The Process of Conversion

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a matrix for measuring steps in the process of conversion of Muslims to the Christian faith. It briefly explains conversion from the perspectives of theology, sociology and psychology. It then gives an overview over different approaches to describe the conversion process, particularly one-dimensional and two-dimensional approaches. Based on these various approaches a spiritual decision matrix for evaluating conversion processes of Muslims is being introduced which describes the cognitive and the affective dimension of such processes. The matrix shows and visualizes various aspects in this process and becomes therefore an important tool in evaluating the stage on which a Muslim friend is in the decision process. This enables the Christian change agent to be able to share the gospel in a meaningful way and encourage Muslim friends to move forward on the cognitive and affective dimension towards a decision to follow Christ.

The following article is based on an MTh Dissertation in Missiology, accepted in 2006 by Unisa: "Conversions from Islam to Christianity in the Sudan (Straehler 2005), supervised by Dr. Christof Sauer. The dissertation first gives a biblical and theological understanding of conversion and then introduces the sociological and psychological understanding of such a change in religious affiliation. It discusses conversion as a spiritual decision process and develops a spiritual decision matrix for evaluating conversion processes of Muslims. The heart of the study is an analysis of the conversion processes of six converts with a Northern Sudanese background from different Muslim ethnic groups. Interviews with these converts are analysed in terms of five parameters: reasons for conversion, factors that led to conversion, stages in the conversion processes, problems encountered during the conversion processes, and results of the conversion. These parameters are compared with existing data from six studies of Muslims in other geographical areas who also converted to the Christian faith.[1]

1. Conversion in multiple perspectives

Conversion is an issue that needs to be seen in multiple perspectives. These are: the personal life story of an individual, the religious-theological aspect, and also sociological and psychological factors. In order to understand the conversion of Muslims to the Christian faith, we need to look briefly at these perspectives.

1.1 God's unique ways

How do people become believers in Jesus Christ? Eldredge (2001:210) reminds us that for God there are no simple formulas. He is a person and not a doctrine. He does not function like a system – but acts in an original and incalculable way like any free and living personality. There are many examples in the Bible of unique ways and miracles through which God helped his people, for example the conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6) and Gideon's victory over the Midianites (Judges 7). These miracles and many others were never repeated. Jesus healed people in different ways, using a variety of approaches. From this observation Eldredge draws the conclusion that there always remains a mystery around the activities of God. He quotes Chambers (1989:171): "Never make a principle out of your experience; let God be as original with other people as He is with you." God uses different ways in his dealing with human beings and each story is unique. This is also true for Muslims who become believers in Jesus Christ.

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One woman who was interviewed (Convert 1) comes from one of the main Arab ethnic groups in Northern Sudan. Growing up in a traditional Muslim family from the lower-middle class in Khartoum, she did not think much about Christianity. From her father she learned a lot about foreign cultures and developed a sense of tolerance for them. She was very interested in these cultures. One day, when she was in her early twenties, she was returning home from her office, and suddenly felt being pushed into a certain street in the city centre where she normally did not go. She ended up in a Christian book exhibition and became involved in discussions with the Christians there. She continued to talk for hours and at the end she was convinced about the truth of the Christian faith and made a decision right there. She got married to a Muslim husband who knew that she was a follower of Jesus and who later became one himself. The couple continue to live within the Muslim society. They are generally respected but occasionally face severe discrimination and troubles.

Another person interviewed (Convert 2) is now in his late thirties. He comes from one of the Arab ethnic groups in the Eastern Sudan. He grew up in a village in the northern part of southern Sudan, in a strict Muslim family. He became active as a youth in political Islamic groups who were trying to "Islamise" the southern Sudanese Christians in their area. During these activities he was quite hostile towards Christians. As a Muslim he was fully convinced about the truth of his religion. In 1993 he began to study the Bible in order to be able to better refute it in front of the Christians. He then compared the Bible with the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. After a year of intensive studies, during which he consulted only the Bible and various Islamic books, he came to the conclusion that Christianity was the truth. During that time he did not discuss anything with Christians. Once he was convinced, he went to a church in the next town and got some books from the Christians there. Later he visited a pastor in another town and attended a Christian conference. He asked what he needed to do in order to become a Christian. The Christians prayed with him and then sent him to Khartoum, because his family had heard about his conversion and had become very angry. In Khartoum he was in touch with Christians and later attended a Bible College. Since his graduation he works as a voluntary evangelist. He is married to a Northern Sudanese woman who is a second generation Christian.

These two examples already show that each conversion story is unique. But as one analyses the conversion stories of Muslims, one discovers certain trends which are common. It is these common trends which will be explored later on.

