Introduction

Sharing the biblical portrait of Jesus Christ with Muslims has been a formidable challenge and the cause of much debate. One particular approach has created a lot of controversy that in the professional literature is called a C-5 movement (Travis 1998a:407-408). The Seventh-day Adventist Church has also been involved in this type of experiment and Jerald Whitehouse (from now on called Jerald) has been its initiator (personal communication, June 30, 1998) although he would hasten to say that he stood on the shoulders of his mentors who empowered him with a vision for such a ministry. In November of 1989 Jerald submitted a proposal to the far Eastern Division (FED) committee, asking for permission to start a new type of work among Muslims.

In 1998, after the contextualized ministry had been in existence for nearly ten years, I had the opportunity to evaluate this mission experiment for my PhD dissertation and came to a favorable conclusion (Lepke 2001). In it I called the experiment the “R-Movement” and the country “Islamex” out of obvious security concerns, and because of the same concerns my dissertation was never published.
In this work I offer a description of Jerald’s life up to 2000, for I believe it is very important for an understanding of the R-Movement and how the idea and concepts for it took shape. Jerald was the mastermind behind the experiment, and it was he who put to work the main concepts gained through his years of experience in Muslim relations and through the input of ideas and experiences that other people had shared with him. Without Jerald, such an experiment as the R-movement may never have been conducted in Islamex. Therefore, looking at his life is important in order to understand why Jerald was able to achieve this type of breakthrough. What follows is largely drawn from the contents from my dissertation (Lepke 2001:65-83), but I have removed some pseudonyms to give due respect to Jerald and some of his mentors.

**Aiming for the Mission Field**

Jerald was born into a rural lower middle-class, White, Protestant, Adventist working family. As the second of two sons of a father who had worked as a day laborer logging in the forests of Washington state, he grew up very simply in a moderately confined and parochial environment.

**Education**

Attending church schools throughout all of his formal education years, Jerald was socialized in a traditional Adventist environment that quite naturally led to his baptism at the age of ten. Even as a boy, although never leaving the area until college, he showed some interest in becoming a missionary, without really knowing what that meant.

Later, Jerald majored in theology at Walla Walla College, a Seventh-day Adventist college in the State of Washington. At that time his girlfriend, Judy, went to Loma Linda University, an Adventist university in California to study nursing, leading to a long distance relationship (and several visits by Jerald to California) for a year and a half, after which they finally got engaged. Jerald received his degree in 1965 and the couple was married shortly after his graduation. One of the things that helped bring Jerald and Judy together was their common vision for foreign mission service.

Jerald realized that being a pastor was not sufficient to qualify for a profession in international missions so he became interested in doing graduate work in health education. He was convinced about Ellen White’s admonitions regarding the cooperation between the gospel and health.
It was this same concern that had triggered his unusual second minor, zoology—besides biblical languages—that he used to accommodate the science prerequisites for the master’s degree in health education. So it was that Jerald went to Loma Linda for his graduate studies while Judy was finishing her nursing degree there.

**Spiritual Development**

Although Jerald grew up within the Adventist culture and religion with an early interest in mission work, his spiritual life was not always easy for he struggled to internalize his faith during his academy and college years.

“I was a theology major. But it wasn’t easy for me to be genuine and comfortable with religious things. And that is maybe the product of growing up in a home that did not talk a lot about personal things. There were the normal religious things. Dad read worship every morning and evening, that kind of thing. [There] was not any discussion about what it does in my life. So I had to learn that more as I was growing up later” (personal communication, June 30, 1998).

During Jerald’s time at Loma Linda University he not only acquired practical knowledge, but he also found people there who helped him in his spiritual development. One of those was Dr. Jack Provonsha, but the main direction for his spiritual life he gained from Dr. Graham Maxwell, both Seventh-day Adventist theologians and authors.

“I guess Maxwell probably had quite a significant influence on my personal and spiritual development at that point. His understanding of the *Great Controversy* and the issues in the *Great Controversy* and that the main issue being over God’s character and the government of God gave me a new window, not only in theology but also in my personal relationship with God” (personal communication, June 30, 1998).

