and prosperous Muslim communities in the countryside and towns of the Ethiopian interior"[212].

1.2.6. Evaluation

The typological overview had two parts: one described the innerislamic process from orthodox to Reform-Islam via popular Folk-Islam with its specifications in Ethiopia that has a more religious appearance. The expansionist Islam with its more political-functional aspect

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[211] Braukämper, Islamic, 170. See also Musk, Unseen, 110: „As one moves from the centre to the boundaries of orthodoxy, the clerics of ideal Islam become more deeply committed to folk-Islamic belief and practice".
[212] A. Hussein, ib., 71.

and the settlement of Islam with its socio-cultural and religious aspect helped to clarify the outward appearance of Islam. The nominal adherence to Islam can be explained by the expansionist and political-functional aspects, or with the socio-cultural and religious aspect, in which the traditional system absorbed Islam to such an extent, that religious contents of Islam almost disappeared. On the other side, the capacity and strong identity of people, which developed with the help of political-functional or socio-religious Islam, could lead to such a strong adherence to Islam or identity, that make the Muslims immune against any other influences of political or religious character. Both types can be found in CMR and in approaches of Christians to Muslims.

1.3.   Interim Summary: What is Ethiopian in Ethiopian Islam?

In order to summarize the first section of the second chapter, an attempt at an answer to the question should be undertaken. As has been indicated above, Ethiopian Islam had and has two dominant features, the political-functional type especially in its endeavors of expansion, and the socio-cultural and religious type towards and during the settlement. Secondly, the tensions within Ethiopian Islam, between the Orthodox Islam, the Sufi-Islam, the Folk-Islam and the Reform-Islam have become a contemporary feature. With regard to relations the Muslims have with Christians, as was pointed out in the historical overview, the ambivalent attitude of tolerance and suspicion prevails. The definition of Ethiopian Islam is therefore to be found mainly within the frame of these typologies and attitudes.

2. The development of the EECMY and initial efforts in its approaches to Muslims[213]

It is not without the introduction of Christianity to Abyssinia, which was mentioned above and that developed towards the establishment of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) that the EECMY would have had come into existence. It lies, however, outside the scope of this presentation to describe the EOTC and the CMR within it[214], which would indeed shed another light on our subject. The necessity to fill this scientific gap remains. The same must be said with regard to the Catholic Church, as well as for the many other protestant and evangelical churches in Ethiopia. The focus lies here with the EECMY. While lighting up the background of this church generally, attention shall be applied to the first documented forms of understanding of Islam and the first approaches towards Muslims. This

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[213] This section is mainly based on the work of Arén.
[214] Pankhurst, Glimpse, gives an example of the relationship between Abba ´Enbaqom, a Muslim convert to Christianity, and Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim during the 16th century.

should prepare a historical foundation for CMR for the EECMY. Since the EECMY was established officially in 1959, the time before shall be approached in two steps, which had formative character for the foundation of the EECMY. The first refers to the time of the pioneers, and the second to the time of the first mission organizations, of which the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) made the first serious attempts towards Muslim evangelization. After that the foundation of the EECMY and the aftermath until 1969, for the sake of completeness, shall be examined shortly. Each section shall be reviewed briefly in summaries, which should be combined in the summary at the end of this section.

2.1. Pioneers

Many protestant and evangelical Christians, as well as missionaries from abroad, entered the Abyssinian context with the aim to revive or to reform the existing Orthodox Church, the later EOTC. Without these attempts the EECMY would not have come to the fore. After some progresses and achievements especially in establishing a Bible movement in the northern and central parts of the country, and after many failures, the attention shifted towards other groups like the *Felasha*, for example. The main emphasis, however, grew towards the Christianization of the Oromo. Without these shifts, the EECMY equally would not be what it is today. It was less and almost without any consideration the aim to witness directly to the Muslims. However, indirectly these Christians contributed to the contemporary CMR within the EECMY.

a) The first protestant Christian with the zeal to revive the "old" Abyssinian church was the Lutheran Peter Heyling from Lübeck (1607/8-1652)[215]. He stayed at Gondar from the end of 1634 or early in 1635 until 1652. His activities included the Bible translation from *Ge'ez* into the vernacular Amharic that helped many people, who were not familiar with the older liturgical language, in order to read the Bible. This may have had initiated a Bible movement within the churches of Begemder, Gojjam and Shawa in the northern and central parts of Abyssinia, whose followers through the centuries carried his advise on

"to teach nothing but the unadulterated Gospel in the vernacular"[216].

Some of his followers supported the first outreach activities in Wollega, like in Boji, that later led to the foundation of the EECMY[217]. Even though it is difficult to examine Heyling's intention or views in respect to Islam, his life itself gave testimony to the beginning of CMR

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[215] For the following see Arén, Pioneers, 34-38, 409-410, and others as the Index of this book indicated.
[216] Ib. 134.
[217] Ib. 34, 409.

of the later EECMY. Some historical accounts claim that he, after spending 17 years in Abyssinia, left for home in 1652, passing the Muslim land of Suakin (Sawakin), where the Ottoman *pasha* took hold of his goods, which included the gold that he received from Fasiladas for his services. Making him choose between becoming a Muslim or to die by the sword, Heyling refused to deny Christ and was, according to the reports, decapitated[218]. His death by a Muslim sword but moreover the beginning of a Bible movement thus paved indirectly the way for the gospel which later emerged into the EECMY[219].

b) It was secondly the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of England that drew its missionary efforts to the ancient churches of the Near East. In their considerations they included the Muslims.

> "The society believed that if these churches were awakened from their lethargy, revived and infused with real spiritual concern, they would be reactivated and challenge Islam with the Christian message of reconciliation"[220].

This could be done no better than by;

> "those who lived in a Muslim country and had first-hand knowledge of Muslim thought and life"[221].

Through the translation of the Bible into the vernacular and through a pietistic understanding of conversion the aim was thought to be achievable. The strategy therefore was indirect by preparing the conditions on which later Muslim outreach would be possible.

Stirred up by the CMS the Basel Mission Institute in Switzerland, which received substantial support from southern Germany, recruited the Germans Gobat (1799-1879) and Kugler (1801-1830), (and later Aichinger):

> "to explore the possibilities for distribution of the vernacular Scriptures in Ethiopia"[222].

They arrived at the port of Massawa on December 28, 1829, in the company of *Sheikh* Ali Umar, a Muslim governor of a small district in Agame. This happened during the "Era of the princes", which had been mentioned above, when Islam was spreading over the highlands of Amhara, a territory which by age-long tradition had been Christian.

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[218] Ib., 36-37.

[219] The incidents, however, remain strange. The *pasha* was following Fasiladas orders (see above), probably suspecting Heyling of falling under the category of not wanted missionaries, at the same time not knowing about the good relationship Heyling had with Fasiladas.

[220] Arén, 45f.

[221] Ib., 46.

[222] Ib. 48f, 54. The missionaries distributed more than 8000 copies. "Some of these were to bear visible fruit in due time", ib. 84.

This CMS enterprise was lasting from December 1829 until July 1843 for more than 13 years. After their first steps at Gondar and Adwa had been taken, other missionaries like Isenberg, Blumhardt and Krapf followed. The Egyptian attack on Abyssinia and the political suspicions led to an end at Adwa in 1838, and a new attempt was made by Isenberg and Krapf to settle at Ankober in Shawa in August 1842, which was governed by king Sahle-Selassie[223]. The missionaries' activities were often influenced by political developments.

c) Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810-1881) from Derendingen/Tübingen in southern Germany stayed in Ankober from 1839-1842. He conducted his missionary work convinced that converting the Oromo, whose importance he became more and more convinced of, would bring many of Africa's non-Christians to Christ, and that they:

> "would have an important mission to fulfill in the Horn of Africa by forming a mighty bulwark against Islam. The idea kindled a fire in the soul of Louis Harms at Hermannsburg"[224]

in the northern Lüneburg heathen of Germany[225]. Krapf's idea indeed stood in line with the vision of the CMS. His activities concentrated not only on the distribution of Amharic Bibles, but also on the study of the Oromo, their language, culture and religion. He learnt their language so well, that later he wrote a vocabulary, a grammar, and helped to translate many portions of the Bible in the Oromo language. His involvement in political matters, being an interpreter between the queen of England and the king Sahle-Selassie[226], as well as his social concern for the slaves against the slave trade may have had caused his return to Egypt in 1842. Because he was unable to return to Shawa, he then turned to East-Equatorial-Africa (Mombasa, Zanzibar), from where he continued his work from 1843-1855[227]. His travel reports[228] are worth to be examined under the aspect of CMR, since he had many encounters with Muslims guided by a positive attitude, and drew many useful insights out of them. He was fully aware that for effective approaches the understanding of the people and their contextual situations are helpful towards any kind of approach.

In 1855 he helped to initiate the work of the Pilgrim Mission of St. Chrischona, Basel, amongst the Ethiopian Jews or Jewish Ethiopians (*Felasha* or *Bete Israel*). He made

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[223] Ib. 67f.

[224] Ib., 73.

[225] Louis Harms, the founder of the Hermannsburg Mission in 1849, was probably primarily set on fire by the idea of converting the Oromo, who were described by Krapf as the "Germans of Africa", less by the idea to form a countermeasure against Islam, even though serious research on Harm's reception of Islam has not been carried out so far to prove the statement.

[226] Arén, ib., 80f.

[227] Ib., 84.

[228] Krapf, Reisen.

recommendations to the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM) to take up the work in Eritrea in 1866[229]. The impression he left on Louis Harms (1808-1865) led to a first attempt by the Hermannsburg Mission to begin outreach work in Abyssinia in 1853, followed by others which all failed, but later was successful in commencing work in December 1927. When the mission's brigg "Candace" arrived at Sansibar during Eastern 1854, the Hermannsburg missionaries had contacts with Muslims, especially with the *Sultan* Seyid Said, who was in control of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden area. It is questionable why Harm's men faced the bitter rejection in spite of his efforts he made to reach the Oromo. Was it the suspicion of the Arabs towards the Europeans to oust them from economic ascendancy over the interior[230], and was therefore the "Candace" an obstacle? Was it because of Krapf or other persons who were discredited? Was it wrong to approach the British governors, or was it a wrong attitude, which meant a lack of understanding by the missionaries of the contextual situation at that time? The questions remained unsolved. The reaction of Harms in Hermannsburg, however, after the missionaries' attempts to proceed inland from either Zanzibar or Mombasa failed, was filled with hot anger against the Muslims[231], which may have caused a hindrance in considerations of outreach work amongst Muslims, as a consequence in effects of history (German *Wirkungsgeschichte*).

d) Another episode in the period of pioneers was started by the Pilgrim missionaries from Basel in 1855 and was continued firstly until 1874[232]. They were supervised by Gobat, who became bishop in Jerusalem. They

> "combined Christian witness with technical aid"[233].

This happened during the reign of emperor Tewodros, who wanted to convert the Muslims and Oromos to Christianity. The missionaries Flad, Bender, Maier and Kienzlen (later Waldmeier, Saalmüller and Stern followed) started the *Felasha*-Mission in 1859 west of the Lake Tana at Yifag and at Gafat near Debre Tabor, combining evangelistic work with development work by building schools and a workshop for technical training. However, their religious liberty had the price of being "imperial slaves"[234]. The distribution of Bibles, especially carried out by Johann Martin Flad (1831-1915)[235] and the translation work which

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[229] Ib., 121f.
[230] Ib. 110.
[231] Harms, HMB, 154. See also 30f, 65, 82f, 143ff, 170f on the attitude toward Islam.
[232] For the years see Arén, ib., 88 and 103. The continuation after this period was lose and needs more study for better presentation.
[233] Ib., 88.
[234] Ib., 93.
[235] Ib., 103.

they carried out in the footsteps of Heyling and Krapf, contributed to the Bible movement in the city of Tseazega in the Hamasen area west of Asmara, which later led to the foundation of the Eritrean Evangelical Church and the EECMY. It may be possible by these directions that relations to CMR are to be discovered[236]. However, since the material at hand gives no concrete indication, this question must be worked out at another time.

e) Evaluation

The pioneers who contributed to the development of the EECMY, directly and indirectly started the CMR in Abyssinia. P. Heyling is the first landmark in this regard. The others laid a foundation by their considerations to use the evangelization as a means against the proceeding world Islam. However, their activities were not directly concentrated on Muslims. However, Krapf's encounters with Muslims, which he documented in his travel reports, could be examined, and would probably indicate that he discovered the need for contextual studies and approaches, thus making him a pioneer in CMR with regard to Ethiopia. The Pilgrim missionaries introduced the combination of Christian witness with technical aid, and therefore could have paved the way for holistic ministry, which later in this study shall prove to be one of the approaches in witness. Another important contribution of these pioneers is the Bible translation work, which should even influence Muslims, even though the reports and documents in this regard are yet weak. However, the translation into the vernacular is one of the most important prerequisites in approaches to Muslims.

2.2. Approaches to Muslims that evolved with the Swedish Evangelical Mission (SEM)

a) The SEM in 1865 appointed its first missionaries (Lange, Kjellberg and Carlsson) after having consulted Harms in Hermannsburg and Krapf[237]. During the period of fifty years (1866-1916) the missionaries were engaged in various enterprises, some of which led to important CMR and approaches resulting in various Muslim converts, and which brought the first direct evangelical approaches to Muslims and to Muslim dominated areas.

The missionaries first established a relay post in Kunama, at the northern borderlands of Abyssinia, from where they intended to proceed further to the Oromo of the south-west.

"The Kunama welcomed the Swedes, hoping for foreign help against oppression"[238]

by the Egyptians, who wanted to islamize them or send them into slavery, in order to control the area. A political-functional interest appeared here. The pressure by the Egyptians and

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[236] Ib., 104, 158f, 161, 247, 272, and other, which shows the interconnections between the work of the Pilgrim missionaries with activities that include outreach work amongst Muslims.
[237] Ib., 122.
[238] Ib., 136.

tropical diseases caused the mission to resign from Kunama and to establish itself on the coast at Massawa, and concentrate on training some indigenous evangelists[239]. The missionaries thus first became aware of the interplay between politics and religious interests they were involved in.

Secondly, the place Ailet, 40 Km west of Massawa, with mineral baths, was discovered in 1870 by Lager, where he and Hedenström settled in March 1871[240], parallel to the settlement of Ahlborg and Lundahl in Massawa 1870/71. In Ailet and Massawa, the Swedish mission

> "aimed at making medical service an integral part of its outreach"[241].

The first convert to be won through this holistic approach was in 1871 Hamed (1845-1891),

> "an Oromo of solid Muslim stock who after three years in the sheikh school of his
> native village had been sent by his parents to Mecca where he continued his studies
> for another six years. On his way home as a *haji* he fell ill and was deserted by his
> fellow Muslims. The love and care he met at Ailet opened his heart to the gospel and
> he resolved to stay and become a Christian"[242].

He became Lager's protégé whose faith got strong and therefore was baptized with the new name Amanuel in May 1872[243]. In Massawa, by way of the establishment of a school, Onesimus (1856-1931), a freed slave was won for Christ's service in 1870, who was the protégé of Lundahl. To follow original aims

> "the missionaries were convinced that an effective outreach required a trained
> indigenous staff … [since] only nationals would have sufficient knowledge of local
> languages, popular attitudes and traditional beliefs to present the gospel in a genuine
> indigenous garb"[244].

Together with the training of evangelists, the promotion of Bible study in the vernacular was practiced. The elements of the missionaries' work included: freeing slaves and caring for them[245], medical service, running a school program, training of Evangelists, Bible study in the vernacular, book distribution at Massawa[246]. The care for slaves was one of the ministries the missionaries offered to the population. In 1873 the Swiss Münzinger, an appointed

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[239] Ib., 148.
[240] Ib., 161f.
[241] Ib., 162.
[242] Ib., 163.
[243] Ib., 166.
[244] Ib., 171.
[245] Ib., 136, 139f.
[246] Ib., 232. The depot of books moved to Massawa from Tseazega in 1870.

Egyptian governor of Massawa[247], had about three hundred liberated boys and girls to offer to them, which documents

"the extent of the inhuman slave-traffic in the Massawa area"[248].

Another station at Geleb amongst the predominantly Muslim Mensa, about 100 Km north-west of Massawa, was initiated in December 1873 with

"a small scale project of community development by combining basic education with cotton farming"[249].

The students were mainly fugitives from Hamasen[250]. This was initiated with Hedenström's help. Whereas Lager gave precedence to the refugee work at Geleb and Ailet, Lundahl was primarily committed to a mission among non-Christian people with his training of liberated slaves at the school in Massawa[251]. After ten years of orientation and first settlements, the SEM gained substantial ground and perspectives on the mission field, ready to spread in various directions. The edict of Boru Meda at the church council north of Dessie, which had been mentioned above, prevented all mission organizations to enter Abyssinia. The SEM missionaries therefore kept their programs on[252]. Later the missionaries were allowed to include the Muslims of the coast in their programs, but they had given them very little attention[253]. However, inspired by Gustava Lundahl, Rosa von Hagen concentrated on female slaves and destitute women which included

"Muslim women who were very often treated as inferior beings"[254].

The general opinion with respect to a Christian mission amongst Muslims was expressed.

"The Muslim are not going to be converted"[255],

words of the British General Charles Gordon, who held the general opinion, that investing much effort would not have much value, since the Muslims were strong in religion, and would not easily be convinced by another faith.

b) Settlement of indigenous evangelists in the Muslim Jimma area

The first serious attempt of a Christian approach to Muslims in Abyssinia, encouraged by a protestant mission organization, was carried out by evangelists that had been trained at the SEM's stations in Ailet and Massawa.

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[247] Ib., 170.
[248] Ib.
[249] Ib., 202.
[250] Ib., 220.
[251] Ib., 208.
[252] Ib., 212.
[253] Ib., 212, 215.
[254] Ib., 216.
[255] Ib., 231.

> "Easily forgotten, but no less worthy of remembrance are the indigenous pioneers who in the early 1880's penetrated to the Muslim Jimma and founded a self-supporting Christian community among the Oromo of the area"[256].

It was the first settlement plan practically implemented in the pre-formative time of the EECMY. Its key figure was Nigusé Tashu, an Amhara merchant from Gondar and the region of Lake Tana (Begemder). He may have had been inspired by the Bible movement that originated with Peter Heyling in the 17th century, or by the dissemination of Bibles through the CMS and their Chrishona and *Felasha* colleagues, when he arrived at the missionaries station at Massawa to obtain New Testaments in 1872[257].

Nigusé, a man of about forty years old, returned to the station in 1877, eager to study the Bible, and had been accepted at school. Even though he was a successful merchant, the message of the New Testament worried him to become a good man like God demanded[258]. As Massawa had been frequently visited, there were also Oromo traders from the sultanate of Jimma, who asked Lundahl for some evangelists to teach them.

> "Lundahl received their request as a call from God"[259].

After having thought about it, Lundahl selected two indigenous Evangelists to go to the Oromo: Nigusé Tashu and Amanuel Hamed.

Until they finally settled at Jiren close to Jimma and established the first evangelical mission among the Oromo of Abyssinia in May 1884, they had to endure years of hardship during their first expedition from 1877-1884. Both Nigusé and Amanuel were encouraged to participate in this venture. Nigusé, who knew Hirmata at Jimma, one of the biggest slave markets in Abyssinia, was encompassed by the idea to

> "open a school on Lundahl's model by giving liberated slaves children both spiritual care and practical training"[260].

Amanuel, the first Muslim convert with much knowledge of understanding the Muslims, had been Lager's right-hand man entrusted with organization tasks at Ailet. Both together seemed to be a good combination and team. They received their ordination as evangelists on October 29, 1877. The team was joined by a young Sidama named Yohannes as an interpreter and personal aid to Negusé, who had been assigned to be the leader. During their first expedition

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[256] Ib., 211.
[257] Ib., 233.
[258] Ib.
[259] Ib., 234.
[260] Ib., 235.

they were effected by the edict of Boru Meda[261], which secured the roads and made them stop at Agew Meda in Gojjam, where they started a timely school and witnessed Christ to the *Felasha* and followers of the traditional Agew from the end of 1877 until middle 1881. The second station of their way to Jimma was Bali in Shawa, where the group, because of marriages and other persons added; consisted of seven people, who stayed from 1881 on with the German Pilgrim missionaries Maier and Greiner as their assistants[262]. Meanwhile Nigusé and his team, but moreover missionaries from abroad were much awaited by the young *sultan* of Jimma, Abba Jifar II (1861-1932), since he was eager to introduce modern education into his area[263]. In the background stood a motion that

> "people stood in great awe of all books, regardless of language and content. People would flock around a person who read from a book, for 'they believe that everything that is being read must be a prayer to God'. Their attitude seemed to be favourable for disseminating the Bible and preaching the Gospel"[264].

Communication between the group and the missionaries was very difficult. The support the group received was but very little. However, the group maintained their way. Nigusé left Bali in January 1883 and entered Jiren, the administrative center of the sultanate, three weeks later, where Abba Jifar II granted the evangelist a site for a house[265]. Finally;

> "it was in May 1884 that an Evangelical mission was first established among the Oromo of Ethiopia"[266],

with Negusé and his wife as the pioneers, together with four orphaned children, who first started in Jimma, because Amanuel with his wife Elsabet had to wait in Bali.

At Jiren Nigusé, about 47 years old in 1884, realized his dream

> "to rescue young people from slavery and, if possible, restore them to full human dignity by leading them to Christ. His ministry at Jiren was to last thirty-six years [i.e. until his death in 1920]. It has not received the attention it deserves"[267].

The independing and self-supporting establishment of the first truly indigenous evangelical community was a landmark in the history of Christian approaches to Muslim dominated areas and societies in Ethiopia,

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[261] Ib., 243.
[262] Ib., 247.
[263] Ib., 259.
[264] Ib., 260, cited from Onesimus' letter from 20.1.1883.
[265] Ib., 264.
[266] Ib., 265.
[267] Ib., 266.

"though it had only rare opportunities of spiritual renewal through fellowship with other Evangelical Christians"[268].

The activities of Negusé, Amanuel and Yohannes had raised protest by the *sheikhs* who demanded only for them the right to preach. In conclusion, on the long term, as was also considered by the missionaries, Jimma would not

"serve as a bridgehead for an Evangelical outreach to Oromo tribes … The Muslim environment effectively inhibited evangelism"[269].

The evangelists at Jiren were cut off from communication and remained over long periods of time isolated. They obviously have not had received the support needed for further activities. Meanwhile by 1895, Nigusé became the secretary to Abba Jifar II, which was a prominent post. In addition

"Successful trade (domestic and foreign), farming and cattle-breeding made him a rich man, and he used his wealth as a responsible steward by liberating slave children and giving them a Christian education after Lundahl's model"[270].

However, mainly children of some Orthodox families joined the school and the freed slaves were mostly "pagans" by birth. The Muslim opposition, which grew after the death of Emperor Yohannes in 1889, and incited by the Mahdist movement, led to riots at Jiren, which had been stopped by Abba Jifar's interference, and even evoked Menelik's attention in favor for Nigusé, probably because he was looking for an opportunity to interfere with Abba Jifar. Inspite of this survival, the community with about 60 people in 1895, continued to exist, even though their Christian witness to the Muslim population was very limited[271]. It is surprising therefore, that Nigusé and Yohannes were allowed to read the Bible and preach the word before Abba Jifar at his residence, as it is told.

All Christian efforts at Jiren concentrated on the leading role of Nigusé, who combined his leadership with his importance and influence as the *sultan's* secretary, as well as his;

"lively concern for the spiritual and social welfare of their fellow men"[272].

Waiting for other missionaries to come they kept on in this isolated situation. When a group of three (Gebre-Ewostateos, Gumesh and Gebre-Egziabher) were commissioned to Jiren by Anders Svensson, the Swedish leader after Lundahl died in 1885, in the beginning of 1898,

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[268] Ib., 267.
[269] Ib., 268.
[270] Ib., 270.
[271] Ib., 271.
[272] Ib., 272.

Nigusé gave them a warm welcome, an invitation to settle on his farm[273]. They hesitated, because they;

> "had found that the evangelical community maintained an insulated existence like an enclave detached from the surrounding population; they missed the opportunities of reaching out with the gospel"[274].

Gebre-Ewostateos, originally an Orthodox monk, wrote a report about Jiren after a year's stay in 1899[275]. He wrote about the difficulties to work as evangelists.

> "In Jimma the people are Muslim and reject the gospel. There are a few individuals who wish to learn reading, but they are immigrants. To run a school for them will not lead to the evangelization of Jimma"[276].

Were the group of three the right support for Jiren? Was their attitude, being mainly orthodox, and their approach to Muslims the right one? These questions remained unanswered, since we do not possess any other reports on their attempts.

After Amanuel's death in 1891[277], and again we do not have any account on his work, his widow Elsabet distanced herself very much from a Christian life[278]. The "market" in Gebre-Ewostateos report, probably a secret synonym for evangelistic work, was described as being very discouraging:

> "We did not find anything here that can satisfy us"[279].

One has to doubt if with their expectations they were the right men for this work.

In 1902 there is a note that Nigusé received books from *Aleqa* Taye[280]. In 1906, when Ayele and Feben came to Jimma, they too

> "found it impossible to initiate an evangelistic ministry owing to *Abba* Jifar's Muslim policy, which prohibited the proclamation of the Christian faith"[281].

Nigusé, who retired from his secretary-post by 1906, was at liberty to continue to run his farm as an evangelical settlement for many years[282].

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[273] Ib., 392.
[274] Ib.
[275] Ib., 398, see also Appendix Three, 449-451.
[276] Ib., 449, n. 2.
[277] Ib., 270.
[278] Ib., 450.
[279] Ib.
[280] Arén, Envoys, 60.
[281] Arén, Pioneers, 430.
[282] Ib., n. 312.

> "Yohannes Nigusé succeeded his father as secretary to Abba Jifar for some six years til his death, when his mother Mihiretwa (d. 1933) and his only daughter Zertihun moved to Addis Abeba and joined the (future) Mekane Yesus congregation"[283].

We have no information on the whereabouts of the site in Jimma. No memorial can be found in Jimma to the work of Nigusé and his colleagues. It is almost impossible to find any documents about this time or about Nigusé, from the official side, i.e. letters and other related to the work of Nigusé as a secretary.

c) Work at Imkullu and Geleb

First serving as a refugee-camp, Imkullu developed as a new station starting from 1879[284] and served as a place for missionary conferences, as well as Geleb.

> "Under Egyptian rule it was prohibited to evangelize the tribal lowlanders. These were Muslims and refused to establish any contact with the infidels, which was their contemptuous name for the people at Imkullu as well as for Christians at large. Winqvist's medical mission gradually changed their attitude. His skill … attracted patients from the neighboring villages and Bedouin camps, broke down their enmity and opened a door to the gospel … Dawit Amanuel, the first Mensa convert, served as an evangelist … The double task of healing body and soul was given full attention from the start"[285].

During the great famine from 1889-1892, a camp outside Imkullu served as a food and relief distribution center[286]. The famine relief brought many people to whom the Imkullu people preached the gospel.

> "Since most of the lowlanders were Muslims, they thought that the best way of presenting the gospel was to enter into a dialogue of questions and answers. Some of the evangelists were former Muslims. One of them was Dawit Amanuel. … Another was Dawit's cousin Alazar Hemmed (1871-1964)"[287].

Dawit Amanuel was baptized by Lundahl at the age of fifteen in 1877. In 1925 he was ordained to minister as an Evangelist at Geleb[288].

> "As evangelists these men were invaluable, since they were familiar with Muslim thought and practice from their childhood"[289].

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[283] Ib., Envoys, 60, n. 3.
[284] Ib., Pioneers, 226.
[285] Ib., 215, 291.
[286] Ib., 319-322.
[287] Ib., 324.
[288] Ib., 215.
[289] Ib., 324.

Winqvist observed the importance of studying the *Qur'an*. However, the

> "prospects for a successful ministry to the Muslims of the lowlands were evidently
> not very bright"[290].

Yishaq Hemmed of Habab north of Mensa, who found help at Imkullu in 1884, is one example of a convert and his struggle between the Muslim and Christian faith. Many dreams challenged him in spiritual matters, since;

> "it was the gospel that brought them [i.e. the converts] out of obscurity, gave them
> identity, made their existence meaningful and imbued them with compassionate
> concern for their fellow men"[291].

Imkullu was, however, abandoned in 1906[292].

In the Geleb area people steadily changed to Islam, against which orthodox Christianity fought a losing battle. The evangelical approach again was holistic, and local people confessed in 1916;

> "You have made life easier for us and our children"[293].

A clinic and two schools were built, and communication with Keren and the coast and with its commerce were improved. During the famine, food was distributed, jobs were created and road projects were initiated[294]. A young convert from Islam, Naffa wod Etman (1892-1909) contributed to the research of Mensa folklore and cultural heritage[295]. Many other young people converted

> "while going to school at Geleb, though their parents appeared to be either opposed
> or indifferent to the Christian message"[296].

Some students became evangelists: Timoteos Faid (1879-1956/7) was commissioned to Mehlab, Yosef Hemmed (1881-1966) and Natnael Nigusé (1882-1939) to Imkullu, Samuel Etman (1881-1940) and Abraham Jeme (1881-1926) to Geleb. The young Muslim woman Medhin Hemmed (1878-1931) converted and;

> "became instrumental in leading five of her relatives to Christ … The Geleb school
> for girls was thus instrumental in emancipating Muslim women from human
> bondage by restoring to them their rightful dignity as human beings"[297].

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[290] Ib., 325.
[291] Ib., 326.
[292] Ib., 359f.
[293] Ib., 354.
[294] Ib., 355.
[295] Ib., 358f.
[296] Ib., 360.
[297] Ib., 361-363.

In 1911 the Geleb congregation comprised of about 277 members, and the majority of them came from Muslim homes[298]. The schools made committed people and some evangelists were running village schools outside Geleb. A network of village schools thus strengthened the promotion of Bible study and adult education[299].

> "More than a thousand former Muslims were estimated to have become Evangelical Christians by 1950, when the Geleb congregation numbered 400 people"[300].

The original aim of the SEM, however, remained throughout all these activities the same:

> "an evangelistic enterprise among Oromo tribes untouched by Christianity and Islam"[301].

This was then officially recognized by the permission for the evangelical enterprise in Ethiopa granted by Lij Iyasu in 1916, who;

> "established the liberty to proclaim the gospel"[302].

d) Evaluation

With the first endeavors of the SEM at Massawa and Ailet in direct approaches to Muslims the first converts had been found. The holistic approach, which originated from the social concern for slaves and destitutes, had opened this door. Other components that followed were the training of indigenous evangelists and the post-conversion care in form of the promotion of Bible studies in the vernacular, as well as book distribution. With Gustava Lundahl the concern for female slaves and destitute women started the care for Muslim women. Imkullu and especially Geleb were other important stations in which the holistic concept with famine relief and school service was implemented successfully. The first serious attempt of an approach to Oromos and Muslims in Abyssinia, that should be carried out by indigenous evangelists and their settlement in the Muslim dominated Jimma, started in May 1884 with Niguse Tashu as its most important pioneer. His concerns for the slaves and his prominent post as well as his own resources helped the Christian settlement to exist for 36 years. Its isolated situation, due to the lack of attention and support it would have had deserved, made it difficult to enhance or expand the silent and humanitarian-oriented witness. However, this first indigenous evangelical community is a landmark in the history of Christian approaches to Muslim dominated areas in Ethiopia.

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[298] Ib., 363.
[299] Ib., 370.
[300] Ib., 364, n. 258.
[301] Ib., 371.
[302] Ib., 439.

2.3. The foundation of the EECMY and the aftermath until 1969

a) The formative time of the EECMY, 1916-1959

This period[303] saw the coming of other missions to Ethiopia besides the SEM (Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen): the Swedish Mission Bible-True-Friends (Bibeltrogna Vänner), in 1927/28 the German Hermannsburg Mission, at about the same time the Anglo-American Society Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), a little earlier the American Presbyterian Church, the British Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society in 1934, the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) already in 1921 and the *Falasha* Mission[304]. The time until 1959 was characterized by the continuation of the activities that begun mainly with Onesimus in Wollega, western Ethiopia, and in Addis Ababa, as well as the establishment and support of new initiatives by the new arrived missionaries from 1916-1936. These had been heavily disturbed by the Italian fascist invasion from 1936-1942. After that the process of uniting and the consolidation towards the establishment of the EECMY characterized the time from 1942-1959.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Commission on World Mission, proposed in 1951 that Lutheran missions, which took up work in one country, should coordinate their efforts through consultative committees. Based on this the five Lutheran missions in Ethiopia formed a Lutheran Missions Committee. Emanuel Abraham and E. Gebre-Selassie attended the All African Council of Churches (AACC) in Tanzania in 1955, and discovered the identity with Lutherans of other countries and the idea to apply for a national church. The Addis Ababa Mekane Yesus Congregation already entered an interim membership with the Lutheran churches in 1957. Finally, after the settlement of all organizational questions, the signing of the Constitution on January 21, 1959, marked the foundation of the EECMY.

Neither note-worthy contacts with Muslims nor any activities of Christians among Muslims, besides the continuation in the places described above, can be examined during this formative period, since Islam and approaches to Muslims obviously were not the main target and subject of the missions. However, it would be a worthwhile task to revise all the mission organizations' archives etc. with respect to this question.

b) One of the few persons who reflected on the subject, however, was J.S. Trimingham, as documented in his publication in 1950[305]. He gave a rough account and picture of the

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[303] PS 1.3.7.1., 60-88.

[304] After 1944 new missions arrived: the Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) came in 1948 and started in Sidama and Gamo Gofa, the Danish Evangelical Mission (DEM) arrived in 1950 and started in Bale, and in 1957 the American Lutheran Mission took up their work.

[305] Trimingham, Christian. In the following a brief presentation of his book shall be given.

religious scene in Ethiopia with emphasis on the Christian churches. Quoting a sentence given by emperor Menelik;

"'Ethiopia is an island of Christians in a sea of Muslims'"[306],

his tendency to present the distribution of Islam in and around Ethiopia, was in a line with a general exclusive scholarly interest for the Christian Ethiopia. However, he did not reflect on the sentence itself, which secretly included that Muslims are not part of Ethiopia, i.e. Ethiopian Muslims, or that Islam is somehow an alien part to Ethiopia, as has been stated above in chapter II. 1. Trimingham may not have been aware of this, and his insights and information he shared through his books, still have to be considered as classical in the field of Islamic studies in East Africa. Some of his statements shall be presented here in order to fill the gap at least partly until 1959.

The policy of Emperor Haile Selassie, aiming at internal unity brought a certain toleration of Muslims. In 1942 he said:

"When we established *Qadis'* courts by law we did it in order to achieve national unity"[307].

But Islam always remained a challenge to Ethiopia and its' Christians after the 16th century's aggressions. At the same time, the Christian missions and churches gained much recognition by the emperor, because of their contribution towards the development of Ethiopia, especially the promotion of the schools and education in general. The Italians by their decree of 1937;

"provided that no non-Italian mission should conduct schools and the members of the various missions were eliminated either by the refusal to grant return visas after they had left the country or expulsion on various (non-religious) grounds … Restrictions were also placed upon their work in Muslim areas because the pro-Muslim policy of the government"[308].

In spite of this, by the time of the absence of missionaries, many congregations grew strong and especially the movement in the Wollega area became partly;

"self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating"[309].

After the restoration permission was given to the former missionaries, but not to new missionaries, until the Decree No. 3 of 1944 was propagated. In this decree the proselytizing of Ethiopian Orthodox Christians was restricted.

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[306] Ib., 7.
[307] Ib., 10-11.
[308] Ib., 30f.
[309] Ib., 33.

"In Open Areas, Missions may teach and preach the Christian Faith of their own denomination without restriction"[310].

These Open Areas included Muslims. The decree sought to assure full cooperation between the government and the missions, it was therefore an act of balancing different interests. Concerning the spiritual situation, Trimmingham gave his estimation:

"For many, particularly the Galla [i.e. old word for Oromo, not used any more], Islam filled the spiritual vacuum during the past hundred years; now its advance is stopped and many are eager to accept Christianity"[311].

This estimation did not consider the shape of Oromo Muslims and the strong identity it developed with Islam. With regard to the Christian outreach work, Trimingham mentioned the superfluous character of the Ethiopian people in general.

"Conversions from Christianity to Islam and from Islam to Christianity have been frequent in every age"[312].

However, in his opinion, little

"missionary work has been done amongst Muslims in this region … The importance and immediacy of the extension of missionary work in those regions where the adoption of Islam is recent cannot be overstressed. Islam has been spreading amongst the Arusi Galla [i.e. Oromo] since about 1870, but it is still little more than a veneer and a degree of openmindedness has been found by missionaries in their early contacts with the Arusi"[313].

In his conclusion he finally encouraged all missions to prepare their missionaries for the encounter with Islam and Muslims in Ethiopia;

"It ought not to be necessary to say that missionaries need to be trained in the forms which Islam takes in Africa so that they in turn may train the Christians of the new communities to meet Islam, but no mission within the knowledge of the writer has anyone on its staff who is trained in Islamics!"[314].

Trimingham continued his studies which resulted in his important book entitled "Islam in Ethiopia" and other books and articles, with which he prepared the way for an understanding of Islam in Ethiopia, even though at times he gave an obstacle for understanding Ethiopian Islam.

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[310] Ib., 70, p. 11.
[311] Ib., 54.
[312] Ib., 58.
[313] Ib., 59.
[314] Ib., 62.

c) Evaluation

The time before the foundation of the EECMY focused on the consolidation of the missions initiated by the LWF and the continuation of the work mainly in non-Christian areas and mainly among the Oromo. Trimingham encouraged the outreach activities towards Muslims, since he saw an opportunity to use the spiritual vacuum within the Oromo and the superfluous character of the religious landscape in general. His studies contributed much to the awareness of the Muslims' situation and historical development in Ethiopia. However, it should take still another decade since the EECMY should start its approaches to Muslims seriously.

2.4. Interim Summary: Historical foundation for the CMR of the EECMY

In order to summarize the second section of this section, pioneers starting from Heyling as the first landmark in CMR in the 17th century, and pioneer missions of the EECMY in the formative time until the foundation in 1959 have mainly dealt indirectly with CMR. The SEM, however, had carried out a serious attempt on approaches to Muslims at some stations, of which the Geleb activities and the Jiren settlement have been the most important ones and expressed a contextual, indigenous and holistic approach. The Jiren settlement was the first serious and indigenous approach to a Muslim dominated area, and therefore represents the second landmark in CMR. Not enough is known about the attempts of the other missions and churches, which still need further study. Until 1968/9, except Trimingham's overview, no serious attempt has been undertaken to understand Ethiopian Islam or to develop approaches towards Muslims, even though the constitutional call for outreach included the Muslims. However, a foundation had been laid with these first activities, on which the participation in the IAP/PROCMURA, to which attention shall be given in the next section, had started.

3. The Islam-in-Africa-Project (IAP) / Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA)

3.1. The history and the structure of the IAP / PROCMURA

At the conference of the All African Council of Churches (AACC), held 1958 in Ibadan, Nigeria, the delegates again expressed their concern for

"more intensive study and action in respect to the presentation of the Gospel to Muslims in Africa"[315].

An impetus was then given by the International Mission Council (IMC).

"According to Procmura reports, 'After the first All Africa Conference of Churches meeting in January 1958 … the International Missionary Council took the initiative *[to organize]* two consultations on Islam in Africa *[both of which were held in 1958]*"[316].

Under the supervision of the European Liaison Committee (ELC)[317] two consultations were held in 1958, and P. Benignus of the Paris Missionary Society conducted study travels and visited some churches in Africa as the first secretary of the ELC[318]. The first established Area Committees (AC) in North and West Nigeria were bound together lose, and the organization with the name IAP was founded in 1959. In 1963, advisers took up work in Ghana, Cameroon and Kenya. From 1968-1971 the work began in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Other countries followed[319].

The ELC arranged the IAP to function as a service body, not to be at the front-line of Christian-Muslim encounters as a new mission organization, but to

"encourage and educate Christians of Africa to fulfill their responsibility towards the Muslims"[320].

Secondly, the ecumenical aspect was expressed by making the IAP an autonomous body open to the widest range of churches[321].

The ELC first exercised the coordination. In 1970, the responsibility has been handed over to the IAP General Council, which had been established by the Area Committees[322]. It is the governing body of the IAP/PROCMURA and is composed of one member from each AC, women and youth representatives from each region as well as non-voting administrative functionaries. An Executive Committee is acting on the decisions and consists of officers with their duties. The General Council appoints the General Adviser to be the secretary,

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[315] Crossley, Islam, 153.

[316] PS 1.4.2.2.

[317] Hock, Streiflichter, 350: The ELC is not an independent organisation or institution, but a platform on which representatives of the Churches, church aid organisations and other institutions are engaged in Christian-Muslim relations or having relations to African churches, to discuss how to promote the work of PROCMURA.

[318] Hock, Islam, ib.

[319] Ib. 155. Nowadays PROCMURA has 18 African countries as members; see Hock, Streiflichter, 352. See also PS 1.4.2.4., 3: "Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda in the East and South Africa sub-regions; and Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Benin, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire Sierra Leone, Senegal, the Gambia and Cameroon, in the West Africa sub-region".

[320] Ib. 153. PROCMURA is not an organisation with an hierarchic-institutional structure to decide in Nairobi what should happen elsewhere, but the central office (not headquarters!) should support what happens at the grass-root-levels. See Hock, ib., 353.

[321] Ib.

[322] Hock, Islam, 97.

leader and manager of the IAP/PROCMURA[323]. The General Council nowadays meets every three years.

Regional coordinators form a link between the IAP/PROCMURA and the AC's[324]. Regional consultative meetings are held according to the needs and finance capacity.

The AC's shall coordinate the work directed to the grass-root-level, i.e. the Christians. They consist of representatives from the local churches (and missions) and, if possible, from national councils of churches. Competent Advisers are assigned to assist them and to coordinate the work[325]. Since the AC's decide on how to carry out the work autonomously[326], they may add beside their Executive Committees with their officers an Associate Adviser, consultants, sub-committees, working groups and other. Much responsibility, however, lasts on the Adviser's shoulders.

The IAP had a study center from 1965-1977 in Ibadan. Its first director, W. Bijlefeld, had much influence on the definition of the IAP/PROCMURA aims. After its closure in 1977, the office moved from Ibadan to Nairobi, Kenya.

In 1987, the organization's name had been changed, since the former name was misleading people to think of it as an Islamic organization or other. Secondly, the inter-religious and relational aspect between Islam and Christianity should be stressed. Therefore, the name PROCMURA was given to the organization[327]. The ELC and the support group in the USA continued to be supporters with advisory function.

International consultations, seminars and workshops are held regularly and are carried out by the various Advisers and consultants.

PROCMURA has its own newspaper and offers a variety of literature[328].

The women's work had been re-emphasized since 1989[329], and included in the constitution a Women's Coordinator. Besides it gives scholarships for women and offers competent

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[323] PS 1.4.2.4., 3: "The General Adviser heads the General secretariat and serves as the overall overseer for the implementation of the Project's programmes. He provides advice, skills and expertise (technical assistance) in addition to ensuring the general functioning of the Project".

[324] Ib.: "The work of the Area Advisers is coordinated by Regional Co-ordinators who are usually selected from among the most experienced Area Advisers. The Regional Co-ordinators from time to time provide the General Secretariat with new developments in Christian-Muslim relations in their regions and give yearly reports on programmes carried out in the various regions to the Executive Committee".

[325] Ib.: "Grassroots ministry of the Project is carried out by Area Advisers who work with Area Committees within the different National Council of Churches' inter-faith programmes or where such programmes do not exist, in close collaboration with the churches".

[326] PS 1.4.2.2., 5: "As the organization strives to increase local autonomy … there may be a need to delegate decision-making and implementing authority".

[327] Hock, Islam, 97.

[328] M. Oduyoye, Project.

[329] See chapter III., 4.3.3. of this study.

teachers for women. A focus is laid on Christian education, and AC's and Advisers for women are the main concerns of the PROCMURA's women's wing.

3.2. The aim of the IAP/PROCMURA

As defined in the constitution point 2.a, the primary aim is;

> "To keep before the churches of Africa their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the churches task of interpreting the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully in the Muslim World"[330].

In the Constitution and Bye-Laws draft 2003 under Article 2. Section I, this aim was kept but extended by the words;

> "… and the promotion of constructive engagements with Muslims for peace in society and peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims"[331].

The aim consists of two main elements, which should be commented on briefly: understanding Islam, and interpreting the Gospel faithfully. Both aspects are not separated from each other, but interwoven by the words "in view of". However, the need for understanding has gained more weight. With the second element the word "faithfully" was added, which emphasizes the tendency the interpreting of the Gospel should have.

a) Understanding Islam

> "Understanding implies not only a fair and objective knowledge of what Muslims believe and practice, but a respectful and empathetic attitude towards the Muslim as fellow-creature and as seeker after God"[332].

The consequence for such understanding is therefore what has been defined in point 2.b. of the constitution:

> "To effect the research and education necessary for (a) above"[333].

To avoid an understanding which leads to an offensive or hostile attitude and potential for conflicts on one side, and to a disinterest or indifference on the other side, the task of understanding of Islam in its regional and contextual appearances had been made constitutional[334]. This overall guideline includes the scientific and religious understanding of

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[330] PS 1.4.1.3.: The Constitution PROCMURA (as amended in 1995), 1.
[331] Ib., see draft.
[332] Crossley, ib., 154.
[333] PS 1.4.1.3. For the operationalization of the mission statement see PS 1.4.2.2., 2: "Programmatically, Procmura has adopted three approaches to promoting Christian-Muslim relations. The first is through sensitization and awareness building (e.g. in the dissemination of publications). The second is through the organization of local training activities. The third is through the creation of opportunities for academic training".
[334] PS 1.4.2.4., 1: "The Project has always maintained that to avoid confrontation and strife requires an objective study of Islam, and informed knowledge of past and contemporary history of Muslims in the continent. This

Islam in its broadest sense. The churches at the institutional and local levels are responsible to promote such understanding by all possible means.

b) Interpreting the Gospel faithfully

The term "interpreting" indicates, that the Gospel should be communicated to Muslims primarily;

> "by *the quality of life* of the Christian community, and especially by its behavior towards the Muslims"[335],

and secondarily by clarifying words for effective witness, which need to be understood by the Muslims. The witness hereby becomes a holistic dimension. The example of a living Christian community with a living faith is crucial for witness. Again it is the task of education to include the various themes to raise awareness for effective witness through forms of evangelization and outreach, church service, contextualization and indigenization of Muslim converts, theological interpretation of Islamic and Christian concepts, as well as forms of Christian participation in communal life for the improvement of living conditions in its widest sense.

The understanding of the Muslims and the interpretation of the Gospel are appropriate and reasonable when carried out faithfully, i.e. in;

> "obedience to God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ … [Neither] compromise for the sake of peaceful co-existence, nor yet aggressiveness under the guise of proclamation"[336]

are intended. The profile and the contours of the Christian faith should not be clouded or kept in passive silence, and extreme forms of aggressive evangelization like "crusade"-methods should be avoided for the sake of respect[337]. Against this;

> "Christians have eagerly welcomed the middle way of witnessing to Christ in love and loving, because this is the truest witness"[338].

The aspect of "*Missio Dei*", i.e. God's own mission work in the example of Jesus Christ, and God as the ultimate subject of the CMR and encounters, becomes an overall ruling aspect. It

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informed knowledge it is believed, will promote responsible Christian witness that does not violate the spirit of Good neighbourliness".

[335] Crossley, ib. See also PS 1.4.2.4., 2: "That in spite of the common humanity Christians share with Muslims or perhaps because of it, the Gospel is to be communicated to them, lest it be obscured by the quality of life of the Christian community – especially by its behaviour towards Muslims in history as in the contemporary situation".

[336] Ib.

[337] J. A. Mbillah, Rolle, 14, speaks of both Christian Evangelists and Muslim open-air-preachers, who proclaim their message polemically and hurtfully against the other religion.

[338] Crossley, ib., 159.

is a religious, systematic-theological and missiological aspect. Therefore, the discussion about the understanding of God within Islam and Christianity, becomes a crucial and decisive key. Tendencies towards an understanding of a dichotomy between the Islamic *Allah* and the Christian God, and towards an understanding of having one (and the same) God prevail and are debated in present discussions. However, faithful understanding and interpreting is not described by detail in the constitution, thus leaving an open field for research for contextual religious and theological studies, which should enhance and promote CMR in order to prevent misunderstandings and obstacles.

It is worth stressing that conversion-oriented or proselytizing activities as a possible means in witness have been put in constructive and creative tension, or in a framework, by making understanding a precondition, most probably in order to slow down direct and offensive outreach approaches that are understood as to be harmful. Another question open to discussion is whether the foremost intention in CMR should be seen in witness and conversion, or in understanding Islam and interpreting the Gospel to the Muslims without necessarily expecting conversion, or, in other words, on which way one can expect conversion or the condition of non-converted in CMR. It is here to be mentioned, that the driving force of conversion-oriented approaches may be an obstacle for faithful understanding and interpreting. However, this question has to be dealt with later on, when it comes to missiological implications in approaches in chapter III. The role of Christian witness, a word that had not been mentioned directly in the constitution, has to be defined according to the context.

The draft of the new Constitution, as mentioned above, has included a new aspect, which should be looked at here briefly. J. Mbillah, the present General Adviser of PROCMURA, has defined dialogue with Muslims as "constructive Christian engagement"[339]. He highlighted with this interpretation, besides the importance of the Christian witness as an integral part of the Christian identity, the common strive of Christians and Muslims for peace and peaceful coexistence as an overall African and human feature[340]. The role of the two main religions in Africa for a potential religious conflict management gives PROCMURA an important task for the future of Africa[341]. The problems of such constructive engagement are of general and doctrinal, as well as of practical and existential nature. Some of the actual

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[339] J.A. Mbillah, Projekt, 9.
[340] Ib., see also the Preamble of the new Constitution draft, ib.
[341] J.A. Mbillah, Rolle, 12-16. See also PS 1.4.2.4., 2: "That is to say that the project promotes responsible witness to the Christian faith, and an African oriented Christian-Muslim co-operation for peace in the continent, and peaceful co-existence between men and women of the two faiths".

problems in CMR, without giving solutions, following Mbillah, should be mentioned here. Since violent encounters prohibit friendship, to find preventive measures and nurture peaceful encounters becomes a mandate. Another question is how to combine witness with peaceful coexistence, i.e. dealing with the suspicion of proselytism. The missionary activities on both sides, the Islamic *da'wa* and the Christian call for redemption, should be clarified and channeled into forms that enhance the respect and mutual understanding between each other. Cooperation in common social matters for the betterment of life-conditions can improve CMR. The "Islamophobia" with Christians, i.e. the fear that Muslims or Islam are a permanent threat, should be reduced by peaceful encounters in which the aspect of humanity, i.e. being humans, should be stressed. Generalizations in every case should be avoided. This rough overview of problems in CMR as experienced in Africa[342], which are showing that the addition given in the draft is more concerned with actual developments in CMR in Africa.

The aims of PROCMURA provide common and guiding principles, from which the member countries should find orientation in order to develop their own understanding of Islam in their contexts, and approaches, strategies and guidelines for their contextual CMR. Common to all should be the unprejudiced and comprehending endeavor of understanding Islam and the Muslims not so much as the other but as humans with a religious quest, that result in faithful approaches and forms of witness which improve the peaceful coexistence in view of God's acting mission with the possibility of conversion, prevailing in such CMR.

3.3. The beginning of the IAP in Ethiopia

The ELC, which was financed and supported i.a. by some Misson Societies and the German Missionary Council, selected Advisers and mediated them to the African Area Committees. Gunnar Hasselblatt[343] was the first German Adviser for Ethiopia and in East Africa, who was assigned to work within the EECMY. The "Hannover Landeskirche", a regional church of the Evangelical Church of Germany, released him for almost six years[344], and the GHM facilitated his appointment as a teacher in Old Testament at the MYTS. However, his main task was to work as the Adviser for the IAP Area Committee in Ethiopia with the EECMY. In this condition he worked from October 1969 until July 1975 in Ethiopia. In the form of travel reports, he described the country and its people, the ways in which Muslim and

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[342] See for details, ib.

[343] Born in 1928 in Reval he studied Theology and semitic Philology in Bethel, Tübingen and Göttingen. After working as a Lutheran pastor for several years in a congregation (Stade) he habilitated with the Göttingen University in 1969 with an research on Muhammed 'Abduh's (1849-1905) apologetical work, see Hasselblatt, Herkunft.

[344] The Hannover Landeskirche covered his salary.

Christian leaders lived and thought. Beside his travel reports[345] he wrote small books and some articles on Islam in Ethiopia and the general political situation. Concerning his perception of Islam in Ethiopia and the way he understood the CMR in Ethiopia, his documents shall be examined in the next chapter. Before Hasselblatt arrived, the documents are not clear about the beginning of contacts between the IAP and the EECMY, probably in 1967-1968. Only formal and preparatory steps towards Hasselblatt's coming have been detected in the older documents. Therefore, the IAP-work within the EECMY started effectively with his coming.

Representatives of a Presbyterian group, the Mennonites, an American Mission close to the Church of Christ, and the Lutheran EECMY were at the first time members of the Area Committee[346]. The EOTC was not a member, because of a feeling of a superior position they meant to have, and in order to avoid cooperation with the protestant churches, which they viewed as sects, and to whom they stood in competition[347]. In chapter III the attempts at ecumenical unification for the IAP/PROCMURA work shall be further examined.

The first task of an Adviser is to study Islam and to give the churches an impression of its structure and power in Ethiopia[348]. The second task is his teaching through courses for evangelists, pastors and missionaries, who are working in Muslim surroundings[349]. To take away existing fears about Islam and to encourage the Evangelists to proclaim the gospel to Muslims are two important aspects of the teaching. Besides some small pietistic groups, who have tried to penetrate into Muslim areas, so far the churches have not started the important task of CMR, according to Hasselblatt. It was in former times easier and more attractive to operate within traditional religious adherents[350]. Islam in contrast stood and grew stronger as the impact of modernism arose, by returning to its religious roots, and therefore and because of the financial and spiritual challenge that went along with it, Islam had been never a target for the churches and missions outreach activities[351]. With these impressions the work of the IAP in Ethiopia started, and led into a process, that brought the EECMY into a quest for an appropriate understanding of Islam and witness to Muslims in Ethiopia from 1969-2004. The details of this quest shall be examined in the next chapter.

