

Religious Factors that Influence Effective Evangelization to the Garre Muslims in Moyale,  
Ethiopia: A Study of Moyale Kale Heywet Church and Moyale Yehiwot Berhan Church

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ABSTRACT

This article is designed to investigate the religious factors that influence the evangelization of the Garre Muslims in Moyale, Ethiopia. The Garre community is one of the Ethiopian Somali peoples who live in Moyale. Now that Moyale is situated at the border of Kenya and Ethiopia, and as was stated in the topic that the community is found on the two sides of the border, this study was carried out among the Garre who live in Ethiopia. Specifically, in carrying out this task, the study sought to examine these factors' bearing in both the Moyale Kale Heywet and Yehiwot Birhan churches found in the region. Particularly, in coming up with reliable findings, the study employs the qualitative research data collection method. The data were collected mainly through the use of interviews, after which they were transcribed and analyzed accordingly. Through the findings of this research, various religious factors that affect the evangelization of Garre Muslims were established. These were identified as a lack of training for Christians in preparation for the task, the lack of finances for sponsoring all the activities that accompany effective evangelization, a conspicuous lack of unity among the Evangelical churches in the region - a move that would have made evangelism among the target people realistic, resistance and violence towards the Christians from Muslims, and on the part of Christians a general lack of strategies for effective mission in terms of reaching out the Garre Muslims with the Gospel message. This study also uncovers the missiological implication for the Garre Muslims in the area. Finally, the findings also demonstrate the importance of contextualization in reaching out to the Garre Muslims, rendering holistic ministries. On the part of Christians, the study established that there is a need for all the evangelical Churches in the region to be intentional both individually and corporately in establishing and enhancing vibrant evangelism among the Muslims through proper training and supporting of missionaries from the individual churches in all ways. From the foregoing, it follows that, for the expected results to be realized since they go hand in hand, this factor needs to be implemented together with all the other factors that were found affecting evangelization among the Garre community.

Key words: Christian, Evangelism, Fundamentalists, Garre, Moyale Ethiopia, Muslim evangelism, Persecution, Violence

## Introduction

The introduction and spread of Islamic religion into the Moyale area were started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the regime of Haile Selassie through the Somali and Arab Muslims in different ways. First, some Arab traders settled both in Ethiopia and Kenya for their business work. Whenever they hired people as workmen or house-helpers, the first thing they did was convert them to Islam, especially the laborers from the southern region who were initially Christians. During that time, Somalis and Arabs had big shops in Moyale town. They used to give converts cloth and support to their family during Ramadan and give Islamic names that enhanced Islam's spread in the area. Secondly, Islam was spread through civil servants transferred to Moyale and non-Arab businesspeople who came as Muslims. Finally, when Somalia gained independence, many Somalis moved to their countries, and most Arabs evacuated the area. The converts took over their businesses and properties and continued pursuing and spreading the religion.

The Garre are a sub-tribe of a larger ethnic group known as Ethiopian Somali, who live in north and northeastern Kenya and south and southeastern Ethiopia. Garre people were initially pastoralists moving from place to place with their camels and goats. However, they had contact with Somali people and were influenced by their culture and Islamic religious practices. This influence has resulted in the Islamisation of the Garre, who have become predominantly Muslim.

Urga and Gebremedhin state that in Ethiopia, there are still 33 unreached people groups made up of 24,000,000 who have yet to hear the Gospel, and the Garre Muslims are among them (Urga & Gebremedhin 2016, 1). Although the exact date of conversion of the Garre people to Islam is obscure, the main factor for their conversion was their interaction with the Somali and the Arab Muslims. The assertion shows that at the time they settled down and occupied the Moyale area, the Garre were entirely Muslims. In addition, over the years, with approximately 98% of the Garre community subscribing to Islam, their sole agenda has been to relentlessly work towards the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam with the motive of dominating all the religious and social facets of the locals. Hitherto, the Garre community plays a pertinent role towards the expansion of Islam in Moyale town in that they have well-crafted strategies that are intended to work towards the establishment of more mosques in the area thus ensuring that Islam takes root and has dominance in the locality and by so doing subvert the Christian evangelization enterprise.