It happened that the whole environment at the School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine was quite conducive to the mission interest of Jerald. All professors there had to have international mission experience, and Jerald even took a class in cultural anthropology that helped him throughout his international ministry.

**Getting to the Mission Field**

Jerald and Judy are still amazed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church even accepted their application for mission service, considering their young
age and lack of experience. “Well, I’ve often said that if we had been in a position of responsibility, we ask ourselves, if we would have taken the risk on this young couple or not. And we probably would not have. . . . We were as green as can be” (personal communication, June 30, 1998).

The call into the mission field came because of a great urgency in the Adventist Hospital in Benghazi, Libya. They needed a chaplain who could also do health education. Jerald was trained for exactly this combination. Also Judy’s nursing degree made them the ideal couple for the needs in Libya.

The airplane carrying them into mission service left on August 4, 1966. Before going to Libya, though, they spent three months in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where Jerald did his clerkship in health education in a health education training program for Tanzanian pastors, after which their ministry in the Middle East officially began.

Libya (1967-1970)

The experience in Libya was the beginning of changing paradigms regarding Jerald’s outlook on reaching Muslims. That does not mean that reaching Muslims became his primary activity, but foundations were laid that enabled him to accept new ideas, to come up with new ideas, and to try them out.

Cultural Insights

One of the first things Jerald learned was the high value and emphasis that Muslims and peoples in Mediterranean cultures put on shame and honor. His associate, an Egyptian young man, wanted to marry another Egyptian young woman who worked as a nurse in the hospital. After the elaborate engagement, the head of the young man’s family from Egypt objected to the planned union because the woman was an orphan, without any family. In addition, her profession was seen in the Egyptian context as ranking next to that of a prostitute. Such a marriage could not bring honor to the family. The young man was threatened to be excluded from the family if he would go on with the wedding. At that time Jerald could only think in terms of how awful such an attitude was. So the couple proceeded with the wedding. As a result, all communication was cut off with the young man’s family and reconciliation never really took place. This was not even something that happened in a Muslim family for the head of the young man’s family was a high official in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in that region.
Meeting His Mentor

While Jerald and Judy waited in Lebanon in December 1966 for four and a half months for their visas so they could proceed to Libya, Jerald met Dr. Robert Darnell for the first time. Darnell was the man who became his main mentor regarding Muslim relations and who was then the field secretary of the Middle Eastern Division. Darnell had been sent to do doctoral studies in anthropology with an emphasis on Islam and was therefore the best educated authority in that field in the Adventist Church. The basic concepts and ideas that were utilized in the R-movement had their origin in Lebanon twenty years before the ministry started.

Later, while the Whitehouses were in Libya, Jerald was assigned to attend one of Darnell’s seminars in Beirut, where he was determined to gain as much knowledge and as many ideas as possible from Darnell.

That seminar was probably the turning point in really heading me in a direction as far as Islamic work and relating to Muslim peoples. . . . I was a young missionary and I had the concepts from my own graduate study of cross-cultural work, learning about people, getting inside the people's minds, understanding their culture from the inside as much as possible in order to establish relationships and have any impact in their lives. And so what Bob Darnell was saying fit in perfectly. It was just a carry on from the basic foundation that I had. That was really what gave me that direction and the impetus on Muslim work right from that time. (personal communication, June 30, 1998)

This does not mean that Jerald all of a sudden became a specialist with many ideas ready to put into practice. His understanding grew over time. Jerald picked up the idea of enabling Muslims to make the right decision in an end-time scenario from Darnell. The idea was to present the polarizing view from Seventh-day Adventist eschatology where apostate religio-political powers will form a block that will fight against the true people of God. Understanding these issues from a Muslim perspective in their full scope would be difficult. Nevertheless, Jerald and others felt that there may be an opportunity to help prepare Muslims for these final events so that they would be able to recognize the group that follows the truth and make an appropriate decision when that time comes.
Jerald used that concept when, in 1969, the hospital in Libya was nationalized. Most of the expatriate workers had to leave Libya, leaving only Jerald and his Egyptian associate behind. Nevertheless, in a very short time he and Judy had to leave too, with the Adventist work in Libya being closed. Adventists are still not allowed in the country at the present time (2010).