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[345] The travel reports (circulation letters) are only partly available at the ELM archive in Hermannsburg.
[346] Hasselblatt, Dialog, 126.
[347] Ib., 127.
[348] Ib., 126.
[349] Ib., 127.
[350] Ib., 125.
[351] Ib. 125.

3.4. Interim Summary: Aim and framework for the CMR in Ethiopia

In order to summarize the third section of the second chapter, it became clear, that the IAP/PROCMURA, which had been founded in the same year as the EECMY, provided the EECMY with an aim and a framework, which both gave an organizational structure and a guideline concerning the content of CMR, in which the understanding of Islam and Muslims was made a prerequisite for the faithful interpretation of the Gospel, i.e. the witness. However, the Area Committees had been given freedom to develop their own activities, in which the context of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Islam had to be included. The next chapter, therefore, will highlight some of the most important concepts of understanding, concepts of training with literature, concepts of approaches and strategies and concepts of the EECMY Area Committee within the EECMY in its wider context.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND FINDINGS

The analysis has an order, in which the process starts with the concepts of understanding, develops with the concepts of training as an active process, in which the understood is being taught, which again passively reflects the understanding. The concepts of teaching and the literature give at times views to approaches and practical issues, which must be dealt with separately, while dealing with concepts of approaches and outreach strategies. Finally, after reflections on experiences, the approaches mould into the shape of a strategy paper or lead toward guidelines. The setting of the EECMY with its concepts then will be placed into the wider scene by describing ecumenical and interreligious efforts in connection with the EECMY PROCMURA-AC.

1. Concepts of understanding

The concepts of understanding have developed with people, who stood in relation to CMR, and who had to deal with the understanding of Islam. The first two persons were key persons with the IAP/PROCMURA project in Ethiopia, whereas the following two conducted particular scientific researches related to our subject. The guiding question should be: what is essential in each concept of understanding, and what is common to all of them? In the interim summary, an answer to this question shall be elaborated.

1.1. Contextual understanding: Gunnar Hasselblatt

a) Preperations

Before Hasselblatt entered the Ethiopian scene, he was aware of the IAP and some of the trends in CMR. He gave a report about three lectures held at the 16th annual meeting of the Commission for World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Uppsala from August 16-22, 1964[352]. The meeting introduced Hasselblatt to some insights. It had been stated on this meeting that the approach of Christians to Muslims through the methods of infiltration through development activities, or through an intellectual discussion, may be without success or misleading. The better way would be presented when the encounter happens on religious grounds, for which a proper study and knowledge about Islam are required[353]. The Christian has to be steadfast and grounded in the biblical message, and his proclamation's core must be Christ and his life. It became clear that the best way to achieve these aims was to send trained staff to countries like Ethiopia, and to cooperate with institutes like the IAP[354]. Writing about the meeting, Hasselblatt probably was not aware that he himself should be one of these Advisers to carry out the study of Islam in Ethiopia, and to train the Christians, even though first contacts have been made there. However, to gain some knowledge for himself in Islamic studies, Hasselblatt gained his doctorate with a study about the apologetic work of Muhammed Abduh's "Islam and Christianity in relation to science and civilization"[355] in 1969.

b) Aim and method: *Theoretical and practical*

The picture of Islam in Ethiopia, as perceived by Hasselblatt, included firstly some of the historical developments like the Axumite *hijra* and the Gragn' episode, which he found in the literature[356]. However, since it was not a vivid picture he found there, other questions arose:

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[352] Hasselblatt, Evangelium, The consultation was held with the participation of W.A. Bijlefeld, director of the IAP, J. Christensen, Bishop in West-Pakistan, and P. Lundgren from Genf, who were the lecturers.

[353] Ib., 154f. This was mainly the contribution of Christensen.

[354] Ib., 157: „Kirche und Mission müssen *ausgebildete Kräfte* in diese Länder entsenden, um für bessere Kenntnis des Islam zu sorgen, damit erst die Möglichkeit für sinnvollen Kontakt und für eine gezielte Verkündigung geschaffen wird … Auf jeden Fall wird den Kirchen dringlich empfohlen, mit … [dem] ‚Islam in Afrika Projekt' [zusammenzuarbeiten]".

[355] Hasselblatt, Herkunft.

[356] For the following see PS 1.1.1.1.-3., 1.1.2.1.-5., 1.3.1.1.-6.

In his **first document** PS 1.1.1.2./1.3.1.4., entitled "Islam in Ethiopia", Hasselblatt gave his first official comments on Islam in Ethiopia. It was already written in 1970, see PS 1.3.1.6., 2, and later was published again in various periodicals both in German and English, see Hasselblatt, Äthiopien, Islam, Der Islam. The literature for this article included Trimmingham, Ethiopia, and Watt, W.M., Muhammad at Mecca (Oxford 1962). **The second document**, that must be placed after this, is PS 1.1.1.1./1.3.1.1., a four page report given to the 7th General Assembly in 1971. **The third document** is PS 1.1.2.3./1.3.1.2. **The fourth document** then is "The Wollo Settlement Plan", written in June 1972. **The fifth and sixth documents**, i.e. PS 1.1.2.5. and PS 1.3.1.6., have to be seen together, because Hasselblatt mentioned in PS 1.1.2.5. the existence of PS 1.3.1.6., the latter called "The Islam in Africa Project in Ethiopia 1969-1974 is a collection of four articles, namely I. Islam in Ethiopia, II. The Wollo Settlement Plan, III. Dr. John Taylor's Travel Diary, and IV. Islam – a Living Religion, Visit to a Mawlid. **The seventh document**, PS 1.1.1.3./1.3.1.5., is called "Islam – a Living Religion, Visit to a Mawlid" (here with an introduction given in 1975), that later was published in Hasselblatt, Visit, (without an

where and how Islam lives today, what he teaches[357], how it carries out its mission, if and how it contributes to the development of the country; all this was not to be found for him in the literature. Regarding his aim and method, Hasselblatt developed his own system. To discover the features he was asking for, he had to travel deep into the hinterland, where he looked for Islamic schools and teaching centers, as well as to the holy places of Islam, in order to discover the carriers of tradition[358]. As soon as he had discovered one place, he was directed to another, from one in the desert to one in the highlands, then to the lowlands, and so on. While doing so he became aware of a network of schools and sanctuaries with scholars, leaders and holy men, not systematically connected with each other, but spread throughout the country and interconnected indirectly. Arriving at such places, he conducted dialogues and disputes, and collected the information he found about the history of the place, etc. In exchange, he told the hosts about what he knew, at times speaking or reading in Arabic, and about the places he had visited before. In this way, Hasselblatt had the opportunity to conduct many dialogues in the encounter between Muslims and Christians on the basic level. Normally the adherents of the religions live side by side in a *modus vivendi*, but in some areas a strict separation through marriage and food observances prevails. However, people never talked about religion. An intellectual encounter or confrontation has not been happened so far.

Later he wrote travel reports prepared for the circulation letters he used to write monthly to his friends in German[359]. Many of his observations he used to include into his teachings[360].

c) Islamic education system: *Discovering the educational network*

By this way he found schools with a high level in which the orthodox Sunni Islam mostly of *shafitic* background was practiced. The students stay there for up to twenty years or move to other schools, until they are able to work as *Qadis* or establish their own school. Many thousands of mobile teachers of Islam are moving around in Ethiopia. It appeared to him that the Muslims have their strategy while establishing new schools and holy places. The students are assembled around a *shaykh* who enjoys almost divine admiration. Such places soon

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introduction). The outcome was later to be seen in Hasselblatt, Horn, in 1991, in which most of Hasselblatt's findings, with some distance, were presented.

[357] Hasselblatt, Islam, 18: "In as much as Islam from the first has been essentially concerned with a Book, and with writing and teaching, I would first of all give some account of the state of Muslim education in Ethiopia"

[358] Hasselblatt, Dialog, 126.

[359] His letters have not been revised yet, since the author of this study has not been able so find a complete collection. This remains a task to be carried out in the future.

[360] No outlines or documents about his teachings have been found so far. It is possible that he was also working with a book, that was available in an Amharic translation, i.e. "Christian Witness Among Muslims", see Anonymus, Christian.

become pilgrimage centers. These schools and holy sites lie apart from the streets. As soon as the youth gets in contact with modern schools, the Islamic schools become unattractive, because they could only learn Arabic and the traditional religious education, but no English or sciences, which are necessary to compete in order to find employment and income.

Regarding the school system, Hasselblatt described five levels of Islamic schools;

> "as it were of five storeyed structure"[361].

Places without a school: Fathers in these schools teach their children in Arabic, in the *Qur'an* and in simple practices of religion, such as the manner of prayer, fasting, and the like. Places with a school: A graduate of a higher school has settled after he may have studied at different places and travelled for a long time. Such schools are scattered all over the country wherever Muslims reside and outnumber 10,000[362] according to Hasselblatt's estimation. Places with a more advanced institution: Two or three hundred students receive instruction;

> "which covers all the fundamentals of Islam"[363]

and can last up to ten and more years. Hasselblatt estimated the number of these schools at around 100. Places with higher schools: Hasselblatt has visited some of these schools, of which he placed Dana in the first range, then others like Abred, Kolito and Gera (near Jimma). There may be others. The place often consisted of a mosque and a school with about 100 resident students. The syllabus comprised mainly language studies,

> "which is to say that the Suras of the Koran are written out over and over again on whitened wooden boards and learned of by heart"[364].

The practical rituals of religion are exercised and supervised. Thereafter follows the study of *Hadith* and the commentary on the *Qur'an*;

> "along with instruction on proper procedures when there is death in the family or when there is sickness, what is to be observed at weddings or at circumcision ceremonies"[365].

Besides, the central duties of Islam being taught, with specification on law regarding the school which is going to be followed, and including philosophical studies and poetry.

d) Pilgrimage centers: *Experiencing the spiritual infrastructure*

Hasselblatt mentioned the pilgrimage centers of *shaykh* Hussein in Bale and the more modern but popular shrine of Ja'a, where saints are highly venerated, since they have

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[361] Hasselblatt, Islam, 24.
[362] Ib.
[363] Ib., 24-25.
[364] Ib., 19, here describing Dana, between the Christian Highlands and the Muslim Danakil desert.
[365] Ib.

performed miracles which express their inhabitation of *baraka*, besides their piety and teaching. The importance and influence of holy men cannot be underestimated. Whereas on the one hand he became aware of the educational network Islam vividly has, he now experienced;

"what can be called spiritual infrastructure or inner structure of the nation"[366].

His descriptions gave testimony of the many alive features of spiritual and religious Islam, that he concluded:

"This is a living faith"[367].

Islam's vivid forms like the celebrations, prayers, drum beats, smokes, chants, dances, ritualsand the like must be felt and experienced, otherwise one will not touch the soul and heart of a Muslim. It is only by this way that one may find an idea of what it means to be an adherent of Islam in Ethiopia. The contextual experience is the most concretest form and an important prerequisite for a proper understanding of Islam.

Other holy places were named by Hasselblatt to be found in Burye, Boarana (west of Dessie, Wollo) and Qatburie. All these places share one common feature: they are not to be found in cities, but lie apart in the countryside. This may be due to the underground and sub-group existence, in which the traditions had been conserved in order to resist external influences. Classical Islamic studies and traditional Islamic practices compete with modern education and modernism to be found in the cities[368].

e) Settlement: *When faith gets settled*

Hasselblatt later worked out the system of Islamic settlements throughout the centuries as the decisive instrument of expansion of Islam[369]. The islamization had been prepared by traders through coastline settlements and caravan trade inside the hinterland, and then had been made permanent through the religious orders[370]. The spread of the settlements of *sufi*-orders, had been a stabilizing factor in spite of the historical socio-political changes like the colonization and decolonization through the constitution of national states. A somehow Islamic internationalism had been formed by the fact that many Muslim scholars who

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[366] Ib., Visit, 60.
[367] Ib., 54. See all his descriptions of the *Qadiriyya Mawlid* celebration in Qatbery, ib. 51-60.
[368] Ib., Islam, 25.
[369] Hasselblatt, Horn, 429: „Der Islam hat bei diesen Völkern schnell und ohne große Auseinandersetzung (wenn auch mitunter recht oberflächlich) Fuß fassen können, besonders in der Gestalt von Niederlassungen der *sufi*-Orden, von denen es hunderte, wenn nicht tausend in der Region gibt. Da dieses System islamischer Niederlassungen durch die Jahrhunderte und bis heute das entscheidende Instrument der Einpflanzung und Ausbreitung des Islam am Horn von Afrika ist, muß es hier an einigen Beispielen vorgestellt werden".
[370] Ib., 430.

received their training at higher schools, moved to provinces in the countryside to establish their own schools and centers.

Holy places (*zawiyas*) were propagated to function as replacements for the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca, thus attracting masses of people and keeping the faith strong and alive. A characterization of such a holy place was given by the example of Ya'a with its former *shaykh* al-Fakki al-Barnawi, who died about 1950, who came from Bornu in Nigeria as a pilgrim from West-Africa, and settled in Wollega close to the border to Sudan, who then established a popular center venerated by many pilgrims[371]. With these *zawiyas* Islam has created a vital sub-culture in Ethiopia, strong and resistant to most external pressures[372]. Its persistence and survival within the shadowy existence created by overlords, who discriminated the Muslims and marked them as second-class people, gave the mostly poor people a sense of pride, and strengthened their backbone of identity, i.e. the belonging to a powerful religious community (*ummah*). No serious attention had been given to these *zawiyas* and its scholarship that had been conserved and passed on, far off the roads and modern civilization. The power of Islam rests within these vessels and in the exchange of traditional knowledge in between them. Some of these *zawiyas* were mentioned and described by Hasselblatt: Bure (Illubabor), Gerawa (Wollo), Abred (Gurage), Dana (on the border to Danakil), Qatburie, and some other, concentrated around Harar.

Even though Islam was considered a threat and an enemy; as a result of the relations Europe had with Christian Abyssinia, which resulted in a negative image of Islam. These relations influenced the interest almost exlusively in Semitic, Amharic, and Christian aspects amongst concerned scholars. Meanwhile Muslims remained largely unnoticed and grew stronger as a community.[373]. By forceful subjugation, for the amharization and for the national unity, the identity clinged to its religious and cultural origins, both of which were embraced by Islam over centuries. Their settlement forms seemed to have provided enough strength to endure all these external powers.

f) Evaluation

To give a short summary here, after Hasselblatt had been prepared for his ministry in Ethiopia, he started to carry out his studies, partly with available literature, but mostly by travelling and visiting the most important places of Islam in the country, where he collected

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[371] Ib., 431.
[372] Ib., 434, Hasselblatt mentioned the external influences such as the Amharic colonisation, the development-oriented Christian missions, the competence of governmental schools, and the pressure of the atheistic and antireligious propaganda of the revolutionary government (Derg).
[373] Ib., 436.

the information he found. He discovered the educational network and system of Islam, and experienced the spiritual infrastructure and dimension of faith. By coming as close as possible to Muslims and their most important aspirations, contextual studies which are focused on the co-experience of religious practices, are necessary to understand the religious feelings and the importance of the learning and keeping of the traditions and religion of Islam. He gave special attention to the form in which Islam settled through the example of *zawiyas* which served i.a. to establish a sub-culture with their own identities, bound to religious and cultural origins. Practically not many would be privileged to conduct such studies in the way Hasselblatt did. This concept of contextual understanding of Islam involves a lot of requirements which probably many are not able to carry out. To travel into various regions and to participate in Muslim activities, without creating suspicion, was probably only possible because Hasselblatt was a foreigner with a frank mind, whose appearance soon opened all doors, and who was well educated and versed in Islam. One has to question the practicality of this concept. However, even if Ethiopians may conduct such ways of understanding only in their regions and with the door openers they have and could use, it may contribute essentially to a growing understanding of Ethiopian Islam.

Secondly, his detailed knowledge of syncretistic forms or socio-cultural and religious features that differ from orthodox Islam was limited. His ability to differentiate between local customs and Islamic expressions of faith was therefore weak[374], because he only roughly visited the places and people, thus he was only partly able to experience them punctually at moments of highlights. The daily and continuous sharing of life was not possible for Hasselblatt. Even though these critiques seem harsh, they shall not reduce the value of his understanding that was possible only because of these conditions.

Thirdly, the highlighting of the settlement processes of Islam prepared a way towards approaches to Muslims that Christians could carry out in practice. The settlement strategies of the Muslims made such an impression on Hasselblatt that he considered the settlement idea as a possible means for Christian witness and approach to Muslims that can be practiced especially among strict Muslim communities. Since he prepared a detailed plan, the approach will be later examined in section 3.2. It should become very clear, that this approach was a contextual one, since it arose from a contextual understanding.

1.2.   Indigenous understanding: Shamsudin Abdo

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[374] Compare with section 1.4. of this chapter, in which Peter, Kulturelle, criticized him.

a) Introduction

Shamsudin Abdo Ahmed introduced himself in one letter, written on August 27, 1991.

> "I was born in a Muslim family and grew up as a Muslim boy and passed through Quranic School before I was fifteen years of age. The Lord Jesus found me in a Mission School when I was about twenty years of age. I have been Christian over thirty five years now … I had a long contact with Christian-Muslim Relation what we used to call Islam in Africa Project before and I have been an Evangelist in Eritrea among Muslim people in the law [low] land area. Now I am working with [the] Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus as an adviser on Christian Muslim Relations"[375].

As a member of the Mennonite Church called *Messerete Kristos* in Ethiopia, he first was a student at the Nazareth Bible Academy in 1962, and shortly after this he was appointed to be the director of the elementary school in Bedeno. Then he started to work as an education director of the Messerete Kristos church's education program, which comprised twelve schools. Later he was a trainer at the Lutheran College at Debre Zeit, and in 1966 the director of the Nazareth Bible Academy[376].

He was working together with G. Hasselblatt as an interpreter and translator, but there are no documents at hand which give report about this time and his work[377]. The Derg regime imprisoned him from 1982-1986, accusing him to be an agent for the CIA in America[378]. After his release he was again employed by the LWF in Addis Ababa. The EECMY appointed him for the IAP-AC in Ethiopia to be an Adviser from 1991-1997[379]. S. Abdo's understanding of Islam can be taken here only by the examination of the documents at hand, covering the time from 1987-1997[380].

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[375] PS L5. He was born on November 19, 1935 in Deder, Hararge, East Oromo Region.

[376] Hege, Beyond, 84f.

[377] PS 1.2.2.8., reported about S. Abdo's scholarship situation, and gave a hint about his work situation, stating: „We hope that Ato Shemsuddin's present job will allow him to participate in our future courses for the churches. Our chairman is asked to write to the Addis Ababa Synod asking them to allow to Ato Shemsuddin to participate in two courses", which indicates that S. Abdo was employed by the EECMY Addis Ababa Synod, most probably with the LWF.

[378] Hege, ib., 185.

[379] For the beginning see PS L4 (August 1991): "I am glad to inform you that the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus has appointed Mr. Shamsudin Abdo, our Christian brother with much experience to assist our Church on Christian-Muslim Approach", and in addition see n. 377. This appointment has been arranged in cooperation with the LWF, see PS L14 and L21. For the end see PS 1.2.3.6., 1, where S. Abdo reports that „my work contract is going to end June 30th 1997", and in PS 1.2.3.8., 1, I. Gobena stated that "Mr. Shemsudin Abdo … left the country in November 1997".

[380] PS 1.2.3.1.-8., 1.3.2, 1.3.6.1.1.-8., 1.3.7.4.b), 1.6.2., PS L (selection). The material has been divided into seven sections, the **first section** describes the necessity of the reintroduction of the CMR in Ethiopia: PS. 1.3.1.3., the **second section** deals with the reception and presentation of Islam: PS 1.3.2.2., 1.3.2.9., 1.3.2.11., 1.3.7.4.b), 1.6.2., the **third section** concentrates on the training program: PS 1.3.6.1.1.-8., 1.3.2.3., 1.3.2.4., 1.3.2.6., the **fourth section** includes some teaching material on Islam in general and on witness: PS 1.3.2.7., 1.3.2.8., 1.3.2.14.a/c/d/e/f, the **fifth section** includes three documents with strategies and guidelines: PS

b) Continuation of the EECMY-CMR work with the IAP/PROCMURA

The EECMY, according to the documents, interrupted its contacts with the IAP from March 1979 until October 1987. The official membership of the EECMY with the IAP, by reestablishing the Area Committee together with the appointment of S. Abdo as the Adviser, continued in 1991[381]. However, already in 1987, after having participated in a meeting on a CMR-project in Nairobi, S. Abdo gave a report and recommendations on the renovation of the AC in Ethiopia. It was this re-starting point that led to new reflections and processes toward the understanding of Ethiopian Islam.

c) Historical aspects: *ambivalent CMR*

Like Hasselblatt, S. Abdo tried to understand the development of Ethiopian Islam firstly from the historical perspective. He mentioned the pre-Islamic Arabia with its old worship of many gods[382], their clan and tribal existence that caused segmentation, and the trade relations they had nationally and internationally. All these factors should later develop to be supportive for the establishment of Islam. The second phenomenon arose with Muhammad and the persecution of his followers,

> "so severe that the victims were sent in small groups to Ardul-Habasb [*Habash*], (Ethiopia) by their Prophet Mohammad as refugees"[383].

The shelter the first followers of Mohammad received in Axum resulted in the saying (*hadith*) that Ethiopia should be left in peace and not be touched unless it takes the offense and attacks the Muslims[384]. The history of CMR in Ethiopia, according to S. Abdo,

> "had two distinct phases, good and suspicious"[385].

1.3.2.12., 1.3.2.13., 1.3.2.14.g., the **sixth section** are reports given to the IAP/PROCMURA General Council, Executive Committee, Regional Meetings, and other, the **seventh section** are letters who are related to the 1st-6th sections. However, the sections may intersect. The first two sections shall be reviewed here in the following, the third will be presented in 2.2. Training of teachers, the fourth will be mentioned in 3.1. Witness, and the fifth will be discussed in 3.4. Strategy papers. The sixth gives, like all letters of the seventh section, additional information from the background, concerning all other sections.

[381] In PS L3, 1, S. Abdo reported about an IAP Regional Meeting, held in August 1990 in Nairobi, in which he mentioned that the first Regional meeting was held in 1978, in which he participated, and the meeting in 1990 being the second one. On page three in this letter, S. Abdo recommended that the EECMY should renew its membership with the IAP by creating an Area Committee with or without other churches. Even though there is no document at hand for prove at this time, together with the appointment of S. Abdo as the Adviser for IAP (see PS L4, L14 and L21) in June 1991, it is obvious that the AC was officially re-established in 1990/91. PS L1 shows that there were still activities in connection with the IAP/PROCMURA in March 1979. Therefore, the time after March 1979 until the reopening of contacts between the EECMY and the IAP in July 28, 1988, see PS L2 and PS 1.3.1.1., can probably be seen as the time of interruption due to the causes described above.

[382] PS 1.3.2.14.b, 2.: „The Pre-Islamic Arabs were known to have lived in the time of Jahiliyya-Darkness", ib.

[383] Ib., 3.

[384] PS 1.3.7.4.b), 1:"Thus Christian/Muslim relations in Ethiopia were good and are full of happy memories".

[385] PS 1.3.2.9., 1. In PS 1.3.2.11., S. Abdo distinguished between three historical features: firstly **the persecution feature** with the *hijjra* and the order to leave the Abyssinians in peace, which was a peaceful expression because of the survival and without any intention of expansion, secondly **the trade feature** with a

The first was characterized by the good reception of the Muslims, after which the tone of CMR slowly began to change toward negative[386]. The expansion was accompanied by a growing number of conflicts until its climax in the 16th century with its war. After that the relationship between Muslims and Christians was marked by a bitter history of confrontations, with many black points of conflicts and wars, which created a spirit of doubt, mistrust and suspicion[387].

> "This skepticism, built on fear and conflict, which even exists today, is like a high
> wall that hinders the encounter between the two people"[388],

i.e. the Christians and the Muslims. The Christians, when they experienced the toughness of the Muslims faith and their reservations against Christians, often hesitated, saying "we will not convince them therefore don't let us waste our time"[389], which expresses the discouraging attempts. This attitude of skepticism is one of the biggest obstacles in the understanding of Islam and it shows at the same time the lack of understanding.

This understanding is a reflection of the Gragn-syndrome mentioned above. The history of conflicts and confrontations has created a permanent skepticism, nurtured by the impression that one is a threat to the existence of the other. This has caused a living in separate religious patterns, even though their cultural patterns may be similar and both respect each other as Ethiopians, i.e. through their national identity[390]. This *modus vivendi* with its ambivalent character[391], which the Christians and Muslims have created, therefore is best described in a form of coexistence with a certain tolerance, in which the adherents of both religions live inside their own patterns, but separated from the others.

d) Typological and contemporary aspects of understanding: *indigenous insights*

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mainly peaceful expansion and settlement i.a. by way of marriages, and thirdly **the conquest feature** with offensive expansion schemes, including the small principalities starting from the 10th century, the 16th century *jihad* and some other warlike confrontations until the 20th century, in relation to the Turks, Sudan and Egypt.

[386] Ib., PS 1.3.2.13., 1f.

[387] For S. Abdo's presentation see 1.3.2.2., especially 4-6.

[388] PS 1.3.1.1., 1.

[389] PS 1.3.1.1., 1.

[390] PS 1.6.2., ii: "Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia do not eat meat that the other community prepared … On one hand Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia today peacefully coexist and have mutual respect for each other; but on the other hand there is mistrust and enmity feeling partly retained from the past history, and partly influenced by the present international agitation to lit the world on fire in the name of religion … It is only the present Transitional Government that gave the right of all nationalities and nations and there [i.e. their] languages to be developed on equal status".

[391] PS 1.3.7.4.b), 2., and PS 1.3.6.1.2., 1: "In spite of the past bitter religious bloody battles between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, the relationship between these two Ethiopian religious communities today could be said positive. However, considering the current movement of world Islamization, Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular are under a great threat of this new movement. Therefore, we believe that it is high time that the Church puts more emphasis on the reconciliations and evangelization of our dear Muslim friends in Ethiopia".

With regard to the theological understanding of Islam S. Abdo mentioned the orthodox (Sunni) Islamic articles of faith[392] and the pillars[393]. In another document, he concentrated on the *qur'anic* position on the nature of sin and forgiveness, and on predestination, in order to show the superiority of Allah, and how the Christian and biblical understanding can be adjusted to the Islamic way of understanding, resulting in a positive attitude towards the evangelization of Muslims[394]. Other themes for comparison which appear in S. Abdo's documents are those of the concept of the Islamic *ummah* and the Christian fellowship, and between the Qur'an and the Bible[395]. In the latter the question always remained, which book would have the final authority[396]. As a former Muslim it was possible for S. Abdo to reflect on Islam from within, especially about the self-understanding of Islam.

> "Islam does not see itself as a new Religion that has come after Christianity, rather
> Islam takes itself as a final revelation of the same old Religion of Abraham down
> through Jesus Christ"[397].

Therefore, the last and final revelation was received and sealed with the last prophet Muhammad and is now fixed in the Qur'an, which is the last revelation of Allah[398]. The three books of revelations given before, i.e. the *tawrat* (Torah) from the prophet Moses, the *zabur* (Psalms) from the prophet David, and the *injil* (gospel) from the prophet Isa al-Masih were sent through *Jibriel* (Gabriel).

> "All of these four books come from the source that is called the Mother of books or
> Lohal-Mahfuth"[399].

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[392] Ib., 4: Belief in one God (*Amantu Billahi*), in Angels (*Wamalaikathithi*), hin His Books (*Wa kutubihi*), in His Apostles (*Wa Rusulihi*), in the Last Day (*Wal Yowmul Akhir*), in all Bad and Good decreed by God (*Wa Qadara Kayrun wa Sharrun Minallahi Wal Ba'athu Badal Moyti*), ib.

[393] Ib., Confession of faith (*Shahada*), Prayer (*Salat*) five times a day, Contribution (*Zakat*) from the income, Ramadan Fast, Pilgrimage (*Hajji*) to those who could do it, ib.

[394] PS 1.3.2.9., 2-5, 7-16. It is not possible here to concentrate on this aspect more intensive. S. Abdo only gave an account of the Islamic understanding of some aspects, but no evaluation. Therefore, an comparative study must be carried out with more information on S. Abdo's understanding in this regard.

[395] PS 1.3.2.14.g., 4f.

[396] Ib., 6: After having quoted Revelation 22:18f, "Here we find that on the part of Christians there is no way to entertain and accommodate the claim that Muslims believe the Quran to be the last revelation from God; and they even go beyond that by concluding that the Quran is not only one of the Books of God, but it replaces all the previous Books meaning the Bible is replaced by the Quran. This idea no doubt will not find a warm welcome from anyone Christian".

[397] PS 1.3.2.14.b., 1; PS 1.3.2.13, 1, PS 1.3.2.4., 2: "Islam came to fulfil and to complete the religion of Abraham".

[398] 1.3..2.13., 1.

[399] PS 1.3.2.14.b., "Lohal-Mahfuth is a kind of tablet on which the original word of Allahu is imprinted … It is believed that the content of the book holds the particular message needed for the people of that time … In this manner when the previous book or message becomes insufficient to guide people at any given generation, then a new revelation comes to replace the the old", ib.

Since the Qur'an is the last book, all other books are outdated. This understanding includes that whenever Christians approach the Muslims with the gospel (*injil*);

> "the Muslim gets puzzled because according to his religion the Gospel was once the right book for the guidance of the past generations and but now it is well replaced by being superseded by the Quran"[400].

This example was taken because it shows clearly the way on which understanding develops towards another attitude and approach of Christians towards Muslims. Even if the Muslims shall believe in all the four books, it is not clear for them why they should dig out the obsolete book while Allah has sent the final and authoritative one. This understanding must be taught to the Christians in order that they may find the appropriate approach. Secondly, it must be made clear, that fundamental differences exist between the two religions.

> "On the surface it seams [seems] that Christianity and Islam have a very close relationship rooted in Abraham, but deep underneath confessionally they have unreconcilable doctrinal stands"[401].

It is especially the concept of the universal community, the *ummah* that became very important to S. Abdo.

> "It is very important for the Christians to understand what Ummal-Islam is and how it functions. Yes, Ummal-Islam embraces all Muslim communities in the world … Ummal-Islam gives certain, religious, economical and social life insurance"[402].

The understanding of this unity and solidarity that gives the Muslims great confidence is expressed in uniform expressions like the Arabic names the members take, the Ramadan fasting and the festivals, the clothes one wears, and others. The community feels hurt if one member becomes an apostate,

> "they feel that he has become a sort of 'traitor' who has gone over to a rival community. The Sunni Muslim law said that a male 'apostate' should be killed. At least the apostate was usually persecuted"[403].

The *ummah* includes the three governments[404], which again was very important to understand for S. Abdo.

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[400] Ib., 1f.
[401] PS 1.3.2.13., 1.
[402] PS 1.3.2.14.g., 1-2.
[403] Ib., 2.
[404] PS 1.3.2.14.b., 5f.:
"Darul-Islam": "Under such Islamic government it goes without saying that the total life of all the people in Darul-Islam are bound to be regulated according to Islamic Law, the Sharia. Darul-Islam means the country or the land of Islam, where only Muslim-community 'Ummal-Islam' has the right citizenship and total ownership

"Muslims are never satisfied with any state less than DARUL-ISLAM"[405].

Coming from the religious understanding of Islam as the last revelation from Allah, and from the understanding of the three governments in Islam, S. Abdo consequently connected it with:

> "today's Islamic Expansionism, Fundamentalism, Militant Islam and all other forms
> of 'Islamization' movements in the world … So then Islamic Da'wa is the Islamic
> Mission of presenting Islam to all humanity"[406].

This may happen peacefully or, if this is not accepted, even by forceful means. In this way, S. Abdo's understanding of Islam as a challenge was aware of an Islam that is a threat and that this cannot be neglected but has to be faced seriously, even though the situation at the grass-root-level may be different from it and be more peaceful[407].

> "Islam will never be satisfied with anything less than hundred percent! Their aim is
> to convert the whole world in Ummal Islam of Darul-Islam"[408].

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to all wealth of the land … even the air to breathe … In such Islamic State all non-Muslims if there are, are considered the guests of the Muslim Community", ib.

"Darul-Muahada": "Is the country where Islam and other religions coexist in what may look peaceful coexistence. In Darul-Muahada there is enough religious freedom for Muslims to carryout their religious exercises … but let us never forget that Muslims always aspire to get to Darul-Islam state the perfect Islamic State", ib.

"Darul-Harb": "In Darul-Harb, Islam is denied the right of propagating itself and expand. Under such condition unless individual Muslims decide not to stand for their faith, this situation certainly calls for arm struggle in the form of jihad, the Holy War … Darul-Harb means in Arabic, the State of War, or the land of war", ib.

[405] Ib., 6.

[406] Ib., 6. Fundamentalism is understood as the present force of Islam for expansion, not so much as a reform movement. "Looking at the Islamization movement today the situation my [i.e. may] look glumy and even hopeless! certainly, this movement of Islamic Fundamentalism could be said it is the greatest challenge to the Church of Jesus Christ today", ib., 8. See also 1.3.2.13., 3: "There are sects like Wahabis who are trying to weed out from the House of Islam anything contrary to the teachings of the Quran and of the Hadith or Sunna of the Prophet Mohammed. No doubt this process will take quite a long time for them to be able to put the house in order".

[407] In PS 1.3.2.2., 6-9, S. Abdo gave an overview of Islam in Ethiopia before and after the revolution (Derg) and some contemporary features. He mentioned the new rights of the Muslims after 1991, the establishment of Muslim holidays as national holidays, the feeling of nationalism, i.e. Muslims discovering their Ethiopian identity, the growing number of mosques' constructions, the sharia courts, etc., see also 1.3.2.6., 2. His general description of Islam as a challenge was expressed for example in PS 1.3.2.13., 3, and PS L17: "I fully understand that many black African countries are under a great threat from Islamization vast and organized movement. In some countries this movement is gaining speed and coming to a situation where maybe violence is not at too far distances. In others already there are conflicts of religious root. On top of all these, many churches have not either seen Islam as a challenge". For Africa and Ethiopia see PS 1.3.6.1.2.: "However, considering the current movement of world Islamization, Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular are under a great threat of this new movement", see also PS 1.3.7.4.b), and PS 1.3.2.13., 4: "Here in Eastern Ethiopia particularly in Ogaden Al-Ittihad-Al-Islamiyya movement wether it is a political game or a Jihad for Islamic expansion is gaining momentum in the mass media for whatever reason … [however,] it would be unfair to equate the real community people's voice with the untamed noises of the opportunist politicians who aspire to destine the fate of the people the[y] seemingly representing. Life at grassroot level is going on smoothly and some Christians by their own choice become Muslims, while at the same time some Muslims again on their own accord do adopt Christianity. This takes place in the spirit of harmony and understanding".

[408] Ib., 7.

From this innermost intention of Islam and the Muslims, S. Abdo reflected on the forms of the challenge of Islam today. In view of the manifold activities of Muslims worldwide and especially in the Horn of Africa, S. Abdo was impressed with the strategies of the Muslims they have for the expansion of their religion. First of all, an important feature is the ability of Islam to adopt the culture of the community that has accepted Islam as their religion and the way of life[409]. It is important to understand this syncretistic feature, not only for later contextual approaches, but also to comprehend the success of the settlement and expansion of Islam. Once the religion has settled within the community and inspired by a zeal for *da'wa*, which is a consequence from *ummah* and its governments, Muslims use different ways to propagate their religion[410]. This;

> "Islamization receives great support from the Islamic world both financially and otherwise"[411].

Another important aspect of the *ummah* is its holistic character.

> "Islam is not only religion, but politics and all other social life and economy as well"[412].

The Muslims political aspiration is to turn Ethiopia into an Islamic nation by Muslim politicians who extend their influence step by step through elections.

> "As we can imagine an election could be influenced by money, and there are enough funds among Muslim Nations in our neighbor-hood"[413].

For this reason the Ethiopian Muslims have organized themselves recently and established the Supreme Council of the Ethiopian Muslim Affairs with regional branch offices[414].

The aim is always to establish the Islamic government ruled by the *Sharia*[415]. In the community of Islam, the Islamic law governs the worship, the belief, the customs, the trade

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[409] PS 1.3.2.14.g., 1.

[410] Ib. 8: „Video cassettes are produced … Islamic literature are in great abundance for free distribution including the Quran … [who is] to be translated into local languages … With Da'wa they have learned to use relief and certain development projects which are always geared to Islamization purpose", ib. See also PS 1.3.2.2., 8f.: "On videos they show the historical development of Islam and use attractive modern techniques … special attention is given for the youth … they construct modern school up to 12th grade at sites where they have their former schools". See again PS 1.3.2.11., 4-6, and 1.3.2.6., 1-2: "Video cassettes that are produced in South Africa for the purpose of playing down of Christianity and propagating Islam are here in the country and are in use very much. Highly trained Muslim teachers are coming back home from Middle East countries, to promote the cause of Dawah (Islamic Mission)".

[411] PS 1.3.7.4.b), 2.

[412] Ib., PS 1.3.2.14.g.: "Islam is understood as the way of life which comprises: Religious belief, politics, social life and economy".

[413] Ib., PS 1.2.3.2., 2: "At present, they are working on building their structure down to village level and it is moving fast like wild-fire … Politically, an Islamic Party is organized to participate in the coming National Elections".

[414] PS 1.3.7.4.b), 2, PS 1.3.2.13, 3 and 5: "Not only this, but youths and women associations are being organised at all levels".

and even the politics[416]. The *ummah* represents therefore a strong alternative in competition with other powers.

> "Muslims believe that the Western Imperialism and the Eastern Communism are both failures and what is left then is of course Islam as the only alternative to save the world"[417].

Unfortunately, in comparison with the Islamic community,

> "the cooperation between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia is very poor, to say the least"[418].

However, in spite of all these powerful methods and problems, S. Abdo is convinced

> "that Islam can not offer a free gift of Salvation as we know and have it in Christ Jesus … We really need a very strong support both in prayers and financial in order to cope with this great challenge at our door … Christian approach to the Muslims by itself is a vast subject that needs time to go through"[419].

As for the approach, the training of trainers program will be dealt with in 2.2., and a reflection on the witness of Christians will be examined in 3.1. S. Abdo's insights culminated in the strategy papers he developed in 1996 and 1997, which will be examined in 3.4.

e) Evaluation

The continuation of the work with the IAP/PROCMURA is a result of S. Abdo's efforts. In order to summarize his indigenous understanding, through his historical studies he firstly became aware of the ambivalent CMR, which are guided by skepticism, a spirit of doubt, mistrust and suspicion. Even if both tolerate oneanother, they live in separate patterns. His indigenous insights documented, beside the comparison of the Qur'an with the Bible, the importance of the *ummah* and its strong holistic components, which seemed to him stronger than the Christian community in Ethiopia. The innermost aspiration for each Muslim is to achieve *dar al-Islam*, in which a Muslim may live in peace according to the *Sharia*. Everything seems to concentrate on this objective, which, according to S. Abdo, is connected to the expansion of Islam, the fundamentalism and the militant Islam. *Da'wa* is then the engagement to achieve *dar al-Islam*, and the *ummah*, the all comprising body, represents a strong bulwark against all other powers like imperialism, communism and westernism. The

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[415] PS 1.3.2.13., 6: "Only when the Shariah is in power will Muslims dreams come true and their ultimate goal will really come to conclusion and victory won".

[416] PS 1.3.2.14.g., 4.

[417] Ib., 8.

[418] PS 1.3.7.4.b), 2, PS 1.3.2.13., 5: "The largest Christian body in Ethiopia is the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which does not want to even recognize the existence of Evangelicals and Pentecostals".

[419] Ib., 8f.

importance of indigenous understanding, especially of one who had been a Muslim, has been clarified with S. Abdo. His invaluable insights as a former Muslim, and his critical review of his former religion was of great value for the development of an Ethiopian understanding of Islam for the benefit of the churches, most of all for the EECMY and PROCMURA. The importance of the indigenous understanding was also made clear by Rev. Iteffa Gobena in one statement:

> "In fact we feel that special attention has to be given to this region, particularly Ethiopia, for we have been close neighbors to the cradle of Islam religion. We believe that this geographical relation has its historic and cultural dynamism that can produce its unique contribution to the positive and constructive development if it gets its scholars who are cultivated from its soil"[420].

It can be said without any doubt that S. Abdo has proved to be one of these scholars. Different in its intention and extent, another Ethiopian scholar should be reviewed next.

1.3.   Theological understanding: Yonas Deressa

a) Introduction

Yonas Deressa[421] wrote his thesis entitled "The saving work of God: Christian and Muslim perspectives based on the Bible and the Qur'an" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of ministry, and presented it to the faculty of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in August 1995[422]. After S. Abdo left Ethiopia in 1997, Y. Deressa as a resource person of the EECMY[423] had been asked to prepare a presentation on CMR in Ethiopia for the first General Assembly meeting of the Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa (LUCCEA) in Arusha, Tanzania, from 8-10 July 1999[424]. The concern for the penetration of Islam in the sub-region of East Africa had been raised since 1993 when the church leaders of LUCCEA started to meet[425].

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[420] PS 1.2.3.7., 4.

[421] He was the principal of the MYTS until his death in 2003. No other biographical data about him are at hand at this time. Therefore, only the documents that are with the PS 1.3.3. can be used here for examination.

[422] PS 1.3.3.1.

[423] PS 1.2.3.8., 2: "Dr. Yonas Deressa of the … (MYTS) is helping us to organize a workshop on strategies to dialogue/preach the Gospel in the different groups of Islam and Cultural back grounds of Ethiopian Muslims. This workshop may take place in November or December, this year [i.e. 1998]".

[424] PS 1.3.3.2., PS L51. The need for the presentation was prepared by a presentation that was made to the church leader of LUCCEA during an earlier meeting held in Addis Ababa, which was given by S. Abdo.

[425] PS L50: "A general approach to the problem has not been established as yet by the church leaders for the sub-region. We hope, however, that a workable solution to the problem will be made during the coming general assembly, in Arusha, Tanzania". See also PS L51: "member churches should make studies in their respective countries on Islam so as to be able to make reports on the issue during the assembly".

In the document Y. Deressa presented to the meeting, besides a historical overview he gave about the development of CMR in Ethiopia [426], he expressed his main concern.

> "Christians hold many stereotypes about Islam. Muslims also have the same [about Christianity]. It is essential for both religious communities to know about each other's beliefs and doctrines to have better knowledge in order to help each other eliminate the stereotypes that hinder friendly relations between them"[427].

Deressa concentrated his interest on the religious knowledge and understanding which he discovered to be the greatest lack in CMR in Ethiopia.

> "In Ethiopia, both religious communities live together in peace as neighbors and often intermarry freely … sharing in each other's festivals and joyous celebrations, and sad occasions such as death and calamities. Each respects the faith and practice of the other. Neither of them, however, discusses doctrinal matters since the majority of them do not know much even about their own faith"[428].

To improve the inter-religious dialogue, which he considered an alternative to the old method of witness[429], Deressa gave emphasis to a topic crucial to both religions, i.e. salvation.

> "Both Christianity and Islam are historical religions that claimed from the beginning to embody a universal message intended by God for the salvation of mankind. Both believe that their respective scriptures the Bible and the Qur'an, reveal God's purpose of salvation for all"[430].

Since the concept of salvation prevails in both religions, and both are missionary towards salvation, the church has to be aware of the different understandings, especially in view of her own intention to give witness to Muslims.

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[426] PS 1.3.3.2., 2-7, PS 1.3.3.3., 1-6.

[427] PS 1.3.3.2., 1.

[428] Ib., 1f., 7, see also PS 1.3.3.1., 1, and PS 1.3.3.3., 7: "In general the adherents of one religion know very little or nothing at all about the belief and doctrine of the other … Can we do something about this ignorance and change this culture of silence?".

[429] Ib., 7: "Shall we follow the old missionary method, direct confrontation method and preaching to them or shall we try the popular method of our day – 'Dialogue'. Dialogue is not new in Christian Muslim relation in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular. Missionary minded adherents of both religions have been discussing with their friends about their religions and whoever is convinced has been joining the religion of the other. Is it time that the leaders of our Churches formalize this and initiate official dialogue with leaders of the Muslim community?". See also 1.3.3.3., 7: "If both Christians and Muslims come together and discuss, educating one another about their faiths and doctrines the possibility of discovering what is common to both and being alert to their differences will be provided. What can we do to facilitate such a dialogue?".

[430] Ib., 1, PS 1.3.3.1., V and 1.

"This Christian duty [i.e. preaching the Gospel of Christ to all nations in obedience to the Great Commission of our risen Lord] itself makes it important to know about Islam and Muslims in order to be faithful Christian witness"[431].

With this statement Y. Deressa stood in line with PROCMURA's aim. The central importance of salvation, according to Y. Deressa, can serve in two directions. Firstly, in dialogue for the improvement of CMR and, secondly, in making witness effective with an improved understanding of the Islamic view[432]. In fact, witness becomes effective in successful dialogue. The insights Y. Deressa presented to the church leaders of LUCCEA were a result of his studies he conducted on the topic of salvation concepts in 1995. Therefore, the main lines of his theological understanding as expressed in his doctoral thesis shall be reviewed next.

b) Aim of the thesis: *dialogue and witness*

In order to approach the understanding of salvation in Islam and in Christianity, Y. Deressa was guided by some key questions.

"How do both diagnose the human situation? What is the saving work of God that both believe and proclaim would change the human situation and restore authentic humanity? What do they have in common? How do they differ?"[433].

In trying to find answers to these questions by analyzing the understanding of the human condition in both religions, Y. Deressa sought

"to develop an appropriate understanding of the saving work of God in both religious communities and propose dialogue as a way to share theological insights"[434].

The aim of the theological understanding as preparatory for dialogue was specified in view of the Ethiopian context.

"Nevertheless, it seems that the majority of the adherents or the leaders of each religion [in Ethiopia], have not yet realized the necessity of knowing something about the other's religious beliefs and practices, in particular about the saving act of God that gives tranquility to the restless souls"[435].

In order to respond to this ignorance and to enable the adherents of both religions to actively participate in dialogue, practically

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[431] Ib.
[432] PS 1.3.3.1., 4: "It is the hope of the writer that these insights into the saving work of God will be useful to interfaith relations and to the ministry of the church in a pluralistic society".
[433] PS 1.3.3.1., V.
[434] Ib.
[435] Ib., 2.

"the churches in Ethiopia need scholars who have studied the beliefs and practices

of these religious communities. In addition to the scholars, they need written books,

articles and other documents on the beliefs and practices of these communities"[436].

In this sense Y. Deressa tried to contribute to this need[437]. He was aware of the conditions that have to be prepared for the process of understanding, which starts with getting knowledge of the other religion by carrying out studies, and expresses itself in teachings and literature given by scholars and directed toward the grass-root-level. To equip the congregations and its members with useful insights, the understanding and teaching aims at supporting the ministry of the church. The aim therefore, as mentioned above, is twofold: firstly to enhance dialogue in interfaith relations, and secondly, to help the ministry of the church in its witness[438].

While concentrating on salvation, Y. Deressa was conscious and concerned about the limitations given with it, because the topic deals with the work of God, which;

"is wider and deeper than the human mind can comprehend and describe"[439].

The aspect of "Missio Dei", the acting of God in his own and sovereign way, cannot fully be understood and therefore remains open, even with regard to the understanding approaches in CMR. A space left open is essential in this respect.

The concern of this chapter is the way of understanding Islam. Therefore concentration shall be given here to the understanding of salvation in Islam, which is one important component in the methodological structure of Y. Deressa's thesis[440].

c) Salvation in Islam: *Divine guidance*

The human condition in Islam, with Y. Deressa, is defined by an original constitution (*fitra*) and an actual state[441].

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[436] Ib., 2f.

[437] Ib., 3: „Nevertheless, it is hoped that reading the content of this thesis will enable both Christians and Muslims to read their scriptures with new insight and to be aware of their common grounds and significant differences. At the same time, it is hoped that both communities will have the courage to come together and openly share their experiences of God in a way they can enrich each other and avoid value judgement about each other's beliefs and practices".

[438] Ib., 4.

[439] Ib., 3.

[440] Ib., 3f.: "In chapters one and two, the Biblical and Qur'anic views of human beings in their relation with God and one another is described. In chapters three and four, the saving work of God according to both scriptures is described … In chapter five, some of the themes that are common to both religions … are identified. Along with their commonality, significant differences are also stated briefly. In the conclusion, it is noted how both religious communities may be able to mutual understanding and live creatively with these differences".

[441] Ib., 46f: "Sura 20:121 says, about the fall from ‚the original constitution' to ‚the actual state",‚ the following: 'Thus Adam violated his Lord's will and went astray'". Ib., 52: "The Qur'an teaches that human beings are prone to sin but not of sinful nature". The primordial state of man (*fitra*) is a state of purity. See ib., 53.

"'Islam condemns the dogma of original sin and regards the children as pure and sinless at birth. Sin, it says, is not inherited, but it is something which each one acquires for himself/herself by doing what he/she should not do and by not doing what he/she should do'"[442].

Since the actual state shows that the human being is imperfect because of his own doings, it needs to be reminded and helped to achieve perfection.

"Through the prophets, beginning from Adam, God has repeatedly reminded human beings of the Law of God. The repentance of Adam and Allah's forgiving him remained a paradigm for sin and repentance in Islam"[443].

The cycle, that humans in their imperfect state receive Allah's commandment and guidance, then break it, repent[444] and are forgiven, follows the pattern of Adam. The Muslims do so in fear of the last judgement, which

"'with its eternal reward and punishment, remains a constant reminder of the ultimate consequences of each life. It underscores the Qur'an's strong and repeated emphasis on the ultimate moral responsibility and accountability of each believer'"[445].

Having described the human condition as such, the question of salvation has to be raised.

"Uthman Yahyah, as discussed there, raised the question, 'If … man as he actually is incapable of living in perfect blessedness, where is salvation and by what means is it to be real?' Then he himself gave a traditional Muslim answer, 'Divine Guidance.' This divine guidance, as Yahyah pointed out, has been provided in the Qur'an"[446].

A life under divine guidance, as the root *hada*, to guide, indicates, is a process in which the human effort to live a good life is dependent on the guidance. Crucial quotations from the Qur'an are Sura 2:30 and 38, and serve to prove the importance of guidance. The scriptures,

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[442] Ib., 51. See also ib., 113f.: "in order to understand the nature of salvation in Islam, one has to know what sin is according to Islam … not to follow the law of God is sin … There are sins of omission and sins of commission. Not to do what God has commanded to do is omission and to do what God has forbidden is commission. A believer should avoid both types of sins … Muslims in general believe that human beings are fundamentally good and dignified creatures and not fallen sinners. Muslims, because they are optimistic about human nature, are 'only looking for right guidance, not transformation of human nature,' like Christianity". See again ib., 119: "To the Muslims, the one unforgiveable sin is that of 'shirk,' or 'associating anyone or anything with the almighty'".
[443] Ib., 51f.
[444] Ib., 116: „To overcome sin and share in the blessings of God both in this life and the life to come, 'One must have repentance (‚tawbah')' … The repentant person is a returnee to God and God rejoices when a person returns to Him as in the story of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-24)". See also ib., 118: "So the individual's pathway to God or salvation 'begins with repentance for an earlier misdirected life … Allah, the forgiving One, 'al-ghafar,' (Sura 38:66) greatly acceps repentance (Sura 2:37, 54, 4:16, 24:10) and forgives".
[445] Ib., 62.
[446] Ib., 107. See ib., 108: "Qur'an is the torch-light by which humanity can be rightly guided onto the straight path".

given to Moses[447] and Jesus[448], and finally to Muhammad with the *Qur'an* itself, were the messengers and carriers of the guidance.

> "The duty of the prophets and messengers has been to remind (tazkir) and guide the wayward people about the moral law that is within them [in their original constitution]. Muhammad was also a prophet and a guide with whom, according the Qur'an, the revealed guidance of God came to its completion"[449].

In Islam, by returning and remembering, and through it restoration, the Muslims find their way back towards salvation. Salvation is understood as a continuous process. The terms *waqa*, to save and protect oneself[450], and *najja*, save or deliver[451], show that both human and divine participation in the process of salvation is possible. The word *falah*, salvation with the meaning of success[452], again depends on

> "human effort as well as the more fundamental action of God, as salvation is impossible without human recognition of God's lordship"[453].

Therefore, beside the human participation, the decisive and crucial role is with Allah, and

> "'salvation is the act of God alone. No one can save except God. No one can save himself or others, even the prophets and the most righteous people cannot save themselves and others'"[454].

The Qur'an emphasizes two aspects of salvation, in which the process with Allah's sovereign decision ends, the salvation from the hell, and the salvation to the divine bliss and eternal

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[447] Ib., 109: "It was we who revealed the law (to Moses) therein was guidance and light' (Sura 5:44)"

[448] Ib., „ "We sent him [Jesus] the Gospel, therein was guidance and light and confirmation of the law … guidance and admonition to those who fear Allah" (Sura 5:46).

[449] Ib., 110.

[450] Ib., 111: "The Qur'an 'exhorts believers to protect themselves from evil, from sin, from the anger and the wrath of God'".

[451] Ib.: „'Najja' comes from the noun ‚najat', found only in Sura 40:40. It is translated as 'salvation' or 'deliverance' … and it means, saving from destruction, rescuing and delivering", see Sura 11:66, 11:94, 41:8, 19:72 and 10:103.

[452] Ib., 112: also translated as "eternal bliss and success in the hereafter, see Sura 23:102:" Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will attain salvation". The term stands further for "a state of spiritual and social prosperity brought about by pardon and obedience to God's revealed law in the state of Islam or submission" (Kenneth Cragg, The call of the Minaret, 1956, 33f.). Ib., 120: "The Qur'anic idea of salvation (falah), … is very much a matter of success and prosperity. And the means for this *falah* are readily available in the structures of guidance and mercy, following submission and obedience. 'Central among the means is the Muslim Community itself, the Umma, with its din, as Islamic salvation is intimately linked with the Islamic way of life.' Belief alone is not enough, 'Humans must perform all duties required of them by the Islamic faith".

[453] Ib., 112f.

