"The waters of baptism wash people's sins away, not their color, nor nationality, nor all that was good in their former way of life."

(Johnson 1987:4)

Faith Development in Context (FDIC) is an “incarnational” and redemptive approach to mission that eventually leads to the emergence of end-time Jesus movements mainly among people groups of major world religions. This happens when the past and present activity of God in the history of each community is retrieved and the gospel is communicated in understandable, relevant, and meaningful forms through indigenous spiritual change agents.

“Our goal in not just to proclaim the gospel and to see a few individuals enter the Kingdom of God. Our purpose is nothing short of establishing naturally multiplying communities of believers who follow Jesus within their cultural norms to the extent they can with integrity” (Adams and Adams 2009:141).
When engaging in mission, Christian witnesses have the rare opportunity of standing where the veil between heaven and earth thins out. From this privileged position God’s witnesses often can catch a glimpse of how God’s glory transforms peoples and communities from within. In this chapter I will describe this transforming process as I have witnessed it and studied it for the past fourteen years in numerous communities both inside and outside the 10/40 Window. I will explore the key components that lead to the development of faith in high identity and high religious practice communities. I will also offer a practitioner’s description of the resulting Jesus movements.

Additionally, I will explore in detail the components of what years ago Jerald Whitehouse and I coined as “Faith Development in Context.” I will limit this chapter to the offering of a practitioner’s description without entering into a lengthy and detailed exploration of the theological basis for each component. I will assume that this description will be sufficiently self-evident to justify this approach. As a field practitioner I am open to further dialogue and interaction that would clarify or provide a stronger biblical framework for FDIC work.

This chapter will define FDIC, describe four basic missiological assumptions that frame FDIC work, offer seven cultural, socio-religious factors that are the key components of FDIC, list four fruitful practices that contribute to the development of movements, and finally share three ongoing activities that nurture the process of spiritual growth.

**Definition of Terms**

*Faith Development* is the development of a faith focused on spiritual development rather than on a mere intellectual assent to truth. Faith is a gift from God “that comes from hearing” (Rom 10:17), so doctrinal and biblical content clearly feed into our understanding of who God is and how he deals with the sin problem. That understanding in turn feeds into the development of faith. Because a mere knowledge of God does not necessarily lead to the development of faith, FDIC practitioners begin by calling disciples to a deepening faith relationship with God through Jesus. The weight of God’s holiness crashes into sinful desires and moves the heart, mind, and soul to deeds of obedience to God’s law. This is at the core of a spiritual transformation that challenges people to heart-felt submission to God, but not out of want of reward or out of fear of judgment.

*In Context* refers to a receptor-oriented communication of the gospel
which becomes embodied in the life of the host community as core to their identity as God's end-time people. In context means that the context or the realities of the host community must be taken into consideration so that the gospel will be perceived not only as truthful but also as relevant. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of relevance, for being relevant means that the gospel answers the host community’s longing, heartfelt needs, and affirms whatever is godly and biblical in their culture.

In summary, FDIC combines a biblical understanding of God’s self-revelation in the past and his activities in these last days with careful consideration of pressing sociological, anthropological, and theological issues that the new disciples face within their communities.

In seeking to understand God’s activity in the world, God’s witnesses also encounter the tragic reality of the presence of Satan. It is crucial to discern the specific local forms by which the deceiver holds people captive and to discover his devices and tools that obscure the character, the law, and the government of God.

In other words, what are the particular expressions of the “Great Controversy” in the given community and, how do those expressions fit into the larger meta-narrative of what God is doing on the earth. Understanding and operating within the Great Controversy worldview, gives FDIC practitioners a unique Adventist feature that will be explored in more detail in another section of this chapter.

Towards a “Working” Definition of FDIC

Why a “working” definition? Because this is still a work in process. Let me explain. As God’s witnesses go to the ends of the earth to see what God is doing in establishing his dominion, understanding is sharpened, advanced, and new treasures are found that had not previously been understood. This will impact the understanding of mission. Therefore, in order to reflect this reality the following definition carries the sign “under construction.”