Thus, while on the one hand, approximately 46 mosques have already been established in this small region and more were still under construction, on the other, the total number of Christian churches in the same locality were 14 at the time of the study. Indeed, these statistics show how the expansion of Islam has resulted from the deliberate attempt on the part of the Muslims to outdo and overrun Christianity in the region. As a matter of fact, as a result, Christianity has not been on the increase among the Garre Muslims. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the various religious factors contributing to the Islamization of the Garre people and consequently the corresponding exponential growth of Islam in the area and show what bearing the same can have in the evangelization of the same people this time in Christianity.

## Literature Review

As a religion, Islam is one of the three monotheistic religions. The others are Judaism and Christianity. Additionally, it is noteworthy to point out that Biblical scriptures such as the *Pentateuch* or *Torah*, the Psalms or *Zabur*, *Injil* (Arabic for the Gospels) have explicitly been referred to in the Qur'an. In the same vein, it is noteworthy to assert that: Islam and

Christianity have some similarities. For instance, both are missionary religions and practice the propagation of their beliefs (Pullapilly 1980, 130). Furthermore, the world over, these religions display a zeal expressed in the winning of converts. Therefore, this study seeks to show how the zeal that is a characteristic of Christianity per se can be tapped and used in reaching out to the Garre Muslims with the eternal Gospel of Jesus Christ in the area in which the research was carried out.

From the preceding, since they are lost without Christ, and God desires that all human beings be saved, the effort of reaching out to the Garre Muslims with the Gospel of Christ Jesus is of tremendous significance. God has provided the way for salvation from eternal damnation by sending His Son, the Savior Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for the iniquities of humankind. Christians have found the marvelous light of salvation and have received the command from Jesus, and so have the privilege to help those who are under the bondage of sin find their way out of spiritual darkness. According to Ephesian 2:3, "we are God's workmanship," it is imperative that Christians embrace evangelism. They are the only workers the Lord Jesus has.

Thus, the Gospel is a special and the sole means to reconcile a great multitude of people throughout the globe, one that encompasses sundry nations and nationalities, bringing them to everlasting glory (Livingstone 1993, 195). Therefore, as Christians, we are called upon to promulgate the Gospel to fulfill the divine mission that has been inaugurated from the advent of creation. "There is no message like it, and there never will be. Jesus Christ and his salvation is God's last word to a fallen world; by this message, all who believe can, and will, be eternally saved" (Parshall 1980, 203).

### **Methodology**

This study employed the research qualitative design and technique (Pope 2000, 67). Pope explains the advantage of qualitative research methods by asserting that they help identify intangible elements like social norms, ethnicity, religion, genders roles, and socioeconomic status (Ibid. 203). Therefore, the researcher chose to utilize in-depth interviews. Seidman articulates that "the root of in-depth interviewing is intense in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make out of that experience" (1998, 56).

Labrakas defines the term population as the collection or aggregation of the individuals or other elements about which inferences are to be made (2008, 590), while Mugenda and Mugenda refer to a population as the entire collection of a set of people, events, and objects or collection of all the items that one we wants to make generalizations or conclusions about (2008, 48). Therefore, the study population is the entire group of individuals with one or more characters that are in common, which are pertinent to the researcher (Gall et al., 2007, 221). It is the accessible population from which the researcher draws the sample for his study. Accessible populations are convenient for the researchers and represent the overall target population

Two churches were considered: the Moyale Kale Heywet and Yehiwot Berhan Churches. The two churches are evangelical denominations located, in Moyale, Ethiopia. The total population of the study was one thousand members. Kale Heywet church consists of seven hundred members, while Yehiwot Berhan church has three hundred members. Therefore, the informants included were one hundred and twenty people who from time to time participated in evangelism from two churches. It is from this population that the researcher drew his sample for the study.