1.2 A biblical and theological understanding of conversion

When studying conversion to the Christian faith we need to define such a conversion in a biblical and theological sense. Walls (2004:2) is right when he emphasises that the most elemental feature of the word 'conversion' is the idea of turning, the specifically Christian understanding of the response to God's saving activity (cf Peace 1999:37; Schäfer 2003:168). The biblical concept of conversion centres around two aspects: the negative aspect of conversion being repentance from sin, and the positive aspect being faith in Christ (Erickson 1985:935, 938; Grudem 1994:713). The New Testament uses two main words to express these aspects:

- Repentance from sin is expressed mainly with the word *metanoeo*. Literally it means "to think differently about something" or "to have a change of mind" (Erickson 1985:937). Together with the noun *metanoia* it expresses the idea of repentance as an alteration in the total moral attitude, a profound change in life's direction, a conversion which affects the whole of a person's conduct (Behm 1967:979, 999).
- The main word to express faith is *pisteuo*. It means, "to believe what someone says, to accept a statement (particularly of a religious nature) as true". At the same time it has the meaning of "to have personal trust as distinct from mere credence or belief". The type of faith necessary for salvation involves both *believing that* and *believing in*, or assenting to facts and trusting in a person (Erickson 1985:939f).

From a look at these key-words it becomes apparent that conversion in the biblical understanding refers to a person accepting a complete new set of beliefs and switching his or her religious

allegiance to Jesus Christ as his or her supreme authority. It means to repent from sin and to put one's faith in Christ. In his theology of mission, Freytag (in Triebel 1976:65ff) describes conversion as a process and shows, that the Gospel meets a person in three steps: (1) the impulse, (2) the struggle for a decision and (3) the breakthrough to faith. This shows that conversion in the biblical understanding is really a process, however long it may take. Because conversion is a real event, its processes can be described (:209).

1.3 Conversion from the perspective of sociology and psychology

Processes involving human beings can vividly be described by human sciences such as sociology and psychology. This adds important dimensions to our understanding beyond theological categories. For Rambo (1993:xii-xviii), 'genuine' conversion is a total transformation of the person by the power of God. This transformation is influenced by social, cultural, personal, and religious forces. Conversion is a process over time, not a single event. It is contextual and thereby influences and is influenced by a matrix of relationships, expectations, and situations. Factors in the conversion process are multiple, interactive, and cumulative. There is no one cause of conversion, no one process, and no simple consequence of that process (:5).

Bryant and Lamb (1999:12) note that there is something of a sliding scale regarding conversion: "From the dramatic personal and inward experience of being turned around, to a very external institutional and formal process of induction into a new religious community." Rambo (1993:12-14) describes five types of conversion: *Apostasy* or *defection*, *intensification*, *affiliation*, *institutional transition*, and *tradition transition*. The type of *tradition transition* conversion seems to best describe the kind of conversions researched in the study about converts in the Sudan. For Rambo this is "the movement of an individual or group from one major religious tradition to another."

The motivation of a person to convert is a fascinating study. Conversions are not only initiated by spiritual motives, but can also be a response to a crisis experience (Rambo 1993:44). In such a situation the central dynamic of a change in religion cannot be reduced to a cognitive re-orientation (Wohlrab-Sahr 2002:88ff). This seems to be the case particularly in conversions to new religious movements (Ahlstrand 2003:124), where people often join because they find an attractive atmosphere in the new group and only later, through socialisation into that group, do they learn about the doctrines and give their assent to them (cf Lienemann-Perrin 2004:222). But there are other cases where conversions are motivated by an intensifying of religious affiliation, based on an increasing cognitive understanding (Köse 1996:95; Popp-Baier 2002:99). In addition to the basic motives for conversion, different factors also play a role in the conversion process, like the socio-political context (Van Butselaar 1981:113). Stress, tension and crisis can be grouped together as another factor. They may not be enough to explain conversion, but they may be the initial catalyst of a conversion process (Rambo 1993:48). And finally, one should not overlook the role of the change agent or the advocate in the conversion process (:66, 87; Ullman 1989:81).

2. Conversion as a process

Engel (1990) reports that "gradual conversion is the most common manner in which those with little or no prior exposure or meaningful Christian background come to faith in Christ". This process of conversion has been described in different ways.[2]

2.1 One-dimensional approaches in describing the conversion process

Green (1989:237f) views the process of conversion as a large number of discrete decisions, each one for or against a commitment to Christ. A more specific way to describe this process comes from Tippet (1987:75f) for whom the process of conversion includes "a period of awareness, a

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[2] See Table 1, "Models of Stages of the Spiritual Decision Process" at the end of the paper.

point of realization, a period of decision-making, a precise point of encounter and finally a period of incorporation" (cf Rommen 1994:44f). Kasdorf (1980:138-140) uses Tippet's model and adds a fourth stage which he calls 'growth of believers in Christ'. Hesselgrave (1991:618ff) describes five phases in the conversion process. The whole process is set in motion through a *discovery* of something new which leads to a time of *deliberation* in which the person considers the possibility of changing. If the result is positive, the person will *determine* to actually adopt this new way. Often the convert is next exposed to pressure to return to the old beliefs. Only when these *dissonances* are overcome will there be a complete identification with Christ and integration into the body of Christ, which can be called the submission to certain *disciplines* (Rommen 1994:101).

