“Fulani?” she responds that some nomadic *Fulbe* have rejected Islam completely, whereas others have used Islam in an opportunistic way without changing their central allegiances. When nomadic *Fulbe* settle, however, they are soon Islamized and the Islamic law (with which they try to identify their ethical code of *Pulaaku*) becomes their central allegiance.

R. Nelson has also analyzed the worldview of nomadic *Fulbe*. He sees the worldview as an “underlying system of presuppositions, values and allegiances . . . through which experiences are viewed and interpreted” (1997:v). His analysis of the religion and culture of *Wodaabe Fulbe* leads him to propose two basic themes in their culture, *Pulaaku* and fertility. Through an analysis of the pre-Islamic religion of the *Fulbe* (see Chapter 5), he finds the basic allegiance of the nomadic *Fulbe* to be the central tripole of cattle-woman-self.

What then about Islam? R. Nelson observes that Islam has gained influence not only among the sedentary non-pastoral *Fulbe*, but also among the nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoral *Fulbe*. Where Islam becomes strong, the religious system of Islam replaces the *Pulaaku* system. R. Nelson concludes that “If Islam is really successful in reaching to the deeper levels of nomadic *Fulbe* life, they will be faced with a call to a reorientation of allegiance to Allah and the Islamic brotherhood. If Islam remains on the surface, traditional *Fulbe* authority may continue its decline with a possible result of disintegration of nomadic culture” (1997:98). According to R. Nelson, however, Islam still remains on the surface level among most nomadic *Fulbe*, and the nomadic *Fulbe* have not yet changed their basic allegiance (1997:78-79, 86-87, 97-99).

My analysis confirms the conclusions of Veltkamp and R. Nelson concerning the centrality of the allegiance to cattle among pastoral *Fulbe* today. As Veltkamp points out, commitment to cattle leads to commitment to a life in the bush characterized by individualism and freedom counterbalanced by the ethical code of *Pulaaku*. Veltkamp,
however, seems to underestimate the increasing influence of Islam on the thinking and practice of pastoral Fulbe. It has already been stated that, among many pastoral Fulbe, Islam is becoming a commitment, although not so important as their commitment to the welfare and fertility of their cattle.

R. Nelson acknowledges the growing influence of Islam on the pastoral Fulbe, and foresees that the Islamic system may one day replace the Pulaaku system, as pastoral Fulbe’s central allegiance shifts from the cattle-woman-self tripole to God and the Islamic brotherhood. There may, however, as Gilliland has pointed out, be varieties of integration between Islam and traditional African religious systems. Gilliland in his book, *African Religion Meets Islam: Religious Change in Northern Nigeria* (1986), distinguishes between three types and extents of Islamic influence on traditional religion: (1) traditional practice that continues alongside a non-integrated Islam, (2) traditional practice that becomes merged with a folk Islam, and (3) visible Islam that is overlaid on a traditional base (1986:67). Among the pastoral Fulbe societies, examples of all three models of interaction between Pulaaku and Islam are found.

Gilliland, however, adds a variant to the third category, which might be considered to be a fourth category: a society that universally conforms to the Muslim ritual but still has a traditional core (1986:74). Some ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria, which are considered by Muslims and Christians alike to be highly Islamized, such as the Nupe, fall into the fourth category. Not only have these societies adapted their traditional thinking and practice to Islamic belief and ritual, but they have adapted Islam to their traditional thinking and practice. In the case of the Nupe, Gilliland points out that in spite of the fact that they seem to be the most regularized as an Islamic society, tribal interests continue to dominate when the Nupe people as a whole feel threatened (1986:74, 211).

The same pattern may come to exist with the pastoral Fulbe. Although they continue to become more and more Islamized, as long as they depend on cattle for their
survival, their concern for their cattle will probably continue to dominate when they are exposed to conflicting religious demands. Loyalty to one’s ethnic group has proved in many cases to be stronger among Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria in recent decades than loyalty to one’s religious group and religious principles. Therefore, we should not be surprised that Muslim pastoral Fulbe’s attachment to their cattle, on which they depend for survival, in many cases is stronger than their attachment to the Islamic principles and the Muslim community.

This analysis has shown that the pastoral Fulbe live in a “force-field” between the two “powers,” Pulaaku and Islam. Both Pulaaku and Islam are part of the worldview of almost all pastoral Fulbe today. Pulaaku represents the immediate, this-worldly needs of the Fulbe (in the form of the welfare and fertility of the cattle and the welfare of the family), whereas Islam, in its more orthodox form, represents the long-term, other-worldly needs in the form of escape from hell-fire and admission into paradise. Pulaaku helps the Fulbe to survive in their traditional world of the bush and the cattle, whereas Islam helps them gain acceptance and find their way in the modern world of the village and the town.

For pastoral Fulbe, the allegiance to cattle has traditionally been more important than allegiance to Islam. In the eyes of pastoral Fulbe, it is still possible to be a true Pullo without Islam, but it is not possible to be a true Pullo without cattle. Increasingly pastoral Fulbe have come to realize, however, that it is not possible gain access to the modern world and to the world of paradise without Islam. Therefore, Islam is becoming a more and more important part of the worldview of pastoral Fulbe.

39 The religious system of spirits and magic does not form an independent third power, competing with the two others for allegiance since it in practice easily joins hands with both Pulaaku and Islam.
All pastoral Fulbe live between the two powers of Pulaaku and Islam. Traditionally pastoral Fulbe have been pulled closest to Pulaaku, but recently there has been a tendency for individuals and groups to draw closer to Islam. This tendency is seen when nomadic Fulbe become semi-nomadic, and it is almost a sociological rule that when pastoral Fulbe lose their cattle and become sedentary they become strongly Islamized. There are also certain clans, who though they are still nomadic or semi-nomadic, have gained a reputation for being more committed to Islam than are other clans.

When individuals, especially young men, leave their pastoral relatives in the bush with the cattle to work in the town, they escape the magnetic power of cattle and Pulaaku and are converted to a worldview in which the central allegiance is the principles of Islam and the community of Islam. This happens even though these young men keep in contact with their relatives in the bush, and even though they one day intend themselves to return to the bush. Finally, education is pulling young Fulbe towards Islam because education means either Qur’anic education or modern education in a nomadic school or a primary school in a village, where they will invariably be taught Islam.

**Summary**

All three religious structures play important roles in the lives of pastoral Fulbe in Northern Nigeria today and all three structures will influence their encounter with the church and the gospel. The first structure is the Islamic structure, which is used mainly in the rites of passage and is most often operated by an outsider, a malam from the village or town. Its function is to give ritual form and meaning to critical social events and to link the pastoral Fulbe to the wider world--first their town Fulbe brothers, and second the wider Muslim community. The Islamic religious structure also increasingly serves to
address the need of eternal salvation, a need which the teaching of the Islamic law strengthens.

Although, only few pastoral Fulbe practice an orthodox form of Islam, their interaction with Islam over centuries has lefts its indelible mark on almost all pastoral Fulbe. Through time, the Islamic religion represented by the Qur’an and Islamic education has gained a high prestige among them. Whenever the Fulbe consider aspects of life other than those connected with the cattle and the life in the bush, their religious frame of reference is increasingly determined by Islam. Therefore it is necessary to think through how the presentation of the gospel may be related to the Qur’an. It is furthermore necessary to develop Christian rites that express Christian understandings of these main events in the pastoral Fulbe’s life cycle in cultural forms that make sense to them.

The second religious structure is that of spirits and magic, which is used mainly in rites of healing and prevention of diseases and accidents and is most often operated by insiders, both specialists and ordinary people. Most of these rites are shared with other tribes in the area, irrespective of their formal religious affiliation. The function of spirits and magic is to channel to individuals a power stronger than the hostile powers threatening them so that they may survive and prosper in all of the insecurities and dangers of the life in the bush.

The crucial role of spirits and magic in the life of pastoral Fulbe, both as sources of protection and of fear, necessitates the development of a theology of the Holy Spirit and rituals that may communicate to them the power of the Spirit. The trust in Jesus Christ that should replace their reliance on magical objects and practices must be expressed in rituals and symbols that make it possible for them to actually exercise their new faith in a practical way vis-à-vis the dangers and challenges of the pastoral life.
*Pulaaku* is the third religious structure. It is used to regulate the personal interactions within pastoral *Fulbe* society and to protect maintain their identity as pastoral *Fulbe*. The main function, however, is to secure the welfare and fertility of their herds and families. This religious structure is operated entirely by insiders of the pastoral *Fulbe* societies.

Since cattle plays such an important role in their religion, and their identity is so closely connected with the possession of cattle, any attempt to present the gospel to the pastoral *Fulbe* must address squarely the question about the Bible’s perspective on cattle and the compatibility of pastoral life with the Christian faith. It is furthermore necessary to consider how Christian teachings and rituals may be used to communicate God’s blessing on their cattle. Finally, the most disgraceful comment for a Pullo to hear is that he/she has no *Pulaaku*. A Christian Pullo who is seen not to have any *Pulaaku* will feel very bad about himself/herself and will be almost completely unable to serve as a credible witness to other *Fulbe*. Therefore, the *Fulbe* must be shown that the ethical code of *Pulaaku* is not opposed to Christian ethics. This can be done by showing Jesus as the ideal good shepherd incarnating the ideals of *hakkiilo*, *munyaal* and *semteende* in his life and ministry.

There is much overlap between these three structures or dimensions. Both the Islamic structure and the *Pulaaku* structure are clearly connected to communities, whereas the structure of spirits and magic is very individualistic and is easily fused with either the Islamic structure, thereby underlining the folk Muslim character of their religion, or with the *Pulaaku* structure, thereby stressing the animistic character of *Pulaaku*.

The analysis of these three dimensions of the religion of the pastoral *Fulbe* has clearly shown that *Pulaaku* is the most important religious structure for the pastoral *Fulbe*. When the demands of Islam conflicted with the demands of *Pulaaku* and spirits
and magic, Islam had to give way if the concern of the Fulbe for their cattle was at stake. In the pastoral Fulbe worldview, Pulaaku (centered around their attachment to and dependence on cattle) is the central allegiance or commitment. Almost all pastoral Fulbe today, however, consider themselves to be Muslims. We must reckon with the fact that allegiance to Islam is an element in their worldview. Its importance and centrality can only be determined by an analysis of the group or individuals in question.

The gospel of Jesus Christ must be presented in such a way that it touches and challenges the basic allegiances and commitments of the pastoral Fulbe. Islam was unable to replace cattle as the pastoral Fulbe’s primary allegiance. For a Christian conversion to take place, pastoral Fulbe must begin to give Jesus Christ their first allegiance. This does not mean, however, that pastoral Fulbe have to allow their present worldview in its totality to be replaced by a Western, so-called Christian, worldview, or with the worldview of the Christian farmers from animistic backgrounds. The conversion of the pastoral Fulbe should be a conversion within their context, not a conversion out of their context.
CHAPTER 6
HISTORY OF MISSION TO FULBE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

It was in the historical, social, and religious context described in the two previous chapters that the mission among pastoral Fulbe was carried out. While the missionary movement in Northern Nigeria began around 1900, only in the 1960s did the mission agencies and churches begin to organize mission initiatives aimed at reaching the Fulbe.¹ Inspired by the work of the Islam in Africa Project, both conservative and more ecumenical groups slowly began to consider ways in which to share the gospel with Fulbe. In the 1980s, churches and mission agencies began to organize Fulbe mission projects. By the end of the 1990s, most larger churches had established Fulbe mission projects, and the first few hundred Fulbe had become Christians.

The Islam in Africa Project

The missionary movement in Northern Nigeria, beginning in around 1900, focused only on animistic ethnic groups until around 1960. In 1952 the Church

¹ Before the 1960s there was no organized Fulbe mission work in Northern Nigeria. A few expatriate missionaries and some African church members on their own tried to share the gospel with Fulbe, and Fulbe also came in contact Christianity through church institutions such as dispensaries and hospitals. The number of Fulbe converts before the 1960s, however, was very small. One of the first evangelists in the work of the SUM-D was a Christian Pullo originally from Yola, Malam Muhammad (baptized Markus). For many years he was a trusted co-worker of the mission, but he was never assigned to work among Fulbe (R. Nelson 1980:18). Malam Adamu Dogon Yaro, a Pullo from Kagoro, came in contact with SIM missionaries and was converted in the late 1940s. In the early 1950s a couple of Fulbe men in the SUM-English branch area of Nigeria (present day Plateau state) were converted (Martenson 1974:35).
Missionary Society (CMS) and the Methodist Missionary Society asked Trimingham to do a survey of Islam in West Africa, the result of which was published in 1955 in his book *The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa* (1955). Trimingham observed that the individualistic approach of Western mission would have to be changed to a community approach when sharing the gospel with Muslims in West Africa and that it would have to abandon its separation of religion from other aspects of life and adopt a “total” (or as we might say today a “holistic”) approach. Since Christianity was perceived by Muslims to be a Western religion, the work of mission would have to be done primarily by the African churches. The main thrust of Trimingham’s book, however, was his call for a deeper understanding and appreciation of Islam. Since “the attitude of Christians towards Islam largely determines the attitude of Muslims towards Christianity” (1955:40), Trimingham recommended that the church without abandoning its proclamation of the gospel enter into dialogue with Muslims (1955:44).

The call of Trimingham was heeded by church and mission leaders. In a meeting in Ibadan of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the African church leaders recognized their obligation to bring the gospel to their Muslim neighbors and called on their overseas mission partners to assist them in this great task. At the request of the International Missionary Council, and as a follow-up to the recommendations of the Ibadan conference, the French missionary leader Pierre Benignus, in 1959, visited a number of African countries in order to discuss with Protestant church and mission leaders the steps to be taken to equip the Christian community in Africa for its task of presenting a positive Christian witness to the Muslim community. This led to the establishment of special area committees, first in Northern and Western Nigeria and Ghana, and soon afterwards also in Cameroon and Kenya. The committees consisted of representatives of local churches and missions. Also in 1959, a number of European
mission leaders met and established a European Liaison Committee, and the Islam in Africa Project (IAP, later called Project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa, PROCMURA) came into being.

There was a consensus that this project should not be a new mission organization, but that it should be a joint effort for which mission organizations would send Islam experts to work together with local committees to equip church members to interact with Muslims. One of the first area committees was formed in Northern Nigeria, and the first Islam expert was sent out from Holland. The expert settled first in Numan, where the headquarters of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Sudan (later renamed Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria) were located. In 1965, IAP established a Study Center in Ibadan, Nigeria (Haafkens 1984:10-11).

The objective of IAP, which has remained unchanged for about forty years, was “to keep before the Churches of Africa (South of Sahara) their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the Churches’ task of interpreting faithfully in the Muslim world the gospel of Jesus Christ” (Constitution of PROCMURA). This objective held dialogue and proclamation together in a way that made it possible for a broad spectrum of churches to join the organization. All five of the churches whose Fulbe mission projects I have researched have been involved in the work of IAP. There is strong evidence that IAP was instrumental in raising the awareness about mission to Muslims in general and mission to Fulbe in particular. The IAP played a strong part in inspiring new initiatives taken in the 1960s. In the 1960s, initiatives were taken both in the more conservative, evangelical mission organizations and churches, such as SIM and ECWA, and in the more ecumenically minded mission organizations.

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2 In the middle of the 1970s, the European Liaison Committee handed over the leadership of the project to an IAP council consisting entirely of African church leaders. But most of the funds for the work still come from European mission organizations.
and churches, such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Lutheran churches. Although there was an overlap between the initiatives of the conservative evangelical movement and those of the ecumenical movement, it is still possible to distinguish between the two different developments.

**Conservative Evangelical Mission Initiatives**

Today ECWA has by far the largest number of *Fulbe* converts in Northern Nigeria. ECWA and its mission partner, the Society for International Ministries, formerly known as the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), were the pioneers in *Fulbe* mission.

**Fulbe Congregations in Dahomey and in Kwara State**

For many years, SIM worked among the *Bimbara* people in Dahomey (now called Benin). In 1958, the *Fulbe* began to respond to the Christian message and SIM started a work among sedentary *Fulbe* in the Borgu area. This was the first place in which groups of *Fulbe* were converted and *Fulbe* congregations were established. Some of the *Fulbe* who had become Christians in Dahomey were *Korakube Fulbe*, with an animistic-Islamic religious background. Others were *Gondo Fulbe*, the descendants of *Bimbara* children given to the *Fulbe* as domestic slaves. The *Gondo Fulbe* spoke *Fulfulde* and had adopted a *Fulbe* life-style, and a few of the *Gondo Fulbe* villages had never been strongly influenced by Islam.

One of the first *Fulbe* converts in the work of SIM in Nigeria, Malam Adamu Dogon Yaro, was sent to Dahomey in 1960 to become the first principal of a newly established Bible school for *Fulbe* in Tchatchou. When he died in 1964 and the school

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3 One of the major towns in the Borgu area is Parakou located only about thirty kilometers from the Nigerian border. Tchatchou is situated thirty kilometers south of Parakou.
was closed,\textsuperscript{4} twenty-five \textit{Fulbe} had gone through the three-year theological training program. At that time, the \textit{Fulbe} students and other converts attended the local churches, which had been established for other ethnic groups (Martenson 1974:35; “Fulani Seminar” 1969:3-4; Burkwall 1987:115-123).

The turning point in the work in Dahomey came in 1970 when the Christian \textit{Fulbe} started their own congregations. In the 1970s and 1980s, the \textit{Fulbe} congregations experienced a steady growth. P. Burkwall analyzed one congregation in Dahomey and pointed to the following causes for the church growth: (1) The \textit{Fulbe} Christians moved their houses and cattle into the same area so that they could form a Christian community of believers with the church as the center. (2) The homogeneous nature of the church made communication of the gospel to other \textit{Fulbe} more effective, using \textit{Fulfulde} and \textit{Fulbe} works of music and worship. (3) Every year they held three \textit{Fulbe} conferences for both Christian and non-Christian \textit{Fulbe}, one for men, another for women and the third for young people. (4) \textit{Fulfulde} Christian material was translated and printed in the \textit{Fulfulde} dialect of the area, and there was a strong emphasis on literacy work. (5) There was a strong emphasis on evangelism in the congregation. In particular, a New Life for All (NLFA) campaign had led to an increase in church attendance. The average Sunday church attendance in this congregation increased from seventy-five adults in 1975 to 170 adults in 1985 (1987:126-133).

In 1992 there were fifteen \textit{Fulbe} congregations in Dahomey. The gospel was carried by the \textit{Fulbe} in the Parakou region in Dahomey to their \textit{Fulbe} relatives in the Borgu area on the Nigerian side of the border, where the Baptist mission was already working (Lagardy 1992:10-11).

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\textsuperscript{4} The Bible school was reopened in 1986, and in 1992 it had thirteen students in a four year program in \textit{Fulfulde} (Lagardy 1992:10).
There are three different Fulfulde-speaking groups in the Borgu area. The first is the Korakube Fulbe, who were migrants from Benin. They came from an animistic Muslim background and had not been involved in any of the Muslim Fulbe jihads of the 19th century. The second group is the Bakube, who belonged to a strongly Muslim tradition and had migrated from a highly Islamized area in Northern Benin. The third group was the Gondo, who were bariba outcast people raised by Fulbe. Some of the Fulbe are semi-nomadic cattle herders, but the majority are farmers, some of whom likely have small herds of cattle (Gorder 1988; Adamu 1998).

Since the beginning of the 1950s, Southern Baptist missionaries from America have been in contact with Fulbe in clinics and schools. In 1959, a Baptist Yoruba pastor, E. O. Adegbola, was employed as the first full-time missionary to the Fulbe. Adegbola tried to bring Fulbe together with two other ethnic groups for worship. In 1960, Gospel Recordings with the help of American Baptist missionaries made records in Fulfulde. The same year the first Fulbe man was baptized, but shortly afterwards he went mad probably as a result of having been poisoned. The second Fulbe man was baptized in 1963, but died shortly after he had begun primary school (Burkwall 1987:163-164).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, much visitation work was done with the intention of bringing Fulbe into non-Fulbe congregations, but with very few results. In 1974, an American missionary couple, Paul and Faye Burkwall moved to Okuta in the Borgu area. Their primary assignment was to begin a Batonu Baptist high school, but occasionally they also visited the semi-nomadic Fulbe in their villages. In 1978, Faye Burkwall together with a Batonu student began to visit six Fulbe villages weekly, bringing along a tape recorder so that they could play the Gospel Recording tapes. The only man who showed interest, however, soon died (Burkwall 1987:115, 164-165).

The breakthrough in the Burkwalls’ mission to the Fulbe came in 1980 when a newly translated Batonu New Testament was distributed in all the Batonu villages in the
area. Some young *Fulbe* men took interest in the Bible. Soon eight young men indicated their wish to become Christians and began to attend Christian meetings in a *Batonu* church. In 1982, a pastor named Samuel Yero, a *Pullo* from the SIM church in Benin, moved to the Borgu area. *Fulbe* began to meet in his house, and he organized literacy classes with reading materials from Benin. The same year, the Burkwalls arranged the first *Fulbe* Christian Easter conference in the Borgu area with more than 100 *Fulbe* in attendance. One of the two *Fulbe* men who first showed interest in the gospel married a Christian *Fulbe* woman from Benin. Later the same year, Paul Burkwall baptized seventeen *Fulbe*, and by 1983 two *Fulfulde*-speaking churches had been established, one led by Samuel Yero, the other led by a *Fulbe* lay leader also from Benin (1987:107, 121-123, 165-167).

In 1983, the Burkwalls moved to Kaduna, where Paul Burkwall was assigned to lecture at the Baptist pastors’ seminary. The Burkwalls took two young *Fulbe* along for training as pastors. The Burkwalls kept in close contact with the work in the Borgu area, and around 1990, they again spent a few years there before leaving for Ghana in 1994 (Shotts 1998; Tenking 1998).

The basic strategy throughout this period was the establishment of reading classes in which the *Fulbe* were taught to read in *Fulfulde* and then the establishment of *Fulfulde*-speaking congregations. By 1988, there were three churches and five preaching stations, and altogether more than fifty baptized believers, with another 100-200 *Fulbe* identifying themselves as Christians or expressing interest in becoming Christians. Two *Fulbe* had been trained as pastors, and three others were in the training process. The most responsive *Fulbe* were the *Korakube*, followed by the *Gondo* (Gorder 1988; Burkwall 1987:107-108; Wandersee 1994:10).

In the 1990s, the church growth among the *Fulbe* in the Borgu area plateaued. In 1998, there were six congregations with about sixty baptized adult *Fulbe*. Of seven
Fulbe had been trained as pastors, six were working as pastors for Baptists churches in the Borgu area and other parts of Nigeria. The seventh pastor was working at the Sawtu Linjilila radio studio in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon (Adamu 1998; Audi 1998; Wandersee 1994:4).

**New Life for All**

In 1963, the veteran SIM missionary Gerald O. Swank, principal of the Bible school in Kagoro, together with one of his students and a Nigerian pastor, took the initiative to organize an interdenominational movement with the purpose of evangelizing unreached people, both Muslims and non-Muslims. They called the movement Sabon Rai Don Kowa (New Life for All, NLFA), and it soon spread through Northern Nigeria and became a movement of all the Protestant churches. NLFA trained their members before allowing them to be involved in evangelistic outreach, and then they sent them out in teams. Some of the evangelism teams went to the Zaria area and contacted nomadic and semi-nomadic Fulbe. It was reported that a number of Fulbe in this area had accepted Christ as their savior (Kure 1998; Swank 1977:173; Richards 1969:3).

In 1969, the NLFA took the initiative to call together a number of interested people from various churches for a three-day Fulani seminar in Kano. Church leaders, evangelists, expatriate missionaries, and Christian Fulbe participated in this seminar. The papers and the discussions dealt with the distribution of the Fulbe population, their culture, language and literature and methods of evangelism. It is interesting to note that many of the issues that were to be discussed in the following decades were first addressed at this crucial meeting.

1. **Language.** A SIM missionary working among Fulbe in Dahomey, Shirley Barbey, challenged all those who wanted to evangelize the Fulbe in Nigeria to learn the Fulfulde language because it would be much easier for Fulbe to accept the Word of God
if it was preached in their mother tongue. The participants agreed that even if the *Fulbe* understood Hausa, *Fulbe* must first be reached in the *Fulfulde* language (“Fulani Seminar” 1969:4, 13).

2. Community approach. Swank pointed out that there were two ways of evangelizing the *Fulbe*.

One whereby we extract someone from his family group and set him aside as a Christian. He is no longer able to relate to his family because he has been excluded. The other plan is to go into a family and give the gospel to all members of the family together. . . . No man lives alone. He lives with others, and the relationships of family are very important. We should present the gospel to this family unit (“Fulani Seminar” 1969:25).

Here Swank is in line with the advice given by Trimingham to replace an individualistic approach with a community approach in mission. Malam Yusufu, Wusasa, who was a Christian *Pullo* from a royal family in Wusasa, lamented the mistakes of the past.

Some of our converts before they receive the gifts of the New Birth fall back, because in the process of the unnecessary sacrifice of their own way of living they have become individualists, emphasizing the individualistic approach, and have lost the care and love of their natural community and the sense of belonging. That is what brings out the remark often heard, “Look, they are the people who separate men and women from their villages and family.” They do not belong any more (“Fulani Seminar” 1969:15).

3. Relationship to *Fulbe* religion and culture. Throughout the seminar there was a strong emphasis on getting to know and respecting the culture of the *Fulbe*. Malam Yusufu warned evangelists against imposing their own so-called Christian culture on *Fulbe* converts. Evangelists should allow Jesus to convince the *Fulbe* of what changes in their culture they should make. It was agreed that it was important to encourage new converts to continue to honor their parents and to continue their work of herding cattle after they had become Christians. Even more surprising is the following advice concerning new converts: “Do not tell them immediately that they must stop doing *salla*. Trust the Holy Spirit to show them this” (“Fulani Seminar” 1969:15-17).
4. Integration of converts into congregations. On this point, the opinions of the participants differed. The missionary from Dahomey advocated the system followed by SIM in Dahomey, where the *Fulbe* had their own congregations with *Fulfulde* services. “A separate Fulani church helps the Fulani to recognize that God loves them and wants them.” As an argument in favor of integrating the *Fulbe* converts into Hausa-speaking congregations, it was mentioned that the Nigerian government was encouraging unity in Northern Nigeria through the use of the Hausa language. The seminar participants finally agreed that the option best would be to establish *Fulbe* congregations, because “church growth occurs best along ethnic lines. Crossing ethnic lines often hinders growth.” They realized, however, that when there were only a few converts, the converts should be included in the local church (“Fulani Seminar” 1969:13, 18).

A number of other issues were also discussed at the conference. The need for inter-church cooperation and the need for a combination of proclamation and social services in *Fulbe* mission were considered.

**Fulbe Conferences**

In 1969, NLFA took the initiative to start an annual *Fulbe* conference (*Taron Fulani*), to which *Fulbe* Christians and seekers from all denominations were invited. The idea came from COCIN, where a missionary the year before had gathered seven *Fulbe* and two *Kanuri* in Panyam. From 1969 onwards, Christian *Fulbe* from all over Nigeria and some from the neighboring countries began coming together for four days of Christian fellowship, preaching, and teaching each year.

The first *Fulbe* conference, which was attended by only fifteen Christian *Fulbe* plus a number of non-*Fulbe* Christians and expatriate missionaries, was held at an ECWA Bible school in Zabolo outside Jos. In 1972, when the number of *Fulbe* participants had risen to about fifty, the conference was moved to Jibu Miango outside Jos in Plateau
state. The key figure in the conferences in Miango was Linda Klassen, a SIM missionary with long-standing friendships with Fulbe in the area.

The conferences were organized by a committee with representatives from most of the churches from which the Christian Fulbe came. After some years, the committee took the name Kungiyar Yada Bishara ga Fulani (KYBF), Fulbe Evangelism Group. In 1990, the number of Fulbe participants had risen to 227 and, in 1998, to 336.\(^5\) The statistics (for the years 1988 to 1990) show that on average 85 percent of the Nigerian Fulbe participants came from Plateau, Gongola, Kaduna, and Bauchi states. Since then Gongola state has been divided into Adamawa and Taraba states; and Bauchi state was divided into Bauchi and Gombe states. These states were, as mentioned earlier, the states where LCCN, CRCN, COCIN, ECWA,\(^6\) and NBC have focused their mission efforts among Fulbe.\(^7\)

During the first conferences, expatriate missionaries played key roles, but their presence and importance have decreased steadily over the years so that the work for the last decade or more has not been dependent on expatriate missionaries. The chairman of the committee has always been a Christian Pullo, but some of the other leadership positions, even up to this day, are occupied by non-Fulbe Nigerians (KYBF 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1989a, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Falaka 1998; Klassen 1998). In 1989,\(^5\) The total number of attendants was often up to fifty percent higher because many non-Fulbe came along with their Fulbe friends. We have no statistics indicating how many of the Fulbe attendants that were Christians, but from the reports of the conferences and from the author’s own observation during a number of conferences, we may conclude that probably more than two thirds were Christians.