Kerlinger and Lee define the term sampling as "the processes of selecting sub-sections of a population to represent the entire population to obtain information regarding the

matter of interest" (2000, 18). While Mouton delineated sample as "elements selected with the intention of finding out something about the total population from which they are taken" (1988, 124). Informants in qualitative research should be chosen based on their ability to provide relevant information useful to the researcher's understanding of the problem (Creswell 2003, 184). Thus, the researcher used a purposeful sampling procedure to select interviewees for the study.

Therefore, the researcher's choice was based on their participation in the Muslim evangelism from both churches. This study comprised forty-four people in total. Interviewees from Kale Heywet church were seven church leaders, one pastor, three evangelists, five youth leaders, three-woman leaders, and six ordinary members. Of these ordinary members, three were men, and three were women, all aged thirty and above who are involved in evangelism. In the Yehiwot Berhan church, there were seven church leaders, two evangelists, three youth leaders, three-women leaders, and four ordinary members. Of these ordinary members, two were men, and two were women, all aged thirty and above, who are also involved in evangelism.

In this research, ethnographic data gathering was the key to getting information in the process. This study used in-depth, open-ended interviews. The interviews' data comprises precise quotations from interviewees about their knowledge, feelings, opinions, and experience. The data consists of accurate elucidation of people's comprehension and a full assortment of interpersonal interactions (Best & Kahn 2003a, 13).

Data from interviews were collected by writing and recording. The researcher requested for permission from the interviewees to write down and record whatever they would say during the interview session. The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews and translated them as well. The interviews were carried out both in Amharic and Oromic languages as appropriate, hence the need to translate.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Inadequate Support Systems in the Churches**

Inadequate skills in Muslim evangelism emerged as a challenge as 23 out of the 44, 57% of the informants felt that when Christian's approach Garre Muslims, the latter challenged them with their knowledge of the Qur'an. The Muslims seem to be well equipped and trained with their Qur'anic education, which poses challenges when evangelizing them. According to informant 003, Christians inadequately prepared for Muslim evangelization and lack familiarity with the Qur'an, which consequently has contributed to the challenge of conducting evangelism. Informant 008 supported this by stating that the Garre Muslims are people who follow their Qur'an keenly.

Informant 009 explained that "we as the ministers and the church members should work together for Garre Muslims to receive Christ. In addition, we should give training on Muslim evangelization to Christian believers. So that they can reflect Christ through their lifestyle and dress code." He added by saying that "our Christian life should trigger in Muslims a question about their fundamental teaching of religion and that they should be attracted to Christ." In support, Informant 016 mentioned praying to God for persons from their community to receive Christ, including secretly training and teaching them to be sent back to their community.

Christians need to have training on Muslim evangelism to understand them better so that they can know how to approach them and successfully win them to Christ and, in the long run, be able to retain them in Christianity. As stated by Informant 005, an absence of understanding the character of the Garre Muslims is among the major obstacles in reaching

out to Muslims. Getting training about Muslim evangelism, including learning their language and culture, will give good exposure to evangelism.

Informant 022 felt that the church needs to equip the participants with skills and knowledge on Muslim evangelism regarding evangelism strategies and the language. According to informant 013, who had faced a challenge on how to do Muslim evangelism because of the language barrier, stated that when they accept Christ, they do not stay in Christian belief; instead, they go back to their Islamic religion. However, there are no Bible training centers in the area where local missionaries are equipped with the knowledge of God's word. In addition, there is a lack of training on how to conduct Muslim evangelism; the church leaders themselves are not well trained and equipped on Christian leadership, and there are no clear visions to reach out.

### **Inadequate Approach to Garre Muslims Evangelization**

Another factor revealed by the informant pastors and evangelists of the two churches was that they felt *Awud* (contextualization) was a robust method of the gospel proclamation to the Garre Muslims. As an approach to proclaiming and living out the Gospel once accepted, contextualization helps the believer to be invulnerable to attacks from the adherents to Islam. This is because the message will be suitable to their context. As supported by informant 001, contextualizing the gospel message within their culture, understanding, and building relationships is the mission strategy to penetrate Garre Muslims' strongholds. Informant 004 further stated that reaching and preaching to them within their context could be the option. In addition, Christians who do business among the Garre need training about the Garre Muslim culture and cultural forms in order not to be carried away by business, marriage, and other conditions proposed from the Garre Muslim side.