Still another model that explains the spiritual process leading to conversion in terms of different phases or stages has become known as the *Engel Scale* (Søgaard 2000; Dayton 1981; Engel 1979; Engel 1988; Engel 1990; Engel & Dyrness 2000). The basic function of the Scale is to indicate that a decision for Christ is not just one event, but a journey or series of events that lead toward spiritual maturity. The model suggests that everyone is positioned somewhere along a continuum in terms of relationship to Christ (Fraser 1979:135). The Scale, first developed by Engel and Søgaard, was refined by Engel who follows the paradigm of a linear approach to decision making as seen in the behaviour of consumers: knowledge – belief – attitude – intention – behaviour. This unites both cognitive and affective dimensions on one linear dimension (Søgaard 2000:311). This approach is similar to the one Rogers (1983) uses in his concept of 'diffusion of innovations', a way of describing how new ideas and technologies are adopted by communities. The 'diffusion of innovation' approach has also been used to describe conversions (Rambo 1993:95). Rogers (1983:165) sees five stages in the innovation-decision process: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation.

Because in evangelism among Muslims the main problem is not one of ignorance but of misunderstandings of Christianity, Fraser (1979:136-138) suggested that the model should be adjusted for the context of evangelisation among Muslims. This has been done by Mirza (in Livingstone 1993:235-238), who divides the steps to conversion into four major parts: 'tilling' (identification), 'sowing' (exposure), 'sowing & watering' (investigation), and 'reaping' (harvesting). These steps were further elaborated in an article by an anonymous missionary in the Muslim world (IL 1997), adding a preliminary stage called 'casuals' (casual relationships).

Figure 1: The Concept of Spiritual Progress according to Søgaard (1993:65)

2.2 Two-dimensional approaches in describing the conversion process

Søgaard (1993:64-69; 1996:56-61; Figure 1) moved beyond this model and developed a two-dimensional scale with a cognitive and an affective dimension, involving both knowledge and feelings. The affective dimension is primarily the person's feeling towards the gospel, the church and Christ himself. Søgaard suggests that "conversion is to a large extent the crossing of the affective line from negative to positive, and it can occur at multiple places (along the cognitive axis)" (1996:59). In other words, conversion is mainly a change of allegiance (:58).

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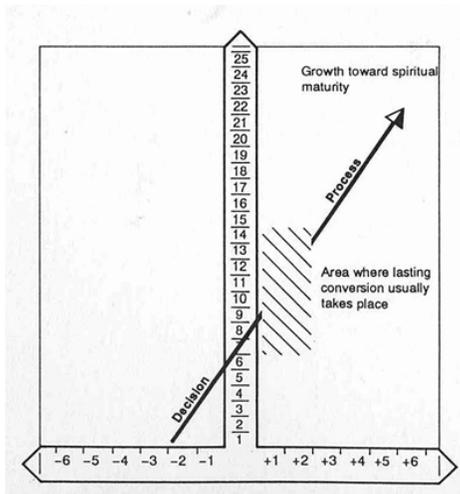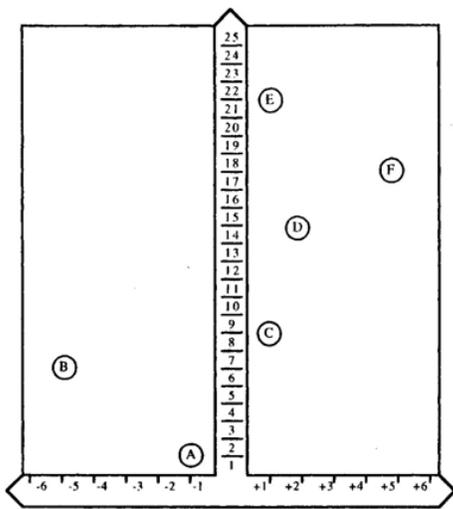Figure 2: Various Audience Positions according to Søgaard (1993:68)

What is helpful in Søgaard's model is that it illustrates vividly that a person can make a decision for Christ even though on the vertical, cognitive axis he or she is very low, which means there is little knowledge of Christ and salvation. A person can cross the line at any point on the cognitive axis – even though Søgaard suggests an area were lasting conversions *usually* take place (:59). Søgaard (:60) uses his model to describe the positions of various audiences in communicating the gospel (Figure 2), but it can also be used to some extent to map the process of conversion for an individual. In his example there is one tribal group, (A), which does not have an awareness of the Christian gospel, but is not really opposed to it. They are close to "0" on the affective line as well as on the cognitive line. On the other hand there is a group of young people in a Western country, (B), who have been brought up in a Christian context, but have rejected Christianity. They are close towards "- 6" on the affective line even though they are higher on the cognitive line than group A because they do have some knowledge about Christianity.