\(^5\) The financial support for the work of KYBF and the Fulbe conferences seems to have come from congregations, women’s fellowships, individuals (and in a few cases church headquarters) in ECWA, COCIN and the Anglican Church, and to a lesser extent from CRCN, LCCN and other churches. The leadership of the KYBF, who organized these conferences, mainly came from ECWA, the Anglican Church, COCIN, CRCN, LCCN, and EYN. All chairmen of the committee came from either ECWA, the Anglican Church, or COCIN.

\(^6\) ECWA had also included Niger state in its focus area, because of the seasonal migration patterns of the Fulbe to whom they were ministering. Many of the Fulbe ministered to in Plateau, Kaduna, and Bauchi states, spent the dry season in Niger state.

\(^7\)
the committee approved a constitution for KYBF in which the purpose of its work was stated as being the bringing together of Fulbe Christians and seekers to share the gospel with them, the encouraging of new converts in their new faith, the helping of the new converts when they are in need, and the teaching of churches to bring the gospel to Fulbe (KYBF 1989b).

The characteristics that set these conferences apart from others were that they were led by Christian Fulbe, that the main language was Fulfulde, and that the form of fellowship was adapted to Fulbe culture. The meetings were held outside a village in the open on a plot that had been bought by the committee (Klassen 1998).

**Fulbe Mission Handbook**

Another significant initiative from Swank and NLFA was the publishing of a handbook on Fulbe evangelism. In 1972, the book was published in Hausa under the title *Taimako ga Fulani (Help for the Fulbe)*, and in 1978, it was translated into English under the title *Let’s Help the Fulani*.

The purpose of the book was to motivate and help Christians to evangelize pastoral Fulbe in Nigeria. The book contained information about the customs of the Fulbe shepherds and principles and methods of sharing the gospel with them. The bulk of the content, however, was twenty-two biblical stories that would be meaningful for cattle herders. The book emphasized showing respect for the Fulbe and their culture, developing friendships through visitation, and prayer and witness. Realizing that almost all pastoral Fulbe were non-literate, the methods of communication recommended were primarily storytelling (both biblical stories and Fulbe stories that could illustrate the biblical messages were included in the booklet), combined with memorization of Bible verses, and listening to gramophone records and audio cassettes.
On the one hand, the handbook emphasized the different culture and religion of pastoral *Fulbe*, which necessitated untraditional evangelistic approaches. On the other hand, it followed a very traditional conservative evangelical approach in explaining the way of salvation. The procedure the book suggested ends with an “altar call”: “Those of you who agree to these things should stand up and raise your hands to show God your real desire to follow His Son Jesus from now on” (Kastner 1978:45).

When it comes to the question of “conversion and community,” the approach to the pastoral *Fulbe* seems to have been inspired by the new church growth thinking (in particular the Homogeneous Unit Principle). The ultimate objective has been that “Fulani men and women, youth and children come to Christ in families and groups” (Kastner 1978:7), and that they begin to worship in their camp (1978:5). In the English version of the handbook a new chapter was added by Swank entitled “How to Begin a Fulani Church.” “A church composed of Fulani converts is desirable at this time. People of a cultural group relate best to each other. When non-Christian Fulani see them, they will be attracted to Jesus Christ as being theirs and not think of Him as another culture” (Kastner 1978:49).

Swank’s booklet *Taimako ga Fulani* (1972), and the translation of it into English, which was made at the request of a Lutheran consultation on *Fulbe* mission, is the only handbook on *Fulbe* mission in Nigeria. This booklet has come be used and appreciated by all churches and mission agencies involved in *Fulbe* mission in Northern Nigeria. As will be seen in report on the work of the five mission projects, only some of the principles discussed in this booklet were followed.

**Ecumenical Mission Initiatives (The Lutherans)**

Parallel with the conservative mission initiatives, two important ecumenical initiatives were taken to reach the *Fulbe*. Lutheran mission agencies had for many years
been involved in mission in many West African countries from Senegal to the Central African Republic, where there were many *Fulbe*. Many of these mission agencies belonged to churches that were members of the LWF, which came to play a key role in the development of a ministry to *Fulbe*.

**Sawtu Linjiila**

In 1956, Fridjov Birkeli, the director of the Department of World Mission in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), when traveling in Africa, was impressed by the apparent impact of radio on people in African villages. The following year, he challenged the LWF Assembly to take an initiative to assist missions and churches in Africa and Asia in sharing the gospel with people through radio.

The assembly accepted the idea, and in 1963, Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG) was opened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Lundgren 1983:12, 30-31). The program policy of RVOG was holistic. It tried to “meet the needs of the whole person, as an individual and as a member of society,” by endeavoring to “combine the proclamation of the Good News and assistance in the struggle against ignorance and poverty.” The goal was that seventy percent of the program time would be devoted to education, development and news, and thirty percent to more direct evangelism. The short-wave broadcasting station was owned and operated by LWF, but RVOG expressed its ecumenical aspirations by partnering with other Protestant and Orthodox churches and by developing contacts with a variety of groups from Evangelicals to Roman Catholics. The concept of RVOG was very decentralized, leaving the responsibility for program production, ranging from follow-up, and research to area studios owned by local churches (Lundgren 1983:viii-xi). One of the seventeen area studios producing Christian programs to be broadcast by
RVOG was Radio Sawtu Linjiila (SL), in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon. This studio produced Christian broadcasts in *Fulfulde* for the nomadic *Fulbe*.\(^8\)

The first *Fulfulde* programs produced at SL were broadcast from RVOG in October of 1966. The initial response of the *Fulbe* to the broadcasts was one of mistrust and hostility, in particular from the Muslim leaders, who forbade their people to listen to SL.\(^9\) After a couple of years, however, the studio began receiving responses from listeners, and at the time of the closing down of RVOG in 1977 the regular audience (people who listen at least five times per week) was estimated to be about 1.8 million *Fulfulde* speaking people. The listeners were scattered over eleven countries from the Central African Republic to Mali, and about half of them lived in Nigeria (Jørgensen 1986:352-353).

Jørgensen, who had been on the staff of RVOG, in his research of SL pointed out that the success of SL was due to the felt-needs approach inherent in the program policy and to the closeness of the producers to the listeners, which facilitated daily contact and immediate feedback. Furthermore, because the RVOG broadcasts of the SL programs in 1966 were the only *Fulfulde* broadcasts in the area and the educational level among the

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\(^8\) In November of 1962, a consultation in Ngaoundéré with representatives from the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS), the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Lutheran Brethren Church of USA, who together with their partner churches were in contact with *Fulbe* in Cameroon, Chad and the Central African Republic, agreed to work towards the establishment of a local radio studio. Before the production of programs could begin, an extensive language survey was carried out among the *Fulfulde* language group scattered all over West Africa. Ron Nelson, an American missionary from ALC working with the Église Évangelique Luthérienne du Cameroun (EELC) was appointed as the first director of the studio, and a number of Christian *Fulbe* (and other *Fulfulde* speaking people) from Cameroon, Nigeria, and Benin were employed as producers (Lundgren 1983:79).

\(^9\) In 1961, radio ELWA (Eternal Love Winning Africa), which was established by SIM and was based in Monrovia, Liberia, had already begun broadcasting in *Fulfulde*. The programs, however, were infrequent and short. The producers were inexperienced in radio broadcasting, and the studio did not receive any response to the programs. SIM was planning to set up a radio studio in Parakou, Dahomey, but the plans were given up when the missionary in charge of SIM’s *Fulbe* ministry in Dahomey, Gus Fredlund, died in an accident (R. Nelson 1979a:3-4).
**Fulbe** was rather low, radio came to play a very significant role in providing information and education for the *Fulbe*.

Jørgensen concluded that the *Fulfulde* broadcasts had generally not resulted in any conversions\(^{10}\) but had led to a,

transformation of general openness to new ideas into a new attitude toward Christians and Christianity. Thus we may say that the broadcasts have contributed to a change of attitude among some Fulani groups to the extent that resistance to the Christian message has been decreased and confidence in the messenger has been established. Part of this new attitude was a change in their perception of Christianity. The distorted picture of Christianity, created among the audience through generations of Muslim influence, has been replaced among many Fulani, to the extent that they now express surprise over how sound Christian doctrine is and how parallel it is to their own belief system. The broadcasts also seem to have improved the relationship between Christian and Muslim communities, thus facilitating friendly communication between Muslims and Christians (1986:371-372).

At a meeting in 1958, in which LWF decided to establish RVOG the crucial question was asked, “Do we really reach people when we talk to them by air?” (Lundgren 1983:32). From the beginning the necessity of follow-up was stressed, and it was strongly emphasized that the local churches (in cooperation with the area studios) would be responsible for developing effective patterns for follow-up. The founder and first director of RVOG, Sigurd Aske, put it this way, “The station does not evangelise; the churches do” (quoted in Lundgren 1983:16).

In 1974, SL began to produce and distribute cassettes in order to assist the local churches in their follow-up. The research of Jørgensen, however, showed that apart from using these cassettes, the churches in Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, and Nigeria did very little to follow up on the openness towards the gospel which had been created by the *Fulfulde* broadcasts. By the end of the 1970s, only two churches had set

\(^{10}\) Known exceptions to this rule were the conversions of six *Fulbe* in the Central African Republic as a result of the use of cassettes produced by SL (Jørgensen 1986:371).
aside people for this work. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic had released two full-time workers (one expatriate missionary and a Central African evangelist) and, in Nigeria, LCCN had released a pastor for part-time service. Even ECWA, who was in contact with many Fulbe, had developed no special Fulbe mission project (Jørgensen 1986:377-378). Jørgensen therefore concluded that “In view of the present lack of relevant follow-up, the present media work among the Fulani will remain ineffective unless the existing Churches realize their responsibility evangelizing receptive Fulani and/or unless new methods and structures of evangelism are developed” (1986:387).

In 1977, RVOG was closed down and taken over by the revolutionary government in Ethiopia. Radio ELWA, however, helped the SL radio studio transmit program through their transmitter in Monrovia, Liberia. In 1981, SL was closed down by the government in Cameroon, apparently because of Muslim annoyance with its effectiveness in reaching Muslim Fulbe. It reopened in 1985 (JCMWA 1989). Since then it has tried to transmit its broadcasts through various outlets inside and outside Cameroon, but most of its former audience has been lost in the process due to the changes and poor reception. Only in 1997 when its programs began to be broadcast from the Trans-World Radio transmitter in Southern Africa, did SL begin to re-capture its audience. But by this time the conditions had changed radically; there were now a number of Fulfulde broadcasts from other stations, and FM programs were becoming more popular.

The Establishment of the Joint Christian Ministry in West Africa

In the 1970s, a process started that would lead to the creation of a networking organization for the promotion of mission to Fulbe. This organization, named Joint
Christian Ministry in West Africa (JCMWA), came to have a very significant influence on the development of *Fulbe* mission work not only in Nigeria, but all over West Africa by bringing a number of churches and mission agencies together for inspiration and joint action. The initiative came from Morris Sorensen, the director of the mission department of the American Lutheran Church (ALC), but JCMWA would never have come into being had it not been for the preparatory work of IAP and in particular the ministry of SL (Darman 1982).

In 1972 and 1974, conferences were held in Ngaoundéré, Cameroon, and Jos, Nigeria, to discuss the present impact of the broadcasts of SL on the *Fulbe* in West Africa and the strategy, planning, and coordination of the local follow-up work. After the Jos conference in 1974, a continuation committee was set up to oversee the work. During the next three years, the committee conducted a “Fulani Evangelism Survey,” which

11 In the early 1970s, ALC supported the Lutheran World Relief work in Nigeria and Niger in connection with the drought which also affected *Fulbe*. In 1973, ALC, under the leadership of Morris Sorensen, commissioned a “Fulani Study,” headed by Robert R. Martenson, who had been a missionary in Cameroon and Nigeria for fifteen years. The study project intended to “identify and develop new areas of ministry whether they be new in geography or style.” Apart from getting ALC involved directly in ministry to *Fulbe* in West Africa, it was also hoped that ALC “might become helpful in coordinating the work of various groups who are presently involved in Fulani work in West Africa” (1974:3-5). The immediate result of Martenson’s report was that his proposal of starting a *Fulbe* ministry in Senegal was accepted by ALC, who in 1976 began a ministry among *Fulbe* there.

12 The fact that the four most influential organizations in the creation of JCMWA were IAP, SL, LWF, and ALC is reflected in the program of the Dakar consultation in 1979 where it was decided to set up a new *Fulbe* mission organization. The three main speakers were Claude F. Molla, who was an IAP leader, Ron Nelson, who was an ALC missionary and the director of SL, and Christina Held, who represented LWF. In 1978, LWF was asked to take over the leadership of the process (which led to the establishment of JCMWA) from ALC.

13 The Ngaoundéré conference in 1972 focused more narrowly on the use of media in mission to *Fulbe*, whereas the Jos conference in 1974 apart from discussing the use of media also looked at mission to *Fulbe* from a broader perspective. The Jos conference, which was called together by the LCCN and SL, had forty-five representatives from churches and missions in Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and the Central African Republic, including the Agency for Christian Literature Development, the Bible Society of Nigeria, and the World Association for Christian Communication, ALC, IAP, LWF, and RVOG.

14 The LCCN bishop Akila Todi was the chairman of the committee, and ALC missionary Clifford Michelsen was assigned to be the coordinator of the work.
focused on the needs and possibilities of developing literature that would assist the churches in their follow-up work. In the conclusion of this report, the author of the report, Charles Richards, tried to answer the crucial question, “Has Fulani Evangelism priority in the planning for mission in the churches of the region?” (1976:11). When visiting a number of churches in Nigeria and Cameroon, he did not see much evidence that mission to Fulbe had high priority with the leadership of the churches. One of his major proposals was that people be released for mission work among Fulbe, and that a fellowship of such workers be built through events, visits, sharing of experience, and prayer support.

The continuation committee encouraged churches to release persons for full-time work among Fulbe and to set up Fulbe evangelism committees. It furthermore suggested that representatives from these committees and churches meet for occasional planning and sharing events (Richards 1976:2-26).

From 1978 to 1980, LWF, at the request of ALC convened a series of meetings in Europe and Africa, which led to the establishment of JCMWA. In the preamble of the “Agreement of Cooperation” the background for the establishment of the new organization was stated like this:

Compelled by the love of God, a number of Churches and agencies having realized the urgency of expanding Christian Ministry among Fulani speaking people and challenged by the new opportunities for such ministry in churches in West Africa and in other regions, have come to the conclusion that the most effective way of carrying out this ministry is through coordinated efforts and the pooling of personnel, funds and talents (JCMWA 1980b).

The specific purpose, which had been hotly debated, was for the organization “to be a servant of the member churches and agencies to strengthen the witness and service of

15 The Committee also suggested that pastors or evangelists travel with mobile Fulbe congregations using tents for their meetings, and they suggested that the focus be on extended families rather than on individuals.
churches in West Africa among Fulani-speaking people and to initiate new Christian ministries among them in areas of obvious need” (1980b).

Later in the “Agreement of Cooperation” it was stated that the specific objectives would be (1) coordination, planning and sharing of resources, (2) strengthening of the ministries of the member churches, and (3) initiating new ministries where there was no established member church. The actual mission work was to be carried out not by JCMWA, but by the member churches and agencies. The organization was therefore only to have a staff consisting of a secretary. The headquarters of JCMWA were to be Jos, Nigeria (1980b).

Three major missiological principles were emphasized. (1) Both witness and dialogue form part of the proclamation of the gospel. Therefore, there should be witness in dialogue and dialogue in witness. (2) Proclamation and development should be seen as two parts of one mission. (3) The already existing communities of Fulbe should be respected in the proclamation of the gospel, and great attention should be given to the theological significance of the Fulbe worldview (LWF 1979).

Although the initiative, which led to the establishment of JCMWA, had been taken by Lutheran churches and agencies, it had become clear in the process that the cooperation had to be much greater, and that an ecumenical cooperation was called. Therefore, ECWA, SIM, NBC, Church Missionary Society and other non-Lutheran churches and organizations were invited to participate. But of the fourteen churches and agencies that became members in the beginning, CMS was the only non-Lutheran organization. At the first assembly in Jos, however, seventeen potential member organizations and observers were present.  

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16 JCMWA was the result of an ecumenical Lutheran initiative. Some of the more conservative Lutherans were concerned that the ecumenical character of such an organization would not be acceptable to the conservative churches that had been doing most of the mission work among the Fulbe. According to the director of Radio Sawtu Linjiila, Ron Nelson, who at that time probably had the most extensive
Over the years a number of non-Lutheran churches and mission organizations have joined JCMWA together with other Lutheran churches and mission organizations. SIM, ECWA, and NLFA have regularly been represented at the JCMWA meetings, but have never become members, probably because of the ecumenical character of the organization. Of the five churches that are researched in this study LCCN was a founding member, and COCIN, CRCN, and NBC became members later, whereas ECWA never formally joined, but in many ways still cooperated with JCMWA. The only overseas mission partner of these five churches who joined JCMWA, was LCCN’s partner, SUM-D, who was also a founding member (JCMWA 1980a).

**The Achievements of JCMWA**

It is not the purpose here to write the history of JCMWA, but only to indicate the significance of the work of JCMWA for the Fulbe mission in Northern Nigeria. Over the years the membership of JCMWA has increased, by 1998 there were twenty-one knowledge of mission to Fulbe, there were only six known Fulbe converts resulting directly from Lutheran witness in West Africa. Most of the remaining 500 or so Fulbe Christians were the result of the work of the conservative evangelical groups (R. Nelson 1979a). Kåre Lode, who represented NMS, was of the opinion that “If we want a cooperation with the evangelical Churches that are actually doing the work among the Fulanis we have to make sure that our organization will not cooperate with WCC [World Council of Churches] or any other of the subdivisions of WCC. The one who knows the situation, knows that we will not be accepted by the two sides. We will have to decide from which side we want the support.” Lode therefore concluded that only “with a decentralised structure based on an evangelical theology [will] it be possible to have a non-organized cooperation” with SIM/ECWA and the evangelical Lutheran Brethren Church in Cameroon (1979). It seems, however, that ALC, as early as 1977, had made its choice. Michelsen, who was in charge of the ALC Fulani Project discussed the possibilities for cooperation with ECWA with the LCCN administrative secretary Anthony Bumbum. They concluded that “it would advisable for Lutherans working among the Fulani to maintain good relationships with ECWA, but that they shouldn’t identify too closely. ECWA considers itself a conservative evangelical church, and having both SIM and ALC as partners would cause real tension in an embryonic African church.” The “embryonic African church” probably refers to an eventual Fulbe church (Knutson 1977:3). The ALC position concerning the ecumenical nature of the organization carried the way, but the Norwegians found support for the idea that the organization should be very decentralized. ALC had probably originally considered a closer cooperation similar to United Mission to Nepal. A paper was prepared with the title “The Relevance of the Evangelistic Strategy of the United Mission to Nepal to the Fulani Evangelism Project” (author unknown), and in a letter from Michelsen to the ALC Africa secretary James L. Knutson, he even referred to the project as “United Mission to the Fulani Peoples.” If this model had been followed, then JCMWA would have become, as the Norwegians came to fear, a multinational, interdenominational mission organization with its own missionaries, sponsored by the mission organizations (Michelsen 1978).
members, eight of which were non-Lutheran. In recent years, the biannual assemblies, have normally attended by eighty to one hundred international and native church and mission leaders, African and non-African missionaries, scholars, and others from several countries around the world, including representatives from many churches and organizations that are not members. Between the assemblies, the secretary has tried to keep in contact with all churches and agencies in West Africa (not only JCMWA members) that are involved or interested in Fulbe mission.

JCMWA, being a networking organization, has no mission work of its own, but is only working to inspire its members and other Fulbe mission projects and help them to exchange experiences, ideas, and resources. Within its limited resources, JCMWA has been able to give financial support to new initiatives, training programs, workshops, and seminars, and thereby help mission projects get started and grow. The main achievement of JCMWA, however, has been its inspirational work resulting from the biannual assemblies (and other conferences, seminars and workshops) and the extensive travels by the secretary, all of which is reflected in the assembly and standing committee papers of JCMWA.

Over the years, JCMWA has proved to be an invaluable forum for missiological discussion and reflection on the ministry among Fulbe. From the very founding of JCMWA, some key missiological convictions have remained a basis for the deliberations. Proclamation and development (or social services) were seen as two necessary parts to mission (holism). The form of the proclamation has been “witness in dialogue and dialogue in witness.” The socio-cultural and religious context of the Fulbe was to be taken seriously both in proclamation and development. And finally, the mission work has been carried out in an ecumenical cooperation.
In accordance with these missiological principles, there have been many lectures at the assemblies about the socio-cultural and religious context of the *Fulbe*\(^{17}\) and about various forms of holistic ministries dealing with actual needs of *Fulbe*.\(^{18}\) In particular, the very serious Rinderpest catastrophe in Nigeria and the surrounding countries in 1982 and 1983 was taken very seriously by JCMWA and those churches involved with JCMWA. Hector Ottemoeller, an American missionary from the Lutheran Missouri Synod working with the Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN), did a tremendous job, with a Nigerian team, of facilitating the vaccination of hundreds of thousands if not millions of *Fulbe* cattle, thereby helping to reduce the loss of cattle. The JCMWA secretary encouraged the member churches to contact the *Fulbe* in their area, show them that they were concerned, and help them get a good quality vaccine. He also prepared a day of prayer for the affected *Fulbe* (Gorder 1983). The initiatives taken by JCMWA and its member and observer churches was of great help to the *Fulbe* herders and no doubt contributed significantly to breaking down the barriers between the Muslim *Fulbe* herders and the church.

There is no doubt that one of the major achievements of JCMWA has been to help the churches focus on the felt needs of the *Fulbe* and to establish relevant holistic ministries. In the following, some of the other themes that are most relevant for this research on conversion of *Fulbe* will be highlighted.


The members of JCMWA soon realized that the classical model of identifying a circular area of people for a target group was not applicable to the *Fulbe*. The individual families or clans might be extended over hundreds of kilometers, straddling several borders (Burkwall 1987:64-65).

Gorder, the first secretary of JCMWA, put this challenge before the assembly in 1982.

I have referred to this as linear ministry instead of circular ministry. Most JCMWA members think in terms of well defined circles of relationships in well-defined circular geographic areas. The Fulani are not congregated in one area, but are spread out in lines throughout West Africa. The techniques which we have adopted in our missions and our churches are not the same as the strategies we need to work among these people. We are faced with a new mission--a mission which is different from any we have confronted before. This is a ministry to periphery people, people outside our own circles . . . (1982:18-19).

He, therefore, also challenged the churches and mission organizations to make pastors, doctors, veterinarians, nurses, linguists and sociologists available for this particular ministry. “We must free people from the confines of our circles to identify with the Fulani speakers.” It would not be acceptable or adequate to add an assignment of reaching out to *Fulbe* to their other assignments (Gorder 1982:19).

Another consequence of this linear thinking was an emphasis on the clans as one of the most significant organizing principles in the *Fulbe* societies. At the same assembly in 1982, R. Nelson gave a lecture on “Fulani Clan Identification and Its Consequences,” which was followed by a presentation by a Christian Pullo, Musa Ja’e Na’Ango, of the cultural, religious, political, and social characteristics of a number of clans. R. Nelson stressed that for nomadic *Fulbe*, boundaries are just a nuisance. The most meaningful boundaries for them are the rain forest to the south and the desert to the north. All the rest is “*Fulbe* land.” But apart from these physical boundaries, the *Fulbe* communities are organized according to clan affiliations. Knowledge about their clan affiliations
might indicate their relationship with other clans, their way of keeping cattle, the degree of their involvement in politics, the degree of their attachment to *Pulaaku* and Islam, and their openness to change, including religious change (1982b).

In the discussions of the lectures by R. Nelson and Na’Ango, it was concluded that “since clan identification crosses national boundaries in West Africa, to facilitate effective witness there is need for a free flow of information among churches involved in Fulani ministry” (JCMWA 1982:2). Also, the emphasis on the clan would have to be reflected in the actual witness to *Fulbe*. “We must allow the Spirit to move not just in the heart of individuals, but within the clan structure itself,” stated the secretary (Gorder 1982:19).

**Community and Conversion**

In 1979, the question of the role of the community in Islam came up. Claude F. Molla from IAP challenged the participants to consider the need to revise some of their usual methods of evangelism and even some of their church regulations. He based this recommendation on his observation that in Islamic societies (as well as in animistic societies) the individual has no personality apart from membership to his ethnic or religious community. One of the frequent causes for relapses of Christian is that they are regarded with suspicion and isolated from the community. A fish cannot live out of water, nor can a new convert live his faith and his communion with Christ outside a Christian community. Spiritual solitude is dangerous, it may even be fatal for one’s faith and loyalty (Molla 1979:12-13). This role of community, which had previously been discussed in an NLFA consultation in 1969, has remained with JCMWA and the five mission projects in Northern Nigeria till today.

R. Nelson in 1982 challenged the churches to respect and use the *Fulbe* culture in their ministry. “Will the church use their language, or will it require them to use some
other language as does Islam?” he asked. He noted that there had been some good beginnings, as the whole Bible would very soon be available in the Adamawa dialect of *Fulfulde*. The question, however, was if the church would use *Fulfulde* as the language of worship. Apart from the linguistic challenge, R. Nelson also asked the churches to consider taking the church to the nomadic *Fulbe* through mobile churches and allowing them and helping them to practice forms of worship that would help them feel at home and feel that they could worship God without giving up their *Fulbe*-ness (1982a:13-14).

The most radical solution to these problems concerning community came from Hinds, who was a CMS missionary lecturing in Islamics at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. Basing his argument on the biblical principle that everyone should remain in the state in which he was called (1 Cor. 7:24), he condemned the extraction methods of evangelism, which he himself had once followed. He referred to an example of three young *Fulbe* men who had become Christians. All of them were now very unhappy.

Is their unhappiness partly our fault? When these men were first introduced to Christ, where did we find them? They were following their cattle. And what did we do, some of us? We got them accepted into a Bible school and those who did not run away from the place, as one did, went through the same sort of training as young farmers have done (1984:3).

What then about Christian worship, should the converts not only remain within their community, but also continue to participate in the Islamic rituals? Hinds did not reach any conclusion, but he quoted (apparently with consent) a story about a friend advising his Muslim friends, who wanted to become Christians, to continue to study the

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19 The *Fulfulde* Bible, *Deftere Allah*, was published the following year in 1983.
Qur’an with the community in the morning. In the evenings, then, they should study the New Testament and pray together with their wives and families (1984:2-3).

**Spiritual Warfare**

Spiritual warfare is a topic that is seldom discussed in most of the JCMWA member churches, maybe because traditional Western theology usually does not deal with it. At JCMWA meetings the issue surfaces from time to time in the testimonies of Fulbe converts and in the reflections of a some missionaries working among Fulbe. Recently, the topic has been dealt with by a Western theologian.

A typical testimony in this respect came from Musa Ja’e Na’Ango, who was a nomadic Pullo. He first heard the gospel from a Nigerian cook working for a missionary, but only decided to become a Christian when God in a dream called him to get up and follow Jesus. His first wife (when he became a Christian he had two wives) decided to leave him when the Muslims began to call him a pagan.

Then her father became angry with me. He sold seven cows in order to get the money to pay sorcerers to kill me by sorcery. He went to Keffi and Wamba. He came back home, but I had not died yet. So he went to Kaciya. When he came back, I still had not died. So he went to Sarkin Baka in Kadarko, a very powerful sorcerer. But I still did not die. Two days after he returned home, he started urinating with blood. As his people were preparing to take him to the hospital, he died in the camp. As for me, the more I was persecuted, the stronger I became as a Christian (Na’Ango 1986:1).

Reflecting on similar experiences, Veltkamp, an American missionary with CRCN, emphasized that that Fulbe should be taught about spiritual warfare. The converts need prayers on their behalf and prayers with Christians for protection and

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20 In 1988, Paul Burkwall presented as a solution to the problem of community for Fulbe converts the HUP congregations (1988:3-4).
freedom from the destructive influence of evil spirits. Veltkamp proposed that a special curriculum be prepared based on these needs.

Many Fulani rely on charms and potions. Each charm or potion is an indication of an area where teaching needs to be done. All of these charms indicate a felt need that the Fulani have, where they think they need extra spiritual power to get what they want or to protect them from something. . . . Gradually all the wants and fears that caused them to seek out help from Malams before must be answered by good teaching.

Veltkamp therefore concluded that those who are involved in mission to Fulbe must know well the traditional background of the Fulbe (1991:3-4).