As MYHBC informants stated, when Christians share the Gospel to the Garre Muslims in their language, they become eager to listen. According to Informant 019 youth leader, training evangelists and pastors who will preach to the Garre Muslims in their language will bring a dynamic result in evangelism to the Garre Muslims. Another aspect that poses a challenge is that some Christians are not reflect Christ centered life to Muslims they are trying to bring to Christ.

### **Inadequate Financial Support Systems**

In the interviews, as felt by 28 of the 44, 66.6% of the informants, there is inadequate financial support from both the church leadership and the Christians as the church does not have a system that can nurture the Muslims who are coming to Christ. Another informant pointed out a shortage of financial support to local missionaries and a lack of planned fundraising to provide money for mission work. In support, MKHC elders stated that after some years, the church was financially challenged, so that they were no longer able to support the evangelists and missionaries on the field. As a result, more than eight missionaries left the mission field and are currently involved in government jobs and private businesses. Informant 043 stated that the church should purpose in enhancing relationships with willing partners. Participant 038 asserted that the church is not working on how to make a partnership with Christian NGOs and encourage them to open schools, build clinics, and bring water for the community to enhance evangelism to Garre Muslims.

Informant 023, an MYHBC evangelist, indicated that financial assistance for the evangelist and missionaries is essential. However, a church strategic plan is not engaged to solve the issue, especially in facilitating evangelism and walking with those who convert to

Christianity among the Garre Muslims. He continued by saying that it is one of the primary responsibilities of church leaders to look out for the welfare of mission workers. Still, there is no robust mobilization to provide financial support. Furthermore, Informant 007 stated that buying land for the church is more expensive on Garre Muslims' side than Borana. That means it will involve more money buying land and building churches and schools in the Garre Muslim area.

Informant 029 from MYHBC elder mentioned that the church is not bringing forth a budget plan that will facilitate Muslim evangelization. As explained by Informant 044 from MKHC, "as a church, we have the plan to reach the Garre Muslims through evangelism group initiative and financially supporting those who go out to witness, but there is no fixed allocation of finance for mission work." In support, informant 011 from MKHC said that Christian churches are not well prepared financially to take care of the church work and supporting missionaries.

### **Leadership Challenges in the Church**

The MYHBC elders described Christian leadership as the backbone of the existence of the community of believers. Informant 022, who was one of MYHBC elders, continued by saying, "We would be immature and inexperienced if we thought about the existence and continuity of the church apart from leadership." However, "There are three requirements for a good program within the church. The first is leadership, the second is leadership and the third is leadership" (Beasley-Murray 1990, 89). Murray enthusiastically addresses the importance of leadership in his statement as it has been said, "leadership is the key priority in the churches of today. Preaching is important, worship is important, pastoral care, evangelism, and social action-all these things must come high on the list. But uppermost comes leadership" (Beasley-Murray 1990, 123).

Both MKHC and MYHBC faced inner conflicts and disagreements which left them vulnerable to different kinds of splitting. An MKHC elder narrated that from 2005 to 2007, the church started experiencing disputes that led to leadership disagreements, split among the leaderships resulting in separation, and the opening of another new church, which slowed down the progress in expanding the vision and mission of the Kale Heywot Church. The chairman of MKHC proceeded to express and narrate how they have been affected as a church. A new generation of youth leaders had been raised in the church from 2008 to 2015 who were called the Fares Gospel Mission Team. Their vision and mission were to reach the communities around Moyale and other parts of Ethiopia such as Borana, Arsi, Southern Ethiopia tribes such as Bodi, Hamar, and the planted churches. Unfortunately, in 2015 another conflict happened between the youth missionary team, who were an arm of the church, and the church leaders, resulting in discrepancies and separation, which even divided the church congregations into three parts. Currently, the church is focusing only on church buildings, and their attention is on resolving conflict issues among the congregation. This causes the church to narrow down the bigger vision into a smaller one because of the lack of good leadership. Healthy and biblically rich leadership has a paramount influence and could pave the way to practice the good, sound, and profound application of the various ministries in the church consistently.