The question for Jerald was: What could he accomplish in terms of preparing Muslim people for the coming of Christ with only a few months left in the country? He did not have all the understanding he had many years later, but it was at that point that he did his first contextualized outreach to Muslims. Jerald realized that many of the Libyan workers and their families had never been visited by an Adventist person before. Only two Seventh-day Adventist families had been engaged in establishing relationships with some of the Libyan workers besides Jerald and his family. Therefore Jerald tried to make up for this negligence as best as he could.

However, it should also be noted that the hospital had permission to exist only after signing an agreement not to proselytize for new believers. It would have been morally wrong to go against the agreement with King Iddris and to disregard that agreement would have threatened the very existence of the hospital by appearing to proselytize. In retrospect, the hospital workers certainly could have focused more on relationship building with the Libyan people. When the Whitehouses came to Benghazi the hospital had been in operation for ten years and there had been many relationships of various levels prior to Whitehouse’s arrival. Part of the problem was that there was no defined strategy on how to work in a restrictive part of the world. For example, there was no plan for mingling with the Libyans except for work relationships. This was illustrated by the fact that hospital-provided housing was based on socio-economic status that excluded all but the wealthiest Libyans. Recognizing this disconnect with local people, Jerald found housing for his family outside of the city among the indigenous people, but only ten months prior to the hospital’s nationalization. The abrupt and bleak finality of the hospital’s nationalization shocked the missionaries into the recognizing the eternal implications for people they had worked with one on one. Notice Jerald’s reaction to the situation:

So I decided that I would make sure that I visited every hospital worker, every Libyan that had worked in the Adventist Hospital, at least one time before I would leave. There were quite a few. It wasn’t like that I could do that in a day or two. It took several weeks to do this. I prepared a little booklet
called “Your Friends the Adventists,” after the style that had been printed in English about that time, but in a Muslim way, from what I understood at that time, describing Adventists as a faithful people, as godly people, as having godly lifestyles, healthier lifestyles and so forth. I put it together in a way that would be appealing to the Muslims, and that we look forward to the end of time and the Day of Judgment. What I’ve been forced to think about was, what is the basic information that I would like them to know, so that when the issues become clear, they can make an informed choice between right and wrong? . . . It forced me to, sort of, filter out what is kind of peripheral and what is core? What do I think is most important that these people know, initially at this point? What is possible for them to understand? I mean, I may think that something is most important, but it may be too advanced for them to even grasp or understand, so this would be worthless also. So I was forced to do two things. First of all, I, sort of, asked what is most important in Adventism from our viewpoint and secondly, is it possible that Muslim people that I am going to give this to, could accept and grasp and understand and sort of plug in to their spiritual experience. I think that was a valuable exercise, because it forced me to begin to think in terms of a progression. Here is where the Muslim is, and here is the next step that I think the Muslim could understand and accept. So we prepared that little booklet, and my associate translated it into Arabic and we got it printed. (personal communication, June 30, 1998)

Jerald had had 200 copies already printed when he received notice that this material had to pass the government censor. Anticipating that it would not pass, he returned the booklets while keeping some copies for himself, realizing that they would not count them. After receiving the denial notice from the censor, he was at least able to share the few copies left with some of the hospital workers. He was able to visit all of them before he had to leave the country. This experience again molded his thinking and his direction. Finally, in March of 1970 Jerald and Judy left Libya for Lebanon.

**Lebanon (1970-1973)**

When it became clear to Jerald that the family had to leave Libya, the next question was where to go. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Middle East was preparing to do pioneering work in new villages in Lebanon. That was a very interesting concept for Jerald and was exactly what he wanted to do. So he requested to be assigned to that ministry.
Assignment Struggle

However, when he and Judy arrived in Lebanon, no one talked to them about doing pioneering work in new villages. The church was proposing different assignments for them. One was to become a pastor to an expatriate group in Kuwait, while another was to go to Iran. Jerald, on the other hand, had started to learn Arabic in Libya, and one of his main objectives was to achieve a conversational ability in that language. So the prospect of either ministering to expatriates or entering a different language environment in Iran was not very exciting for him. Jerald approached the division leadership of the church and questioned them about the idea of pioneering work in unentered areas in Lebanon. It turned out that the church was hesitant to put this young couple into an “impossible” situation, but Jerald successfully convinced them to let them at least try. So they worked for three years in Lebanon, living in a village up in the mountains where Jerald also learned Arabic.