[454] Ib., 121f.: "On that day [the Day of Judgement], 'when Allah assembles people in His presence, He will begin to judge them on the scale of absolute justice. Everything a person does … including intentions and desires, will be accounted for. At that moment, nobody can help anyone else because a person's deeds and intentions will speak for him.'".

happiness in heaven[455]. Men and women can find salvation by the will of Allah[456], the mercy of Allah[457], by faith alone[458], by faith and works[459], by identification with the community[460], by intercession[461] and by the mystical way[462]. However, salvation remains uncertain and there is apparently no assurance of salvation in Islam. Muslims, when approached by Christians with the question if the lack of assurance is a sign of weakness, respond in their understanding;

> "'You Christians, when you speak about the assurance of your salvation, you boldly
> enter into the realm we Muslims leave to Allah because He is the only One Who

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[455] Ib., 113. See also 121: "'Salvation conceived negatively, refers to the escape from hell … positively conceived refers to the enjoyment of physical desires in a pleasure-laden heaven'".

[456] Ib., 122-125: "Some Muslims … put the salvation of humans completely in the realm of God's sole activity, attribute salvation to God's predestinating will" (122). The absolute determinism is to be seen in Sura 14:4, 7:178f., 13:27, 13:33, 11:19, 22:16, and in some traditions (123). "God's guiding whom He pleases means that the condition on which the direction and the guidance of God become available are God's own choice" (124).

[457] Ib., 125-129. "This guidance [given already at humans fall] 'represents the mercy of God which will lead men [and women] to paradise,' or salvation, by having guided them to faith. Sura 24:21" (127). Further the mercy of Allah becomes evident through forgiveness. This mercy is something the believer, especially in prayers, can cling to. "From these Qur'anic prayers one can see how God's mercy and forgiveness play a fundamental role in the Muslim Doctrine of Salvation" (128). Even the assurance of the prophet Muhammad depends on Allah's mercy (129).

[458] Ib., 129-131: "God will take out of the fire of hell everyone who has said the testimony or shahada … And this belief includes: Belief in God, in His Angels, in His scriptures, in His Apostles, in the Resurrection Day and Day of Judgement, in God's absolute decree and Predestination of both good and evil. Whoever believes in this is called a believer (mu'min) and whoever denies any of these is called unbeliever (kufir)" (129f.). According to the Sunni faith, "'a man who believes and confesses and dies before he has done any good work, is a true believer and enters Paradise'" (131).

[459] Ib., 131-134. Salvation is possible "by the mercy and grace of Allah and faith in God through the guidance of the prophets … but the Muslim doctrine of salvation also includes human actions … Faith without action is as insufficient as action without Faith" (131). "'The Qur'an teaches that the means to salvation in the hereafter on the human side are belief or faith (iman) and action (amal): Salvation cannot be achieved without these two means … faith places Muslims on the straight path. Acts or good works demonstrate commitment and faithfulness'" (132). The five pillars of Islam are required to obtain salvation. "'Some Muslims have also included jihad, an exertion in the cause of God or a holy war as the sixth pillar of Islam'" (133). The emphasis on rewarding is understood as a motive for good works or righteous deeds. An ambivalence is obvious, since "salvation is totally a divine act and gift, human action is, nevertheless necessary" (134).

[460] Ib., 135f.: "The Muslim community, the Umma, being the community of faith that has submitted to the will of Allah … implies community 'of faith, doing right, being an example to others to do right, and having the power to see that the right prevails.' … Muslims regard Islam as the interim state of theocracy" (135). The Umma, is indispensable to salvation, "for it is 'the nurturing environment for living the Muslim life … a vehicle for spreading the message of falah (salvation) to the rest of mankind … Faith in Allah is 'the door to this saved community'" (136).

[461] Ib. 137-140. The Qur'an both neglects intercession (Sura 2:48, 6:164, 8:19) and gives room for the possibility of some kind of intercession through angels (Sura 53:26) and to whom Allah granted permission (Sura 20:109), and "some Muslims think that salvation may be granted, on the Day of Judgement, because of the intercessions of the prophets, particularly Muhammad and Husain" (137f.).

[462] Ib., 140-142. Salvation by the mystical way, is "the achievement of an ultimate mystical union with God" (140). The Sufi way or *tariqa*, a path of knowledge, is understood to consist of stages which involve moral discipline and ascetic life, disciplines of mind and body, remembrance of Allah through repetitive invocation of Allah's name, ecstatic states through music, song and dance, veneration of Muhammad and Sufi saints as intermediaries between God and people, which lead to "an immediate experiential knowledge of God called 'tewahid,' unity. This loving interpenetration of God and the soul is the mystical union, by which a man or woman passes away from self and abides in an essential oneness with God. This is the salvation of the Sufi.'" (142).

knows the destiny of all. The reality of our uncertainty is not a weakness but it motivates us to continue our life in obedience to Allah and seek refuge in Him alone'"[463].

d) Consequences: *more common ground than differences*

In his reflection on common aspects and differences, Y. Deressa observed that

"within every area of convergence between Muslims and Christians, experiencing the pain of divergence' also becomes a reality"[464].

However, Y. Deressa concentrated on the common themes with regard to the saving work of God, which include belief in one God (monotheism) and revelation[465], common humanity and God's desire to save humankind - how he did it and continues to do it -[466], scriptures[467], God's people[468] and prayer and worship[469].

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[463] Ib., 143f.: „I [Y. Deressa] have also met some other Muslims in Ethiopia who admit that this uncertainty does bother them. Generally, however, according to my observation, the understanding of the majority of Muslims in Ethiopia is in agreement with what Miller says here: Salvation by faith is inseparable from the idea of safety within the embrace of the Islamic community".

[464] Ib., 145.

[465] Ib., 146-152. "Allah is the God of the Jews and Christians. There is no Muslim who disagrees that these three religious communities worship the same God. Yet, some Christians ask: 'Is the God of Islam the same as the God of Christianity?' Or, 'Is Allah of the Qur'an and the God of the Gospel the same Lord?'" (146). This question "can only rightly be an honest 'yes' and 'no' … [with] the danger of making either the convergence total or taking the divergence to be complete … Predicates about God may differ widely while God as the subject of differing predicates is the same subject … The Christians, who say that Allah is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are right if they say that He is not so described by Muslims. They are wrong if they mean that He is other than the One Christians so understand" (147). The radical monotheism of Islam is unable to include persons participating in the divinity, whereas the mystery of the inner life of God of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is a mystery of faith and preserves the unity of God (148f.). Islamic revelation is of law, as given in the Qur'an as the climax of a long sequence, whereas the Christian faith declares that God is personal "and that this personal God has been revealed in this world through a person" (150f.).

[466] Ib., 152-157. "Both Christians and Muslims share a common world … have a common faith in the One Transcendent God and believe that 'man [and woman] cannot be fully human without relationship with the creator God.'" (152). "Both religions recognize the problem of sin, but understand and interpret differently" (154). "Both religions, according to the Bible and the Qur'an believe and teach that God graciously desires that all humans be saved from the eternal suffering and calls them to salvation" (155). "Yet, the definition of salvation and other means of salvation differ greatly" (156). "Both Christianity and Islam believe that the salvation provided by God for human beings is wholistic for the present liefe and the hereafter" (157).

[467] Ib., 157-159. "Christianity and Islam are religions that have sacred Scriptures, 'the word of God' … But they have different understandings and interpretations of the word of God" (157). "The Qur'an also encourages Muslims to live amicably with the people of the Book (Sura 5:5)" (158). "The Qur'an declares Jesus the Word and Truth of God. Here both religions have a point of contact" (159).

[468] Ib., 159-162. "The Christian community is called the church and the Muslim community is called the Ummah. In both religions, it is the saving work of God that created the community, in which salvation is equated with the kingdom of God" (159). "Believers who respond in repentance and faith to God's call are saved individually, but 'always as a part of a community'" (160). Important differences between the umma and the church exist in view of political involvement, Islamic reform and Christians transformation of the society, the conception of suffering and being a "sacral society whose integrity is measured by its conformity to the written law of God" in Islam and a "redeemed community, which gives witness to the kingdom of God" in Christianity, are some of the differences (161f.).

[469] Ib., 162-168. Even if both have different forms of worship and prayer, "Christians and Muslims share the strong bonds which have linked them as co-religionists through the centuries, although their canonical traditions have kept them apart" (162). Muslims and Christians, however, "are not far apart or removed from each other in

"Discovering that there is some truth in the belief and practice of the other religious community is not the only conclusion that an objective Christian or Muslim inquirer comes to realize. He or she will also be surprised with the discovery of what both have in common regarding the truth"[470].

Having faith in a common transcendent source, which is God, from whom anything comes and goes to, reveals that;

"which is common is deeper than their common humanity. It includes God's revealing and saving activity and human accountability to God"[471].

e) Evaluation

With the theological understanding Y. Deressa wanted to bridge the gap of ignorance and the lack of knowledge that prevents both religions' adherents from dialogue, by concentrating on the crucial aspect of salvation, which could serve the Christians both in dialogue and in witness. A good dialogue is in itself a good witness. However, he was aware of "Missio Dei", which surpasses all human efforts. After salvation in Islam had been understood as divine guidance, and Muslims may contribute to their salvation, beside the various forms in which they can find salvation, the uncertainty of the not known but decisive last decision of Allah, who alone can save, is not a weakness, but a motivation for the Muslims, according to Y. Deressa. The study wanted to help both Christians and Muslims to respect each other's beliefs and practices even though they differ.

"Both religious communities, if they take each other's beliefs and practices seriously and study them objectively, can 'bridge the gap of ignorance that exists' on both sides [which even] leads to 'openness to change … a new attitude and thought pattern of relating to the other can be discovered. Both learn. 'To learn is to change'"[472].

Therefore, the emphasis was laid on common grounds instead of seperations. The openness to change one's own opinions and assessments that could come along with effective dialogue may cause Christians to learn from Muslims. This kind of learning would show an enormous increase of understanding and a change in the course of approaches. Deressa's theological

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their respective understanding of prayer and worship. Because both devout worshippers are sincerely questing for God … But, in the theological sense … the chasm is wide, 'for within worship is salvation. Once redemption is discussed, the distinctions of each religion become painfully clear. Yet, common ground should and must be explored'" (167f.).

[470] Ib., 169.

[471] Ib.

[472] Ib., 170f.: "These three phases, discovering that which is common, being alert to that which is different and openness to change are 'parts of Christian responses as they encounter people and communities of other faiths".

understanding, by opening the path to constructive dialogue, has proved to be useful to encourage theological understanding in CMR.

1.4.   Socio-religious understanding: Burkhard Peter

a) Introduction

Burkhard Peter had been a missionary of the GHM in Ethiopia from January 1985 – September 2000. For about ten years he was working with the EECMY-SCS around the southern city Hossaina. While having been appointed as the adviser for the Synod's outreach work, he concentrated on ethno-historical, socio-cultural and religious studies of the Hadiyya, one of the biggest nations of the Synod. B. Peter was a participant of the training-of-teachers program with S. Abdo and received the certificate[473]. This involvement has made it necessary to include him into this study, even though his documents have not been found with the PS. It may well be possible that this participation in the training-of-teachers program stimulated his interest to include Islam more attentively in his studies. The first reflection of his studies was presented in an essay entitled "About the political and missiological engagement of Islam in Southeastern Ethiopia", that mainly concentrated on the historical development of Islam in Ethiopia and among the Hadiyya[474]. In 1998 he wrote an article about the contribution of the IAP/PROCMURA to the Christian witness among Muslims in a book with a collection of various articles published by the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Organisation in Hermannsburg (ELM)[475]. However, his studies culminated in his doctorate thesis and book "Cultural identity and religious confession, Syncretism with the Hadiyya of South Ethiopia", which was published in 1999[476].

b) Premises

In his studies he was inspired by the work of U. Braukämper, a German ethno-historian connected to the University of Göttingen, who concentrated on southern Ethiopian nations like the Hadiyya, Kambata, Arsi-Oromo and other[477]. It was eventually with him that Peter discovered the importance of syncretism that occurred with his observations he made among the Hadiyya[478]. Looking for a systematical classification of syncretism features, he became aware of the model of U. Berner, a German who was in charge of clarifying and systemizing the term syncretism with the "Special research realm 13" again at the University of

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[473] PS 1.3.6.1.6., list of participants.
[474] Peter, Engagement. See also Peter, Islam, which is a selection of parts of Peter, Engagement.
[475] Peter, Muslim.
[476] Peter, Kulturelle.
[477] Braukämper, Islamic, see there for other publications from Braukämper.
[478] Braukämper, for example see ib., Aspects, 194.

Göttingen[479]. Peter wanted to examine the different religions in view on the debate about syncretism[480]. The third premise came with the participation in the teachers-training-program of the EECMY, whose frame was set with the IAP/PROCMURA mediated by S. Abdo. Peter also read most of Hasselblatt's narratives and discoveries. It is largely with these premises that his understanding of Islam and approaches toward Muslims can be verified, while concentrating on the chapter "Islam among the Hadiyya" in his book[481].

c) Understanding: *dualism in Folk-Islam*

After having started with a short overview of the historical development of Islam among the Hadiyya, beginning from the 16th century until the episode of Lij Iyasu in the beginning of the 20th century, Peter presented his thesis, on which his following descriptions should be built on. Islam among the Hadiyya has not so much been expanded as a religious reform-movement (renewal), but through Islamic centers that have strong clan bonds. These influences of folk-oriented centers led to a nominal adherence to Islam[482]. In this differentiation the influence of the folk-religious tradition prevailed over the stricter Islamic religion. To prove these conclusions Peter presented some of the centers with their influence on the people, then the religious praxis, Sufism and Islamic reform movements. Firstly, he described the centers in Bedene[483], Alkasso[484], Qatburie[485], Abred[486], Maraqo[487] and

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[479] Ende, Islam, 727. It is not possible to enter the discussion about syncretism here. However, in short, syncretism can be understood as a process that starts with the encounter of different religions, or the competition of different traditions within the same religion. In the encounter of religions the process can happen in the area of systems, or in the area of single elements or religious ideas, which are going to be connected. The result of this process may be the development of a new system that is separated from the context without any new elements, or it may be a creative process, at whose end a synthesis with new elements will evolve. Berner was attempting at creating a heuristic model for the verification of the processes and elements, in which the varieties can range from harmonization until reservation, even with the effect of distancing from one another. See Ende, Islam, 727f.

[480] Peter, Kulturelle, 278: „ Wenn im folgenden die verschiedenen Religionen im Blick auf die Synkretismusdebatte untersucht werden … kann sich ein komplexes Bild ergeben, in dem Aspekte der **Systematisierung**, **Rationalisierung** und der **Entstehung neuer Systeme** im Sinne Berners nachgewiesen werden". These phases systematization, rationalisation, and emergence of new systems, are understood as consequences of the encounters, or dialogue, like Peter described it. Systematization is understood as the expansion of a religion, rationalization as the perfection of the existing religion, and the origination of new systems can be seen for example in the development of sects. Ib.

[481] Peter, Kulturelle, 279-309.

[482] Ib., 279.

[483] Ib., 282-285: The religious leader of the Alaba nation and of the Bedene center, which is close to the river Bilate and north of Kolito, was *Sheikh* Makiyye (died in January 1997), who stood in high respect among the people. Many brought presents to him as a sign of veneration. He inherited his office from his father Said Ali, who got to know Islam in Dange-Gurage, and who built the mosque in Bedene in 1950 (282). Said Ali's father was remembered as a mighty sorcerer. Sheikh Makiyye was introduced to the *shafitic* school of Islam in Qatburie. He followed the *Qadiriyya* order of Sufi-Islam. The family belongs to the *wushira*-clan with its strong spirit called *hobiyyo*, who has a relation to the spirit *golfa* of the Shamanna, which describes the high veneration given to Sheikh Makiyye, who was also known in dealing with the spirits and sorcery (283). Hasselblatt described a visit to him in 1972, as mentioned above. However, Peter asked critically, if Bedene really was a big school, and if Sheikh Makiyye really was a reknowned teacher, or if he was practicing more the traditional

Hoyawa[488], and concluded that the expansion of these centers followed the principles of clan-related office-carriers[489]. These carriers are charismatic personalities who themselves, or

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religion under the auspices of Islam (284). Sheikh Kadir in Kolito seemed to have won more influence than Sheikh Makiyye in his last days, and most of the children are going to be taught in Kolito (285).

[484] Ib., 285-288: The islamic center of the Silti nation in Alkasso lies between Butajira and Werabe. Its religious leader was called *getocc*, i.e. reign. In the *zikr*-meetings with the *dibbe*-drum and the *shelilat*-songs, the spirit of *getocc* is called upon and glorified (285). *Sheikh* Asraq is the leader of this center. Presents offered to him are called *jäbata*. People call him also *Bale zar* or *Woliyye*, i.e. friend of Allah, who has contact with spirits. His grandfather was *Sheikh* Usman, whose son was *Sheikh* Alkasiyye, the father of *Sheikh* Asraq, who performed some miracles. Sheikh Alkasiyye was also known as a *Woliyye*, who was able to foresee and posses a strong spirit. Peter observed an ignorance of Islamic contents of faith that stood in contradiction to the huge mosque built in 1942, which shows the tendency of syncretism. The center follows the *shafitic* school and the *Qadiriyya* order (286). Many *Sheikh* Hussein pilgrims, called *Geriba*, are to be found there. The *Aiwan* celebration on *Shabaan* 15 is the biggest festival (287f.).

[485] Ib., 288-289: 10 Km west of Welkite lies Qatburie, the center of the Qabena people, a brother nation of the Hadiyya, who migrated from Sidamo, according to Braukämper, and who came in contact with the Islamization in the middle of the 18th century (288). *Sheikh* Isa Hamza al Qatburie was born 1865 as the son of *Sheikh* Hamza Bäture, and was trained in Bidara in Masqan, then with *Sheikh* Said in Gädäbano, then with *Sheikh* Abaye in Jifat Cano, and with the famous *Sheikh* Jamalu Daniyy in Dana. He chose Qatburie to establish a teaching center, in which *zikr, aurad, tauhid, hadis, fiqih* and *quran* have been taught. *Id al Adha* and *Id al Fatr* were started to be celebrated. On the area of the Nur-mosque a *Qur'an* school has been established, in which foreign teachers are teaching. *Sheikh* Isa died 1948 and his son *Sheikh Shaläqqa Hajj Sultan* Isa, who has constructed the mosque in Butajira (289).

[486] Ib., 290-291: Abred is the most known center of West Gurage whose famous leader *Shehocc*, grandson of *Sheikh* Said Bushura Ibrahim, died at the end of the 1970's. Hasselblatt visited the place in 1979, and reported that a big library was there with many important books. *Shehocc* used religion for his own purposes. Peter criticized Hasselblatt that he was not aware of the fact that the title *Sheikh* was used for people who practiced sorcery and magical practices. Therefore, the dialogue with the religious aspects of Islam found no expression among the people. Islam served to the continuation of the folk-tradition oriented centers. *Shehocc*, who was a student of *Sheikh* Bedene, of *Hajj* Amo and *Sheikh* Alkasiyye, after having been removed from his office by the Derg, has found no similar successor (290). *Sheikh* Saidi, who died in 1996, taught at Abred without similar influence. Peter concluded that the influence of a center is connected more to the charisma than to the grade of Islamic education to be taught (291).

[487] Ib., 291, see also ib., 114-125: Iname, the religious leader of the Maraqo people, who are originally Hadiyya located in an enclave between Butajira and Zeway, probably because she is a women, has no official Islamic title (291). She has visited most of the centers mentioned before and collected her insights and religious powers from there (121). As a sorceress she is able to contact various spirits in *zikr*-sessions, in which spirit-possession (*boranticca*) with *zar* is practiced (122). Peter classified the *zikr*-chantings, in which the spirits of the death people are being called, and to which sacrifices are offered, as a form of the ancestors-cult (125). The names of the spirits come partly from the Islamic traditions, and it is here that Islamic influences have been varified. The function of a "melting pot" becomes obvious with her. The judge of the Maraqo, *Abagaz* Bafa Alalo was a Muslim, followed after his death in 1992 by *Abagaz* Ergado Wollamo, is another important leader of the Maraqo (116). The syncretistic feature with these people, who call themselves mostly Muslims, is still obvious with the practice of *Fandano*, the traditional religion that combined Islamic elements with pre-Islamic elements of the Hadiyya. Braukämper described the ethno-genesis of the Maraqo, and is going to write a book on "Fandano. The socio-religious system of the Hadiya in southern Ethiopia", see Braukämper, Aspects, 207, footnote 23. Peter described some of the features of *Fandano*, and the Islamization process that was enforced with the Muslim Abba Zemzem from Tembaro (119f.), who in about 1940 constructed a mosque in Qoshe, where Iname started to expand her influence. After visiting Iname, Peter reported that he and other Christians tried to pray, including a prayer against evil spirits, that evoked the disagreement of Iname (122). The Muslims of Maraqo follow the Shafitic school and the Qadiriyya order (121). Peter wanted to demonstrate the osmotic processes of the syncretism with the Maraqo. Islamic elements have intermingled with traditional religious practices (like the rain-sorcery, consecration of cattle-enclosures, the arrangement with possession spirits, and other), to safeguard the survival of the culture and therefore the identity of the people (125).

[488] Ib., 291-292: The Hoyawa center within the Shashogo is led by *Hajji* Amo, a student of *Sheikh* Makiyye and the *Sheikh* of Abred. He is a *Woliyye*, who calls upon the god of their fathers and sacrifice him in *zikr*-meetings

whose ancestors have been ritual functionaries, who stood in a traditional line, and of which one has officially accepted Islam. There is only one center in one nation[490]. Islam has gone into a dialogue with the cultural and social contexts and thus created a wide spectrum of local styles[491] with centers and central personalities, who represent the religious power in a concentrated form. Secondly, Peter dealt with the religious praxis of Islam among the Hadiyya. He first described the Sunni-Islam type with its praxis, and then concentrated on Folk-Islam and with it the Sufi-Islam. The emphasis on hadith-traditions[492], the articles of faith[493], the political and social offices[494], and the Qadi-courts[495] were shortly presented to describe the Sunni-Islam[496]. As characteristic for the Folk-Islam Peter then described the *zikr* (*dhikr*)-meetings[497]. The influence of the Sufi-Islam was presented with the Qadiriyya order and its effects on the traditional religion[498]. Thirdly, Peter mentioned for the Reform-Islam

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(291). He is also giving medical advises from a book called *Rahma*, a popular treatise on folk medicine and magic, probably a pseudo book of Suyuti's *Kitab ar-rahma fi't tibb wa'l hikma* (292).

[489] Ib., 292: "daß die Ausbreitung dieser Zentren den Prinzipien der stammesgebundenen religiösen Amtsträger folgt"[that the expansion of these centers follows the principles of clan-connected religious office holders].

[490] Ib.: „Es fällt auf, daß sich jeweils in **einem** Volk **nur ein** solches Zentrum entwickeln konnte"[It catches the eye that only one center could develop in one nation].

[491] Ib., 293.

[492] Ib., 294: Because the traditions are transmitted orally, the Islamic teachers easily include local traditions with the official *hadiths.*

[493] Ib., the six articles include the teachings of God, of the angels, of the holy-scriptures, of the prophets and holy men, of the life after death and of the predestination.

[494] Ib., the offices had been transformed with the culture of the Hadiyya, and included titles such as *imam* for elders, *kitabinyya* for producers of amulets and for teachers, *sheikh* for the leader of a center and for magicians, *qadi* for judges, *hajji* for pilgrims to Mecca. All titles have been used for former titles of honour and were introduced into a new structure of authority.

[495] Ib., 295: the *qadi*-courts are assigned to the *sharia*-office that cares for the keeping of the Islamic order. They were introduced with Haile Selassie with decree No. 62 of 1944 "with jurisdiction over questions regarding Mohammedan marriages, divorce, guardianship, succession and Wakf gifts". The introduction was made to secure the political loyality of the Southern nations. In this regard the adherence to Islam can be defined as an attitude of an harmed cultural identity as experienced against the amharization policy with Menelik II and later Haile Sellassie. "Mit der Förderung des Islam in den Jahren 1936 bis 1941 gelang es den Italienern, den anti-kolonislistischen Widerstand der äthiopisch-orthodoxen Kirche zu unterlaufen".

[496] Ib., 293-295.

[497] Ib., 296-301. The *zikr*-meetings, according to Peter, are not originally Islamic, because other names like holy men and ancestors beside Allah are called upon in order to secure their support (296). *Zikr* is understood as a mystical entrance to the unseen world, in which, according to Sura 33:21 the faithful shall remember of Allah. While being in ecstasies the spirit-possession occurs. "Die ekstatischen Zustände löschen das individuelle Empfinden aus und bieten den Mächten der unsichtbaren Welt Zugang zu ihrem Leben" (297) [The ecstatic conditions give room to the invisible powers to enter their lives on the expense of individual conciousness]. The correlation with the Qadiriyya becomes obvious in the high respect given to Abd al-Qadir al Jilani. Peter further mentioned a relation between "*zkr*" and "*shr*", the latter meaning sorcery, which resulted in a fusion for most Muslims. Therefore, the leaders who practice *zikr* are equal to magicians and sorcerers, like it was exemplified with the person Abba Zemzem (299). In his religious practice he included magical practices under the auspices of Islam.

[498] Ib., 301-302: Characteristic for the Qadiriyya is the green colour, the *zikr*-meetings and a decentralized organisational structure (301) resulting in local forms influenced by the religious mediators who include their ancestors, holy men and founders of the clans, without any neutral control. In this way the local popular traditions easily enter the religious practices. The spirit possession has entered by this way, and Peter did not found any inner-islamic way to deal with exorcism (302). Therefore, he concluded that many possessed people

the example of the *Wahhabi* movement[499]. Forthly, in the next chapter Peter reflected on conversion to Islam[500]. Fifthly, his understanding of Islam came finally clearer to the fore in his considerations about syncretism[501]. Peter was following Trimingham in so far, that Islam adopts the substantial traditional elements of the people through syncretism.

> "The introduction of Islam therefore is to be understood, even among the Hadiyya, not as a religious conversion, but as a development in the wider scope of the secular cultural change, in which elements of the Arabic universe of language and ideas were taken over to serve to universalize the traditional religions"[502].

In this sense the traditional elements have not been changed considerably. The ancestor cult within the integration of Islamic elements has been carried on as well as other traditional rites. Both Islamic and traditional elements come to a fusion in the daily life, but, according to Peter,

> "a true synthesis of both religions never happened. Therefore the different elements and institutions coexisted in parallel, so that the religious life was influenced by a dualism"[503].

This dualism is characteristic of Peter's understanding of Islam. Following his insights, the Hadiyya-Islam with its nominal character and low infiltration of Islamic and *qur'anic* elements among the people, on the other hand the strong influence of traditional practices, makes the latter governing or determining the first, or makes Islam secondary. It is a typical description of Folk-Islam as mentioned above in chapter I, 1.2.3. There are, however, dangerous processes of this kind of syncretism and dualism, which need to be considered. The harmful existence of the spirit possession was a serious concern for Peter.

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found their way to evangelical congregations, because in the name of Jesus Christ the exorcism was experienced as a healing force.

[499] Ib., 302-303: The *Wahhabi* movement had not yet been very successful among the Hadiyya, according to Peter (302). Their strict denial of the *zikr*-meetings, the chanting of religious leaders at burials quoted from the *Tembe* book, the visiting of shrines and the position of the *Geriba* are all strictly refused by the *Wahhabites*. The *Wahhabites* expand the rationalization process within Islam, to use the term of Berner, and therefore influence a cultural change among the Hadiyya by adoption of the purer Islamic culture they present (303).

[500] Ib., 303-305. The conversion to Islam is expressed in rites that differ for men and for women (303). Since there is, according to Peter, no conversion rite for women, they mainly remain in the traditional religious sphere with *Idota* (a female goddess)-prayers, sacrifices they give at *adbar* (sacrifice)-trees and at rivers for the spirits. Rarely, they participate in the mosques' activities. But outwards they appear to be Muslims nominally and formally. A sign is the wearing of the *Tisbe* (prayer)-necklace for decoration purpose (304). Islam in all these aspects serves for conservation of local traditions, enables a universal expansion of the former religious system. Peter quoted Trimingham: "Therefore such purely religious pagan elements as can by the Islamic process of syncretism be in some way reconciled with the sovereignty of Allah are retained in the new religion" (305). Further Peter mentioned the slave trade in former times as a motive for conversion to Islam, and the conversion as a sign of resistance against the Amharic control, in order to keep the own identity (305).

[501] Ib., 306-307.
[502] Ib., 306.
[503] Ib., 306f.

> "The Islam of the Hadiyya has not offered a means to deal with the phenomenon of spirit possession, that has been integrated with the zar-cult, and that could break out within the zikr-ceremonies"[504].

The dualistic religion provides shelter for such elements as the spirit possession. According to Peter, the Christian faith has provided an answer to this problem, which can be presented to the followers of this Folk-Islam, while communicating the Gospel to them.

Finally Peter mentioned the challenges of such a Folk-Islam towards attempts of dialogue with Muslims[505]. Coming from the understanding that Islam and the former traditions came into a fusion through syncretism that led to a religious dualism, in which the people live and proportioned daily issues either to Islam or to the traditions, Peter came to the conclusion, that a serious theological dialogue with Muslims of nominal adherence to Islam is not appropriate. It is more realistic to have a living dialogue within the *modus vivendi*, i.e. the tolerant coexistence, in which it is possible to observe the other religion, to ask the adherents about their religious praxis in order to gain insights regarding one's own praxis.

> "It could be therefore rather a concern, to point to the dialogue partner's situation, that he lives in a religious dualism, to extend the opportunity to overcome his division [or ambivalence] through accepting of the Christian faith"[506].

d) Evaluation

With Peter the line from G. Hasselblatt and S. Abdo was extended by adding an example for a contextual approach with genuine cultural insights toward an evangelical approach through a living dialogue, in which the understood is directed to an appropriate communication of the Gospel by responding to the dualism conflict. It was the first time with Peter that socio-cultural and ethno-religious studies of one nation, i.e. the Hadiyya, have been carried out by a missionary, in order to apply it to the situation of the Hadiyya-Muslims. The systematic use of the term syncretism has proved to be useful for the understanding of Folk-Islam. Peter has covered a wide range of the Ethiopian Islam, including the orthodox Sunni-Islam while dealing with the religious praxis, the Sufi-Islam with concentration on the Qadiriyya and the *zikr*-practice, the crucial role of Folk-Islam with its syncretistic features, and the role of Reform-Islam by example of the Wahhabi movement. The typological system developed above in chapter I, 1.2., was used by Peter unconsciously, and it seems at times that he was not aware of the inner-islamic system. Saying that Islam has not expanded because of a

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[504] Ib., 307.
[505] Ib., 307-309.
[506] Ib., 309.

reform-revival movement, but through centers that had great influence on the people[507], implies that he hardly understood that the centers were created and at times stimulated through reform-movements with their tendency back to original Islam, that included the Sufi-Islam, through which strong impulses came with Sufi-scholars. This does not diminish the fact that these centers developed more and more into Folk-Islam centers. Some statements of Peter seemed to indicate linguistically a tendency, which has to be dealt with carefully while being engaged in CMR for the sake of respect of Islam[508], which he himself was aware of when he described the aim of the IAP[509]. The tendency to describe the Islamic religious contents, like its educational importance, to an extent that it does not have much importance, needs to be carefully reviewed, since Peter in his relatively short visits like many other foreigners can hardly develop a system to prove the authenticity of the believers faith with regard to Islam[510]. The understanding of the circulation within the typology of Ethiopian Islam, and its inner-regulation that occurs at times, however, proves to be useful while examining Peter, and could help in balancing the various forms of understanding. Peter's socio-religious understanding indicated a wide field for further studies about other nations, which are necessary in CMR and in interreligious perception studies.

1.5.   Interim Summary: What is common in the concepts of understanding?

In order to summarize the first section of this chapter, four concepts of understanding, which except Peter have been found with the documents (PS), have been presented. They were connected to people engaged in CMR. Hasselblatt's contextual understanding was showing the importance to discover the educational system of Islam and the experience of the spiritual infrastructure. By this way one has come as close as possible to the Muslims, i.e. to the context, in order to understand Islam. S. Abdo's understanding was indigenous and concentrated on the *ummah* with its strong components that gives a security and an identity to

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[507] Ib., 279.

[508] For example ib., 284: "practice of the traditional religion under the auspices of Islam" ("Ausübung der traditionellen Religion unter dem Gewand des Islam"), that shows a hypocritical tendency, or ib., 286: "ignorance of the visitors in Islamic contents of faith" ("Ignoranz der Besucher in islamischen Glaubensinhalten"), that indicates a reproach for which the people for lack of knowledge could not be accused for.

[509] Peter, Muslim, 108: "Das Islam-in-Afrika-Projekt hat als Auslegung seines Ziels formuliert: 'Verstehen meint nicht nur faire und objektive Kenntnis von dem, was Muslime glauben und praktizieren, sondern auch einen respektvollen und einfühlsamen Zugang zu Muslimen als Mitgeschöpfen und Gottsuchern'".

[510] Ib., 290: Peter criticized Hasselblatt of not having noted that the title *Sheikh* was used for private purposes and traditional practices, and not as an Islamic religious title. Whereas Hasselblatt was amazed about the educational importance of the Abred center in an Islamic sense, Peter was reducing this aspect in favour for the traditional components. To value both views a balancing view seems appropriate, in which both the educational value and the folk-traditional importance of such centers must be recognized.

the Muslims, and on the innermost aspirations of Muslims, i.e. to strive for a condition of living in *dar ul-Islam*. Indigenous understanding thought therefore to understand the Muslims from within and thereby tries to come as close as possible to their self-understanding. Y. Deressa's theological understanding by concentrating on salvation as a common ground opened a way to dialogue, in which even the Christians may need to be changed in order to increase their understanding, and by this way changing their attitudes and approaches. The theological understanding tries to come as close as possible to the Muslims through common features in faith. The socio-religious understanding of Peter introduced the importance of studying the features of syncretism in order to understand the dualism in which the Muslims of Folk-Islam live. The socio-religious understanding therefore tries to come as close as possible to the situation, i.e. the socio-religious framework the Muslims live in. All these concepts of understanding are leading to approaches which evolve with them. The contextual approach aims at co-experience and vivid forms of faith, the indigenous approach with the tendency to understand Islam from within tries to find approaches in comparison with Islamic features, the theological understanding encourages dialogue, and the socio-religious understanding looks for an approach, in which the distinction between original Islamic and traditional features exposes the dualistic nature, in Peter's case of the Folk-Islam, which again designs the approach of witness. The common motive for all the concepts of understanding is to come as close as possible to the Muslims, in order to understand them essentially. The closer one comes to Muslims, the better the understanding, and the better the approaches result out of this. Some of these concepts of understanding will pass through the concepts of teaching, in which the understood has to be taught. The other will remain in the background, while other contents that will come have again to be examined for their understanding.

2. Concepts of training

Having dealt with some concepts of understanding, the focus shifts now to the concepts of training, which act like a link between the understanding and resulting approaches. In the teaching concepts and through the teachers, various concepts of understanding appear again and in some cases these concepts lead to methods and strategies of approaches. The most common concept of training within the EECMY was and is the conduction of courses, seminaries and workshops. A special training concept has been developed with S. Abdo, which was a training-of-teachers program. The Theological Education by Extension (TEE) has produced two books on Islam, which have to be examined. The academic teaching

institutions, seminaries, bible schools and the synods, area work and outreach areas of the EECMY have other concepts of training, which need to be reviewed. The Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary (MYTS) had started to include an academic institute, called "Program in CMR", which shall be presented at the end of this section. The guiding question of this section, to which an answer shall be presented in the interim summary, focuses on the usefulness of the different aspects of the training concepts in view of their relation to the grass-root-level, i.e. the ministers and congregations who work and exist among Muslims.

2.1. Courses, seminars and workshops

a) 1969-1979

It was with Hasselblatt that courses for ministers, evangelists and pastors of the synods of the EECMY and for other missions and churches started. He was convinced, that

> "the best information and best theological education is the best help to preach the Gospel towards the Muslims"[511].

The teaching aim was, according to Hasselblatt, the witness of the Gospel to the Muslims, but the way to achieve the best results, depends on the best information about Islam in relation to Christianity:

> "The aim of my teaching is to the real relation between the two religions, Islam and Christianity from the historical and systematical point of view in order to make it clear for everybody, that only the word of God which is in the Bible, is the real living and saving Holy word of our heavenly Father"[512].

By focusing on the relationship between the Qur'an and the Bible, which share seemingly common features, the word of God is powerful to reach the heart, in difference to the Qur'an that has only power in outward-directed forms of daily life[513]. The living word of God is unique and needs to be proclaimed to Muslims.

> "That is the background of my teaching in all the courses in different provinces of Ethiopia"[514].

While teaching, one of the most important tasks is to take away the fear about Islam, and to encourage ministers to preach the Gospel to Muslims[515]. The psychological fear is grounded

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[511] PS 1.1.1.1./1.3.1.1.
[512] PS 1.1.2.3./1.3.1.2.
[513] PS 1.1.1.1./1.3.1.1.
[514] Ib.
[515] PS 1.1.2.3./1.3.1.2.: „Because of this similarity in Muslim and Christian preaching a lot of Christians think, Muslims don't need the Gospel any more, and due to the rigidity of the Muslim teaching evangelists are afraid to witness among Muslims", see Hasselblatt, Dialog, 127.

in the fact that Islam appears strong from within, so that one must be very convinced to preach a stronger element. This element for Hasselblatt is undoubtedly clear:

"I think Jesus Christ is still the Word of God which came to all mankind"[516].

This teaching program has been received well by the EECMY and their ministers.

"On the other hand the adviser was helping to equip the evangelists and Pastors with the good approach to the Muslims with the Gospel and also teaching the fundamental of Islamic Theology and Doctrines. Many seminars were held to acquaint church workers with the presence of Islam in Ethiopia and what Islam teachers [teaches] and how to present the Gospel Message to the Muslims. In this way the church out-reach ministry to the Muslim friends began and results are not discouraging"[517].

It is not possible to give an account of the numbers and other data of the seminars and courses that have been held from 1969-1979, because of the scarcity of the documents. The situation for the time from 1988-2004 is better, and the documents give more information.

b) 1988-2004

Besides the letters[518] and other documents[519], one of the sources that give information about seminars and courses that were held in Ethiopia[520] are the reports of the EECMY-GMD[521]. In the GMD report for 1991 and 1992, within the teachers training program of S. Abdo,

"several seminars were held in basic Islamic theology, Islamic practices, history and development of different sects, 'Sharia' and its implications as well as most part of the methodology of basic Christian approach is covered in good depth. We hope our first batch of trainees will complete their course after two more seminars in plan"[522].

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[516] Ib.
[517] PS 1.3.6.1.2., 1f.
[518] PS L2: Seminar with S.N. Wanda, in Addis Ababa, August 22-27, 1988 (theme: Christian Witness to Muslims or Christian Approach to Muslims).
[519] PS 1.3.8.1. Schedule of a PROCMURA seminar dated September 16, 1994 (themes: Islamic Fundamentalism, *jihad*, Modern Islamic outreach in the world, *Sharia* its historical developments, contents and aims, The Role and outreach of Church in Muslim society).
[520] Besides those seminars that were held in Ethiopia, seminars organized by the IAP/PROCMURA and other outside Ethiopia, have been conducted. However, it is not possible to examine those here, since concentration shall be given to Ethiopia.
[521] PS 1.3.4.1. The first report with the documents, of 1989 (PS 1.3.4.1.1.) gave a report on the activities of the first 5-year-plan for the CO Evangelism Department from 1983-1987. Since there were no activities related to the IAP until 1988, no report about seminars dealing with CMR, was given. The next reports that are with the documents of 1992 (PS 1.3.4.1.3.), 1993-1996 (PS 1.3.4.1.5.), 1997-1998 (PS 1.3.4.1.6.), 2003 (PS 1.3.4.1.7.) and 2004 (PS 1.3.4.1.8.), can be reviewed.
[522] PS 1.3.4.1.3., 9.

The report from 1996, dealing with the years from 1993-1996, revealed that seminars had been held again in relation to the teachers training program in its second phase[523].The report from 1997 and 1998 stated that in;

> "1997 seven seminars of five days each, were held in the Units where over 400 pastors, Evangelists and lay preachers took part. The office also held two seminars for the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Fellowship where several ministers attended. In 1998 we have given four training courses in conjunction with other subjects in the area of evangelization … [with] some 160 participants"[524].

It has again to be noticed, that S. Abdo left the country in November 1997. After that the activities continued but with less attention. However, the PROCMURA EECMY Ministry Report of 2001 reported that

> "Three workshop[s] of five days each were held in Makane Yesus Theological Seminary and in the Units, SCES [South Central Ethiopia Synod] and SES [South Eastern Synod] where 96 pastors, Evangelists and volunteers preacher took part"[525].

The GMD Annual Report 2003 reviewed a workshop at the MYTS from February 13-15, 2003, in which 33 male and 10 female ministers participated[526].

> "The main objective of the workshop was to enable the participants to be able to appreciate the culture and life setting of the different religious communities and witness the Good News to them to the effect [of] transformation of their culture so that the community will get their fulfilment in Christ in their respective life setting and then, the Gospel will be expanded among their relatives, friends and communities by themselves. As the result the participants had been highly challenged with the contemporary Missiological teachings to evaluate the traditional way of witnessing"[527].

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[523] PS 1.3.4.1.5., 14: "In that 2nd phase training program all the units have been actively working for the implementation of the program No. of trained persons in the 1st [2nd?] phase was … [in 8 synods a] Total [of] 295 … in the near future we plan to have a seminar to provide orientation on the subject [of uniting the Evangelical churches in Ethiopia]".

[524] PS 1.3.4.1.6., 15.

[525] PS 1.2.3.10., 1f.: "In the workshop which was held at MYTS, two guest lecturers from the Sudan and Nairobi Kenya, were invited by GMD and presented their valuable lectures [and] participants were enjoyed, shared their experiences and promised to implement in their Units what they achieved from the workshop. The workshop has proposed the fellowship items to be carried out seriously. These are: … - to create great awareness in believers – to raise fund to support the ministry – to take lovely care of converts under persecution – to conduct a short and long time training range … - to establish sub-committee in each Units as well as are committee – to conduct a witness, effectively through prayer and faith". The total number of participants was 96 (2). See also PS 1.4.3.26., 19, for a report about the seminar held from July 4-6, 2001 (see 4.3.1. g) of this study).

[526] PS 1.3.4.1.7., 6. See also PS L62-66, L70 and PS 1.3.8.2. a) and b).

[527] PS 1.3.4.1.7., 7. PS L62: "We are also planning for a workshop dealing with Christian witness among Muslims, with Harold Kurtz to be the primary speaker. He is the Senior Associate of the Presbyterian Frontier

The minutes and the report about this course are with the documents, and can be reviewed here. Since this section deals with concepts of training, the usefulness of seminars and courses shall especially be emphasized. The report shall have priority in this regard, and the minutes shall add, if necessary, to the contents.

> "Following an Awareness Raising Consultation in Addis Ababa from July 4-6,01 [2001], we have conducted a three-day workshop on Christian Witness Among Muslims at MYTS from Feb. 13-15, 2003"[528].

According to this statement, no seminar was held in 2002. Lecturers were Peter Ford and Harold Kurtz[529]. A spiritual program was designed to frame the workshop.

> "Devotion was daily conducted. Three Bible Studies were delivered. Finally, the workshop was closed by the Holy Communion Service"[530].

Experience sharing was another aspect of the workshop[531]. Some reflections from the participants stated that the lectures have empowered them. Questions concerning the lecturers were asked by the participants and answered by the lecturers[532].

> "Furthermore, the participants felt the necessity of further studies and analysis particularly on the missiological perspective part given by Rev. Harold Kurtz since it challenges and calls a new strategy and a radical approach towards the PROCMURA ministry"[533].

Fellowship in the US, and Rev. Dr. Peter Ford will be our facilitator and is a specialist in this field … we would like to invite 40 participants: two persons from Synods which have a concentration of Muslims; one person from other Synods; and a few from the Central Office, especially the GMD staff … We should therefore like to kindly make a request from the PROCMURA office for financial assistance for this workshop, for US$ 3500.00". PS L63: "PROCMURA would support your upcoming workshop with $2500". For the objectives see also PS 1.3.8.2. a), 1.

[528] PS 1.3.8.2. a), 1.

[529] Ib., 2f.. P. Ford: A review of Muslim beliefs, A review of Muslim practices, Challenges concerning Christian Witness among Muslims, Responsible Christian witness among Muslims. H. Kurtz: Blessed to be a blessing (Gen. 12:1-3, Gal. 3:8) and the Acts 10 revolution, The Acts 10 revolution and the Muslim culture, Touchstones of truth (Rom. 1:19-20) and life in Jesus in the mother culture, Respect for every culture (Acts 17:22-34) and Muhammad and the Qur'an as preparation for the Good News; using the name of Allah for God when talking with Muslims, The kingdom of God vs. the church (Mark 1:14-15, Matth. 16:18), The Church as Judazer of the "circumcision party" (Acts 11:2-3, Gal. 2, Gal. 3:28), The many form of the Church, Equipping Church leaders for Christian Witness among Muslims.

[530] Ib., 3.

[531] Ib.: "W/t Mihret Yonas and W/t Rahel Yemam from the CS [Central Synod] and CES [Central Ethiopia Synod] of the EECMY who participated 'The East and Southern Africa PROCMURA Women's Consultation' held in Nairobi-Kenya from August 25-29, 2002 shared an informative oral report … Furthermore, they challenged the workshop participants to raise the participation of women in the area of Outreach and PROCMURA Ministries". See also PS 1.3.8.2. b), 7: "Participants have also forwarded some reflections from their ministerial experiences".

[532] PS 1.3.8.2. b), 3: "After the lecture [Review of Muslim Practices], the following Questions raised by the participants: 'What is the background of their (Muslims) Worship? Are all Muslims devoted to all the pillars? What would happen if they do not do that?' For the questions raised the presenter gave plain ansers"

[533] PS 1.3.8.2., 3.

Words of gratitude were given to the financial contributor PROCMURA and to the facilitators. The final conclusion and impression of the GMD was that

> "all who have [were] involved in and contributed to it in terms of time, logistics and
>
> finances can rest assured that the workshop was a worthwhile effort"[534].

A similar workshop was held from March 2-5, 2004 at MYTS[535]. The participants of the workshop wrote a "Communique and Recommendations on Christian-Muslim-Relations (CMR)" with a preface and 11 recommendations, and presented it to the DMT[536]. The DMT presented it to the Evangelism and Theology Commission of the EECMY which discussed them and endorsed the points for implementation. The preface emphasized that

> "special emphasis should be given to the grass-root-level (congregations and
>
> preaching places and their ministers dealing directly with the issues of CMR) where
>
> the need of a sound and *contextualized approach and witness for Christ* is most needed"[537].

The eleven recommendations in short were to provide training (teachings, workshops) on CMR with special emphasis on the grass-root-level, establishing PROCMURA Sub Area Committees at Synod and Work Area levels, establishment of CMR-related peace, justice and reconciliation committees at all church units and the preparation of recommendations for the establishment and conduct of such committees, more priority and concentration should be given to CMR at the EECMY seminaries, bible schools and TEE programs, provision of suggestions for all congregations and preaching places on how to care for new Muslim converts, establishment of small cell-groups dominated by Muslim converts and accompanied by those trained in CMR, preparation of handouts with recommendations on how the congregations and preaching places should care for new Muslim converts, which shall include principles for contextualization and suggestions on how to create indigenous churches, encouragement of studies on the use of Arabic words in Christian prayers and conversations, production and distribution of relevant literature on CMR as well as other media in different languages, establishment of cooperation with other Christian agencies

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[534] Ib., 4.

[535] PS 1.3.4.1.8., 5f.: "In this workshop, more than 50 leaders (pastors, Evangelists) participated. Most of the participants were from the EECMY units and Areas work, while some missionaries, who live in Ethiopia, serve in various Denominations also participated in the workshop. Four facilitators, namely Rev. Dr. Jonsen Mbillah, the PROCMURA Gene[r]al Secretary from Nairobi, Dr. Belay Guta from USA, Dr. Peter Ford from MYTS and Mr. Shiferaw Sayid from ECFE played a great role equipping the participants by the subject of CMR. In addition to their lectures, the groups discussion, led the participants to come up with very important recommendation[s] of 11 points which was directed by DMT [Department for Mission and Theology] to EVTC [Evangelism and Theology Commission], accepted and endorsed with a lengthy discussion for implementation [No. 62-788-04-3]".

[536] PS 1.3.8.3.

[537] PS 1.3.8.3., 1.

experienced in CMR at the national level, preparation of calls for partner missions to give special focus and priority to Muslim dominated areas when sending expatriate missionaries or assigning development projects and the continuation of this workshop to be conducted at least one or two times every year[538]. Many of the recommendations already have been dealt with within the terms of reference for the EECMY PROCMURA-AC that was written in June 2001[539]. They shall be reviewed in 4.1. of this chapter.

c) Evaluation

The aim of the courses and workshops is to improve the understanding and the witness of the church in every aspect. Seminars help to reduce fear that is with the ministers with regard to CMR. Especially with the workshops conducted in 2003 and 2004, the value of seminars and workshops became clear. Various useful elements such as teachings related to the grass-root-level and practical issues, spiritual encouragement, opportunities to share experiences and to ask important and actual questions are possible within this teaching concept. It became also clear, that the organisation and logistics, including the financial coverage are not easy to manage. Important recommendations raised by the participants had been given including the practicability of CMR at the grass-root-level, which need to be transformed by the EECMY bodies, of which the AC has a leading role. The need for updates on new missiological and other studies, especially in relation to contextualization, for all units and persons dealing with CMR could be channelled through seminars and workshops. But only a limited number of ministers are able to participate, and it is questionable, if they are able to teach the contents at the grass-root-level. Therefore, only those who are able to transmit the contents should be selected to participate as multiplicators. Because of the logistical and financial efforts, such mostly national or regional workshops could be carried out only once or twice a year. However, the teaching concept of seminars, courses and workshops help to keep the continuous link between the grass-root-level and the actual ministry of witness, with the teaching institutions, and with new missiological developments and other teachings concerning CMR. The understanding of Islam and Muslims can further be stimulated through the exchange of insights that come from the ministry at the grass-root-level. These have to be taken up by the academic institutions and official church bodies, in order to promote the approaches and conditions of Christians in Muslim contexts.

2.2.   Training of teachers (Shamsudin Abdo)

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[538] Ib., 1f.
[539] PS 1.2.1.2.

The EECMY in former times until 1991 had conducted many seminars and consultations, and has given teaching seminars and courses at various times[540], as mentioned before. However, not enough attention had been given so far[541]. In order to deal carefully with the subject of CMR;

> "Realizing the urgent need of Muslim Evangelization in Ethiopia, the Evangelical
> Church Mekane Yesus has decided to put more effort on this particular venture"[542],

and therefore a new program was prepared with the help of S. Abdo[543].

a) Aim: *peaceful coexistence, preparation of ministers for witness (and ecumenical unity.*

In his presentation of the training-of-teachers program, S. Abdo mentioned the two main aims and one supportive aim of CMR in Ethiopia. The history of relations so far was marked by conflicts and wars due to Ethiopia's strategic position in the wider vicinity, which created suspicions and skepticism. In this regard distinctions between the adherents of the two religions were made, and Muslims were not called Ethiopian Muslims. Even though Christians and Muslims are representatives of two religions in Ethiopia they belong to one nation and one people, and therefore have the chance to live together peacefully[544].

> "With a short word, for Ethiopians 'religion is private, the nation is common', as the
> fathers say … this foundation gives the church the task to look for ways to remove
> old conflicts and to establish mutual understanding"[545].

In this view it is the church's task to make a new beginning in CMR with a positive attitude. The first aim therefore is to create and to contribute toward peaceful coexistence[546] by using

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[540] PS 1.2.3.1., 2: "The church had even appointed one adviser to make proper research … and also teaching … many seminars", probably mentioning the work of G. Hasselblatt. See also PS 1.3.6.1.2., as mentioned before.

[541] PS 1.3.2.4., 3.

[542] PS 1.3.6.1.2., 2.

[543] PS 1.3.2.3. and 1.3.2.4. were written in March and April 1991, and PS 1.3.6.1.2.-3. were written in May 1991. All give a preview on the program and its plan. PS 1.3.6.1.4. was written at the end of 1992 and PS 1.3.2.6. was written in January 1993. Both gave a report on the programs implementation and preview to further plans. PS 1.3.6.1.5. gave an second phase plan overview for 1993. PS 1.3.6.1.6. is a copy of a certificate with a list of the participants who received the certificate. In PS 1.3.6.1.7. a participant has given a report.

[544] PS 1.3.2.3., 1f.

[545] Ib., 2, 1.3.2.4., 3: "This historical situation [i.e. mistrust] has changed and the people of the two religions agreed and decided to embrace each other and to accept each other to live in peace, which is a precondition for the proclamation of the gospel". See also 1.2.3.1., 2: "In spite of the past bitter religious bloody battles between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, the relationship between these two Ethiopian religious communities today could be said positive. However, considering the current movement of world Islamization, Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular are under a great threat of this new movement. Therefore, we believe that it is high time that the Church puts more emphasis on the reconciliation and evangelization of our dear Muslim friends in Ethiopia".

[546] Ib., 3: "To help people of different faiths to agree to live united and in peace itself is a big result". See also PS 1.3.6.1.2., 2, and PS 1.2.3.1., 3: "To teach how to maintain the present seemingly peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia".

the link of nationalism. This is to be seen as a preventive method for possible conflicts[547].
Only when the way is paved with peace, the message of the gospel can be proclaimed[548].

The second aim is to be seen in the church's task to call all creations to reconciliation with God, and to salvation by way of preaching and witness[549].

In order that the Muslims accept the good news of Christ, the EECMY Evangelism Department prepared a method of interpreting the gospel for Muslims for the church's ministers that included teachings about the religion of Islam, its faith foundation and doctrine, and teachings about the care of converts and how to bring them together with the congregations[550]. The ministers have to know both their own and the Muslims doctrine. The preparation of these ministers is therefore the most important aim[551]. Connected to this aim the synods of the EECMY shall have trained experts who shall later function as local coordinators[552] for CMR to bring down the teachings to the grass-root-level.

This task should not only be limited to the EECMY, but all Christian churches should participate, at least the ECFE member churches. The EECMY has the responsibility to call the churches to this task in a visionary manner.