The MKHC evangelist ardently pointed out that "because of the inner leadership problem among the elders, the leaders continued to serve beyond their prescribed contracts which contributed to a split and separation of the members finding other churches or planting their churches." As stated by participants from MKHC elders, dishonesty of the leaders in terms of finance, misuse of church property contributed to the church's lack of focus on evangelization, contributing to many becoming Muslims in the town and the Moyale area.

The church's leadership problem, alongside disagreements and conflict, divides the congregation of the church, contributing to the church members leaving and forming new churches jointly with ministers by stealing the members from each other. Biblical leadership is unarguably the most distinctive factor in a church that determines the church's growth, or else lack of biblical leadership points to the failure in its entirety. Leadership is the pillar of all ministries that hold together every activity to develop and extend God's kingdom. As long as leadership does not evidence an attitude of servanthood and is tied to the scripture's reality, the biblical mission and vision passed through godly fathers through generations may get lost as it reaches a current generation. The Bible has ample teachings on leadership; one may get ideas from the professional arena, yet it should be strictly assessed before implementing in the church leadership.

### **Lack of Mentorship**

The leadership has not been able to put up well-coordinated mentorship programs. The MKHC youth leader stated that lack of mentorship, especially developing new generations on how to reach out to Muslims and other communities, had not been applied. As explained by participants from MKHC, there are well-written plans on how to reach out, but the leaders are not ready to implement them. In addition, the leadership has not been able to give direction on the diverse preaching and teachings; the preachers have only concentrated on aspects that please the congregants. According to the MKHC pastor, the preaching always has been geared towards prosperity gospel that focuses on prosperity, not thoroughly biblical teaching on salvation. Therefore, instead of making disciples of nations as Jesus commanded, the tendency of individual churches going for members from other churches to fill theirs is the routine. This contradicts the Great Commission's purpose of reaching out to evangelize to the nations.

The leaders and ministers of MKHC and MYHBC have a common understanding, if not identical, about leadership ministry. However, it is not sufficient and practical in terms of mentoring new leaders. Leadership, like other ministries, considers and utilizes content, context, and method through developing new leaders. Christian leaders are obligated to mentor, nurture, and bring up young leaders, taking as the example Jesus, Paul, and other apostles in the early church.

### **Lack of Holistic Ministry to the Garre Muslims**

Moyale Kale Heywet Church has tried to reach out through wholistic ministry by inviting NGOs to assist the community with the development projects. There are relief projects such as the Medan Act, which helps empower the community in terms of health, self-helping groups that support the community by saving money, and relief projects in the community, especially during drought. According to the MKHC elders, the projects were door openers to reach out to the community with the Gospel. However, primarily those who benefited from the NGO projects were the Borana community; and the church could not extend her vision to reach Garre Muslims in the area. This development project created disagreements among church leaders because of their low educational background, which hindered the church's vision and mission and ended up closing.

### **Lack of Unity among Churches**

Informant 004 stated that the unity of churches is very significant; however, the churches are not working together; as a result, those who come to Christ from Muslim

background go back to Islam. In support, Participant 006 mentioned that there are disagreements, unforgiveness among the Christians, lack of unity, and fear that promotes uncertainty among the churches because of the transfer of membership from one church to the other, which made them only focus on the program, and lack of passion for Muslim evangelism.

According to informant 012, an elder from MYHBC, lack of unity among the Christian churches hinders reaching the Garre Muslims with the Gospel because, without unity, churches will not put emphasis on their mission of reaching out to unevangelized people groups. Further, informant 013, MYHBC evangelist, expresses that there are more than 14 churches in the town, but they do not have a healthy coexistence in praying communally and reaching out to the Muslims. Informant 002 pointed that if all churches come together as people belonging to one kingdom with the same purpose in an inner will to win Garre Muslims to Christ, that will create a great potential for the Gospel of Christ to reach them. Further, according to Participant 009, they should respond by working together as ministers and church members for Garre Muslims to receive Christ.