At the JCMWA Assembly in 1994, Jan Opsal, a Norwegian theologian, gave three lectures that focused on meeting this need and reflected theologically on how to respond to various aspects of the folk Islam practiced by pastoral Fulbe all over West Africa.21 As the title of his third lecture indicated, “Ministering to Folk Muslims--Power or Truth?” Opsal raised the question whether missionaries should focus on “power” as seems to be the felt need of many West African Muslims or on “truth” as is traditionally done in Western theology. His answer was that missionaries had to meet the Fulbe where they actually were, and most of them were engulfed in a popular form of Islam, where power issues were more important to them than truth issues. Missionaries have to minister the their “power-needs.” But he sounded a warning,

there is a danger to be aware of. We would make the gospel just another kind of power to be tapped and manipulated if we set out with the gospel to meet all the felt needs among the popular Muslims among the Fulbe. There is power in the gospel, I emphasize that. There is a life

21 The titles of the three lectures were: “Folk Islam--a Different Form of Islam?” (1994a), “Death and Illness--Fate or Control?” (1994b), and “Ministering to Folk Muslims--Power or Truth?” (1994c).

22 Opsal refers to a story told by Amadou Hampâté Bâ, in L’Etrange Destin de Wangrin (1973). In the story a young African man at a point in his life finds himself at a cross-roads, with roads leading in three directions, representing the religions of Islam, Christianity and the traditional African religion. At this point he does not know which he will choose, but he does know one thing. He will choose the religion that will give him the most success, the greatest health, the most money, and the most power (Opsal 1994c:3).
transforming and healing power... But the power as such must never be made an end in itself. The central aim of the gospel is after all that man should have a personal encounter with the crucified and risen Lord, who said: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (1994c:4).

Communicating with Non-Literates

According to the traditional strategy, most of the churches in Northern Nigeria have emphasized non-literacy based evangelism methods during the awareness phase. Most follow-up and training programs for Fulbe converts, however, are literacy based. Ways of helping the pastoral Fulbe to learn to read and write so that they might not been completely marginalized in the modern Nigerian society and so that they might benefit from the programs of the church have often been discussed. It has, however, most often been taken for granted that the Christian life involves becoming literate.

In 1991, however, JCMWA sponsored a workshop that focused on how to do follow-up with and train Fulbe converts while they are still non-literate. Gorder pointed out that most of the time when people are touched by the Spirit and respond in faith, literacy has nothing to do with it. But when these seekers or converts need more cognitive biblical truth, non-literacy is a serious handicap for them. “However desirable literacy may be, we know that many people have neither the opportunity, nor the means to learn to read. Even if opportunity for learning to read is available, many people simply don’t place literacy as a priority... What then are their options for understanding?” Gorder pointed to the media technology as an effective tool for reaching illiterate people with information that would have been totally inaccessible to them just a few decades ago (1991:2-3).
Contextualization

From the beginning of JCMWA, there was a great focus on relating the proclamation of the gospel to Fulbe culture, in particular to Pulaaku. R. Nelson in 1982 raised the question, “Can the church show that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of pulaaku?” “The point is not simply that there are a lot of interesting parallels between the culture of Israel and that of the Fulbe or that Jesus seems to exemplify the best qualities in pulaaku, but that Jesus is really the fulfillment of pulaaku just as he is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets.” For R. Nelson there was no doubt that Jesus was the fulfillment of Pulaaku, and he therefore called on missionaries to Fulbe to use their Spirit-guided imagination to show this to the Fulbe (1982a:17-18).

The participants in the JCMWA assemblies were generally favorable towards using Pulaaku as a contact point when proclaiming the gospel, even to the extent that Jesus Christ was portrayed as the fulfillment of Pulaaku in the same way he was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. There was, however, much more disagreement when it came to finding contact points in Islam. The IAP adviser Johannes Haafkens was not applauded by all participants when he indicated that Muslims worship the same God as Christians or when he said,

> We do not know in advance what may happen when we move into closer relationship with Muslims. Sometimes, we may have the experience of Peter, when he went to the house of Cornelius. We discover that somehow, through the Holy Spirit, Christ is already present with the person we had not known before hand. God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform (1986:6-7).

Many of the participants were very hesitant regarding the use of Islamic themes as contact points. For them it was important “to give a sound Christian interpretation of

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23 R. Nelson uses the themes of Pulaaku and fertility as the two cultural themes most suited to present the gospel (1997:113ff).
Scripture and avoid the confusion that the God worshipped by Christians and Muslims is the same” (JCMWA 1982:6).

In 1996, Chris Shu’aibu Abashiya, a Nigerian Christian from a town-Fulbe background, addressed the question squarely in his lecture, “Some Common Themes between Christianity and Islam and Their Significance for Evangelism among Muslims.” The purpose of his lecture was to discuss whether the common themes would help or hinder the presentation of the gospel to Muslims. After having analyzed the similarities and dissimilarities of a number of common themes in the Qur’an and the Bible (God, Jesus Christ, sin and forgiveness), he concluded that using common themes was a two-edged sword, which might in some cases help and in other cases hinder a Muslim’s acceptance of the gospel. However, his observations of the dissimilarities in the themes, stemming from differences in scriptural accounts, led him through a consideration of the question of the authority of scriptures to conclude that the common themes are not really related to the same God. His lecture therefore ended up being an argument against constructive uses of the common themes in evangelism (1996).24

New Fulbe Mission Initiatives

When JCMWA was founded in 1979, LCCN was the only Nigerian member. Since then, JCMWA has been joined by the following churches: CRCN, COCIN, NBC, EYN, and the Anglican Dioceses of Jos and of Zaria. LCN was a member for a number

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24 The theme of similarities and dissimilarities between Islam and Christianity is developed in much more detail in the book Christianity & Islam: A Plea for Understanding and Tolerance, which Abashiya co-authored with Ayuba Jalaba Ulea (1991). As the title indicates the purpose of the book is to counter the deteriorating relationships between Christians and Muslims in particular in Northern Nigeria. Just as in the lecture, the focus is on defining the two religions in terms of the similarities and in particular the dissimilarities. Christians and Muslims should understand each other’s religion and then practice the principle of “live and let live” (1991:ix, 1, 249).
of years, but is now only an observer, because its work among the *Fulbe* has been closed down.\textsuperscript{25}

In 1979, no *Fulbe* mission projects had been set up, nor were there any full-time Nigerian or non-Nigerian missionaries working among *Fulbe* in Nigeria. Soon after the establishment of JCMWA, *Fulbe* mission projects came into being, and the first missionaries to *Fulbe* began their work. Today almost all the larger churches in Northern Nigeria have a *Fulbe* mission project with full-time employees. As will be seen in the following sections, JCMWA played a significant role in this positive development.

**The History of the Five *Fulbe* Mission Projects**

The most important mission projects set up in the 1980s, which are still active in *Fulbe* mission, belong to the churches of LCCN, CRCN, COCIN, ECWA, and NBC. In this section, the history and development of these five mission projects will be traced. The review of the characteristics of the mission projects will provide the necessary background for the analysis of their ministries in the following chapters.

**The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria**

In Adamawa state, where most of the congregations of LCCN are located, there are several hundred thousand *Fulbe*, many of whom are pastoralists. The establishment of the *Fulbe* mission project was part of the process that led to the creation of JCMWA.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{25} LCN is mainly working in the southern part of Nigeria. For a number of years they had an American missionary, Hector Ottemoeller, based in Jos. During the Rinderpest catastrophe, he and his Nigerian team provided thousands of pastoral *Fulbe* a high quality vaccine. A holistic ministry was set up in the Wase area of Plateau state, but a few years after Ottemoeller’s departure from Nigeria, the work was ended.

\textsuperscript{26} During the 1970s, the ALC had talks with the LCCN leadership about *Fulbe* mission. Another motivating factor was the drought in the Sahel area in 1968-1973. Into the LCCN area came a large number of *Fulbe* refugees, whom the church felt obliged to help (Loven 1977; Martenson 1974:40; LWF 1979).
The project started as a joint venture between ALC and LCCN, with an American missionary couple, Grace and Don Flaten, and a half-time Nigerian elderly pastor, Lenos Ahmadu. Apart from visiting pastoral and town *Fulbe*, the work focused on encouraging and training church members to respect and reach out to *Fulbe* through courses offered locally and through Bible schools. For the first few years, however, the *Fulbe* mission work had a low priority with the church leaders and the expatriate missionaries (Flaten 1980, 1998).

In 1983, the Flatens left the work due to sickness. A couple of years later an ALC missionary, Inger Hendrickson, who for many years had been in contact with *Fulbe* around Jos, moved to Numan, and a *Fulbe* evangelism committee was set up. As a result of her visits to *Fulbe* camps some young men were enrolled in reading classes and became interested in the gospel.

Three young men became Christians, but the missionaries and the church leaders had serious problems handling these *Fulbe* converts. Two of them were soon sent to Bible schools and the third was given employment in a *Fulbe* mission project by a church in another part of the country. All three of them were baptized, but soon returned to Islam, which created a suspicious and negative attitude in many church members and leaders concerning *Fulbe* mission (Hendrickson 1998).

In 1986, SUM-D for the first time sent a missionary couple to work among *Fulbe*. Two years later, LCCN and SUM-D agreed to set up the holistic “Fulani

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27 Lenos Ahmadu had long-standing friendships with pastoral *Fulbe*. The Flatens had been missionaries in Cameroon and were fluent in *Fulfulde*.

28 Looking back over her ministry, Hendrickson concluded that “Usually the Christians were proud, when a Fulani was baptized in their church; but they were not happy, when they realized that this convert was completely dependent on them for financial support, since his family usually refused to help him. And they often became quite critical of these Fulani converts, if they did not behave like good mature Christians at once, therefore so many of them became lonesome and gave up” (1998).

29 My wife and I worked as teachers in a secondary school and an advanced teachers college in Gongola from 1982, before we in 1986 were called to be involved in the *Fulbe* evangelism work of LCCN.
Evangelism Project.” Over the next few years a team including evangelists, pastors, teachers, nurses, and a veterinarian was formed. The backbone of the work was a network of *Kungiyar Makiyayi Mai Kyau* (Good Shepherd Groups) (KMMK) in local congregations. These groups consisted of lay people with an interest and love for *Fulbe*. They prayed for *Fulbe*, visited them, helped them, witnessed to them, and took care of converts. The expatriate and Nigerian missionaries trained and encouraged the groups in their work and assisted them by offering them their medical or veterinary expertise (M. Mogensen 1989a, 1989b).

The work of the missionaries and the KMMK groups can be characterized as friendship evangelism combined with social ministries. The evangelism principle was called the “foot, mouth, hand” principle. They would visit the *Fulbe* (the foot), and through conversations (the mouth), they would express their concern for them and share the Good News with them, and when necessary they would help them (the hand) with their needs (E. Jensen 1994).

In the late 1980s, the LCCN mission project began to see the fruit of their work in the form of converts, and a variety of models of follow-up and incorporation were considered and tested. In 1996, a center for Christian *Fulbe* was opened near the

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30 In 1998, there were about thirty KMMK groups with ten to fifteen members in each.

31 This concept is taken from a lecture given by the NMS missionary Odd Hansen Matre, working among *Fulbe* in Mali. “I have heard it said among the Peul that there are three elements in friendship; these elements can serve as a little guide for us in maintaining relationships: Our foot allows us to go see our friend. Our tongue permits us to greet our friend and say good things about him. Our hand lets us give good things to our friend” (1992:5).

32 The following were among the models: (1) The school model, which was never again used with new converts. The missionaries in cooperation with the central and local church leadership, however, experimented with the four other models; (2) The employment model, where the convert was employed with a Christian employer or in a Christian project; (3) The adoption model, where the convert was
LCCN Brønnum Lutheran Seminary in Mbamba outside Yola. The center was not a Bible school, but a place where new converts who for security reasons needed to get away from their own people could come to stay and, as part of a Christian fellowship, be brought up in the Christian faith and learn to read and write.

When the work started, the missionaries contacted both town and pastoral Fulbe, but since 1988 the focus has increasingly been on pastoral Fulbe. Because of the close cooperation with the congregations, the missionaries used both Hausa and Fulfulde in their work. All Fulbe converts were integrated into Hausa-speaking congregations made up of non-Fulbe ethnic groups (Bukata 1998).

The Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria

The origin of an organized Fulbe mission project in CRCN can be traced directly to the American CRC missionary, Veltkamp, who as a teacher in the Wukari-Takum area of what is today Taraba state often came in contact with nomadic Fulbe. In 1980, she was made the director of the Muslim Evangelism Department, and she began to investigate the needs of the Fulbe. Her house, which was located next to a hospital, became a hospitality center for Fulbe coming for treatment. Soon some young nomadic convert was attached to a mature Christian as his/her discipler; (5) The remain-in-Fulbe-context model, where the convert was helped to stay with his/her own people (M. Mogensen 1991).

33 There were also other reasons for the emphasis on Hausa. The Flatens “found the Fulanis in Nigeria, especially the settled Fulanis use the Hausa language more and more. They seem to prefer that to Fulani and the new generation will not even know Fulani” (Flaten 1988). The first bishop of LCCN, Akila Tod, who was fluent in Fulfulde, and his administrative secretary gave preference to Hausa over Fulfulde for new missionaries among Fulbe. The JCMWA secretary, however, argued that it would be more relevant for the LCCN missionaries to become fluent in Fulfulde first, since they were trying to understand the Fulbe community (Gorder 1984).

34 In the early 1980s, Veltkamp studied at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, where she focused her research on aspects of the culture and religion of Fulbe and ministry among Fulbe. In research papers, such as “Amulets, the Good Eye and Fulani” (1980a), “Toward a Theology of Cattle for Fulani and Fulani Workers” (1980b), “Did Prophet Abraham Have Cows?” (1980c), and “An Exploration of World View and World View Change among the Fulani” (1983), she developed the perspectives and theologies that she later tried to put into practice in her work in Nigeria.
*Fulbe* men began to respond to the gospel and were enrolled in the Bible school in Wukari.

Veltkamp wanted to concentrate her ministry on nomadic *Fulbe*, but her approach was first to meet the *Fulbe* in town, and then, after having ministered to their needs in town, she would proceed to minister to them in their camps. Her rationale for doing so was that even the most nomadic *Fulbe* spent a significant amount of their time in towns and villages. Another important reason was that, in order to mobilize the Christian church to evangelize the nomadic *Fulbe*, it was not realistic to begin by asking them to go to the *Fulbe* camps in the bush. For one thing, the camps were far away, and for another thing an unknown non-*Fulbe* Christian might not be welcomed in the camps. In town, Christians might show hospitality to *Fulbe* coming to market, and they might help them get treatment for sickness. They might also help them when they came to town to claim their land and grazing rights and to buy cattle medicine. Finally, most nomadic *Fulbe*, who had learned to read and write, had learned to do so without going to a formal school, rather they had learned from their friends in town (Veltkamp 1982). This holistic approach of Veltkamp’s initial ministry became the model according to which the CRCN ministry in 1983 was organized. The CRCN *Fulbe* mission project, which was called *Akin Bishara cikin Fulan* (Evangelism Work among *Fulbe*), ABF, was a joint effort between CRCN and its overseas mission partner the Christian Reformed Church in the United States and Canada.

During the following years, a mission team of expatriate missionaries, *Fulbe* Christians, and Christians from other ethnic groups was set up to do a holistic ministry among the *Fulbe* in the southern part of Gongola state (today’s Taraba state). When the Rinderpest disease broke out among the cattle of the *Fulbe* in 1982 and 1983, the ABF helped the *Fulbe* herders get medicine. Some local congregations helped Christian *Fulbe* who lost their cattle with farmland, and in 1986 the ABF began trying to develop a
system to help *Fulbe* rebuild their herds.\(^3\) The ABF bought cattle and lent them out to Christian *Fulbe* who had lost their cattle. The cattle still belonged to ABF, but the calves belonged to the herder. The system was discontinued in 1993 because of administrative problems (Ja’e 1998). In the medical area, the missionary nurse trained a number of *Fulbe* evangelists to administer medicine so that they might work on their own (they called on the registered nurse for injections). A number of *Fulbe* converts were also sent to Bible schools, and some of them were employed in the ministry as evangelists by ABF. Soon after the ministry was organized, a number of *Fulbe* who had become Christians earlier in other parts of Nigeria moved to the CRCN area, forming a small Christian *Fulbe* community (Gorder 1990:7-10; De Jonge 1998).

The first *Fulbe* converts and the Christian *Fulbe* moving to the CRCN area were integrated into Hausa speaking churches composed of *Kuteb, Jukun* and other non-*Fulbe* ethnic groups. But it soon became clear that this was not a good plan. The missionary nurse Ann De Jonge observed that the non-*Fulbe* church people “like to see Fulani join their local churches, but the Fulani don’t feel comfortable there and have difficulty because they move so often. . . . The Fulani have no great love for the farmers and most of the church people are farmers! So the Fulani have some trouble seeing these people as part of the church” (De Jonge as quoted in Gorder 1990:38).

Over the years the ABF, however, tried to encourage Christian *Fulbe* to worship in their camps in *Fulfulde*. They also experimented with more contextual forms of worship using milk and *chobbal* (pounded millet and ginger cooked and made into balls for mixing in milk) for communion services (De Jonge 1998; Ja’e 1998).

\(^3\) The system was inspired by the *Fulbe* tradition, *habbinaaye*, according to which relatives and friends would help a *Fulbe* herder who had lost his cattle to rebuild his herd by giving him a few heads of cattle.
In the 1980s, the *Fulbe* ministry of CRCN was considered to be a model for other churches to imitate.\(^\text{36}\) The mission project, however, ran into serious problems, which eventually led to a partial paralysis of the work, when some town *Fulbe* (together with some non-*Fulbe* urban Muslims) began to respond to the gospel and the old tensions between nomadic *Fulbe* and town *Fulbe* began to surface within the church. The work eventually had to be divided up. Veltkamp, who had been the pioneer and driving force in ABF, left ABF and concentrated on work among town *Fulbe* (and non-*Fulbe* Muslims).\(^\text{37}\)

ABF also ran into financial problems. *Fulbe* Mission was probably never a high priority for the CRCN leadership in terms of finances, and when CRC reduced its financial support, it became very difficult to keep up the momentum of the work. The final blow to the work came when the expatriate missionaries, who returned home, were not replaced by new missionaries, and the *Fulbe* pastor left the church to be employed by a sister church.\(^\text{38}\)

**The Church of Christ in Nigeria**

The pioneer of *Fulbe* mission in COCIN was the English SUM missionary teacher Elisabeth W. Caldwell, who in the 1950s began to visit *Fulbe* camps together with some of her students.

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\(^{36}\) CRCN only became a member of JCMWA in 1988, but from the beginning Veltkamp and others from CRC and CRCN participated in the assemblies, consultations, and workshops of JCMWA, and Veltkamp was often asked to give lectures and present the ABF model of *Fulbe* ministry.

\(^{37}\) In her work among *Fulbe* and non-*Fulbe* Muslims (most of whom were *malamai*) in Jos and other towns in Northern Nigeria, she began to follow esoteric mission principles that increasingly alienated her and her work from her church and mission so that she was eventually removed from the work.

\(^{38}\) The secretary to the board of ABF concluded in his report on the history of ABF that “The ABF work has been plagued by conflict among its staff members for the past few years. We are grateful that these conflicts have been resolved, and it is our prayer that the work of CRCN/ABF will make great progress in the coming year” (Van Der Dyke 1998).
Visiting Fulani in times of sickness, bereavement, naming ceremonies helped to make lasting contacts. When visiting distant Fulani homes, which I knew I could never visit again, I shared the gospel soon after the welcome. . . . I very, very rarely (hardly ever) was not given permission to speak of the way to Heaven. Welcoming Fulani to our homes. I gave many invitations to come to my home. . . . I often taught Fulani to read in my homes . . . One of those I taught then is now a Fulani Ardo--related to other Fulani chiefs--this has opened doors. . . . Visiting Fulani patients in hospital--not just those known to us--opened doors to sharing the gospel with relatives and visitors as well as patients. . . . Years later I would meet Fulani I didn’t know, who would say, “You spoke to me in . . . [name of Town] Hospital years ago. They would remember the place and time (1998).

After she had become a full-time missionary to the Fulbe, she had the vision that they should visit every Fulbe home within reach using the “Two-By Two-Evangelism” principle (based on Lk. 10:1-2), which she began to teach in congregations. Her principle was that they should never go to the camps in big groups and use loudspeakers in their preaching, but only go two by two to talk with people about the gospel. This would arouse less opposition, and therefore would allow them to reach more Fulbe homes. A number of church members, especially women’s groups, took her advice.

To support her visitation program, Caldwell had a Christian Fulbe tract written, Laawol Kisndam (The Way of Salvation), and also a handbook on evangelism in Hausa (later translated into English).39 In general, she placed a strong emphasis on the use of literature in evangelism.

Muslims want to see in writing the message we proclaim. They lay emphasis on what is written. Even those who cannot read, including nomadic Fulani and women eagerly take the gospel leaflets that Fulani friends or Fulani children who go to school may read them to them. Some take them with the intention of learning to read themselves (1998).

In the early 1950s, the first two Fulbe were converted. The first convert was trained to help in COCIN’s medical work. The second, many years later, was employed

39 The book called Kowane Kirista Mashaidin Bishara (Every Christian a Witness) was a handbook on evangelism in general, not only on Fulbe evangelism.
as an evangelist. Another convert was a *Fulbe* girl who, due to a seemingly incurable disease, was given to Caldwell. She was healed, became a Christian, and was trained to be a teacher.\(^{40}\) At the initiative of Caldwell, COCIN arranged the first conference for Christian *Fulbe* in Nigeria, which was later carried on by NLFA (Caldwell 1998; Isa 1998; Falaka 1998).

In the early 1980s, after Caldwell had left Nigeria, a *Fulbe* evangelism committee was set up within the department of evangelism of COCIN and charged with the responsibility for finding ways of how best the church could meet the *Fulbe* and share the gospel with them.\(^{41}\) During the following years, the committee reviewed its mission principles and methods\(^{42}\) and decided that “new converts should stay with their families unless persecuted, this enables them to become witnesses among their families/people. It is after this that those who opt for formal training are given the opportunity to do so” (COCIN 1994:2).

In principle, all other *Fulbe* mission projects agreed with this policy, but the *Fulbe* evangelism committee of COCIN planned to apply the principle differently than had most other mission projects. When a *Pullo* responded to the gospel, he/she would be told that he/she should not immediately begin to go to church. An evangelist or another concerned church member would come to teach him/her the gospel and teach him/her to pray at home so that his/her house or hut would become his/her church. The converts

\(^{40}\) Today, she is the principal of COCIN’s Girls High School in Gindiri.

\(^{41}\) At that time the department of evangelism was headed by Stephen D. J. Niyang, who was a graduate from the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary. It is noteworthy that a number of key people in the *Fulbe* mission work in Northern Nigeria and other countries received training at Fuller Theological Seminary and were influenced by church growth thinking and the evangelical ideas of contextualization. Among them were R. Nelson, the first director of SL, Veltkamp, the pioneer of *Fulbe* mission in CRCN, and Mogens S. Mogensen, the first director of LCCN Fulani Evangelism Department.

\(^{42}\) In the pioneer period under the leadership of Pixie Caldwell, COCIN followed the traditional evangelism methods of visitation combined with the use of literature, cassettes, and medical help from hospitals and clinics. When a *Pullo* wanted to become a Christian, he/she came under the care of expatriate missionaries, or the local congregation, or was sent to a Bible school.
were told to be even more obedient to their parents than before. Only when the convert had matured, could he/she go to church and tell his/her people that God had called him/her to this new path. The committee found that this approach reduced the persecution and allowed many converts to stay with their family. The COCIN mission project, like the other mission projects, is characterized by a holistic approach where evangelism by visitation is combined with health work and veterinary work.

The Evangelical Church in West Africa

Much of the history of the ECWA Fulbe mission project in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s has already been described earlier in this chapter in the section entitled “The Conservative Evangelical Mission Initiatives.” The work of SIM covered most of the states in Northern Nigeria, so for decades ECWA churches have been in most of the areas where pastoral Fulbe are living. Only in the 1980s and 1990s has ECWA developed a specific Fulbe mission project. Prior to the 1980s, the converts came in contact with Christianity through ECWA dispensaries and hospitals and through expatriate missionaries and individual African church members, who on their own initiative shared the gospel with Fulbe.

The pioneer missionary in ECWA was Klassen, who from 1950 onwards visited the women in the Fulbe camps around Miango, outside Jos. In spite of opposition from the local church members who were not on good terms with the Fulbe, she would teach

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43 Hereby, the COCIN Fulbe evangelism committee accepted to work with secret or hidden believers among the Fulbe. Some of the members of the committee even went a step further and advised the converts not to stop doing their salla as soon as they began to believe in Jesus. In many cases, the discontinuation of salla attracted attention and persecution. Rather, they were instructed to substitute in their hearts the Islamic term in the confession of faith, “and Muhammed is his apostle,” with a Christian term, such as “and Jesus is my Savior.” Some have expressed a desire to see the church policy concerning polygamy changed so that a Pullo with two wives could keep his wives, and so that both the husband and his two wives could be baptized (Isa 1998; Falaka 1998; Yamden 1998).
the *Fulbe* to read and write and tell them Bible stories (Klassen 1998; “Fulani Seminar” 1969:19).

Only in 1980, did ECWA begin to organize a *Fulbe* mission project, with a Christian *Fulbe* pastor Umaru Garba as coordinator and an expatriate missionary as a co-worker. Later, when the Rinderpest broke out, a veterinarian was added (JCMWA 1980a, 1984). In the beginning of the 1990s, the SIM Nigeria Fulani Ministry Team was set up within ECWA’s mission organization, the Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS). The team targeted cattle herders on a specific migration route from the Adunu/Jere area in Niger state, over the Gure area in Kaduna state, to the Ningi/Bura area in Bauchi state. All the workers were stationed on this route. The team endeavored,

to reach out to the Fulani with a holistic approach, demonstrating the love of Christ in both word and deed. Meeting important felt needs such as those for veterinary treatment for their cattle, provision of health care, and desires for learning to read show our concern for the Fulani and may open the door for proclamation of the gospel in word also (“SIM Nigeria Fulani Ministry Team” 1998:2).

The ultimate goal of the team was the development of “an indigenous, maturing, self-propagating body of believers within the *Fulbe* culture.” They aimed at starting an ECWA *Fulbe* church that would worship in *Fulfulde*, not just a *Fulbe* section in a Hausa speaking church (“SIM Nigeria Fulani Ministry Team” 1998:1). This was fully in line with the principles advocated in the 1960s and 1970s by the SIM missionary Swank, but the ECWA leadership still seemed to want *Fulbe* converts to be integrated into the already existing Hausa-speaking congregations (Maigari 1998; Thomae 1998; Ibrahim 1998).

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44 One of the first *Fulbe* converts in the work of ECWA/SIM was Malam Adamu Dogon Yaro from Kagoro, who became a Christian in the 1950s. After having finished Bible school he was employed by the church, but not to do *Fulbe* evangelism. Only when he was called to go to Dahomey, did he become a full-time missionary among *Fulbe*. Another of the early *Fulbe* converts was Malam Ahmadu Usman, who was a town *Pullo* from the Daura emirate. He was later employed as a hospital evangelist at the SIM Eye Hospital in Kano. Through his ministry a number of *Fulbe* were converted, but after the converts left the hospital, the church lost contact with most of them (“Fulani Seminar” 1969:18).
The team distanced itself from the previous procedure for handling *Fulbe* converts.

In the past, new Fulani believers have sometimes quickly been extracted from their families, possibly hindering the spread of the gospel and confirming the impression that becoming a Christian means no longer being a Fulani. For lack of a better option, Fulani have been sent to Bible school even without a clear call, and have subsequently left school with a poor reputation. . . . New converts should stay in their home if possible, and if not, then (in order of priority) in their area, with a local church, or in the most convenient location from which they can be discipled (“SIM Nigeria Fulani Ministry Team” 1998:5).

Not only did the team try to break with the traditional extraction evangelism, but it also experimented with new approaches. In order to avoid extraction of *Fulbe* converts from their families and communities, the team was open to having *Fulbe* believers stay within their Islamic context as secret or hidden believers. They could continue to do the *salla* prayers and fast until they were strong enough to make an open confession (D. Nelson 1998).

**The Nigerian Baptist Convention**

There is no doubt that it was the successful work in the Borgu area of Kwara state that inspired the Nigerian Baptist Mission, its missionaries and NBC to begin a work

45 The team in general wanted the *Fulbe* Christians to continue in their original life-style and advised them against selling their cows (“SIM Nigeria Fulani Ministry Team” 1998:1).