> "If the other churches do not have an understanding of the meaning [identity] of Islam and about their innermost feelings [mind], their ministers may endanger the Ethiopian CMR and this may cause the Muslims to reject the gospel and may create religious conflicts"[553].

To avoid these dangers and to make the Christian witness stronger, as many churches as possible should be united in this task. This is the third and supportive aim of the project.

> "Unity and love are signs [messengers] of the Christians faith"[554].

The undertaking of uniting the churches, however, became very difficult.

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[547] PS 1.3.6.1.2., 2: "As we understand the nature of the Islamic fundamentalism, certainly, the situation in Ethiopia could, be very explosive".
[548] PS 1.3.2.4, 2, see also n. 405.
[549] PS 1.3.2.3., 3, PS 1.3.2.4., 1, PS 1.3.2.14.g, 1: After having quoted Matthew 28:16-20, "It is the duty of the Church to take the Gospel to all nations and cultures. Each nation and its particular culture need special approach and care suitable for that particular situation".
[550] PS 1.3.2.4., 1: "Therefore, the ministers, who are called to bring the gospel to the adherents of Islam, have to be prepared before to understand the meaning of Islam and the inner mind of Muslims in order to bring the gospel to them". See also PS 1.3.6.1.2., 2, and PS 1.2.3.1., 3: "To teach our church workers so that they are well informed on Islamic Theology and Doctrines and also the Christian approach to the Muslim friends in the way that most of the offensive approach are eliminated and the ages old misunderstandings are carefully treated".
[551] Ib., 2.
[552] PS 1.3.6.1.3.
[553] PS 1.3.2.3., 4.
[554] PS 1.3.2.3., 4.

> "It is sad to report [that] the Christian Churches in Ethiopia are in segments still. Orthodox, Catholics and Evangelicals are far from creating the Christian Council in Ethiopia"[555].

The endeavors towards the creation of a united national committee for CMR shall be looked at later in 5.2.

In all the planning, S. Abdo made clear that not the methods and plans are decisive, but that above all the Holy Spirit touches the hearts of the people so that they may find salvation, and that the ministers are only instruments[556]. He referred therefore to the "Missio Dei", i.e. God himself is carrying out his mission.

> "The Lord himself is the owner of the work"[557].

b) Method

The task's program had a short-term (first phase) and a long-term (second phase) aspect. During the first year every four months once for ten days, at least three evangelists from each synod of the EECMY shall receive basic knowledge and a method for teaching[558]. During the second year the students, i.e. the teachers, shall practice what they have learnt, by going to the ministers and people of the grass-root-level of their respective synods, to visit them and to distribute literature in addition[559]. Within this year additional teaching for advance, so called reinforcement seminars[560] will be given to the teachers at least one time for two weeks. At the end of the second year the result of the two year's teaching will be examined and the best student(s) will receive the opportunity to go abroad with a scholarship in CMR[561]. The first phase comes to an end after the hand-over of the certificates.

The long term aspect, in documents referred to as the second phase, had been considered:

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[555] PS 1.3.2.6., 2.

[556] PS 1.3.2.3., 4.

[557] PS 1.3.2.4., 2.

[558] PS 1.3.2.4., 3, and PS 1.3.6.1.3: The participants requirements were to have at least a certificate of the MYTS or similar, since in CMR the command of the own doctrines is necessary. Being fluent in English was required for an eventually participation in a later scholarship program. The number of at least three persons from each synod was considered, since in CMR one could hardly work alone and should consult and support another person. These persons shall have offices at the Synods and shall have a call and a proven commitment for the work with Muslims.

[559] PS 1.3.6.1.4., and PS 1.3.2.6., 3: "Once the training of Synod level teachers is completed, our next step is to help organize pasters and evangelists training in each EECMY Synod. Here we expect the teachers now under training will create a team in each Synod and carryout the necessary training programme in their own Synod, while the EECMY Christian-Muslim relation Consultant is present with them as adviser and supervisor". PS L17, 2: "we will need to hold consultation seminars to reinforce their education and share field experiences".

[560] Ib.: "to strengthen the weak points observed and encourage their strong qualities". See also PS 1.3.6.1.4., and PS 1.2.3.1., 3: "After several seminars have been conducted and the basic Islamic Theology is well covered, we plan to introduce the methodology of how to witness to our friends in Islam religion".

[561] PS 1.3.6.1.4., 1: „we hope two or three among the present trainees will be granted scholarship abroad for higher degrees to replace our present Consultant at the church level on their return".

"Since CMR is a long-term work, the teaching has to be continued every year in different stages. In every synod the Evangelism Department shall cooperate and establish sub-divisions assigned for this work who shall continue the work steadily"[562].

During the first two years of training the CMR coordinators at the synod level and in the Evangelism Departments will already have been trained in their responsibility, and installed to coordinate the ministers in their surroundings[563]. The certificate of the MYTS at the end will approve them to be accepted as teachers, since this certificate will not easily be obtained. However, seminars supervised by the CMR adviser of the EECMY shall be given to the ministers of the synods continuously[564]. The second phase was proposed to last from 1993-1996.

The crucial role is given to the EECMY-AC Adviser, who is coordinating the work, preparing the teachings[565], carrying out the seminars, visits and supervisory tasks. A job description has been prepared for the Adviser[566].

The teaching program needed manpower and financial support, therefore a budgetary proposal has been prepared carefully to be submitted to the EECMY[567].

c) The course the training program took

The training program started in November 1991[568] and was carried out in the Amharic language, because this was the easiest language to use for all participants, and because it was the instruction language later on for the trainers[569].

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[562] PS 1.3.2.4., 4.

[563] PS 1.2.3.1., 3: "In each Synod the people that are under present instruction will form a team of Gospel ministers with the know how they are requiring now. Along with what the Synod teams are doing in their respective localities, the … Adviser on Christian Muslim Relations will make supervisory visitations from time to time to evaluate and assist".

[564] PS 1.3.6.1.5.: "In each Synod we propose about twenty evangelists and pastors to be trained in a center or and more convenient place to be selected by each Synod". The costs for 4 seminars in ten units with allowances and transportation was proposed with 35,280.00 US-Dollar, and the expenses for the consultant office with a full-time adviser for three years with 47,280.00 US-Dollar.

[565] PS 1.2.3.1., 4: "It is understandable that teaching materials are to be prepared by the adviser himself".

[566] PS L14, attachment: The consultant on CMR is responsible to the Gospel Ministry Department. His specific duties are: 1. preparation of teaching material for training courses, 2. preparation of radio scripts, 3. organization of workshops and seminars, 4. supervision and evaluation of the courses, 5. informing the EECMY leadership, 6. helping each Unit to establish small libraries on CMR, 7. giving reports to the AC and other concerned bodies, 8. performing other duties related to CMR.

[567] PS 1.3.6.1.2., see attachment. The proposed training budget breakdown included the costs for seven training courses to be held from 1991-1993, the teaching materials and other supplies, and contingencies and unforeseen expenses. The total costs were given with Ethiopian Birr 75,000.00 or US-Dollar 36,300.00. The EECMY's own contribution included the transportation costs and the full salary for the CMR Coordinator in a total of 27,415.00 US-Dollar. However, it is clear that the salary was covered from contributions of the LWF and other. The synods should have had to contribute the transportation costs for their participants, see PS 1.3.6.1.3., 5. For the second phase see PS 1.3.6.1.5.

[568] PS 1.3.6.1.4., 1, PS 1.3.2.6., 2, and PS L17, 2.

"During the past 14 months several seminars were held and basic Islamic theology, Islamic practices, history and development of different sects, sharia and its implications as well as most part of the methodology of basic Christian approach are covered in good depth"[570].

After two years 21 evangelists from eight synods took four seminars on ten days duration on the first level training[571]. The report of one of the participants, given by evangelist Kebede Fayissa at the graduation ceremony, expressed the thankfulness of the participants, the content of the training that had been given, and one main critique, i.e. that only men were given the opportunity to participate, and that women should be included in the future[572].

The second phase was carried out with the trainers,

"who are now actively participating in organizing and running their local PROCMURA Seminars under the supervision of the EECMY PROCMURA Adviser"[573].

Changes were to be seen with the participants.

"In every seminar held so far we have witnessed much change of attitude among almost all of the participants"[574].

However, the need for a special mission strategy became obvious.

"We understand that such venture calls for contextualized Gospel Witness which is nothing less than being incarnated in their culture that are actually different from ours"[575].

For such approaches and strategies the study of the various contexts is necessary.

"As the situation from place to place is expected to vary, we intend to accommodate a special care on each vividly varying situation according to their ethnic and cultural make up. This calls for an extended survey of different Church areas"[576].

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[569] PS 1.3.6.1.4., 1.
[570] PS 1.3.2.6., 2, PS 1.3.6.1.4.
[571] PS 1.2.3.2., 3.: "They were graduated on May 29th 1993 at the end of Church Executive Committee where all the Church leaders representing all the Synods were present. The whole afternoon was devoted for this graduation".
[572] PS 1.3.6.1.7.
[573] PS 1.2.3.3., 1: "These seminars are of five days duration to give proper orientation on the theology and practice of Islam, and the methodology of Christian witness among Muslim friends".
[574] PS 1.2.3.3., 1.
[575] PS 1.3.6.1.4., 2: "therefore study plans for such special Mission strategy should be given a high priority attention". See also PS 1.3.2.6., 3, PS 1.2.3.1., 3.
[576] PS 1.2.3.1., 3.

Such experiences that resulted from the understanding of Islam and the teaching program led to the development of strategies and guidelines, which shall be later examined in 3.4. Again the strategy will call for trained men, church building support and other holistic services.

It seems from the documents at hand, that the short-term trainers teaching program came successfully to an end after some seminars were held on the Synod level, and that the continuation of the long-term program was running smoothly into the teaching method of holding seminars annually, as proposed for 1993-1995/6, and as mentioned above.

The PROCMURA section report of 1996 supported this impression:

> "The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is now in its third year of training Synod level pastors and evangelists for Christian witness among Muslim communities in their vicinity. We praise the Lord that PROCMURA Section has been able to graduate about one hundred Pastors and evangelists … The two courses we give concentrate on the two areas mentioned above, namely theology and methodology respectively"[577].

Another factor for this development may be seen in the fact that S. Abdo was appointed to be the regional coordinator of PROCMURA in 1993[578]. The double burden of being the full-time Area Adviser[579] for the EECMY in Ethiopia, and the East-Africa Regional Adviser for PROCMURA was challenging for S. Abdo[580]. Therefore, the short-term teachers training program lasted from November 1991, with the graduation in May 1993, and a series of seminars until 1994, but was not carried out again. After the appointment of S. Abdo, the long-term program continued and seminars were held regularly. The trainers once trained partly continued their ministry, as reported in 1997:

> "Most of these trained have now good experience over the last two years in teaching and training their local church ministers. Reports coming from all area are encouraging because Christian-Muslim relations particularly on sharing and witnessing the Good News of Salvation is going well without noticeable conflicts"[581].

However, some of the trained local teachers have been reassigned to other tasks by their synods, and other went for higher education in the country and abroad. The synods have been

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[577] PS 1.2.3.6., 1.
[578] PS L17. In this letter of gratitude S. Abdo mentioned the receipt of the letter from PROCMURA of March 20, 1993, in which the decision of the PROCMURA Executive Committee was transmitted to him.
[579] PS L23. Starting from June 1, 1994, according to the Church Officers decision, S. Abdo started to be the full-time Coordinator for CMR.
[580] Ib., 2.
[581] PS 1.2.3.7., 1f.

encouraged to share their trainers with other synods who have lost their trainers[582]. The need for scholarly trained staff on higher level became obvious.

> "In this particular area the churches of this country need the support of PROCMURA very much in providing scholarships"[583].

An important turning point came with the departure of S. Abdo in November 1997. A substitute was hardly to be found[584]. From this time on the plan of the EECMY-AC turned towards workshops and consultations to be held occasionally.

d) Evaluation

The aim of the training-of-teachers program was to promote a peaceful coexistence with Muslims and to improve witness, for which trainers should have been trained, who again would transmit their insights to the ministers at the grass-root-level. Another secondary aim was the effort to unite the churches in Ethiopia toward a national ecumenical body. This proved to be very difficult, and shall be reviewed again in 4.2. of this chapter. Again the link to the grass-root-level, this time to be channelled through the trainers, improved with this concept. The organisation of a network of teaching, starting from the academical level through the multiplicatory teachers, who teach again the ministers at the grass-root-level, supervised by the adviser, is most convincing. However, the organisation rested on the adviser, which at times put a great strain on S. Abdo. In a sense, the training of trainers filled the gap of the need of a central academic teaching institute, which later should have been organised in the "Program of CMR" at the MYTS, which will be reviewed in 2.4.3. of this chapter. However, this program improved the concept of giving loosely courses and seminars, since it had been organised thoroughly. The continuous supervision and organisation of the adviser is needed, and therefore is of crucial importance for this teaching concept. The training of trainers program was a success and had a great result on the EECMY from its top reaching down to the grass-root-level. The continuation or a new attempt of this teaching concept should be considered and encouraged.

2.3. Theological Education by Extension (TEE)

2.3.1. Introduction

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[582] Ib., 3.

[583] Ib., 4.

[584] PS 1.2.3.8., 3: "The PROCMURA Office of the EECMY has been vacant for over ten months because of our coordinator leaving the country. He may not came back in the near future. It is also very difficult to find a well versed person in the Islamic, in Ethiopia".

> "(TEE) is a decentralized education in Theology. 'Instead of the student coming to the Seminary, the Seminary goes to the student' … it is meant for *people in ministry* … They may be ordained ministers as well as evangelists, elders, teachers, bible-study-group-leaders, youth- and women-group-leaders, choir-members etc"[585].

After TEE started in Guatemala in 1963, it was introduced to the MYTS by Loren Bliese in 1970. Its aim is to train ministers at the grass-root-level for effective ministry. Therefore, self-study materials[586], seminars[587] and field education[588] are the three pillars of TEE, showing that it is an "in-service-training", focusing on theory and practice.

> "In TEE living, learning and working are interconnected and contextual"[589].

The TEE department at the MYTS also has prepared books related to Islam and to the ministry among Muslims for the diploma program[590]. According to the documents at hand, the first had been written by Benyamen Adem Yusuf, entitled "Understanding Islam, For Effective Evangelism", together with "A course on Islam, A companion Study Guide to the Book 'Understanding Islam for Effective Evangelism", in 1994[591]. After a draft, entitled "Christian Witness to Muslims", had been prepared in July 2001[592], in 2002, a new book had been written and published by the TEE diploma program, called "Communicating the Good News, A Course on Islam"[593]. The most important features and elements, dealing with the understanding of Islam, the Ethiopian context, and the approaches to Muslims shall be reviewed here, in addition to the effort to examine the usefulness of this teaching concept. Therefore, the main character of the two books shall be extracted.

2.3.2. TEE book, 1994-2002 (Yusuf)

a) The aim of the book, according to the study guide, was to enable the participants

> "to know some facts about Islam"[594].

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[585] Domianus, Guatemala, 1.

[586] Ib., 1: "TEE-participants don't have a teacher. They study independently from their *'self-study-materials'*. The book is the teacher. TEE-books follow a clear structure and elaborate the teachings in special lessons".

[587] Ib.: "the participants come together with their group-leader/tutor in order to reflect what they have learned at home. For comprehension (to understand a matter deeply …) and application (how a lesson relates to life …)".

[588] Ib.: "unless a teaching is put into practice, we cannot say that learning has taken place".

[589] Ib., 2. "Since TEE focuses on the preparation of faithful Christians for voluntary service, TEE is also an important step for an African church in getting self-reliant financially".

[590] The diploma program is similar to the residential Seminary program. It is conducted in English, whereas the certificate program is conducted in the vernacular, and leads to certificates for lay ministry or evangelists.

[591] PS 1.3.7.2. Since the book "Understanding Islam" is undated, it remains open, in which year it was written. Ib., 1, indicates slightly that it could have been written in 1991.

[592] PS 1.3.7.6. a).

[593] PS 1.3.7.6. b).

[594] PS 1.3.7.6. a), 1.

However, the title of the book was reaching further to the understanding of Islam for effective evangelism[595]. For this aim fear as the normal attitude of Christians towards Muslims, has to be overcome. Only when dealing with the sources of fear, it can be overcome.

> "The source of long-standing and persistent fear of Islam among Christians is twofold. One source is theological, while the second is historical. Theological differences between Islam and Christianity have created a negative image of Islam …
>
> The second point underlying the negative image of Islam in the Christian church is the long historical conflict between Islam and Christianity"[596].

Both historical and theological studies reveal the spirit of Islam, the spirit of its activism and nationalism within the Islamic community.

> "The Islamic community in the world is at once a political and religious community … divided into three regions; the territory of Islam (dar-al-Islam), the territory of peace (dar-al-sulh), and the territory of war (dar-al-harb)"[597].

The religion of action in contemporary Islam is characterized by the religious revivalism, which seeks to fight a decadent Islam and to (re-)establish the dominance of Islamic systems. An inner Islamic struggle between fundamentalists[598] and liberals[599] hinders these reform activities. Beside of this, the historical and theological studies help to understand the

> "current problems that confront Muslims when Christians teach them of salvation, loving your enemy,."[600].

b) The content of the book

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[595] The study guide had reorganized the order of the book and proportioned it into 4 weekly sections with each 5 day sections. 1st week: Understanding the rise and spread of Islam (1-10), Day 1: The fear of Islam (1-2), Day 2: The spirit of Islam (2-4), Day 3: Mohammed and his background (5-7), Day 4: The spread of Islam, Expansion after the death of Mohammed (5-7), Day 5: The spread of Islam to Africa (7-10); 2nd week: Islamic understanding of Christianity, the Qoran, the Islamic traditions and law (11-22), Day 1: Muslim-Christian differences (11-13), Day 2: Muslim-Christian differences continued, The Christian scripture (13-14), Day 3: The Qoran (15-16), Day 4: Tradition, hadith (16-17), Day 5: The Islamic Law (18-22); 3rd week: Islamic Theology, piety, Angels and Prophets (23-30), Day 1: Islamic Theology and piety (23), Day 2: Islamic Theology continued (24-25), Day 3: Angels (25-27), Day 4: The Prophets (27-28), Day 5: Last Day, Day of Judgment (28-29); 4th week: Rules of Conduct, Moral, and Social Behavior, Observance and Festivals, and Islamic groups in Africa (31-55), Day 1: Rules of Conduct, the 5 pillars (31-37), Day 2: Moral and Social Behavior (38-40), Day 3: Observance and Festivals (41-47), Day 4: Muslim groups, Sunites and Shiites (48-51), Day 5: Suni and Sufi, and Sects (51-55).
[596] PS 1.3.7.6. a), 1.
[597] Ib., 2f.
[598] Ib., 4: "Those who insist on a return to a traditional Islamic way of life".
[599] Ib.: "Those who demand secular reforms".
[600] Ib., 4.

Therefore, the book begins with the historical perspective of the Islamic people and their world view, describing the beginning of Islam, Mohammed's biography and the spread of Islam which expanded also into Africa[601].

> "The Dervishes in Sudan, Ethiopia and some parts of Western and Central Africa, were free to bend the rules to suit the local customs and habits of different peoples"[602].

Besides the consolidation and ability for syncretism, Islam makes the converts part of a great Muslim community.

> "I believe the Muslim faith is a community faith, not individual faith like Christianity. Whenever an outsider invades a Muslim community, the faith brings them together more than ever to resist the foreign ideas"[603].

This sense of community in Islam leads to a strong resistance against Christians and others. Further its sensitivity for poverty, injustice and tribalism will exercise a powerful attraction for African people in the future[604]. Since Muslims improve the social conditions and development activities with physical assistance as mission strategies, it;

> "is the duty of the Christian church to find ways to combat this Islamic influence over our cities, our people, and our children. We also have reason to be concerned for the poor as Christ was"[605].

The strong term "combat" indicates an understanding of Islam as a threat which tends to make Islam enemy-like to Christians. Compared to the afore-mentioned statement, a contradiction indicated that the author himself yet has not come to overcome the fear. Such understanding is a serious obstacle for peaceful coexistence in CMR and should be avoided. However, the challenge with the activities of Islam remains, and Christians are reminded of their ministry to be holistic, which could lead to a fruitful competition.

B. A. Yusuf continued in describing the Islamic understanding of Christianity by concentrating on religious and theological features, and concluded that

> "in spite of their common heritage, an immense gulf separates them. When we look deeply, we see immense friction and disagreement between Muslims and mainline

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[601] Ib., 5-7.

[602] Ib., 7f.

[603] Ib., 9.

[604] Ib., 9f: "As a result, many African Muslims are experiencing a revival in their faith as they receive comfort through the Koran's promised paradise. They also are using the promises of the Koran to reach non-Muslims who are suffering the same injustices, and to encourage them to embrace Islam so that they can have answers to their problems. We Christians should be aware that poverty, unemployment, and problems of inadequate housing are being used by Muslims to encourage people to seek help in Islam".

[605] Ib., 10.

Christian churches, partially because they differ in their understanding of doctrinal matters"[606].

Four fundamental Christian doctrines proved to be difficult to reconcile with Islam: the fatherhood of God, the divinity of Christ, the doctrine of original sin, and the Christian scriptures[607]. Yusuf has not given any common ground here, but only the strongest separating features, which make it hard for Christians to communicate with the Muslims. These features have been dealt with before, and since no new aspect has been found, they shall not be repeated again here. Yusufs' presentation of the Qur'an and tradition (*hadith*)[608] is only informative, and gives no view for contextual understanding in view of the Christian evangelism. The same can be said of the following description of Islamic law, which includes the family law, the inheritance law, the transactional laws, and the penal laws[609].While dealing with Islamic theology and piety, Yusuf quoted Sura 2:171 and 4:135f., which indicate the five doctrines of Islam, and started to describe the doctrines about God[610] and the angels[611]. He continued with the amplified Islamic teaching of the angels, namely the archangels, the ministering angels and the fallen angels, mentioned here the *jinn*[612], and then continued with the doctrine of the prophets[613] and the last day[614]. In the following Yusuf described the five pillars of Islam[615], the moral and social behavior[616], the observance and

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[606] Ib., 11.
[607] Ib., 11-14.
[608] Ib., 15-17.
[609] Ib., 18-22. "Islamic law is a comprehensive code of behaviour that embraces both private and public acts … When we look into Muslim society, we find that while Christians carry their faith within them, Muslims want to have it rule everything around them as well. In the western countries, religion has become a more or less personal bond of commitment. In the Islamic world … the corresponding Arabic word, Din still means an all-encompassing way of life, which is upheld by external controls" (18f.).
[610] Ib., 24: "Islam's very literal and specific interpretation of monotheism illustrates one very fundamental and irreconcilable difference between Muslims and Christians".
[611] Ib., 23-26.
[612] Ib., 27: "According to Islamic theology, Jinn are mortal spirits who exist mainly in communal groups, marrying and living an existence comparable to the rest of humanity. They are normally invisible, but many appear in human or other forms, or may live in trees, waste places, ruins, and sometimes in uninhabited homes. According to Islamic theology, humans may be Jinn-possessed, a condition identified as majnun, or insane. Astrologers, dividers, soothsayers and poets, among others, are to some degree subject to possession by a jinn. Because the prophet was a poet, the implication is that he was Jinn-possessed. Jinn are considered to be hostile influences on people".
[613] Ib., 28: "According to Islamic theology, a messenger is considered to rank a grade higher than a prophet. A messenger is one who is sent by God to a special community with scripture containing rules and laws of human conduct. A prophet merely preaches a message. Prophets are not messengers, but all messengers are also prophets … When we look for their names in the Bible or Koran, 18 of these [28 prophets] are from the Old Testament …, three are from the New Testament …, four are probably associated with Arab tradition …, and the claim of three to the prophetic series … The Koran further teaches that some of them were endowed by God with special power to perform such as Moses and Jesus, who both seem to hold a special place among the prophets of Islam"
[614] Ib., 27-30.
[615] Ib., 31-37.

festivals[617], and the Islamic groups in Africa, namely the Sunnites and Shiites, the Sufis and immigrant sects, which includes the Ismaili, Agha Khan (Nazaris) and the Khoja[618].

c) Evaluation

In all these descriptions almost no comment on the Ethiopian Islam with its historical and contextual features had been given. Secondly, nor recommendations or reflections on the Christian ministry with its approaches to Muslims in whatever form, neither advises on witness or other had been presented. The only reference was made concerning the above mentioned holistic ministry, which should be dealt with in 3.3. However, the practical orientation, as constitutional for TEE, was missing. No assignment for field education had been given. At large this TEE book gave some of the basic information about Islam, firstly dealing shortly with the history of Islam (pages 5-10), and secondly with the main religious and theological ideas and groups of Islam more extensively. The tendency of presenting Islam as a threat with the need to combat it was detected and directly criticized. Therefore, in the minds of the readers, eventually the two aspects of Islam as a threat and the fear of it, and the unbridgeable separation between Islam and Christianity will remain. Further, no selection of literature or a bibliography for further studies had been given. The title of the book therefore was misleading and not fulfilled with the given content, since rather information than understanding, and rather difficult than constructive points for an encounter in CMR had been presented. These would, without any further supportive teaching, hardly be helpful for lay ministers and others who work and live directly in Muslim surroundings. Only the transmission of knowledge about some selected contents of Islam had been presented, which hardly increase the understanding which evolves from the closest possible relation to the Muslims as had been summarized in the section 1.5. of this chapter. It rather created a distance.

With this evaluation yet no comment on the usefulness of the teaching concept of the TEE had been given, but only the book itself had been examined. The TEE program, however, because of its intention to bring academic training to the grass-root-level, i.e. to make it an "in service training", could be another useful tool in CMR, if the book itself implements the policies connected with TEE. The role of an adviser or supervisor, which lasts in the hand of a TEE-group-leader, has to be considered seriously, especially with regard to CMR, i.e. it

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[616] Ib., 38-40.
[617] Ib., 41-47.
[618] Ib., 48-55. It is not clear, why Yusuf mentioned the last groups, since they are not represented in Ethiopia.

should be a person well trained in CMR. The next book shall be reviewed now, to detect any improvements, and to further elaborate the premises given at the beginning of this section.

2.3.3. TEE book, 2002 ongoing (TEE Department)

a) Aim and objectives

It was probably because of the weaknesses of the first book, that the TEE Department of the MYTS prepared a new book[619]. The aim and objectives of the book have been given in the introduction.

> "The exhaustive study of Islam is impossible in short courses like this one. Our intention is therefore, only to give you a basic knowledge of this religion: its origin, doctrine, practices and a brief concept of its holy book, the Qur'an. The course also gives a brief explanation on the relationship between the Holy Scripture of Christianity and the Qur'an. Another objective of this Course could be to seek to understand Islam and Muslim communication [communication with Muslims] and to promote such understanding to stimulate interest in you who feel responsible in the witness of the Gospel among Muslims"[620].

The primary emphasis lies on transmitting knowledge about Islam and a partly comparison with Christian contents[621], and the secondary intention was indicated more vague ("could be") with the promotion of understanding which leads to the Christian witness to Muslims. The author or editor was aware of the process of learning which leads to understanding[622]. Within the secondary aim the creation of a relationship with Muslims was mentioned as an objective.

> "Upon completion of this course you will be able … to suggest practical ways and means of how to communicate with Muslims and become their friends"[623].

The proportioning of the content reflects the giving of importance to the two aspects[624], i.e. two weeks deal with the history of Islam, one week with the Qur'an and Islamic religious

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[619] It is unclear, who contributed to the book. However, it seems that large parts have been taken from an unpublished manuscript of Terje Ostebo, entitled "Responsible Witness, Part I: Islam in history & the teachings of Islam", see PS 1.3.7.9. Further, the old TEE book has partly been used.

[620] 1.3.7.6. b), III.

[621] See ib., 67: "But as the main objective of this course is to help you to get a basic knowledge on Islam religion …", again ib., 101: "To know Islam, you need to know its worship and doctrine … The lesson is very significant to equip you with the pre-knowledge of Islam to be prepared to witness to the adherents of this religion", and ib., 127: "The first step to witness to Muslims is to get to know them … This knowledge guides the communication you will have with them".

[622] Ib., 1: "We still want you to learn more about this religion in order that you may be able to understand its followers".

[623] Ib., IIIf.

features partly compared to Christianity, and the last week, besides an overview of the expansion of Islam and the historical development of Islam in Ethiopia and its contemporary features, concentrates on CMR and approaches of witness. In accord with the policy of TEE, the students are expected to study the book by themselves and answer the given questions, present their own questions to the weekly seminars where they are going to be discussed, and will await a home-take assignment (task) in the middle of the course, as well as a final examination[625].

b) Introducing aspects to the examination of the content

In this book the transmission of knowledge prevails, similar to the first mentioned TEE book of Yusuf, but improved in many different aspects. Since the character of knowledge with Yusuf seemed to be more informative, it becomes more substantial and contextual in the new book. Between the knowledge and the practical approach, which is as indicated in the title of the book, communicating the good news, understanding, as far as possible from within the Islamic perspective should be placed in between, as the previous sections of this analysis have shown. Only out of appropriate understanding from the most possible approximation to the Muslims, the good news can be communicated faithfully or CMR can effectively be established. Such understanding means, that the one who approaches Muslims anticipates how they will hear the good news. Only in this practical communication the quality of understanding will show up. Understanding then searches the most closest and intimate relation to the Muslim, his life, his religious understanding, his social context, his way of thinking and the like. Teachings or literature that bring closer to the Muslims and their holistic context, i.e. reality in the afore-mentioned sense, eventually create better understanding and approaches. On the other hand, contents that separate or transmit only objective and informative knowledge, eventually limit the understanding and will create a gap between Christians and Muslims. The transmission of knowledge with or towards understanding therefore is the most difficult part. Once understanding has been gained, the

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[624] Ib., II, Table of Contents: Week one: The background and origin of Islam (1-30), Day 1: Pre-Islamic Arabia and birth of Mohammed, Day 2: Mohammed's business travel experience, Day 3: The call of Mohammed, Day 4: The new religion preached, Day 5: The effect of Islam on Mohammed's close relatives; Week two: The challenge Mohammed encountered and his final days (31-66), Day 1: Persecution, Day 2: Persecution led to immigration, Day 3: Mohammed, a spiritual and a secular leader, Day 4: Mohammed's last days, Day 5: The Khalifs after Mohammed and groups in Islam; Week three: The Qur'an and its regard on Christianity (67-108), Day 1: The Qur'an, Day 2: The Qur'anic sources, Day 3: Jesus in the Qur'an, Day 4: Islam worship and its doctrine in brief, Day 5: The concept of community in Islam; Week four: No title, intention probably Christian Witness to Muslims (109-146), Day 1: The spread of Islam, Day 2: How to approach a Muslim, Day 3: Communicating with a Muslim, Day 4: Reaching Muslims with Good News, Day 5: Christian witness to Muslims; Key answers to questions (147-150), Bibliography (151-152).
[625] Ib., IV.

approaches in CMR seem to evolve out of it in consequence. Approaches based on knowledge with a certain objective distance to the substance of Islam and Muslims, will result in a somehow superficial character of understanding and approaches. Therefore, the book shall be reviewed under the three aspects knowledge, understanding, and approaches.

c) Transmission of knowledge with or without understanding

The description of the pre-Islamic Arabia including its geography, its people and their economic background, moreover their religion with its folk-religious features, and the fractured knowledge of Jewish and Christian beliefs, help to understand the background and reasons out of which Islam emerged[626]. The rest of week one and week two concentrated on the biography of Muhammad including his birth, his business travel experience, his call, his preaching, the effect of Islam on his close relatives, the challenge he encountered, the persecution which led to emigration, his spiritual and secular leadership, his last days and the continuation of his message with the *khalifs* after him and groups in Islam[627]. The growing-up of Muhammad laid the foundation for his later concerns.

> "His growth as an orphan boy had been the historical basis for his ethical concern
> and compassion for the poor, the orphan, the widows and other helpless victims"[628].

On his business travels Muhammad had a contact with Bahira, a Christian (Nestorian) monk, who asked him about the polytheistic religion of the Arabs. Muhammad's answer helps to understand the harsh critique concerning polytheism in Arabia[629]. Muhammad's knowledge of Christianity later increased with Umm Habiba, his wife and former wife of Ubaid Ibn Jahsh, one of the four Hanifites, who was one of the refugees who came to Abyssinia and converted to Christianity[630]. The description of his personal character and his mental condition help to understand his revelations, his call to be a prophet and the development of

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[626] Ib., 1-4: "Arabia is the birthplace of Islam, and it is therefore, good to know about the Country where Islam was founded" (1). "Religion in pre-Islamic Arabia is known as 'A time of Ignorance' according to Islam. It was the time when pagan cults, polytheism and distorted Judaism and Christianity were being practised. This time of ignorance was against which Mohammed preached Islam religion, the belief in one Allah" (3). "Although those people who practise Judaism and Christianity were few in number, their influence spread along the trade routes. Many Arabs knew some of the Bible stories as well as Jewish and Christian legends".
[627] Ib., 4-66.
[628] Ib., 6.
[629] Ib., 8: "Bahira stood before the boy and asked him by the Lat and Uzza to answer his questions. (Al Lat was the clan goddess for Banu Thaqif and Al Uzza for the Quraish tribe. Both were clan goddesses of pre-Islamic Arabia) Mohammed's reply to that question was, 'Do not ask me by Lat and Uzza but by Allah, I do not hate anything more than these goddesses.' This statement of Mohammad depicts how much he hates idol worship of pre-Islamic Arabia".
[630] Ib., 9f.: "Something very important for the reader here is that Mohammed married this Christian woman to understand for himself the motivation behind a Muslim converting to Christianity".

his religious and social ideas[631]. Religious influences which were incorporated into Islam came from various directions[632]. The socio-economic background of the society provoked his preaching of Islam as an alternative[633]. His preaching was, besides the partial rejection of polytheistic worship[634], categorized under five themes, namely about Allah's goodness and power, Allah's return for judgment (eschatology), man's response to Allah in gratitude and worship, man's response to Allah's generosity (social service) and Muhammad's own vocation[635]. The first converts and adherents of Mohammed's preached religion, the effect on Mohammed's close relatives and first signs of opposition were characterized[636]. A short summary of the lessons given in the first week concluded:

> "In order to know deeply about Islam, you need to know the life of the people of
> per[pre]-Islamic Arabia, the circumstances which paved the way for the new religion

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[631] Ib., 10-15: "he showed a love of solitude. Questions oppressed him. Restlessness drove him round" (10). "Mohammed began a mid-career quest for life's meaning … he began regularly to frequent nearby Mount Hira for retreat, solitude and contemplation" (13). "First of all there were vivid dreams or visions" (14). "Every time on arriving home, having mental disturbance, he usually confides to his wife Khadija what had happened to him. He pours out his heart telling her about his fears and his mental confusion" (15). "From the Islam point of view, Mohammed's revelations were authentic and it does not have anything to do with other supernatural forces. But many scholars claim that the revelations did not come to Mohammed in a liberating or blessed manner. Each time Mohammed received the revelation from the angel, he had the feeling that he would suffocate from pain or that he would die … This is a question of theology. It would be very significant to read how the Old Testament prophets were called and to relate it with the call of Mohammed" (15f.). "Mostly most Orientalists (from the east) explain his earlier revelations in terms of wishful thinking. It was known from the Islam's historical background that Mohammed had deep conviction that Arabs like Jews and Christians needed a messenger and a spiritual book like our Bible … Already, before the revelation to Mohammed, the conviction that the gods, idols and statues in the temple area of Kaaba were worthless and dead [doubt] had grown among these people who searched for true faith. Mohammed being a young man with a sincere heart and of modest character grew into such a religiously tense atmosphere" (17f.).
[632] Ib., 7: the Nestorians, ib., 9: the Hanifites "those who search for God", ib., 11: the Sabeans, especially the custom of Ramadan, ib., 13: the Zoroastrians, ib., 16: the Judeo-Christian influence.
[633] Ib., 19: "'While the rich merchants were increasing their personal wealth, they were also more and more disregarding their obligations towards the less fortunate members of their clan or family. It was in an environment characterized by such economic and social changes that Mohammed began to preach".
[634] Ib., 19f.: "He renounced the numerous deities … Anyhow, he had made some amendments not to abandon all the items of worship in pre-Islamic Arabia. One of the significant actions … was, the accepting of the Kaaba to be identified with 'Allah' … [and] permitted intercessions to the deities at some of the shrines around Mecca … This shows that at that stage his monotheistic preaching did not exclude some forms of prayer to the subordinate supernatural beings, who were perhaps regarded as a kind of angel". The openness for syncretism that remained with Islam may have its source here. This, however, was not discovered in the TEE book.
[635] Ib., 19-21.
[636] Ib., 21-30. The three groups of adherents were "close relatives of the leading men of the most influential clans … men from the other clans and families of Mecca … [and] the weak. This includes: strangers living in Mecca, not from the Quraish tribe" (22f.). "Mohammed had comrades who stood by his side, defended his teaching and believed in his prophet-hood. Particularly the four males of the first converts were the later pillars of Islamic religion" (24). The effect of Mohammed's teaching has divided the community of Mecca in two groups, those who followed Muhammed's teaching and those who opposed it. "Further the Quraish grew increasingly more violent towards Mohammed. They mobilized the most bold and daring individuals among themselves against him. That group treated Mohammed as a liar and as a demon-possessed person" (27). "Some were against him as to defend the doctrine of the religion of pre-Islamic Arabia. Therefore, they accused Mohammed of calling them fools, ridiculing their fathers, condemning their faith, dividing their people and mocking their gods … At such agonizing situation, Mohammed's uncle Abu Talib took the responsibility of protecting him" (29).

to be originated ... Further, as someone who might face the challenge of interaction with the followers of Islam, you need to know the biography of Mohammed"[637].

As opposition grew against Mohammed and his followers, the accusations and the conspiracy resulted in severe persecution[638], which led to emigration[639]. The emigration to Abyssinia[640] increased the aggressiveness of his opponents and forced Muhammad to move to Medina[641]. Being in Medina he used his spiritual and secular leadership to

"draw together the rival parties. As a result, the town of Medina became more united and reconciled"[642].

In 630 he entered Mecca after many unsuccessful attempts for conquest[643]. His death on the 8th of June 632 led to changes of the structure with regard to the spiritual and political leadership, carried out by the *khalifs* after Muhammad, and characterized by the groups in Islam[644]. A short description on how Sufism entered Ethiopia in the southeast was given[645].

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[637] Ib., 27f.

[638] Ib., 31-37.

[639] Ib., 38-49. "But, later it became unbearable that he was forced to send his followers to a neighboring country, Abyssinia. For he himself did not find any improvement on the change of heart from his opponents, he decided to flee to Medina" (38).

[640] Ib., 38-40. Since the story of the Aksumite *hijjra* has been dealt with above, no review is needed here.

[641] Ib., 43: "Hijira. Actually, Hegira means more than flight. It has more to do with leaving your tribe and making your home in another country or place. This flight to Medina was so decisive, a move that Muslim calendar is dated from. Muslims see 622 A.D as year Zero ... This flight also marks the birth of 'Ummah' the first Muslim community ... It was on 28th of June 622 that Mohammed along with his company arrived at Medina. By this the first stage of the first mission of Mohammed was over".

[642] Ib., 46. See also 48f.: "After two years of solidifying his movement and forming his Muslim community into a military and spiritual force ... Mohammed had to become at one and the same time, a prophet, a statesman, a legislator and a military commander".

[643] Ib., 50f.: "This return of Mohammed to Mecca was his first opportunity as a Muslim to make a pilgrimage to the Kaaba ... Mohammed had adapted the ritual pilgrimage to the Kaaba into the Islam religion ... But it was not Mohammed's intention to adapt the 360 idols which were placed in the Kaaba during pre-Islamic Arabia. He threw all of them out and destroyed them all. In doing so he said, 'It is the end of idolatry in Arabia'".

[644] Ib., 58-66. "Abu Bekr was elected as the first Khalif after Mohammed ... First and foremost, his unflinching adherence to the concept of equality among believers was appreciable ... His second contribution was his emphasis on taxation [59]... Thirdly, he was very clever at utilizing state revenues ... he nominated Umar as his successor ... Under his domain as the second Khalif, Islam's kingdom extended to Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Persia ... he captured Jerusalem ... Uthman was nominated and was elected as the third Khalif [60]... His death resulted in a series of civil wars among Arab families. As a result, in the end, Islam was divided into two, Major categories known as the Sunnis and Shiites ... After the death of Uthman, only Ali was found to be the right person to succeed him ... After Ali's death, Mu'awiya, Uthman's cousin proclaimed himself a Khalif in Jerusalem ... From the death of Ali until the year 750, the Khalifate office was held by members of the old Meccan clan collectively known as the Umayyad dynasty which was started by Mu'awiya. They made their capital in Damascus [61]". "Thus, those who accepted Abu Bekr's view were called Sunni Muslims ... because they follow Mohammed's examples in his way ... The second camp is known as the Shite Muslims ... It is commonly known as 'shiat Ali' meaning the party of Ali" (63). "Therefore, the Shiats believe that Ali inherited Mohammed's spiritual abilities (his Wiaya) ... The shiats believe that this passing on of the spiritual qualities will continue until the end of human history ... The Shiat Muslims are again divided into groups. The first is known as 'the seveners' ... The second sect is known as 'the twelvers' ... The third sect within Shiat is called 'the Ibadis'" (64). "There are pious religious groups within the Sunni and shiat Muslims. They are called the 'Sufis'" (65).

[645] Ib., 65.

No short summary of the second week was presented. Whereas the first week has transmitted knowledge with more indications of understanding (bringing the reader closer to the substance of Islam), the second week lost this decisive force of enlightening the background, to the result that it became rather informative.

Week three concentrated on the *Qur'an* and its relation to Christianity with

> "a comparison of the Qur'an and the Bible, Jesus in the Qur'an, the doctrine and practices of Islam worship and the concept of community in Islam"[646].

The origin of the *Qur'an*[647] and its aim, to correct the corrupted original message, as well as the collection and canonization process, which reveals the different periods and stresses inside the *Qur'an* were described[648]. The explanation of the *Hadith* and noting that following the *Sunna* is the key to Muslims happiness brought a good understanding, since it brought closer to the Muslims experience, and completed the first day's lesson[649]. Day two identified the sources of the *Qur'an* from contextual studies

> "from the Arabian past, from the Talmud, from the Gospel and apocrypha, from the Eastern sources and from the Hanifites"[650].

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[646] Ib., 67.

[647] Ib., 67f.: "Qur'an is believed to had been originally engraved on a tablet in heaven and has existed from eternity. In Islam, it is believed that God revealed the content of the 'Mother of the Book' 'Umm al-Kitab' in heaven to other prophets even before Mohammed. For example, the Torah was revealed to Moses, the Zabur or the Psalms was revealed to David and the Injil or the Gospel was revealed to Jesus. And Muslims stress that Allah finally revealed the Qur'an to Mohammed". See also 71f.: The periods inside the Qur'an could be verified, after the very first call "to turn from the worship of idols and false gods, to worship only the one Allah", as the first Meccan period with its stress "warning", the second Meccan period with concentration "on the doctrine of Islam with some Biblical materials to be included", and the Medina period after the *hijjra* with focus on "the divine approval and the blessing from Allah on his [Muhammad's] leadership".

[648] Ib., 67-73. "Something very important to know is that the Bible was written over a period of thousands of years by many different people in different places. On the contrary, the Qur'an was revealed to only one person, immediately recorded by scribes with in twenty-three years of time. The canonization of the different books of the Bible was done only after intensive discussions of the early church councils. Qur'an was canonized during the first generation of Mohammed. The Bible has different versions which help to make the concept of particular text rich. The other versions of the Qur'an were burned down from fear of confusion".

[649] Ib., 72f.: "after the death of Mohammed, many new problems developed for which the Qur'an gave no answer. For such situations, the Muslims were forced to discover what Mohammed said or did in similar cases … Finally, these stories were collected … For Muslims, the key to happiness is following the Sunna, tradition of Mohammed, in all their lives. That is why the Hadith is also important besides the Qur'an. They are found in six major collections".

[650] Ib., 74f.. The various elements of the sources are in brief the following: a) Pre-Islamic Arabian influence: the name Allah, the Kaaba and the pilgrimage to it, the Sabean Ramadan, i.e. tradition of fasting (75); b) Talmud: the Jewish law, the "Islamic doctrine which teaches that there is a 'mother of the Book' in heaven (75f.); c) Armenian influence: the two idol angels Harut and Marut (Sura 2:102), about the seven heavens and the seven hells; d) the Gospel and the apocrypha: "On top of this, Mary, the slave girl, who was given to Mohammed as a present and became his concubine was a Coptic Christian from Egypt. It is believed that she could be another source for Mohammed to know about Christianity"; e) Zoroastrian (Persian, Iran) influence: "the concepts of Paradise, Balance and Sirat": from the apocryphal book known as the Testament of Abraham and "from Egyptian deity where judgment was believed to be by using a 'balance'" (see Sura 101:6f.) where the concept of balance derived from, Sirat means "the bridge that leads over a deep gulf of hell crossing to a paradise … As Arabia and Persia (Iran) were neighbors and are still the same, the possibility of sharing their legends was very

With regard to the concept of revelation through *Wahy* or *Ilham*[651], there are differences between Muslims and Christians. However, it remains unclear, whether these differences can be reconciled or not[652]. Statements with total character such as "can not be reconciled" or

"Islam is also one of the religions which differ from Christianity in all respects"[653],

should be avoided. Differences instead should stimulate further studies. The task of discovering common ground should be given priority. The tendency of separation or total classification creates always more distance. Reconciliation therefore must be a predominant theme in comparative studies. However, the presentation of the sources has brought forward the understanding of the complexity of the world of the Qur'an, which is not easy to grasp and to make it fruitful in CMR. With regard to the concept of Jesus in the Qur'an, as taught on day three[654],

"Muslims have something to accept and something to deny concerning the birth, ministry and last days of Jesus Christ … [mainly because] the Qur'an had many other sources"[655].

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high" (76f.); f) the six Hanifites: the belief in one God, rejection of the idol worship and burying of infant girls, "the existence of paradise and hell and that both call God 'Allah'" (78).

[651] Ib., 78f.: "'Wahy' signifies a revelation from Allah through the archangel to a prophet, who then passest he word to the people … ,Ilham' which describes a revelation without angelic mediation but with direct human involvement in the shaping of the word".

[652] Ib., 78: "With regard to God's revelation to Mankind, Christians and Muslims have different understanding and belief which can not be reconciled". To this statement, no proof was presented. It would be clarifying to study, whether the concepts of Wahy and Ilham on one hand, and general and special revelation on the other could be compared. "Christians do not believe that the Bible was written on a tablet in heaven and then revealed verbally as a reflection from the one in heaven. But they accept happily different translations of the Bible as far as it agrees with the original language (Greek and Hebrew)". Again, it would be important, to study and compare the different concepts, whether the last source in both religions goes back to God or Allah, and then reflect on the different ways the word of God made to the humans.

[653] Ib., 1.

[654] Ib., 80-88.

[655] Ib., 80. a) the virgin conception of Jesus: "The problem with the Muslims is that they confuse her with the Old Testament Miriam … Although Muslims accept the virgin birth of Jesus, they strongly deny the divine sonship of God" (80); b) names and titles given to Jesus in the Qur'an: Isa, Yasua, Ibn Maryam, Al Masih, Abdullah, a spirit of God/Him' (Ruhun min Allah), the word of Allah (Kalimatullah), a prophet of God (Nabiyullah), (81-83); c) the miraculous works of Jesus, "The holy scripture of Muslims mentions Jesus as the healer of the sick, but is silent about the nature of the miracles … They are neither the signs of his divinity, but a confirmation of his message" (84); d) Jesus' last days: his crucifixion and its idea, "Muslims believe that Jesus did not die on the cross … (Qur'an 4:158-159)", the doctrine of the substitution, i.e. traditions that state that Jesus continued to live in other places (85f.). "In fact, the death of Jesus is of a little importance or interest to the Qur'an. The reason is that Islam religion does not have any teaching about the atonement of sin … Mohammed confirmed the sinless nature of Jesus directly or indirectly. (Qur'an 19:19) But, he could not understand that incarnation of God in Jesus was essential, so that one man would remain without sin and would be worthy to die as a Lamb of God for all Sinners … for Christians, the death of Jesus on the cross is an incontrovertible historical fact and theologically indispensable … The four Gospels agree in the real death of Jesus on the cross, and give the centurion's witness to this. (Mk. 15:45)". It is questionable to make the crucifixion an historical fact only by quoting the gospels. The reasons why Muhammad rejected Christ's crucifixion were: firstly because Allah is sovereign (86), secondly "everyone has to carry his own guilt and punishment. Therefore, the regulation governing sacrifice in the Old Testament does not have any expression in the Qur'an. Thirdly, Mohammed was a business minded person. So the heading in Qur'an 3:57 says, 'He (Allah) paid the believers'

Common ground can be verified here. With regard to the titles and names given to Jesus in the Qur'an, again the question of comparison appears.

> "For Muslims, all creatures of Allah, human beings and angels are created to worship and serve Him. Therefore, Jesus as a man like Adam is a servant worshipper of God. So he is given the title 'Abdullah' meaning 'a servant of God.' (Qur'an 4:172) … Jesus himself claimed that he came to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. (Mr. [Mark] 10:45). Paul writes the relationship between God and Christ as 'God and Servant', (Acts 3:26) but the biblical understanding of Jesus as 'a servant' is different from that of how the Qur'an presented it"[656].

For the sake of understanding, the tendency toward separation instead of finding an inclusive common ground is obvious. No further comment or explanation to prove the last statement has been given in the book. The reader has been left alone with the process of understanding with regard to this example. Even no question for discussion has been provided.

With regard to the denial of the crucifixion, their rejection

> "of the crucifixion of the son of God makes them immune to the salvation that has been completed for them as well"[657].

With this sentence the third day's lesson ended, but a task was given at the very end:

> *"Task I. Find a Muslim who has a good knowledge of Islamic teaching and discuss with him/her who Jesus is believed to be in Qur'an and how his sonship is considered"*[658].

If the asking person has gained some understanding, he should be able to anticipate the Muslim's or Muslima's reaction. Since this question could create provocation and an obstacle in the discussion, it is questionable if this task should be given to the student. Further, in a later section advises were given, including;

> "you should refrain yourself from using phrases like 'Jesus the son of God' … if you use such phrases mentioned above in your conversation, you will end up in destroying your relationship"[659].

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wages based on their deeds. Thus Islam shows itself to be a religion of righteousness by works built on the good deeds of the adherents. The fourth reason is Mohammed's worry. He worried much why Allah put his loyal slave; Jesus, into the hands of his enemies. His worry was that if Allah does this to his loyal slave Jesus, he might do the same to him … Finally … because of the old Christian sect which lived in the Nile valley whose theology did not accept the real incarnation of God in Christ nor his death on the cross".

[656] Ib. 82.
[657] Ib., 87.
[658] Ib., 88.
[659] Ib., 129.

Such kind of contradictions should be avoided in every case, since it may create confusion. The lesson of day four concentrated on worship and Islamic doctrine in brief[660]. The five pillars of Islam and the six articles of faith were discussed.

> "It is the core of this course. To know Islam, you need to know its worship and doctrine"[661].

The five pillars have been mentioned above, therefore some remarks shall be made here about the presentation of the doctrine. Muslims describe Allah in many ways, in the seven attributes given to him[662], by the ninety-nine names.

> "Devout Muslims repeat these names as they use the Supa in Ethiopia called 'tesbah' [Tisbe] which is a set [necklace] of prayer beads. A Supa contains thirty-three beads … By going through the Chain three times, the ninety-nine names of Allah are completely remembered. How many names do Christians give to God in their worship? Try to list those you remember and discuss with the group at discussion session"[663].

The doctrine of the oneness of Allah has practical implications for any person who wants to witness the good news to Muslims[664]. The creation of man and other could create a point of contact for witness, while reflecting on the Christian understanding of creation out of nothing and the Islamic understanding of simply shaping something[665]. The understanding of sin, forgiveness, salvation and eschatology[666] has been mentioned with Y. Deressa, and since no new important point has been found, further review shall not be made here. The conclusion that

> "they [the Muslims] stumble into the last Judgment without having their sins forgiven and … without having peace with God"[667],

because they reject consciously or unconsciously[668] the crucified son, seems to lead to the climax in the transmission of knowledge and understanding. Therefore, the

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[660] Ib., 89-103.

[661] Ib., 101.

[662] Ib., 93: "life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, seeing and speech".

[663] Ib.

[664] Ib. 94f.: "'God' is never called a 'Father' … Allah is the only personal name permitted for God", Muslims reject the trinity, but "Allah is a creator. He created all that is. He contains the heavens and the earth, and they belong to Him because He is their source. (Qur'an 2:115, 31:26) … Can you use these texts of the Qur'an with regard to Allah as a creator and an eternal as a point of contact to witness to Muslim friends?".

[665] Ib., 95: "For this reason, modern Muslim theologians agree with the evolutionary theory. (Qur'an 3:5a) Do you see any point of contact to witness". The evolution theory could be misunderstood here leading to an atheistic view which does not correspond with the Islamic opinion.

[666] Ib., 95-100.

[667] Ib., 101.

"lesson is very significant to equip you with the pre-knowledge of Islam to be prepared to witness to the adherents of this religion"[669]

The witness aims at bringing Muslims to the Christian understanding of salvation in Jesus Christ. With regard to damnation and uncertainty for the Muslims with regard to their fate, it is still important to reflect on the understanding of man in Islam.

> "As it is with Christians, Muslims also believe that man is the crown of creation. He is the last in the order of creation. According to the Qur'an, man is created to the representative of Allah on earth. (Qur'an 2:30). Man is superior to the angels who were commanded to bow down before Adam. (Qur'an 15:28-30) … After Allah created Adam's body, He gave him spirit and life"[670].

Such high esteem and worth given to men by Allah could create a fresh counter-weight to the dark picture of uncertainty[671] in eschatological matters. The human condition is not only to be disvalued, as pictured in describing men only as unworthy slaves and other. How the Muslims will "stumble into the last Judgment", after they have lived a good life as Muslims, as best as they could do in the circumstances of their lives, and if they, like all other humans, will have peace with God, is not foreseeable yet. However, the witness of true salvation in Christ needs to be given to the Muslims in the best form in which they may understand it.

The concept of community in Islam and in Christianity has been dealt with in day five of the course[672]. The background of the Islamic community helps to understand its appearance today[673]. The different reigns of Islam were described[674].