Learning Arabic

Although Jerald’s interest to work among Muslims had been sparked by Darnell, the church ended up sending him to a Christian area in Lebanon where mainly Maronite Catholics and Eastern Orthodox people lived. The church did not think it safe enough to send him and Judy into a Muslim environment. However, they were happy with where they were sent and with being able to learn the language. Arabic, then, was not so much a means to study the Qur’an as it was a means to communicate the gospel with whomever he met. This was the main contribution he gained from his ministry in Lebanon. Working with Muslims was not the emphasis, but neither was it totally neglected.

We weren’t able to do too much with the Muslim interest, . . . but it was during that time that Bob Darnell set up what was called the team, T-E-A-M, that stood for Thrust for Evangelism Among Muslims. I would never use that name today, but that’s what they chose. They had about five people, [including] Ken Oster . . . . that they brought into the Union office there in Beirut. They set them up in the basement of the Union office with an area to work and with a commission to prepare materials and experiment with outreach and work with Muslims. So I interacted with that group, sort of informally on the side quite a bit. I would go and talk with them and I was aware of what they were doing, just that kept my interest alive. And eventually I did a little bit of work
with them in the area of health, like doing some of the health lectures and anti-smoking programs, the smoking cessation programs and so forth. (personal communication, June 30, 1998)

Out of the Mission Field

While doing health education work in Lebanon, Jerald realized that he needed more study in his field so he requested a return to the United States to pursue a doctorate in Public Health. He would not return to the mission field for seven years.

Doctoral Studies (1973-1977)

At the point when Jerald started his doctoral studies, the details of effectively relating to Muslims still had not been fully developed. “I knew that we needed to do something, that our initial relationships with a Muslim needed to be through felt needs, through understanding the Muslim mind, through an understanding of the Qur’an as much as possible, and through finding common beliefs and so forth, but it was still a bit hazy at that point” (personal communication, June 30, 1998).

Jerald knew the general direction he had to go, and therefore doing more graduate study in health science to use as an entry point seemed necessary for him. He had done many five-day stop smoking plans and he had even developed some follow-up health studies that could lead to spiritual discussions. Thus, he had tried some things to bridge health work with spiritual topics, but a full understanding of the various dynamics that needed to be considered was not worked out yet.

Most of his doctoral work was finished by 1976, and he received his degree in 1977 after which Jerald worked in a hospital in Fontana, California, close to Loma Linda.

Period of Transition (1977-1980)

The desire was certainly there for the family to return to the Middle East, but certain obstacles delayed this move and nearly jeopardized any further assignments to the mission field.
Setbacks

Several circumstances existed that had adverse effects toward a quick return to Muslim areas. First, after finishing the doctoral degree a call came from the church to become the dean of men at Middle East College in Beirut. Jerald did not feel that he was called to be a dean of men at a place that he felt would be an unsupportive environment for his ideas. Second, when another inquiry soon followed from Darnell who had become the president of the Middle East Union asking the family to go to Bahrain to establish Seventh-day Adventist work there, the timing did not seem right. Refusing this call was hard for Jerald, but family reasons prevented them from accepting it. In addition, he felt that he needed more training in acute medicine (as a physician’s assistant) to supplement his training in preventive medicine. After finishing that fifteen month program, Jerald and Judy were ready to move again into the Middle East, if a third obstacle had not happened.