46 Several of their young *Fulbe* friends said that Jesus was the right one to follow, but that becoming a Christian was dishonoring to their father, so they would wait to come out in the open until after their father had died. A few elderly men, who also in their heart believed in Jesus, said that they felt it too embarrassing to confess their faith publicly (D. Nelson 1998). The question of how to handle *Fulbe* converts with two or more wives is a more thorny issue. Presently the missionaries are talking with the EMS/ECWA leadership about allowing polygamists to be baptized and to take Holy Communion, but not allowing them to hold leadership positions. In Niger, where SIM works more independently of the church, they have already adopted this position. They also have realized that they have to develop Christian rituals for name giving ceremonies, and for burials, otherwise Christian *Fulbe* who live among Muslim *Fulbe* have no alternative other than to call the Muslim *malam* (D. Nelson 1998).
among *Fulbe* in Northern Nigeria.\(^{47}\) The Burkwalls’ move to the seminary in Kaduna with two *Fulbe* students in 1983 provided the impetus for the work. In Northern Nigeria the plan was to set up a team of Nigerian and expatriate missionaries who would be able to meet both the physical and the spiritual needs of the pastoral *Fulbe* along their migratory routes from Kaduna state to Gombe state. The work started in Kaduna, where employees and students at the seminary became involved with *Fulbe*. Then in 1988, a veterinary team, headed by an expatriate missionary, based in Jos, was set up. The Nigerian veterinarian described their approach like this.

> When we offered our veterinary services, we always prayed with them. We went to their camps, sometimes staying with them in their own tents for days, up to a week. We played cassettes in *Fulfulde* with songs and sermons. Secretly especially young men would come up to us to ask questions. We also showed films (in Hausa and *Fulfulde*) in the evening. We would start with films on the prophets and then move on to Jesus (Adewumi 1998).

The approach of the NBC *Fulbe* mission project was holistic with a strong emphasis on evangelism and prayer. The short-term goal was to have the converts integrated into the local non-*Fulbe* congregations, but the long-term goal was to establish *Fulbe* fellowships and congregations, following the pattern of the Baptist mission work in the Borgu area.\(^{48}\)

\(^{47}\) In the mid-1980s the Baptist Mission in Nigeria decided to target three people groups in Nigeria, the *Kanuri*, the *Mumuye* and the *Fulbe*. Since then teams of expatriate and Nigerian missionaries have been established. The Baptist *Fulbe* mission work has focused on Kwara state, Kaduna state, and (the newly created) Gombe state (Tenking and Tenking 1998; Meribole 1991:12).

\(^{48}\) One of the missionaries stated very clearly that in order for *Fulbe* converts to be accepted in the local congregations they would have to become like the local non-*Fulbe* people. His vision was a highly contextualized *Fulbe* church. “I see a church that doesn’t need to meet on Sundays. They don’t need to sit on benches, they are free to sit on the floor. A church that is free to have a men’s service, a women’s service. If they want to bow towards Jerusalem, if they kneel and recite prayers, that is possible. If they don’t want to sing and to have drums, I don’t have any problems with that. If they want to baptize their own, if they have a strong natural leader, a growing Christian, I am not going to require him to be a reverend” (Houser 1998). Not all church leaders and not even all missionaries would agree with these radical views, but we have to remember that the NBC together with the Nigerian Baptist Mission have had the courage to put the hotly disputed “homogeneous unit principle” into practice by establishing *Fulbe* congregations in the Borgu area.
It was part of the strategy of the NBC *Fulbe* mission project to work with secret or hidden believers. “We should allow them to be silent or hidden Christians in their own society. If they have accepted Christ, we should encourage them to stay in their camp. If necessary they may go to mosque to pray. We can work together with them until we have five to ten people in the camp, who may make a public confession” (Adewumi 1998).

Church members living near secret believers were asked to visit them to encourage them in their faith, and also members of the veterinary teams were asked to visit them (Tenking and Tenking 1998; Shotts 1998; Adewumi 1998). The missionaries would not put any pressure on the secret believers to confess their faith publicly. “It is the work of the Holy Spirit to call Fulanis, and it is up to the Fulanis themselves to find out when to go public with their new faith” (Tenking and Tenking 1998). The main emphasis of the project has been on direct ministry to the *Fulbe*, but the missionaries have also tried to involve some of the local congregations and interested individuals in the work.

**Summary**

Mission among *Fulbe* started very late compared to mission among non-Muslim ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria. The first initiatives emerged in the 1960s, but only in the 1980s did the churches and mission agencies begin to set up mission projects. IAP helped to create a general awareness of mission among Muslims, and the conservative revivalist movements and the ecumenical radio broadcast initiative led to a fruitful encounter of the pastoral *Fulbe* with the gospel.

It was primarily the influence of the successful mission work in Dahomey in the 1960s and onwards that led to the first small breakthrough in *Fulbe* mission in Nigeria. The establishment of *Fulbe* congregations in Kwara state (outside the area researched in
this study) in the 1980s indicated that it might be possible to win *Fulbe* for Christ in other parts of Nigeria as well.

Although JCMWA was an ecumenical initiative, it came to exercise a decisive influence on all the major churches in Northern Nigeria and was the most important single cause of the rapid growth of *Fulbe* mission projects in the 1980s and 1990s. Whereas there were no mission projects before the establishment of JCMWA in 1979, today most of the larger churches are involved in mission among *Fulbe*.

In spite of the theological differences between the more conservative evangelical and the more ecumenical churches and mission agencies, there is a missiological consensus between the two groups regarding many of the key issues in *Fulbe* mission. In accordance with church growth thinking and contextualization principles, both conservative and ecumenical leaders realize that missionaries among *Fulbe* has to use other mission methods and approaches than the ones that were traditionally used in reaching animistic sedentary groups, and that *Fulfulde* speaking congregations have to be the goal of the mission work.

Expatriate missionaries together with a number of individual Nigerian church members were the pioneers of *Fulbe* mission in all of the five churches. Their methods were very traditional and their few converts were all extracted from their communities and taken care of by the expatriate missionaries themselves or the church. The establishment of organized mission projects in the five churches took place in the 1980s and seems to have been strongly influenced by the work of JCMWA. The mission projects were partnerships between the national churches and the overseas mission agencies. However, it is clear that *Fulbe* mission projects in most churches have been strongly dependent on mission agencies, both in terms of finances and personnel. This dependency has been reduced over the years, but in many churches *Fulbe* mission is still not a high priority.
CHAPTER 7

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FIVE MISSION PROJECTS AND THEIR MISSION PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

After having described the history of Fulbe mission in Northern Nigeria, including the history of the five mission projects, the results of my survey of these mission projects will be analyzed. The main focus will be on the mission principles that have guided the work of the mission projects and on mission approaches and methods that have been employed by these agencies in their attempt to share the gospel with the pastoral Fulbe.

The following analysis of the mission projects of LCCN, CRCN, COCIN, ECWA, and NBC is based on extensive personal interviews with ten missionaries and others from each church involved in Fulbe mission. For the interviews the questionnaire provided in Appendix A were used. Supplementary information was obtained through unstructured interviews with leaders from each of the mission projects.

Demographic Data about the Mission Projects

In the following sections, the respondents’ perception of the mission projects’ principles, approaches, and methods will be analyzed. All those who answered these questions were involved in the activities of the mission project, either as missionaries, volunteers, or committee members. The responses obtained through the interviews were not the observations of outside observers, but the self-understanding of those who were themselves involved in the mission project. Through the interviews with the leaders of
the mission projects, more detailed information was obtained about the type of missionaries employed in the projects. After the demographic information about the respondents is given, information about the missionaries in the mission projects will be presented.

**TABLE 2**

**POSITION OF RESPONDENTS IN RELATION TO THE MISSION PROJECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>LCCN</th>
<th>CRCN</th>
<th>COCIN</th>
<th>ECWA</th>
<th>NBC</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigerian missionaries</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expatriate missionaries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nigerian missionary = Nigerian church employee who is working or within the last three years has been working in the mission project.

Expatriate missionary = Non-Nigerian missionary who is involved in or within the last three years has been involved in the mission project.

Volunteer = Nigerian who without being employed in the mission project is involved in the activities of the mission project.

Committee member = Nigerian who is or within the last three years has been involved in the mission project through membership on a Fulbe evangelism committee, or through his/her position as church administrator.

Table 2 shows that those from LCCN represent the perspectives of the employed missionaries. The majority of the NBC respondents were also missionaries, whereas the missionaries in the other churches only made up half or less than half of the respondents.

An analysis of the names of the respondents shows that the number of Fulbe among the respondents in the mission projects varied greatly. While LCCN had none and

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1 The number of Nigerian and expatriate missionaries refer to missionary units. Even if both husband and wife are working as missionaries they are counted as one unit.
COCIN had two, CRCN had as many as six, ECWA had five, and NBC had four *Fulbe* among their respondents. Some of the differences in responses between the five churches may be due to differences in the composition of the groups of respondents.

**TABLE 3**

**MISSIONARIES EMPLOYED IN THE MISSION PROJECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training of missionaries</th>
<th>LCCN²</th>
<th>CRCN³</th>
<th>COCIN</th>
<th>ECWA</th>
<th>NBC</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastors/Evangelists</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet./Agric. workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity of missionaries</th>
<th>Fulbe⁴</th>
<th>Non-Fulbe Nigerians</th>
<th>Expatriates⁵</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² For the last twenty years, LCCN has had expatriate missionaries working in the *Fulbe* mission project. For a few years they had only a part time worker, but during most years they have had two expatriate missionary units. At the beginning of 1998, however, LCCN has no expatriate missionary working in the project.

³ For the last twenty years, CRCN has had expatriate missionaries working in the *Fulbe* mission project. For the last couple of years, however, they have had no expatriate missionaries working in the project.

⁴ All of the five churches have Christian *Fulbe* employed in other departments of the church.

⁵ We have only counted a missionary couple as one unit, although in many cases both husband and wife are involved in the work of the mission project.
Also, when we look at the size and composition of the mission teams in the five churches, we may note significant differences. While LCCN had as many as eleven missionaries employed, and COCIN only three, the other churches had between three and five missionaries each. All of CRCN’s five missionaries were *Fulbe*, whereas LCCN had no *Fulbe* missionaries. In each of the other churches, there were two or three *Fulbe* missionaries. While the expatriate missionaries were in the majority in NBC, CRCN and LCCN had no expatriate missionaries, and the other churches had one or two each.

Interviews with the missionaries of the five mission projects revealed that less than half of the nineteen non-*Fulbe* missionaries were fluent in *Fulfulde*. This means that the missionaries have mainly been using Hausa in their ministry among the *Fulbe*.

**Mission Principles**

The first major section of the questionnaire sought to identify the mission principles on which the mission projects had based their mission. As mentioned earlier, the results of the survey are the perspectives of missionaries and others involved in the ministry. First, the goals of the mission projects will be presented and then the types of approaches employed. The topics for the statements of mission principles were developed on the basis of my understanding of the key issues in *Fulbe* mission and of the research of other mission projects among Muslims.
TABLE 4

MISSION PRINCIPLES BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(MP = The Mission Project)</th>
<th>Not Really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much or very much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MP emphasized the authority of the Bible, using the Word of God as final authority.</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP emphasized a holistic ministry perspective, meeting the needs of the total person.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unless his/her life is in danger a new <em>Fulbe</em> convert would not be removed from his/her community.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>86.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In case a <em>Fulbe</em> person was expelled from his family and community . . . we encourage and help hi and her to re-establish close relations with the family and the community.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP had a very clear goal, which all of those involved know and can explain.</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP used a person-based approach with focus on personal testimony and life of the evangelists.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those involved in MP depended on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and on the power of the Holy Spirit (healings, deliverance from evil spirits, etc).</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP focused at integrating <em>Fulbe</em> converts in existing non-<em>Fulbe</em> congregations.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP used culturally relevant approaches with which the <em>Fulbe</em> were familiar.</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP was need-oriented and the approach focused on meeting specific needs of the <em>Fulbe</em>.</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP utilized an incarnational model with people actually living among the <em>Fulbe</em>.</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP used media and methods that were appropriate to the social and educational background of the <em>Fulbe</em>.</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP involved local congregations or groups within local congregations as much as possible.</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP carefully used research and information available and conducted their own research concerning the <em>Fulbe</em>.</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP emphasized the development of local <em>Fulbe</em> leadership, training them and giving them authority.</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP works closely together with <em>Fulbe</em> MPs in neighboring churches from other denominations.</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP used the same approach in reaching <em>Fulbe</em> as is used in reaching other people.</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP focused on development of community (church) rather than on individual conversion.</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Goals for the Mission Projects

More than three quarters of the respondents agreed much or very much that their mission project had a very clear goal, which all of those involved knew and could explain. When the goals for the mission projects were considered, two goals clearly emerge. For the vast majority of the respondents, an important goal of the mission work was to avoid extracting the *Fulbe* converts from their *Fulbe* people and to help them to maintain close relations with their family and community. Only if the life of the converts was in danger would they be removed from their community, and in that case they would be encouraged and helped to re-establish close relations with their family and community.

The other goal that emerged involved the question of the incorporation of *Fulbe* into churches. Only thirty-eight percent of the respondents gave high priority to the development of a community of Christian *Fulbe* rather than to individual conversions. This means that for almost two thirds of the respondents, the conversion of individuals was seen as the goal of the mission work. In the light of this, it is not surprising that only ten percent distanced themselves from the traditional goal of integrating *Fulbe* converts into existing congregations, whereas as many as seventy percent indicated that their mission project much or very much aimed at integrating converts into existing non-*Fulbe* congregations. These findings reflect the fact that there are no *Fulbe* congregations in Northern Nigeria (apart from the ones in Kwara state, which fall outside the scope of this research). On the other hand, it may also be noted that today’s practitioners of *Fulbe* mission have gone against the agreement in *Fulbe* mission conferences that for *Fulbe* mission to be effective *Fulbe* congregations had to be established.

Almost half of the respondents gave a very low priority to the development of local *Fulbe* leadership. This may be understood in the light of the fact that there were no
Fulbe congregations and that most of the respondents felt that it was not the goal of the mission projects to establish such congregations.

The responses to the questions about development of a Christian Fulbe community, incorporation of Christian Fulbe into existing non-Fulbe congregations, and development of Fulbe leadership form a coherent pattern. To summarize these responses: in general the mission projects did not give high priority to the creation of communities of Christian Fulbe, to the integration of Christian Fulbe in Fulfulde speaking churches, and to the development of Fulbe leadership. On the contrary they tended to focus on converting individual Fulbe and then integrating them into existing non-Fulbe congregations without much emphasis on Fulbe leadership.

**Mission Approaches**

In this section, first it will be considered to what extent the mission approaches are contextual, and then organizational principles will be discussed. As stated in Chapter 2, contextualization involves faithfulness to the Bible and an attempt to relate it meaningfully to the context. The results of the survey show clearly that faithfulness to the Bible was the most important mission principle of all those listed. All respondents, except one, gave the highest priority to the authority of the Bible. When it comes to taking the context of the Fulbe seriously in the development of mission approaches, however, the mission projects appeared to be more reluctant. One way to take the context of the Fulbe seriously and to work towards the development of contextual approaches is for the projects to analyze the research and information available about the Fulbe and to conduct their own research. A little more than half of the respondents thought that this was done much or very much in their project.6

6 There is a striking correlation between the degree of involvement of mission projects with JCMWA and the responses to this question. The highest score is found with LCCN, who has been working
About two thirds of the respondents chose much or very much as their response to the statement, “The mission project used culturally relevant approaches with which the Fulbe were familiar.” The use of “media and methods that were appropriate to the social and educational background of the Fulbe” was slightly less emphasized in the mission projects.

In all five churches, there was a strong tradition of holistic ministry which is also reflected in this survey. As many as eighty-eight percent of the respondents stated that their mission project emphasized a holistic ministry perspective, meeting the needs of the total person. So all five mission projects were not only involved in preaching the gospel, but also in a variety of social services (e.g., medical and veterinary work). We expected that the statement, “The mission project was need-oriented and the approach focused on meeting specific needs of the Fulbe,” to score equally high; possibly the lower figures indicate a slight self-criticism. It may be that not all of their holistic activities took seriously the actual needs of the Fulbe.

The most remarkable finding concerning the mission approaches of the five mission projects is the response to the statement, “The mission project used the same approach in reaching Fulbe as is used in reaching other people.” Only a little more than a third of the respondents disagreed with this statement, whereas about forty percent agreed much or very much that their mission project used the same approach in reaching Fulbe as the churches used in reaching other ethnic groups. These figures illustrate that the Fulbe mission work in Northern Nigeria is fairly traditional.

closely with JCMWA since its foundation, and the lowest score was with ECWA, who has never joined the organization, though it has always sent observers to participate in the meetings.

The holistic approach to mission, however, is not specific for the Fulbe mission projects, but was used also among the animistic ethnic groups right from the time when the churches were founded and also today in the mission work in animistic ethnic groups.

The most traditional among the mission projects were LCCN and CRCN, where the majority of the respondents agreed much or very much with the statement. The least traditional were ECWA and NBC, where the majority of the respondents stated that they did not really agree with the statement.
Although their good intentions for taking the context of the *Fulbe* seriously can be traced, and although the respondents felt that their mission approaches were largely geared to the needs of the *Fulbe* and adapted to their cultural patterns, the conclusion is that traditional approaches to mission are still very influential in the mission projects. Also, in spite of their attitudes regarding relations of the *Fulbe* converts to their community, the traditional policy of integrating *Fulbe* converts into non-*Fulbe* congregations still dominates.

Almost three quarters of the respondents agreed much or very much that their “mission project used a person-based approach with emphasis on personal testimony and the life of the evangelists.” There seemed to be a realization that this approach was very important for reaching the pastoral *Fulbe*. Taking into consideration the very limited number of missionaries set aside by the churches for *Fulbe* mission and the spread of the *Fulbe* in most of the districts of the churches, it is surprising that as many as forty percent of the respondents attached no or only some importance to the involvement in the mission work of local congregations or groups within local congregations.9 Pastoral *Fulbe* are very mobile and often cross denominational boundaries. In the light of this, it is surprising that almost half of the respondents considered close cooperation with mission projects in neighboring churches from other denomination to be only of little or no significance to them.10

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9. Behind these figures we find significant variations between the ideas of the five mission projects, which are a reflection of different mission strategies. In LCCN, whose mission project is based on evangelism groups in local congregations, ninety percent give high priority to this cooperation, whereas sixty percent of the respondents in both ECWA and NBC, whose mission projects are built up around expatriate missionaries, attach no or only little importance to this.

10. A closer look at the figures reveals differences between the five churches involved. For the mission projects in the three churches that were members of both JCMWA and of TEKAN, i.e., LCCN, CRCN, and COCIN, cooperation with other churches was of significantly greater importance than for ECWA and NBC. Neither ECWA nor NBC is a member of TEKAN; ECWA is not a member of JCMWA; and NBC has only recently become a member of JCMWA. In LCCN, CRCN, and COCIN, there has been a long tradition of cooperation among the TEKAN churches that have sprung up as a result of the work of SUM.
Mission Methods and Media

The purpose of this portion of the survey was to discover which methods and media the mission projects used in reaching the Fulbe. We asked specifically about the significance of the use of these approaches for the conversion of the Fulbe. A mission project might very well have had legitimate purposes for being involved, for example, in veterinary work other than just conversion of Fulbe. The selection of topics for the questions about the use of media, social services and specifically Christian activities were chosen on the basis of my knowledge of Fulbe mission work and of research of other mission projects among Muslims. Each question in this portion of the questionnaire was asked three times in order to discover how significant the mission project considered the use of each of these methods in the awareness phase, in the conversion phase, and in the incorporation phase of the conversion process.

The Awareness Phase

In the survey of the awareness phase, the purpose was to discover which of the selected twenty-two methods or media were considered to be of greatest importance in making the Fulbe aware of the gospel. First, the ten audio, video, and literary media are considered. The Qur'an has been included among the literary media, although the Qur'an may never have been distributed and used directly by mission projects. The five media that scored the highest response are all media in Fulfulde, which cater to the need of the Fulbe to hear the gospel in their own language. The vast majority of the pastoral Fulbe are non-literate, and three of the most used media were oral media that could be understood by all Fulbe. It is surprising that the Fulfulde Bible was used so much in this phase, since so few of the non-Christian Fulbe are able to read it. The Fulfulde Bible may have been used in reading aloud and possibly it was referred to by leaders. The importance attached to the use of the Fulfulde Bible corresponds with the
previously reported fact that the emphasis on the authority of the Bible was one of the most important mission principles.

**TABLE 5**

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEDIA IN THE AWARENESS PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio cassettes(^{11})</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible or portions of the Bible in <em>Fulfulde</em>(^{12})</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jesus Film(^{13})</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in <em>Fulfulde</em></td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio (<em>Sawtu Linjiila</em>)</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible or portions of Bible in another language(^{14})</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other TV, video, slides or film</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in another language</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books or tracts in <em>ajami</em> script</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <em>Qur’an</em>--certain passages</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is equally surprising that as many as forty-two of the respondents attached no importance to the use of the Christian broadcasts of Radio *Sawtu Linjiila*. In the initial period, from 1966 to 1977, Radio *Sawtu Linjiila* built up a very impressive audience in

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\(^{11}\) The audio cassettes were primarily *Fulfulde* cassettes, most of which are produced either by Radio *Sawtu Linjiila* in Ngaounderé, Cameroon, or by Gospel Recordings in Jos, Nigeria.

\(^{12}\) The Bible was translated into the Adamawa dialect of *Fulfulde* in 1983. In the central and eastern part of Nigeria, many *Fulbe* have problems understanding the Adamawa dialect, so now a team of translators are working on producing a Bible translation that will be more useful in this area.

\(^{13}\) In the middle of the 1980s, the Jesus Film produced by Campus Crusade for Christ, known in Nigeria as the Great Commission Movement, was released in *Fulfulde*. Christian *Fulbe* from Northern Nigeria lent their voices to this version, which immediately became very popular among the mission projects.

\(^{14}\) The alternative language to *Fulfulde* is most often Hausa.
Northern Nigeria, but since then the lack of continuity in broadcasting and the weak signals of its broadcasts have led to a decrease in audience.\(^{15}\)

Some *Fulbe* have been taught to read and write *Fulfulde* or Hausa in the *ajami* script, but only about a third of the respondents attached any importance to this media. *Ajami* is a way of writing Hausa and *Fulfulde* through the use of Arabic letters. To Muslims and many Christians alike, Arabic and *ajami* are specifically Islamic forms of writing, which may account for some of the reluctance to use it.\(^{16}\)

The lowest scoring of all the media was the *Qur’an*: sixty-three percent stated that it was not really of any use in their ministry. There seems to be a great reluctance among Christians in Northern Nigeria to use the *Qur’an* in their ministry among Muslims. Church leaders have directly warned their people against quoting from the *Qur’an*. The use of the *Qur’an* is commonly avoided for the following reasons: first, referring to the *Qur’an*, when preaching the gospel, might be understood as giving the *Qur’an* a similar status as the Bible in terms of revelation; second, most Christians are not qualified to

\(^{15}\) When we look at the differences between the responses of the five mission project, we be able to ascertain answers to why radio was not considered to be very important. LCCN had the highest positive response to radio with seventy percent answering much and ten percent some. In ECWA, twenty percent answered much and sixty percent some. In the other three churches, between fifty and seventy percent answered “not really.” LCCN is closest to Radio *Sawtu Linjiila*, both in terms of geography (the signal is clearest in the LCCN area), in terms of dialect (Radio *Sawtu Linjiila* uses different dialects but most often the Adamawa dialect, which is the main *Fulfulde* dialect in the LCCN area) and also in terms of relationship (Lutherans have been at the forefront of this work, and there have been fairly close links between Radio *Sawtu Linjiila* and LCCN and its mission partner the SUM-D). ECWA has a long tradition of involvement in radio broadcast in *Fulfulde*. Some of the first *Fulbe* speakers at Radio *Sawtu Linjiila* came from ECWA. Through the ECWA/SIM radio station Radio ELWA in Monrovia, *Fulfulde* programs produced in Jos were broadcast until the civil war in Liberia stopped this. Because of problems with reception of signals and because dialectical differences, the broadcasts from Radio *Sawtu Linjiila* have not been of quite the same importance to ECWA as to LCCN.

\(^{16}\) Whereas most other mission projects did not seem to attach any significance to this medium, seventy percent of the LCCN respondents stated that in their ministry, the use *ajami* had some or much importance. This is probably due to the fact that some individual volunteers and missionaries at a certain time attended *ajami* courses arranged by IAP. In LCCN, *ajami* training has been included in a number of courses on *Fulbe* evangelism.
interpret the Qur’an; third, their use of the Qur’an might create problems in the relationship between Muslims and Christians as it has done in years past.

Altogether, the mission projects seemed to take the linguistic needs of the Fulbe seriously in their selection of media. There was, however, a marked reluctance to let the selection of media be influenced by the religious characteristics of the Fulbe.

**TABLE 6**

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN THE AWARENESS PHASE BY PERCENTAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary program</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical program (hospital, clinic, nurses)</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy program</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other educational program</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the awareness phase, all mission projects, in accordance with the mission principle of holism, emphasized the use of social services very much, as seen in Table 6. Most popular were veterinary programs, followed by medical programs. In all five mission projects, veterinary and medical personnel had been employed. All mission projects were involved in teaching Fulbe to read and write, but at the time of the interview none of the projects had employees that were specifically trained in literacy work. In this phase, other educational programs, the most common of which is Bible schools, had not been of much importance.
As seen in Table 7, four specifically Christian activities stand out in the awareness phase as most important. These activities are personal witness, intercession, Christian Fulbe conferences, and prayer with Fulbe. Between seventy-four and eighty-six percent of the respondents attached some or much importance to these activities (and between forty and sixty-four percent attached much importance). The remaining four methods—large rallies, Bible study groups, correspondence courses and theological debates—were not important for the mission projects. Between sixty-two and seventy-four percent of the respondents stated that these activities had not really had any significance in their ministry during the awareness phase.

### The Conversion Phase

In the conversion phase, the mission projects generally emphasized the same media as in the awareness phase. The main difference was that the Hausa Bible was used more in this phase than in the previous phase (and making it the third most used media), probably because many Fulbe seekers were taught to read and write in Hausa in connection with their conversion.
The most significant change in the use of social services in the conversion phase compared with the previous phase was that literacy programs and other educational programs gained in importance, although they still did not surpass medical and veterinary programs. As the Fulbe move along in the conversion phase, most of them undergo some type of education in the Christian faith (e.g., baptism class). The education is aimed at helping the people read the Bible and so literacy training is given a greater importance. Some converts were probably also sent to Bible schools as a preparation for baptism.

The same four specifically Christian activities that stood out as the most significant in the awareness phase (personal witness, intercession, Fulbe conferences, and prayer with Fulbe), were also considered in the conversion phase most important, even more important than they were previously.17

The Incorporation Phase

The four most frequently used media in the conversion phase were the Fulfulde and Hausa Bibles, audio cassettes, and the Jesus Film. These media stand out in the incorporation phase even more clearly as being the most important media. In this phase, the mission projects seem to have focused strongly on making the converts familiar with the Bible and with the story of Jesus.

In this phase, the four social services were of almost equal importance. Surprisingly two thirds of the respondents considered their veterinary program to be of much importance in the period of incorporation. Understandably fifty-six percent considered literacy and other educational programs (such as Bible schools) to be of much

17 There was almost complete agreement among the five mission projects that these four were the four most important specifically Christian activities in the conversion phase. But the relative importance of the four items varied among the mission projects. Whereas personal witness was given highest priority by CRCN and ECWA, prayer with Fulbe was valued highest by NBC, intercession by COCIN, and Fulbe conferences by LCCN.
importance in the incorporation phase. Many of the Fulbe converts, who up to this point had not learned to read and write, were offered the opportunity in this stage, and many Fulbe converts were sent to Bible schools for training.18

Of the specifically Christian activities, the same four items that headed the list in first two phases were still considered most important in the third: Christian Fulbe conferences, prayer with Fulbe, intercession, and personal witness. The most conspicuous change was that the Christian Fulbe conferences were now seen as by far the most significant activity. To eighty-eight percent of the respondents, these conferences were of much importance. This means that the mission projects considered the value of Fulbe conferences in this phase to be higher than any of the other items. A wider range of activities were considered to be of greater importance in this phase than in the previous phases, such as Bible study groups and large evangelistic meetings.

Summary of the Conclusions Concerning the Survey of the Mission Projects

The number of Nigerian and expatriate missionaries set aside for mission among Fulbe is very small compared to the number set aside for mission among other much smaller ethnic groups. In view of the number of Muslim Fulbe in Northern Nigeria and the difficulties and complexities of Fulbe mission, it is evident that the churches and mission agencies so far have not given high priority to Fulbe mission.