Søgaard's two-dimensional model was modified by Gray (2005; Figure 3) by making the vertical line actually cross the horizontal line. Søgaard's model has the disadvantage, that it is not clear what the minimum belief for a biblically valid conversion is. In Gray's model, it becomes clear that the convert needs to cross a certain point on both lines, the affective as well as the cognitive. It is not necessary to cross the line exactly at the intersection of the two axes. However, neither Søgaard nor Gray define the different points on the scales in their respective models. This is where the contribution of this study lies.

Figure 3: The Gray Matrix (Gray 2005)
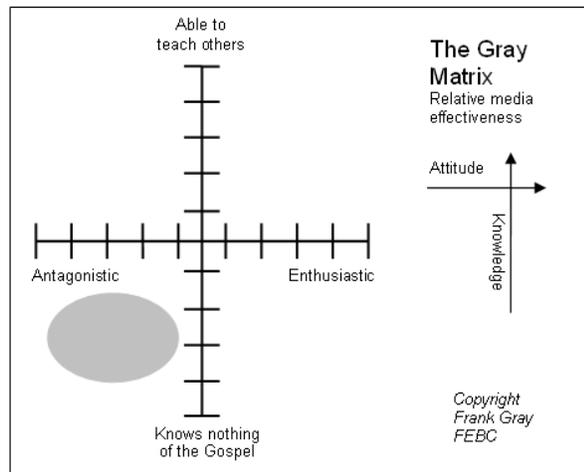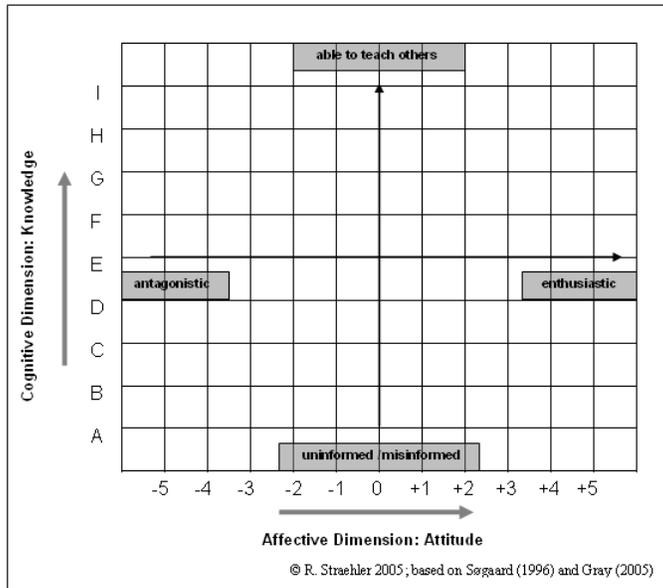
3. The spiritual decision matrix

Based on the information gained from the analysis of the interviews and after comparing it with existing models for describing decision processes, the author came to the conclusion that it is necessary to use a two-dimensional defined matrix to graphically describe the stages of decision processes.

3.1 The cognitive and affective dimension of the decision process

In the decision processes of Sudanese converts cognitive and spiritual reasons played a major role. These reasons have to do with an increase in knowledge about the content of the Christian faith (*cognitive* aspect) as well as with the attitude towards Christ and their search for salvation (*spiritual* aspect). The *spiritual* aspect can also be called the *affective* aspect and this term will be used in describing the model. What became obvious from the study is that in all conversion processes both aspects or dimensions, the *cognitive* as well as the *affective*, play an important role.

5

Figure 4: The Spiritual Decision Matrix (Basic Form)

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These two dimensions are described graphically in Figure 4. The vertical axis shows the knowledge dimension (*cognitive* dimension); the horizontal axis shows the attitude dimension (*affective* dimension). The general idea of the "Spiritual Decision Matrix" is based upon Søgaard's (1993; 1996; see Figure 1 and 2) and Gray's (2005; see Figure 3) two-dimensional models. The scales on the two dimensions represent different stages. The different stages on the cognitive and on the affective dimensional lines emanate from the data of the interviews; they are stages that were actually identified. The explanation for these stages is given in Figure 5. The crucial point, for a biblical understanding of conversion as a change of direction, is "E" on the cognitive dimension and "0" on the affective dimension. Until one has crossed from the lower-left area to the upper-right area,

Cognitive Dimension:

uninformed / misinformed	A	misconceptions about Christianity, no knowledge about the gospel, little sense of spiritual need
	B	initial awareness of Christian faith through personal contact or media probable restudy of Koran about Christianity and Christ
	C	awareness of the gospel, grasp of the implications of the gospel
	D	realisation that Jesus is more than a prophet
	E	realisation that Jesus is the focus of submission to God (together with "0" equals faith in Jesus, the turning point)
	F	realisation and confession of sin, repentance
	G	experience of assurance of salvation
	H	evaluation of decision, doubts, questions
able to teach others	I	growth in understanding the Word of God growth as a disciple of Christ