> "With the concept of communal life, Muslim inhabitants of villages all over the Islamic world share a common way of life, a common spirituality, symbols … This

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[668] Ib., 100f: "Muslims consciously or unconsciously reject the crucified son of God and the salvation he effected for humankind. Based on this belief, they deliberately divorce themselves from the completed justification of free cleansing of their hearts that has been prepared for all mankind through the work of Jesus Christ".

[669] Ib., 101.

[670] Ib., 94f.

[671] Ib., 97.

[672] Ib., 104-108.

[673] Ib., 104f.: "The concept of community in Islam was originated in Medina. This communal life style which the Muslims adapted with amendment was existing in pre-Islamic Arabia. The tribal life of that time was maintained by the security guaranteed by the social solidarity of the whole tribe. At the Medinan time, the special word used for community was 'umma' … always applied to certain ethnic, linguistic or confessional communities … At those early days, for a person to be the member of that Islamic community, that individual must be an Arab. The other minority groups who became Muslims were accepted as clients of the Arab tribes … The worldwide community of Islam is not formed based on tribal or kinship unity. It is the community where everyone acknowledges Mohammed as the messenger of Allah. With such commitment each Muslim has the desire to be the same as his fellows in community life and feels insecure if he or she found himself/herself out of the circle of this community. For Muslims, life apart from this community is unthinkable. Therefore, everything that threatens to separate Muslims from their fellows must be avoided."

[674] Ib., 105f.: dar-al-Islam, dar-al-sulh, dar-al-harb, and dar-al-hiyat for Ethiopia.

includes: clothing both for men and women, veiled faces with orthodox Muslim women and capes called 'Takia' or wound of a piece of clothe round their heads"[675].

The Christian community is different, according to the book, in many ways. However, the aspects that were mentioned have to be critically reviewed[676].

> "Christian community is different from theirs. In Islam prayer rituals and daily prayer are done with regular rules … Christians are free which way they want to use when praying. Therefore, the Christian prayer and worship frustrate new Muslim converts. They may not feel as member of a community. They need close help from individuals like you and me"[677].

Without further comments and without a summary of the third week, the lesson ended. At this point the experienced reader in CMR wishes to find practical advices on how to help the Muslim converts in finding a place in the Christian community and to feel comfort. The preparation of the after-conversion situation in witnessing and converting Muslims is a necessary pre-condition. Without it, it is questionable if the witness toward salvation and integration into the Christian body should be started at all. However, this has partly been done later. The last week started with the factors that helped Islam to spread and an overview on the historical development and some contemporary features of Islam in Ethiopia[678]. The factors for the spread of Islam were and are *jihad*[679], traders and merchants[680], teachers and holy men[681] and marriage[682].

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[675] Ib., 107.

[676] Ib., 107: "The Christian community does not create Christianity as a philosophy or a system, but rather leads to the formation of the Church … The gospel calls men and women from diverse families, tribes, castes, classes, parties, nations, races, cultures and so on into a new Christian community". All these things could be applied in the same way to Islam.

[677] Ib., 107f.

[678] Ib., 109-121.

[679] Ib., 110: "If a soldier has such conviction that his death is a reward of life with Allah, then he advances towards his enemy for whatever sacrifice it may require. Such belief among Muslims helped them to be victorious in many of the battles they fought. And also it became one of the way or factors for the religion to spread".

[680] Ib., 110f.: "The merchants traveled to these countries with their faith … [their] servants and maids were the first converts to Islam because of the circumstances which forced them … From the interaction between the rich merchant and the local chief, in the long run, the chief becomes a Muslim … means the whole village became Muslims".

[681] Ib., 109. No further comment was made, even this proved to be one of the substantial reasons for expansion as noticed above.

[682] Ib., 111: "During the early Islamic era, there was a historic basis and social need for a polygamous marriage. The main reason was to protect the security of surplus women … Among modern Muslims, marrying numbers of women has been considered as one of the strategies of producing more Muslim population … According to 1998 statistics, there are 1.3 billion Muslims on this globe. With such growth, thirty million additional Muslims are born every year worldwide".

"Besides, the lust for the wealth that had been confiscated had motivated for making war which resulted in the expansion of Islam"[683].

The latter could be understood only as a side effect of the expansion or as stimulation to it, but not as a main reason for it. In Africa and in Ethiopia in particular mainly conquest and trade contributed to the spread of Islam[684].

"With regard to the animist African countries, Islam had a good point of contact to preach their religion to those people who had fears of the spirits. Muslims believe in Satan, jinn, the evil eye, angels and the power of amulets for protection. The pagan countries of these parts of Africa accepted Islam without any resistance as it fits with their traditional worship. But, with Ethiopia, things are a bit different"[685].

As the socio-cultural and religious understanding of Islam of B. Peter and his examination of syncretistic processes above has shown, traditional religious elements played an important role in the expansion of Islam in Ethiopia. The TEE book did only on the fringe mention the aspects of Folk-Islam[686], which is to be considered as one of its main weaknesses. However, the Muslims missionary work in the eastern, southeastern and southern part of Ethiopia, as the TEE book itself mentioned, was carried out among people who followed their traditional religion[687].

"This slow Muslim missionary work later on developed into the creation of small Muslim local states such as Dawaro, Fatajar and Bali bordering the Kingdom of Abyssinia"[688].

Conflicts between these states and the Abyssinian kingdom culminated in the Granj-conquest and its aftermath in the 16th century[689], which has been described above. Another factor came with Menelik's conquest and Christianization, which caused opposition and an enforced

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[683] Ib., 109.
[684] Ib., 112.
[685] Ib., 112f.
[686] Ib., 19f., 51, 75-77: Reference to early tendencies of Muhammad to include traditional religious elements into Islam. Ib., Sufism in Ethiopia and reference to some Folk-Islamic centers in Ethiopia. Ib., 119: Fundamentalism: "A lot of pressure is put on the believers to abandon the traditional way of religious practices". Ib., 132: Muslims looking for arguments with regard to the Bible. "This may not include many folk Muslims". Ib., 134: "You can learn better what folk-Muslims traditionally believe when you let them speak than from the books". Ib., with regard to syncretism: "In dialogue, you get to know one another's faith in depth and therefore [th]is far from being a temptation to syncretism". This statement is unclear, and no explanation about the meaning of syncretism has been given in the book.
[687] Ib., 113.
[688] Ib.: "In the Years from 12-15 centuries, a number of Musilim sultanates, or kingdoms were established and these kingdoms grew in strength, mainly in areas South of the Awash basin. The most important were Ifat and Adal. Others were Sharka in present day Arsi, Bali in the present bale and Hadya. These Sultanates were more or less commercial centers ruled by Muslim family dynasties".
[689] Ib., 114-116.

adherence to Islam[690]. During the Italian invasion Islam was officially recognized, new mosques were built, and Arabic was introduced as a school language[691]. Typological and contemporary features of Ethiopian Islam such as the foundation of the SCIA, the distribution of magazines and other literature, the movements of Wahabism and fundamentalism, the emphasis on Arabic language and culture were shortly presented[692]. With regard to fundamentalism, which

> "is actually talking about a politicized Islam aiming at Islamizing all aspects of private and public life by the means of force … Although there might be elements inside the Muslim community of Ethiopia, regarding Islam as a political ideology and hoping to transform Ethiopia in Islamic state, the Islam practiced is not a political one"[693],

the concept of fundamentalism and the innermost aspiration of Muslims to turn every nation into an Islamic nation, has to be dealt with more intensive. Islam is always to be considered both religiously and politically.

d) Practical approaches and CMR with our without understanding

The last four days of the last week dealt with approaches to Muslims in general and in particular with regard to the Ethiopian context[694].

> "Your attitudes towards them now and before you studied this course must have a difference. Now, you may have the will and confidence to approach them as your friends"[695].

The aspect of friendship with Muslims has appeared several times[696] and became one guiding feature in the presentation of the approach to Muslims. Have the lessons given so far really encouraged the reader to make Muslims his friends? What were the encouraging aspects? What brings the reader close to the Muslim in order to create friendship? Why should he trust the Muslims, what should he admire about Muslims to create such an intimate relationship?

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[690] Ib., 116. See also ib.: "While the Christian Empire was faced with internal problems, such as the decline of central authority, Islam made a steady progress in the northern highlands. Islam was organized under regional Oromo dynasties like Yejju and Warra Himano in Wollo. In the east, Harar became important center for Islamic teaching with some political influence. Then, a peaceful propagation of Islam was done among the Oromo people. Because of the lack of central government, Muslim traders acoompanied by Muslim clerics were able to bring Islam to various parts of Eastern and South Eastern part of Ethiopia".

[691] Ib., 116f.

[692] Ib., 117-120.

[693] Ib., 120.

[694] Ib., 122-146.

[695] Ib., 122.

[696] Ib., IV: "to suggest practical ways and means of how to communicate with Muslims and become their friends"; ib., 27: "to prepare you for your future ministry among the Muslim friends"; ib., 124: "The more you know them personally, the better you come along with them to the stage of becoming intimate friends to one another, then they will have confidence to share their hearts with you"; ib., 129: "When your friendship got matured, you are heading towards revealing the truth of the word of God from the Bible"; ib., 130: "Your visit to them has to be as their friends, not as an individual sent to test their faith".

How can a Christian become intimate with a Muslim while having religiously many strong differences, according to the TEE book? Or is the term "friend" not appropriate for CMR? Having these questions in mind, the approach to Muslims as described in the last four weeks shall be reviewed.

The first spiritual advice is rather irritating.

> "Pray to God to give you a wise approach to Muslims. Know that if we are not ready
> to make missionary work among Muslims, they will do it among us"[697].

The advice of the second day all dealt with silent witness[698]. Firstly, knowledge of the Islamic group the Muslim belongs to[699], and knowledge about the person[700], to care for his welfare, which indicates a holistic approach[701], were the first two requirements for creating "intimacy" with a Muslim. Secondly the process of interactions within the social activities identifies the approach toward Muslims[702]. Thirdly,

> "make visits to their homes as you invite them to yours. Be careful not to offend
> other Christians … Your visit should be with an intention to bring them to Christ.
> You need to freely participate in their family events at childbirth, marriage and
> funeral ceremonies … take gifts to be given to their children, let them love and
> express their desire for your visitation again … If a Muslim wanted to pray in your
> presence let him do it, be patient until he goes through. Do all what you do
> genuinely and gently"[703].

Is it good to bring gifts or could it create the feeling or suspicion that the Christians want to buy the Muslims? How is the intention for the visit to bring them to Christ to be understood

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[697] Ib., 122.
[698] Ib., 127: "silent witness which is the primary approach". See also ib., 132: "Your personal life style as a Christian shapes your approach to others. Your positive approach touches the lives of people of other faiths. Such testimonial approach is a silent witness".
[699] Ib., 122f., Sunni, Wahabi, Sufi.
[700] Ib., 123: "position in his religious circle … a religious leader … a government employee … Knowing their occupation helps you to correct and make your approach fitting".
[701] Ib., 125: "Muslims have feelings and external and internal needs like any other human beings. They may have the need for security, love and fellowship if he/she is lonely. They have the need for the peace of heart which no medicine can cure. They need justice and truth which are hardly expected from anyone. They have the need for forgiveness for their guilty conscience and hope of salvation. They need healing for their physical and spiritual sicknesses. When their lives undergo crises, they need counseling. They like if they are visited when they are sick and in bed at home or in the hospital".
[702] Ib., 123f.: „participating in the days of joy and sorrow … genuine greeting and your concern for their welfare. Respect any Muslim you find in your community regardless of their position or tribe … Love them and be gentle. Be aware of what you are doing in Muslim's presence".
[703] Ib., 124. See also ib., 130: "Visiting Muslim homes is one of the crucial approaches you make. Your visit to them has to be as their friends … appreciate their constructive contributions to the well being of your community".

practically? How long has the Christian to wait for an audible witness? An answer, even unconsciously, was given in a later statement:

> "When your friendship got matured, you are heading towards revealing the truth of the word of God from the Bible"[704].

In other words, the silent witness has to be as long as to the point of having such a good relation with the Muslim, that it could be called friendship.

Forthly,

> "cancel out from your mind the negative presuppositions you have against them"[705].

One of the strongest presuppositions is that Muslims are lost people and their religion leads them on a wrong path, according to the book and many other sources. How can this negative presupposition be overcome to create a positive attitude? Negative presuppositions have to be canceled out to pave the way for dialogue, which will be dealt with on day four[706].

Fifthly, the holistic approach in itself turned out to be one of the most important approaches to Muslims.

> "A Church organization may undertake a project like digging wells, providing primary health care, relief for food and education on community development. Of course our Church, EECMY is actively taking part in such projects regardless of religious differences, which has to be encouraged"[707].

The advantages and disadvantages of development projects as part of the holistic approach shall be dealt with later in 4.3.

After having presented some aspects of silent witness, day three of the last week dealt with audible witness as an approach to Muslims. Firstly, again knowing the Muslims is a precondition for good communication.

> "In getting to know Muslims better, you shall learn increasingly about their culture, their way of thinking and their typical life style. This knowledge guides the communication you will have with them"[708].

If the word knowing or knowledge could be replaced with understand and understanding, the intention would become more precise. However, it shows that the best understanding can be found with the closest approach to the Muslims reality and context itself.

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[704] Ib., 129.
[705] Ib., 125.
[706] Ib., 135: "Therefore, dialogue is very significant in order to dispel the misunderstandings and prejudices of the past, created by our negative attitudes".
[707] Ib., 126.
[708] Ib., 127.

Secondly, besides spiritual advices[709], there are "don't's" which need to be avoided, such like heated theological arguments[710]. Thirdly, the topics for discussion, the "do's", need to be prepared[711]. Forthly, besides all these aspects and avoidances at this first stage of audible witness, which shall mainly help to build up the relationship, the personal witness has been described:

> "you must emphasize your own personal conviction … give your own life testimony, a true witness of what God has done in your life as an individual or a family which may attract the attention of the Muslim listening to you[712].

On day four intensified audible witness, characterized as proclamation of the good news through dialogue, was the theme.

> "Now you can read your Bible and explain the foundation of your faith … your conversation with a Muslim later develops into a dialogue … [which] is a mutual sharing of each other's faith, convictions and experiences in the context of living together"[713].

For such dialogue, the things common to both religions should be propagated[714].

> "Whatever direction the dialogue may take you, do not forget to keep the truck on these common understandings"[715].

The criteria for dialogue have been folded out[716]. The paper of the WCC entitled "Christian Meeting Muslims" of 1977 supports the idea that

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[709] Ib., 128: "ask God for the right words for them rather than presenting your prepared formulas".

[710] Ib., 127: "If you begin your conversation with the theological topics, all the doctrinal differences will come up. Such discussion undermines your relationship and widens the gap which may lead to hatred and enmity in the course of time". Ib., 128: "be careful not to speak negatively about Mohammed and their holy men … You should not compare Mohammed with Jesus and the Qur'an with the Bible. Do not condemn any Muslim in the community for the bad character they exercise". Ib., 129: "you should refrain yourself from using phrases like 'Jesus the son of God', 'God the father' and 'Trinity' … do not include about the sin of Adam and that the effect of original sin has stained to all human beings which needs to be forgiven". Ib., 131: "be aware not to speak anything negatively about your Christian brothers and sisters … Do not try to cover the truth, do not lie".

[711] Ib., 128: "primarily based on social, economical and other related current issues of your community". Ib., 130: "There are beliefs which are held in common … the virgin birth, Jesus being called 'the word of God', his miraculous healing of the blind, the leper, raising the dead and feeding the multitude, his calling of the twelve disciples, his sinless life, his being rejected by his own people and his return for final judgment … God is creator, great, provider, compassionate, merciful, judge protector. But they do not call God 'the father' … If you use these common beliefs as a point of contact, you will have a healthy communication with them".

[712] Ib., 129f.

[713] Ib., 132.

[714] Ib., 133: "In their teachings, both religions call for good neighborliness in mankind and have concern for the poor and oppressed". See for more common themes the "do's" mentioned in the section before.

[715] Ib.

[716] Ib. 134-137. Ib., 134: "you must be frank and open … not be condemning another religion … a Muslim could raise many questions with which that individual had been struggling. Now it would be a good opportunity for you to tell the message of the Good News, that Jesus is the only gate to eternal life. (John 14:6) … [dialogue] should not be polemic and as if you are defending Christianity [apologetic]. Let the Muslim also explain his/her experience as a follower of Islam … In dialogue, you get to know one another's faith in depth and therefore is

"dialogue is essential to dispel the negative attitude we have to people of different faiths which makes the proclamation ineffective and irrelevant. A negative attitude invites a negative response"[717].

When it comes to the aim of dialogue,

"The dialogue should aim at the target of bringing an individual to the hope of eternal life through the gracious work of Jesus Christ"[718].

This expression is explicitly conversion-oriented approach. It is possible to apply dialogue to an understanding-oriented approach.

"That is why dialogue is considered as a positive effort to attain a deeper understanding of the truth through mutual awareness of one another's convictions and witnesses"[719].

However, both, the understanding-oriented approach and the conversion-oriented approach have to be brought in balance for effective witness, as will be later discussed in 4.1.

Dialogue efforts lead to a dialogical existence.

"Dialogical existence naturally starts with living in openness of heart and spirit, instead of self-protective isolation. There can be no living together without witnessing and the most effective witness is that which we are least aware about, the living of your faith ... Dialogue, thus involves the risk of one partner being changed by the other. God's love and care for you will work on changing and bringing the individual you are having dialogue with into the Kingdom of God"[720].

This is the final statement of the lesson of day four, indicating that the author or editor of the book himself is struggling with the concept of the dialogical existence. He struggles because he fears that he himself can be changed by the encounter with the Muslim, as has been indicated with Y. Deressa's openness in dialogue in 1.3. of this chapter. He may fear the challenge, and therefore the last sentences had to be added, bringing the readers back on the track of the conversion-oriented approach.

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far from being a temptation to syncretism. If you determine yourself to witness the Good News to Muslims, dialogue is a creative interaction which liberates a person from a closed system Christian life experiences".
[717] Ib., 135.
[718] Ib.
[719] Ib., 135f.
[720] Ib., 136.

The last day of the course should lead to the climax of understanding[721]. It focused on some important Bible verses[722] and how Christians should handle the new convert[723]. For all, the main instrument

> "is carrying out your mission in love. Our love should be extended beyond the confines of the barriers and differences … Love opens door to your witnessing. The God of creation longs for all people of all races and religious background that they acknowledge His rightful rule and receive all His gracious gifts of life and salvation"[724].

It is important to see that both love and aspects of "Missio Dei" have been combined here. Love is capable to give room for God's own mission work among people of all faiths. With regard to the care for Muslims who have converted to the Christian faith, the three components instruction, integration and discipline have been used[725]. However;

> "the duty of growing and helping the plant to bear fruit is in the hands of God. (2Cor. 3:5-9)"[726].

The last statements dealt with the hostility of Muslims towards Christians and the slow process and the difficulties in bringing them to Christ. However, trusting in the "Missio Dei" and in the strength of the value of Christ's work, the commission to reach out to the Muslims makes Christians ready to take the initiative and responsibility to carry the message to them.

> "We believe that only Christ can quench the spiritual hunger which is so often seen among Muslims. We pray for the day when Muslims come to recognize that Jesus Christ is and will always be the goal of their spiritual pilgrimage through out witness"[727].

e) Evaluation of the 2nd TEE book

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[721] Ib., 138: "Today, you will come to the heart of the whole course and the peak of the lesson you ought to acquire".

[722] Ib., 138-146. The Bible verses have been connected to themes like forgiveness (Phil. 2:1-11), salvation (Heb. 10:12 and Rom. 10:9.13). Bible verses to use as a guideline when witnessing: about incarnation (John 1:1-12), piety and spiritual life (John 3:1-36), meaning of faith (John 5:24), liberation from sin, condemnation, death to eternal life (Rom. 6:23), original sin and sin in general (John 8:32.36 and 2Cor. 5:17, good deeds (Lk. 18:9-14), about the Messiah in relation to Mohammed (John 14:16).

[723] Ib., 141: "Christian's daily meditations, congregational worships and Bible studies help them to grow into the likeness of Christ. (2Cor. 3:18)".

[724] Ib., 139.

[725] Ib., 144f.: "He/she must be instructed with regard to the worship tradition of the local congregation … Instruction should not be on the basis of command, but with mutual understanding. With this understanding, the Muslim convert must also make an effort to integrate himself/herself with the tradition of worship … have a Bible study … The most important thing a Muslim convert knows is that he/she must be disciplined in his/her spiritual life and make himself/herself ready to accept and face the possible suffering inflicted upon him/her from his/her family and former friends"

[726] Ib., 145.

[727] Ib., 146.

The understanding of Islam clearly improved with the second book, even though a clear distinction of knowledge and understanding has not been made. The primary aim of transmitting knowledge with attempts at creating understanding towards the approach to Muslims for the communication of the good news has been kept throughout. The process of understanding and making understanding itself the first priority is a desideratum. Finding common ground for understanding in dialogue should be given priority before finding separating arguments. Some weaknesses remain with the second book. Only spare remarks were made about Folk-Islam and syncretism. The aspect of "Missio Dei" has not been mentioned expressively, and only appeared as a dimension included in some of the statements, for example when spiritual advices had been given. Total statements or words that could be understood in an anti-Islamic manner, should be avoided[728]. The practical task given to the students in the middle of the course was not wisely chosen. The term friend or friendship, after all, is an ambivalent expression of what is intended with it, i.e. mutual trust and respect of one to another. Even though the existence of PROCMURA has been mentioned[729], it would be helpful to give some more information about the aims and work of this important organization. Despite these weaknesses, the book has some valuable strength. The vast area of bringing the complex theme of Islam to the reader's mind has been done in a way that covered most of the important themes necessary for dealing with Islam and Muslims. The concentration on the pre-Arabic history and context as well as on Muhammad's biography has proved to be very useful in understanding Islam from within. The same can be said largely, with regard to the presentation of the *Qur'an*, Islam's worship, belief and community. The inclusion of the spread of Islam and the Ethiopian context was also helpful. The discussion about fundamentalism and the political aspirations of Islam need more precise treatment, which of course cannot be carried out within the limited space. The distinction of silent and audible witness, as well as the explanation of dialogue and the dialogical existence proved to be helpful in presenting practical approaches. The holistic ministry has been mentioned as a tool in approaching Muslims, but without critical reflection of the advantages and disadvantages. The distinction of the conversion-oriented approach and the understanding-oriented approach with the attempt to bring both into a balance needs further to be elaborated. A bibliography with 26 books at the end of the book helps the students to continue their study.

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[728] Ib., 121: "Confidently it penetrated into Christian Communities with bribes and mosque building programme". The word bribe cannot be proved and therefore should be omitted.

[729] Ib., 145f.: "In Africa, an organization called 'Project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa' was formed".

2.3.4. Evaluation

Both TEE books dealt at large with the transmission of knowledge about Islam. The first was rather informative with almost no contextual dimension or practical applications towards approaches. The second book, three times larger than the first one, included the Ethiopian context as well as many suggestions for practical approaches. Whereas the first book kept a distance to Islam and Muslims by stirring up separation tendencies and threatening aspects with regard to Islam, the second brought the reader closer to the substance of Islam and the Muslims reality, and therefore helps to improve the understanding of Islam and the approaches to Muslims. The TEE program could be a useful tool in CMR, if the companion or group-leader is well trained in CMR, in order to respond carefully to the questions and statements or attitudes of the participants, i.e. the ministers.

2.4. Academic teaching institutions, Seminaries, Bible Schools and Synods, Area Work and Outreach Areas of the EECMY with regard to CMR

The documents have revealed that teaching material exists for the courses at one bible school, for one area work, and about the establishment of the "Program of CMR" at the MYTS. As in the sections before, the contents of the teaching material and the usefulness of the teaching concepts shall guide the examination.

2.4.1. Courses at Seminaries and Bible Schools

The only document for use at a bible school that has been found with the documents is a book entitled "The Course of the other Religions – Islam-material - for Terfa Jarso Bible School & Outreach work in IBS (teacher's guide)", prepared by Risto Leikola in Mettu, for the Illubabor Bethel Synod of the EECMY in 1994[730]. A letter inside the book, dated on September 20, 1994, without address to whom it was written[731], gave some explanations.

> "One of my main problems was to keep this material short enough thinking the given time in the bible school. However, maybe there should be something about the folk Islam and about the history of mission work among the Muslims, as I originally planned … How, why and on what purpose I made this material is told in the

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[730] PS 1.3.7.3.
[731] Ib.: "You know both the overall situation in Ethiopia and Islam probably better than anyone". This may be S. Abdo. See also ib., 2: "In January 1994 I also met Ato Samsudin, with whom I discussed this matter and he gave some books to help my work".

preface … The possibilities of how widely this teaching material could be used in our church, or could it, I leave for you to decide"[732].

In the preface it was said that the guide grew completely out of practical needs, i.e. to be taught at the "Mettu Bible School" from 1993-1994, and to use it in the outreach work[733]. R. Leikola, a Finnish missionary, had studied Islam at the "Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations" in the Selly Oak Universitiy in Birmingham for five months in 1991. The book should bring together three elements:

"1) the history of Islam, where everything about that religion has its roots, 2) the dogma of Islam with the comparison to Christianity and 3) some ideas about how to do mission work among Muslims"[734].

The content of the book accordingly reflected this giving of importance[735]. No further review shall be given here, because no new aspect can be drawn to the process of this study, and because the style in which the contents have been presented are similar to the above mentioned transmission of knowledge in a more informative way. A course or teaching concept, however, for the bible schools and seminaries, has to be developed in the future, which could use the latest TEE book as a model.

2.4.2. Courses used in Synods and Area Work of the EECMY

The South East Area Work of the EECMY has printed an unpublished manuscript, entitled "Responsible Witness, Part I: Islam in history & the teachings of Islam" in 2003[736]. Even though no author has been named, it is clear that the author is the adviser for the work area, especially for matters related to CMR, i.e. Terje Ostebo, a missionary from the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. T. Ostebo has specialized on Islamic studies for some time[737], and concentrated on the Eastern and South-eastern parts of Ethiopia, mainly the Bale region and the Arsi and Somali nations. He developed the organization of CMR in the Work Area by

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[732] Ib.

[733] Ib., 2.

[734] Ib.

[735] Ib. 1: Chapter 1: Geopgraphical, Human and Religious Setting (3-5), Chapter 2: The Life and Work of Muhammad (6-14), Chapter 3: The Expansion of Islam (15-30), Chapter 4: The Dogma and Practices of Islam (31-55), Chapter 5: How to Winess (56-63), Appendices: Maps, The Arabian Peninsula around 600 A.D (64), Islam in the 1980's (65), The story [about atonement] (66), Bibliography (67-68).

[736] PS 1.3.7.9.

[737] Ostebo, Creating (which is the fundament of the following articles and also for the part 4 History of Islam in Ethiopia in the book "Responsible Witness"), Kristendom (which is mainly based on the first article) and Islam (which is almost identical with the part 4. History of Islam in Ethiopia, of the book "Responsible Witness"). His studies concentrated on historical and contemporary aspects of Islam in Ethiopia. Some of his findings have entered the TEE book and were partly reviewed there.

establishing a PROCMURA Sub-Committee[738] and supported the EECMY at its regional and national level[739]. The book covers a wide range of themes related to Islam[740]. Therefore, only those sections who are dealing with the Ethiopian context in general and those about the region in particular, shall be reviewed here. Since the book is to be understood in preparation for approaches of witness, this aspect has to be kept in mind. The second part of the course, dealing with Christian apologetics in meeting with Islam[741], unfortunately is not at hand and could therefore not be used for this study.

a) Concept and aim of the book, and the motives for witness

The concept of responsible witness, as the title of the handbook has revealed, has been stressed in the foreword.

> "The meaning of this concept is that all our activities should be carried out in a respectful manner, not insulting or criticizing the other's faith. Of course there will be time when we will disagree with the Muslim, but the main point is that in our conversations, our witnessing we should respect and tolerate the views and opinions of the Muslim. We are not called to quarrel, but to share our faith"[742].

The aim is, therefore, connected to the concept of responsible witness

> "to get a better understanding of Islam and Muslim practices … Secondly, you should have knowledge about your own faith … Unless you have this basic knowledge you will not be able to really explain what the faith means, and you will not be able to give answer to the questions and challenges Muslims often raise"[743].

This twofold aim, the understanding of Islam and knowledge about the Christian faith in view of the encounter with Muslims, has been divided in the two parts of the course, of which unfortunately only the first part is at hand, which deals with Islam itself. The course is

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[738] PS L68. To this letter attached was a report of the South East Area Work PROCMURA Sub-committee activities of 2002. Ib., 2: "By now, however, we believe and testify that PROCMURA (Project for Christian Muslim Relation in Africa sub-committee for SEAW) is a God given and timely strategy pertaining to Somali/Muslim evangelism in Bale. Since its establishment in SEAW (2002), PROCMURA is now through its one-year conducive service with regard to responsible evangelism among the Muslim Community".

[739] PS L38. In this letter Ostebo made the first contact with the EECMY, indicating that he worked in Norway on a thesis about the role of Islam in Ethiopia, and that he wished to conduct interviews. See also PS 1.2.2.9., which reveals that he had become the chairman of the EECMY PROCMURA AC.

[740] PS 1.3.7.9., 2. Content: Foreword (4), 1. Introduction (5-7), 2. Muhammed, The Prophet (8-12), 3. Islam in History (13-20), 4. History of Islam in Ethiopia (21-34), 5. Divisions in Islam (35-40), 6. The Book of Islam (41-47), 7. Hadith – The Traditions (48-50), 8. The Belief of Islam (51-60), 9. Sin and Salvation in Islam (61-72), 10. The 5 Pillars of Islam (73-78), Conclusion (79).

[741] Ib., 4.

[742] Ib., see also ib., 79: "Again let us remind ourselves; our knowledge about Islam should not be used as a weapon against Islam. It should not be seen as a mean to attack Muslims. Remember out main slogan *Responsible Witness* – where the love and the respect for our Muslim brothers and sisters are the forces driving us in our ministry".

[743] Ib.

directed toward the grass-root-level, i.e. the congregations. However, it is a training-of-trainers concept, which lies behind the course itself.

> "The main concern here should be that the participants should be able to act as trainers in their respective congregations"[744].

Before entering the historical dimension of Islam, the introduction of the book dealt with the commitment and motives for outreach to the Muslims[745].

> "Everybody belongs to God, no matter what religion he has … he [God] longs for the Muslim … The Muslim is our brother, who went away … and our work is to lead him home"[746].

This understanding of the Muslims' situation, the lost brothers, who had been separated from God and went away, and the understanding of God, who longs for the Muslims to come back to him, even though he "owns" them, is a understanding that indicates that the Muslims, where they are, are not with God, have no home, are lost and need to be saved. This understanding lies at the bottom of the conversion-oriented approach[747], which shall be dealt with later in 3.3. of this chapter. The alternative would be an understanding that respects the Muslims where they are, and tolerates that they may feel at home, with God, not alienated from God, even though or because they are Muslims, and that God has his possibilities to be with them, in a way that Christians need to understand. But such understanding-oriented approach is difficult to grasp once the conversion-oriented understanding prevailed. More difficult, however, is to integrate both into a balanced understanding. What then is the level of responsibility, respect and tolerance, if there is no truth on the side of the Muslims, while stating "We have the truth on our side"?

> "Every religion that leads away from Christ – is a lie, it is turned … from God – the truth. And the devil is in all lies – because he is a liar. But this does not mean that all Muslims are possessed by the devil … When a person is possessed by the devil, we will know, won't we?"[748].

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[744] Ib.

[745] Ib., 5-7: "We many times have negative ideas about the Muslims, we sometimes even fear them. Yes, we want to reach the Muslims, but we don't want them as friends, we don't want to be close to them, eat together with them, invite them to our houses, spend the night with them. Do we REALLY want to reach the Muslims?". The ambivalent aspect of friendship has been dealt with before.

[746] Ib., 5f.

[747] Ib., 6: Other statements of this tendency are: "We have the truth on our side, we have the only living God on our side. And what ever challenge – He will always be the strongest. We don't need to use violence, we don't need jihad – we have the truth on our side". This is the apologetical version of a conversion-oriented understanding.

[748] Ib., 7.

In the interreligious context, when dealing with other religions like the Jewish or the Islamic, the statement that their religions are a lie with the devil within, because they are not leading to Christ, is a very dangerous statement that could create an obstacle in interreligious relations and dialogue. The theological understanding very much corresponds with fundamental and charismatic teaching doctrines, which prevail partly at the grass-root-level of the congregations of the EECMY. It could have been used for the reason to make the understanding of Islam easier for them. However, it is a very questionable statement that should have been avoided.

b) History of Islam in Ethiopia and contemporary features

Ostebo has divided the outline of the history of Islam in the wider Horn of Africa context, after the first contact during the Axumite *hijjra*, into five phases leading up to the 19th century, and mentioned two important events in the 20th century[749]. Some highlights in CMR were presented, in which emphasis was given to the Axumite *hijjra*[750], the political rivalry between Muslims and Christians[751] and the persecution from the Christians after the Gragn conquest[752]. Contemporary aspects of Islam in Ethiopia included typological elements like Sunni-Islam with its schools, Sufism, traditional elements in Islam and orthodox Islam[753].

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[749] Ib., 4. He was following H. Ahmed, Wallo, 58f. Early phase – 7th to 11th century: "Important is to underline however, that Islam did not enter the Horn of Africa as a political system and was not accompanied by military conquest. The first introduction of Islam to this area was overall done by peaceful means" (22); Period of expansion and consolidation – 12th to 15th century: "in this period tension and fighting between the Muslim states and the reviving Christian empire in the north emerged … they were economically, where the control of the trade routes became crucial" (22); Period of confrontation – the 16th century Ganj episode: "With the defeat of Granj, Islam as a political force in the region declined … Further the expansion of the Oromos changed the geo-political picture completely" (23); Period of steady expansion – 17th and 18th century: "This steady expansion of Islam was done by peaceful means, conducted by Muslim traders as the Red Sea trade revived in the beginning of the 18th century. Because of the lack of central government, Muslim traders accompanied by Muslim *umma*, Muslim clerics were able to bring Islam to various parts of the area" (23); Period of revival and – the 19th century: "The revival of *sufism* … made its impact on the Horn of Africa … Further, the aggressive policy of Egypt in this period paved the way for the expansion of Islam. This was clearly seen in Harar (occupied 1875) where Egyptians forced the surrounding Oromos to embrace Islam. One last factor that caused Islam to expand was Menelik's conquest of the southern area … [caused that in Arsi] Islam came to be a counter-force against the army of Menelik". The two events in the 20th century were the episode of Emperor Lij Yasu and the second the Italian invasion, which both improved the situation of the Muslims.
[750] Ib., 25: "However, in medieval Islamic thinking, a new concept was introduced and applied for Abysssinia – *dar al-hiyad* (land of neutrality). Here the Islamic leaders accepted Abyssinia as a neutral entity, to be immune from *jihad*, and to be granted the right to exist as an independent state".
[751] Ib., 25: "In particular the war with Granj, alarmed the Christians about the prospective threat of Islam in such a way that some [H. Erlich] labelled it 'the Ahmed Granj syndrome.' It is said that this seriously shaped the minds of the Abyssinians, revealing what possible damages Islam could cause upon the Christian kingdom".
[752] Ib., 26.Yohannes I, Tewodros, Yohannes IV, Menelik and Haile Sellassie followed a policy of discrimination. "The Muslims, not willing to submit to the Christian religion, came to be viewed as a counter-force to this project [of uniting the nations], and therefore treated with suspicion and with a negative outlook. Much of the same treatment continued in the Derg period".
[753] Ib. 27f.: "All of Ethiopia's Muslims are followers of the Sunni way of Islam. As in most of sub-Sahara Africa Islam came to Ethiopia by traders and Islamic scholars accompanying them. These latter were often Sufis and were the ones facilitating the expansion of Islam. This again mean that the kind of Islam introduced were not a

With the time of the Derg, new contemporary aspects like Islamic organizations, production and distribution of literature and magazines, evolved[754], which brought transformation with regard to the Muslim community of Ethiopia. This led to the question;

> "what kind of Islam we see emerging in this country. And likewise, what are the prospects for the future"[755].

The analysis tried to clarify these questions, by describing the process with the terms revival[756] and fundamentalism[757]. Islamism in his understanding, paved the way for

> "creating a new identity as proud Ethiopian Muslims … This [the introduction of modernism competing with traditional elements] combined with unemployment, poverty and a wider gap between rich and poor – seems to have created some sort of crisis in the minds of young Ethiopians … In my opinion this is an important reason explaining why young Muslims seek their answer in religion … Islamism provides and alternative to the chaos … a comprehensive way of life, a total understanding of oneself and the world around … Islam has the answers guiding the person to a complete way of living"[758].

The contemporary typology which was described in the introduction of this study, proved to be a good tool for the understanding of Ethiopian Islam, which was verified also in the presentation of Ostebo. Sunni Islam in its orthodox form develops with Sufism toward Folk-

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strict orthodox one, but a religion tolerate and open, and that could easily be adopted by the already existing local culture" (27). "In many cas pre-Islamic elements were incorporated into Islam. Underlying pagan elements were forged into the new religion, and led to a syncretistic Islamic practice" (28). "In Harar and in Wollo a more orthodox Islam was kept intact. In Wollo, parallel with Sufism, several Islamic education centres were found … These centres played an important role in the preservation and diffusion of Islamic scholarship in Ethiopia, and served as cultural and religious links with the outside Islamic world. Further a large number of Islamic indigenous literature emerged from these areas".

[754] Ib., 28-30.

[755] Ib., 30.

[756] Ib., 31f: "As the door to the wider Islamic world was opened after 1991, contacts with other Islamic countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have increased. As we have seen – in terms of literature, but even more important in terms of travels to and studies in Saudi Arabia. The direct results of this are that a new and more orthodox kind of Islam is getting foothold here in Ethiopia, labelled as Whahabism … This movement can be seen as part of a wider revivalist movement, causing great changes upon Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, which again can be seen in connection with the wider Islamic movement often referred to as Islamic fundamentalism. The term fundamentalism is not very clarifying, and here I will use the term Islamism … the main characteristics of this movement are the focus on sharia, the call for the return to the Qur'an and the Hadith and struggle to purify Islam from traditional non-Islamic elements and from sufism" (31). "Furthermore emphasis has been put on Arabic language and culture, at the expense of local language and culture … Tradition and culture have been seen as an essential part of the local Muslim heritage, where indigenous local customs have been important for cultural as well as for religious identity … In other words, Islamism for Ethiopian Islam means a break with tradition … it is a break with tradition, a break with the traditional Islam, and represents the introduction of modernity to Ethiopian Islam".

[757] Ib., 31-34.

[758] Ib. 34.

Islam, which again is to be reoriented to an orthodox form of Islam demanded by Islamism or fundamental movements like the Wahhabi.

c) Evaluation

The understanding of Islam in Ethiopia was expressed in a respectful manner with convincing arguments, and led to conclusions that are helpful to understand in CMR. The term identity is important and brings close to the Muslims reality. The Christian approach to Muslims, however, is guided mainly by the conversion-oriented approach, which may be an obstacle in CMR. The statement, that truth is alone on the Christian side, and that other religions, because they do not lead to Christ are lies with devils inside, is a very harmful statement especially for the envisaged dialogical existence, and has been criticized. The conversion-oriented approach, as one possible approach in witness, has to be specified with the church's doctrine, i.e. the Lutheran doctrine, on which the EECMY is built on. Charismatic or Pentecostal contents, however, that are not conform with the Lutheran identity, should not be used to be carried out with the conversion-oriented approach, which has to be considered later in 3. of this chapter. The understanding-oriented approach, which does not necessarily demands conversion, could be helpful for the sake of peaceful coexistence in CMR. A balance of both approaches, however, should be aimed for. The teaching concept that originated with Ostebo in an area work (Bale) of the EECMY continued the training-of-teachers concept, but this time within one regional part of the EECMY. It would be advisable, if the EVTC in cooperation with the AD and the "Program for CMR"at the MYTS would decide about the publication of such a book after an examination. In general, such local activities, in relation with sub-AC's are to be encouraged, because they are closer to the context and the grass-root-level than nation-wide concepts, like the one which shall be reviewed next.

2.4.3. Academic institute for CMR, "Program in CMR"

a) Preparations

The efforts in obtaining improved understanding about Islam, besides the other forms of teaching like having seminars or workshops, the teaching of trainers program, or the TEE courses, courses at seminaries, bible schools or in synods or area work's; led in 2001 to the

idea to create an academic institute for CMR[759]. A memorandum from the EVTC of the EECMY had been written on the 5th of October 2001 to the 113th Executive Committee;

> "There is a need for strengthening the church's capacity in terms of better understanding and knowledge about Islam, and in terms of training and equipping our ministers doing outreach among the Muslims. Based on this, the EECMY Evangelism and Theology Commission has come up with the idea of establishing an Institute for Christian-Muslim Relations"[760].

Such an institute should at the same time be a research center with the focus on Islam in general and in Ethiopia in particular. The main objective;

> "would be to educate trainers with a deep knowledge about Islam that can then again train the workers in the various units"[761].

This is an improved version of the training of trainers program that started with S. Abdo. The aim and objective both were presented in the line with PROCMURA'S concept, i.e. responsible evangelism with respect and tactfulness[762], both of which require appropriate understanding. The long term aspect, to become an institution that could affect the whole of the Horn of Africa and beyond it, was seen[763]. The center should be located at the MYTS

> "and be run as an independent accredited department under MYTS"[764].

b) The program

An expatriate with a PhD in CMR, who would work out matters of the academic level, curriculum, syllabus amongst other matters, was in view and expected to start at the end of 2002. Dr. Peter Ford[765] from the Reformed Church of the USA arrived in 2002 and immediately took up his work. A working group for the "Program in CMR" under his responsibility, which should serve as a communication link between the MYTS-CMR program and the EECMY-CO, was established and presented some proposals towards establishing the CMR program at the MYTS on August 22, 2002[766]. The basic components of

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[759] PS 1.3.4.2.4. See also 1.2.3.10., 2: "the executive of area Committee of PROCMUR[A] has a further vision, [i.e. it] plan[n]ed to establish an Institution [for] PROCMURA here in [the] EECMY in [the] near future and the project is under process".
[760] Ib., 1.
[761] Ib., 1f.
[762] Ib., 1: "and not in a negative manner".
[763] Ib., 2: „Therefore we think it could easily attract students from other African countries, and even students from Europe and US, preparing for missionary service on this continent. Also when it comes to teaching personell, this could become an attractive institution for visiting professors from Africa, Asia, and Europe etc.".
[764] Ib., 2.
[765] Find more information in 4.3.1. g).
[766] PS 1.3.6.2.1.: "They are based on the 'Project Proposal: Program for Christian-Muslim Relations' (3rd December 2001) that was put forward by the Working Group, and approved by the Seminary Council, Seminary Board, and EECMY Executive Committee in the spring of 2002. I [P. Ford] list them here for the sake of further

the CMR program were listed and mentioned that the program should not be called institute at first, but "Program for Christian-Muslim Relations"[767]. The director of the program shall i.a.

> "be responsible for full direction of the Program, including curriculum, class scheduling, teacher recruitment, budget, library development in CMR, textbook acquisition, and promotion"[768].

The first Islam course was to be conducted from late August 2003 to mid-June 2005[769]. A draft of the curriculum was prepared and presented on August 26, 2002[770]. Beside the teachings, a field education is required:

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discussion and possible modification". Unfortunately, this project proposal was not found with the documents at hand.

[767] Ib., 1: "although it may become a more independent institution at a later point in time, possibly with an ecumenical structure". The basic components of the CMR program were listed: Incorporation into the Theology Department of the MYTS, equivalent to 3rd and 4th year of the standard B.Th. program. "Graduates will receive the B.Th. with a 'Concentration in Christian-Muslim Relations. The CMR Program will thus be fully accredited by ACTEA [Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa]". Intake shall happen every other year "until there is sufficient staff and resources to handle an every-year intake". Students from other churches within Ethiopia are accepted. "EECMY graduates of the program will serve as specialized evangelists, Synod consultants conducting CMR workshops for their congregations, and teachers of CMR in regional seminaries and Bible schools".

[768] Ib., 2: "Working hours shall consist of approximately 15 hours administration and 6-8 periods per week of teaching; plus occasional church workshops, conferences, etc. … Establish appropriate preliminary contacts of a dialogical nature with the local Muslim community". For other duties, especially during the first year (spring 2002-spring 2003), see ib.

[769] PS 1.3.6.2.3., 2.

[770] PS 1.3.6.2.2., 1f: The curriculum was firstly classified in years one and two: "All Degree students will follow the standard B.Th. program for these two years. This will include, during Year Two – Term Two, the course 'Introduction to Islam' ("An introduction to the history, doctrines, and practices of Islam, and the issues that have divided Muslims and Christians throughout history. Included will be some initial Christian reflection and appropriate response. This course is required for all B.Th. students", ib. 2) … Students wishing to enter the CMR Program may apply during Year Two – Term Two. Secondly, it was classified in Year Three and Year Four, each with Term One and Term Two. Term One of the Year Three included the Christian Doctrine I, Ethiopian Traditional Religions [Block A], Communications [Block B], Qur'anic Arabic I, The Life of Muhammad [Block A] ("This course will review the political, social and religious context of Arabia at the rise of Islam. The sources for the life of Muhammad will be introduced. His life will be studied, with particular focus on his religious reforms, and his relations among Christians and Jews", ib., 2), Islamic History [Block B] ("This course will be a general survey of Islamic political and intellectual history from the death of Muhammad to pre-modern times. Key figures in classical Islamic thought will also be covered", ib. 3), The Qur'an and its Interpretation ("This course will examine the structure and content of the Qur'an, focusing on major religious themes. Select passages will be analyzed, including those dealing with Jesus and Christians", ib., 3). Term Two of Year Three included the Church History III, Christian Doctrine II, Qur'anic Arabic, Hadith Literature [Block C] ("This course will review the nature and content of Hadith literature … and their impact on Muslim belief and practice. Included will be a review of Islamic Hadith criticism", ib., 3), Islamic Law [Block D] ("This course will review the historical development of Islamic Law, including its principles and sources. It will also review the content and application of Islamic Law, and its variations among the different 'schools' of law. Attention will be given to the local African context", ib., 3), Islam in Ethiopia & Africa ("This course will review the manner in which Islam entered Ethiopia and Africa, and the role it has played in the history of the continent. It will cover the various expressions of Islam in Ethiopia and the surrounding region, with a focus on the contemporary situation", ib., 3). Year Four, Term one included Christian Doctrine III, Qur'anic Arabic III, History of Christian-Muslim Relations ("This course is a survey of relations between Muslims and Christians, from Muhammad to modern times, especially as revealed through the apologetic and polemical literature from both sides. Emphasis will be given to the few cases where a positive approach is taken", ib. 3), Varieties of

"during the summer between Year Three and Year Four will consist of research in a particular region of the student's home country, examining the beliefs and practices among Muslims in that region, and the challenges facing the church there with regard to Islam. Direct contact with Muslims is expected"[771].

A brochure entitled "Program in Christian-Muslim Relations" was produced and dispatched. In it the aim was again specified.

"CMR courses will seek to offer a balance between understanding Islam, dialogue, and evangelism – all within the actual context of Ethiopia and Africa"[772].

The wider ecumenical aspect has been expressed[773]. The relationship of the program with PROCMURA has been clearly indicated.

"It has also received recognition from PROCMURA"[774].

c) Evaluation

An evaluation of the program can only be given after the first course finished, and its first participants have applied the knowledge and understanding with its practicability in their ministry. However, the syllabus shows that a wide range has been considered for coverage, with as much concentration as possible given to the Ethiopian context. The theoretical

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Islamic Belief and Practice ("This course will review the beliefs and practices of Shi'ites and other Islamic groups, such as the Ahmadiya. Attention will be given to 'folk Islam', i.e., the impact of Sufism and various forms of traditional religious beliefs on Islamic belief and practice. The situation in contemporary Ethiopia and Africa will receive special focus", ib., 3), Evangelism among Muslims ("This course will examine methods of sharing the gospel with Muslims in a respectful manner. Emphasis will be given on the building of relationships and the use of the Bible. The use of the Qur'an and other materials will also be considered. Issues of an apologetic nature, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, will be covered", ib., 3), Missiology and Christian-Muslim Relations ("Missiology and Church Growth … The additional portion will offer principles and strategies for cross-cultural and cross-religious communication among Muslims in the context of Ethiopia and Africa", ib. 4). Term Two included the subjects Church History IV, B.Th. Paper (CMR), Islam in the Modern World ("This course will review the various expressions of Islam from the late 19th century to the present. The contributions of key ideological and political figures will be considered. The impact of these expressions on contemporary Ethiopia and Africa will receive special focus", ib., 4), Issues in Christian-Muslim Dialogue ("This course will examine issues of both a theological and practical nature that have historically divided Christians and Muslims. It will explore how Christians might cooperate with Muslims in promoting dialogue and peaceful coexistence as religious communities, especially in the context of Ethiopia and Africa", ib., 4), Issues in Religious Pluralism ("This course will examine the challenge to Christian theology posed by the existence of various religious beliefs … with regard to divine revelation, religious truth, the nature of salvation, the goals of evangelism, etc. The views of various theologians … who have examined these issues will be considered", ib. 4) and Teaching Christian-Muslim Relations ("This course will develop methods and curriculums for teaching Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in regional seminaries, Bible schools, synod workshops, etc. The emphasis will be on practical matters", ib., 4). In the totals of years three and four 66 periods and 64 credits in the CMR-program, and 65 periods and 64 credits in the standard program were counted.

[771] Ib., 2.
[772] PS 1.3.6.2.3., 2.
[773] Ib., 3: "Although the CMR Program was established in response to the needs felt within the EECMY, it is intended to serve all denominations in Ethiopia and other African countries".
[774] Ib., 6.

transmission of knowledge should be combined with all possible efforts to transmit the understanding as had been described in 2.3. of this chapter, and with practical isssues.

2.5. Interim Summary: *The training concepts and their relation to the grass-root-level*

Various teaching concepts have been examined in order to distinguish the usefulness at various levels, and to evaluate the relation to the grass-root-level, i.e. the ministers who work among Muslims.

The importance of the sharing of experiences and the update on new missiological teachings among others had been found to be the strength of the first concept. However, the logistic and financial burden allow only a limited number of such workshops and a limited number of participants, who should be consciously selected to act later as multiplicators.

The training-of-teachers program that had been developed with S. Abdo, improved the first teaching concept, because the way from the academical teaching level down to the grass-root-level has been organised in a convincing manner.

The TEE program with its two books had been critically reviewed. Whereas the first book transmitted knowledge in an informative way which rather created a distance to Islam and to Muslims, the second improved the possibility to understand Islam, because it brought the reader at times close to the Muslims and Islam in general, which is a necessary requirement for appropriate understanding. The TEE book with its "in-service-training" approach could be a good teaching concept, but depends strongly on the group-leaders and their abilities, their own understanding and attitudes. These group-leaders, therefore, have to be well trained in CMR, and therefore special courses should be prepared for them.

The teaching material of one bible school and one area work (Bale) had been reviewed. Especially the second book openly indicated a conversion-oriented approach, which had been criticized. The conversion-oriented approach, as shall be seen in the next section, has to be balanced with the understanding-oriented approach (that does not necessarily lead to conversion) and the humanitarian-oriented approach.

However, all these approaches are expressions of the task of witness, the Christians have to carry out, as shall become clear in the next section. Another task that has been discovered in this line is to elaborate a conversion-oriented approach that is either Lutheran when used within the EECMY, or which has to have an ecumenical fundament, when used in the ecumenical context. However, this theological task cannot be carried out here. In every case, each book that is going to be used at the national or regional level of the EECMY (synods and area works, seminaries, bible schools, TEE program, etc.) should be critically reviewed

by the EVTC in connection with the AC and the "Program of CMR" at the MYTS, before it will be published. This would be helpful in order to avoid misunderstandings, misinterpretations and other harmful statements. The "Program of CMR" looks very promising. It is quite similar to the training-of-teachers program, but with an improved academical level. Since the results are not known yet, no further evaluation could be given. One has to wait to see whether and how this academical concept will reach down to the grass-root-level. A field-study at the grass-root-level should be carried out, in order to elaborate the understanding of Islam and the approaches to Muslim, channelled through the teaching concepts, directly at the grass-root-level. This remains to be an important task in the future. All teaching concepts, however, had one aim, i.e. to improve the witness, which shall be reviewed next.

3. Concepts of approaches and outreach strategies

The concepts of approaches and outreach strategies had been organised here starting with the contextual witness, which is the overall aspect that combines all approaches and strategies. At the end of the section of contextual witness, the understanding-oriented approach, the conversion-oriented approach, the humanitarian-oriented approach and the congregation-oriented approach will be distinguished and explained, leading to the ideal balanced and multifaceted approach. Especially the humanitarian-oriented approach with its holistic ministry has to be examined more specifically. A special attention had also been given to the settlement aspect, i.e. the congregation-oriented approach, to which all approaches connected to witness lead in, i.e. the existence of a Christian community within a Muslim context, which includes the post-conversion care. The last section deals with the strategy papers that have been developed within the EECMY so far. Guidelines and strategy papers represent a final stage of the process that started with the understanding that passed through the teachings towards the approaches. The interim summary then shall review the findings on the concepts of approaches and strategies, under the leading question, in which way a balanced approach to Muslims could be developed. The "Missio Dei", as the all comprising feature, shall round up this section.

3.1.   Contextual Witness

In review of the previously mentioned concepts of understanding and teachings with the literature, the concepts of witness are varying depending on the direction the understanding took towards an approach. However, witness itself is the center of each Christian approach to

Muslims. The second aspect is that whether the witness is understanding-oriented, conversion-oriented, humanitarian-oriented or congregation-oriented, it has to be contextual. Since the strategies and guidelines for approaches must be seen at the same time as forms of witness, only those aspects shall be dealt with here that have been treated with separately from the aspects to be mentioned in 4.4. However, overlaps and repitions are not avoidable. The various aspects of contextual witness shall be presented while passing through the various persons or literatures with which they are connected, i.e. Hasselblatt, S. Abdo, Y. Deressa, B. Peter, the TEE book of 2002, the book "Responsible Witness" by Ostebo, before the concepts of approaches that have been detected with this study so far shall be presented.