### **Business Prowess of Garre Muslims**

In Islam, business is considered as part of their religious acts, and hence it is considered under the religious factors discussed in this section. Informant 027 asserted that the Garre Muslims used to be nomadic but presently, especially those in Moyale, control the business sectors. Their business transactions attract the other tribes to get involved with business-making among them and others serving within their homes as house-helpers. Informant 012, one of the MKHC elders, pointed out that Muslims consider Christians lazy and economically poor. However, the financial power and the control of the area's business have motivated them to attract people to their Islamic faith from Christians and traditional religious people like Borana. Informant 044 stated that Garre Muslims are empowered with a financial capacity which enabled them to convert non-Muslims and build mosques in different parts of Moyale town. However, once non-Muslims get money support from Muslims, they start blocking any Christian evangelizing in their area.

#### **Garre Muslim Evangelization by the Two Churches**

As MYHBC elder stated, they rarely reach out individually to the Muslims with the Gospel, but as a church, they sometimes reach out to the Muslims through the organized evangelism team and prayer. According to MKHC elders, they have reached out to them through the means of cleaning the town and praying at the Garre Muslim areas of the town. When the informants were asked whether they conduct Muslim evangelization or not, 8 out of the 44 informants agree that they participated in Muslim evangelization in one way or the other. There was a general feeling from the informants that this was the right time for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to reach the Garre Muslims; that is the reason why they need to reach them. Preaching about Jesus Christ is the only way of winning souls among the Garre Muslims. According to informant 007, who participated in Muslim evangelism, it is the right time than any other period because of the fast spreading of Islam in Moyale town. Participant 013 said that he has never participated in outreach but sometimes shares the Gospel in hotels, business centers, coffee shops, and other places and through prayers. Further confirmation was done by Participant 012; "Yes, I do Muslim evangelism because the Bible speaks about the second coming of Christ which is near, and it is my heart thrill to reach them through the sharing of the Gospel and prayer."

On the other hand, 30 informants of the 44 stated they do not participate because it is challenging to evangelize to the Garre Muslims as it is difficult to convince them to be



converted to Christianity. According to informant 002, "With God, everything is possible though there can be difficulty in reaching the Garre Muslims with human beings." Furthermore, 6 out of 44 informants stated that they have only participated once in Muslim evangelism. They felt that their experiences with the Muslims during evangelism gave them a lot of fear, as they sounded like they hated Christianity with a passion. While the rest, 38 out of the total 44 informants, pointed that they have never participated in Muslim evangelism. As stated by informant 003, "Muslims hate Christianity, and the mention of Christianity could even cost your life." According to MKHC elders, in 1990, evangelism was done from Moyale up to Mount Agal, located within the Garre community area. However, since then, there has been no strategical evangelism done to reach Garre Muslims.

### **Attitude Toward Garre Muslim Evangelization**

When the informants were asked whether there are positive things and negative things (the tendency of undesirable outcomes) about evangelizing the Garre Muslims in Moyale Town, the researcher received feedback from the informants. In responses given by all 44 participants, they provided positive and negative things about evangelizing the Garre Muslims in Moyale Town.

#### *Positivity about Evangelism to Garre Muslims*

This section discusses the positive things that were singled out by the participants concerning the evangelization of Garre Muslims. Positivity in this section implies the quality of being encouraged or promising of a successful or desirable outcome. The informants felt that evangelizing Muslims would provide an opportunity for interaction with them and giving time to those who accepted Christ to be followed up through showing honesty as Christians. However, in doing so it can be in comparison to Muslims' honesty and looking for other ways of moving closer to them. According to participants from MYHBC youth leaders, it opens the door to buying plots of land among them and living among them, interacting, doing business, and being familiar with their culture.