Affective Dimension:

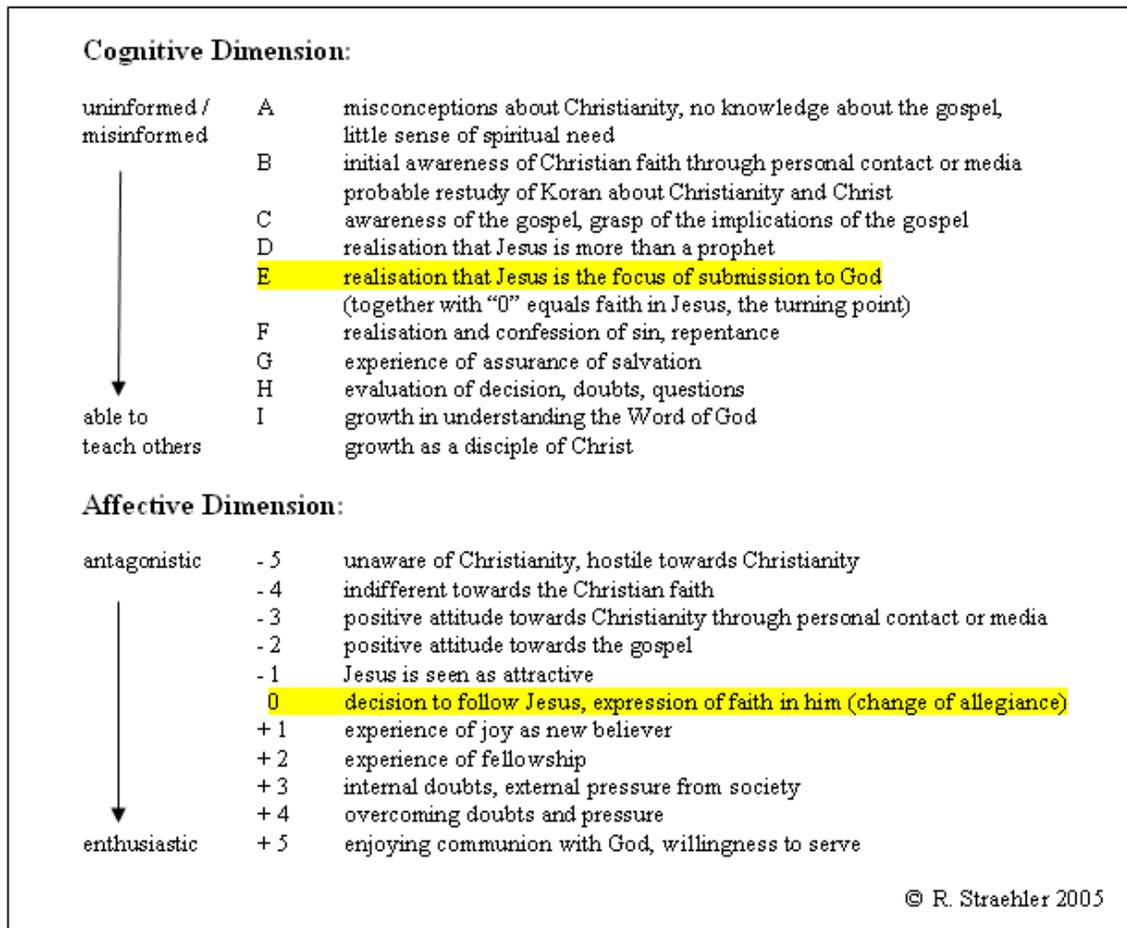|		
antagonistic	- 5	unaware of Christianity, hostile towards Christianity
	- 4	indifferent towards the Christian faith
	- 3	positive attitude towards Christianity through personal contact or media
	- 2	positive attitude towards the gospel
	- 1	Jesus is seen as attractive
	0	decision to follow Jesus, expression of faith in him (change of allegiance)
	+ 1	experience of joy as new believer
	+ 2	experience of fellowship
	+ 3	internal doubts, external pressure from society
	+ 4	overcoming doubts and pressure
enthusiastic	+ 5	enjoying communion with God, willingness to serve

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Figure 5: The Cognitive and Affective Dimension of the Spiritual Decision Matrix

6

he/she has not experienced a conversion in the biblical sense and can therefore not be called a follower of Christ. But once this crossing has been made, the person has fulfilled the biblical understanding of a true conversion, no matter where exactly in the upper-right area the person may be located.