3.1.1. Hasselblatt: *The living congregation and its members as witness*

Asking how to preach the gospel[775], he was directed more towards a settlement strategy, in which the Christian community itself has the major influence in witnessing to the Muslims.

> "The main way to witness is always to be an active member of a living, inspired Christian congregation"[776].

The center of witness, according to Hasselblatt, is the Christian community settled in a contextual mode, but separated from the Muslim context, in order to avoid a falling back in the older patterns, and to ensure safety from persecution and other pressures. It is further necessary in order to safeguard an authentic socialisation of the converts. Since the aspect of a living congregation will be specified in 3.3. of this chapter, it shall not be reviewed more concretely here.

3.1.2. S. Abdo: *Tactical and practical advises for contextual witness that culminate in the incarnational witness*

In his teachings he used i.a. an older paper, in which both tactical and practical advises for witness had been given[777]. However, in 1993 he wrote one document which gave an

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[775] PS 1.1.1.1., 3f.

[776] PS 1.1.1.3., 123.

[777] PS 1.3.2.14.e), it is not clear whether the document originated with Hasselblatt or together with S. Abdo. See 19f.: Helpful advises for witness to Muslims: 1. appropriate understanding of them, 2. to value their way of life, 3. to respect them, 4. to do everything legally, 5. good reception of them, 6. to be wide-hearted, 7. to do everything in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, 8. to hold the Bible while witnessing or preaching, 9. to remove obstacles like in eating, use of alcohol, clothes and cleaning, pictures and fotos, urinating, use of the left and the right hand, respect of prayer and worship times, 10. no use of spiritual war or forceful or powerful measures, because the true justice lies in peace and silent prayers, in fasting etc.
Helpful basic truths for witness: 1. to use every opportunity, 2. always friendly greetings, 3. to be attentive for opportunities, 4. when there is an opportunity for witness, to find soon a way for realization, 5. to show always

overview of themes related to witness, that he used for his teachings[778], and a report about the religion of Islam, with emphasis on witness, which he entitled "Is there a better way to preach the gospel amongst Muslims? If there is, what is the way?"[779]. This document has four sections: the first deals with the contextual situation of Islam, the second gives answers to the question why to witness, the third shows how to witness, and the fourth gives some strategies and methods for the church necessary for attracting Muslims to Christ. As for the context of Islam, it is generally the Muslims' aim to islamize the whole of Africa in the next ten years, i.e. in the shortest time. Their method for expansion combines the marriages of many wives, the teaching of their children and the provision of money and work for Muslims. Concerning the strength of the Muslims faith, S. Abdo distinguished between two types: the strict Muslims, who have knowledge about their faith and the Qur'an, and who are even willing to kill for their faith, and the less strict Muslims, mostly in rural areas, who practice traditional religious elements and who have less strict convictions and knowledge about Islam. To witness to the first group is very difficult, but to witness to the other is possible. The need for witness, the why-question, comes firstly from Matthew 28:19-20 and the Lord's call for mission, secondly from John 4:12 and 14:6, i.e. the salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, thirdly from Psalm 4:6, to show the Muslims the good thing that comes with Jesus Christ, fourthly from Psalm 3:16-21, to teach the Muslims what has been taught to us in fear of God, who will ask us one day for this, and fifthly from 2 Corinthians 5:14:

> "Because we are one people and nations of one nation, because they are our brothers, we have to live in peace and in love together in unity, by sharing the life, rest and relief we found, so that they may find the same, therefore, the love of God presses (drives) us to witness the gospel to the followers of Islamic religion"[780].

With regard to the ways of witness, the how-question, S. Abdo mentioned seven points: firstly, a witness has to know about the Muslims religious fundament and about their books, especially the Qur'an, otherwise he will not be able to give an appropriate witness; secondly,

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good attitudes, 6. to be legal in all, to honour discipline and order and to avoid any provocative speaking, 7. to be patient. The over all ruling aspect, that covers all, is the love we show to the Muslims.

[778] PS 1.3.2.8., 1f. This is an incomplete overview or a draft for a teaching S. Abdo was going to give. Only the following contents were given: Introduction: By only using a tactical method to extract any formula, it is not possible to fulfil the gospel's aim that they shall be evangelized; quotation of Matthew 4:18f; only by following Jesus we can catch people (like fishes). Chapter 1: What Christians have to show Muslims (new love, 1. John 4:8, tell them the message, 2 Cor. 4:5, Christian witness, 2 Tim. 2: 24f), chapter 2: What to do to help Muslims to understand the gospel (God's command to love others, His father's love, Jesus Christ life, Jesus Christ's sacrifice, Jesus Christ's victory, Jesus the word of God, teaching about the trinity, teaching about the Holy Spirit and the church), chapter 3: How to help Muslims who have a serious (heartful) interest in the gospel.
[779] PS 1.3.2.7., 1-3.
[780] Ib., 2.

the witness should create a close relationship with them using also family bonds, and in a given time, while living together he may give testimony in love and respect; thirdly, quoting Matthew 5:16, to be a good light before people means to have good ethics and morals, a faithful Christian lifestyle which includes helping the needy, by which we may bring back the Muslims to Christ; fourthly, the witness shall start telling about things the Muslims know, and later coming to the unknown, i.e. the gospel; fifthly, it is good to use easy stories like creation, about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Isa, i.e. Jesus, and the prodigal son, in order to bring the Muslims to Christ; sixthly, it is good to ask some questions while witnessing, because it is not good that the witness alone is speaking, but he should listen respectfully about the Muslims religion and feelings without refusing or denouncing them, and if they ask the witness should quote from the Bible for answer; seventhly, the witness has to be a reader of the word of God and a man of prayer, and with the knowledge and carefulness together it is possible, to bring Muslims to Christ. For all this the power of God is needed, for which the witnesses should ask for.

Concerning the method of the church, again seven points were raised by S. Abdo: firstly, prayer groups should be established at all levels of the church, who pray according to given topics; secondly, ministers should be selected and sent to training by the districts who have also to supervise them; thirdly, to buy books that came out from Muslims in order to study them; fourthly, the congregations shall take care for the converts and teach them, especially the Muslim converts later shall become ministers to their people; fifthly, tracts shall be prepared dealing with questions of witness for those who are witnessing; sixthly, to teach the congregations about the differences of Christian and Islamic faith; seventhly, saying "this is a great gospel work", the church shall give special attention and provide the work with a budget and an office (at all possible levels).

From his indigenous understanding he later concluded that the witness has to be contextualized,

> "which is nothing less than being incarnated in their culture"[781].
> "In fact the sociological interaction in our communities can be [a] medium for interring [entering] into dialogue / witness. In times such as marriage, child birth, death and the like. in the neighborhood, experiences of joy and sorrow, love and care goes deeper to facilitate the true sharing of once faith and experience across the

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[781] PS 1.3.2.6., 3. See also 1.3.4.1.3., 10.

religious lines. Such relation can be bas[i]s for our interaction and witness, even though we need carefully thought strategies"[782].

The incarnational model of witness within the Muslim context or community that appeared also in the strategy paper shall be examined further in 3.4. However, the placement of the witness within the Muslim context or community leads to an integrative model, whereas Hasselblatt's model is seperative in this sense. The incarnational model is indigenous and genuine christological, and therefore identical with the Lutheran doctrine. His incarnational witness therefore represents the strongest form of witness so far discovered in this study. The incarnational witness, however, is placed in the center of the witness, i.e. the congregation.

3.1.3. Y. Deressa: *Successful dialogue as effective witness*

According to Y. Deressa, as has been described in 1.3. b), witness becomes effective in successful dialogue, for which the understanding of the Islamic view, especially on the common aspect of salvation, is mandatory. While coming close to the Muslim through the theological understanding and concentration on the common aspects, the Muslim will be able to understand, and may be affected by the Christian understanding, which may cause him to accept the Christian faith. In this sense, the understanding-oriented approach with its theological nuance is very strong with Y. Deressa, and the conversion-oriented approach becomes effective in a good dialogue. He did not, however, mention the humanitarian-oriented approach and the congregation-oriented approach.

3.1.4. B. Peter: *Witness of an alternative to the dualism in a living dialogue*

For Peter, as was seen in 1.4. c), the theological dialogue would become rather difficult, since the knowledge would not allow any deep discussion. For him, more in a living dialogue, in which the Muslim may be asked about his religious praxis, in order to point to his situation, that he lives in a religious dualism, that partly includes destructive elements like the spirit possession, the chance would be given to witness. The opportunity to overcome the ambivalent division of the Muslims' life through the acceptance of the Christian faith, has to be presented as an alternative. Peter's suggestion indicates that for him the conversion-oriented witness is a form of witness, since the weakness of Folk-Islam could only be overcome through the conversion. The understanding-oriented approach, however, must be preparatory, as the socio-religious studies of Peter with its concentration on syncretism has

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[782] PS 1.3.2.13., 7.

shown. He also did not mention the humanitarian-oriented and the congregation-oriented approaches.

3.1.5. TEE book 2002: *Silent and audible witness*

Silent and audible witness as the two basic concepts of witness have been presented in the TEE book of 2002, as has been seen in 2.3.3. b). Whereas the silent witness concentrates in the development of an intimate relationship with the Muslim that creates trust and that includes the care for him and his family, or that includes a holistic ministry, the audible witness in a dialogical existence has more a conversion-oriented tendency, i.e. bringing the Muslim to the hope of eternal life through the gracious work of Jesus Christ. The humanitarian-oriented approach, the understanding-oriented approach, which is necessary for dialogue, and the conversion-oriented approach have to be brought into a balance. The danger is here, that the conversion-oriented approach becomes an obstacle for the understanding-oriented approach. The congregation-oriented approach has not been elaborated so far. However, the distinction of silent and audible witness is helpful. The understanding-oriented, the humanitarian-oriented and even the congregation-oriented approaches are more to be understood as silent witness, whereas the audible witness is substantially a conversion-oriented approach.

3.1.6. Responsible Witness

The same problem as in the witness concept of the TEE book of 2002 appears with the concept of responsible witness that has been reviewed with the book of Ostebo in 2.4.2. of this chapter. Even though responsible witness needs respect and tolerance of the Muslim's views, the appropriate understanding seems not to be fully achievable in an authentic way, as long as the truth only is with the Christians, and therefore the Muslims, like lost brothers, need to be brought back to the Christian faith. This view is questionable, since the understanding-oriented approach could indicate that God in his own "Missio Dei" may be at work even in Islam, as shall be considered next. However, the theological tendency of stating that the only truth is with the Christians shows that the conversion-oriented approach with a more fundamental theology prevails before all other. A balance of the approaches is needed here as well.

3.1.7. Multi-dimensional and multi-faceted witness

a) The understanding-oriented approach

The understanding-oriented approach seeks primarily and foremost to understand the Muslim, without the intention to bring him to convert to the Christian faith. This understanding in itself could be a genuine witness, since it has no tendency of proselytism, which could provoke suspicion with the Muslims. Only when the Muslim in its being is understood and feels himself understood, he may be able to become interested in the Christian faith in an authentic way. The understanding-oriented approach aims at peaceful coexistence, which again in itself is a genuine witness. With this approach, one has to consider the question, how God in his "Missio Dei" is present within Islam. If one positively learns from Islam and from the Muslim, common ground could be found, which may show that God is at work even in Islam. This study needs to be carried out sensitively, and would be part of a study in the theology of religions. It cannot be carried out here, but remains an important task in relation to studies with interreligious relations and perceptions. The understanding-oriented approach also needs to be balanced with the other approaches.

b) The conversion-oriented approach

The conversion-oriented approach is the classical approach of Christians in outreach activities, and prevails especially at the grass-root-level of the EECMY. A field study at the grass-root-level still would have to prove this statement. Even though the understanding-oriented and other approaches may be taught and the listeners may agree with their necessity, when it comes to the question what really matters, the conversion-oriented approach, i.e. bringing non-Christians directly to Christ, would soon come to the fore naturally. This eventually is a result of the evangelical theological tendencies in their pietistic and charismatic forms that came from the missions from abroad and influenced the evangelical churches in Ethiopia substantially. However, this fundamental theology has to be questioned, especiall in view of CMR. The conversion-oriented approach could be in itself an obstacle for genuine understanding. It could be harmful for the relationship with Muslims, when carried out in confrontative and aggressive preaching or other. However, it becomes authentic in forms when the understanding reached a level, in which the Christian message of salvation is presented in a form that the Muslim can understand, i.e. in a contextual form. The incarnational and contextual approach in the understanding of S. Abdo could be a useful way, in which the conversion-oriented approach could be carried out. The conversion-oriented approach needs to be balanced with the other approaches.

c) The humanitarian-oriented approach

The humanitarian-oriented approach is a form of silent witness, in which through social care and through development projects the gospel is proclaimed in a practical way that indicates

the Christian motives towards better life-conditions, which is understood as a will of God. The humanitarian-oriented approach does not necessarily intend conversion, rather it stimulates towards discovering the Christian faith and the love of God for each human being. This approach is part of the holistic ministry, and lies at the very bottom of the foundation of the EECMY. In fact, it is the EECMY's central policy, i.e. to serve the whole person. This approach will be reviewed more deeply in the next section 3.2. The humanitarian-oriented appraoch needs also to be balanced with the other approaches.

d) The congregation-oriented approach

Both Hasselblatt and S. Abdo have emphasized the need of a congregational witness. The living congregations and its members represent a strong witness to the Muslims. In fact, all approaches that intend witness are resulting in the existence of a congregation. However, the suggestion of Hasselblatt, who aimed at a separative existence of the congregation, as shall be seen later, was improved by S. Abdo, who followed an integrative existence of the congregation with his incarnational approach, which shall be reviewed in his strategy paper later on. The congregation is the place, where all the other three approaches, i.e. the understanding-oriented approach, the conversion-oriented approach and the humanitarian-oriented approach could and should be exercised in a balanced form. This is the place, where the grass-root-level takes the leading role of approaches to Muslims.

e) The balanced approach

The balanced approach seeks to combine all the four afore-mentioned approaches, and becomes therefore a multifaceted approach of witness. All the four approaches in themselves have their own strength of witness, however, if combined they would result in the strongest witness the Christians can present to the Muslims. They include all the four concepts of understanding that have been presented in the first section of this chapter. Without combination, the singular, twofold or threefold combination of approaches still will remain weaker as the four together. Therefore, the aim of witness should comprise all the four approaches.

3.2. Holistic Ministry

Approaches to Muslims cannot but have to include aspects of holistic ministry.

"Having said the above viewing Christian Muslim Relation in Ethiopia, EECMY once again commits herself to bring the 'Whole' Gospel to the whole person among the Muslim communities in the country"[783].

The reflection on holistic ministry has to start with the decisions the EECMY has taken toward establishing her central policy that is also crucial in CMR.

a) "On the Interrelation Between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development"

On the very bottom of the holistic ministry approach of the EECMY lies a document entitled "On the Interrelation between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development", which was signed by the church officers on May 9, 1972.

"In January 1971, the 7th General Assembly of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus passed a resolution requesting the Lutheran World Federation to approach the Donor Agencies in Germany and other countries with a view to reconsidering their criteria for aid and include direct support for congregational work, leadership training and Church buildings"[784].

The paper criticized the unequal distribution of funds and sought to balance both wings of development and evangelism work[785]. Within this paper, the motto of the EECMY, "to serve the whole man"[786], had been established. With it the understanding of holistic ministry was expressed in the first section called "Our Understanding of Man and his Needs"[787]. People have not only material or physical but also spiritual needs.

"We therefore see the development of the inner man as a pre-requisite for a healthy and lasting development of our society … We believe that an integral human development, where the spiritual and material needs are seen together, is the only right approach to the development question in our society"[788].

The primary aim is achieved when man is set free from his own self centered need through the liberating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ[789]. The meaning of integral development,

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[783] 1.3.2.13., 6.
[784] PS 1.1.3.1.2., 1.
[785] Ib., : "the Church had become more and more concerned about the prevailing imbalance … the Church had become more and more aware of her obligation to serve our fellow men and society … At the same time, the Church … realized her obligation to proclaim the Gospel to the ever growing crowds … it has become evident over the last few years that the Churches and Agencies in the West are readily prepared to assist in material development while there seems to be little interest in helping the Church meet her primary obligation to proclaim the Gospel".
[786] Ib., 5: "These two extreme positions [i.e. the old emphasis on verbal proclamation and the new emphasis on development] are equally harmful to the local Church in Developing Countries which see it as their obligation to serve the whole man".
[787] Ib., 2-5.
[788] Ib., 3.
[789] Ib., 4.

reaching at this innermost point of conflict, has been clearly stated. Another important aspect is the involvement of ordinary man as the agent in the development process, and

> "provision must be made to work with unimportant groups over long periods of time"[790].

The closeness to the grass-root-level, i.e. congregational level with its potential, is indicated here. Congregational work and development work have to be brought together and separation should be avoided. A third aspect was mentioned concerning the criteria which determine where assistance should be given to.

> "We also maintain very strongly that it is the need [in a given local situation] that should determine where assistance should be given and not the criteria laid down by the Donor Agencies which reflect trends in the Western societies and Churches"[791].

The need-oriented aspect gives an objective and neutral argument for the distribution of development activities. In view of the fast growth of the church as a challenge in present time the 7th General Assembly passed the resolution with the intention to give more support to the congregational work including leadership building and church construction.

Having laid down these principles, no consideration on the effect of development work on Muslim societies was made. However, the principles have to be understood in view of the church's ministry among Muslims.

b) Development projects and the question of self-reliance

With regard to the dependency on external means in view of the church's holistic ministry among Muslims, another document which was called "Memorandum" has to be reviewed briefly. The document was written by Gudina Tumsa, the General Secretary of the EECMY, to Emmanuel Abraham, the President of the EECMY, on July 21, 1975[792]. Based on this paper, the EECMY's 35th Meeting of the Executive Committee (Special Meeting) was held from August 19-24, 1975[793]. Both documents shall be reviewed under the aspect of CMR in general and concerning dependency on external means.

The revolutionary changes that affected all areas of society that came along with the socialism gave rise to the "Memorandum"[794]. In its center the question of a moratorium has been placed[795].

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[790] Ib., 4.
[791] Ib., 5.
[792] PS 1.1.3.1.3.
[793] PS 1.1.2.6.
[794] PS 1.1.3.1.3., 2: "Lack of a sound Theological reflection in the present Ethiopian situation has in my opinion affected our work in a negative way, which if allowed to continue uncorrected will be very harmful to the life of this Church to which we have committed ourselves for service".

"In short, moratorium is defined as withdrawal of resources and expatriate personnel for a certain period of time from the former Mission Fields in order to give the Churches in the Third World time to find their identity as they make efforts to depend on their own personnel and finances thereby attaining self-reliance. Self-reliance is the final goal of any Church; however, for the sake of self-reliance moratorium should not be applied to the primary task of the Church which is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ … In my opinion we are responsible for the use of resources in whatever form they are available"[796].

The alternative to the moratorium is the increase of local resources and the decrease of grants from overseas in four periods of each five years from 1971-1990 in order to enhance self-reliance[797]. The need for a holistic ministry toward nation-building itself is unquestionable[798]. It is a result of indigenous and contextual theology and becomes itself a holistic theology, which has a

"worldly dimension of human existence and Wholistic Theology is an effort in rediscovering total human life … We are not interested in creating medieval monastries, in setting up ghettoes (modern monasteries), but in being involved in the complex social life of our people as we find it daily"[799].

The approach of holistic ministry among Muslims therefore has to be considered under the criteria of a usage of available resources, the contribution of the converts, and self-reliance in its broadest sense. This, of course, requires an authentic conversion, i.e. a service-oriented conversion, which leads to suffering of the incarnation process, or, in the words of G. Tumsa, the cost of discipleship[800].

"To believe in Christ is to take the form of a servant, to be a servant for others … The confession that 'Christ died for our sins' implies that we, the confessors are ready to sacrifice what-ever the Lord of history demands of us in a concrete

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[795] Ib., 6f.
[796] Ib., 7. See also PS 1.1.2.6., 4f.: "The ECMY Executive Committee rejects the concept and proposal of Moratorium on Theological grounds … ECMY is still dependent on foreign funds and personell. We therefore see planning as an alternative to 'Moratorium'. Planning to increase local resources to enhance self-reliance".
[797] Ib., 7f.: "The fourth period, 1986-1990, should be the last period for any financial grants from abroad. This planned way towards self-reliance is an alternative to moratorium which is a withdrawal for a certain period of time", ib., 8. See also PS 1.1.2.6., 5f: "(2) All planning for new projects or programmes should from now on be done within the framework of the goal of self-reliance … (6) It is an essential principle of the Church not only in Theology but for the structure and organization and strategy that the Congregation is the fundamental unit and the main centre of the Church".
[798] Ib., "The ECMY [EECMY] will continue to contribute her share to the economic development of Ethiopia, to improve the living conditions of the people".
[799] Ib., 12.
[800] Ib., 14-16.

situation. To pay the cost of discipleship is not to buy our salvation; it is to demonstrate the quality of love that led Jesus of Nazareth to the Cross"[801].

A quotation from a PROCMURA newsletter brings this truth to the fore with other words:

"Not conversion but discipleship is the Master's Great Commission"[802].

The incarnational witness with its service character therefore is closely related to the humanitarian-oriented approach, otherwise it could not lead towards self-reliance, which again creates an indigenous church independent from external means.

c) Other statements related to holistic ministry with regard to CMR.

S. Abdo gave several statements concerning holistic ministry in his documents, especially in his strategy paper of 1996, which shall be reviewed in 3.4.c), strategies four and five. Before this, he made some remarks about holistic ministry in the document which he presented to the interfaith consultation of the LWF in 1995[803].

> "Evangelism and service (diakonia) therefore are like the blades of a pair of scissors … Christian service expresses the encounter of the congregation and the individual Christian with the need in the life of individuals and of the local community. Christian service is an integral part of our missionary task, and not something we may 'choose' to do for strategic reasons. This means that service or diakonia is a natural and necessary way of expressing the Gospel … We do not help people in order to convert them!"[804].

In this sense S. Abdo, in line with the church's policies mentioned before, continued the line which leads to the humanitarian-oriented approach, which does not necessarily intend to lead to conversion, but which is a natural expression of the church in itself. It has its own way of being the Gospel. Secondly, the need-oriented decision where the help and support should be given to, and the importance of the grass-root-level, was taken up by S. Abdo.

> "Its focus is on the most marginalized in the society. It is rooted in the needs and situation of the people to be served. It emphasized mutuality and participation and helps people to discover and use their own potentials"[805].

Still, in all the efforts of this humanitarian-oriented approach, S. Abdo is aware of "Missio Dei", i.e. God who shares the pain and who acts and creates something new[806].

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[801] Ib. 14f. G. Tumsa dealt here with the review of salary payment practices. "We should be prepared to give up luxury for the sake of the Gospel of Salvation".
[802] PS 1.4.3.5., 12.
[803] PS 1.6.2. See especially IV. Some theological reflections, ib., 5f.
[804] Ib., 5.
[805] Ib.
[806] Ib., 6.

Iteffa Gobena wrote a document entitled "Contemporary Challenges in Evangelism and Mission – Ethiopia perspective" which he presented to the EECMY, ELCK (?) and NLM meeting from February 4-6, 2001, conducted in Nairobi[807]. In this document he mentioned the challenges of the secularized policy of the government, which;

> "is sending a strong message to the church that her workers in social and economic development must be equipped to witness Christ more in their daily lives and relate to others"[808].

In the background of this statement prevails the inner-church complaint, that development workers of the EECMY are not doing enough for the witness of their Christian faith, an indication of the existing separation of the two wings, i.e. development and evangelistic work. However, whilst the church is asking how to witness to Muslims, the important approach of a Christian presence among Muslims and the integrated social development program must be combined.

> "Therefore, it is imperative to employ only witnessing Christians [as development workers] in those areas"[809].

If the humanitarian-oriented approach in line with the afore-mentioned policies has its own right as an expression of the gospel and as a silent witness, it is questionable why the conversion-oriented approach must gain priority in development activities. If a good development worker improves the life and carries out a silent witness without having the qualification to witness in an audible manner, does that increase or decrease the gospel's validity? Therefore, a balanced approach is needed. However, the moral and ethical attitude of the development workers towards Muslims should be Christian.

d) Evaluation

The holistic ministry policy of the EECMY especially the development activities and the social care for all humans has been referred to as the humanitarian-oriented approach to Muslims within this study. In its very core rests the incarnational theology, which firstly aims at the spiritual needs of man and sets him free from his own self-centered need through Christ, and which secondly leads to forms of audible witness, in which the service and suffering character of the gospel with the cost of discipleship should be made clear in order to achieve an authentic conversion. The understanding-oriented approach, however, is necessary in order to carry out the conversion-oriented approach faithfully. Therefore, the

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[807] PS 1.3.4.2.3.
[808] Ib., 1.
[809] Ib., 3.

humanitarian-oriented, the understanding oriented and the conversion-oriented approaches should be balanced naturally. In order to achieve self-reliance, which is needed to become an indigenous and independent church, the congregation itself with its resources should be the carrier of this holistic ministry, through diaconia and other. Therefore, the three approaches should be exercised in the congregation, which makes it a congregation-oriented approach.

3.3. Christian settlement

The settlement of a Christian community of believers amongst Muslims and in more or less Muslim dominated areas has become a serious concern for all endeavors of approaches to Muslims carried out by missionaries before and after the foundation of the EECMY. It has been said that all approaches to Muslims lead into the existence of a congregation. In fact, the congregation as the community of authentic disciples is the aim of all witness. At the same time, as was seen above, the congregation itself is the strongest witness to Muslims, if it is incarnational in its nature. The Christian settlement is therefore most crucial for approaches to Muslims. The conditions of the settlement of the congregation decide about the lasting effect and result of approaches. These conditions and forms or patterns of settlement have to be considered. The care for Muslims who have converted to the Christian faith is connected with this question, and it has been pointed out that it is questionable if approaches should be carried out at all unless the post-conversion care has not sufficiently been clarified. The history before and after the establishment of the EECMY has provided some models for settlement, that shall be considered next. While doing so, the main features connected to the models shall be worked out.

3.3.1. The "Jiren" experience (isolation)

a) Evaluation

The first settlement plan that had been exercised in the preformative time of the EECMY, as had been highlighted in the second chapter 2.2., was carried out with Niguse Tashu, and lasted for 36 years. The social care for slaves, the provision of a school and thus education, rested at the very centre of this first indigenous settlement in Abyssinia, that had been initiated by the SEM. The settlement was also quite self-reliant, because of its indigenous character. The humanitarian-oriented approach to Muslims, however, led into insulation or isolation, which had been caused both by the strong identity of the Oromo Muslims of that particular area, i.e. Jimma and surroundings, as well as by the neglection or lack of support through the mission, and further by inadequate provision of motivated ministers, who had not

been trained in CMR and therefore were unprepared for the task, which eventually at that time was simply not possible. The imbalanced approach, lacking appropriate understanding and therefore adequate audible witness through the conversion-oriented approach, led into isolation, which could not have guaranteed a long-lasting congregation. The settlement, however, was a serious attempt to create a congregation in a Muslim dominated area. Its final failure was a result of an imbalanced approach that rested more or less on the shoulders of Neguse Tashu, and not on the shoulders of a strong congregation. In Geleb, outside Ethiopia, with its more balanced approach, that included holistic ministry, the settlement of a Christian congregation had been more successful and led to a long-lasting existence, as had been documented above in chapter II. The Christian community had been open and permeable to its Muslim context, and therefore the isolation or separation of converts had been minimized.

b) Isolation

Isolation in itself is a common feature in the settlement of a Christian congregation in a Muslim dominated area. The pressures and conflicts, including severe persecution from the Muslims towards the "traitors", who have converted to the Christian faith, leads into a permanent crisis, since the uprooting process and partly seperation from the cultural identity with its familiar and clan-oriented bonds that safeguarded stability, leads each convert into a certain isolation, which can only be overcome through the provisions of an adequate socialisation, which can only be found in a vivid and strong congregation, which is able to care for the convert and backbone the partial loss of identity, until a new identity has been established. The isolation as a holistic conflict, but moreover as a psychological problem, has to be dealt with seriously. If provisions for such problems had not been taken, each approach with the aim of witness leading to conversion is questionable. If provision had not been taken, the return of converts to the Muslim faith could become a natural consequence. Therefore it should be a task for the EECMY to give guidelines for such a post-conversion care.

3.3.2. The "Wollo Settlement Plan" (separation)

In June 1972, plans were made to establish a Christian settlement in the Wollo region as a model to build up a Christian community within a wider area dominated by Muslims. Even though this approach may not have had the expected outcome, it is worth to consider the plan and to reflect on it as a strategy of a congregation-oriented approach, and to rethink the theological and missiological motives of this endeavor. Hasselblatt wrote an unpublished

presentation with 13 pages entitled "The Wollo Settlement Plan"[810]. Probably subconsciously or directly inspired by the Muslim idea of settlements he during his studies about Ethiopian Islam, he may have originated this idea and considered seriously to adopt it for Christians, i.e. Muslim converts. The premises shall be examined and the effectivity of a seperative approach shall be questioned on the background of this study. The separation of converts from their socio-cultural and former religious background shall be considered at the end.

a) Contextual Theology

> "The idea to settle Christian congregations as closed communities or as separate villages in a surrounding of peoples of different faiths, is as old as Christianity itself"[811].

As the Rechabites (Jer. 35) or the prophets and their followers (as in the book of Kings), examples for settlement can be found in the Old Testament. Christian settlements consisting of families or groups that led a monastic life are to be found in the Christian church history. Being aware of the dangers connected to such an experiment,

> "it has always been clear to all those who work with the question of how to proclaim the Gospel in Muslim surroundings that the preaching of the Word, discussion and dialogue alone are hardly enough or meaningful unless there is a strong Christian congregation. To a Muslim, a living, spiritual congregation speaks much more clearly than a preacher of the Word that only explains and comes with arguments about the faith"[812].

To establish living congregations is understood as a serious attempt to present an alternative that surpasses the toleration of holistic approaches like using school buildings to attract Muslims;

> "They will tolerate us, accept our money, learn to read and write, and forget us as soon as there are built more government schools. It is only out of politeness that they do not laugh in our faces"[813].

The imbalanced and singular humanitarian-oriented approach had been criticized here by Hasselblatt. Bearing the ancient Muslim tradition makes the Muslims feel proud and stronger in front of a new religion that argues much with the intellect. This again is a critique of an imbalanced understanding-oriented or conversion-oriented approach in dialogue efforts. By means of new Christian settlements, the spiritual dimensions of the Christian faith are much

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[810] PS 1.3.1.3. / 1.3.1.6., 11-21.
[811] PS 1.3.1.3., 1.
[812] Ib.
[813] Ib., 2.

more convincing. This contextual approach comes from the understanding of Ethiopian Islam:

> "Islam has hardly been recognized by the Churches as a spiritual phenomenon"[814].

Even though mission activities have been carried out they were not effective due to the lack of understanding of Islam;

> "through inconsiderable attitudes, caused by lack of knowledge of the other part, so disappointingly little has been achieved"[815].

Discouraging efforts of Christians in the Northern Synod in the Wollo province with converts returning to their religion led to new considerations;

> "One has built churches and always also tried to acquire a graveyard, which are very important elements in order to give the new congregations home-feeling and security"[816].

Nevertheless, the results have been insignificant, since it did not offer something new to the familiar religious landscape. Therefore the preaching of the word of God;

> "must fill a spiritual gap in a society that has been influenced by a more or less superficially accepted form of Islam"[817].

Such is the biblical message, that it gives stability to the intellectually and spiritually homeless and restless, is able to free from archaic forms of traditions and capable to lead into the future. However, the preaching of the EECMY elsewhere led to this effect, but not in the Wollo province. It is

> "too much for a young missionary who is brought up in a narrow Western individualistic-pietistic theology and who in no way is prepared for such tasks, and rather dreams of individual conversions"[818].

A sociologist or anthropologist would be of much support for this contextual approach, but because of financial restraints this is not yet applicable, according to Hasselblatt.

b) Historical and cultural background of the context

It is interesting to see how Hasselblatt reflected on the historical and the contemporary Islam in Wollo in view of the Christians task, i.e. connecting both the understanding of Islam and approach to Muslims;

> "Wollo was the scene of religious and political upheavals"[819],

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[814] Ib., 3.
[815] Ib.
[816] Ib., 4.
[817] Ib.
[818] Ib., 5.

located between two other powers, namely Shawa and Tigre. Somehow in a transitional state this has formed a;

"fluctuating religious, … cultural and sociological, situation"[820].

This has influenced the religious scene. Many Muslim and orthodox-Christian schools and sanctuaries outwardly have common or similar features, like dressing, methods of teaching, location of the places, monastic ways of life, esteem for holy places, rosaries, liturgies, learning holy texts by heart for example. However, they;

"are in no way prepared for or interested in a dialogue or an intellectual confrontation with the other religion"[821].

This exchangeability of the religious forms expresses itself in the everyday life of the people, such as in the slaughtering of animals either in the name of the trinity or Allah, having several wives, eating meat with Christians or Muslims and the like. Because

"all these forms and customs strongly emphasize the external, one can exchange one
for the other without breaking one's heart"[822].

The superfluous character makes it possible for people to change and to convert from one to another religion without creating many problems. The EECMY has not yet presented something new to this;

"ancient, almost interchangeable religious phenomena one felt at home in, but which
still did not give one anything unmistakably original and unique"[823].

c) The Settlement Project

How could the biblical message of the EECMY be understood in such an environment?

"So far, the message has hardly been understood, or its power has not taken effect
and developed, because the spoken Word alone could not solve this dreadful chaos
of socio-religious ties and connections, let alone put something better and stronger
in its place"[824].

A new setting with new social ties, in which the word of God is being proclaimed, is needed.

"Only, one must not send the qalichas home after a completed course of instruction
and baptism, with the exhortation, 'You are now salt and light and apostles'; but one
must keep them together for years and lead a Christian life together with them"[825].

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[819] Ib., 6.
[820] Ib.
[821] Ib., 7.
[822] Ib., 8.
[823] Ib.
[824] Ib., 9.
[825] Ib.

To put an alternative to the old strong links and religious and cultural patterns, it is almost impossible for the converts to live in their villages for fear of being cursed. The only solution to this problem is to buy land and settle a group of converts with their families in a new village and start a new economy. Organizational conditions must be provided by the EECMY, i.e. the land-owner must be the church, villages have to be built, and ministers must be ordained to live with the people. A project leader or the community must be flexible to create contextual modes of transition and transformation, with

> "impulses from old traditions, suitable for … a new style … [and] faith itself must create its own proper form of life"[826].

A new school (like the Islamic version) could adopt familiar features known for centuries. Thus the faith found by the converts will have hope and future, exists in a vivid reality, and thus can be lived out without pressure from the former socio-cultural and religious links. This living faith or "spiritual congregation"[827] is more than a spoken word or money which impresses only for a short time. The long-term perspective of a living congregation was part of Hasselblatt's vision. The congregation must be the focus and center of the village and its activities. Agriculture and marketing, a handicraft school for carpentry, metal work, weaving, amongst others., and even a Bible School may become possibilities to be opened. Such a project will influence the whole surrounding with both the Muslim and Orthodox communities, who will be attracted by this model:

> "Quite new possibilities for a dialogue with Muslims and Orthodox people will come about. But it should be quite clear that our main concern is not an agricultural settlement. Our intention is to create through the mission work living spiritual, visible congregations. Since Islam consists mainly of social ties, links, and laws which are very strong, a Christian witness without the emphasis on congregational life will not be understood and accepted"[828].

Some practical advice has been given for implementation, i.e. that a missionary assigned to such a project, must be equipped with language and land, and should spend a longer period of time to assist the congregation. Land purchase and agricultural conditions must be studied before.

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[826] Ib.
[827] Ib., 2.
[828] Ib., 11.

"Then, after five or ten years, one will be able to see if the expected results, and other secondary results, have materialized"[829].

Other settlements and congregations may follow this example, and a network of Christian settlements can

"radiate a new ethos, representing cultural and agricultural focal points, and are thus homes for a solid Biblical Christianity that in this way can give strong impulses to the whole province"[830].

d) Evaluation

It must be stated, that this visionary approach was a result of many encounters, travels, courses taught to new converts, discussions, reflections amongst others. It may be seen as a fruit of a compassionate endeavor to promote the evangelical enterprise amongst Muslims. Several factors may be pointed out to reflect on the reason why the settlement project had such a little outcome or even never was fully implemented.

The Wollo settlement plan took place within the organizational structure of the EECMY-North Ethiopia Area.

"The 'Wollo-Tigre Synod' was one of the founding synods of the EECMY … Reports of mass conversions of Muslims in the late 1960s made the whole church rejoice. But then a few years later the Synod broke down [i.e. in November 1972] and its remnants were administered by the EECMY Church Officers as a home-mission in the 'North Ethiopia Area'"[831].

The American Lutheran Church (mission) had invested in a lot of development projects, and congregations and preaching places could only follow slowly. In 1959, 375 members were counted when the Synod was formed, there were more than 2500 members in 1969 largely as a result of the literacy campaign school program that started from 1967. In 1972 this number had reduced to about 1000.

"from where it rose only moderately to be about 1100 in 1984"[832].

Having not found the profit the people were hoping for, many Muslim converts;

"left the church when the bonus for which they were attending the church was stopped … The institutions were first – the congregational work came later … [and so] the American Lutheran Mission put a heavy burden on the small Synod"[833].

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[829] Ib., 12.
[830] Ib.
[831] PS 1.3.7.1., 102.
[832] Ib., 103.
[833] Ib.

The statement indicates that the conversion was not authentic in the incarnational sense with the service character, but was profit-oriented with interests other than spiritual. The congregation had not been founded to be self-reliant. Disagreements then led to the dissolvement in November 1972. The EECMY Church officers have administered the North Ethiopia Area (11 congregations and 5 preaching places at the end of 1984).

The overthrow of Haile Sellassie's regime in 1974 and the appointment of Hasselblatt as the Evangelism Director at the CO in 1974 (and his leaving in 1975), in which he got more and more involved in political matters, as well as the constraint of financial resources, may have additionally contributed to the difficulties in the follow-up of the project, more over in the project idea. Since there are no documents at hand about the development of this settlement project, it is not possible to give any further estimation[834]. However, the plan itself consists of many valuable insights. Most above it was an attempt of combining the two fundamental legs of the IAP/PROCMURA policy: understanding Muslims from their historical, religious and sociological background, and contextualization of witness, not primarily connected to development or intellectual approaches, but to and by the example of a living congregation. The overemphasis on the humanitarian-oriented approach with the help of the American mission caused an imbalance in the Synod. The congregations could not keep the speed to balance the approaches or to grow from within in spiritual maturity. The development work had not been balanced with other approaches. Moreover, the congregation held a secondary position in the project. However, the settlement plan of Hasselblatt stimulates to consider the effectivity of such a settlement, especially in strict Muslim dominated areas. The separation, according to Hasselblatt, would only be partial, since most of the contextual patterns would be designed to the Christian context, and therefore the risk of isolation or total separation be minimized. As indicated, Hasselblatt was aware of balancing the different aspects of witness, even though he placed the word of God for the creation of a vivid congregation with spiritual strength, in the center. The incarnational character of this word, however, was not yet clear to him, but had been developed with S. Abdo.

e) Separation

The concept of the Wollo settlement plan would lead to a separation of people from their former religious surrounding, and a certain up-rooting from family and clan bonds, i.e. from their socio-cultural background. It is not clear if Hasselblatt was fully aware of the dangers, since he reflected on how some of the socio-religious patterns could be implemented into the

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[834] This must be carried out through interviews and other means, consulting the persons who were involved in the project.

settlement. However, a complete separation from the family bonds would lead into a heavy identity crisis, which would be difficult to balance with the new Christian socialization idea. Seperation is, like isolation, a side effect of conversion. The new Christian faith separates from certain former bonds and customs. The separation could lead into a crisis, if not cared for in an adequate form, which can only be provided by the congregation. If such provision could not be made, all approaches which lead to conversion are questionable. Therefore, as had been said before, guidelines for such provisions should be prepared by the EECMY, in order to reduce the suffering to a certain grade. However, since the incarnational and authentic conversion or Christian existence normally includes suffering and sacrifice, which again is the strongest form of witness of a congregation with its members. The conflicts that accompany the conversion, could not be completely avoided. Further, with regard to Hasselblatt's plan, to create a new settlement with all its requirements starting from zero is again a heavy burden, especially for new converts. The level of expectations is too high. The practicability speaks against the realization. The alternative then would be to consider whether the settlement idea could be implemented without creating a new village, i.e. by a slowly settlement of a Christian community within an existing Muslim community.

3.3.3. A settlement of a Christian Community within a Muslim Community (integration)
a) Contextualization

It was with S. Abdo, as seen above, that the plan of establishing a Christian community within a Muslim society, instead of separating it from the converts' context, which is part of their identity, has been seriously considered and developed.

> "The Church's adaptability and willingness to serve in any given cultural situation today, in a sense is rightfully comparable to that great mystery of incarnation. Here, there is no suggestion of compromise of our faith rather we are only seeking a contextualized method of approach in order to minimize the anticipated pain in leaving the old and being grafted into the new"[835].

Contextualization minimizes the pain of the settlement guided by the principle of incarnation. The contextualized method of approach does already include the post-conversion concern, because it anticipates the effects of the conversion by minimizing the alienation process of the convert. Unless the approach is contextualized, the pain of shifting from the old to the new faith will increase. Connected to the contextualization is the idea of indigenous

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[835] PS 1.3.2.14.g., 3.

incarnation. It is understood as the ability to adapt to the context, including the suffering that goes along with it, and it is therefore required both from the Christian that approaches a Muslim, and from the convert who seeks to find his new Christian identity while remaining in his former context, which also includes at times painful processes which again gives the best witness. The idea of contextualization and incarnation has been specified with S. Abdo and will be presented in the section that deals with strategy papers.

Beside the concept that was developed by S. Abdo, the EECMY had tried to define models for contextualization. One special course was carried out from April 1-9, 1996, and a paper was presented with the title "Three Models for Contextualisation", prepared by Knud Jorgensen[836]. It seems that the target group for this presentation was not primarily the people who deal with CMR, but was meant to give a general orientation. However, the fact that the paper has been found with the documents related to CMR makes it necessary to examine it briefly, in order to find out if it could contribute to the understanding of contextualization for approaches toward Muslims and post-conversion problems.

b) Three models

The first model has been called "dynamic-equivalence transculturation", which has been taken from Charles Kraft, Christianity in Culture (1990; Orbis), and by the same author, Communication Theory for Christian Witness (1983; Abingdon)[837]. God, who is outside culture and therefore as an aspect of "Missio Dei" supra-cultural, wants to relate via word and life, by becoming flesh and blood through the culture.

> "His method of communication is thus incarnational: He comes to us where we are and as we are within our context"[838].

God uses scripture and in it human language and culture, and he chooses to come in human form, which reached its climax in Christ, to reach humans with his message.

> "The model illustrates three things: a. Scripture is a mixture of supracultural and Jewish/Hellenistic reality. b. As we interpret Scripture, our interpretation/ communication is coloured by our culture. c. Nevertheless we present our communication of the Christian faith as 'God's Truth'"[839].

According to Kraft, an equivalence of the contemporary recipients of the message with the original recipients should be established. By applying this method in transculturation, or contemporary communication,

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[836] PS 1.3.7.5.
[837] Ib., 1-3.
[838] Ib.
[839] Ib.

"Transculturation signifies to culture what translation signifies to language"[840].

Firstly, by transculturation the original communication or message within the original frame of reference goes through the interpretation within the communicator's frame into the dynamic-equivalent communication, i.e. the reencoding process within the hearer's frame of reference, to create a dynamic equivalence of both the communication and the response. Secondly, Kraft applied this model also to the understanding of the church, which should not simply reproduce the forms of early churches or preserve traditional forms, but should be an agent for embodying Christian meanings contemporarily[841]. Thirdly, authentic conversion is dynamic equivalent, and therefore

> "is concerned with meaning rather than form, and with the direction in which people are moving. The aim is to avoid false conversions which are satisfied with conformity to certain forms instead of showing evidence of a genuine change in worldview"[842].

With regard to CMR, the Christian message has to be reencoded within the Muslims frame of reference, its language and culture, to create an authentic response and genuine change of their worldview. The understanding-oriented approach alone can safeguard such reencoding. This model is open in a dynamic way for changes but shall remain equivalent to the Christian intention, which applies to the church and even to conversion, which shows that all the three, communication, church and conversion underlie the process of transculturation understood as contextualization.

The second model is the "cross-cultural communication", a three-culture model, and originated with David Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally (1978; Zondervan), and D. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, Contextualization (1989; Apollos). In this model the biblical culture, the modern Christian culture and the target culture stand in relation to one another[843], but emphasis is given to the authenticity of the message.

> "The purpose of this model is to strike the right balance between faithfulness to Scripture and meaningfulness to contemporary human beings. The aim of contextualization cannot be to 'over-contextualise' so that the message becomes a prisoner of the receptors' worldview"[844].

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[840] Ib., 2.
[841] Ib., 3.
[842] Ib.
[843] Ib., 3f.
[844] Ib.

Such over-contextualization is given in Western Christianity with its concentration on individualism, rationalism and materialism, or in syncretism, when the faith is absorbed by culture. Instead, faithful communication means faithfulness to God's revelation in scripture;

> "that is meaningful to respondents in their respective culture and existential contexts
> … Contextualisation is both verbal and nonverbal and has to do with theologizing,
> Bible translation, interpretation, application, incarnational lifestyle, evangelism,
> Christian instruction, church planting and growth, church organization and worship
> style – i.e. with all the activities involved in carrying out the Great Commission"[845].

According to this study, the model is balanced in the various approaches. This model further involves firstly God's revelation, which produced a text of a human being under the guidance of God's Spirit that guarantees the correspondence between the revelation and the text. Secondly, the interpretation is affected by the culture of the text and the interpreter's culture, which causes to limits the understanding through ethnocentrism, language and sin. However, a more or less accurate understanding of the biblical intention is possible. Thirdly, the application includes the interpreter's acceptance or rejection of the text's claims or his own meaning's superimposing. Rejection leads to a loss of truth, and to accept the claims enables him to apply it to his socio-cultural environment. According to Hesselgrave's model, the dimensions of cross-cultural communication include worldviews (ways of perceiving the world), cognitive processes (ways of thinking), linguistic forms (ways of expressing ideas), behaviour patterns (ways of acting), social structures (ways of interacting), media influence (ways of channelling the message) and motivational resources (ways of deciding). The source encodes the message and is decoded through these dimensions to the respondent[846].

In this presentation of Jorgensen, the focus is shifting to the authenticity of the scripture, which in itself is meaningful and directs the contextualization. More importance is given to the channels of the cross-cultural communication than to the recipient's context, i.e. in our case the Muslims and their frames of reception. For the sake of the avoidance of over-contextualization, this model helps to keep the authenticity of the message.

The third model has been called "Critical Contextualization", and is given with Paul Hiebert's Anthropological Insights for Missionaries (1985; Baker Book House).

> "This model refers to all the elements we find in traditional culture and asks: How
> should new converts relate to their cultural past – to the food, dress, medicines,

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[845] Ib., 3.
[846] Ib., 4.

songs, dances, myths, rituals etc? And how far can the Gospel be adapted to fit into a culture without losing its essential message?"[847].

The three suggested ways are firstly denial of the old and rejection of contextualization[848], secondly acceptance of the old but uncritical contextualization[849], and thirdly dealing with the old and critical contextualization. In the latter, old;

> "beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. They are first studied with regard to meanings and place they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms"[850].

The people themselves and not the missionaries or church leaders, who would then act like policemen, make the decisions about changes that may be needed, or customs that shall be kept. The approach is therefore in its intention indigenous[851]. The last model again drew attention to the recipient's world while dealing with the cultural phenomena which the convert transmits into the new faith. It deals with the after-conversion situation and is especially practically helpful with regard to the creation of new indigenous Christian forms for Muslim converts.

All the three models have each its value with regard to the question of contextualization in approaches to Muslims. The document of Jorgensen may well have inspired S. Abdo in his formulation of strategies as shall be seen in 3.4. of this chapter, since his understanding of incarnation and indigenization partly intercedes with Jorgensen's presentation. Contextualization, as has been noted in the document of Jorgensen, has two dimensions. Firstly, it is necessary for the transmission of the message, and secondly for the after-conversion situation. Whereas the first two models dealt with the transmission of the message

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[847] Ib., 5f.

[848] Ib., 5: "this rejection was a result of the ethnocentrism of the missionaries [in the past]. Or the reason was that the missionary found it hard to draw a line between religious and nonreligious practices. This rejection created many problems: - It left a cultural vacuum that needed to be filled, and too often this was done by importing the customs of the missionary. - It created misunderstanding and distortion of the missionary message … - The old cultural ways simply went underground and were practices in secret. The result was often Christopaganism – a syncretistic mix of Christian and non-Christian beliefs. - It turned missionaries and church leaders into police, and kept converts from growing by denying them the right to make their own decisions. A church only grows spiritually if its members learn to apply the teachings of the Gospel to their own lives".

[849] Ib.: "Here, old cultural ways are seen as basically good … Those who advocate this way, recognise that the 'foreigness' of the Gospel has been one of the major barriers to its acceptance … The weaknesses of this approach include: … - It opens the door to syncretism of all kinds. If Christians continue in beliefs and practices that stand in opposition to the Gospel, these in time will mix with their newfound faith and produce various form of neo-paganism".

[850] Ib., 5f.: The dimensions in dealing with old ways in critical contextualization are: 1. Gather information about the old, 2. Study biblical teachings about the event, 3. Evaluate the old in the light of biblical teachings, and 4. Create a new contextualized Christian practice.

[851] Ib., 6: "For example, the people may choose to adopt the funeral practices of the missionary rather than retain their own. Or the people may create new symbols and rituals to communicate Christian beliefs in forms that are indigenous to their culture".

and emphasized the re-encoding process within the Muslims frame of reference and the authenticity of the message in order to avoid over-contextualization with its dangers, the third model specified the after-conversion situation with a critical contextualization. The last model called for indigenous responsibility in the socialization process of converts.

d) Integration

In order to safeguard the integration of converts in the settlement of a Christian congregation, firstly the transmission of the message has to be contextualised, and secondly, the older forms and socio-cultural patterns of the convert have to be critically examined and contextualised into new forms through critical contextualisation. This idea had been also considered with Hasselblatt. However, it was with S. Abdo that this idea had been followed up without separating the converts from their social-cultural and familiy ties. The balance between the faithfulness to the scripture and meaningfulness to the human beings has to be kept, in order to avoid over-contextualisation. With regard to the post-conversion socialisation, the critical contextualisation rests in the decision of the indigenous people. Integration can be carried out therefore only by the people of the context, in which they live in, according to the scripture. No answers had been given to practical problems like what to do in persecution, in pressures and clashes, how to live in the processes of isolation and separation, how to establish rituals of transgression amongst others. These questions have to be elaborated in guidelines which need to be prepared by the EECMY together with the PROCMURA-AC and the "Program on CMR" at the MYTS. However, integration is the aim of the post-conversion period, in which isolation and separation have been overcome through contextual and authentic participation in the congregation.

3.4. Strategy papers

The EECMY has prepared various kinds of strategy papers, of which only two were found amongst the documents. The first kind directly dealt with CMR and had been written or prepared by S. Abdo in 1996 and 1997. The second kind indirectly dealt with CMR while generally reflecting on the outreach ministry regardless the people under which it is to be carried out. The validity of the afore-mentioned approaches shall be considered in the evaluation of the strategy papers.

3.4.1. Strategy papers on CMR
a) The documents of 1996-1997

A document, written by S. Abdo, entitled "Guidelines on Gospel Ministry Among Muslim Communities in Ethiopia" appeared at an earlier stage and set the tone with its contextual-incarnational orientation[852]. After this came two papers, the first called "Mission to Muslims – Some Strategies", written in August 1996[853], and the second called "Christian Muslim Relations In Ethiopia, January 1997"[854]. Both followed the patterns of the earlier document, and gave valuable insights about the development of strategies and guidelines for the EECMY at that time. Attention had been given to the development of these papers, since the PROCMURA General Assembly of 1997 was going to be held in Ethiopia. As can be seen by comparing the two papers, the first was understood in preparation for the second. However, the paper from August 1996 revealed stronger and deeper insights, and concentrated more on strategies, which for the sake of public reception were lessened in the paper of January 1997, which gave a more general overview of CMR in Ethiopia, and added some strategies only in a very concentrated form. Therefore, attention shall be given here to the paper of August 1996.

b) Preamble

The preamble had the function to lay down the foundation, on which the strategies should be presented. It included an understanding of Islam and a way of interpreting the gospel to Muslims. Therefore, it is in line with the policy of PROCMURA as described above. In order to link up with Islam, S. Abdo stated that biblical persons as well as an

"evaluation of the Christian faith, which includes both recognition and criticisms"[855],

are to be found with Islam. The ambivalent relation is further seen by the fact that Muslims pray "guide us the right path" (*Sirat Al Mustaqium*) but still deny Jesus Christ

"as 'the way, the life and the truth' and even proclaim 'jihad' or holy war on Christians who try to convert a Muslim person. And yet they some times teach that Christians are the closest friend[s] to Muslims"[856].

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[852] PS 1.3.2.14.g). The document without date opens with the quotation of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20, summarized in the statement: "Each nation and its particular culture need special approach and care suitable fort that particular situation.." It then dealt with the understanding of "Ummal-Islam" and the church. The tone for the development of strategies and guidelines was set with the following discovery: "The church's adaptability and willingness to serve in any given cultural situation today, in a sense is rightfully comparable to that great mystery of incarnation. Here, there is no suggestion of compromise of our faith rather we are only seeking a contextualised method of approach in order to minimize the anticipated pain in leaving the old and being grafted into the new". The document then carried on in comparing features of the Islamic community and the Christian fellowship with the Qur'an and the Bible respectively. The inclusion of the contextualized understanding of incarnation therefore was set in the centre of the community.
[853] PS 1.3.2.12.
[854] PS 1.3.2.13.
[855] PS 1.3.2.12., 1.
[856] Ib.

However, there are some statements in the *Qur'an* which may affirm the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. From this angle S. Abdo concluded the following:

> "The secret of Christian Ministry in [an] Islamic context is to be Christ-centered, both theoretically and practically in the way Jesus Christ Himself meets with people. The challenge is also to be Christ like ourselves [like Christ ourselves]. Witness for Christ includes to suffer and even to be killed for the witness of Christ"[857].