Darnell was back in America by then. The Middle East Union was still withering through the difficult years there in Beirut. They were under a different Division by then and [Tom Smith (pseudonym)] who was the treasurer of the Middle East Union wrote back saying, they didn’t have any openings for us. We had refused two calls previous, and in fact I got a letter from Elder [Holmes (pseudonym)], the Division President, which was quite disconcerting actually, that basically said, we won’t even think of you coming back to the Middle East. You refused two calls, you disappointed your brethren out here, so forget it. That was the tone of the letter, about that strong. (personal communication, June 30, 1998)

Re-Orientation

This was somewhat discouraging for Jerald and Judy, and they turned their minds and actions to a different pursuit. Again the starting point was to put together a health and gospel ministry. Jerald wanted to do preventive medicine in a clinical setting. He thought that adding a spiritual framework would have a great potential for the Adventist Church in North America so he found an Adventist physician in Oregon who was willing to combine their work of preventive and acute medicine. Eventually a contract was drawn up, but Jerald could not sign it until he obtained his Oregon license as a physician’s assistant. Since the required examination would not be offered until three months later, the Whitehouses decided they should remain in California where they had a home and Judy had a job until things were
The physician was willing to wait and Jerald and his family were ready to move to Oregon.

**Back into the Mission Field**

However, this waiting period was providential, according to Jerald, because one morning the phone rang. He was asked to go to Sudan to establish an outpatient clinic and become the director of the Adventist work there, which had not yet been organized. This time the couple was ready and it was clear to Jerald that he could not refuse this call. He quickly settled things with the physician in Oregon, and Jerald and his wife moved back into a majority Muslim country even though they lived in the southern region that was largely animistic and Christian. The family spent the next five years in Sudan.

**Sudan (1980-1985)**

Despite being occupied for the first year with just setting up the operation in Sudan—developing the health and church work, a strategy, and a plan—Jerald was not interested in simply setting up church institutions. How to establish relationships with Muslims was always on his mind. Although they had been sent into a Christian environment in the south of Sudan, he tried to find a way to balance the Seventh-day Adventist work so that it also included the Muslim north of the country. Jerald overcame conflicting predispositions held by the regional government in the south and the central government in the north, leading to a contract with the central government that legalized the Seventh-day Adventist operations throughout the country. This was possible only after a Seventh-day Adventist who worked for USAID in the capital city suggested that Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) should take over the work of the Catholic Relief Agency that had to leave the country.

**Challenged by a Non-Strategy**

These preliminary activities had taken a few years to develop. When the new staff arrived to work for ADRA, Jerald wanted to give a seminar to the new people to prepare them for work within Muslim areas. The Union President and Kenneth Oster, who had worked in Iran at that time, were invited to give presentations together with Jerald. The Union President was
given the topic of how ADRA work would fit into the Union’s strategic plan for working with Muslims. The president had to admit that no plan had yet been set up. So the three presenters talked it over because such a presentation needed to be given. This was really Jerald’s purpose in asking how ADRA fit into the strategy. The Union President wanted to know what Jerald thought was needed to set up some work for Muslims. Jerald made just one point that he had picked up earlier from Darnell, who had already suggested it in the 1960s. He suggested that a coordinating center for Muslim work in the Middle East be set up. Jerald was hoping that he could direct such a center, but nothing was established at that point. Later, however, the idea was picked up by the General Conference, but they wanted such a center to become a global center. This dream became a reality in 1988, but not with Jerald as its director. Jerald was happy to see it happen in 1988 but he was frustrated and discouraged by the obstacles that took so long to overcome. Jerald had ideas but had not had an opportunity to try them out yet.

Searching for Steps

In fact, during his years in Sudan, Jerald developed a step approach to Muslims whereby establishing good relationships would be the basis for spiritual discussions. Although the Middle East Union President was impressed by it, nothing materialized from this plan. Jerald later realized that he needed to have his later experience in Islamex where he was able to try out these new approaches to be better able to direct the Global Center for Adventist Muslim Relations (GCAMR) that he was asked to direct from 1995 to 2009. As Jerald looks back on these developments he felt they were being designed by God.