However, MKHC elders explained that, since the tribal conflict between Garre and Borana people, it has made Garre Muslims become approachable and accessible for other tribes to live among them. Significantly, the recent conflict of 2019 which had happened between the Borana and Garre, is making the Garre people to allow other tribes to live among them. The reason behind this was during the conflict, the Garre community was attacked and affected because of their homogenous habitation, while on the Borana side, more than thirty tribes live together. Therefore, evangelizing them creates room for expansion of the Gospel and bringing new souls to the kingdom of God.

According to informant 014, in terms of peace, sharing the Gospel avoids violence and allows Christians to help people to live in peaceful association with one another. Informant 023 stated that "Our God is God of peace thus, without evangelizing the gospel to the Garre Muslims they will not experience the harmony of coexistence with other people and more crucially everlasting life through Jesus Christ." An informant from MKHC mentioned that "through our evangelization to the Garre Muslims God will touch their heart to be approachable people." Despite the challenges, it shows that evangelizing the Garre Muslims is very helpful in enhancing a good relationship with them.

#### *Negativity Towards Muslim Evangelism*

This section discusses the negative things that were singled out by the participants concerning the evangelization of Garre Muslims. Negativity in this section implies the tendency of an undesirable outcome.

Informant 001 stated that the church's presence among the Garre Muslims is one means to reach them, but there are persecutions toward the Christians who preach to them. According to MKHC elders, if anyone is identified as a Christian among the Garre Muslims, the person will be shunned socially. Finally, to their extreme decision, the person will be killed. Furthermore, MKHC evangelists asserted that Garre could only marry among themselves even from close relatives and live together; therefore, they do not allow any other tribe or ethnic group to mingle and live with them. As a result, most of them fear cultural repercussions and family ex-communication, which deter them from converting to other religions.

### **Hostility from Garre Muslims**

#### **Fear of Jihad from Fundamentalists**

Participants from MKHC expressed that the Garre Muslims are very zealous for their Islamic religion and dedicated and ready to defend their religion in every possible way. Moreover, both those from a rural setting and town are conservative and were well acquainted with Qur'anic teaching from their childhood in their learning centers called *madrasa*. To become and be called committed Muslims, they had to fight non-Muslims. The sheiks and imams have a spiritual influence on their Muslim community because of their Islamic commitment and knowledge to reach out to several Muslims and traditional religious followers through their organized dawah (outreach).

Some of the Garre Muslims take the exercise of Islamic teaching and practices seriously and have negative attitudes towards Christians. As one informant 015 from MYHBC stated, "Jihad is a sensitive and often debatable issue when it is interpreted; some say it is a holy war and others define it as terrorism." Thus, when Christian believers know the consequence of jihad, they panic and become discouraged to share the Gospel with the Garre Muslims.

The MYHBC youth leader explained that the Garre Muslims were perceived to have been influenced by Somali Muslims; thus, they do not allow any other tribes to mix with them, build houses among them or inter-marry them and no harmonious interaction with other neighboring communities. According to informant 019 from MYHBC, people in the Moyale area believe that the Garre Muslims work with Al-Shabab because of their unwillingness to accept and interact with other people who live in the area. This makes many other people perceive Garre Muslims as terrorists and extremists, creating the image or picture of fear among Christians not to reach out to them.

#### **Violence**

Conflict emerged as a hindrance to Muslim evangelism in Moyale town, as explained by 21 out of the 44 participants who stated that the Garre Muslims do not like Christians. Therefore, when Christians approach them for evangelism, they tend to disagree with them, which causes violence and fighting in some cases. In support, Participant 012 stated that for Christians, the fear of extremist groups from the Garre Muslim side is one of the key factors that discourage them from getting close to them. Another participant described that fear is one of the emotional inclinations which prevents Christians from reaching out to the Garre Muslims.

## Conclusion

In Moyale, Ethiopia, there are myriad challenges that churches are facing. However, as the church takes steps to achieve the Great Commission which Christ has commanded her, one thing that should be known is that Muslim evangelism is God's work, and reaching out to them can be accomplished through trusting and obeying his command.