The Christ-centered understanding paves the way on which the witness has to be carried out. The approach will become centrally incarnational on this way. The Christ-centered understanding leads to an indigenous approach and witness and becomes an authentic contextual means in CMR. It is characterized by the adoption of the way Christ met people as the son of God and as a human, i.e. Christ-minded, that includes to suffer for (being like) him. This foundation gave a solid starting point from which seven strategies have been presented.

> "However they are not exhaustive as such and should not be considered as the only way"[858].

c) Strategies

The first strategy had been called "THERE IS NO FORMULA" for evangelism. This limits the human possibilities to such an extent, that it gives room only for God's even supernatural activities in human life such like healing, miracles, deliverance from evil, for example. The witness keeps passive in praying and fulfilling of what the Holy Spirit is guiding to, and active in interpreting and teaching what has been done by God.

> "Be prepared for the miracul[o]us and combine it with teaching. It is essential to affirm and respond to God's supernatural activities in human life"[859].

The "Missio Dei" concept is concentrated here by using the term "supernatural" to indicate what is out of reach for human possibilities, and in counterbalance to the more human-oriented but Christ-centered understanding mentioned in the preamble.

The second strategy, named "CONTEXTUALIZATION" had been folded out in two aspects. The first relates to the process of bringing the gospel to Muslims, the second relates to the self-expression of the newly found Christian faith in a Muslim context.

> "How does one 'contextualize' the Gospel so the message can be <u>heared</u> [heard], <u>received</u> and then allowed to find <u>self expression</u>, within the Muslim culture?"[860].

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[857] Ib.
[858] Ib., 2.
[859] Ib.

The best approach with this regard is to be carried out by indigenous people, who are with the people, i.e. they create the link between the witness and the grass-root-level.

> "We must begin where the people are. And for that matter true contextualization can only be done by the people themselves"[861].

Therefore, the first aspect is indigenous contextualization of the gospel proclamation, i.e.

> "a good missionary to an Afar people group is an Afar national"[862].

The knowledge of the culture and vernacular is an essential tool and best carried out by local people. S. Abdo criticized the church's practice for sending for example an Afar to the Oromo people, and the practice of hosting a second native language Amharic, even though it would be better to conduct services and other in the mother language for the sake of understanding[863].

> "In evangelism, r[e]spect for ones language and culture makes a big difference"[864].

The indigenous contextualization is concentrated on language and culture, and its carrier should evolve from the local people.

> "The second aspect of contextualization is the expression of faith the new believers and community develops for their particular culture"[865].

Like the apostle Paul in the New Testament freed the Gentiles for example from circumcision, in order to contextualize the Gospel for themselves, lines have to be drawn to decide what must be avoided and what indigenous elements can be tolerated to be included or integrated into the Christian life, i.e. the critical contextualisation.

> "We affirm positive aspects of beauty and truth where ever they exist in Islam. They can continue to use such word as Allah or Rabbi, Aslamu Alaiku. Yet equally we recognize that there are aspects of falsehood and demons in Islam which must be renounced. Zikir practices have to be replaced by praise songs, the rynthm [rhythm]

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[860] Ib.

[861] Ib.

[862] Ib.: „In case of that absense a cross cultural missionary has to be well versed in Afar language and well acquainted to their culture. Do not send a Tigre missionary to Guji people group – it does not just work from the point of view of 21st centery mission strategy".

[863] Ib., 3-6: "I had visited most part of Oromia region and I had come to the conclusion that Oromos have developed a strong resentment against a ruthless domination and are now struggling to renew their sense of ethnic identity, pushing for regional autonomy and dream of their own ethnic state 'Oromia' some day. At that time where does our Christianity turn? Let us not forget one thing that weather one is white, yellow, brown or black pigminted wheather one speaks english, latin, africar, oromifa, kambata, amaharic or arabic as long as he/she believes in Lordship of Jesus Christ and as a personal savior we are one, bondaged in His Blood", ib. 6.

[864] Ib., 6.

[865] Ib.

can remain the same. Use the beating of the drums for the glory of Jesus Christ. We

do not need to rush to replace everything into Western fashion"[866].

The second aspect of contextualization is therefore an indigenous (authentic) contextualization of the expression of Christian faith.

The two-folded aspects of contextualization, one leading to conversion and the other after conversion, links the forms of witness with the responsibility to care for the converts. The danger of alienation should be avoided. The contextualization makes people feel at home.

The third strategy has been entitled "INCARNATIONAL MODEL":

"An incarnational model refers to theological assumptions, attitudes and life style

that reflects Biblical principles grounded in Jn. [John] 1:14 and the denial of self

called for in Phil. 2:6-8"[867].

The most concrete expression of the Christ-centered strategies is given with the term incarnation, which is described by Christ's way of coming into the flesh while becoming human, and by the condescending orientation from top downward, including suffering even until death, in a servant's style, which includes the cost of discipleship. Therefore the consequences for approach include various aspects. Firstly,

"living among the people and adapting their life style, being one of them. The yeast

can do its work only by being in the dough"[868].

This is a genuine form of becoming everything to everyone while being in Christ, which includes suffering the pains of being the yeast. Incarnation comprises homogeneity, i.e. the being-like-them, and "martyria", i.e. the suffering of the living in Christ's example.

The second aspect of incarnation is:

"Focus on personal testimony. Person to person contact in witnessing to conversion

is very effective. The convert will tell his/her story in a language and symbols that

communicate in an authentic way"[869].

Preferably and especially in Muslim culture, the witness shall be given in couples, by two witnesses, and not alone, according to S. Abdo. A male witness shall witness to men, a female witness to women, while carrying out home-to-home evangelism.

The third aspect of incarnation is concentrated on the form the converts shall grow into the Christian community:

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[866] Ib., 7.
[867] Ib., 7.
[868] Ib. It is possible that S. Abdo thought of 1. Corinthians 9, 19-23.
[869] Ib., 8.

"Do not separate converts from their Islam family and existing primary community except in extreme life threatening circumstances"[870].

With this statement, S. Abdo has neglected the approach that was developed with G. Hasselblatt, i.e. the idea behind the Wollo settlement plan. The experience has shown that the Christian community has to be developed within the Muslim society, not apart from it. The picture of the yeast supported this conviction. The suffering of the convert is in itself witness:

"By their remaining in the midst of persecution, they will become like the yeast and may be able to have a support community and overcome the opposition to witness to the Gosple [Gospel]"[871].

The effects of conversion that have been documented in examples for the settlement of Christian faith above, are eventually leading in a similar way individually into processes of isolation, separation, and with enough support of a congregation, into integration. The experiences of isolation and separation the converts make while remaining in their former contexts, is the most difficult process the convert has to go through, at the same time it is the strongest witness a church member can give within a Muslim surrounding. The aspect of "martyria" with the incarnational model, especially during the phases of isolation and separation weigh heavily and are decisive in evangelical approaches to Muslims.

"By witnessing we expect suffering and we have to prepare for suffering. Two aspects of preparation are needed for a new believer and [for] Christian workers. The first is the orientation or instruction that enables them to cope with persecution. The second is to help the believing community to support those who is [are] suffering"[872].

Guidelines for behavior in persecution situations have to be provided to the congregations and ministers. If not enough support can be provided in such situations, the ministry gets fragile.

With respect to the holistic ministry, a fourth aspect was that S. Abdo, after having reflected on the LWF project carried out in the Hurso area, stated that;

"they have been doing 'wholistic' developments, but not 'holystic'. The preior [prior] word refarse [refers] to an integrated development which involves the whole person in terms of his/her material or social needs and the latter word refers to wholystic

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[870] Ib.

[871] Ib.

[872] Ib.

plus and address to the soul in getting its redem[p]tion through our Lord Jesus Christ"[873].

The incarnational model therefore supports a balanced understanding of the term holistic that combines both the material and social needs of the human body and spirit (wholistic) with the spiritual needs the people have in their souls ("holystic"). S. Abdo here strictly followed the policy of the EECMY as described before.

The fourth strategy had been called "FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY MORE THAN ON INDIVIDUAL CONVERSION".

> "The objective is to plant a faith community that can in turn evangelize the broader community, provide nurture for the new convert, and plant other churches. Plan of a cell group everywhere in the community. A cell that can grow into a bigger tissue, and a tissue that can grow into a mass"[874].

With the concentration on the Christian community leading to a congregation-oriented approach, individual aspects have been subordinated or put in second importance.

The consequence is, according to S. Abdo, that in Muslim evangelism the head of the community, of the Mosque, and of the family should be targeted first, because the subordinated persons to them will follow. This thinking is very much from the Muslim perspective as described in the historical and typological aspects above, and S. Abdo, being himself a former Muslim, still was convinced that this is an important cultural pattern, which must be used for approaches to Muslims. However, to avoid only nominal and functional conversion to Christianity, one has to consider this part of the strategy very carefully. Nevertheless, if the balance between the community aspect and the individual decision is kept, the strategy may function.

Another aspect of the emphasis on the community had been developed for approaches:

> "Wherever one gets converted use his/her family and friendship lines to communicate the gospel. Evangelism should be done in a way which allows the preservation of family and friendship lines and the encouraging of the new converts to witness to their [their] faith within these relationships"[875].

In all these aspects attention is given to the preservation of the structures that form the identity of the people, so that they may not be up-rooted from their identity when converted, which may lead to psychological disturbances, but will slowly integrate their identity into the

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[873] Ib., 9.
[874] Ib., 9.
[875] Ib., 10.

Christian faith by contextualization, and vice versa the Christian faith into the framework and context of their identity, which includes family relations amongst other factors. This flowing forth and back or bridging-over as a process of transculturation is intended with the strategies.

The fifth strategy, "USE A FELT NEEDS ORIENTED APPROACH" partly continued the before mentioned line of considerations on the holistic ministry.

> "Our Gospel is Holy and touches every part of human life spiritually, socially, politically, and economically"[876].

According to S. Abdo, the gospel is first holy, and then holistic. It is interesting to note that S. Abdo follows a parallel pattern of the idea of the Islamic understanding of *ummah*, which is holistic in a similar way. He mentioned the relief work and other with its effects on conversion. The holistic ministry is laid down in the command to spread the gospel as well as demonstrating love to one another as quoted in Luke 10:25-37.

> "However, avoid using funds as a means of motivation for conversion. Provisions must be made, carefully to assist new believers who may be ostraised [ostracized] so they may be self supporting"[877].

The humanitarian-oriented approach and the conversion-oriented approach have to be balanced. On the one hand, one has to use the holistic ministry carefully to avoid nominal or functional conversion and on the other hand the provision for new converts also is an expression of the holistic ministry or gospel. The tendency and intention in both cases indicated that the grass-root-level, i.e. the congregations and ministers should be in charge of this responsibility, even though it has not been expressed directly in the document by S. Abdo. In order to avoid long-term dependency on external support, the grass-root-level has to be taught in "diaconia" as a supportive self-expression of a Christian community, especially in Muslim contexts. The incarnational understanding of being Christ-like in a servant manner with sacrifices is necessary to be taught to the congregations. This is also genuine Lutheran doctrine and had been expressed by the EECMY, especially in the "Memorandum".

Strategy six encouraged to recognize and to facilitate "COGNITIVE; AFFECTIVE; and BEHAVIORAL CHANGES".

> "The conversion process reflects a response of the whole person including how he/she thinks, feels, and what he/she does. This process takes time as each aspect is transformed"[878].

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[876] Ib.
[877] Ib., 11.

Here S. Abdo mentioned the example of an imam who accepted Jesus Christ but still remained in his Islamic function.

> "Though an initiation rite, like baptism, is very important, for the sake of smooth cooperation and to bring the whole change from inside, Umma movement towords [towards] Christ, it is taking him some time [takes some time]"[879].

The Muslim remains an adherent of Islam, but has stretched his belief by adding the faith in Christ, i.e. the personal closeness of Allah/God to his former distant understanding of Allah. The strategy therefore endures in patience the forms, in which God, according to the "Missio Dei" understanding, may work according to his possibilities among Muslims.

The seventh strategy concentrated on the aspect of "LOCAL LEADERSHIP". Local leaders shall take responsibility in the ministries. In capacity building, various ways and media can be used. They have to be appropriate to the social and educational background[880]. Secondly, the leader shall emphasize the authority of the Bible.

> "The Bible must be used without reservation as authoritative and treated in every way as God's revelation of His Gospel"[881].

In this statement S. Abdo applied the cross-cultural communication model of Hesselgrave, which emphasized the faithfulness to the scripture in order to avoid over-contextualisation. S. Abdo connected the understanding of Islam as the last revelation together with the *Qur'an*, as mentioned before, and bridged this understanding toward an approach with regard to the Bible. While interpreting the gospel to Muslims, the Bible must be used as the authoritative word. An advice had not been given what should happen when the Muslim refuses to accept the Bible as the last authoritative revelation. However, by this way the Muslim may get convinced by the life example and by experience that proof the truth about either the Muslims or Christians claims of inhibiting the final authority.

Thirdly,

> "Local Christian leaders should never feel inferior because of their number, economy or political circumstances … We have the right for religious librity [liberty] both in our constitution and in the international law … we should not let [allow] the foothold of Sharia"[882].

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[878] Ib.
[879] Ib., 12.
[880] Ib., "This may be interpersonal, print, radio, cassette, television or some other. Since over 80% of the whole Ethiopian population cannot read and write, the Muslims have cleverly produced the whole Quran on cassettes, Christians have not done any yet". Again it is interesting to note how S. Abdo drew parallels.
[881] Ib., 12f.
[882] Ib., 13.

S. Abdo gave some examples of violation of the rights and responses to it[883]. The strength of the local leadership should correspond to the strength of the appearances of the *ummah* and its activities in *da'wa* as described above. Again a parallelism between Christianity and Islam can be noticed here.

The document ended with the seventh strategy somehow loosely, not indicating any further recommendations to the church, the synods, the other bodies concerned with CMR. In almost all strategies we have noticed parallelisms to Islamic thinking as a result of the approach to firstly understand Islam and then develop ways of interpreting the gospel to the Muslims. S. Abdo applied the understanding-oriented approach. It is interesting to note again with S. Abdo, how much insight he gained by this method. However, attention should be paid to some of the outcomes. One has to be careful about tendencies of the Islamization of Christianity. The question remained, how much syncretistic features are allowed to take place in the processes of contextualization and incarnation. Who decides whether some traditional cultural patterns and customs are good or bad and what are the criteria? If the people themselves decide, as had been proposed in order to make it indigenous, who is controlling or supervising the accordance with the Bible? Is it possible, to provide any guideline with this regard? If yes, then the EECMY has to provide such guidelines and orientations.

d) Evaluation

However, the consequent development of strategies and guidelines, starting from a Christ-centered fundament, leading to the "Missio-Dei"-concept, and then taking form in contextualization and incarnation as the governing features, are very convincing. The aspects and strategies dealing with the community and holistic ministry are extending the strategies constructively. Strategies six and seven, however, are not very convincing yet. Here one cannot oversee that S. Abdo's indigenous reception or application of Islamic features towards Christian approaches sometimes run into dangers of losing the Christian fundament laid down before, thus tending toward an islamization or traditional culturalization of the Christian faith. In other words, the danger of over-contextualisation lies at hand. The concept of leadership does not correlate necessarily with the condescending movement of Christ downward to the grass-root. Here, the cultural elements of the context of Ethiopia took over the first priority that should be given to the Christ-centered understanding which is conform to the scripture,

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[883] Ib., 14f.: "Level 1. Use thrid [third] party friends-friends of decision makers to encourage compliance. Level 2. Utilize political contact-government structures … Level 3. Utilize contacts and encourgments [encouragement] from communities such as Diplomats, Business agents, UN agencies. Level 4: Use human rights legalities. Level 5: Use media, demonstrations, international advocacy. Level 6. Boycotts, civil disobedience. Level 7. Use what ever mechanism appropriate, self defense …". The last points are very close to the understanding of Jihad in Islam, and should be read and reflected on carefully.

as concerning the leadership question. The understanding-oriented approach therefore was carried out by S. Abdo, who was a Muslim and gained much indigenous insight, but tended to overstress some aspects. The conversion-oriented approach came clearly to the fore with the Christ-centered inculturation approach of witness. The humanitarian-oriented approach was applied in strategy six in its genuine sense of the EECMY. Here, the differentiation between holy and holistic was helpful, and showed a critical reception of holistic ministry. The priority given to the congregation rather than to individual conversion expressed the congregation-oriented approach, since the existence of a strong congregation with the ability to care for converts is prior to individual conversions. In its center again, the incarnational model leads to an indigenous contextualization, in which the sufferings of the converts lead through the processes of isolation and separation into integration. All the approaches are in a balancing process, which is a result of the deep concern S. Abdo had, while taking up the various missiological and socio-cultural questions connected to contextualisation. In all his considerations, S. Abdo was aware of "Missio Dei" as an all-comprising reality, on one hand supernaturally and superculturally, on the other hand humanly through Christ's incarnation. This cannot fully be described, but it shows that God on his own behalf, through the ministers' efforts in witness, and through other means he uses, is at work from within the contexts, even among Muslims.

3.4.2. Strategy papers on outreach ministry in general

The papers have to be reviewed with the leading question if they could contribute to the development of strategy papers with regard to CMR.

a) The document of 1991

In 1991, Iteffa Gobena as the EECMY Evangelism Department Provisional Coordinator prepared a document with methods, resources and tools that are helpful, and a working structure for evangelistic outreach[884]. The 83th Executive Committee meeting has adopted the guideline on evangelistic outreach,

> "produced by a Consultation which was attended by some Church Officers, Synod Presidents and Synod Evangelism Secretaries. The Guide is meant to look for new strategies to encourage that Evangelistic Outreach Program to be congregational based and has to be organized accordingly"[885].

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[884] PS 1.3.4.1.2.
[885] PS 1.1.3.2.1., 1.

The consultation dealt with the question how the outreach activities could continue with limited financial support from mission organizations in the consecutive years. More emphasis should be given to the support that should come from the congregations[886]. Firstly, twelve methods for outreach were described[887]. Secondly, the question of which kind of ministers are needed to be raised and how they must be supported was considered. Thirdly, ways and means of getting funds for outreach work were suggested[888]. Forthly, tools that are helpful were listed[889]. Fifthly, the working structure must be directed to the congregations who need to have committees for outreach both at the congregational, the parish and the district levels[890]. The orientation of this strategy paper was towards the congregations, i.e. the grass-root-level-oriented. It therefore supported the congregation-oriented approach. The self-support and self-reliance policy of the church was behind this concept. It is questionable, however, if in Muslim dominated areas with a young and yet weak congregational work the outreach work can be carried out in the described way, or if timely support has to come from the whole church or mission organizations and other. On the other hand, the responsibility of the even new established congregations has been pointed out rightly. The ways to achieve this aim have not been sufficiently presented with regard to congregations in Muslim dominated areas. The use of development workers for the task of verbal witnessing has been questioned before, however, a balance between the humanitarian-oriented approach and the conversion-oriented approach would be a great help in outreach activities amongst Muslims.

b) The document of 1993

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[886] PS 1.3.4.1.2., 1: "As a result, a Consultation was conducted from August 23-24, 1991 in the Mekane Yesus Seminary compound in order to help boost the efforts of the congregations and strengthen this ministry".

[887] Ib., 2f., including: 1. encouragement of church members to pray for outreach, 2. encouragement of church members to pass the Gospel to others through their personal testimony (2 Tim. 2:2), 3. distribution of tools like books, cassettes, etc "and preparing more in better qualities when needed" (2), 4. contacting Christian teachers, nurses, merchants, etc for outreach work, 5. to conduct conferences to create awareness, 6. to invite others to Bible studies, 7. study of the culture, language, "thoughts and the condition of the areas to be reached" (2), 8. training of the ministers, 9. learn different approaches according to the context (city-rural areas, different age groups, sex, for example), 10. "Creating mutual help and cooperation among the congregations, Synods and Evangelical Churches" (2), 11. "Planning Outreach Programme along with the Development work in order to make the Wholistic Ministry of the EECMY more a reality" (3), 12. Mass-Media as tools.

[888] Ib., 4: "Funds can be raised for evangelistic outreach work in various ways. Paying tithe, producing farm products and give the sale, for example young people can plant vegetables, own poultry, bee-hives. . They can establish a small shop where they can sell their products and use the proceeds for Evangelistic Outreach. Regarding tithe, if we tithe faithfully from our income the congregations resource will increase. That will make the employment of an evangelist to be sent to the outreach work possible"

[889] Ib.: 1. Printing and distribution of spiritual books and magazines, 2. using mass-media, 3. using local animals for transportation, 4. letter writing, 5. "The EECMY's Literacy schools, clinics etc. together with her Evangelistic Work have fulfilled the Wholistic Ministry of the Church. Therefore the different professionals among Church members must be urged to render free service to the society in their free times and witness the Gospel" (4), 6. include a workable structure within the Church.

[890] Ib., 5.

An outreach plan for the unreached Oromos of the Hararge region, which are mostly Muslims, had been written in 1993 by the EECMY-GMD[891]. After an introduction, the geographical location, the historical background of the Hararge-Oromo, their religious life, their vocational trend and education had been briefed[892], the EECMY vision for this region has been described. During the first stage from 1994-1997

> "we plan to send ten evangelists. Resources are not available yet for which we need prayers and support of our friends and partners. As this is [a] very new area to us we need to consider some buildings to be constructed in the three first districts to use them for centers"[893].

As for the local participation, the problem with self-reliance has been dealt with:

> "as this is a new area from our Work Areas and as the total population are Muslims, we can not expect them to help us build these needed buildings … In the future our expectation is that as soon as the first indigenous congregations are established then they will learn to follow the policy of our Church in order to share their local responsibility in building future houses be it Church buildings or others"[894].

The financial problem in the first stage of outreach activities in Muslim dominated areas proved to be a serious and ambivalent problem. As soon as external support gets in, it is questionable if the congregation will develop indigenous, i.e. self-supporting, self-governing and self-reliant forms or if they will keep dependent on external funds. A strategy paper has to deal with this sensitive problem wisely.

c) The document of 1998

Bekalo Beredo, the EECMY Evangelistic Outreach Coordinator has written a document entitled "The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Evangelization – Review Paper presented to Gospel Ministry Department Staff Consultation" on August 19, 1998[895]. Firstly, the meaning of evangelization was stressed[896].

> "The Lord Christ Himself through His Holy Spirit enables His servants to explain the Gospel powerfully and effectively. Also Christ Himself through His Holy Spirit

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[891] PS 1.3.4.2.1.
[892] Ib., 1-3.
[893] Ib., 3f.
[894] Ib., 4.
[895] PS 1.3.4.2.2.
[896] Ib., 1f.: "evangelism means to share or announce the good news … It is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit that men shall come to put their trust in God, through Jesus, to accept [him] as their savior and Serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church".

opens the man's mind and heart to receive the Gospel and draws him/her to Himself, said J.I. Packer in his book "Evangelism and the sovereignty of God"[897].

The "Missio Dei","Missio Christi" and "Missio Spiriti" reality had been applied here. Evangelization is the work of the Holy Spirit and human beings could be used as instruments[898].

> "Yet the evangelization work (planting Church, Church construction, basic teaching) is not deeply rooted, the members are not matured [and] need shepherds and holistic support as well to strengthen themselves and to reach unreached communities around them. What shall we do?"[899].

No further comment had been given in order to answer this question. Regarding the methods, those who caused the tremendous growth of the church like the healing ministry, the schools witness, the fellowship of believers, persecutions, the development activities, comfort giving at funeral ceremonies, social work and other have been mentioned[900]. The number of ministers is not enough to cope with the growing places.

> "Therefore, I seriously request, this [the] evangelism staff members to pay a great attention to suggest some income means-budget to train volunteers, upgrade the coordinators capacity by 6 months-one year course in abroad to mobilize volunteer ministers, the congregations and the members as whole where they are"[901].

As for the financial resources and self-reliance, suggestions were given.

> "Are our congregations and their members providing the resources for the Evangelistic ministry efficiently? How? May we establish in each unit, a committee which facilitates a collection for evangelism work?"[902].

d) Evaluation

The strategy papers on outreach ministry in general all dealt with the question of financing the tremendous outreach work. A convincing strategy, especially for the work among Muslims, has hardly been detected. The dependence of external funds in this respect has still to continue, but the cost of discipleship and therefore the authenticity of the faith, and together with it the indigenous character will remain weak.

> "Salvation is free, but discipleship costs everything we have"[903].

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[897] Ib., 2.
[898] Ib., 3.
[899] Ib.
[900] Ib., 4.
[901] Ib., 7.
[902] Ib., 9.
[903] Ib., 10.

The task to describe ways to make this discipleship a strategy, especially in outreach work amongst Muslims, still needs to be realized. The importance given to the grass-root-level, however, correlates with the congregation-oriented approach. Guidelines for congregations in Muslim dominated areas have to be prepared in order to give suggestion, how they can grow self-reliant. The need for a balance between the humanitarian-oriented approach and the conversion-oriented approach was indicated. The "Missio Dei", "Missio Christi" and "Missio Spiriti" reality counterbalanced the human efforts of evangelization.

3.5.   Interim Summary: *The balanced approach and "Missio Dei"*

Throughout the whole third section of the third chapter of this study, the achievement of a balanced approach of witness had been the guiding factor. However, the all-comprising aspect of "Missio Dei", God's own and independent work within all contexts and through the human efforts in witness, has been stressed as an accompanying reality.

The contextual witness had been examined with the result, that the understanding-oriented approach, the conversion-oriented approach, the humanitarian-oriented approach and the congregation-oriented approach all serve the need of witness in a contextual form. As for the conversion-oriented approach, it has been pointed out that the doctrine, which guides this approach, has to be in accordance with the Lutheran doctrine as fundamental for the EECMY. This task has to be taken seriously, and has to be taken as a special subject for example with the "Program of CMR" at the MYTS. The EVTC has to check books and other publications with this regard. The teaching concepts and academical institutions with their ability to reach down with their teachings to the grass-root-level have to work out the Lutheran doctrine with regard to CMR. However, a good Lutheran guideline had been provided with the incarnational teaching. The balanced approach, in which all forms support each other, had been described as the strongest witness the EECMY may offer to the Muslims.

The holistic ministry, which includes the humanitarian-oriented approach, expresses the genuine policy of the EECMY, and is incarnational in itself as it should lead toward self-reliance. The spiritual need and the material or physical needs of human beings have been pointed out and both have to be served to by the EECMY. Therefore, the understanding-oriented approach which is mandatory to exercise the conversion-oriented approach, in order to respond to the spiritual need, has to be balanced with the humanitarian-oriented approach, which concentrates on the material and physical needs of human beings in approaches to

Muslims. This is of most crucial importance in a country like Ethiopia, with all its economic problems including poverty and under-development.

The settlement of a Christian community dealt with the question, how the congregation-oriented approach has to be carried out. Examples of the church history indicated settlements which led to isolation, separation and integration. These categories, as have been shown, could serve at the same time to describe the stages through which the individual convert may have to pass. The integration of a Christian congregation within a given community, i.e. in the case of this study the Muslim community, corresponds with the incarnational and Christ-centered doctrine of the EECMY. The aim of integration has to be achieved by a balanced approach of contextual witness.

The strategy papers, especially the paper written by S. Abdo, and the two documents by I. Gobena and B. Beredo, have all been examined. The presentation of seven strategies by S. Abdo is a good and convincing example for a definition of strategies that comprised all the approaches of witness mentioned before. It is also striking to see how he struggled to bring all the approaches into a balance. He was also aware of the "Missio Dei" behind all endeavors. A slight and minor tendency of over-contextualisation and islamization of the Christian faith had been detected. However, the strategy paper was a first serious attempt in this regard and has to be considered to be the third landmark in CMR in Ethiopia within the EECMY. The papers of I. Gobena and B. Beredo raised the important question, how the congregation can move towards self-reliance and how they can cope with the fast growth of the church. The importance given to the grass-root-level goes ahead with the congregation-oriented approach for witness. However, convincing guidelines towards self-reliance, especially with regard to young and yet weak congregations in Muslim dominated areas, still have to be prepared. The same must be said with regard to the post-conversion period, in which the congregations have to provide special care for the new converts, who have to pass through the stages of isolation, separation, in order to reach the final stage of integration. Guidelines have to be provided for this task, without which the approaches of witness leading to conversion are questionable.

The leading question, which has been raised at the beginning of this section, was in which way a balanced approach to Muslims could be developed. The answer, which had been given before is, that the four approaches have to support each other. There could hardly be an appropriate conversion-oriented approach without the understanding-oriented approach. There could hardly be a humanitarian-oriented approach in the sense of the holistic ministry, without a conversion-oriented approach, which again needs the understanding-oriented

approach. All approaches lead into and therefore need the congregation-oriented approach, which again in order to achieve integration and to become strong has to include all other approaches. If one approach is missing or becomes weaker than the other, the strength diminishes. The proof of a one sided approach had been given with the "Jiren" experience and the "Wollo Settlement plan". Encouraging examples have been detected with the "Geleb" experience, and had been promised with the establishment of a Christian congregation within the Muslim society. Balancing the approaches, and to improve the balance through correction or through the introduction of one missing component, would improve the witness.

The "Missio Dei", as the all comprising feature, shall round up this section. A missiological and systematic-theological explanation with an emphasis on the theology of religions and in it the interreligious relations and perceptions have to be carried out intensively, in order to clarify the reality of "Missio Dei" sufficiently. This cannot be presented here. However, as had been indicated in this study starting from the presentation of PROCMURA in chapter II, 3.2., the question, whether God is the same as Allah or completely different, has to be dealt with in such a study. As had been detected in the documents, the opinion and view, that God works besides all human efforts and within all contexts above the human understanding, is a common feature that appeared with Hasselblatt, S. Abdo, Y. Deressa, the various literature and other. The question, if God is carrying out his work in Islam, has to be clarified with the interreligious study or theology of religions. If the question is yes, then the approaches have to be adjusted according to this understanding. If the question is no, the same occurs.

4. Concepts of the EECMY PROCMURA Area Committee

The concepts of the EECMY PROCMURA-AC shall reflect on issues of the AC itself, including its tasks and organisational matters, and on the wider scene including ecumenical and interreligious questions in order to widen the horizon.

4.1. Terms of Reference

According to the documents, three papers had been prepared which have organized the work of the PROCMURA-AC in Ethiopia. The first one, of which only the first page was found with the documents, was written on October 19, 1992[904]. The second one was written in

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[904] PS 1.2.1.1. Title: The EECMY-Advisory Committee on Christian Muslim Relations (PROCMURA).

prospect of a national and ecumenical body in 1995[905]. Since the constitution has to be seen within the attempts at ecumenical unity, it shall be reviewed in 4.2. The third one, entitled "Terms of Reference for EECMY project for Christian Muslim Relation Area Committee" has been written in June 2001[906]. The first page of the first terms of reference for the EECMY PROCMURA-AC gave the six aims and objectives of the body, of which the first two are mainly identical with those of the general PROCMURA aims and objectives of 1979[907], which have been reviewed in the second chapter 3.2., but which were related here to the EECMY[908]. The third objective stated an inner-church related aspect:

"To help in the creation of Synod level Committees to serve as local committees in each Synod"[909].

The fourth regulated the contact with the PROCMURA Regional Committee, and the fifth objective stressed the task to unite the Ethiopian churches toward a national council[910]. The sixth objective dealt with the task to inform the EECMY about issues related to CMR on the national and continental level. Since no other pages of this document have been found, which probably dealt with organs and persons like the adviser i.a., it is not possible to review the whole document. However, it became clear that the aim was identical with PROCMURA's, and that the structural place of this AC was placed between the EECMY and the PROCMURA Regional Committee, to function as a link and as a national body to bridge concerns related to CMR between the EECMY and the wider international organisations and activities.

The terms of reference which have been written in 2001, stand in the just mentioned line, but specified the aims, tasks and structural components of the AC. The aim included the other churches in Ethiopia[911]. Nine specific duties and functions were listed. The accountability of the AC should be to the EVTC, to which any prepared projects assessments and efforts in the coordination of the CMR work should be presented. The second specific duty included a holistic concept of approach.

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[905] PS 1.2.4.2.
[906] PS 1.2.1.2.
[907] PS 1.4.1.1.
[908] PS 1.2.1.1., I: "*1. To keep before the EECMY Synods their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the Churches task of interpreting faithfully to the Muslims in Ethiopia the Gospel of Jesus Christ. 2. To effect the research and education necessary for (1) above*".
[909] Ib.
[910] Ib.: "*To seek ways and means of encouraging other Churches in Ethiopia to cooperate on this important task, so that eventually there will be a National Council representing churches in Ethiopia*".
[911] PS 1.2.1.2., 1: "To keep before the EECMY and other Churches in Ethiopia their responsibilities for understanding Islam and Muslims of their areas in view of the task of interpreting the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully in the Muslim communities".

> "To effect[,] promote and facilitate survies [surveys]/studies in the relevant area[s] for planning the necessary approach in bringing social, economic development and to witness [the] Gospel to the people of the target areas"[912].

This expression combines the humanitarian-oriented approach with the conversion-oriented approach. With regard to the establishment of Sub-AC in the church units, it was mentioned that it should function as a link between the national AC and the ministry in local areas and at the grass-root-levels by organizing workshops and seminars[913]. The ecumenical aspect was again included with the aim to create an inter-church AC[914]. As for the approaches to Muslims, the task of advising with regard to strategies was pointed out:

> "5. Advise in the ministry of Christian-Muslim relations in establishing strategies for responsible witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ"[915].

The AC is therefore the body to prepare strategies and guidelines. The last specific duty was the yearly evaluation of the AC work.

With regard to the organisational structure of the AC, including the composition of the committee and the functions of the Executive Committee, several aspects were given[916]. At least seven members from the units of the EECMY should be chosen by the EVTC to participate in the committee. However, the election in 2003 was only partly based on this regulation[917]. It is not clear, why and who of the general PROCMURA shall elect the chairperson of the EECMY-AC, since PROCMURA strives at local autonomy. In the 2003 election, however, Alemu Shetta (GMD Director) was elected by the EVTC to be the

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[912] Ib., 2.

[913] Ib., see No. 3 and 6 of the specific duties.

[914] Ib., see No. 4 and 7: "4. To subscribe, to assist, subsidies and cooperate with denominations organization or institutions whose objectives are in whole or in part similar to the EECMY through the Gospel Ministry Department (GMD) … 7. Create ways and means to involve/help other churches to be part of the activities of Christian Muslim work for possible establishment of inter church area committee".

[915] Ib.

[916] Ib., 2f. Committee: "1. The EECMY ProCMuRA-Area committee shall have members consist of at least seven members chosen by EVTC from the units of the church. 2. The EECMY project for Christian Muslim Relationship in Africa shall elect the chairperson among the members for a period of two years 3. The ProCMuRA section coordinator shall be a secretary for the committee, without a voice. 4. The area committee shall meet at least once in a year. 5. The Area committee shall have an Executive committee comprising of three persons elected from among its members for a term of two years. 6. Specialists (on Islam) shall be invited to participate in the committee when it is necessary. 7. The minutes of the committee shall be given to GMD and members of the committee". Executive Committee: "1. The Executive committee shall meet at least three times a year. 2. It shall deliberate on the decisions and responsibilities of the Area committee as given. 3. It shall prepare plans and follow up their implementation of the work. 4. It shall report its activities from time to time to the EECMY committee ProCMuRA or EVTC. 5. It shall coordinate the work of the sub-committee in the units. 6. It shall facilitate seminars, workshops and training through the coordination office. 7. The minute of the exe-committee shall be presented and approved by the EECMY-Area Committee."

[917] PS L73: Elected persons were: Alemu Shetta (GMD Director), Peter Ford (CMR Program at the MYTS), and five other members as well as one co-opted member again from the CO.

chairperson for the committee[918]. A revision of these terms of reference was indicated to take place in a letter[919].

If the aim and the specific duties and functions are seen together, many relevant aspects have been included. The aim revealed the understanding-oriented approach. The humanitarian-oriented and the conversions-oriented approach have been mentioned in the specific duties. The congregation-oriented approach was not mentioned. The link towards the grass-root-level, however, has been indicated by the duty to facilitate the establishment of Sub-AC's. The cooperation with other churches and the organization toward a national AC expressed the ecumenical apect. No interreligious aspect, however, like the organisation of peace and justice committees or other, has been included. Again the production of literature and the link to the teaching institution were not mentioned. Nevertheless, the terms of reference offer a good place to describe the aim and objectives of the AC's work in Ethiopia. At the same time these present some guidelines for approaches. It should be pointed out again, that the AC of PROCMURA should not be confined to one church alone, but is meant to be an ecumenical body to operate independently from single churches. This aspect has to be worked on seriously in the future.

4.2. Attempts at ecumenical unity

Along with the first steps of establishing the CMR program in Ethiopia, undertaken by the EECMY with G. Hasselblatt, attempts were made to unite the Ethiopian churches.

> "Just at the beginning of the revolution era churches in Ethiopia established an ecumenical body called 'Cooperation of Churches in Ethiopia' and worked together for some years, but when their chairman and their secretary were taken prisoners at different times, the cooperation slowly died naturally in 1982"[920].

The Council of Cooperation of Churches in Ethiopia was founded in 1976[921]. There are no other documents about these activities at hand of the time before and from 1976-1982[922].

a) Need

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[918] Ib.

[919] Ib.: "Terms of Reference for the committee shall be dispatched after its revision".

[920] PS 1.2.3.2., 1.

[921] PS 1.6.1. c), 1. The council has discussed about plans to have an interreligious seminar, which was held in Addis Ababa from March 27-29, 1978. See the section 5.3. a) of this study.

[922] PS 1.3.3.3., 6. Yonas Deressa, in his historical overview of CMR in Ethiopia, stated, while mentioning the Derg time, that „the regime that provided this favourable condition for the Muslims on the other hand hindered the organization of the council for the cooperation of churches in Ethiopia by detaining and killing the chairman, the Rev. Gudina Tumsa General Secretary of the EECMY and detaining the Secretary of the council, Ato Shamsudin Abdo".

The need for a united national body consisting of as many churches as possible, for a united witness in front of the Ethiopian Muslims has always been a serious concern.

> "Considering Islamic Fundamentalism in Ethiopia, as Ethiopia is said one of the target areas for Islamic Fundamentalism in the Middle East and horn of Africa; certainly, churches in Ethiopia do well if they realize the danger ahead and decide to create a fellowship forum in spite of some serious differences among some of the churches"[923].

b) Continued attempts

The first attempt, according to the documents at hand, that had been undertaken after 1982, has started in March 1993 in a letter, in which S. Abdo was asking the president of the EECMY to support the organization of a one-day-meeting of all churches for the sake of CMR and evangelization of the Muslims in Ethiopia[924]. In 1994, as a result of the meeting i.a., the process continued.

> "Now we are organizing a National Area Committee with eleven member churches
> in Ethiopia … We are anticipating that each member church will take [a] proportion
> [of the] financial responsibility for our local project"[925].

In May 1995, as a consequence of the seminar in 1994[926], a meeting on CMR in Ethiopia was conducted, of which the minutes exist[927]. Participants were two members of the EECMY, three members of the *Kale Hiwot* Church, two of the Lutheran Church, one of the *Gennet* Church, one of the *Messerete Kristos* Church, one of the *Amanuel* Baptist Church, one of the *Emnet Kristos* Church, and the chairman of the ECFE. One of the main tasks was to approve the constitution that has been prepared by an ad-hoc steering committee before[928]. After the review and some minor corrections the constitution was approved.

c) The Constitution

The constitution, which probably was written in 1995, was structured with an introduction about the historical development of the Committee and the constitution, followed by eight paragraphs. The name of the body, according to paragraph one, was "Christian-Muslim

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[923] Ib.

[924] PS L16. S. Abdo called upon the president Yadessa Daba, to use the experience of the EECMY, the leading role and example of the EECMY, in order to take the initiative to invite the other churches.

[925] PS 1.3.2.10., 2, and PS L37, „ that all the eleven Evangelical Churches … have accepted responsibility to establish Christian Muslim Relation in Ethiopia on which each church is represented by five voting members".

[926] PS L24, from September 16-18, 1994. The church officers in their 1291st meeting on August 23, 1994 resolved the following decision CO-94-343 b): „ Further, to extend an invitation to 25 persons from the EECMY and 25 persons from other churches in Ethiopia to participate in the Seminar. Furthermore, to extend an invitation to Mr. Abd Al Masih to lecture on the seminar".

[927] PS 1.2.4.1.

[928] Ib., 2, PS 1.2.4.2., 1, see introduction.

Relations in Ethiopia"[929]. The second paragraph was entitled "Aim" and in the first letter of the Amharic alphabet read:

> "The body of the Evangelical Fellowship by convincing, consulting and supporting likes to hold before their member churches their obligation to reach out with the Gospel of Christ appropriately and faithfully to the Muslim community of their respective areas"[930].

In this definition the understanding of Islam as such had not been mentioned. It is not clear why this has not been included. Other aims of the second paragraph were in short: to conduct training programs like seminars, to take care for teaching materials and their distribution, to consult other religious bodies (denominations) to join the CMR-body in Ethiopia, to support responsible task carriers with prayer and coordination, to take care for converts, to prepare and give support to the budget, to cooperate and to make contacts with similar organizations[931]. The relation to PROCMURA was not indicated or mentioned. Also the relationship to Muslims in Ethiopia, or the aim of creating dialogue for peaceful coexistence, was not mentioned or described. It was not considered on which fundament the churches, eventually with the EOTC and Catholic Church, could cooperate ecumenically. In the paragraphs 3-7 the organizational structure with the organs structure, the General Assembly, the Executive Committee, the Adviser or Secretary and other continuous or timely committees was described. Paragraph eight stated the possibility of amendments. The conception of the constitution gave the impression that it was prepared roughly without a deep consideration of wider responsibilities.

d) Further attempts

In 1997, after a seminar had been held with some of the churches[932], the report to the PROCMURA General Council meeting indicated that the EECMY had been in contact with the ECFE for the past few years with two seminars being held,

> "and a 'Terms of Reference' proposal for establishing [an] Ethiopia Area Committee were also prepared. Now, we are waiting for such a time that the Evangelical Fellowship decides on the question of joining PROCMURA. In the mean while, the Ethiopian Evangelical Churches Fellowship to conducting [conduct] training courses

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[929] PS 1.2.4.2., 1.
[930] Ib.
[931] PS 1.2.4.2., 1f, paragraph 2.
[932] PS L37. Again this seminar was held with Rev. Walter Wassermann, alias Abd al-Masih, from the "Call of Hope" organisation. S. Abdo wrote "our new council which is just mentioned above [i.e. of the EFCE] will be more than happy to intertain them … In the case of the Catholics and Orthodox Churches I will have to continue on the side to minister to them on this particular area of ministry". The expression "on the side" indicates that probably not enough attention could be given.

for its Evangelism Outreach initiative has divided the country into four geographical zones – East, West, South and North Zones where our Adviser is engaged in teaching on Islam"[933].

In December 1997 the ECFE wrote a letter to the EECMY-CO, asking for a long and short term teaching program[934]. The responding letter[935] from the beginning of January 1998, yet not being clear about the future situation of S. Abdo, who left the country in November 1997, could not precisely answer the question about the future activities. However, it was indicated that the ECFE has to take more responsibility in terms of leading the CMR body and concerning man-power, eventually considering that it should take care for the replacement of the post of S. Abdo. However, this was only indicated indirectly.

In 1998, the failure of establishing a united body has been reported:

> "All through the years of her involvements the EECMY made several efforts so that those Christian denominations in Ethiopia get involved in PROCMURA. Inspite of the effort until this day we have not succeeded in forming an inclusive Area Committee of PROCMURA for the country"[936].

On May 2000, a letter had been written to the PROCMURA General Adviser J. A. Mbillah, indicating that Mr. Faisal Sani Usso from the ECFE had been appointed as the adviser for the AC in Ethiopia and should be invited to attend the PROCMURA General Council[937]. With the same letter in an attachment a project proposal for the local areas ministers-training on CMR was sent to PROCMURA[938]. Applicant, however, was the EECMY, not the ECFE.

> "But this effort of raising awareness among other denominations … needs to be considerably enhanced in order to properly communicate the Gospel"[939].

The ECFE members and ministers have been considered with the objectives of the project.

> "The plan of this project is based on the recommendations made during the different meetings of the EECMY Units and some Evangelical denominations"[940].

This refered to earlier plans to develop teaching programs as mentioned above. The project addressed some of the main problems with regard to other denominations, like the lack of

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[933] PS 1.2.3.7., 2f.
[934] PS L44.
[935] PS L45.
[936] PS 1.2.3.8., 1: "Mr. Shemsudin Abdo before he left the country in November 1997 was able to conduct two courses for interdenominational participants in two Regions of the Country."
[937] PS L55. See PS L61, in which it becomes clear that Feisal Usso has gone abroad for studies, and is at disposition as a potential candidate for CMR either at the CMR Program with Dr. Peter Ford at the MYTS, or with the ECFE.
[938] Ib., see attachment (6 pages).
[939] Ib., 3.
[940] Ib., 4.

attention and awareness the denominations give to the CMR organization and cooperation[941]. The project mainly aimed at supporting such an evangelical body for CMR in Ethiopia, i.e.

> "To raise awareness among the denominations ministers to develop a better forum for creating a strong PROCMURA Area Committee and for joint venture in witnessing Christ"[942].

The project duration was considered to endure from 2001-2003 for three years. The advantages given to the EECMY, which had been considered to implement the project with a part-time coordinator (theologian) and a part-time facilitator (Islamist), and a major share in the participant number, lay at hand[943]. It seems from the documents, that the body for CMR with some members of the ECFE, after it made a good process from 1995-1997, came again to a still-stand and was to be revitalized with this new project. However, no response from PROCMURA, whether positive or negative, was to be seen with the documents at hand. Probably, the costs exceeded the possibilities of the PROCMURA budget, or other donors were not to be found. A change in the EECMY structure, i.e. the appointment of Rev. I. Gobena as the president, and the new appointment of Rev. Alemu Shetta as the EECMY Gospel Ministry Department director, may have caused an interruption and delay of activities related to CMR in 2001/2002[944].

d) Problems

While the Muslims were able to establish a national body, the EIASC, the Christian endeavors towards unification at large failed. S. Abdo pointed out as one of the major problems that the EOTC as the largest Christian body in Ethiopia does not want to even recognize the existence of other evangelical churches[945].

> "In my country in stead of Churches cooperating, they even go to persecute each other in some instances to the extent of killing other Christians"[946].

The relationship between the two, the EOTC and the evangelical churches, is characterized by mutual mistrust, misunderstandings and prejudices. Attempts toward reconciliation are very much in need. Even within the evangelical churches it is difficult to reach consent. In 1999 Rev. Iteffa Gobena reported to the PROCMURA Executive Committee:

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[941] Ib.

[942] Ib.

[943] Ib., 5.

[944] As from the documents, it seems that Rev. Alemu Shetta started officially contacts with regard to CMR on April 1, 2002, see PS L58.

[945] PS 1.3.2.13., 5: "The real situation between the Orthodox and other Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia is a very sad and embarassing one."

[946] PS L17, 2. S. Abdo reported this to PROCMURA in 1993.

"The last seven years the EECMY has made several effort[s] to create the committee. Because of the Evangelical Churches organization who are [is] not motivated or not even felt the strong presence of Islam, with its present political and economical impact in the country we are still lugging behind. This has been a historical problem, that the country's Christian denomination[s] ignor[e] Islams presence because of [the] deliberate disrecognition of the Muslim's by the political powers that ruled the country"[947].

Therefore:

"There is no single organization that could represent all the churches in Ethiopia. This fact makes it difficult for the Muslims to find a Christian body to deal with"[948].

e) Evaluation

Before the creation of an ecumenical body for the sake of CMR in Ethiopia, it would be advisable to create first and generally a national ecumenical body, which could develop several aims, one of which could be the responsibility for CMR. It became clear that there is yet no fundament on which such a body could exist on. Even for the ECFE a common ground was not mentioned in the first constitution. For the wider ecumenical situation in Ethiopia, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the AACC, each of which the EOTC is one of the founding members, may have to give a hand to such an endeavor. The ecumenical situation in this regard will be further dealt with in 4.3.1. It seems just not possible for the EECMY to convince the EOTC, due to the historical relationship with its problems. PROCMURA should help to relate to a wider ecumenical body, even by way through the ELC, LWF or other, to ask the WCC or the AACC to organize national meetings toward a creation of a united ecumenical national body in Ethiopia, since the EECMY seems to be overstretched with the task. However, it seems possible that the EECMY, as one of the founding members of the ECFE could organize at least the evangelical churches in Ethiopia to be united. The good initiatives were interrupted, since the expert S. Abdo has left the country. A committed key person for CMR in Ethiopia would be a great help for the continuity of the efforts of creating an ecumenical body.

4.3. Other matters related to PROCMURA and EECMY activities in relation to CMR

4.3.1. PROCMURA's newsletters I

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[947] PS 1.2.3.9., 1.
[948] PS 1.3.2.13., 5f.

Only those aspects or activities which deal with Ethiopia or the wider region shall be reviewed in the 27 newsletters that have been found with the documents.

a) The first note appeared in July/August, 1993, i.e. the announcement that S. Abdo replaced Silas Wanda as PROCMURA Regional Coordinator for Eastern Africa[949].

b) Iteffa Gobena contributed in March/April, 1995, a short report about the situation in Ethiopia, which included the endeavors to establish a national area committee and the women's participation in CMR[950].

c) The East African Regional Coordinator S. Abdo's report to the 11th PROCMURA General Council Meeting in Bethania, Togo, from September 17-22, 1995, had been printed[951]. He reported that both Islamic and Christian fundamentalism were like a desease.

> "We find a good example in Ethiopia where the Ethiopian Orthodox Church refuses to accept Evangelical and Pentecostal churches. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church persecutes members of other churches to the extent of digging their dead body out and throwing them to the wild animals during the night. If this trend is not controlled now it could cause a grave crisis in modern church history. Several attempts have been made to reverse the situation, but it has all been in vain"[952].

The description of the EOTC as fundamentalists indicated the negative attitude of the EECMY (and other evangelical churches) toward the EOTC, which is not helpful to create an ecumenical unity. Beside the ecumenical problem, the case of the Oromo with their elders' councils has been mentioned as an example to deal with religious pluralism and to build up national unity.

> "PROCMURA could use the traditional systems such as the example of Oromo elders' council in Ethiopia. There must be some kind of long-existing traditional systems of this or other kind which are accepted as social security systems in African countries"[953].

The rest of the report documented some activities that have been carried out in Eritrea, Tanzania, Malawi, Sudan, Uganda and other areas like Rwanda and Burundi.

d) Two articles entitled "Ethiopian Christians and Portuguese Missionaries" and "The Seasons in Ethiopia" were contributed by Modupe Oduyoye in July/August, 1997[954]. The relationship between the European Christians and the Ethiopian Christians during the 15th

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[949] PS 1.4.3.2., 11.
[950] PS 1.4.3.12., 11.
[951] PS 1.4.3.14., 9f.
[952] Ib., 9.
[953] Ib.
[954] PS 1.4.3.22., 4f. and 8f.

and 16th centuries has been reflected in the first article. Some themes like baptism, circumcision, the twin Sabbath observance (Saturday and Sunday), coffee drinking and especially the efforts of protestant missionaries to christianize Christians have been dealt with. The latter should help to understand the confrontations between orthodox and protestant churches in Ethiopia. The orthodox opinion was expressed.

> "Now that the major Protestant communities in the region, i.e., the Presbyterian Episcopal, Lutheran and Congregational Churches, are committed to the ecumenical movement, which means, among other things, a recognition of essential Christian truth in non-Protestant Churches as well as a renunciation of the efforts to convert other Christians to the Protestant faith, what remains for the Protestants to do or more sharply, what remains for the Protestants to *be*?"[955].

The attitude of the EOTC towards protestant churches was neither helpful for the efforts to create an ecumenical body. The union of state and religion with the EOTC showed that this is not a unique characteristic of Islam.

> "The demand for separation of religion and state is not an anti-Islamic campaign: there are Christian denominations whose very survival depended on maintaining a right and a freedom they won from Christian kings at the cost of great sacrifices. What happened in Algeria in 1992 and in Turkey in 1997 shows that Islam is not going to be exempted from the struggle to free religion from the sponsorship of the state"[956].

e) The Ethiopia AC report of Iteffa Gobena as the chairman, and the report of the General Adviser of PROCMURA presented to the 12th General Council meeting in Ethiopia had been printed in September/Oktober 1997[957]. The report of I. Gobena concentrated firstly on the training-of-teachers program second phase. The second focus was on attempts to create an ecumenical national AC. With regard to manpower in CMR, PROCMURA had been asked to provide scholarships.

> "In fact, we feel that special attention has to be given to this region (Eastern Africa),
> particularly Ethiopia, for we have been close neighbors to the cradle of Islam"[958].

The report of Stuart Brown included activities carried out by S. Abdo.

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[955] Ib., 8: "Note the change brought about by the ecumenical spirit – from emphasizing and only seeing what separated Church from Church to concentrating and cultivating what they have in common. It is inevitable that those who have experienced this change in intra-faith relations will carry the same spirit to inter-faith relations. As they have come to realize that what unites Church and Church is much more than what divides them, so have they come to realize that what unites religion and religion is much more than what divides them".
[956] Ib., 9.
[957] PS 1.4.3.23., 3-5 and 9.
[958] Ib., 4.

"With the help of our retiring vice-chair, Revd Ted Mwambila, Shamsuddin organised a symposium for southern Africa and a seminar in Malawi; he has also served as the leader of PROCMURA's peace initiative team in Sudan, along with his primary tasks of developing the programme of our committee in Ethiopia. We rejoice in having such a diligent and amiable colleague … Mr Shamsuddin Abdo is to represent PROCMURA at next month's General Assembly of the All-Africa Conference of Churches, which has been helpful in many ways"[959].

f) In January/February 1998, extracts from "The Speech made by His Holiness Abune Paulos, Patriarch of Ethiopia and Echegue of the See of St. Tekle Haimano at the opening of the 7th General Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches" in Addis Ababa on October 4, 1997, entitled "The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church", had been printed[960].

"As one of the most ancient churches in the world, and the first autocephalous Church in Africa, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church feels honoured and privileged to have been a founding member of the AACC"[961].