3.2 The question of the "minimum factor"

The issue of the minimum belief in the conversion of Muslims is treated well by Green (1988:6) who asks the question: "If conversion consists of a fundamental change of allegiance in favour of Christ, what is the minimum change of belief required for the Muslim to move from being outside of Christ to being 'in Christ'?" He explains that conviction of sin is outside the normal experience of the Muslim and may therefore not operate as a motivation for turning to Christ. Therefore, he suggests that the critical cornerstone on which a Muslim's conversion will be based is his/her response to Jesus' question to his followers, "Who do you say that I am?" Usually a Muslim would answer that Jesus is a prophet, perhaps a very significant and worthy one, but no more than a prophet and certainly inferior to Muhammad. Green goes on by saying: "Until a Muslim acknowledges Jesus as the focus of his/her submission (*islam*) to God, he/she cannot be regarded as having truly embarked upon the Christian pathway" (Green1988:8).

We have seen earlier that a biblical understanding of conversion includes the following aspects:

- acknowledging that one was approaching God in the wrong way
- feeling sorry for the sins committed in the past
- turning around to face God
- accepting Jesus as God's way to approach him
- expressing faith in Jesus

If a Muslim realises that Jesus is the focus of submission to God (stage "E" on the cognitive dimension) and decides to follow him, thus changing his or her religious allegiance (stage "0" on the affective dimension), he or she can then be considered to be a follower of Jesus. However, the issue of realising one's sins and confessing them is closely connected with such a decision. A person who acknowledges Jesus but has not understood the need to confess sin will need careful instruction after the change of allegiance regarding this issue. But as Green (1988:6) notices, for Muslims such an understanding often comes after the expression of faith in Jesus.

3.3 Evaluating conversion processes – some case studies

After having introduced the spiritual decision matrix, two examples from the analysis regarding the stages in the decision processes among Sudanese can be presented. Tables 2 and 3 show the stages that were identified in the process of conversion for each person. In addition, for each convert a spiritual decision matrix is presented (Figures 6 and 7) which together with the explanation of the stages in Tables 2 and 3 give a good overview of the process through which each of the converts went.
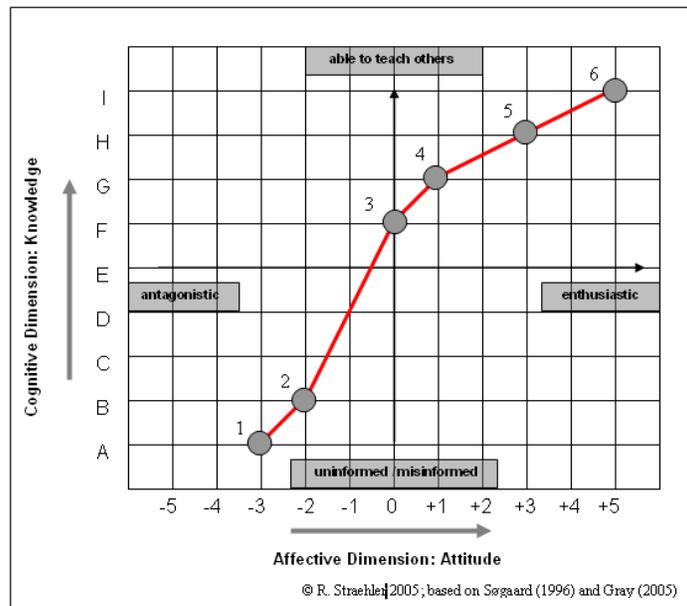
Convert 1

The main stages were identified by analysing answers given to questions in the interviews. Some stages were literally mentioned by the converts, other stages were inferred from other information given.

Table 2: Stages and Factors in the Conversion Process of Convert 1

Cognitive dimension (knowledge about Christian faith)	Affective dimension (attitude towards Christian faith)	Factors that caused movement to this stage	Time frame for stage	Marker on matrix
A: misconceptions, doesn't understand Christian faith, little sense of spiritual need	-3: somehow positive attitude towards foreign cultures and Christians	Father teaches her a lot about foreign cultures, develops a sense of tolerance in her	some years	1
B: initial personal awareness of Christian faith through contact with Christians	-2: positive attitude towards gospel	meets Christians at a Bible exhibition, intensive talk with them about meaning of the gospel	one day	2
C-F: convinced about the truth of the Christian faith, wants to have it, takes a decision	-1: fascinated with Jesus 0: decision to follow Jesus			3
G: considers herself to be a Christian (assurance of salvation)	+1: feels joy as new believer			4
H: evaluation: no doubts	+2 / +3: experience of fellowship, external pressure	Christians stand with her in times of trouble, Christians provide fellowship	till today	5
I: growth as disciple of Christ	+4 / +5: enjoying communion with God, service, involved in witnessing			6

The stage on the cognitive dimension and the stage on the affective dimension which are placed in the same row in each table, were present in the life of the person at the same time. The number in the right column refers to the numbered markers for each stage on the matrix for each convert. The factors that caused movement to this particular stage and the approximate time frame for this stage are also given.