In the first Fulbe mission conferences, and particularly in the JCMWA assemblies and meetings, it was emphasized that mission among Muslim Fulbe would have to be

18 In each of the five mission projects the scores were divided evenly equally between the four types of social services. The most significant differences were that “other educational services” were ranked a top priority in LCCN, CRCN, and COCIN, whereas they were ranked of least importance in ECWA and NBC. This seems to be an indication there was a greater tendency to send Fulbe converts to Bible schools and other educational institutions as part of the follow-up that in the three TEKAN churches than in NBC and ECWA churches.
different from traditional mission among most other ethnic groups. The fact that the 
*Fulbe* were Muslims and pastoralists, and many of them nomads, with their own peculiar 
culture, which distinguishes them radically from most of the ethnic groups, called for 
new mission principles and approaches. I will briefly look at some of these principles 
and discuss how they were being followed.

1. **Linear ministry.** All of the churches had set aside a number of missionaries to 
focus all of their attention on the *Fulbe*, although the total number, as mentioned above, 
seems to have been inadequately small. Some of the churches, in particular ECWA, 
CRCN and NBC, had set up their ministry so that they met the *Fulbe* along their 
migration routes. The cooperation within JCMWA and KYBF between churches in 
Northern Nigeria met some of the needs of cooperation in mission necessitated by the 
linear organization of the *Fulbe* societies. This survey, however, shows that the 
realization of the need for cooperation in *Fulbe* mission had not penetrated very deeply 
into all the mission projects.

2. **Holistic ministry and felt needs approach.** All the churches had organized their 
ministries in accordance with the realization that mission among *Fulbe* must be holistic in 
nature and must meet he felt needs of the *Fulbe*. Social services, in particular medical 
and veterinary services, were emphasized. This survey shows that those involved in the 
mission projects gave very high priority to these principles. These principles, especially 
the principle of holistic ministry, had also to a large extent been applied to mission 
among animistic ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria. This may explain why all churches 
and mission agencies so readily applied them in *Fulbe* mission.

3. **Contextualization.** JCMWA and the *Fulbe* mission projects were conceived at 
the time when the principles of contextualization began to be accepted in both 
ecumenical and evangelical circles. There was a consensus in all circles that the cultural 
context of *Fulbe* had to be taken into consideration when devising ministries among
Fulbe. This survey shows that this principle was not widely followed by the participants in the mission projects. A significant percentage of the respondents were still not ready to exchange traditional approaches with more culturally relevant and contextually appropriate approaches. In the area of language, all mission projects strongly emphasized the use of Fulfulde over the use of Hausa, but still many of the missionaries were not yet fluent in Fulfulde. On the topic of the religious context of Fulbe, there was no agreement concerning ways in which to deal with this. In general, the mission projects seem to have followed a most cautious path. This is reflected in their hesitancy to make use of the Qur’an, and it may also have played a part in their negative attitude to the use of ajami script and theological debate or dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

4. Community approach. In both the evangelical and the ecumenical circles, there was a consensus that the community had to be taken seriously in mission to Fulbe. As early as 1969, Swank warned against extraction evangelism and promoted a community approach. This survey, however, shows that although the mission projects intended the converts to stay within their community, they still largely followed the principle of individual conversion in such a way that all the converts were effectively extracted from their community. On the other hand, after Fulbe converts had been extracted from their community, the mission projects gave very high priority to helping them to re-establish a relationship with their own people.

5. Fulbe congregations. From the 1960s to the 1980s, it was discussed in both evangelical and more ecumenical circles whether Fulbe converts should be integrated into non-Fulbe congregations or whether Fulbe congregations should be established. Inspired by church growth thinking, the idea of having separate congregations for Fulbe was promoted and accepted by most participants in the discussions. Some of the mission projects stated the development of Fulbe congregations as a goal for their work; however, one mission project openly aimed at integrating converts in existing churches. The
survey shows that the vast majority of those involved in the mission projects favored the traditional approach of integrating *Fulbe* converts in the existing congregations. The fact is that after almost twenty years of organized *Fulbe* mission in Northern Nigeria, there were at the time of the interview still no *Fulbe* congregations. The conclusion, therefore, is that the mission among *Fulbe* to a large extent follows traditional mission principles.
CHAPTER 8
AN ANALYSIS OF THE MOVEMENT TO CHRIST
OF PASTORAL FULBE

In the previous chapter, the focus was the mission principles the five mission projects had followed and the approaches and methods they had employed in their attempt to communicate the gospel to the pastoral Fulbe. In this chapter, I will look at the communication process from the perspective of the pastoral Fulbe who have received the gospel. I will analyze the movement to Christ among the pastoral Fulbe by identifying the communicational and contextual factors that have impacted their spiritual journey.

First, I will attempt to describe, in terms of their demographic characteristics, the group of pastoral Fulbe who have become Christians in the five churches. Then I will determine the impact of mission initiatives, personal experiences and contextual factors on their movement to Christ in each of the three phases of their conversion process. Finally, I will analyze their response to the gospel in terms of their spiritual maturity and their new relationship with the Christian community and the Fulbe community. The following analysis is based on extensive personal interviews with sixty converts, using the questionnaire provided in Appendix B and on the life stories of fifteen converts.

Demographic Information

To understand the converts, it is helpful to “draw a picture” of the pastoral Fulbe who have become Christians. Some of the important questions to be asked are “who are
they?” “where do they come from?” and “what demographic changes are related to their conversion?”

**Age, Sex, Marital Status, Clan, and Location**

Before probing deeper into the changes related to their conversion, some basic demographic information about the Christian *Fulbe* will be presented. Three quarters of the respondents were men, and only one quarter women. From all indications, it appears that more men than women among the *Fulbe* have converted from Islam to Christianity. This may due to the fact that it is much more difficult for a woman to interact with outsiders such as Christians and to make independent decisions. Often, when a married man is converted to Christianity, the relatives of the wife will try to remove the wife (and their children) from the Christian husband.

Figure 4 shows the age of the respondents at the time of the interview. About two thirds of the respondents were in their twenties or thirties. None of the respondents were in their teens, and only six were in their sixties or seventies.\(^1\) This means that most of the converts were in the pastoral *Fulbe* age group called “young adulthood” (*kori’en*), a stage at which, according to *Fulbe* culture, they are expected to have married, to have had children, and to have established their own herd.

Two thirds of the respondents were married. Of the twenty respondents who were not married, only two were women. Fourteen of the unmarried respondents were between twenty and thirty years of age, which may explain why they were not yet married. Some of the respondents may have once been married, but may have lost their spouses at the time of their conversion and not yet re-married.

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\(^1\) The converts from LCCN, NBC and ECWA were generally much younger than the converts from CRCN and COCIN.
Question: “What is your age?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20–24 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>******</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>******</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>******</td>
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<tr>
<td>35–39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>40–44</td>
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<td>6.7</td>
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<td>45–49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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<td>50–54</td>
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<td>6.7</td>
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<td>70–71</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>******</td>
<td>******</td>
<td>******</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 4

AGE OF FULBE RESPONDENTS

We did not ask specific questions about when the respondents were married and to whom, but the life stories provide detail about the marital stories of each of the sample group of fifteen. Eleven of the fifteen converts whose life stories were recorded were married at the time of the interview, but only five of them had Fulbe spouses. In three cases, the marriages survived the conversion, whereas three marriages broke up at the time of conversion. Altogether eight of the converts married after they were baptized. Only in two cases did the converts succeed in finding a Fulbe Christian person to marry. Based on the life story interviews, interviews with missionaries, and my own observations, it may be concluded that Fulbe men prefer to marry Fulbe women, but because there are so few Christian Fulbe women, the Fulbe men are willing to marry Christian women from other ethnic groups.2

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2 When talking to unmarried Christian Fulbe men (off record), complaints were often raised against Christian Fulbe fathers with daughters. They accused fathers of preferring to marry their daughters to rich non-Fulbe men, instead of encouraging their daughters to marry poor Fulbe converts.
Both in the pastoral *Fulbe* culture and in the culture of most other ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria, a wedding is a community affair in which the relatives provide the man and the woman with the financial and practical support needed to get married. When a male convert has been effectively expelled from his community, it is very difficult for him to handle all of the costs of marriage. In all cases except one (Ali 1998), the local church seems to have assisted the convert in getting married. In one case (Ahmed 1998), the local church leaders even helped the convert to find a suitable non-*Fulbe* marriage partner.

The sixty Christian *Fulbe* interviewed belonged to twenty different clans or sub-clans. Seven *Fulbe* belonged to the *Jallanko’en*, and seven to the *Yakanaaji*. The other clans were represented by one to four persons each. The Christian *Fulbe* were, at the time of the interview, located in twenty-eight different local government areas in seven states. The distribution of the respondents among different clans and local governments indicates that a people movement has not occurred but rather separate individual conversions have taken place.

**Time of Conversion**

The time of conversion is important in two respects. First, it is important to know when the movement to Christ among the pastoral *Fulbe* in Northern Nigeria began. Second, it is important to know in which life stages pastoral *Fulbe* tend to become interested in the gospel.

Figure 5 and 6 show when the movement to Christ among these *Fulbe* took place. Within the last ten years, 46.7 percent of the respondents became interested in the gospel.

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3 The distribution of the converts among the states is as follows: Adamawa eleven, Bauchi eleven, Gombe five, Kaduna ten, Niger one, Plateau ten, and Taraba twelve.
Another 23.6 percent became interested in the gospel from eleven to twenty-five years ago.

**Question:** “How many years ago did you first become interested in becoming a believer in Jesus Christ?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value (years)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>6-10</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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<td>21-25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
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<td>26-30</td>
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<td>6.7</td>
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<td>36-40</td>
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<td>41-45</td>
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<tr>
<td>46-47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 5**

**NUMBER OF YEARS SINCE THE RESPONDENTS’ INITIAL INTEREST IN THE GOSPEL**

Viewing the time of the baptism of the converts (see Figure 6), it becomes even more clear that the movement to Christ among the pastoral *Fulbe* is fairly new. Within the last ten years, 60 percent of all the respondents were baptized, and another 16.6 percent were baptized between eleven and twenty years ago.
Question: “How many years ago were you baptized?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<td>16-20</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
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<td>15.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 6

NUMBER OF YEARS SINCE BAPTISM OF RESPONDENTS

These data show that the movement to Christ is a very new movement; about two thirds of the respondents became interested in the gospel within the last twenty years, and about three quarters were baptized within the same period. Furthermore, the data show that this small movement has accelerated over the last ten years, with the greatest number of baptisms within the last five years.

Finally, the data indicates that the small beginnings of this movement are to be found not earlier than in the 1950s, which corresponds with the findings in Chapter 6 on the history of Fulbe mission. Figures 5 and 6 show when the movement to Christ among the Fulbe in Northern Nigeria started. Figure 7 shows when in the lifetime of the Christian Fulbe, the spiritual journey towards Christ started. The age of the respondents at the time of their initial interest in the gospel was found by comparing the answers to questions 4 and 18 in the questionnaire (see Appendix B).
For forty-five percent of the respondents, interest in the gospel emerged when they were between ten and nineteen years, which means that they were still in the age group of the unmarried adolescents (*sukaabe*). At this time they were still under the authority of their father, who is supposed to help them get married and then hand over part of his herd after their first child is born.

For 38.3 percent of the respondents, interest in the gospel emerged when they were in their twenties. Many of them must had entered the life stage of young adulthood, which means that they were been married. Some of them might even have already had their first child and might have already established their own herd by the time of their conversion. Only about one sixth of the respondents were in their thirties and forties when they became interested in the gospel.

Figure 8 shows how many years passed between the time of the respondents’ initial interest and the time of their baptism. These data have been found by comparing the responses to questions 18 and 19 in the questionnaire (see Appendix B).
More than seventy-five percent of the respondents were baptized within five years after they had become interested in the gospel, with as many as forty-two percent being baptized within two years. Only two were baptized within the first year, and only four were baptized later than ten years after their interest in the gospel had emerged. Considering the fact that all Fulbe know the cost of conversion in terms of pressure and persecution from his/her own community, it is interesting that the time between the initial interest and baptism was relatively short.

More than three quarters of the respondents were baptized before they were thirty years old. Altogether it may be concluded that those who were converted were fairly young. The majority of the converts were probably not yet married, they were not yet in charge of their own herd, and they had not yet reached the age for leadership positions in the pastoral Fulbe society.
Geographical Mobility

All of the respondents were from pastoral *Fulbe* families. The survey showed that 45 percent came from nomadic families, 8.3 percent from semi-nomadic families and 46.7 percent from settled families with cattle. The pastoral *Fulbe* are according to their culture a very mobile people. My intention in this section is to analyze the relationship between the specific geographic movements of the respondents and their conversion. Figure 9 shows where the respondents lived when they first encountered the gospel.

Question: “Where did you live when you first became interested in becoming a believer in Jesus Christ?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>-+</th>
<th>-+</th>
<th>-+</th>
<th>+++</th>
<th>-+</th>
<th>+++++++</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 9**

LOCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS WHEN THEY FIRST BECAME INTERESTED IN THE GOSPEL

Since all the respondents came from pastoral families, it may be assume that they were brought up either in the bush or in a village. When they first became interested in the gospel, however, about one quarter of them were living in town. The data show that

---

4 The distribution between the number of more nomadic and the more settled *Fulbe* in this survey probably reflects the distribution of *Fulbe* in Northern Nigeria. In CRCN the family background of eleven out of twelve respondents was nomadic *Fulbe*, whereas the background of the majority of the respondents in COCIN, LCCN and NBC was settled *Fulbe* families with cattle. In ECWA, there was an equal number of respondents (six) from a family background of nomadic *Fulbe* and settled *Fulbe* with cattle and only two from semi-nomadic *Fulbe* background.

5 Most CRCN respondents were living in the bush when they became interested in the gospel, and the majority of the respondents from COCIN also came from the bush. The majority of the ECWA
about half of the respondents had changed their place of residence within the five years prior to their becoming interested in the gospel.  This indicates that for a significant number of them an interest in the gospel was preceded by a movement from village or bush to town. The survey confirms this, because the geographical movement continued after they became interested in the gospel, as Figure 10 shows.

Question: “Where do you live now?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Town   | 33        | 55.0 | 0  
|        |           |      | 50 |
| Village| 23        | 38.3 | 0  
|        |           |      | 50 |
| Bush   | 4         | 6.7  | 0  
|        |           |      | 50 |
| Total  | 60        | 100.0| 0  
|        |           |      | 50 |

**FIGURE 10**

PRESENT LOCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

At the time of the interview, only 6.7 percent of the respondents resided in the bush, whereas more than a third of them lived in villages and more than half of them had moved to various towns. It is impossible to draw a definitive conclusion as to the influence of the change in place of residence in the converts’ lives, but it is very likely that the movement from the bush to a village or a town, or from a village to a town, respondents lived in a village, and the majority of the NBC respondents encountered the gospel in a town. The respondents from LCCN, however, are evenly distributed between town, village and bush.

6 Seventeen converts representing 28.3 percent became interested in the gospel while residing in a town. A breakdown of the figures show that ten of these seventeen had moved to town within the previous five years. Fourteen converts representing 23.3 percent lived in a village when they became interested in the gospel, and six of these fourteen had moved to the village within the previous five years.

7 Three of the four converts living in the bush at the time of the interview belonged to CRCN. Half or more of the converts from CRCN, ECWA, and COCIN were living in a rural area, whereas the vast majority of the converts from LCCN and NBC lived in an urban area.

---

6 Seventeen converts representing 28.3 percent became interested in the gospel while residing in a town. A breakdown of the figures show that ten of these seventeen had moved to town within the previous five years. Fourteen converts representing 23.3 percent lived in a village when they became interested in the gospel, and six of these fourteen had moved to the village within the previous five years.

7 Three of the four converts living in the bush at the time of the interview belonged to CRCN. Half or more of the converts from CRCN, ECWA, and COCIN were living in a rural area, whereas the vast majority of the converts from LCCN and NBC lived in an urban area.
brought the *Fulbe* into closer contact with Christians. It is also probable that the movement to a village or a town made it easier for the respondents to seriously consider becoming Christians since the perceived social pressure from their *Fulbe* family and community was probably less there. This particularly applies to the situation of the respondents who had moved to towns.

**Social Mobility**

Just as conversion affected (and was affected by) the geographical movements of the converts, it is to be expected that conversion was also related to social mobility. The survey did not show many of the respondents had any school education before they came in contact with Christians, but in general very few pastoral *Fulbe* have ever attended school. At the time of the interview, however, 78.3 percent of them had received some education. Of the thirteen respondents who at the time of the interview had not received any school education, six indicated that literacy programs had some or much influence on their conversion to Christianity. Therefore, six of the thirteen had received some literacy training, whereas the remaining seven likely remained non-literate.

Forty-seven of the respondents had some school education, but the actual number of years of education is only known for forty of them. About two thirds had received only from one to four years of schooling, which likely was Bible school training. Very few had gone from primary school on to secondary and tertiary school.

The parents of all the converts were pastoral *Fulbe*—herders or herders/farmers. At the time of the interview, only 8.5 percent of the converts were herders. As can be seen in Figure 11, most of the remaining 91.5 percent were either farmers or were employed by the church, by the government or by the private urban sector.
Question: “What is your occupation?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastors-Evangelists</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herders</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night watchmen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traders-Artisans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other govt. workers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 11**

**PRESENT OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Although only 8.5 percent stated that they were herders, more than half of the respondents said that they still owned cattle. It is not clear exactly what kind of ownership they were referring to. Probably, many of them were referring to the fact that since their father was still alive, in theory at least, they would eventually inherit cattle.

With their spiritual journey from Islam to Christianity, these sixty pastoral *Fulbe* had also undertaken a geographical and social journey—a journey that had taken many of them from the bush to villages and towns, from non-literacy to literacy to school education, and from a pastoral occupation to jobs in villages and towns with the church, government, and private companies.

**The Factors that Influenced the Spiritual Journey of Pastoral *Fulbe***

Let us now turn to an analysis of factors that, in the perception of the converts, have impacted their spiritual journey. The purpose of this part of the survey was to
evaluate the significance not only of the mission initiatives, but also the influence of several other personal and contextual factors in each of the three phases of the conversion process.

The Awareness Phase

In the awareness phase, the respondents were Muslims living within their Fulbe community. In this section those factors that contributed positively and negatively to their awareness of Christianity as they encountered the gospel will be identified.

Mission Initiatives

First, I will focus on the initiatives taken by the mission projects, that is, the use of media, social services, and specifically Christian activities. None of the social services seem to have had a strong impact on the Fulbe in the awareness phase. This does not necessarily mean that they did not appreciate the efforts of the churches concerning social services. On the contrary, there is much evidence from other sources that such services were greatly appreciated. Here the purpose is only to discover whether these social services impacted their conversion process. Between 70 and 78.8 percent of the respondents stated that medical and veterinary programs, literacy, and other educational programs had no influence on their spiritual journey.

There are, however, indications in the life stories (as well as in the demographic data of the survey) that these social services may have actually played a greater role than the respondents are conscious of. Schools, medical clinics, and veterinary services are a part of the modern world to which Fulbe pastoralists over the last decades have been increasingly exposed, and in which they have been increasingly involved. The Christians using these social services in their ministry had are agents of modernization, and
probably for some Fulbe, modernization is seen as belonging to Christianity and the Christians.\footnote{Some Fulbe even thought that people who were taught the modern way of writing in Roman script, which is called boko in Hausa, would never go to heaven (Zeinabu 1998).}

The majority of the fifteen Fulbe whose life stories were recorded interacted with either the modern school system or the modern medical system during the awareness period, and in that way were in daily contact with Christians. This contact, which was often established through the social services of the churches, seems to have had a crucial impact on the spiritual journey of the converts.

Two nomadic Fulbe had learned to read and write in Roman script. For one of them (Bello 1998), it was through shorter periods in various primary schools, and for another (Dahiru 1998), it was through a special course for non-literate adults. Two had completed or were about to complete their primary school education (Yakubu 1998; Lawal 1998), when they became interested in the gospel. A young woman (Aishatu 1998) was a secondary school student in a predominantly Christian town, when she became interested in the gospel, and one young man had gone to an Arabic teachers college and a health technology school (Bakari 1998). A number of the others had had some contact with people who had learned to read and write, and they were apparently eager to go to a modern school to learn themselves.

For two Fulbe, medical treatment by missionaries at their clinics played a significant role in their awareness of and attraction to Christianity. One of them, a young man of twenty years (Dawda 1998) found an excuse to travel to a neighboring country when he discovered that his father was secretly planning to marry him to a cousin (in order to reduce the wedding expenses). When he arrived in the neighboring country, he became seriously ill.
There I was brought to a dispensary. They tested me and found that I had ilharzia. But they said that this disease was not very difficult to treat. When asked whether I would be well, they answered that by the help of God I would be healed. . . . They gave me medicine and injections against bilharzia. In the dispensary they did a special thing. Before they started the work they would say prayers and give a devotion. In their devotion they would talk about a story from the Old Testament about one of the prophets, David, Jacob, and others. Then I would say to myself, well, I do not see the difference between their religion and our religion, since they talk about all these prophets, whom we know from the Qur’an. Therefore I thought, that their religion was good (Dawda 1998).

When he was finally well, he had decided to become a Christian.

The other to be affected by medical treatment was a twelve year old girl who was so ill that her family expected her to die soon. A missionary woman who was visiting the camp was allowed to take the girl away to a Christian clinic. While staying with the missionary, the girl learned to read and write and became a Christian (Zeinabu 1998). It is therefore likely that the social services had a significant, indirect influence on the converts’ spiritual journey by bringing the converts into contact with Christians.

Table 8 shows that the media in general did not impact the lives of the Fulbe very much in the awareness phase. Between 63.3 and 88.3 percent of the respondents stated that all media but one had not really had any influence on their conversion in this phase. Conclusions concerning the role of social services may also apply to some of the media. In the life stories, there are indications that the Fulbe via some of the media came into contact with Christians, who then came to play an important role in their conversion.

The only media that had been of some or much influence to half of the respondents was the Hausa Bible. The Hausa Bible seems to have had much more importance to the Fulbe than the Fulfulde Bible in this initial phase. Apart from the facts that the number of Hausa Bibles available in Northern Nigeria is much higher than the number of Fulfulde Bibles and that the church language in almost all congregations in Northern Nigeria is Hausa, the reason the Hausa Bible had a greater effect might be that those who have learned to read have done so in Hausa and not in Fulfulde.
### TABLE 8

**THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA IN THE AWARENESS PHASE BY PERCENTAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bible in non-Fulfulde language</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Qur’an—certain passages</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio (Sawtu Linjiila)</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in another language</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jesus Film</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio cassettes</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible or portions of the Bible in Fulfulde</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books or tracts in ajami script</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in Fulfulde</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other TV, video, slides or film</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most surprising figures in Table 8 about media are the ones concerning the importance of the Qur’an. Whereas the vast majority of those involved in the mission projects attached no importance to the use of the Qur’an, thirty percent of the converts stated that it had much influence on their conversion. This is a fact that is confirmed in many of the life stories. For many of the converts who were well versed in the Qur’an, certain passages in the Qur’an dealing with prophet Isa (Jesus) raised their interest in the gospel and also legitimized their decision to follow Jesus and become Christians. These converts frequently used the Qur’anic passages that had affected them to witness to fellow Fulbe (see Chapter 9 for more details about the role of the Qur’an in the conversion of Muslim Fulbe).10

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9 The non-Fulfulde language is normally Hausa.

10 The Norwegian missionary John Gunnar Raen, who has worked in Northern Cameroon, has proposed the thesis that the least Islamized Muslims are not necessarily the most receptive to the gospel. On the contrary the more Islamized Muslims are easier to reach because they already know the prophets and the scriptures (1989:80).
TABLE 9
THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE AWARENESS PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercession by Christians</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal witness by one or more people</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer with Christians</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological debate or dialogue between Christians and Muslims</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Fulbe conferences (<em>Taron Fulani</em>)</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible study group</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large evangelistic meetings or rallies</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible correspondence course</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the specifically Christian activities listed in Table 9 stand out above all the others. For sixty percent of the converts, intercession by Christians was perceived to have been of much importance, when they became aware of the gospel, and 50.8 percent pointed to the personal witness of Christians as a factor that had much importance for them. Both findings point to the importance of personal evangelism.

Local Congregations and Individual Christians

The local congregation as a channel for the communication of the gospel to the pastoral *Fulbe* was ranked as of great importance. The very presence of a church in the respondents’ area was considered to be of much importance for half of the converts. Almost two thirds stated that feeling welcome in the fellowship of the local congregation was of much importance, and half of the converts stated that the fact that the worship had made them feel comfortable was of much importance.
### TABLE 10
THE INFLUENCE OF LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS IN THE AWARENESS PHASE
BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Christians made me feel welcome in their fellowship</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian evangelist from another ethnic group</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was already a Christian church in this area</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship form made me feel comfortable</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or acquaintance</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian evangelist from <em>Fulbe</em> ethnic group</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 further shows that of the four categories of persons involved in the process, the Christian evangelists from non-*Fulbe* ethnic groups had been of greatest importance in the awareness phase. For almost three quarters of the converts, contact with such an evangelist had been of some or much importance. And for eighty-five percent, one or more of the four categories of Christian individuals had been of some or much importance in the awareness phase.11

### Contextual and Personal Factors

There are a number of factors that impacted the spiritual journey of the pastoral *Fulbe* positively and negatively that did not involve the missionaries and other Christians. Such factors include contextual circumstances, personal experiences and feelings, and Muslim and Christian ideas and practices.

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11 Only ten percent of the respondents stated that *Fulbe* evangelists had any influence on their conversion. Could this be due to the fact that in the earlier years there were less *Fulbe* evangelists than today? When we look at those twenty-eight respondents who became interested in the gospel over the last ten years, it turns out that for 92.9 percent (twenty-six persons) *Fulbe* evangelists did not really have any influence for their conversion in the awareness phase, whereas for only 7.1 percent (two persons), *Fulbe* evangelists had had much influence on their conversion.
As may be seen in Table 11, very few respondents attached any importance to economic and political circumstances. Similarly, the dissatisfaction with Muslim leaders did not seem to have played any significant role. Most important to the respondents was observing the life-style of Christians. Combining this response with the previous findings, it may be concluded that individual Christians and local congregations were the most important channel for the communication of the gospel in the awareness phase. Their lives were the gospel that the mainly non-literate Fulbe could study. Answered prayer, miracles dreams and healings are all spiritual experiences that had begun to play a role in this early stage, but which became much more important in later stages.

To discover the aspects of the Christian faith that had been most attractive to the respondents, I listed nine spiritual needs, asking which of the needs the respondents felt were better fulfilled by the Christian faith than by the Islamic faith. In all three phases of the conversion process, the following three needs always turned out to be among the four most important: “Desire to experience the love of God,” “Desire to have assurance of

TABLE 11
THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES
AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE AWARENESS
PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observing life-style of Christian or Christians</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answered prayer</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracles or observing power of Christ in situation</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visions or dreams</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healing from illness</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with Muslim leaders</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic circumstances</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political circumstances</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
salvation,” and “Desire for assurance of forgiveness.” Islam teaches about forgiveness of sins and salvation, but the assurance of salvation is not part of the Islamic teaching. Similarly, Islam teaches about the love of God, but only about the reciprocal love.

TABLE 12
THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN IDEAS AND PRACTICES IN THE AWARENESS PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The type of food some Christians eat (like pork)</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of the incarnation of Jesus as son of God</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian worship: sexes together, drums, language</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from the Muslim community</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from Muslim family members</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is not a religion for Fulbe such as Islam</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is a Western religion</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians have a secular life-style, low morality, etc.</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians have exploited or persecuted Muslims</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christians did not welcome you in the church</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The perception that conversion is forbidden by law</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain Muslim and Christian perceptions and practices had a negative influence on the spiritual journey of the converts. Among the teachings, practices, and perceptions of Christians that had a significantly negative influence the awareness phase, the greatest appears to have been the practice of eating certain types of food (probably pork). For almost two thirds of the respondents, this was ranked as of much negative influence. For

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12 The other needs listed were: “Desire for fellowship in spiritual matters,” “Desire for guidance to spiritual truth,” “Desire for inner peace,” “Freedom from fear,” “Release from demonic or spirit oppression,” and “Release from sorrow or loneliness.”

about half of the respondents, certain worship forms in the church, such as the use of drums, were of some or much negative influence in this stage of the conversion process. Table 12 gives a full overview of the responses regarding negative influences.

The doctrine of the Incarnation was a greater problem for the respondents than the doctrine of the Trinity. For 56.7 percent and 45 percent, respectively, the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity were considered to have been of some or much negative influence. For 41.7 percent of the respondents, the widespread propaganda of some Muslims that Christianity is a Western religion and not a religion for Fulbe had some or much negative influence during the awareness phase. The perceived secular life-style and low morality of Christians had some or much negative influence on the spiritual journey of 40 percent of the respondents.