I would further define FDIC as a redemptive missional approach by which the gospel is embodied in word and deed in the host community under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Such an approach takes place through a process of critical contextualization which eventually leads to a worldview transformation from within. No dimension of reality remains untouched when God's story enters the community story and fuses with it. All elements of faith, worship, values, cultural practices, and even everyday life will look different as a result of this encounter.
Let me stress that FDIC is not a new method, the latest trend, nor a clever technique, but a return to a New Testament model of mission as found in the Gospels and particularly in the book of Acts. As practitioners we are constantly wrestling with the stories of the Bible, to gain deeper insights to better respond to each new situation. But ultimately we are reminded that mission is God’s activity, is God centered, and is God led. The Holy Spirit is the driving force who makes change real. Our role is to contribute in any way that God calls us to within his plans. Thus, at times we have discovered that in different communities God is drawing people in a variety of expressions that are challenging our former notions of “what to do.” God has sometimes sent dreams that have enabled the discipling movement to discover fresh meanings in old practices; he has given signs and created divine appointments, and has bonded people’s hearts together who formerly were enemies. God’s Holy Spirit has revealed the true place of his Word by often using the existing sacred text of the local community.

For me personally, engaging in FDIC has been the most challenging and rewarding thing I have ever done. It has strengthened my faith in God and expanded my understanding of God’s mercy in reaching the world he loves so deeply. The Bible, read from other people’s perspective and challenged by their questions has become ever richer and has revealed the depth of wisdom found in God’s Word. As I have ministered to others, God has ministered to me through them.

In this process, God has used some key people to whom I will always be indebted. Thank you Jerald Whitehouse for your understanding of mission, your keen heart for the Muslim people, and your deep insights into the Bible, for these blessings will continue to impact my life and will inspire me in the years to come. May God continue to guide you as you continue to guide others.

Four Foundational Premises

Premise One

“The light of God is ever shining amid the darkness of heathenism.”

(White 1940:59)

God’s Kingdom is present wherever there are people who live under the lordship of God, that follow his commandments, and have the faithfulness of Jesus. Our role as God’s witnesses is to call people closer to the center of God’s
Kingdom, to reject all darkness, and to live in full submission. Ellen White helps us to understand that even among the pagans there are people to whom the Holy Spirit has been imparted and they are following his promptings in obedience even though they might not know it (White 1940:638, 639). By calling people into the center, we acknowledge the guiding activity of God in their life and clarify who the One is whom they have been answering to. We invite them to continue to live under the lordship of God but now through Jesus they have a more complete disclosure of the full revelation of God as presented in the Bible. We bring to their attention the principles of God’s government as established in his law, and disclose how by faith people enter into a saving relationship with God. At times people have traits that reflect the faithfulness of Jesus in their characters even though they had not known him. In such situations it is our privilege to point to the author and finisher of their faith—Jesus Christ.

Premise Two

*God has left his footprints among all people groups in various forms.*

Today in every land there are those who are honest in heart, and upon these the light of heaven is shining. If they continue faithful in following that which they understand to be duty, they will be given increased light, until, like Naaman of old, they will be constrained to acknowledge that “there is no God in all the earth,” save the living God, the Creator. (White 1917:253)

Faith Development in Context is a redemptive “up-down” approach to mission in which one attempts to discern mission from God’s “throne-room perspective.” It is “up” as in redemptive, “down” as in incarnational.

An important premise and practice that informs our approach involves understanding that God has not left himself without a witness in any community (Rom 1:18-20; Acts 17:26-27; Amos 9:21; Acts 15:17) and that such a witness is part of every people’s spiritual heritage. When this revelation is retrieved it allows God to reveal himself from within—through an incarnational approach.

What this means is that both the discipler and the recipient community actively seek to discover traces of God’s activity in their own past history and in present events while at the same time attempting to determine the expected future God has for that host community. God’s presence and activity in the receptor community often go unperceived by the cross-cultural discipler due to unfamiliar “incarnational” local forms through
which God has revealed himself to that people in the past through sacred ceremonies, symbols, rites, sacred writings, prophecies and biblical truths that are inherent to the people group. I have observed that God has not only left evidence of his activity in the past, but today is significantly disclosing himself in visions and dreams within many Muslim people groups.

God’s activity can not only be found in the forms of a culture, but also can be discerned among the “persons of peace” that are usually present in each community. This concept of looking for the person of peace is based on Luke 10:5-7 where Jesus instructed his disciples, “When you enter a house offer peace. If a Person of Peace is present, your peace will rest on him. Stay in that house, eat and drink what is put before you, and do not move around from house to house.” This spiritual “gatekeeper” is the person God has prepared for that community and is one who can promote righteousness that can lead to positive social and religious change (see also Erich Baumgartner’s chapter in this book).