Figure 6: The Spiritual Decision Matrix for Convert 1

© R. Straehler 2005; based on Søgaard (1996) and Gray (2005)

The most remarkable feature in the conversion process of Convert 1 is that she moved from A/-3 to G/+4 within several hours. She was drawn into an intensive discussion about the Christian faith which caused an increase of her cognitive understanding as well as a change in attitude within a very short time. It is also interesting to note that she started her spiritual journey relatively advanced in terms of the affective dimension at -3 (positive attitude towards Christianity through personal contact or media). This somewhat untypical attitude for a Muslim, (the other converts started at A/-4 or A/-5) was due to the influence of her father.
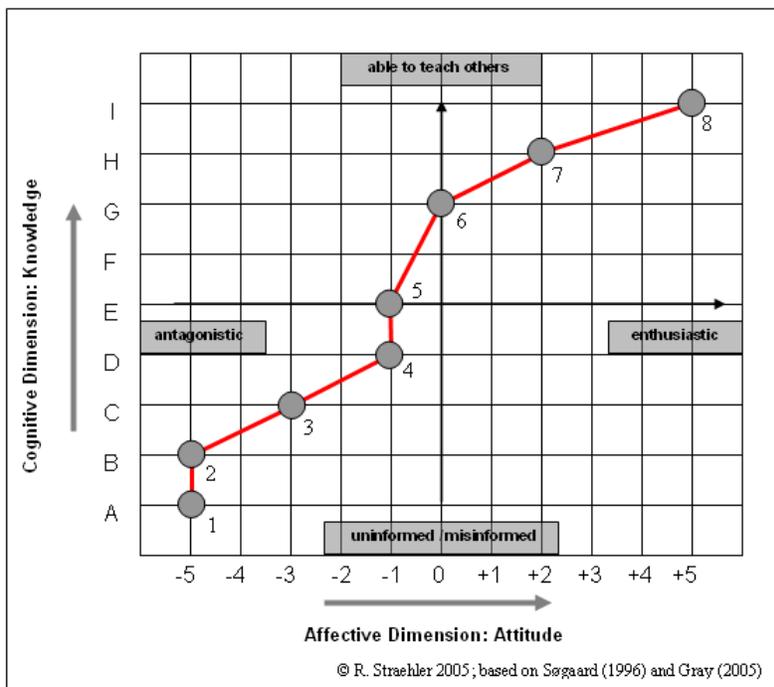
Convert 2

In the process of the conversion of Convert 2, crossing of the centre line on the affective dimension took place quite late (at G/0). His attitude towards the Christian faith remained hostile in the beginning, even after getting to know Christians personally. Only after he realized that Christians also pray and fast did he develop a more positive attitude (C/-3).

Table 3: Stages and Factors in the Conversion Process of Convert 2

Cognitive dimension (knowledge about Christian faith)	Affective dimension (attitude towards Christian faith)	Factors that caused movement to this stage	Time frame for stage	Marker on matrix
A: misconceptions, no knowledge about gospel, little sense of spiritual need	-5: hostile, contempt	upbringing by family and society	first 20 years of life	1
B: initial awareness through contact with Christians (in a negative way), restudy of Koran about Jesus	-5: still hostile	Muslim activities to islamise them, discussions with Christians	some months	2
C: awareness that Christians also pray and fast	-3: more neutral attitude, Christians also pray and fast	reading Bible	some months	3
D: realisation that Jesus is more than a prophet, he is God's word and spirit, judge	-1: Jesus seen as attractive	studying Koran and *Hadith*, also Bible	some weeks	4
E: realisation that he personally needs salvation, that Christianity is correct	-1: Christian faith seen as attractive	studying Koran and *Hadith*, also Bible		5
F / G: Repentance, experience assurance of salvation	0: submission, decision to follow Jesus	Christians helped him to pray	some weeks	6
H: evaluation of decision: he knew it was right, no doubts	+1: experience of joy as new believer +3: external pressure +2: experience of fellowship	Christians stood with him in time of persecution, helped him	some months	7
I: Growth in understanding Bible, as disciple of Christ	+5 joy in communion with God, willingness to serve	involvement with Church	till today	8

His knowledge increased significantly through his study of the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, as well as the Bible, until he finally crossed the affective line and changed his allegiance towards Christ. From there on he progressed steadily and became a mature follower of Christ.

Figure 7: The Spiritual Decision Matrix for Convert 2

© R. Straehler 2005; based on Søgaard (1996) and Gray (2005)

9

4. Conclusions

After having presented the Spiritual Decision Matrix, we will now draw some conclusions.