Pressure from the Muslim community and Muslim family members is a reality for all Fulbe who move towards Christianity. The interviewees who told their life stories all indicated that they experienced pressure or even persecution sometimes to the extent that they felt their life was in danger. Table 12, however, shows that only about half of the respondents, considered pressure and persecution to have had much or some negative influence on their conversion process during the awareness phase.\(^{14}\)

### The Conversion Phase

In the conversion phase, the respondents entered into closer contact with the church, and the tensions with their Muslim Fulbe community began to increase. In my survey of this phase, I sought to discover the influence of he mission initiatives, the

\(^{14}\) There is no federal or state law that forbids Muslims from becoming Christians. In the Muslim tradition, however, there is a law of apostasy, which allows for the killing of an apostate. In some of the life stories, references are made to this tradition, and some of the acts of persecution are legitimated based on this law. The number of cases in Northern Nigeria where apostates in recent years have actually been killed is very small.
congregations and individual Christians, and various contextual and personal factors on
the respondents as they were deciding to become Christians.

Mission Initiatives

Table 13 shows the *Fulbe* converts’ perception of the role of the media in the
conversion phase. When the respondents approached the time to make the actual
decision to become Christians, the Hausa Bible and other Christian books and booklets in
Hausa became increasingly important sources of information about the new religion. In
the conversion phase, the respondents came into closer contact with Christians, and this
gave them more access to films and audio cassettes. Although the *Qur’an* was of less
importance than the above mentioned media, the *Qur’an* was of some or much
importance for 41.3 percent of the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE INFLUENCE OF THE MEDIA IN THE CONVERSION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Type</th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bible or portions of the Bible in another language</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in another language</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jesus Film</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio cassettes</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio (<em>Sawtu Linjiila</em>)</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <em>Qur’an</em>--certain passages</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible or portions of the Bible in <em>Fulfulde</em></td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books or tracts in <em>ajami</em> script</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other TV, video, slides or film</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in <em>Fulfulde</em></td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The social services were still of relatively little importance; however, only literacy and medical programs had some or much influence on the spiritual journey of about half the respondents. The increasing importance of literacy programs in this phase probably has to do with the desire of the respondents to learn to read the Bible and learn for themselves what Christianity is about.

### TABLE 14

**THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE CONVERSION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercession by Christians</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer with Christians</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal witness by one or more people</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian <em>Fulbe</em> conferences (<em>Taron Fulani</em>)</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large evangelistic meetings or rallies</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological debate or dialogue between Christians and Muslims</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible study group</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible correspondence course</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 shows that intercession and prayer became the two greatest influences in the conversion phase. The most drastic change compared to the awareness period, however, is the increased importance of Christian *Fulbe* conferences. Whereas only about one sixth of the respondents considered Christian *Fulbe* conferences to have been of much influence in the awareness phase, about half thought that conferences had been very important for them in the conversion phase. Coming together with Christian *Fulbe* and other *Fulbe* seekers seems to have been of great help to many of the respondents when they were about to commit themselves to the Christian faith. Other larger Christian meetings more than doubled in importance in this period. In a situation where the
respondents felt that they were on the verge of being expelled from their own community, their participation in another visible community seems to have been of great importance.

**Local Congregations and Individual Christians**

Both the local Christian congregation and Christian individuals became more important in the conversion phase than they were in the awareness phase. For as many as 93.2 percent of the respondents, Christians making them feel welcome in their fellowship was of some or much influence.

**TABLE 15**

THE INFLUENCE OF THE LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS IN THE CONVERSION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Christians made me feel welcome in their fellowship</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian evangelist from another ethnic group</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The form of worship . . . made me feel comfortable</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was already a Christian church in this area</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or acquaintance</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian evangelist from <em>Fulbe</em> ethnic group</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this phase, evangelists from non-*Fulbe* ethnic groups remained the most influential persons with 86.3 percent of the converts stating that they were of some or much influence. The three other categories of individual Christians, especially friends and acquaintances began to take on more significance in this phase. Only three converts stated that they did not receive any help from either a Christian evangelist (*Fulbe* or non-*Fulbe*), a Christian friend, or a relative. Seven converts stated that one or more of these individuals had been of some influence. The remaining fifty converts stated that one or
more of these Christians had been of much influence in the conversion phase. These figures underscore the crucial importance of individual Christians for Fulbe when they go through the process of committing themselves to the Christian faith, which often excludes them from their Fulbe community.

**Contextual and Personal Factors**

When the contextual circumstances and personal experiences in this phase are considered (presented in Table 16), the most significant change compared to the awareness phase is that answered prayer became more important. This is in harmony with the findings concerning the influence of the specifically Christian activities where intercession and prayer were considered to be of much importance to about three quarters of the respondents (see a more detailed analysis of the role of prayer in Chapter 9).

The two other significant changes are found in the importance of miracles and dreams. Whereas miracles and dreams were of much importance to 36.7 percent and 35 percent, respectively, in the awareness phase, the figures increased to 56.7 percent and 50 percent, respectively, in the conversion phase. If the figures for those who attached some importance to them are added, it may be concluded that for about two thirds of the respondents miracles and dreams played an important role in leading them to a decision to become Christians. The life stories show that Fulbe seekers believed that Jesus Christ had appeared to them in dreams or visions and called them to follow him. They had these dreams at the time when they were about to make the decision to commit themselves. The dreams gave them the courage to become Christians (see more details about the role of dreams and visions in Chapter 9).
Table 16 presents an overview of some of the factors that influenced the respondents negatively when they were about to make a decision to become Christians. At this critical stage of the conversion process, the pressure from the Muslims became the most significant negative influence. For about two thirds of the respondents, the pressure from the Muslim community and their Muslim family members had some or even much negative influence on their spiritual journey.15

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15 A typical example is found in the life story of Abdullahi (1998). When he was in the middle of the conversion phase he felt the pressure of Islam both from within and from without. “Something in my heart was holding me back according to the Qur’anic teaching. If you leave Islam, you will become a kafiri. You will have no honor in the eyes of Muslims, not even with your Muslim relatives, because you have made yourself abin kyama [a thing to feel aversion for] for them. You will be a kafiri [dis-believer] You will never be able to say anything that people will listen to. You will spoil the honor of your father and your own honor. Oh, this was difficult for me, but my spirit persuaded me that all this was unimportant, because they did the same to Jesus” (Abdullahi 1988).
TABLE 17
THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN IDEAS AND PRACTICES IN THE CONVERSION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from the Muslim community</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from Muslim family members</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The type of food some Christians eat (like pork)</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian worship: sexes together, drums, language</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of the incarnation of Jesus as Son of God</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christians did not welcome you in the church</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is not a religion for Fulbe such as Islam</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is a Western religion</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians have exploited or persecuted Muslims</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians have a secular life-style, low morality, etc.</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The perception that conversion is forbidden by law</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviews with the missionaries indicated that the number of secret believers might be almost as high as the number of open believers. Holding these Fulbe back from going public with their faith was no doubt their fear of the negative reactions of their family and community. An example of this is found in the life story of Buba (1998). Buba became interested in the gospel as a young man, but was not baptized until many years later.

I continued to be a secret Christian because I was afraid of my father. But I never said my Moslem prayers. I continued to pray inside my hut, because I didn’t want my father to know that I was really a Christian. If he found out, he could drive me away from his home, and also my father-in-law would not allow me to keep my beautiful [wife] (Buba 1998).

If Buba had openly confessed Christ, he would have lost both his cattle, that is, the portion of his father’s cattle which he would inherit from him, and his wife, whom he had just married and who soon became a Christian, too. Only when his father a few years
later had died, was Buba baptized and not until then did he openly confess his Christian faith, without fear of losing his cattle and his wife.

Buba lived as a Christian nomadic herder for twenty years after his father’s death. Then in 1983, his cattle were attacked by the Rinderpest disease, and within two weeks he lost thirty-five heads of cattle.

Many of the *Fulbe* were laughing at me. “We shall see if the Christians will give you a cow,” they mocked. Because of our *Pulaaku*, when any cattle *Pullo* loses his cows, the rest of them are obligated to give cows to him. But now, I, Buba, am no longer a Muslim. I am a Christian. “Let us see what is going to happen to him. He will soon die of starvation,” they said. It is true that the Christian people of [name of town] do not have cows, but they gave what they had. They gave me six acres of land. I grew maize, yams, guinea corn, cassava, and some rice. So there was no starvation in my home. I was thankful to God for this (Buba 1998).

Again it is clear how the social traditions of the *Fulbe* made it difficult for Christian *Fulbe* to continue in their pastoral life-style. Being separated from his *Fulbe* clansmen, Buba no longer benefited from the social security system of mutual help, according to which *Fulbe* relatives and friends would have assisted him in rebuilding his herd. The positive aspect of the story, however, is that members of his local congregation who were farmers helped him with farmland and thus facilitated his transition from herder to farmer.

While the negative influence of community and family pressure increased and reached its climax in the conversion phase, the negative impact of the teachings, practices and perceptions of Christianity and Christians rapidly diminished in this phase as compared to the awareness phase. Three things were still problematic to about half of the

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16 More than three quarters of the respondents in the questionnaire survey were baptized before they reached the age of thirty. Even if these respondents had married, their father probably had not died yet. Therefore, they would probably lose their cattle because of their conversion to Christianity. More than half of the respondents in the survey, however, claimed that they still owned cattle. The examples in the life stories indicate that they might still formally own cattle because their father had not died, but in reality they had no access to the cattle, and in all probability when their father died they would not inherit anything because they were considered to be apostates.
respondents: the eating practices and the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. Sixty-five to 93.2 percent stated that the other items really had a negative influence on their spiritual journey.

The Incorporation Phase

Baptism marks the transition from the conversion phase to the incorporation phase. In this phase the respondents were members of local congregations, and, as will be seen later, were separated from their Fulbe community. In this section, the results of the survey will be analyzed in order to discover what methods, experiences and circumstances that had the most positive and negative influence on their incorporation into the Christian community and faith.

Mission Initiatives

All the media became more influential in the incorporation phase, as may be seen in Table 18. The Hausa Bible was still the most important media, and audio cassettes became the second most important media. These two media together with the Jesus Film, Christian Hausa books and radio broadcasts had some or much influence on about three quarters or more of the respondents.

The Fulbe converts benefited more in this phase than in the previous phases from all the social services, as Table 19 shows, but still the importance of social services was less than that of most other mission initiatives. The “other educational programs” were now the most important programs among the social services. As many as 68.4 percent of the respondents stated that they had benefited some or much from educational programs, such as Bible schools. In the incorporation phase, two thirds of the converts probably spent time in Bible schools for discipleship and/or leadership training.
TABLE 18

THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA IN THE INCORPORATION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Bible in non-Fulfulde language</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio cassettes</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Jesus Film</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in non-Fulfulde language</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio (Sawtu Linjiila)</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible or portions of the Bible in Fulfulde</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other books or tracts in Fulfulde</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other TV, video, slides or film</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Qur’an--certain passages</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books or tracts in ajami script</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 19

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN THE INCORPORATION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other educational programs</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical program (hospital, clinic, nurses)</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy program</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary program</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of all the specifically Christian activities, intercession and prayer were still considered to be the most important. As many as 93.3 percent said that intercession by their Christian brethren had been of much importance, and 83.3 percent attached much importance to prayer with Christians. The most significant change, however, was that 85 percent of the converts now stated that the Christian Fulbe conferences had contributed much to their spiritual development in the incorporation phase. While these Christian Fulbe conferences had been of only little significance to the respondents in the awareness
phase, and of some significance in the conversion phase, they were now considered to be factors of most significance in the incorporation phase.

**Local Congregations and Individual Christians**

After the respondents became Christians, the role of the local congregations continued to increase in importance, so that for eighty to eighty-five percent of the respondents the local congregations were of much importance. Only two converts stated that they did not really receive any help from either an evangelist (*Fulbe* or non-*Fulbe*), a Christian friend, or Christian relative. Four converts stated that one or more of these individuals had been of some help. The remaining fifty-four converts stated that one or more of these Christians had been of much influence on their spiritual journey. Still non-*Fulbe* evangelists were the most influential individuals, as seen in Table 20.

**TABLE 20**

THE INFLUENCE OF LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS IN THE INCORPORATION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Christians made me feel welcome in their fellowship</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The form of worship in the church made me feel comfortable</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was already a Christian church in this area</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian evangelist from another ethnic group</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>79.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or acquaintance</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian evangelist from <em>Fulbe</em> ethnic group</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The crucial importance of individual Christians in all three conversion phases is also reflected in the life stories, where the significant influence of individual Christians can be clearly traced in fourteen of the fifteen life stories. Although the data from the
survey does not reveal any details about the nature of the relationship between the Fulbe and these Christians, it is possible in the life stories to identity individuals as serving five clearly distinguishable functions. They functioned as evangelist, friend, resource person, helper, authority person.

1. The evangelist is a Christian who takes the initiative to contact the Pullo in order to share the gospel with him/her. The person performing the function of an evangelist by actively advocating the gospel may be a church employee in a dispensary, a catechist, an expatriate missionary, or just an active church member. In many cases, the relationship between the evangelist and the Pullo extends over a long period and develops into a real friendship. In the spiritual journey of Abdullahi (1998), Ali (1998), Buba (1998), Bello (1998), Dawda (1998), Umaru (1998), and Zeinabu (1998) a person served the function of evangelist.

2. The friend is a Christian who within the context of a friendship with a Pullo, is a witness to the gospel. The friend shares not only religious concerns but a much wider range of concerns. The friendship grows over a long period. The function of the friend as a witness may range from being very passive to be very active and intentional. In many cases, the friend may later assume the function of the pastor or resource person (Ahmed 1998; Aishatu 1998; Dahiru 1998; Mamudu 1998; Bakari 1998).

3. The resource person (often the district pastor or the leader of the local congregation) is a Christian, who is sought out by the Pullo in order to obtain further information or explanations about the gospel or some other form of help in relation to his/her interest in the gospel (Yakubu 1998; Lawal 1998).

4. The helper is a person who in times of need or trouble offers practical help, which the convert desperately needs when he/she faces problems or persecution from the Muslim family and community in the decision and incorporation phases. Some helpers invite the converts to stay with them for some time; others find jobs for the converts. In
the earlier years of *Fulbe* mission, the helper was often an expatriate missionary, but in more recent times it has typically been a Nigerian pastor or friend (Aishatu 1998; Bello 1998; Umaru 1998; Zeinabu 1998; Gidado 1998; Lawal 1998).

5. The authority person in the church is the person who later in the conversion phase is sought out by the *Pullo* in order that the authority person might confirm the *Pullo*’s conversion and accept him/her as part of the Christian community (e.g., Mamudu 1998).

Whereas the evangelist draws the attention of the *Pullo* to the gospel, the friend gives credibility to the gospel. The helper offers practical help in times of need, and the resource person helps the seeker with authoritative information and explanations. The authority person is the person who later, on behalf of the congregation, confirms the conversion and opens the congregation and its resources to the *Pullo*.

**Contextual and Personal Factors**

In the incorporation phase, the experiential dimensions of Christianity increased in significance for the respondents. These data, together with the rest of the research, clearly show that the *Fulbe* converts perceived prayer to be the most important expression of the Christian life. Answered prayer was considered to have had much influence on 85 percent of the converts. Miracles and dreams were two other experiential dimension of their Christian faith that that were very important for 76.7 percent and 61.7 percent of the converts, respectively. The crucial role of the interaction with Christians in the church is reflected in the fact that 70 percent stated that observing the life-style of Christians was very important for them.

A comparison of Table 21 with Table 17 shows that, in general, the negative influence of Muslim and Christian ideas and practices have dropped from the conversion phase to the incorporation phase.
TABLE 21

THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN IDEAS AND PRACTICES IN THE INCORPORATION PHASE BY PERCENTAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not really</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The type of food some Christians eat (like pork)</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from the Muslim community</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from Muslim family members</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Christians did not welcome you in the church</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of the incarnation of Jesus as son of God</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians worship: sexes together, drums, language</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is not a religion for Fulbe such as Islam</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians have exploited or persecuted Muslims</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians have a secular life-style, low morality, etc.</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity is a Western religion</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The perception that conversion is forbidden by law</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The negative influence of the pressure from the Muslim community and Muslim relatives reached its climax in the conversion phase with about two thirds stating that it had some or much negative influence on them. In the incorporation phase, the figures dropped significantly so that only about half of the respondents felt that this pressure had some or much negative influence on them.

The negative influence of the teachings, practices, and perceptions of Christians and Christianity all dropped in the incorporation phase, with one significant exception. A third of the respondents still felt that the eating practices of Christians had much negative influence on them. Some of the worship forms in the church had a negative influence on 23.3 percent of the converts, and 15 percent of the converts still had problems with the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity.

The most significant finding, however, was the feeling among an increasing number of converts that the Christians did not welcome them in the church. While only 15 percent of the respondents stated that this problem had some or much negative
influence on them in the awareness phase, and the figure was almost the same in the conversion phase (16.7 percent), in the incorporation phase the figure rose to 28.3 percent. Almost a fourth of all the respondents stated that this lack of a welcoming spirit in the church had much negative influence on their spiritual journey.17

The Response of the Pastoral Fulbe to the gospel

In the previous section, I looked at the factors that affected the conversion process; in this section, I will concentrate on the results of this process. The focus will be the spiritual maturity of the converts and their relationship with their Christian community and their original Muslim Fulbe community. In this section, the respondents were given four response options and were asked to select the one that represented their position the best.

Key Issues in the Christian Faith

Some of the key issues that divide Muslims and Christians concern Jesus, salvation, and the Scriptures. The converts’ responses to questions about these issues may, therefore, be seen as indicators of their Christian maturity.

The cognitive and behavioral responses to the questions about Jesus were typically Christian. As many as 91.7 percent said that they thought that Jesus was the

17 The serious problem of Fulbe converts feeling that Christians did not welcome them in the church was found in all the churches. While only one convert mentioned the problem in NBC, it was brought up by as many as five in COCIN, four in ECWA, four in LCCN, and three in CRCN.
Son of God, and 85 percent said that they related to Jesus by praying to him and obeying him.

Figure 12, however, shows that the respondents’ answers to the affective question were spread among three responses. While all four responses were in accordance with the biblical teaching about Jesus, a Muslim could easily agree with two of the responses. For example, a Muslim might consider Jesus to be an ideal man and want to be like him in many respects, but no orthodox Muslim would be able to follow Christians in considering Jesus to be a helper or a companion in their daily life. Three quarters of the respondents chose the specifically Christian answers.

By comparing these findings with the earlier findings about the importance of intercession, prayer and answered prayer, one can see that for a large majority of respondents, particularly in the decision and incorporation phases of their spiritual journey, help from and companionship with Jesus was of utmost significance.

As the survey on the spiritual journey of Fulbe and the life story interviews indicated, forgiveness of sins and assurance of salvation are among the most important felt spiritual needs of the Fulbe. It is, therefore, interesting to see, whether these spiritual needs are being met.

Most of the converts had a sound understanding of the biblical teaching about God’s forgiveness of sin. For twenty-three percent of the respondents, the basis for the forgiveness is God’s mercy alone, while seventy percent went a step further and pointed to faith in Jesus Christ. A Muslim might very well agree with a Christian that God’s forgiveness is based on his mercy, but only a Christian would point to faith in Jesus as the

---

18 The other options were: “I think that Jesus is just one of the prophets” (1.7 percent), “I understand that Jesus is someone who heals you” (3.3 percent), and “I believe he is an intercessor between God and human beings” (3.3 percent).

19 The other options were: “I don’t know how to relate to him” (1.7 percent), “I don’t relate to Jesus, but I, try to follow his example” (6.7 percent), and “I sometimes ask Jesus to help me” (6.6 percent).
way in which they receive God’s forgiveness. When asked about what to do to retain God’s forgiveness, about 93.3 percent of the respondents preferred answers that refer to their relationship with Jesus over the answers that would be acceptable to Muslims.

**Question: “How do you feel about Jesus?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “Jesus is an ideal man.”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “Jesus is someone I like to be like.”</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Jesus is someone who can help me when I ask.”</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. “Jesus is my constant companion.”</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 12**

THE RESPONDENTS’ FEELINGS ABOUT JESUS

With the actual feeling of assurance of salvation, the vast majority of the respondents had a fairly high degree of assurance of forgiveness of sins, evidenced in the fact that 60 percent were confident that they had been forgiven and accepted by God, and 21.7 percent believed they were accepted by God, whereas the remaining 18.3 percent only had the desire or the hope of forgiveness.

---

20 The other response options were “God will forgive if we offer sacrifice to God” and “God considers our obedience and forgives us.”

21 “I have accepted Jesus as my Savior” (68.3 percent) and “I let Jesus be the Lord of my life” (25 percent).

22 “I try to obey the law of God” and “I seek God’s mercy and grace.”

23 Whereas there are no significant variations between the five churches concerning the cognitive and behavioral questions, there are some interesting and significant variations concerning the affective question about forgiveness. While the ECWA respondents clearly had the strongest feeling of assurance of
Whereas all the previous responses had been very similar to answers Christians from other ethnic groups might have given, the responses to the questions about the Scriptures were not typical Christian answers, as seen in Figure 13-15.

**Question: “How do you understand the Scriptures?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Qur’an is the final Scripture.”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Qur’an has more authority than the Bible.”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Bible has more authority than the Qur’an.”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Bible is the final Scripture.”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 13**

**THE RESPONDENTS’ CONVICTIONS ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES**

Figure 13 shows that for 53.3 percent of the converts, the Bible is the only authority, while for as many as 45 percent the Bible has more authority than the Qur’an. This implies that for a little less than half of the converts, the Qur’an had some authority as holy scripture.
Question: “How do you feel about the Scriptures?”

Answers:
1. “My greatest blessing is through the Qur’an.”
2. “I am blessed more by the Qur’an than the Bible.”
3. “I am blessed more by the Bible than the Qur’an.”
4. “My greatest blessing is through the Bible.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 14

THE RESPONDENTS’ FEELINGS ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES

More than three quarters of the converts were only blessed by the Bible, as shown in Figure 14, whereas only a fifth responded that they were more blessed by the Bible than by the Qur’an. This means that every fifth convert still received some blessing from reading the Qur’an.

As Figure 15 shows, more than three fifths of the converts only followed the Bible, and less than one fifth followed the Bible more than the Qur’an. It may therefore be concluded that the Qur’an had some impact on the behavior of one fifth of the converts.

24 The appreciation of the Qur’an varied significantly among the respondents from the five churches. The lowest cognitive appreciation was found with LCCN converts, the highest appreciation with the CRCN and the NBC converts. When it comes to the affective and behavioral questions, the NBC converts were clearly more positive towards the Qur’an than the rest. A little less than half of the NBC respondents stated that they were more blessed by the Bible than by the Qur’an and that they followed the Bible more than the Qur’an.
Question: “What do you do with the Scriptures?”

Answers:

1. “I follow the Qur’an.”
2. “I follow the Qur’an more than the Bible.”
3. “I follow the Bible more than the Qur’an.”
4. “I only follow the Bible.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 15

THE RESPONDENTS’ BEHAVIOR WITH THE SCRIPTURES

When the figures are analyzed, however, it becomes clear that among the most recent converts, those who became interested in the gospel within the last five years, there was a higher appreciation for the Qur’an than among others. Conversely, the data reveal that the converts whose interest in the gospel began more than twenty-five years ago showed less appreciation for the Qur’an than did others. It may, therefore, be concluded that appreciation of the Qur’an decreases the longer the converts have been in contact with the gospel.

As has already been noted, the Qur’an was of some or much influence for one third to half of the converts during the three phases of their conversion process. What is

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25 A majority of the most recent converts (seven out of thirteen) said that the Bible has more authority than the Qur’an. The rest said that the Bible is the final scripture. Their feelings about the Qur’an and the Bible did not differ much from the average, but when it comes to behavior they again diverged markedly from the average. Half of these recent converts followed the Bible more than the Qur’an, and the other half followed only the Bible.

26 All ten of them stated that they considered the Bible to be the final scripture and that they only followed the Bible. Eight of them were only blessed by the Bible, and two of them were blessed more by the Bible than by the Qur’an.
the reason for this relatively high influence of appreciation for the *Qur’an*? The answer may be found in the responses to questions asked about continuing to follow certain Muslim religious practices. When asked the question “What is your opinion? Should *Fulbe* who have become Christians continue to read the Glorious *Qur’an*?” as many as 83.3 percent answered yes. This response contrasts sharply with the responses to two similar questions. All of the respondents were of the opinion that *Fulbe* converts should not continue to observe the *salat* prayers or the fast in the month of Ramadan. The reasons they gave indicate that these two religious practices, in their understanding, were so inextricably tied to the Islamic religion that it would amount to syncretism or apostasy to try to incorporate them into their new Christian religion. Their reasons for continuing to read the *Qur’an*, however, were that they needed to know the *Qur’an* in order to be able to witness to Muslim *Fulbe*. In their own life, they had experienced that God had used the *Qur’an* to draw their attention to Jesus Christ. Therefore, they wanted to continue to read the *Qur’an* so that they could use it to help others become Christians. This seems to be the reason *Fulbe* converts showed a relatively high appreciation for the *Qur’an*.

**Relationship with the Christian Community**

One of the goals of the communication of the gospel is the incorporation of the converts into local congregations. All the converts researched were members of local congregations, so the research focused on how well integrated they were in their local congregations.

The responses to the questions concerning the community of faith were typically Christian. To the question, “Who do you say belongs to the community of faith?” 92.2
percent answered, “All who confess Jesus as Savior are the household of faith.” 27 Asked about what community of faith the respondents felt that they belonged to, all of them answered that “My people are all who confess Christ as Savior and Lord.” 28

The survey showed that 70 percent of the converts felt that they had been fully accepted by Christians from other ethnic groups; however, 28.3 percent felt that they had only been accepted to a certain extent (and one convert felt no acceptance at all). One important way of expressing mutual acceptance and fellowship in Northern Nigeria is through eating together. It might have been expected that Fulbe converts would eat with Christians very often or at least sometimes, but almost a fourth of the converts stated that they seldom eat with Christians from other ethnic groups.

It may be concluded that the Fulbe converts had a strong feeling of belonging to the Christian community, but that about a fourth of them had problems being accepted in the Christian community. Unlike the development concerning the appreciation of the Qur’an, the number feeling acceptance did not decrease according to the number of years the converts had been in contact with Christians. The number who felt this lack of acceptance was consistent among all converts. 29

27 None of the respondents agreed that “The Muslim umma is the only household of faith” or that “Followers of Jesus from the Muslim umma are the household of faith,” but 6.8 percent preferred the answer, that “Christians are second class members of the household of faith.” This is probably an echo of “Muslim propaganda” in Northern Nigeria. When during the training seminar for the research assistants the translation of the questions were discussed, a number of the Nigerian participants objected vehemently against including this response option in the questionnaire. Their argument was that this was exactly what the Muslims wanted Christians to feel about themselves. Finally, after long discussion, a consensus emerged that we had to include this response option exactly to find out if some Fulbe converts had been affected by this “Muslim propaganda.”

28 The three other options were, “I do not feel I belong to any community of faith,” “My people are the followers of Jesus from the Muslim umma” and “My people are the Muslim umma.”

29 In CRCN, COCIN, ECWA and NBC, between two thirds and three quarters of the converts felt that the Christians from the other tribes accepted them as Christian Fulbe. Only in LCCN did more than half (five out of nine) of the converts feel that the Christians from the other tribes only accepted them to a certain extent. Between two thirds and three quarters of the converts from all the churches except CRCN responded that they eat together with Christians very often, whereas the majority (seven out of twelve) of the CRCN converts reported that they only seldom or sometimes eat together with Christians. How are we
It was noted earlier that not all Fulbe converts felt at ease in the non-Fulbe congregations. Now the data show that a significant number felt that they were not fully accepted in these congregations. Therefore it may not be surprising that eighty percent of the respondents answered yes to the question, “What is your opinion? Do you think that it would be helpful for Fulbe who have become Christians to have their own congregations for only Fulbe?” The reasons they gave focused on their conviction that they and other Fulbe would feel more at ease if they were worshipping together with other Fulbe in Fulfulde, and in accordance with their Fulbe traditions.\(^{30}\)

**Relationship with the Fulbe Community**

One of the goals of a contextual communication of the gospel is that the convert not only feels at home in his/her local congregation, but also continues to be at home in his/her original community. Indicators of the converts’ relationship with the Fulbe community are their feelings of Fulbe identity and their interaction with the Fulbe relatives and neighbors.