The FDIC model seeks to offer useful tools for retrieving these important missional dimensions. Once the discipler understands these concepts, it is easier to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in aligning and bringing God’s will on earth to bear (as it is in heaven), and all this under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

As God’s witnesses begin to comprehend the incarnational presence of God in these last days within each distinct people group, it helps them (and us) realize that God is preparing every nation, tribe, people, and language to stand before the throne of the Lamb. When we realize the extent of the actions of the Holy Spirit among all people, John’s prophecy in Rev 7:9, 10 where these groups will comprise the great multitude that no one can number becomes a kingdom reality.

FDIC practitioners seek to answer several questions. Where has God already been at work in a specific people group even before the cross-cultural discipler arrived? How can biblical faith take root and become integral to the receptor community? What will the expression of God’s end-time people look like among a given group of a major world religion?

Are these questions valid? I believe they are. Due to resistance to change among the adherents of the major world religions, it becomes necessary to ask new questions. John Travis, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary and a major proponent of indigenous Jesus movements among people of the major world religions, recently pointed out the need to rethink mission beyond the animist and pagan tribal contexts. He explained that historically “Christianity has successfully established a lasting presence and even
become the official religion of regions that formerly were animist tribes; that is Western Europe, South America, and other parts of the world. But in countries in which Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Shintoism is the faith of the majority, Christianity by and large has not been able to get deeply rooted except in isolated pockets. This should lead us to ask why the Christian message resonated among certain animist pagans but failed to impact nations where a major world religion already existed?” (personal communication with author).

The goal of mission is to establish and nurture a vibrant faith community of believers in “every tribe, language and people and nation,” and not merely the conversion of a few selected individuals. In other words, FDIC approaches mission from a community perspective. The yeast of the gospel is planted along existing social networks that are connected to groups, clans, and families. This very crucial dimension will be explored in more detail later in the chapter.

As corollary of the redemptive approach, communication becomes incarnational—utilizing the local thought patterns, local logic system, local cultural expressions, and local art forms, music, and analogies. This is crucial since an incarnational expression of the gospel more easily results in spontaneous growth along existing social networks.

Premise Three

*Every people group has their own worldview, cultural matrix, and heart-felt needs that the gospel answers and transforms.*

Robert Darnell’s article, “Peopling the Earth” (unpublished paper available from the Global Center for Adventist Muslim Relations), describes an important Adventist foundation for missions among non-Christians. He noted that from the time of creation God’s purpose has been for people to be fruitful, multiply, and fill (replenish) the earth (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7). God sent people out to populate all the earth, but they refused and instead lived concentrated in one location. God got the people moving out by confounding their language. As they spread throughout the world they formed new communities, developed different cultures, and vastly different worldviews that reflected the new realities they encountered but also the distorting influence of Satan. Language became the collective tool by which their shared thoughts about their world, about reality, about God, about what constitutes right and wrong, about each other, and about the natural world were expressed.
Darnell also noted the important place that geography played in this process as people groups interacted with their environment around them in an attempt to subdue it and make it inhabitable. God was not absent as this process unfolded and continues to unfold. He is guiding the affairs of every community and is intimately interested in embedding his laws and revelation in every culture and worldview. This premise, which is closely related to the previous one, becomes evident in Paul’s words when he says: “From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us” (Acts 17:26, 27).

I believe that an important Adventist insight is the one that stresses that not only has God been at work in his creation but also Satan is part of what Adventists have termed the Great Controversy. This principle, that there is a battle raging for control of each people group and each individual, is very liberating for the host community since they can develop an authentic appreciation for everything in their culture that carries a positive witness to God while rejecting those things which reflect demonic influence. They can clearly identify who the enemy is while realizing that it is not their culture as a whole that is evil but only those elements of evil that have embedded themselves in their culture and worldview.

**Premise Four**

*God has limited his self-revelation among non-Judeo/Christian communities.*

It is helpful in understanding the FDIC model to realize that God has limited his self-revelation among non-Judeo/Christian communities. This helps explain why they have not received the core of the plan of salvation or understood Jesus’ full identity. This also helps us understand why many people from major world religions strongly deny some of the core biblical beliefs, such as the divinity of Jesus. This also helps explain why so many are polytheists.