4.1 Understanding conversions as process

Conversion can best be described as a process and not as the event of a moment (Conn 1979:101ff; Hesselgrave 1991:618ff; Kritzinger, Meiring & Saayman 1994:31f; Peace 2004:9;). Understanding this process is important for several reasons. (1) For Fraser (1979:128) the fundamental issue in Christian witness to Muslims is "how Christian advocates can fairly and sensitively persuade Muslims to give their faith allegiance to Jesus Christ as Supreme Lord." This can be done if one adapts the evangelistic approach of Christian witness, so that a process of conversion is encouraged in the lives of people one would like to become followers of Christ. (2) It becomes obvious that the task of the agent of change is to accompany interested Muslims on their journey to Christ. This means that at different stages in a conversion process the Christian will emphasize different aspects of the Christian gospel, take on a different role, and use different approaches. The goal will be to move the person one step forward at a time (IL 1997:8). (3) A proper assessment of the evangelistic effort is possible, since not only the actual commitment is considered, but also the general spiritual development of the person. (4) The approach can be adapted to the particular questions and needs the person has at a particular point in the process of conversion.

4.2 Helping people move in the cognitive and the affective dimension

The goal for the Christian advocate is to move his/her friends forward in both dimensions, the cognitive and the affective, towards a complete change of allegiance to Jesus Christ. Most converts do not actively search for a religious alternative, but they "happen" to experience some developments in their lives which encourage or compel them to seek more information about the Christian faith. For this reason, the Christian advocate needs to work and pray for communication of information. The Gospel needs to be communicated as often as possible with as many people as possible. One can never know whether or not this person one day will accept Christ! Effective ways to communicate information about the Gospel of Jesus Christ are:
- personal oral witness
- literature: Scripture portions and other evangelistic literature
- various media (videos, DVDs, radio, TV, internet)
- chronological Bible storytelling

The other issue one needs to pray for is the attitude of people who hear something about Christ. Prayer is needed that their hostile or indifferent attitude will change and they will be fascinated by Jesus. This can happen through:
- Supernatural factors, e.g. dreams and visions. Christians can pray that God will speak with many Muslims and change their attitude.
- Personal friendship with Christians.
- Holistic ministries of Christians (e.g. through NGO's).

The Spiritual Decision Matrix is an important tool in evaluating at which stage a Muslim friend is in the decision process. It can then be determined what one can do to help this friend to move forward. This can be coupled with specific prayer. It also helps to evaluate our activities, tools, and methods in terms of how effective they are. Effective evangelism is everything that causes a person to move forward on one of the two axes, the cognitive or the affective. The Spiritual Decision Matrix shows and visualizes various aspects in this process and therefore helps one to pray specifically for Muslim friends who are on their way to encounter Christ. It helps to be able to share the gospel in a meaningful way and encourage Muslim friends to take a decision to follow Christ.

Table 1: Models of Stages in the Spiritual Decision Process

Green[1]	Rogers[2]	Tippett and Kasdorf[3]	Hesselgrave[4]	Engel Scale (adapted)[5]	Spiritual Decision Process for Muslims[6]
▲ D ▼ ▲ D ▼ ▲ D ▼ ▲ D ▼ ▲ D ▼ ▲ D ▼ ▲ D ▼ ("D" = decision for or against commitment to Christ)	Knowledge	1. Realisation (awareness of abundant life)	1. Discovery	- 10 Awareness of Supreme Being but no effective knowledge of Gospel - 9 Established positive rapport with Christian communicator - 8 Restudy of Koran on Jesus and clarification of misconceptions - 7 Initial awareness of Gospel through life of Christian communicator	Stage 0: Casual Contacts • many misconceptions Stage 1: Establishing Relationships • awareness of Christianity through contact with Christian • clarifying misconceptions
	Persuasion	➢ Point of realisation of an option	2. Deliberation	- 6 Awareness of fundamentals of Gospel through the Scriptures - 5 Grasp of implications of Gospel - 4 Positive attitude toward Gospel	Stage 2: Sowing • awareness of gospel • positive attitude to gospel
				- 3 Personal problem recognition	Stage 3: Watering • applying acknowledged truth personally • systematic study of Bible
	Decision	2. Making positive decisions	3. Determination	- 2 DECISION TO ACT	Stage 4: Reaping • challenge to take a decision
	Implementation	➢ Point of encounter and commitment		- 1 Repentance and faith in Christ 0 Regeneration - new creature	
	Confirmation	3. Incorporation of believers ➢ Experiencing of fellowship and belongingness	4. Dissonance	+ 1 Post decision evaluation	Stage 5: Growing as a Disciple • communion with God • joining a group/church • involvement in God's work • many more steps as a maturing disciple
				+ 2 Incorporation into body	
		4. Growth as a disciple of Christ ➢ Internalisation and maturation	5. Discipline	+ 3 Conceptual and behavioural growth • Communion with God • Stewardship • Reproduction: internally (gifts, etc) externally (witness, social action, etc)	

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