To the question, “Do you consider yourself to belong to the Fulbe people?” 93.3 percent answered “Yes, I am proud of belonging to the Fulbe people.”\(^{31}\) To the question “Do you think it is possible to be a true Pullo without being a Muslim?” 91.5 percent

---

\(^{30}\) Those who were opposed this idea did so mainly because they considered it to be wrong to divide churches according to ethnic lines, and because they thought that Christian Fulbe still were so few that they needed the fellowship and support of Christians from other ethnic groups. The strongest support for the idea of having Fulbe congregations came from ECWA and LCCN converts.

\(^{31}\) The other possible answers were: “No, not really, but I hope that one day my people will accept me again” (5 percent), “No, because I have been excluded from my own people” (1.7 percent), and “Yes, to a certain extent” (0 percent).
chose the answer “Yes, for God created all Fulbe and call all Fulbe to become Christians.” 32 Almost all the respondents (95 percent) answered yes to the question, “Do you think it is possible to be a good Christian and a Fulbe nomad or semi-nomad?” 33

It may therefore be concluded that the converts had a very strong identity as Fulbe. Even though the Islamic religion is an important element of the Fulbe culture and the Fulbe community today, the respondents still considered themselves to be part of the Fulbe people. This is significant because in some areas of Northern Nigeria, like the Yola area of Adamawa state, the words Fulbe and Muslims are often used interchangeably so that it is said of Bachama people who convert to Islam that they have become Fulbe. Just as their identity as Christians, in their perception, did not contradict their identity as Fulbe, in the same way most of them did not see any conflict between being nomadic or semi-nomadic herders and being Christians.

The most serious problems for the Fulbe converts had to do with their interaction with the Fulbe community. More than a quarter of all the converts felt totally rejected by their own people, as shown in Figure 16. Altogether, 58.3 percent did not feel that they had been accepted after they became Christians.

32 The alternative responses were “Not really, for Islam is part of what it means to be Fulbe,” “I don’t really know, whether this is possible,” and “Yes, but I don’t really know how to combine being a Pullo and a Christian.”

33 While 78.3 percent were of the opinion that their being nomads or semi-nomads did not matter, 16.7 percent thought that it was possible to be a Christian as a nomad or semi-nomad, but Fulbe would be better Christians if they stayed in one place all the time. The alternative negative responses were, “No, Fulbe have to settle to become good Christians” and “No, I am not sure this would be possible.”
Question: “Do you feel that your family and relatives accept you after you have become a Christian?”

Answers:
1. “No they have completely rejected me.”
2. “No they do not fully accept me.”
3. “Yes, they accept me to a certain extent.”
4. “Yes, they accept me fully.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
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<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 16**

THE RESPONDENTS’ FEELING OF ACCEPTANCE BY FAMILY AND RELATIVES AFTER CONVERSION

Concerning eating with Muslim people from their community, however, the experience of rejection seemed to be less. As shown in Figure 17, only a little more than a quarter of the converts stated that they never or only seldom eat with Muslim Fulbe from their community.

It would be interesting to know whether the feelings of rejection increased or decreased over time. When the responses of those twenty-one converts who were baptized within the last five years are compared with those of the thirty-nine that were baptized more than five years ago, the result is complex. Whereas 47.6 percent of the respondents baptized within the last five years felt that their relatives accepted them fully or to a certain extent, the percentages decreased to 38.5 percent for those respondents baptized more than five years ago. On the other hand, while 52.4 percent of the respondents baptized within the last five years said that they sometimes or often eat with Muslim Fulbe from their community, as many as 82.1 percent of the respondents baptized more than five years ago said that they sometimes or very often eat with them.
Question: “How often do you eat together with Muslim Fulbe in your community?”

Answers:
1. “I never eat with them.”
2. “I only seldom eat with them.”
3. “I sometimes eat with them.”
4. “I very often eat with them.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
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<td>15.0</td>
<td>-+-</td>
<td>-+</td>
<td>-+-</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
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FIGURE 17
THE RESPONDENTS’ MEAL FELLOWSHIP WITH MUSLIM FULBE

Evidence shows that the feeling of rejection increased over time for the Fulbe converts. At the same time, however, they somehow managed to increase their level of interaction with the Muslim Fulbe. This is an indication that many converts, some years after the initial exclusion from the Fulbe society, were able to re-establish a relationship with their own people to a certain extent, even though their new religious identity was still rejected.

The evangelistic interaction of the Fulbe converts with their Muslim Fulbe relatives and neighbors was fairly high. About three quarters of the converts seemed to be in the habit of praying for and witnessing to their Muslim Fulbe relatives and neighbors. A little less than three quarters (71.3 percent) of the respondents stated that they had prayed for them “today or yesterday” or “this week,” whereas the rest either never prayed for them or did not remember when they last did so. Three quarters of the respondents witnessed to their Muslim Fulbe relatives and neighbors sometimes or very often, whereas the rest never or only seldom did so.
Summary of Conclusions Resulting from the Survey of Fulbe Converts

In the summary of the research results concerning the movement to Christ among the pastoral Fulbe, my communication model will be used to organize the conclusions. Therefore, I will first consider the influence of the communicators and the media channels on the spiritual journey of the converts in the three phases of the conversion process. Second, I will focus on the impact of the context in the conversion process. Then I will show the pastoral Fulbe’s understanding of the message on the basis of which they have responded to the gospel. Finally, I will evaluate the results of the communication of the gospel in terms of the number of conversions and the sociological characteristics of the conversions, the spiritual maturity of the converts and the converts’ relationship with the church and the Fulbe community.

The Communicators and the Media Channels

One of the clearest conclusions of this study is that, in the perception of the Christian Fulbe, the personal interactions with Christians, with individuals or the church fellowship, impacted their spiritual journey the most. The data give the strong impression that the life of Christians and the fellowship of Christians with the Fulbe were the main channels for the message.

Very few converts had gone through the three phases of the conversion process without having received help from a person, either an evangelist, a friend, or a family member. The most important type of person had been the non-Fulbe evangelist. For most of the Fulbe, the actual presence of a church in the neighborhood was significant, but even more significant was the worship and fellowship in the churches, where the Fulbe apparently felt welcomed and at ease.

In the analysis of the mission projects, it was found that the principles of “a person-based approach with focus on personal testimony and the life of the evangelists”
was given high priority. The principle of involving “local congregations or groups with local congregations as much as possible” by missions was, on the other hand, not considered to be important by as many as forty percent of the respondents. The insufficient cooperation between the mission projects and the local congregations may be the reason a significant percentage of the Fulbe converts complained that they felt that the Christians did not welcome them in the church during the decision and incorporation phases.

The most personal communication channels, including prayer and personal witness, were appreciated the most by the Fulbe converts. In the mission projects, social services were seen as very important ways of communicating the gospel. The pastoral Fulbe, however, did not see such activities as having much influence on their spiritual journey. As it has been noted, however, social services probably had an indirect influence by bringing the Fulbe into contact with Christians in schools, clinics, and other programs. The Fulbe may not have perceived the social services to have impacted their spiritual journey, but there are good reasons to believe that missionaries though social services established personal contacts with Fulbe that later came to play a significant role in the Fulbe’s conversion.

Concerning media, the data showed that the Fulbe often perceived such approaches to be less significant than he projects perceived them to be. Throughout all conversion phases, the mission projects gave the highest priority to the use of Fulfulde media, but the Fulbe converts stated that they were almost equally influenced by Hausa and Fulfulde media. The reason the Fulbe were not more impacted by Fulfulde media, however, was probably that they had been exposed more to Hausa media, rather than it being that they preferred Hausa to Fulfulde.

Also, when it comes to the significance of the Qur’an, the evaluation of the Fulbe differed from that of the mission projects. Whereas the mission projects considered the
Qur’an as one of the least useful media, the Fulbe themselves pointed to it as one of the most significant, especially during the awareness phase.

The Fulbe converts perceived that God spoke to them not only through the church and its media and methods, but also through the Qur’an, although the church had no intention of employing this media. The importance of dreams and visions show that Fulbe converts perceived God as communicating with them directly and with impact.

Finally, a brief overview of the most important factors in each of the three phases of the conversion process will be presented. The role of the local congregations was considered to be very significant to all three phases by the Fulbe converts.

In the awareness phase, Fulfulde radio broadcasts, the Hausa Bible and the Qur’an were the most important media. Of the specifically Christian activities, intercession, and personal witness were appreciated the most. Among the personal experiences, observing the life-style of Christians was the most important. Christian evangelists were the most influential persons.

In the conversion phase, the Hausa Bible (followed by Hausa literature, the Jesus Film and audio cassettes) was the most important media. Of the specifically Christian activities, intercession, prayer with Christians and personal witness were considered to have had the strongest impact. Among the personal experiences, answered prayer, observing the life-style of Christians, miracles and dreams were the most important. Also in this phase, non-Fulbe Christian evangelists were the most influential persons.

In the incorporation phase, the Hausa Bible (followed by audio cassettes, the Jesus Film, Hausa literature, and Fulfulde radio broadcasts) was the most important media. In this phase, the social services, in particular “other educational programs,” most often Bible schools, were estimated to have had more influence on the converts’ spiritual journey. Of all the specifically Christian activities, intercession, prayer with Christians, and Christian Fulbe conferences were the most important. Of personal experiences
answered prayer, observing the life-style of Christians, and miracles and dreams once again had exerted the most influence on their spiritual journey. Non-Fulbe evangelists were still the most important persons, but in this phase friends began to play a significant role.

The Context

The survey showed how the context of the pastoral Fulbe and the context of the non-Fulbe congregations impacted the spiritual journey of the converts in various ways. Most obvious is the pressure from the converts’ Muslim families and communities. The life stories show that most of the converts suffered a great deal in the process of becoming Christians: some have even been physically assaulted. Therefore it is not surprising that when the pressure was at its highest, in the conversion phase, two thirds of the respondents felt that it had some or even much negative influence on their spiritual journey.

The negative impact of the Muslim Fulbe context is also seen in the problems the Fulbe converts had concerning the Christian teaching about the Incarnation and the Trinity, particularly in the awareness phase. Whereas the negative influence of these teachings was significantly reduced over time, some of the cultural traditions of the Christians continued to present problems. The most serious problem was food habits of the other ethnic groups that made up the membership of the churches.

The Understanding of the Gospel

From the data of the survey and the life stories, it may be concluded that many of the pastoral Fulbe surveyed understand the gospel, which was communicated to them, as in some way related to their Islamic religion. If this were so, they would not have expressed such a relatively high appreciation of the Qur’an. The aspects of the gospel (as
they understood it) that attracted them most to Christianity, however, were exactly the teachings that differed most from Islamic teaching, namely the teachings about God’s love and assurance of salvation.

The Result of the Interaction of the Fulbe with the Gospel

The movement to Christ of pastoral Fulbe in Northern Nigeria is still new, small and scattered. As many as sixty percent of the respondents were baptized within the last ten years, and only eight percent were baptized twenty-six or more years ago. Although it was not possible to obtain precise and comprehensive data, it is fairly safe to conclude that the total number of adult baptized Fulbe (including the town Fulbe) does not exceed 500 in all of Nigeria. The survey showed that the movement toward Christ is extremely scattered. The sixty respondents from the seven selected states were scattered in twenty-eight local government areas. They came from twenty different clans or sub-clans and were fairly evenly divided between nomadic and settled families, with only a few converts coming from semi-nomadic families. It may, therefore, be concluded that the present Fulbe movement to Christ is not a people movement, but a movement of individuals, most of whom have become Christians through contact not with Christian Fulbe but with Christians from other ethnic groups.

The majority of those who have become Christians are young men. Three quarters of the respondents were men, and four fifths of them were under thirty when they became interested in the gospel and also when they were baptized.

These converts exhibited strong Christian convictions and a Christian behavior very similar to that expected of strong Christians from other ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria. Their cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the questions about Jesus and forgiveness were in harmony with traditional Christian theology and practice found in Protestant churches in Northern Nigeria. Only when it came to their relationship to
Scripture, did a significant minority diverge from Christians of a non-Muslim background by attaching a higher value to the Qur’an. Their more positive attitude toward the Qur’an (which diminished as the converts grew older in their faith) was clearly related to the evangelistic use of the Qur’an.

The Fulbe converts had a strong identity as Christians, and the majority of them also had a strong relationship to the Christian community, but a significant minority faced serious problems of not feeling at home in the non-Fulbe congregations. On the other hand, one of the most highly appreciated mission initiatives by the Fulbe converts was the conferences of Christian Fulbe. As many as eighty-five percent of the respondents said that this had much influence on their spiritual journey in the incorporation phase. At such gatherings, Fulbe got a foretaste of what it would mean to members of a Fulbe congregation. Therefore it is no surprise that as many as eighty percent of the converts thought that it would be helpful for the Christian Fulbe to have their own Fulbe congregations. In their opinion, this would help them to feel more at home in the church, just as it would make it easier for other Fulbe to become Christians.

The movement to Christ was at the same time a geographical and social movement. The research shows that along with the movement to Christ was a strong movement from bush to village and town (or from village to town), from non-literacy to literacy to modern school education, and from cattle herding to farming and employment with church and government. Furthermore, it was a movement out of the Fulbe community into the non-Fulbe Christian community.

Almost all the respondents were converted individually. Only in a few cases (as seen from the life stories) were whole families of husband and wife with children converted Christians. For the vast majority of the Fulbe, their conversion to Christianity led to their exclusion from the Fulbe community. Whereas all of the respondents came from a pastoral background, very few of them were involved in pastoral activities at the
time of the interview. Almost all the *Fulbe* converts still had a strong identity as *Fulbe* and as Christian *Fulbe*, but the majority of them had serious problems being accepted by their *Fulbe* community. Based on these findings it can be concluded that the primary method of evangelism used among *Fulbe* has generally been “extraction evangelism.”
CHAPTER 9
CONTEXTUAL CONVERSION ISSUES IDENTIFIED THROUGH STUDY OF LIFE STORIES

In the analysis of the five mission projects, it was concluded that the mission projects to a great extent were following traditional, non-contextualized mission principles and approaches. The analysis of the movement to Christ among the pastoral Fulbe showed that none of the converts were members of contextual Fulbe congregations and that all of them had been extracted from their community. In this chapter, I will study in more detail some of the aspects of a contextualized conversion.

Contextual conversion is important because it is in harmony with the biblical model of conversion. Furthermore, if churches are to be truly contextual, they will have to be made up of members who joined through a contextual conversion (Kraft 1979a:328). Finally, it is likely that one of the major reasons why mission among Muslims in general, and among Muslim Fulbe in particular, has not been very successful is an insufficient contextualization of the gospel in their context.

In this chapter, I will, therefore, analyze the data and in particular the life stories in order to identify elements of contextual conversion among the pastoral Fulbe. In the following chapter, I will consider what a contextual Fulbe congregation might look like. In the awareness phase of the conversion process, the focus will be on the role of the Qur’an as a bridge between Islam and Christianity. In the conversion phase, I will study how dreams have been perceived as a divine call to conversion. Finally, in the incorporation phase, the role of prayer will be considered.
The Qur'an as a Bridge for Conversion

Although the majority of the pastoral Fulbe are not able to read the Qur'an, the Qur'an has a high authority in the Muslim Fulbe society, and Qur'anic injunctions and perspectives contribute significantly to the Fulbe’s religious frame of reference. The research, however, showed that missionaries and others involved in the mission projects considered the Qur'an to be one of the least important media. Church leaders have discouraged the use of or even reference to the Qur'an in evangelism. Therefore, it must be considered one of the most surprising findings in the research that the Qur'an had much influence on 30 percent of the respondents in the awareness phase. Similarly it was surprising that as many as 83.3 percent of the respondents were in favor of continuing to read the Qur'an after conversion.

The Qur'an in the Life Stories

At least nine of the fifteen converts whose life stories were recorded seem to have had some training in Islam.1 Some of them had learned only to read the Qur'an without translation and interpretation, whereas others went as far as studying the Hadith and other books and were considered to be malamai before they became Christians. The Qur'an played a significant role in the conversion of six of the converts.2

Some of the convert apparently became attracted to Jesus and the Bible through their study of passages in the Qur'an dealing with the prophet Isa.3 Others heard about

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3 In the Qur’an Jesus is called Isa. In the Fulfulde Bible, Defiere Allah (1983) Jesus is referred to by the name Yeesu, and in the old Hausa Bible, Litafi Mai-Tsarki (1932), and the new Hausa Bible, Litafi Mai Tsarki (1979), Jesus is also called Yesu. Christians in Northern Nigeria prefer to use the name Jesus/Yeesu/Yesu, but also accept the name Isa. For most Christians in Northern Nigeria, the term Isa ibn Maryam in the Qur’an refers to Jesus Christ in the Bible, although the descriptions in the two scriptures
Jesus from Christians, either through preaching or in dialogue, and then began to study what the Qur’an teaches about Jesus.

From the Qur’an to the Bible

One of the converts, Yakubu (1998), related the following story:

I was a child who really wanted to read the Qur’an very much. We were almost ten in the town, and we read the Qur’an together. I was one of the most eager students. Sometimes I would even study at night, though at that time I was a small boy. Sometimes they even had to hide my allo [wooden board with Qur’anic text on it]. I wanted one day to become a very, very big malam in Islam. So I was there until I reached tafsir [commentary on Qur’an or another text]. At the time of fasting, I studied the Qur’an intensely and wanted to know more about our teachings. I read about the prophets, and I started asking questions about the prophet Jesus. I came to the places in the Qur’an, where it tells about Jesus and his followers, and what he had told them, then his death and resurrection, and that one day he will come back to judge the world. All prophets have sinned, but Jesus didn’t sin. Then one day I asked the big teachers, “Did the prophets sin, also Muhammad?” They said, “Yes they did.” Then I asked them, “Will the prophet Jesus return? You say about Christians that they are his people and that he will then listen to them? What then about us, who follow another prophet?” They answered, “The ones who follow the Prophet [i.e., Muhammad] will be saved” (Yakubu 1998).

Yakubu was not satisfied with the answers he received, so he soon made contact with Christians who gave him the gospel of John to read, and later he began to study the Bible together with Christians. For Yakubu there was a continuity between the Qur’an and the Bible: “It was Injil [the gospel of Jesus Christ] also have Injil in the Qur’an.” The Injil in the Qur’an led him on to the more expanded story of Jesus in the Bible.

Gidado (1998) was a malam who had become famous for his unorthodox magical practices. In a dream, God warned him against continuing his evil practices and told him to look for a savior. He began to study the Qur’an seriously and came across the passage

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differ in certain areas. For practical reasons we have used the term Jesus, when the Qur’an is quoted or referred to.
in Sura 3:55 where God⁴ says to Jesus that he will set those who follow Jesus above those who disbelieve until the day of Resurrection. Then he went to his father, who was also a *malam* asking him,

“My father, why did we not follow Jesus?” My father said, “What then about Muhammad? We could not leave Muhammad at that time.” I said, “But now, what are we to do now?” My father said, “Well, I will continue my study,” he answered. Later I said to my father, “I want to follow Jesus.” My father did not answer a word. He did not say anything. He only continued writing the *Qur’an*. After three days, I went to him and said, “I want to become a Christian.” But he kept silent. Then I got afraid. On the fourth day, when I came to him, he was still writing. Then he lifted his pen, and after a period of silence he said, “. . . I will not prevent you. Prophet Jesus is a prophet of God. But one thing I wish: Just as you have steadily worked with the *Qur’an*, in the same way you must be in Christianity. Become great. Do your best, have patience just as you have had patience here.” I said, that I agreed. “Will you then allow me?” I said. My father said, “Go ahead with it, prophet Jesus is a prophet of God. And furthermore nobody should despise prophet Jesus, because he is a prophet of God” (Gidado 1998).

This *malam* apparently interpreted the *Qur’anic* information about prophet Jesus in such a way that he did not feel that he had to prevent his son from following prophet Jesus and becoming a Christian.

**From the Bible to the *Qur’an***

While Yakubu and Gidado initially were attracted to Jesus through their studies of the *Qur’an*, which led to their study of the Bible, Dahiru (1998) was first attracted to Jesus through the Bible, which led him to study the *Qur’an*. A quotation from the Bible about Jesus led him to search the *Qur’an* for more information about prophet Jesus. When he was twenty-three years old, he first listened to the gospel from a gramophone belonging to a Christian friend. When he heard, that “all the prophets testify about him

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⁴ Both in Hausa and *Fulfulde*, the word Allah is used not only by Muslims, but also by Christians (e.g., in the Hausa and the *Fulfulde* Bibles) when referring to God. In my translation of the life stories, Allah has consequently been translated as God when used by both Muslims and Christians.
[Jesus] that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Ac. 10:43), he decided to search the Qur’an to find out what it taught about prophet Jesus.

Over the next two years he had asked his friend, who was a malam, show him what the Qur’an teaches about prophet Jesus. The malam, not knowing the intentions of Dahiru (1998) directed him to many passages including Sura 3:45ff, where the angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary the birth of Jesus. Jesus was described as the Word and spirit or breath of God.

Then I began to think. We have the story about how God created heaven and earth with his word. He said, “Be,” and it was. Well, when I saw that it was said that Jesus is the Word of God, I began to think. Since God created heaven and earth and all the beings in heaven and on earth, is there any being that surpasses his Word in importance [or rank or glory, in Hausa: daraja]? This really made me think. I said, that we say that God is Spirit [literally: is breathing on his own. In Hausa: yana lumfashi don kansa], he is giving breath [or spirit] to all who breathe. Can there then be anybody breathing on earth or in heaven who is more important than the Spirit [or breath] of God? I held on to these two things: no creature can be more important than the Word of God, and no breathing creature can be more important than the Spirit [breath] of God (Dahiru 1998).

Encouraged by this information, Dahiru asked his learned friend to share what else the Qur’an taught about prophet Jesus. His friend then directed him to Sura 19:16ff, where the angel Gabriel informs Mary that she shall give birth to a son. This son is described as illustrious in this world and in the hereafter, as one who was brought near to God, a sign unto men and a mercy from God.

So I thought, if I left the illustrious in this world and the hereafter, how would I find a place in the hereafter? If I did not receive the sign, which the angel said was for men, how would my relationship be with God? No, the angel Gabriel said, that this mercy was for us. If I did not receive this mercy, which the Lord God the most holy had spoken about through the angel, what mercy would I have from the Lord? (Dahiru 1998).

After two years, Dahiru contacted Christians who taught him to read Roman script. He bought a Bible and began to study about all the prophets from Genesis
onwards. A few years later he decided to leave the religion of Muhammad and embrace
the religion of Jesus.

Bakari (1998) was a very zealous Muslim, first as a member of the *Izala* group, later as a member of the *Shi’a* group. He had studied the Christian Scriptures, not in order to become a Christian, but rather in order to convert Christians to Islam. He had already succeeded in leading a few Christians away from their faith and helped them to become Muslims when he began to persuade two younger relatives of a Christian woman working in the same office as him. In a discussion, this colleague challenged him with the question, “Is there salvation in the *Qur’an* such as it is in the Bible?” He answered, that of course there was salvation in Islam. If you did your *salla* prayers, if you fasted and kept the commandments, then you would be saved. Her question, however, worried him, and he went to a famous *shaykh* in the town and asked him if it was true that prophet Jesus could save people.

He said to me, “Undoubtedly, only he will save.” I said, “I wonder, is this really the truth?” He was silent, and then he said to me, “Yes, it is true, I will tell you.” Then he looked around him, and said, “There is no doubt, when we talk about salvation, only the prophet Jesus will bring salvation. He is the only savior. . . .” Then I asked him, if Muhammad could not save. He answered me, saying that our *ibada* [serving God with prayer and a good life] might save us, but there would not be any prophet who could save us, such as Jesus could. Jesus could really save us, but Muhammad could not even save his own daughter (Bakari 1998).

This answer worried him a lot. If Muhammad could not help his own daughter, how then could Muhammad help him? This insight started a process leading to his conversion to Jesus.

Abdullahi (1998) was a student in a *Qur’anic* school, and at the same time working as a janitor in a local government office. A dialogue over a long period between Abdullahi and a Christian evangelist in which both shared from their scriptures led Abdullahi to study the *Qur’an* more carefully to see what it says about prophet Jesus.
In the Qur’an it does not say that Jesus is a savior. But what made me put my faith in him was that it said that he is alive, that he is together with God. All prophets have died, but in the Qur’an it says, that he is together with God, and that he will come back. When he comes back, the world will tremble, the dead will rise. . . . This really made me think a lot. In the Arabic [Qur’an] it says that he will come back in order to repair the world. If it will even happen that the dead will rise, then we must understand that he is not only a man, but he is the Word, the Word of life. Before the creation of heaven and earth, the Qur’an says, the Word was there. . . . I began to believe in him, because he is now with God, and it is he who will come to judge the world. . . . If we fear God, we have to obey him. If we do not fear God, well, then we will not obey him. You see, these words encouraged me a lot (Abdullahi 1998).

Many of the same verses about prophet Jesus that played a role in the conversion of Dahiru also attracted the attention of Abdullahi. What appealed most strongly to Abdullahi, however, was the fact that only Jesus of all the prophets never died, but was with God and would return on the last day. Abdullahi soon afterwards followed his Christian friend to church, where he said that he wanted to become a Christian.

Mamudu (1998) was around thirty years old and married when he began to take interest in the gospel. What first attracted his attention to the gospel was a close friendship with a Christian. Sometimes he would follow his friend to church, but he would only sit outside the door and listen. When he felt attracted to the Christians and their teaching, he began to become more and more critical of his own Muslim community. He felt that they talked much about the commandments of God, but hardly practiced them, and he wondered if God was satisfied with this.

I continued with these thoughts in my heart for three years. During the fourth year, however, I began to think about the words about the prophet Jesus [in the Qur’an]. It was said that he was the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and it was even said that he who disobeyed Jesus the Messiah would be condemned on the last day. This really made me think. I said, “If this is how it is, why should we Muslims not follow Jesus Christ? Because among all the prophets, who is called the Spirit, and who is called the Word, apart from him?” (Mamudu 1998).
It was while he was in the midst of all these thoughts that he had a dream in which he experienced Jesus calling him to follow him.

**The Qur’an and Contextual Conversion**

All six life stories show how students of the Qur’an were attracted to the prophet Jesus. Some of them came across passages about prophet Jesus in the Qur’an that led them to reflect on the significance of Jesus as compared to Muhammad. For others, a close contact with Christians provided them with information about Jesus Christ from the Bible, which motivated them to search the Qur’an for explanations of the role of Jesus. In all cases, the interest in Jesus was related to the question of salvation. In the midst of the religious system of Islam, these Muslim Fulbe came across information about Jesus, which to their understanding pointed them beyond the perspectives of Islam and on to the Christian faith. These Jesus passages thereby came to function as contact points for the gospel.

**The Need for Forgiveness of Sins**

The study of the religion and worldview of pastoral Fulbe indicated that forgiveness of sins was an important felt need for many pastoral Fulbe. Whereas the religious structures of spirits and magic and of Pulaaku addressed only this-worldly needs and appealed to individual Fulbe, Islam opened much wider horizons. The preaching of Islam brought the pastoral Fulbe in contact with the worldwide umma of Muslims from all ethnic groups and brought their eternal destiny of salvation or damnation into perspective.

The survey of the Fulbe converts confirmed that forgiveness of sins was a felt need among pastoral Fulbe. Whereas the preaching of Islam including the Shari’a law made them aware of their need for forgiveness and salvation, it did not seem to satisfy
this same need. The offer of forgiveness of sins, assurance of salvation and the love of God in Christianity played a very important role in most of the conversions. The New Testament stories about Jesus as savior from sin and hellfire apparently touched this deeply felt need of assurance of salvation.

**The Qur’anic Frame of Reference**

The passages in the Qur’an about prophet Jesus seem to have functioned as a cognitive bridge from the Qur’an to the Bible, from Islam to Christianity. In some cases, passages in the Bible led the Fulbe to passages about prophet Jesus in the Qur’an. In other cases, the study of these passages in the Qur’an gave them a taste for studying about Jesus in the Bible. In all cases, these passages somehow legitimized their shift of allegiance from Islam to Christianity. At times learned Muslims even accepted this shift of allegiance to Jesus because they recognized the validity of their Qur’anic reasons for following Jesus. Muslim Fulbe lived within the religious frame of reference of Islam, and the good news about salvation through faith in Jesus Christ was communicated to them with reference to the most authoritative book in Islam, the Qur’an, and through the use of concepts known to them from the Qur’an. In the light of such life stories, it is possible to understand the relatively positive evaluation of the Qur’an that was found in the survey of Christian Fulbe.