The history of the EOTC has been described with the contributions of the church to the Ethiopian society and the African churches in general. The problems of the African continent were then outnumbered in material (disasters, wars and poverty), spiritual (need for a new spirit of Christian renewal and revivalism) and cultural (loss of cultural identity) perspectives. The African identity and culture could help to solve the manifold problems in present time, and the role of the churches is to support such endeavours.

"We cannot advance African culture by merely paying lip service to it or bewailing the loss or even the disappearance of ancient African cultures and civilizations. In this regard, we have to make the African dig down deep to find his origin, with the goal of developing an African ecumenical Christian vision throughout the continent and the Diaspora for the current and future generation"[962].

The ecumenical view expressed here, however, contradicts the problem of the EOTC to create an ecumenical unity even in its own country. The speech does not lack an exclusivistic presentation of the EOTC.

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[959] Ib., 5 and 9.
[960] PS 1.4.3.24., 1f. and 8f.
[961] Ib., 1.
[962] Ib., 9.

Beside this extract, M. Oduyoye in his article called "Ethiopia A Bible Land?", continued to focus on Ethiopia with regard to the EOTC[963]. He also dealt with the problem of proselytism that came with the evangelical churches.

> "The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church is protesting against the proselytism of the Evangelical Churches, as Protestant Churches (like the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church [i.e. the EECMY] which came to Ethiopia in 1959) are called. In Amharic Protestants are known as *sana [tsere] Mariam*, 'haters of Mary'. When we in PROCMURA talk about Christian-Muslim relations, we must be certain which Christian is relating to which Muslim: Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox Christians are 'lovers of Mary'; Protestants are 'haters of Mary' – Catholic and Muslims use rosaries to 'count' their silent prayers; Protestants do not. Catholic bishops and Orthodox bishops cannot marry; Protestant bishops marry and Muslims say: 'There is no monkery in Islam'[964]".

The article shows that M. Oduyoye followed the orthodox statement uncritically, since for example according to the Lutheran doctrine, Lutherans are not haters of Mary but appreciate her contribution in another way than the Orthodox do. Such statement are therefore not helpful in creating an ecumenical unity.

g) The newsletters from May 1998 – December 2002 (No. 39-54) had not been found with the documents and have therefore not been reviewed. The newsletters of January-June 2003 (No. 55 and 56)[965] and of July-December 2003 (No. 57)[966], reported about a three-day seminar from July 4-6, 2001, and about a workshop from February 13-15, 2003, both held at the MYTS, which has been reviewed in 2.1. b) of this chapter. With regard to the first seminar:

> "Resource persons at this seminar included Rev. Dr. Peter Ford, an Islamicist who was then a lecturer at the Nile Theological College in Khartum, Sudan, and now head of the new and upcoming B.Th programme on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Others who gave presentations are Rev. Terje Ostebo, Mission co-worker of the Mekane Yesus Church and a researcher on Islam in Ethiopia; Rev. Iteffa Gobena, the Chairman of the PROCMURA Continental

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[963] Ib., 2f.: "What has all this got to do with PROCMURA? We believe that African Christians will benefit from knowing what is going on in Ethiopia, a country which had Jews from the fifth century before Jesus, Christians from 324 AD (the eunuch of Ethiopia, the first non-Palestinian to become a Christian, was from the country we now call Sudan, not from the country we now call Ethiopia), Islam before A.H. 1".
[964] Ib., 3.
[965] PS 1.4.3.26.
[966] PS 1.4.3.27.

body and head of the Mekane Yesus Church; and Johnson Mbillah, General Adviser of PROCMURA"[967].

This newsletter also announced the opening of the MYTS-CMR Program of P. Ford[968]. "Following PROCMURA's discussions with Churches and Theological Institutions in Africa to initiate specialised programmes on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CMR) to benefit pastors and others who would want to make (CMR) their vocation, the … (EECMY) have accepted the challenge"[969].

g) Evaluation

The PROCMURA newsletters reviewed here revealed that beside organisational matters, reports and seminars, the care for ecumenical issues became a main feature. The ecumenical efforts have been further described and reviewed in 4.2. Nevertheless, the objective openness of PROCMURA to the EOTC could contribute to the efforts in uniting the churches in Ethiopia. Statements like the one of M. Oduyoye about Mary should be avoided, since they support to keep the distance between the denominations instead of bringing them together.

4.3.2. PROCMURA's newsletters II

In the PROCMURA newsletters many topics in relation to the CMR have been dealt with, of which as an example its view on witness shall be reviewed here to indicate the wider scene of the concept of approaches developed with the EECMY.

a) In one of PROCMURA's newsletters, an article entitled "Christian Witness among Muslims, The PROCMURA Approach" by E. O. Oyelade, with a following discussion, has been published[970]. Oyelade stressed in the introduction, that certain viewpoints must be discarded, including the views that Muslims are enemies of Christ, of the church and of the gospel. This stood in line with PROCMURA'S concept of understanding. He then pointed to the reason and motive for witness.

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[967] PS 1.4.3.26., 19: "The subject areas attended to in this seminar included: Christian-Muslim relations in historical perspectives, Islam and Christian-Muslim Interactions in the Ethiopian context, and relations between Christians and Muslims in the political, cultural, economic and religious spheres in Africa. Other areas included a presentation on the history of PROCMURA and what it stands for, and principles of faithful and responsible Christian witness. Participants were given the opportunity to share experiences from their encounters with Muslims and what they think is the way forward".
[968] Ib., 22.
[969] Ib.
[970] PS 1.4.3.3., 6f.

"Popular Islam is full of efforts for a man to deliver himself from witches, evil forces and enemies. This deliverance is one of the works of Christ"[971].

As Oyelade stated, evangelism with its proclamation is only one part of the witness.

"Another element is the gospel of Christian presence – the church trying to show the love of Christ. This is a form of witness in which you have to become a book … In his debates with the religious authorities, Jesus was pressing for specific changes for the better in society. There is a need for a Christian witness for peace"[972].

The humanitarian-oriented approach has been indicated here. With regard to PROCMURA, Oyelade referred to its name and specified the term "Relations" in the sense that Christians acknowledge that they live in a human relationship with Muslims.

"The relationship which is affirmed in the commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourselves', implies a commitment genuinely to understand Islam and the mind of the Muslims of Africa and beyond. It implies also a sincere dialogue with Muslims, a dialogue in which we do not hide our identity, our commitment as Christians … They call for new creative approaches in which those who are called to be Christ's witnesses develop their ministry in ways which bring healing to divided communities"[973].

The understanding-oriented approach leads to dialogue and to humanitarian-oriented and conversion-oriented approaches. Oyelade's statements are not the official PROCMURA guideline. Beside the aim and objectives of PROCMURA's constitution, there are no specifying guidelines.

"*Hock:* Isn't there a possibility of developing some guidelines? … *Oyelade:* Can't we have a small committee to propose preliminary guidelines? *Hock:* The idea of this seminar is to indicate areas needing further elaboration. The need for guidelines is one of them"[974].

b) In the November/December, 1994 issue of the newsletter, Johnson Mbillah, PROCMURA Area Adviser in Ghana, wrote an article called "Christian Witness to Muslims"[975]. Reviewing biblical texts as Mark 16:5, Matthew 28:18f., Acts 1:8, J. Mbillah concluded that the

"mandate to make Christ known is imperative – not a choice – for a Christian. But we have to look at the question of method"[976].

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[971] Ib., 6. "In evangelism we should tell Muslims how Christ has given us victory over these fears [the Muslims have]. This testimony may lead to mention of the crucifixion, but do not start with it".

[972] Ib.

[973] Ib., 7.

[974] Ib., 6f., see discussion.

[975] PS 1.4.3.5., 8.

The method should not be static, but flexible.

> "'*If the drum beat changes, you have to change your dance steps.*' The situation in the former fields of primary evangelism has changed. PROCMURA encourages Christian witness which is intensive, extensive and dialogic … We are not the ones who effect conversion; it is the Holy spirit who converts"[977].

The conversion-oriented approach is here combined with the "Missio Dei" reality. The dialogical approach enables genuine witness open for both sides to understand the other and to be changed by the other, as had been discovered with Y. Deressa above.

c) Stuart E. Brown contributed an article entitled "Christian Witness in a World of Many Faiths, Address to Muslim-Christian Dialogue, Sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency, in Hull, Quebec on 18th June, 1996"[978].

> "For Christians, the critical question is not whether to witness to the good news about Jesus, but how. Any action taken in the service of God, Truth, the general good or *al-ma' ruf* contradicts itself if it unreasonably infringes on the capacity of other groups or individuals to fulfil their own religious obligations … Paul indicated the responsible character of witness which he wanted us to adopt: 'Let us pursue what makes for peace and mutual uplifting.' (Rm. 14:19). This brings me to my final topic: peace, *as-salaam*, which is … a state of being right with God the Creator and all creation: our fellow humans, all other living beings and the whole of nature … In this era of multifaith societies, we cannot exterminate one another; nor can we isolate ourselves and ignore one another. We are obliged to live together, to help one another climb the ladder (*al-sallamah*) to an honest, deep and abiding peace in mutual respect and solidarity, accepting our differences … We are called to work together with all people of good faith everywhere, for justice, education, health and genuine freedom for every human person"[979].

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[976] Ib.: "People who go out to proclaim Christ base their message on Acts 4:12 Philippians 2:10 John 14:6. When people go out to proclaim, they go out for open-air-preaching. Some even use the word 'crusade' … Some Christians caricature Islam in order to make Muslims ashamed and change to be Christians. But condemnation is counter-witness. Ther was this Christian standing in the street of Kumasi. He was condemning Islam. He said to his followers in Twi, 'All of you say after me: Muslims are animals.' Is this witness? There are people like that in Africa … Polemic proclamation with abuse of people of other faiths is not witness for Christ. Polemic proclamation stands in the way of making friends".

[977] Ib.: "*Intensive Witness* … Muslims do not let Muslims walk away from the *'ummah*. any Muslim who leaves the Muslim community for another religion is branded a *mu-naafiq* 'betrayer, traitor'. He is punished: in some cases, he is killed. It is difficult for a Muslim to change. *Extensive witness* If we witness effectively, people who are leaving their faith can come to know Christ. *Inter faith Dialogue* Dialogue is done contextually … In dialogue you listen and find out about the Muslim. And you explain Christianity to Muslims".

[978] PS 1.4.3.15., 6-9.

[979] Ib., 8f.

Brown criticized the conversion-oriented approach with its unreasonable and pressing tendency towards proselytation. Responsible witness is understood as striving for peace both with God and with humans and the conditions in which they live. Living and working together while accepting differences in a multifaith society is the humanitarian-oriented character of such responsible witness. Not conversion, but peace is the aim of witness.

d) Evaluation

PROCMURA has included the understanding-oriented, the conversion-oriented and the humanitarian-oriented approach in its concept of witness. It did not mention in the newsletters the congregation-oriented or a balanced approach. However, no systematical reflection had been given so far, according to the documents, in order to produce official guidelines on witness. This would be a worthwile undertaking to carry out in the future.

4.3.3. Women's programme

> "From its inception the pioneers of PROCMURA perceived that a women's programme would be able to effectively attend to issues of particular concern to women in Christian-Muslim interaction"[980].

After a pilot programme started in 1970 in Nigeria, the General Council meeting of PROCMURA in 1987 decided that the women's program needed to be reactivated.

> "On the recommendation of the Council, a women's consultation was organised in Banjul, the Gambia, in 1989"[981].

Since 1990 the programme continued[982], and affected the EECMY as was reported in the EECMY-PROCMURA report of 1994[983]. In 2000, a three-years-project proposal was

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[980] PS 1.4.2.4., 3.

[981] Ib.: "The consultation came out with defined issues of women's concerns in Christian-Muslim relations, which they argued, necessitated the revival or reintroduction of a women's concerns programme to be led by a Women's Co-ordinator. The Executive Committee of PROCMURA accepted the proposal of the women at its meeting in Nairobi in April 1990, and the programme took off immediately after that".

[982] PS 1.4.3.5., a newsletter that concentrated on the women's work of PROCMURA. See ib., 1-4, Women in Islam, extracts from the lecture give at the PROCMURA Women's conference at Abokobi, near Accra, Ghana from the 13th-19th of September, 1993. See also the discussion, ib., 9, with Aberash Dinsa, a participant from Ethiopia.

[983] PS 1.2.3.4., 3: "On the other hand progress is under way that women['] participation become part and parcel in this particular and challenging ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. A short seminar is planned for Women representing many churches in Ethiopia March 28, 29, 1995 in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. We are looking forward to that seminar as PROCMURA Women's concern Adviser Rev. Dr. Janice Nessibou is going to be with us and help us promote the need of women ministry in the area of Christian-Muslim Relations". See also PS L57 (March 13, 2002): "In the General Advisors Report of PROCMURA, I read about the 'initial moves to revive the Women's Programme in a/o.Ethiopia'. Can you inform me on that", and PS L58 (April 1, 2002): "The issue of 'initial moves to receive [revive] the women's program in a/o. Ethiopia' is not clear to me … I would like you will meet my president and get clear answer".

prepared by the PROCMURA Women's programme, with the type of project called "Capacity building for Christian women in dialogue with Muslim women"[984].

> "It is true to say that for Christian women to be themselves prepared to take a step forward, they need basic training in the dynamics of inter-faith relations so as to equip themselves for the task. The project for the next three years will be organizing annual regional training of trainers' workshops for a total of 41 women drawn from almost all PROCMURA's constituencies to disseminate information, and evolve constructive programmes for Christian women in dialogue with Muslim women"[985].

The planned activities consisted of three areas with sub-subject themes, namely basic tenets of Islam with concentration on the role of women in Islam, human sexuality with HIV/AIDS pandemic and sex education as a potential for Christian and Muslim women cooperation as well as inter-faith marriages, Christian witness and Christian-Muslim dialogue again with emphasis on the role of Christian women in it[986]. The implementation strategies included that

> "Specialized people some of who will come from PROCMURA's constituencies will assist the training … At the end of each training programme trainees will draw their own programmes of action and information sharing at grassroots levels. – A booklet will be produced as a PROCMURA's guide to women in Christian-Muslim relations reflecting the issues dealt with within the three years"[987].

As a result of this programme, at a special meeting conducted at a seminar held in Addis Ababa from February 13-15, 2003, with the General Adviser of PROCMURA, Johnson A. Mbillah, it was decided that

> "one female student from the EECMY-CS [Central Synod] has become a beneficiary of greeting [getting] scholarship from the PROCMURA Office Nairobi-Kenya and joined the MYTS-CMR programme to study for the B.TH-Degree in Islamic studies this Academic year"[988].

Meheret Yonas started her studies at MYTS-CMR under the supervision of Peter Ford in 2003[989]. The outcome of this venture looks promising but still has to become effective.

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[984] PS 1.4.2.4.
[985] Ib., 4f.
[986] Ib., 6.
[987] Ib., 7.
[988] PS 1.3.4.1.7., 7.
[989] PS L74 (September 10, 2003): "However, during her studies at MYTS she is obliged to receive her salary according to the rules of the EECMY. Now, we expect you to transfer her ETB 863 x4 = 3452.00 for September – December 2003. Plus some amount of money for book purchase (book allowance). Also medical fee and tuition fee". See also PS L75 (24 September 2003): "The Executive Committee, after deliberating on the proposal, accepted that PROCMURA provides bursary for Meheret's studies at the Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and later at St. Paul's United Theological College in Limuru, Kenya. Miss

The active participation of women in CMR, as stated in 2.1.b) above, has to be supported and encouraged in every possible way.

4.3.4. Literature and other Audio-Visual resource materials

According to the documents, the first distribution of literature to ten Synods and Work Areas has happened in 1994[990]. It included eight books[991]. An offer was made by the organisation "Door of Life" (Addis Abeba) on April 12, 1995[992]. No document has been found on the amount of books that were ordered by the EECMY.

Another distribution was carried out in 1997 and 1998.

> "Building small library projects for trainees in some of the Units continued through the two years [i.e. 1997 and 1998], and a good number of books of different titles were distributed in 1997. This year again we have received several titles of books from 'Call of Hope' organization. These books were distributed to three Seminaries and five Bible Schools in the Church. These theological Schools teach Islam in their courses and it is a great help to their Libraries to build literature resources on Islam"[993].

In 2002, Magne Smordal listed the resource books on CMR at the CO Library and Archive with an amount of 2430 available books[994].

Yonas is expected to go through the two Centres of study with the ultimate objective of obtaining a Master of Arts degree (M.A.) in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. The knowledge derived from such studies is supposed to be put at the disposal of the Mekane Yesus Church and PROCMURA when she is called upon to do so".

[990] PS 1.3.9.1.

[991] Ib.: B. D. Katereggan and D.W. Shenk, Islam and Christianity (1980), I. McDowell and D. Stewart, Understanding Non-Christian Religions (1982), I. P. Dretke, A Christian Approach to Muslims (1979), G. Nehls, Christians Answer Muslims (1992), G. Nehls, Christians Ask Muslims (1992), G. Nehls, The Great Commission, You and the Muslims (1992), M. Goldsmith, Islam and Christian Witness (1982) and ACP. Christian Witness Among Muslims (1971).

[992] PS L28: "Door of Life is offering evangelistic literature for Muslims. We also have books that will help Christians share their faith with their Muslim relatives and friends. These books are available in both English and Amharic". 8 Titles were offered in Amharic and English, and 5 titles in English.

[993] PS 1.3.4.1.6., 15. See also PS 1.2.3.8., 2.

[994] PS 1.3.9.2. The authors included: a) Editor Light of Life, Villach, Austria: Abd Al-Masih (15 titles of books and booklets), Abdallah Abd Al-Fadi (2 titles of books), Emir Rishawi (1 title of a book), Hamdun Dagher (1 title of a book), W. St. Claire Tisdall (1 title of a book), Faris al-Qayrawani (1 title of a book), R. W. Thomas (one title of a book), b) Editor The Good Way, Rikon, Switzerland: Iskander Jadeed (14 titles of books and booklets), C. G. Pfander D.D. (5 titles of books), Ghulan Masih Naaman (2 titles of books), Nicola Yacoub Ghabriel (1 title of a book), Hamram Ambric (1 title of a book), John Gilchrist (3 titles of books), Ishak Ersen (1 title of a book), Sultan Muhammed Paul (1 title of a book), KK – ALAWI (1 title of a book), Zakariah Butrus (1 title of a book), Unknown (2 titles of book and 1 series of books), c) Editor Call of Hope, Stuttgart, Germany: Menes Abdul Noor (2 titles of books), George Ford (1 title of a book and 1 series of books), d) Editor PROCMURA (1 title of a book). See also PS L59: "It seems that most of the books were intended for a consultation in 1997. For some reason however, many books remained unpacked in the office. In addition there were a lot of small packets of books, more or less of the same kind, coming mainly from three different editors

> "I would consider it to be wise also to classify and determine the use and theological background of the books, before an eventual distribution in the EECMY"[995].

It seems that this advice was not followed up, according to the documents, but the books have been distributed to Seminaries, Bible Schools and other.

In 2003, Smordal listed 29 audio cassettes on CMR, available at the PROCMURA Office and ready for distribution. These cassettes mostly were produced by the organization "Call of Hope" from Stuttgart, Germany[996].

The efforts of organizing literature and other materials in connection with CMR are encouraging. A review and theological classification of the content of the materials is still a necessity. This stands in line with the remarks given above, that the doctrine of the witness approaches, especially within the conversion-oriented approach, is important for the EECMY's efforts in carrying out the witness according to its own fundament.

4.3.5. Translation

Some books related to CMR have been translated from English into the vernacular. One of the very early books that have been translated into Amharic is the book entitled "Christian Witness Among Muslims" by an anonymus author (1971; Africa Christian Press, Accra/Ghana)[997]. Another book was written by Gerhard Nehls, called "A Practical and Tactical Approach to Muslim Evangelism (1992; Life Challenge, Nairobi), which has been translated into Amharic and which had been used widely for teachings[998]. No information has been found within the documents about the translators of the other books and about the use or any evaluation of them. S. Abdo has started to translate some booklets.

> "We have translated, some books on the life of Jesus from the Call Hope books into the Eastern Ethiopia Oromo dialect, in Muslim context. These are seven books and are in the printing process. They are going to be distributed among the people with a token prices. We hope it will be received very much by the Oromos who now need reading material in their new Latin alphabets"[999].

As noted in the previous section about resource material, the literature that is available in Ethiopia needs a critical review and theological classification of the concepts of

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in Switzerland, Austria and Germany … There are an average of 35-40 pieces of each title … those books should be made available at study centers and other strategic places".

[995] PS L59.

[996] PS 1.3.9.3.

[997] Anonymus, Christian.

[998] Nehls, Practical.

[999] PS 1.2.3.8., 2. See also PS 1.3.4.1.6., 15.

understanding and approaches that emerge from them. This is not possible here and has to be carried out in another place at another time.

In view of outreach work among Muslims in Eastern Ethiopia, a translation project of the Bible has been started with:

> "Mr. Shemsudin Abdo, who was coordinating the program and now out of the country in Germany, [who] took [an] assignment form the Church to adopt the Western Oromo NT [New Testament] into the Eastern Oromo dialect (in Latin Script) so that the NT can be available for those group who are over 85% Muslim. This work is now completed and ready for printing"[1000].

No documents are available that give any report on the use of this Bible translation. Even though there are some other Bible translation projects within the EECMY for Muslim dominated nations like for the Silti and other, since no documents have been found among the primary sources, no further comment can be given here.

4.4. Interreligious relations

Interreligious relations help to improve the understanding of one another, the dialogical existence and the quest for appropriate way of witness. Further they help to create common activities for peace, justice and other. Therefore, some of the endeavors of the EECMY shall be reviewed next.

a) Interreligious Seminar 1978

The history of the seminar, which was held from March 27-29, 1978, started in the previous year when an investigating commission of the government came to the result that many parts of the population were disappointed about the revolution's development and looked for shelter within the religious groups of the country[1001]. It was the idea of this commission to conduct a political seminar in Addis Ababa with all religious leaders with the propagandaistic aim to make them proclaim their solidarity with the government in order to regain control of the population. The Islamic representatives and some members like the EOTC of the Council of Cooperation of Churches in Ethiopia consented, while other like the Catholic Church, the Adventist Church and the EECMY feared political usurpation and misuse of religious groups to justify the politics of the Derg. The EECMY Executive Committee decided only to send observers. The planning committee of the seminar, however, designed the meeting as a religious one with prayers, readings of the Bible and the Qur'an as

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[1000] PS 1.3.4.1.6., 16. See also PS 1.2.3.8., 2.
[1001] PS 1.6.1. c), 1.

well as songs from choirs between the lectures and discussions[1002]. About 800-1200 delegates appeared under the theme "Faith shall not separate us". The political aim was to unite the groups for the motherland's sake. The motive of Ethiopianism as a uniting force became obvious[1003]. Socialism and religion was another topic[1004]. The religious aim, however, was to fight for religious freedom in the land as against the wave of atheism and against many restrictions of the exercise of religion. The different ambitions made the seminar an ambivalent one[1005]. On the third day a lecture was given by a Catholic representative, which dealt with the question of development activities in relation to the country's progress. Such development activities expressed the love and willingness of the religious groups to support the country practically. Above all, it was stated that it is God who inhabits all might, and not political rulers. The "Missio Dei" reality appeared here in interreligious relations. The preparation committee has prepared two documents, a nine-point declaration for the public[1006], which supported the political direction, and an eight-point petition[1007], which should be handed over to the government directly. The latter criticized the restriction of religious liberty[1008] without opposition in order to avoid confrontation. The aim of both letters was to express loyalty to the nation without rejection of the confession to faith. The petition was later renounced by the government but it helped the religions to clarify their position without compromising their faith.

The common ground for all religions has been expressed in a statement saying that the;

> "the different religious groups sill [shall] not be passive observers but active participants of what Ethiopia does towards national development and its efforts to build democratic Ethiopia. The different religion groups will aligne [align] themselves

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[1002] Ib. The description of the seminar of D. Lorenz included an introduction, an account of each day's activities, and an evaluation.

[1003] PS 1.6.1. a), 4: "On religious aspects one can choose and follow whatever he wishes, but as a native of Ethiopia he bears the responsibility to share the advantages and disadvantages of his country".

[1004] Ib., 1: "But both Socialism and religion have this aim in common that all forms of oppression be abolished and substituted by equality".

[1005] Ib., 2.

[1006] PS 1.6.1. a), called "Various Religious Institutions Seminar on 'Call of the Motherland, Common Declaration of the Seminar".

[1007] PS 1.6.1. b): "Followers of different religions that are in our country Ethiopia have together expressed beyond any doubt the true love that they have for their country during the motherland call seminar held from March 28-30, 1978. They have vividly expressed their wish and support for the unity and well-being, equality and freedom for their nation under the slogan 'loving one's country is with action'. Also in the future, the seminar participants expressed that they will fully support the efforts of our country in opposing the idea of separation of religious grounds".

[1008] Ib., 2: "in some administrative regions churches and mosques are being mistreated and are even closed down. Properties of churches and mosques are being confiscated. The discipline of some religious institutions, are being openly violated. Believers of different religions and their leaders being jailed in great number … We request that the worship hours of the different religious groups be respected and the associations be requested to co-operate".

with those who stand firmly for equality, justice, peace and freedom to eradicate ignorance, poverty and diseases"[1009].

The development activities proved to be a means to establish such endeavors. The common commitment and engagement for peace and justice, as well as the fight against poverty and diseases such as HIV/Aids in the latter years has proved the possibility and necessity to unite the different religions for the common good of Ethiopia.

b) Religious Pluralism

S. Abdo gave a lecture at the "Interfaith Consultation on: Living and Serving Humanity in a World of Religious Pluralism, Feb. 6-9,1995 – Asmara Eritrea" simply entitled "Ethiopian Case"[1010]. The consultation was prepared by the LWF Department for Theology and Studies and Department for World Service[1011]. As for the rationale the consultation;

> "seeks to bring together people from different faith traditions involved in the work of humanitarian assistance and development to seek to better understand one another, the nature of the work, and possibilities for cooperation and collaboration"[1012].

Stating that Jesus as a child found refuge in Egypt and the followers of Muhammad found refuge in Abyssinia, S. Abdo concluded firstly that:

> "Africa is a continent which has displayed its capacity to accommodate religious pluralism … having said this … one should not close his eyes to the fact and practice contrary to what we have alluded to above. Ethiopian history is full of battles generated by both religious and political motivations"[1013].

A reflection of the conflicts led to the civil war with Ahmad Gragn as a climax. On the other hand, the religious communities live their faith separately, as could be seen in food observances for example[1014]. Peaceful coexistence and mutual respect as well as mistrust and enmity feeling as consequences of the past result in an ambivalent relationship. The political leadership has to try to keep together the national unity.

> "Ethiopia, the nation of religious pluralism and rich in ethnic complex [ity], really needs any time a very careful, fair and wise political leadership without which sooner or latter [later] the unwanted ethnic problem eruption shall be inevitable"[1015].

[1009] Ib., 1.
[1010] PS 1.6.2.
[1011] PS L26.
[1012] Ib. See back-side of the letter with the Agenda.
[1013] PS 1.6.2., 1.
[1014] Ib., 2: "Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia do not eat meat that the other community prepared".
[1015] Ib.

After the introduction S. Abdo dealt with the triumphalism concept within the religious communities:

> "It is only fair to entertain that each religious tradition surely believes that their religion will prevail over all other religions"[1016].

Even in each religion there are different groups and sects which are difficult to unite. However, one united body was established in 1984:

> "Learning from the Inter church Response for the Horn of Africa (ICRHA) and Churches Drought Action in Africa (CDAA), the Christian communities in Ethiopia representing the three national churches, and a few supporting NGO's [Non Governmental Organizations] embarked upon a partnership formula to help alleviate hunger disaster in Ethiopia. The Partnership was named the Joint Relief Partnership (JRP)[1017].

Further in this section S. Abdo dealt with the effort of human service carried out by the Christian mission societies before 1970's and after it, the division of geographical areas of responsibility, the obstacles and challenges they met, and the tension caused by the war dilemma[1018]. Some theological reflections on holistic ministry were considered in the next section, and its significance in a religious pluralism society was pointed out:

> "Living and serving humanity in a world of Religious Pluralism, for Christian Church includes among other important components: relief help to individuals, health care and counseling, preventive measures to avoid or reduce human suffering, social actions in terms of getting involved in important social issues in our community"[1019].

Concerning the relationship between the proclamation and service, both should express the same Gospel and both are necessary to communicate the whole Gospel. With regard to other religions, S. Abdo made clear that service, which is a humanitarian-oriented approach, should not be conversion-oriented:

> "We do not help people in order to convert them! And at the same time we need to emphasize that service does not replace proclamation, again reconciliation among human beings is not the same as reconciliation with God, political liberation is not salvation. Yet, the two [i.e.] proclamation and service together form the basic tasks of the church"[1020].

[1016] Ib.
[1017] Ib., 3.
[1018] Ib. 3-5.
[1019] Ib., 5.
[1020] Ib.

Both the humanitarian-oriented approach and the conversion-oriented approach have to be balanced. The common ground for religious pluralism, according to S. Abdo, is the striving for national unity and religious tolerance as traditional African abilities despite differences and each religion's triumphalist and separation tendencies, and the involvement in the human service for the improvement of living conditions. Holistic ministry includes both service and proclamation, one is and should be humanitarian-oriented (without the intention of conversion) and the other conversion-oriented. However, both are expressions of the same Gospel, in which God himself is present[1021].

4.5.   Interim Summary: *The wider context of the EECMY PROCMURA-AC*

The concepts of the EECMY PROCMURA-AC included the terms of reference, which had been produced so far. The aim and objectives of this body, besides the organisational structure, can provide a good place where strategies and guidelines can be developed, aiming at a balance of the various approaches in accordance with the PROCMURA in general. It is a link between PROCMURA, the EECMY and its grass-root-level. The creation of sub-AC at the synod and area work levels should be encouraged, in order to improve the link to the grass-root-level, and their establishment has to be organized. The production and distribution of materials and the link to the academic teaching institutions should be included in the terms of reference. The wider context of the AC has to be considered within this body. It should be made clear that this body is intended to serve as an ecumenical body, not concentrated on one church but acting autonomously. However, a common ecumenical fundament for activities related to CMR has to be elaborated. Furthermore, the aspect of interreligious relations has to be included, for which again a declaration of position; which regulates the relationship to Islam and to the Muslims, has to be formulated.

The attempts at ecumenical unity in their chronological order have been described. Help is needed here from the PROCMURA, which should help to relate to the various international bodies like the WCC, the AACC, the ELC and the LWF, in order to organize national meetings, on which the creation of an ecumenical body could be considered and developed. The concentration on the EECMY proved to be difficult and may be an obstacle in itself. Again, a common ecumenical fundament, on which the national ecumenical body could rest, has to be elaborated.

[1021] Ib., 6: "In the midst of agony and injustice we meet a God who shares the pain and who acts and creates something new in our daily lives. Therefore, our good deed must include charity and love and the struggle for justice".

Other matters related to the PROCMURA and the EECMY had been examined with the PROCMURA's newsletters, which concentrated on the ecumenical aspect, i.e. especially the relationship between the EOTC and the EECMY and other evangelical churches. The PROCMURA should take an objective stance and should avoid statements that support the existing conflict between the two. PROCMURA's view on witness had been reviewed according to the newsletter, and showed that official guidelines still have to be developed.

The focus on the women's programm enriched PROCMURA's activities and is helpful in order to address the women's needs and their contributions in CMR. The women's program in Ethiopia has developed well so far and its outcome looks promising.

The literature and other materials to be used in CMR in Ethiopia, its production and distribution to the academic teaching organisations had started. However, the criteria for the selection of the materials, as well as the theological classification and use have to be examined, in order to safeguard the correspondence with the EECMY's doctrine. The same can be said with regard to the translation projects.

The interreligious relations that have been carried out so far improved the understanding between the different religions, especially between Islam and Christianity. Common ground had been detected, like the concern for the nation's welfare and development, as well as the concern for peace and justice, poverty and the epidemic HIV/AIDS. Even the "Missio Dei" reality appeared within the interreligious relations, and could stimulate further studies in this regard. The religious pluralism in the African context provides opportunities to engage in common aspects to serve humanity through social care and development projects. This includes that the church has to be careful not to use the humanitarian-oriented approach and development activities in order to convert people of other faiths (proselytism). The balance of the approaches, as mentioned in this study, needs to be carried out sensitively.

The wider context of the EECMY PROCMURA-AC has opened the horizon for further tasks to be carried out in the future, and has placed the activities of the EECMY with regard to CMR in the African and worldwide efforts to promote the peaceful relationship between Christians and Muslims.

IV. CONCLUSION

The conclusion shall summarize the main lines of this study and shall result in a suggestion of guidelines for a declaration of position, which are understood as the consequences of the main lines of this study. The preview shall shed some light on further tasks and studies to indicate what the EECMY and the author of this study could and should undertake in order to deepen the understanding of Islam and the approaches to Muslims in Ethiopia. This forecast shall be included in the conclusion and in the guidelines.

1. Main lines of this study

In order to contribute to the studies of interreligious relations and perceptions in Ethiopia, this study concentrated its efforts on the EECMY and its understanding of Islam and approaches to Muslims in Ethiopia from 1969-2004. The research material, which consisted of primary sources and secondary literature, had been used to light up the background of the analysis and to examine the data in view of the aim to provide the EECMY with an overview on the development of its understanding of Islam and its evangelical approaches to Muslims in order to contribute towards a declaration of position, for which guidelines are needed.

The background of the analysis (chapter II) had been distinguished in three sections, i.e. the history and typology of Ethiopian Islam, the development of the EECMY and the first endeavours in approaches to Muslims and the IAP/PROCMURA. Interim summaries have been given, in order to extract the main results. With regard to the history of Ethiopian Islam, the secondary literature given in the bibliography and elsewhere to be found, still could deepen the details of the study carried out in this document. Archeological, sociological, ethno-historical and linguistic studies have to be reviewed beside the religious studies. As had been indicated in the section that dealt with the history of the EECMY, the archives of the missions and the literature about the first pioneers may offer aspects that have not been considered in this study. Interviews and field studies are other means to open new sources. As for the PROCMURA, an exhaustive study of its materials has to be carried out, partly in Nairobi and elsewhere, in order to discover sources, that could widen the scope outlined in this study.

The first interim summary tried to give an answer to the question: What is Ethiopian in Ethiopian Islam? The historical overview revealed the ambivalent relationship between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, which is characterized both by an attitude of tolerance and suspicion in contemporary Ethiopia. Since the EOTC in its history has participated much in the process which led to this attitude, a study of the CMR from the inner perspective of the

EOTC would contribute much to the understanding of the ambivalent relationship. The same can be said with regard to the Catholic Church and the other evangelical churches in Ethiopia. A wide field open to research concerning interreligious relations and perceptions lies ahead. Of course, the reception of the Christians by the Ethiopian Muslims within their various bodies, on the other hand, would contribute again essentially to this field. Indeed, such interreligious studies would add invaluably to the general studies in the Ethiopian landscape of science. An interreligious study center or institute at the Addis Ababa University or any other academic institutions would be of the highest support for such endeavors. So far this field of research had been neglected. The typological overview indicated the inner-islamic tension within the Ethiopian Islam, between the Orthodox Islam, the Sufi-Islam, the Folk-Islam and the Reform-Islam. The political-functional type, which comes to the fore in the expansion of Ethiopian Islam, and the socio-cultural and religious type towards and during the settlement of Ethiopian Islam, had been described in order to explain the more outward expressions of Ethiopian Islam. The definition of Ethiopian Islam therefore can be found within the frame of these typologies and attitudes. Further studies have to include the study of religions, i.e. Islamic studies in Ethiopia in its broadest sense. The "Program of CMR" at the MYTS, has made a good start. From the Christian point of view, the theological understanding of Islam with systematic-theological questions like how God can be explained in view of Allah and Islam in general, have to be studied, probably within the theology of religions. Comparative studies of the Bible and the *Qur'an*, or the *ummah* and the Christian community and others, have to be exercised in order to promote the understanding and to improve the approaches. Even the study of communication methods with rhetorics in dialogue etc. would extent the possibilities in the CMR.

The second interim summary pointed out the first two most important landmarks in the history of CMR of the preformative time of the EECMY, i.e. the death of Peter Heyling in the 17th century through a Muslim's hand according to the historical reports, and the Jiren settlement which lasted for 36 years until 1920. The Jiren settlement was the first and serious indigenous approach to a Muslim dominated area in Ethiopia and deserves more attention and appreciation. No other serious attempts, according to the sources, had been undertaken until 1969, according to the documents at hand. However, the first pioneers and pioneer missions laid down a fundament, on which the IAP/PROCMURA activities of the EECMY could have been started (as another landmark with Gunnar Hasselblatt) and built on.

As the third interim summary concluded, the IAP/PROCMURA provided the EECMY with an aim and a framework, in which an organisational structure and a guideline for CMR could

have been developed. It became clear, that the understanding of Islam and Muslims is a prerequisite for any faithful interpretation of the Gospel, i.e. the witness. The AC then started to develop within the Ethiopian context. Various concepts came along with this process, which the analysis of the data and findings has organized.

Chapter III had been organised in a way that started with the concepts of understanding, followed by the concepts of training, which both led to the concepts of approaches and outreach strategies, in order to make the process from understanding as a more passive component towards approaches with practical consequences transparent. The concepts of the EECMY PROCMURA-AC had been added in order to widen the horizon. Again, interim summaries of the four sections had been given to sharpen the results.

The first section presented the contextual understanding of Gunnar Hasselblatt, the indigenous understanding of Shamsudin Abdo Ahmed, the theological understanding of Yonas Deressa, and the socio-religious understading of Burkhard Peter. The question, what is essential in each concept of understanding, and what is common to all of them, had been answered in the interim summary. Hasselblatt's contextual understanding helped him to discover the educational system of Ethiopian Islam, and led him to experience its spiritual infrastructure. To come as close as possible to the Muslims' context, i.e. through visits, dialogue and religious co-experience, had been essential for his contextual understanding. Ways have to be discovered for Christians engaged in CMR, how they could participate in religious activities of the Muslims, in order to increase the understanding substantially. S. Abdo's indigenous understanding, which he carried out as a former Muslim, was a result of the efforts to understand Islam from within, i.e. its self-understanding and the innermost aspirations of the Muslims to achieve *dar al-Islam* within the *ummah*. To come as close as possible to the Muslims mind, in other words to become Islamic or a Muslim to the Muslims, in order to find an appropriate way to communicate the gospel, had been essential for his indigenous understanding. The contribution of converts who still obtain a genuine understanding of Islam through their own experience, especially concerning the post-conversion period with its psychological problems, have to be promoted in order to use their understanding as a contribution in CMR in Ethiopia. Y. Deressa's theological understanding was inspired by the lack of a serious theological communication and dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. As he had shown in his thesis, which focused on salvation as a common theme both for Christians and Muslims, the theological understanding aims to come as close as possible to the Muslims through common features in faith, which lead to open dialogue, in which both sides can learn. The study of the premises of

interreligious dialogue has to be carried out further in the future. The socio-religious understanding of Peter with the importance of syncretism brought him to understand the dualism in which folk-islamic Muslims live. The socio-religious understanding tries to come as close as possible to the Muslims' situation, in which they live, by studying their socio-religious background. The study of the cultural background and syncretism as a tool to improve this concept of understanding has to be encouraged. Field studies, as had been carried out by Peter, should be motivated in order to use the resources in Ethiopia, which can be found even in oral-oriented traditional cultures. It has been further shown, how these concepts of understanding develop their approaches to Muslims. However, this had been carried out in the third section of chapter III. The common feature of all the concepts is that all try to come as close as possible to the Muslims, in order to understand them. The better understanding can be achieved by coming closer to the Muslims, which can be carried out in different ways. On the other hand, the further the relation to the Muslim gets, the more the understanding will decrease. This had been discovered in the next section especially with the TEE books, which at times through the objective transmission of knowledge in an informative way have created more distance to the Muslims, sometimes it even created an obstacle for CMR.

The second section of chapter III focused on the concepts of training, which, together with the understanding they include, act like a link between the understanding and the approaches. The most important concept had been the conduction of courses, seminaries and workshops. The training-of-trainers program had been developed with S. Abdo to enforce the activities of the EECMY. The TEE-concept with two books and the various concepts of the academic institutions like seminaries, bible schools, the courses at the synod and area work level presented other teaching concepts. All these concepts have been examined with the question of their usefulness especially in view of their relation to the grass-root-level. The interim summary revealed the strengths and some weaknesses of the different training concepts. The sharing of experiences and the possibility to obtain new insights in the latest research on missiology and other with regard to CMR, proved to be the strength in the first concept, whereas the logistical and financial burden allow only a limited number of courses and workshops with a limited number of participants. Multiplicators or teachers who transmit the gained insights to the grass-root-level have to be choosen wisely. The training-of-teachers program improved the way from the academical teaching level down to the grass-root-level through the intermediate teachers, who act as multiplicators. Central to this program was S. Abdo as the key person, who had to organise the whole process, including the preparation of

the teachings, which of course was at times difficult for him, since his academic level was somewhat limited, even though his wise knowledge based on experience was invaluable. According to the documents, this concept proved to be very convincing and successful. The two books of the TEE program showed the importance, how contents about Islam have to be transmitted. Again, the closer the readers can be brought to Islam or to the Muslims through their reading and study, the better the understanding and with it the accompanying approaches. The transmission of knowledge in an informative way may rather create a distance, even more, if the differences between Muslims and Christians are more emphasized than the common ground and may lead to seperation. However, the TEE-program with its concentration on the "in-service-training" at the grass-root-level is very useful, if the group leaders are especially trained in CMR. The training of these "trainers" has to be provided by the EECMY with the help of the AC and the "Program in CMR" at the MYTS. The book prepared by Terje Ostebo for the Bale area work indicated that the conversion-oriented approach has to be balanced with the other approaches that have been developed in the third section of chapter III. The Lutheran doctrine should be expressed with the conversion-oriented approach, and other doctrines which could create an obstacle for CMR have to be critically applied or even avoided. This theological task, that needs to be carried out by examination of the different books that are going to be used at the national or regional levels, has to be exercised by the EVTC in connection with the DMT, the AC and the "Program of CMR" at the MYTS, in order to avoid misunderstandings, misinterpretations or harmful statements. Further theological studies have to concentrate on the Lutheran understanding of Islam, and should work out Lutheran guidelines and strategies. The "Program of CMR" at the MYTS tried again to improve the training-of-teachers concept, which lies at the bottom of all training concepts, by raising the academic standard of the ministers. The outcome of this program looks promising, but the task, to bring down the academic teaching to the grass-root-level, can only be evaluated through field studies, in which the grass-root-level ministers and members of the congregations have to be questioned about their understanding of Islam with the approaches they carry out toward Muslims. This elaboration remains to be an important task in the future. Another feature of all concepts, beside the training-of-teachers concept, is that all concepts try to improve the witness, which had been dealt with in the third section of chapter III.

The third section of chapter III concentrated on the concepts of approaches and outreach strategies, which all represent a result of the concepts of understanding and training. Here the passive turn into practical concepts. The overall combining aspect of the approaches and

strategies is contextual witness. The understanding-oriented approach, the conversion-oriented approach, the humanitarian-oriented approach and the congregation-oriented approach, which have been developed within this section, are all facets of witness. They lead therefore, if balanced to the ideal multidimensional and multifaceted approach. The humanitarian-oriented approach and the congregation-oriented approach have been given special emphasis to by examining the holistic ministry policy of the EECMY and by description of the settlement of the Christian congregation. The strategy papers that had been found with the primary sources and that had been produced so far with the EECMY represent a final stage of the process that started with the understanding passing through the teachings towards the approaches. The interim summary reviewed the findings under the leading question, in which way a balanced approach to Muslims could be developed, and presented the "Missio Dei", God's own and independent work within all contexts and through all human efforts in witness, as the all accompanying and comprising reality in CMR. The contextual witness has shown that all the aforementioned approaches serve the need of witness in a contextual form. The balanced approach is the strongest witness the EECMY can offer to the Muslims. The audible witness within the conversion-oriented approach has to be incarnational, which is an important guideline, because it is identical with the Lutheran doctrine. It leads also to an indigenous congregation, through which the congregation-oriented approach becomes effective. The holistic ministry, of which the humanitarian-oriented approach is a part of, is in itself incarnational in order to safeguard self-reliance. The spiritual need has to be met with by the conversion-oriented approach with its incarnational witness which alone can lead to an authentic conversion, for which again the understanding-oriented approach is needed in order to communicate the gospel faithfully to the Muslims. The physical and material needs have to be met with by the humanitarian-oriented approach, which in itself is part of the silent witness and mandatory in a country like Ethiopia. The fixation of the holistic ministry at the grass-root-level, i.e. the congregations, makes the congregation-oriented approach a melting pot of all other approaches. The question, however, how to settle a Christian congregation in Muslim dominated areas, had to be clarified. Categories like the isolation, the separation, and the integration had been variefied with the church history. The integration of a Christian congregation within the Muslim area, and with it of all converts, for whom the categories may be applied individually, corresponds with the incarnational and Christ-centered doctrine of the EECMY. The aim of integration can be achieved through a balanced approach. The strategy paper of S. Abdo was convincing but reflected his struggle for a balanced approach. It only slightly indicated signs of over-

contextualisation. However, this paper, even though it was not perfect, had been found to be the third landmark in CMR in Ethiopia within the EECMY. Other strategy papers that were concerned with outreach strategies in general, dealt with the question of self-reliance and how to cope with the fast growth of the EECMY. A solution can only be found by giving more importance to the grass-root-level. Guidelines for especially young and yet weak congregations in Muslim areas have to be prepared in order to provide ways, on which self-reliance can be achieved. The incarnational theology is a helpful guideline and practical consequences need to be drawn out of it. Guidelines are also needed for the post-conversion period, in which the congregation has to provide special care for the converts in order to accompany them through the stages of isolation and separation towards integration. If such guidelines with practical suggestions are not available, the approaches of witness leading to conversion are questionable. The question "what does contextuality mean in an African context or more particular in the Ethiopian context?" has to be evaluated in missiological studies. Knud Jorgensen has provided a convincing presentation of different models of contextualisation, which had been taken up by S. Abdo partly. Missiological studies may also help to clarify the terms witness and conversion, and could support to find solutions for the post-conversion period, which has to provide special care for the converts during the Christian contextual socialisation process.

The answer to the question, how to achieve a balanced approach, lies within the ability to make all approaches support each other. All approaches need all other approaches in order to become strong. The improvement of the balanced approach through correction or by strengthening weaker approaches, improves the witness. The "Missio Dei" reality has to be studied on theological and interreligious grounds in order to clarify it sufficiently. The faith and opinion that God works behind all human efforts and is present in all contexts, including the religion Islam with its adherents, had been found in the primary sources at various places. The question, "Under what conditions God is carrying out his work in Islam or not?" has important consequences for all approaches and eventually lead to revision.

The fourth section of chapter III examined the concepts of the EECMY PROCMURA-AC, including the terms of reference which reflected on the aim, objectives, tasks and organisational matters, other matters related to PROCMURA and EECMY activities in relation to CMR, and on the wider horizon of CMR including ecumenical and interreligious efforts. The interim summary made clear, that the AC as a link between PROCMURA, the EECMY and the grass-root-level serves as an important body in CMR. The creation of sub-AC at the synod and area work levels has to be organised by the AC, in order to improve the

link to the grass-root-level. The terms of reference of the AC provide a good place to organise the work and to prepare strategies and guidelines in accordance with PROCMURA and in accordance with the Ethiopian context, of which the doctrine of the EECMY is one part. The balanced approach should be unfolded in all possible directions, including the production and distribution of materials. The link to the academic training institutions should be included in the terms of reference. Since the AC should become an ecumenical body, a theological fundament for the cooperation in CMR has to be elaborated and included in the terms of reference. The interreligious relations to Muslims also have to be clarified for the terms of reference, for which a theological fundament and a declaration of position are needed. The attempts at ecumenical unity throughout the last four decades revealed that the EECMY in its efforts was overstretched with this task, and that help has to be given by international bodies such like PROCMURA, in cooperation with the WCC, the AACC, the ELC and the LWF, in order to organize national meetings, on which a national AC could be developed. Other matters related to PROCMURA and the EECMY concentrated again on the ecumenical aspect, especially on the relationship between the EOTC and the EECMY. PROCMURA should take an objective stance with this regard. Further, PROCMURA's view on witness had not yet resulted in official guidelines, which have to be developed, for which an ecumenical and therefore common fundament has to be created, since especially in the conversion-oriented approach the doctrine guides the form of witness. The perspectives of the WCC could prove to be helpful[1022]. PROCMURA's women's program added an important aspect in CMR. The development of this wing is under process in the EECMY, and the first trained women will take up this work soon. With regard to the literature and other materials that are to be used in CMR in Ethiopia, the theological criteria for the use and the classification of the contents still need to be examined and brought into accordance with the EECMY's doctrine and constitution. The same can be said with regard to the translation of books. The translation of the Bible in local languages has to be encouraged. The interreligious relations were and are helpful in order to improve the understanding of one another, and to discover common ground for the cooperation in activities in favour of the nation's welfare, and to fight together against poverty and epidemics, and to stand together for peace and justice, since all these are common to both Christianity and Islam. Both religions are also bold to declare that they believe in one creator, who wants the human beings to serve humanity positively in all possible means. The "Missio Dei" reality appears at

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[1022] Sperber, Christians.

times even within interreligious relations. This is in fact the widest horizon and reality to be discovered in CMR. Further tasks had been indicated within the wider frame, in which the EECMY with her efforts represents one important link. However, this link contributes to the worldwide efforts to improve the understanding in interreligious relations, and to promote the peaceful relationship between Christians and Muslims, which is again necessary in order to increase the understanding of Islam and approaches the EECMY carries out in Ethiopia in the future.

2. Overview of relevant points for the EECMY towards guidelines

Only the headlines shall be presented here. These shall indicate the content that still has to be formulated, i.e. the explanations. Some of the explanations can be found in this study, others still have to be elaborated.

I.   The history of the EECMY with regard to CMR

       1. Landmarks

            a) Peter Heyling

            b) Other pioneers (Krapf, Pilgrim missionaries, Harms and others)

            c) The SEM efforts: Jiren (and Geleb)

            d) Start with the IAP/PROCMURA (Gunnar Hasselblatt)

            e) Shamsudin Abdo Ahmed's strategy paper

       2. Researchers

            a) Gunnar Hasselblatt

            b) Yonas Deressa

            c) Burkhard Peter

            d) Terje Ostebo

            e) Peter Ford

            f) Others

       3. Workshops, courses and seminars

       4. Academic training institutions

       5. Attempts at ecumenical unity

       6. Interreligious relations

II.   "Missio Dei"

       1. Biblical and theological foundation (Lutheran doctrine)

a) God at work in the contexts and through his ministers

b) Call to Mission (The Great Commandment)

2. "Missio Dei" in interreligious relations

a) God in Islam?

b) God and Allah

3. Consequences for CMR

III. Incarnation

1. Biblical and theological foundation

2. Lutheran doctrine

3. The policies of the EECMY

a) The constitution

b) Holistic ministry: "On the Interrelation Between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development" (1972)

c) Self-reliance: "Memorandum" (1975)

4. Incarnation in CMR

IV. Understanding Ethiopian Islam and Muslims

1. The history of Ethiopian Islam

2. The typology of Ethiopian Islam

3. Concepts of understanding

a) Contextual understanding

aa) Visits and dialogue

ab) Co-experience of the Muslims spirituality

b) Indigenous understanding

ba) Genuine insights

bb) How to use converts as a resource

c) Theological understanding

ca) Common themes

cb) Learning in dialogue

d) Socio-religious understanding

da) Studies of the socio-religious background

db) Syncretism

4. Consequences for CMR

        c) The humanitarian oriented approach

            ca) Holistic ministry and social care

            cb) Development projects (at the grass-root level)

        d) The congregation-oriented approach

            da) The congregation within the Muslim dominated area

            db) The congregation as a witness

        e) The balanced approach (multifaceted approach)

            ea) Guidelines on how the approaches can be balanced

3. Silent and audible (verbal) witness

4. Strategy papers and guidelines

VII.   The congregation and converts at the grass-root-level

1. Settlement in biblical and church-historical dimensions (including the EECMY)

        a) Isolation

        b) Separation

        c) Integration

2. Post-conversion care

        a) Need

        b) Guidelines

3. Indigenous and contextual socialisation

        a) Need

        b) Guidelines

4. Support to be given by the EECMY

VIII.   PROCMURA

1. History

2. Aim and objectives

3. Structure and organisation

4. Material and guidelines

        a) Books

        b) Newsletters

5. Women's wing (youth wing)

6. The EECMY AC

        a) History

b) Terms of Reference

c) Tasks

d) Sub-AC's

IX.   Ecumenical efforts

1. Theological fundament

2. The WCC and the AACC

3. Creation of a national ecumenical AC

       a) The relationship with the EOTC

       b) The relationship with the Catholic Church

       c) The relationship with other evangelical churches

       d) Problems and possible solutions

X.   Interreligious relations

1. Theology of religions

2. Dialogue

3. Creation of a national interreligious forum

4. Common activities

5. Interreligious study center

V. APPENDICES

1. Primary Sources.

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3. Abbreviations

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
AC	Area Committee (PROCMURA body on the national level)
BC	Before Christ
CMR	Christian-Muslim Relations
CO	Central Office (of the EECMY)
Derg	Provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia
DMT	Department for Mission and Theology (the former GMD)
ECFE	Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EIASC	Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (see SCIA)
ELC	European Liaison Committee
ELM	Evangelical Lutheran Mission Organisation (Hermannsburg/Germany)
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
EVTC	Evangelism and Theology Commission
GHM	German Hermannsburg Mission in Ethiopia (of ELM)
GMD	EECMY Gospel Ministry Department
IAP	Islam in Africa Project
i.a.	Inter alia (among other)
i.e.	Id est (this means)
L	Letters
LUCCEA	Lutheran Communion in Central and Eastern Africa
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MYTS	Mekane Yesus Theological Seminary
NLM	Norwegian Lutheran Mission
PS	Primary Sources
PROCMURA	Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
SCA	PROCMURA Sub-Area Committee (on regional / Synod level)
SCIA	Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (see EIASC)
SCS	South Central Synod
SEM	Swedish Evangelical Mission
TEE	Theological Education by Extension
WCC	World Council of Churches