Out of the Mission Field Again

Because of family considerations, Jerald and his family returned to the United States because two of their daughters were studying at the academy level back in the United States while their parents were still in Sudan. In Jerald’s eyes, God’s design does not always mean that everything goes smoothly. In fact, sometimes even church administrative actions can become a stumbling block for one’s faith and commitment.
Weimar, California (1986-1989)

Soon after returning from Sudan, Jerald began teaching health ministry at a self-supporting Adventist college at Weimar, California. The three years that he spent at Weimar served him and his family well for two reasons. First, it was good for the family, with his older girls attending an academy and with his adopted twin girls from Sudan having a good place to grow and develop. Second, it gave the whole family time to recuperate from the very exhausting five years in Sudan.

In Search of a New Assignment

After three years at Weimar they “got itchy feet again,” writing to the Middle East Union that they would be willing to go back to this area, even to Sudan. The Union voted that Jerald should become the Union ADRA director with a base in Cyprus. Jerald was eager to go to the Middle East again and also wanting to improve his Arabic and knowledge of the Middle East.

A Harsh Disappointment

Then something happened that became very hard for Jerald to deal with. He did not get the call. After waiting for three weeks he contacted the Middle East Union again and found out that the General Conference had not passed on the call. Jerald assumed that this was some kind of penalty because of disagreements and misunderstandings over personnel issues at the time when Jerald was in Sudan trying to find qualified people to work there. This situation made him very upset and a bit bitter.

Another reason for not getting the call might have been Jerald’s methodological outlook. From his time in Sudan on he had become convinced that a one-method-fits-all approach is very inadequate. A combination of contextualization and meeting the felt needs of people was what Jerald propagated. It may have been the lack of agreement on this concept by higher church officials that blocked his return to the Middle East. Jerald stated that “some brethren in the General Conference apparently felt that such an emphasis is unnecessary or peripheral to the mission of the church, and the call was blocked” (personal communication to former Director of the Islamic Study Center, October 8, 1989). Later Jerald was not too unhappy about the blocked call because after arriving in Islamex he was
able to interact with people and organizations outside the Adventist Church who were experimenting with contextual approaches for Muslims.

**A New Opportunity**

One Sabbath in May of 1988 during church service in Auburn, California Jerald met a high-ranking ADRA officer from the Far Eastern Division who had come to brief the pastor of that church who would become the new ADRA director in some other country. Jerald talked to this ADRA person and showed interest in working for ADRA again. They met again, and about a week later Jerald received a written call to become the ADRA director of Islamex. At first he had some reservations, because it was not an Arabic speaking country, but at least it got the family back into a Muslim area.

**Working to Establish the R-movement**

It was in Islamex that the R-movement was conceptualized and established. The following paragraphs will show that just arriving in Islamex alone was not going to bring to life such a project. I believe that in order to better understand the processes leading up to this new type of work a broader appreciation is needed for the developments that happened even before Jerald went to Islamex.

**Ideas Take Time**

It is important to remember that when Jerald and his family entered Islamex there was no plan to establish the R-movement. In the years leading up the move to Islamex and also during the first few years there, ideas were being developed. Not only were those ideas important, but also the circumstances in the lives of Jerald and his mentors came together to create a plan at the right time and at the right place. Mentioning some of these developments can help us to better understand what happened in Islamex.

**Mentors**

The two most prominent Adventists in the Muslim work who also functioned as idea resources for Jerald were Robert Darnell, who passed away in 1996, and Kenneth Oster. Darnell especially encouraged Jerald in the use
of the Qur’an as the most successful way to reach Muslims. Both Darnell’s and Oster’s work validated this method, but it was not widely appreciated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church administrators in general or by the Middle East Union in particular. Many felt that using “Satan’s book” would be a compromise.

Ken Oster had some first-hand experience in both the effectiveness of using the Qur’an and the negative reaction from church leaders. When Oster and others had been working on the T-E-A-M effort in the early 1970s the group had started a Sabbath School class for Muslim background people attending Middle East College. The Sabbath School class lessons that they had prepared specifically for Muslim people had resulted in good attendance from among the Muslim students at Middle East College. The class went on for only a few weeks and then it was ordered to be stopped by the division president (personal communication, June 30, 1998).

This is only one example of some of the obstacles faced by those who wanted to approach Muslims in a more appreciative and contextual way.