**Conclusions Concerning the Missionary Use of the Qur’an**

The missionary use of the Qur’an is a very sensitive issue. Church leaders in Northern Nigeria have warned their missionaries against using the Qur’an, and the survey of the mission projects reflects this attitude. In missiological circles, there is no consensus on this issue, not even within the Lausanne movement (Lausanne Committee 1980:15-16). Many missiologists basically reject any positive use of the Qur’an. Samuel
Schlorff rejects the idea of interpreting the Qur’an in the light of the Bible because it may “create a climate of theological ambiguity and inclusivism, which invites syncretism” (1984:176).5

Other missiologists like Michael A. Youssef6 and Kraft7 advocate an approach in which the Qur’an is interpreted in the light of the Bible and used positively to lead

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5 Schlorff in his thorough study, The Missionary Use of the Qur’an: A Historical and Theological Study of the Contextualization of the Gospel (1984), admits that we cannot avoid using the Qur’an when trying to communicate the gospel to Muslims. Because the Qur’an in Islamic societies exercises the most important cultural influence, it is necessary to make use of the Qur’an in the contextualization of the gospel, otherwise the converts are cut off completely from their cultural heritage. Schlorff’s objective therefore is to find out how to use the Qur’an in Christian mission among Muslims. Schlorff objects strongly to the use of the Qur’an both as starting point and as source of truth. The basis for his rejection of a positive use of the Qur’an is found in his theological and hermeneutical convictions or principles. His theology is only contextual in a limited way, in that he insists that only the Bible may be used as the starting point for Christian theology (locus theologicus), whereas the context to which Islam and the Qur’an belongs is not seriously engaged (1984:150-151). Therefore he ends up with a form of contextualization that is in reality better termed indigenization or adaptation. Undergirding this rejection of contextualization principles is a rigid understanding of the Bible as containing a propositional verbal revelation, which is objective and authoritative and free from subjectivity (1984:167). In his theology of religions, he rejects the theory of fulfillment, and therefore can only accept using elements from Islam as “semiotic vehicles” or as “communicational starting points” for the proclamation of the biblical message (1984:153-164). Schlorff rejects what he calls a synthetic hermeneutic approach to the Bible and the Qur’an, “because it involves a synthesis of meanings Qur’anic and biblical, either by reading ‘synthetic’ meanings into those Qur’anic propositions, or by reading into them essentially Christian meanings” (1984:165). An example of this synthetic hermeneutic approach is the interpretation of certain Qur’anic texts about Jesus as “the word of God” as “proof texts” (in accordance with the Bible) for the deity of Jesus. Another example would be to interpret the Qur’an in the light of the Bible. Schlorff objects to this approach because the meaning of no Qur’anic text may be determined independently from its original language system and cultural context and from the Islamic tradition of interpretation, and because it attaches authority to the Qur’an, which will “create a climate of theological ambiguity and inclusivism, which invites syncretism” (1984:176). Schlorff’s alternative analytical approach essentially keeps the Qur’an and the Bible apart each in their hermeneutical community of the umma and the church. In spite of his very cautious attitude, Schlorff finds a limited basis for the use of the Qur’an in the evidence of general revelation (“the divine approach”) manifest also in the Qur’an. Therefore, on the surface level Qur’anic and Islamic forms of expression may be used as semiotic vehicles for interpreting biblical meanings in an Islamic context. Because of the fall of man (“the human rejection”) on the subsurface level, the main approach must be one of “unmasking non-Christian religion, with its repression of the original knowledge of God and of His requirements of man, as sin against God, and calling their adherents to repentance and faith in Christ” (1984:195). See also Schlorff 1980.

6 Youssef points to the fact that though Jesus did not come to preach Judaism or salvation through the Law, he never attacked the Law, but showed the Jews that the Law was pointing to him. Because the Qur’an contains some magnificent verses about Jesus, and Muslims have such a high respect for the Qur’an, he advocates that the Qur’an be used as a bridge to reach Muslims (1992:D135-137). Youssef, who is from a Muslim background, suggests that “Rather than tell the Muslim to ignore his Qur’an, one ought to sit down with him and try to read the Qur’an together to see what it says about Jesus and how Mohammed perceived Jesus . . . The moment one begins with the positive affirmation in the Qur’an, one
Muslims to faith in Jesus Christ. “Virtually all converts from Islam say that the God they knew distantly in the Qur’an they now know more fully in Jesus Christ. As Jesus and his apostles were able to point to the gospel from the Old Testament, so we can point our Muslim friends to Jesus from the Qur’an” (Youssef 1992:D127). In the conversion of the Muslim Fulbe, the Qur’an was understood and used in ways that resemble the positions taken by Youssef and Kraft despite the fact the official theology of all five churches concerning the Bible and the Qur’an resemble more closely the position taken by Schlorff.

It is, however, significant that most often the Qur’an was not used by the missionaries from a non-Muslim background, but by Muslims themselves who apparently came across the Jesus passages or sought them out for study because they had been confronted with the biblical teaching about Jesus and the prophets. In the life story material, there was only one exception to this rule. Ahmed (1998), who was a Pullo from finds a great deal of scope in witnessing to Muslims” (1978:102). Youssef gives the following example of how to approach Muslims with the Good News about Jesus. “I am not proselytizing, I want you to become a good Muslim, surrendering your will to that of God to become a disciple of him whom the Qur’an calls the spirit of God and the Word of God” (1978:103). A similar approach is taken by Michael Nazir-Ali who states that “it has to be acknowledged that the Qur’an is often more open to Christian concerns and meanings that [sic] Muslim orthodoxy allows” (1991:127-128).

One of the most daring positions concerning the use of the Qur’an is that of Kraft, which is in line with the attitude of Youssef, but developed in much more detail. In a paper presented at a conference on media in Islamic culture, held in Marseilles in 1974, Kraft advocated innovative experiments in communication of the gospel to Muslims. Based on his understanding of conversion as a process leading to a faith allegiance in God, stimulated by some feeling of need or inadequacy (stemming from human sin), he argued we should only communicate what the Muslim may be able to understand and accept about Jesus and God, because “a fraction of the truth well communicated is preferable to the antagonism engendered when a whole truth is totally rejected” (1974a:73). In order for the Muslim to be converted, “He simply has to pledge in faith as much of himself as he can to as much of God as he understands, even the Muslim ‘Allah’” (1974a:71). Even within the Qur’an, Kraft contends, the Muslims have enough information about God to be converted; therefore the Qur’an should not be neglected but utilized along with the Bible. “I would press hard for a faith relationship with God and for faith renewal movement starting within Islam as a culture, based on the faith of Abraham (or Ibrahim), pointing to Qur’an, Old Testament and New Testament as the sources of our information concerning this faith, and issuing in a renewal and distinct [sic] people of God, who retain their Muslim cultural allegiance, worship forms and self-respect. I would press further for this faith renewal movement to use all three books (Qur’an, Old and New Testament) as its basis and confidently expect and pray for them to discover both Jesus and the exciting relational aspects of the faith that Jesus characterized by referring to His relationship with God as a Father-Son relationship. But the Muslim must be able to feel at home, both in his society and in his religious allegiance” (1974a:76).
a semi-nomadic family, had never had any Qur’anic or other schooling before his conversion. A Christian evangelist used the Qur’an in his communication of the gospel to his Fulbe friend in order to convince him that the Jesus Christ, whom he preached as savior, also had a place in the authoritative scripture of the religion to which he and his Fulbe community belonged.

He took the Qur’an, the Hausa translation by Gumi and opened it. He pointed to all the places where the Qur’an and the Old Testament agreed. He said that the prophet Jesus is in the Qur’an, and that you should therefore not say that he is only in the Bible. This has not been prepared by us, it is the work of God. If you believe in Jesus, if you repent, Jesus will be your savior and you will escape Hell fire, no matter what you have done in this world (Ahmed 1998).

When considering the potential for the use of the Qur’an in communicating the gospel to Muslims, the context of the Christian-Muslim relations in Northern Nigeria today has to be taken into consideration. Experience shows that for any Christian evangelist, irrespective of his/her ethnic or religious background, to quote from the Qur’an in public is very dangerous, whereas it may be possible to refer to the Qur’an in private sessions. The strongest testimony is from Muslim Fulbe, who themselves have experienced how the Jesus passages in the Qur’an were instrumental in attracting them to put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Based on the above analyses and discussions, the following guidelines concerning the missionary use of the Qur’an are offered:

1. Discovery. In most cases, Muslim Pullo discovered for himself/herself what the Qur’an said about prophet Jesus. This fact may account for the strong impact this information had on their spiritual development. This finding is in harmony with one of Kraft’s basic principles for communicating within a culture. This principle, suggests that communicational effectiveness is heightened considerably (1) if receptors have the impression that the new information or insight has come to them via their own discovery rather than as the result of their being told something by an outsider and (2) if receptors discover that they
can identify with the communicator. *The effective communicator, then, seeks to lead potential receptors to the discovery of both the substance and the value of the message, rather than simply to provide for them “prefabricated” alternatives to their present understandings* (1979a:163).

In some cases, a communicator of the gospel played the role of asking the relevant questions or providing stimulating information that led the Muslim *Pullo* to search his/her own scriptures, so that he/she could make his/her own discovery. In other cases no Christian communicator was directly involved, but the Muslim *Pullo* apparently on his/her own “stumbled” across his/her discovery. Even in this case, however, the positive impact of the presence of Christians in the neighborhood may have facilitated his/her discovery of the information in the *Qur’an* about the object of the worship of Christians.

The main lesson for the missionary communicator of the gospel is,

that the determinative role in the communication process is that of the receptor rather than that of the communicator. Receptors alone can make the recommended changes in their own perspective, and everything depends upon their feeling that whatever change they make is on the basis of their own choice rather than because of outside coercion (Kraft 1979a:162).

2. Interpretation. Who is entitled to interpret the *Qur’an*? Very few Christian missionaries have studied the *Qur’an* and other Islamic sources to the extent that they may claim the competence to interpret the passages in the *Qur’an* about prophet Jesus, and even if they could claim such competence, their interpretations would rarely be considered valid by Muslims simply because the interpreter was not a Muslim himself/herself. I have to agree with Schlorff that in the final analysis the interpretation rests with the Islamic *umma*, but this does not mean that individual Muslims cannot make their own interpretations of the *Qur’an*, even if the interpretations are not in accordance with the prevalent theologies of the local Islamic leaders in their area.

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8 Still, there may be room for non-Muslims to suggest what the original meaning of a passage in the *Qur’an* might have been.
Instead of the Christian missionary interpreting the Qur’an, he/she should encourage the Muslims to make their own interpretations.

Schlorff rejects a hermeneutic approach in which the Qur’an is interpreted in the light of the Bible, which seems to be the interpretation method employed by the Muslim seekers in the life stories. It may, however, be quite legitimate for a Muslim seeker to interpret the Qur’an in the light of the biblical Scriptures to which even the Qur’an refers, instead of basing the interpretation on the later Hadith and the works of Islamic theologians.\(^9\) In this case the role of the Christian missionary may be to provide a biblical framework to the Muslim seeker for his/her interpretation of the Qur’anic passages about prophet Jesus.

A major reason for Schlorff’s rejection of this approach to the Qur’an and the Bible is his fear that it may “create a climate of theological ambiguity and inclusivism, which invites syncretism” (1984:176). The research, however, shows that in spite of the fact that most of the respondents were in favor of continuing to read the Qur’an in order to use it in evangelism (in the way described above), there were no significant traces of syncretism among the Christian Fulbe. It seems that when Muslims become Christians they still value and utilize those elements in the Qur’an that are in harmony with the Bible. But they attached more authority to the Bible than the Qur’an, which is probably an indication that they now use the Bible as the criterion for what is true in the Qur’an.

Whereas Christian missionaries from non-Muslim backgrounds may not be able to use the Qur’an in evangelism among Muslims in an effective way, converts from Islam with a solid knowledge of the Qur’an and the Bible, are in a position to witness

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\(^9\) This approach to the interpretation of the Qur’an can be justified with reference to Sura 3:94, in which God says to Muhammad, “If thou wert in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee.” In a note A. Yusuf Ali explains that “the Book” refers to revelation generally, including pre-Islamic revelations. “Those who have been reading the Book before thee” according to A. Yusuf Ali refers to Jews and Christians (1975:508 note 1475).
effectively to how God used passages in the *Qur’an* to draw their attention to Jesus Christ.10

3. Understanding and appreciation of the *Qur’an.* In order for the missionary to fulfill the roles described under (1) and (2), the missionary needs to develop a basic knowledge of the *Qur’an.* An appreciation of the relative value of the *Qur’an* is required in order to accompany a Muslim seeker on his/her spiritual journey through the *Qur’an* and the Bible in a credible way.

**Dreams--A Divine Call to Conversion**

Dreams play an important role in the life of most Africans. In the study of the religion of the pastoral *Fulbe* it was noted that dreams were a popular form of divination, both for *Fulbe* who were strongly Islamized and for *Fulbe* who were more influenced by the traditional religion.

In the survey, fifty-five percent of the respondents said that dreams and visions had exercised a strong influence on their conversion in the conversion phase. In eight of the life stories, dreams played a very significant role in the conversion of the respondents.11 One of converts (Gidado 1998) had his dream in the awareness phase, whereas the seven others had one or more dreams in the conversion phase. One of them (Buba 1998) had a dream in the incorporation phase.

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10 For example, when the tape recorded life story of Dahiru (1998) was played in a Christian clinic in the autumn of 1998, it attracted the attention of two *Fulbe.* After listening to this conversion story, a major part of which focused on the role of passages in the *Qur’an* about prophet Jesus in the conversion of Dahiru, two pastoral *Fulbe* sought out Dahiru and indicated their desire to become Christians. Soon afterwards one of them publicly declared his Christian faith, while the other remained (at least for some time) a secret believer in Jesus.

Dreams in the Life Stories

The content and the function of the dreams of the eight interviewees differed significantly. In some cases, the dreams helped to remove the doubt about whether Christianity or Islam was the true religion, whereas other dreams gave the seekers courage to make the decision to commit their life to Jesus.

Removal of Doubt about the Truth of Christianity

When Bakari (1998), through his studies of the Qur’an and the Bible, began to doubt whether salvation was to be found in Islam or in Christianity, he was quite worried. One night, he did a lot of thinking.

He got up and did his ablutions and did his salla prayers. Then he prayed to God saying, God, help me. I pray that you will show the truth to me, whether this Islam is the road which will take me to paradise. Please, show me. If, however, Christianity is your way for me to salvation and paradise, then, please show me. Then I went to sleep (1998).

He then had a dream, in which a cross appeared to him in the midst of a great thunderstorm that was threatening his life and the life of many others. When he woke up, and thought of his scary dream, he said to himself that only the Christians have a cross. But still he thought that it could be Satan who was leading him astray.

The following days, Bakari studied both the Qur’an and the Bible. One night he again prayed intensely to God because he was feeling constant fear about would happen to him when he died, whether he would go to Paradise or not. He prayed asking God to show him whether the Qur’an or the Bible was God’s word. That night he dreamed that somebody woke him up. He saw that both the Bible and the Qur’an were lifted up, and then the Qur’an fell down. A voice said to him that the time was near (probably the end of time) and that this Bible was the true word of God. When he woke up, he decided to become a Christian.
Still, Bakari did not tell anybody, but asked if he could follow his colleague to her home and spend Christmas with her family. While he was there, he had another dream in which he saw the Christian relatives of his colleague in white dresses being lifted up towards the throne of God. They tried to lift him up so that he could follow them. Again and again they asked him to believe in Jesus, and when he did not answer he would fall down. His clothes were neither white nor black, but brownish. Finally he said that he would believe in Jesus, and he followed the others to heaven. The next morning Bakari told his colleague about his dream and said that he wanted to receive Jesus as his savior.

Abdullahi (1998) apparently had decided that he wanted to become a Christian. He had told his people about his decision to become a Christian and had been severely persecuted. Christians had bailed him out of prison and sent him to a center for Christian Fulbe. But apparently his heart was still full of doubts.

I was thinking about what had really brought me to be with these pagans. What sin had I committed against God, since he had brought me here. At that time, when the other students were asleep at night I would go out, take my gourd bottle and perform my ablutions. Then I would enter my hut again, lock the door and do my salla. I would ask God to show me what sin I had done, which had cause me to live among Christians. Then I decided to do three days of fasting and prayer (Abdullahi 1998).

On the third day of his fasting, he had a dream in the night. He was watching the moon and the stars, and suddenly a great storm arose. He heard a voice calling him by name, asking him to enter his hut. He ran to his hut, where he saw a ram being slaughtered, and blood covered all his room. In the morning he told his dream to a Christian leader. This leader, however, interpreted the dream to be from Satan. Abdullahi was afraid that he should die and wanted to go home to his own people again. Then he met a pastor who told him that his dream meant that Jesus Christ had washed him and his house by his blood. This persuaded him to stay with the Christians and continue in Christianity.
Courage to Make a Decision

Ali (1998), who had been attracted to Christianity through experiencing the love of Christians in his village, had been invited to attend a *Fulbe* conference, but was confused by what he had experienced at this Christian meeting. After he had said his Muslim night prayers and had gone to bed, he suddenly woke up. He had heard somebody call his name, but he realized that it must have been a dream. When it happened a second time, he thought that it might be evil spirits that were disturbing him. The third time he heard, “Ali, I call you... get up, and receive me.” In his dream he got up and--apparently thinking that it was Jesus who had called him--said that he would receive him. Then he woke up and realized that it was again a dream.

The following morning, he asked the Nigerian missionary who had invited him to attend the *Fulbe* gathering whether it was he who had called him during the night. The missionary said no, and when Ali had explained to him what he had experienced, the missionary told him to pray to God, asking him to show him whether this dream was from him. If it was from the evil spirits, he should ask God to drive them away. After a week’s deliberations, however, he went told the missionary that he had decided to become a Christian.

Mamudu (1998), who for long time had been a friend of a Christian, was becoming more and more dissatisfied with Islam and felt more and more attracted to Christianity. In the midst of these feelings, he had a dream or a vision. First he woke up because of a strange sound, as if somebody or something was touching the grass roof of his hut. He thought that maybe one of his cows had left the pen, but when he went out to check, he found that all the cows were lying there in the pen. He went back to sleep, but a little later he had a dream or a vision.

I saw a man in a white gown enter my hut, but I did not see his face. His gown was shining white. He then came up to me and put his hand on my chest like this. Then I sensed a kind of a sweet fragrance. It was like a perfume or incense, which I have never since met, and it immediately
filled the room. I struggled to get up, and then I bowed my head like this.
Then he said to me, “What are you waiting for?” (Mamudu 1998).

When he shared his dream or vision with his Christian friend the following day, his friend told him that it was Jesus who had visited him and talked to him, and he added, “Truly, there is no other way to salvation than Jesus. Jesus loves you. Do not play with this.” Two days later, Mamudu decided to become a Christian.

Yakubu (1998) had been attracted to Christianity through his study of the prophet Jesus in the Qur’an, and a pastor had given him the gospel of John to study. He then told his father that he wanted to follow the prophet Jesus, but his father told him that he was just a child, too small to understand anything. His father then warned him against continuing his contacts with the Christians, saying they would only destroy him.

In the midst of his fears, he had a dream. Somebody called him and said that he should get up. He woke up, but did not see anybody. When he shared his dream with his father the next morning, his father told him to go and sacrifice a hen so that the Christians would not succeed in making him mad. A few days later he again had a dream, this time about a verse in the Qur’an. When he told his father about this, his father opened the Qur’an, and it turned out that it was a verse about the prophet Jesus.

Later, when Yakubu was sent out to herd their cattle in the bush, he met his pastor-friend, who advised him, saying, “since Jesus had shown himself to me, he was encouraging me to believe in him. He is the only savior. You should accept him. Don’t worry because you are a child. Let him just come into your life” (Yakubu 1998). He then gained the courage to go to church, but was severely beaten by his father. After yet another dream in which Jesus saved him from fire that was about to kill everybody around him, he decided to become a Christian. He left his home and went to stay with some Christians.

The dreams of Dawda (1998) seem to have been more vague in content, but still the impact was similar to the dreams of Ali, Mamudu, and Yakubu. Dawda, who was
being treated in a Christian dispensary in Niger, felt attracted to Christianity. During the treatment he was staying in the house of a famous Muslim who had been to Mecca. Dawda did his daily prayers together with this *alhaji* and other Muslims in the neighborhood. A week after he had begun his treatment in the dispensary, he started having dreams at night. He saw some wild animals who were about to attack him and eat him. He was terrified, but when he lifted up his hand, he was lifted up, away from the dangerous animals. From high up in the sky, he could still watch the ferocious animals.

Three nights in a row he had the same dream, and the third night, which was a Saturday night he had the dream three times. When he woke up Sunday morning his body was very weak, and he did not know what to do. He put on his clothes and went for a walk, without knowing where to go. He felt it as if somebody was drawing him towards the dispensary. When he reached the dispensary, the people there were in the middle of a worship service. After the service, he got up and said, “I am a Muslim, the son of a real Muslim. I am a *Pullo*, the son of a real *Pullo*, but today I want to accept this your religion, this will now be my religion. This Jesus, that you have been talking about, is now mine. I now receive him with both my hands for ever” (Dawda 1998). The following night he slept well, without dreams or worries. Now he felt that he had peace in his heart.

Buba (1998) had a dream a long time after he had decided to become a Christian, but before he was baptized. He was baptized nineteen years after he became interested in the gospel. For some years he lived as a secret believer. Some years after he had made his new faith public, he forgot about Christ for a period of six years due to a severe drinking problem, which was only resolved when he asked a pastor for help.

Buba was a nomadic *Pullo*, and he went to church wherever possible. One Saturday night, he had a dream. In the dream he and another *Pullo* came across a beautiful church building. Buba wanted to go in, but his friend would not follow him. A
voice told him to wash his face and his body before entering. Inside the church were two pastors sitting, one white and one black. A voice told him to go to either pastor and ask for anything he wanted.

I noticed that in front of the white pastor there were some lions lying down looking at him. There were tigers watching the black pastor. “You must step on the lions or tigers before you reach the pastor,” a voice said to me. In my mind I hoped to approach the white pastor, since it was the white people that brought the gospel to Nigeria. When I went near the pastor, I noticed there were five lions. They were all lying down in front of the pastor. I stepped on the middle part of the body of one of them. Then the biggest one opened wide his mouth which was filled with very long and sharp teeth. My body trembled with a terrible fear. I turned my back on them. Then the pastor turned to me and said, “You are not a good Christian.” I became very sad upon hearing these words from a pastor whom I loved. I went back to the door and it opened by itself. . . . I left the house feeling bad (Buba 1998).

Sunday morning he went and told this dream to a Christian relative, and the relative and Buba decided to go to a nearby church and share the dream with the Christians there. The pastor, upon hearing about the dream, said, “God would like you to serve Him, but you are afraid of your Muslim people. Have you been baptized yet?” He said no, and the pastor promised that he would teach him catechism and baptize him. He was then baptized and became an (unpaid) evangelist among Fulbe.

**Dreams and Contextual Conversion**

Dreams had various functions in the lives of the converts. In some cases they helped remove doubt about the truth of the gospel, in other cases they gave the converts courage to commit their lives to Christ. In all cases dreams were understood to be a divine communication, a call from God for their conversion. At the same time, the dreams were a very contextual form of communication with God to which the Fulbe were able to relate.
Dreams in the Bible

Divine communication with human beings through dreams, such as pastoral *Fulbe* have experienced, has little place in most modern Western theologies. Both in the Old and in the New Testament, however, there are many examples of God’s communicating with Israelites and non-Israelites (in the Old Testament) and with Christians and non-Christians (in the New Testament) through dreams and visions. The importance attached to dreams and visions in the Old Testament is evident from the fact that a prophet at one time had been called a seer (1 Sa. 9:9). At the same time, it is made clear in the Old Testament that dreams may come from the devil (Deu. 13:1-5).

In two cases in the Bible, dreams or visions occur in connection with conversions. Saul from Tarsus, the young radical Pharisee on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians, had a vision in which Jesus appeared to him, telling him to go to Damascus where somebody would tell him what to do. In Damascus, he met the Christian Ananias, who had been instructed by Jesus in a vision to take care of Saul (Ac. 9). The God-fearing Roman centurion in Caesarea had a vision in which an angel appeared to him, asking him to call the apostle Peter. Peter, prepared by God in a vision, went to his house and confirmed his conversion (Ac. 10).

In both cases the dreamers seem to have heard about Jesus and to have been considering the claims of the gospel before their dream. Just as in the case of most of the dreams in the research of the *Fulbe* converts, Saul and Cornelius received their visions in the conversion phase of their conversion, and immediately after their dreams they were helped by Christians to complete their conversion through baptism and incorporation into the church. The dreams and visions of Saul and Cornelius, however, differ from the ones in the life stories in that the divine instructions in their dreams were very specific (and therefore did not need interpretation), and in that Christian “missionaries” were called to confirm Saul’s and Cornelius’ conversion through visions or dreams also. These and
other differences aside, in all cases the dreams of the converts were understood as a divine call to conversion.

**Actualization of Religious Frames of Reference**

In my research, I have not distinguished between dreams and visions, because neither the *Fulbe* themselves nor the religious traditions to which they belong attach any significance to the differences; both dreams and visions are understood by the interviewees as supernatural experiences. In order to discuss ways to handle supernatural experiences in scientific research, the concept of “supernatural experience” has to be defined. Here I follow the definition offered by Juha Pentikäinen:

The basic concept of the “supernatural experience” is regarded as an interactional situation in which a religious personality or, rather, through him the religious tradition actualizes an encounter with one or more supernatural beings that dominate his beliefs. In a supernatural experience a religious frame of reference is actualized on an experiential and behavioral level. The frame of reference includes both unique and collective elements (1978:121).

The question becomes which religious tradition is actualized in the dreams of the *Fulbe*. In the dreams there are elements from Islam, such as references to the *Qur’an*, and elements from Christianity, such as the cross, the Bible and a church with pastors. Other elements, which are difficult to associate with either of the traditions (e.g., the wild animals), may best be understood in the context of their pastoral life in the bush. The most characteristic trait of the dreams, however, is that they focused on elements that belong to both religious traditions (although they are interpreted differently). The scenes of the last day are described in such a way that both Muslims and Christians may identify with them. There is no doubt that the interviewees identified the God of Islam with the God of Christianity, and Isa in the *Qur’an* with Jesus in the Bible. This means that the
supernatural beings whom the interviewees encountered belonged to both religious traditions.

How then should reports in which interviewees claim to have had supernatural experiences be handled? Max Weber in his analysis of “social action” claimed that God cannot be considered as an actor just as human beings are considered to be actors. To this Brian Turner replied that, “To preclude God as a social actor is to overrule the actor’s claim that, to take one fairly widespread view among the faithful, God answers prayers. In making that claim, a social actor thereby commits himself to the belief that God enters into an interpersonal relationship” (Turner 1974:41 as quoted in Syrjänen 1987:138).

According to Turner the researcher should take the actor’s (in this case the interviewee’s) definition of the situation seriously, if he wants to give an account of the actor’s subjective world, but this does not mean that the researcher has to believe in the supernatural actor (Turner 1974:41 as quoted in Syrjänen 1987:138).

**Contextual Communication in Situation of Need**

All the dreams occurred at very critical points of time in the converts’ spiritual development. The dreams came when the converts had been in contact with Christians and had started considering whether the claims of the gospel were true. While they apparently felt attracted to Christianity and the Christian fellowship, they were also aware of the probable, fearful consequences for them if they decided to become Christians. In this psychological situation of longing to become Christians, while doubting the truth of the gospel and fearing the consequences of conversion, they experienced having one or more dreams. In the study of *Fulbe* religion, it was noted that the religious system of spirits and magic met the *Fulbe’s* felt need for guidance in critical situations of life. Here the converts found a much needed guidance through their dreams and visions.
The impact of the dreams in the lives of the seekers seems to have been very strong. For all of them, the effect of the dreams was that they overcame doubt and fear and committed themselves to Christ publicly. The converts understood the dreams to be messages from God, or more often specifically from Jesus Christ. This divine communication through dreams, which the converts experienced, is a good example of contextual communication. The dreams were felt to be extremely relevant and important to them because they addressed the deeply felt need for guidance at a critical point of time. The message from God was conveyed to them through a communicational channel with which they were familiar in their Fulbe religion. Interestingly, God’s communication through dreams was very individualized, in terms of the context, form, and content of the dreams. The dreams seemed to be geared toward the personality, the situation, and the needs of the individual.

**Dream-Approved Change**

Dreams and visions play an important role in the religious life--both Islamic and traditional--of the pastoral Fulbe. Dreams and visions are also understood as a channel for divine communication in Christianity. Humphrey J. Fisher has pointed out that interpretation of dreams by Muslim clerics has helped to attract non-Muslims to Islam, because in this area Islam and traditional African religion speak the same language (1979:231-233). At the same time dreams may be a Trojan horse in the Islamic community. “For in the dreams themselves and in their interpretation there are attractive opportunities for innovation. Indeed, it might be argued that when the need for individual or social change is sufficiently strongly felt, this may in itself give rise to dreams, which in turn sanction such a change” (1979:231).