The study has revealed that frequently there is a threat of violence toward the Christians from the Garre Muslims in Moyale that slowed down the evangelization in the area. The study shows that the main factors affecting evangelization to the Garre Muslims in Moyale are lack of training, financial support, and a lack of strong unity among the churches. Furthermore, the aspects identified which pose problems in evangelization work in Moyale town to the Garre Muslims are cultural differences and misunderstanding Muslim culture.

However, for Christian believers, there is no excuse not to support their missionaries; they should remember and follow the example of the church in Macedonian (2.Cor 8:1-5), which they gave out of their poverty. The finding demonstrates that the churches do not have missionaries supported by the church finances to work among Muslims. Therefore, as an alternative, financial support is expected from other Christian organizations instead of creating money-generating means for mission work from the church. Nevertheless, further teaching on Christian stewardship and encouragement is needed. As this researcher writes this paper, the church's mission is not yet completed; the Garre Muslim community is still unreached with the Gospel. The churches in Moyale, Ethiopia, have to look back and see the areas in which missionaries succeeded and failed and improve on them to make progress for mission in the remaining part of people groups.

## Recommendations

Jesus shed His blood and ransomed all humankind for God's kingdom from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. Therefore, our ultimate objective as the body of Jesus Christ is to take the Gospel to every people on earth. To achieve this, the church has to practice and follow God's way of doing missions and bringing souls to His kingdom to fulfill her responsibility and seek and use new various methods. The following suggestions can help Moyale Ethiopia churches if taken into consideration in their work of evangelization to the Garre Muslims.

Furthermore, the churches should open a mission center to train their members for missionary work and leadership in the church. Because of the lack of knowledge of Muslim evangelization, Christian businessmen and women are converting to Islam. Training Christians who work and do different businesses among the Garre Muslims will create ways to penetrate to them with the Gospel.

The researcher suggests that every church in Moyale should have a distinct department for the mission through which they can form the strategy for mission and recruit more missionaries and raise funds for mission work. Since the Garre Muslims do not allow other communities to live among them, the church should come up with new methods to work amongst them. Especially through holistic ministry such as the NGOs, building schools, clinics, since the area has a scarcity of water, digging water for them and making relational evangelization through that. To succeed in Muslim evangelism, the churches should have a mutual relationship and strong interdenominational fellowship and unity. Developing unity with the churches will be the most significant force to increase the number of missionaries and advance the Gospel into different parts of Moyale, Ethiopia, and beyond Moyale.

Contextualization of the Gospel; the church needs to come up with strategies that the Muslims will embrace. The schemes with which churches can reach Garre Muslims are in their contexts, using their language and the Qur'an and dressing like them to be accepted. Contextualization is a crucial method to deliver the gospel message within their culture. Furthermore, understanding their cultural practices and building relationships with them will also be another mission strategy to penetrate Garre Muslims' strongholds. Evangelists and missionaries ought to see the people's felt needs of and contextualize their message to do discipleship training and plant church and develop local leaders for the newly planted church.

### **Missional Implication**

Both the churches have to work in their future directions for mission among the Garre Muslims; one thing to do is train local missionaries and evangelists on how to reach the Garre Muslims and survey their culture since both churches' ministers are from different cultural backgrounds. To work in a cross-cultural context, the missionaries need to affirm and transform culture. The Garre Muslims are sensitive people in their Muslim culture, so the missionaries need to be wise on how to deal with issues that seem strange to them. If workers of cross-cultural missions renew their worldview about the community around them, it will become easy for them to do missions through various difficulties. Therefore, both vision and concept renewal are very important for missions. Many churches are unable to carry out missionary mandates because of inaccurate and distorted images and concepts of missions. Therefore, there is a need for the church to go back to the Bible and see Pauline mission theology, through which they can change their vision and mission concept. When the values of the kingdom become operative in the personal life of Christians and the church's structural life as the body of Christ, all the other things become viable.

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