Organizational Ideas

Besides the ideas and experiences of these men, in Sudan Jerald had a growing conviction that Muslims needed to be approached in a different way than Christians. Some of his experiences in Sudan pushed him toward a certain way of work that probably became the most controversial aspect of the R-movement. He felt that a separate organizational structure that worked underground, but lightly connected to the official Seventh-day Adventist Church structure was probably best (Jerald, personal communication to former Director of the Islamic Study Center, October 8, 1989). This was a line of thinking that was new and had never been tried out by anyone before.

You see, the whole Sudan experience, we were down in there alone. We weren’t directly under the regular church, under the eyes and the nose of the regular church organization. We were so far away. We were an ADRA program. Sure we were under the Middle East Union and I cleared everything with the president and with the Middle East Union Committee. We had a strategic plan and regular reports under the Middle East Union, but still I had to basically come up with that and create that and set the directions and so forth. So, being and doing also ADRA work we kind of operated almost parallel with the church structure. Anyway, we cooperated with the church structure. We kind of ran our own track. So, I suppose, coming through that avenue, really, I was not intimidated by the idea of doing something a little apart or separate. (Jerald, personal communication, June 30, 1998)
A Phone Call from Steve

Another man had an impact on Jerald that encouraged him to experiment with a contextualized ministry in Islamex. In the 1960s, Steve (pseudonym), a native citizen of that country, was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He had been a Muslim before his baptism, but no longer worked for the Adventist Church. Instead he had been employed by World Vision, a non-denominational Christian NGO, and was already involved in a combination of development and contextual ministry to Muslims. Between 1985 and 1986 he attended the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California (Steve, personal communication to CTM Taskforce, April 19, 1990).

While Steve was doing his studies in the U.S., he phoned Jerald who was still teaching at Weimar College. His main purpose was to find out from Jerald if the Seventh-day Adventist Church was in a position to support contextualized ministries. Although Jerald was already very positive about contextualized work, he could not give Steve a positive answer. Jerald thought at that time that the church was not yet ready. He encouraged Steve to continue working on the approach, even with outside organizations, because this was in Jerald's mind the only way to be effective with Muslims. After hanging up Jerald really did not think again about that phone call.

After Steve's return to Islamex he started working under the guidance of another Christian organization and became very successful in planting more than 110 contextualized congregations with several thousand Muslim background believers between 1986 and 1989. In 1989 Steve began working again for the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Steve, April 19, 1990).

Islamex (1988-1992)

Relief

When Jerald arrived in Islamex as the new ADRA Director he immediately became involved in a major relief operation because of massive flooding in the country. While he was touring some of the disaster areas somebody on the street took a picture of Jerald and his guide, the Seventh-day Adventist Union president. They had the ADRA logo on their car so the man taking the picture knew who they were. He asked whether the passenger was Jerald. The president answered in the affirmative, and the man told Jerald that he would see him later. It turned out that this was Steve who had heard about Jerald's arrival in Islamex.
Plans

Over the next year Jerald frequently met Steve and they discussed establishing a contextual Seventh-day Adventist ministry for Muslims. Jerald was, in the beginning, skeptical about the possibilities of implementing such a thing within the Adventist environment, but emphasized to Steve that when the time came, he would be ready to move ahead. Moreover, as the two talked about Steve’s previous experiences in contextual work Jerald added new ideas and possibilities to his plan on how to implement a contextual approach in the country.

The Other Man

It was also about that time that Jerald met Shahjahan (pseudonym), the only Seventh-day Adventist pastor with a Muslim background who later became the leader of the R-movement.

Permanent Return

After leaving Islamex, Jerald continued to work for ADRA International as a senior advisor for health work at the Seventh-day Adventist Church headquarters in Maryland. He also continued to have some contact with the R-movement.

GCAMR (1995-2009)

That contact intensified after he was asked to become the director of the Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations in 1995. One of his tasks was to look at the results of the R-movement in Islamex and to find ways to implement this kind of ministry in other Muslim areas of the world. As of 2010 several similar ministries have been established in other Muslim areas of the world.
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