My personal observation and study on this topic has led me to conclude that while God has revealed certain key aspects of himself, the revelation he has given to non-Judeo/Christian communities consists mainly of his will and basic attributes of himself (see Rom 1:20). Note that there are key aspects in the culture that point to greater truths regarding the plan of salvation and the Messiah, and these are usually found within the sacred ceremonies and sacrificial system of the people. Often though, the meanings
of those ceremonies have become obscured and only partially understood by most. For example, Confucius’ greatest desire was to know the meaning of the broader sacrifice that was annually held in China since the beginning of their history. Though he traveled the nation looking for its meaning no one knew, but all knew, it was important. Confucius told his people that though they did not know the meaning of the ceremony, the future of their people depended upon its continued observance and happy would be those that would one day learn its meaning. These symbols known as redemptive analogies are powerful windows to disclose the gospel to the host community. Thus it is apparent that although God has limited his verbal self-revelation he has left in forms and symbols the greater truths about the plan of salvation in an “encoded” system.

Why would he do that? Allow me to suggest that it is God’s intent to win the cosmic conflict from a point of utter weakness. It would seem that due to the accusations leveled against God, his character, his law, and his government, God chose to limit his self-revelation to the apparent weak and fragile human lineage coming from Abraham. In the end, the universe will clearly understand the superiority of God’s government for “good will triumph over evil” not by force but by the power of truth in seeming weakness.

This is seen in the fact that God revealed the truth of the Messiah to Abraham, through the line of Isaac, through the line of Jacob, and finally through the spiritual line of Jesus and his disciples. This lineage was carried by weak and fragile human beings. First, the promise of the Messiah was given to Abraham, a man married to a barren woman. In the case of Jesus he entrusted the message of the kingdom to a group of men that were uneducated, unrefined, and that had many weaknesses, but this is the story of his kingdom that out of great weakness can come great strength in the power of God. It is in this strength out of weakness that evidence is given to the superiority of the government of God.

This messianic line has been given as a gift to the world, appointed to be a “kingdom of priests,” not selected just for personal salvation, but called to give a message of salvation to the world. But unfortunately this line, time and time again, has become obsessed with their social/religious identity equating it as a prerequisite to salvation. This line has often been blind to God’s activity around them and outside their socio-religious community.

Research has shown that most peoples of the world have seven or eight of the ten commandments and have a significant knowledge of biblical truth. God has also placed redemptive analogies in their culture that point to the
great controversy and messianic redemption. For example, in the highlands of Bolivia among the Aymara and Quechua people, there is an annual ceremony that takes place for three days. Villages come together and draw lots to determine who will represent good and who will represent the powers of evil. This ceremony commemorates the great war in heaven between good and evil. After three days of playing war the communities come back together and sacrifice a llama with great joy. This ceremony to the God of heaven is celebrated by people who have traditionally worshipped Inti, the sun God.

The Aymara and Quechua people have known though that the real God is Veracocha, the Creator of heaven and earth. However, over time they admit that they have forgotten how to worship him. There are also ancient prophecies that indicate that one day a people would arrive that will teach them how to worship Veracocha once again. This is just a little representation of hidden truths that are still discernable among most people groups in the world religions. For example, there is strong evidence that Indus and Chinese people in their past were monotheists for their sacred writing appears to point to this. It is also true that most people groups do not live up to all the light they have and much has been forgotten or misunderstood. This was also true of Christianity during various periods in Christian history. In Islam, for example, the idea that Jesus did not die and was not crucified is based upon one weak verse which can be translated “the Jews thought they killed him but didn’t.” There are three clear Qur’anic verses that refer to Jesus saying, “the day I die and the day I am resurrected,” while another one says, “the day I die the day I am resurrected for the purification of many.”

Thus it is evident that not only have people groups lost sight of what has been revealed but also most people groups have redemptive analogies that point to greater truth that is just a part of God’s self-disclosure. This is where the work of the cross-cultural discipler comes into the picture for disciples are to make disciples and bring the lost or hidden truths to the forefront and disclose the good news about God.

Ellen White in the book Evangelism has given Adventists a lot of information and a wealth of mission principles that should enable them to discern God’s activity outside the Christian community.

Finally, it seems that God has limited his self-disclosure not only to give evidence of the power of God, but also that the sender communities and cross cultural disciplers may be enriched by seeing God through the eyes of the host communities where they faithfully witness. Many times new believers discern biblical truths that the sending communities have been blind to. Thus, God’s witnesses are witnessed to by the baby Christians.
Seven Core Internal Cultural and Socio-religious Components

FDIC practitioners operate on the basis of the previous premises but are not tied to them alone. As a result of those four premises an additional seven core cultural components have been identified that are integral to the gospel being birthed into a major religion context. These seven components have become synonymous for the most part with FDIC.

Empirical evidence indicates that when more of the seven components and their sub factors are present in a ministry, the stronger it will be both spiritually and numerically. The first two components have to do with sociological factors, the next two are spiritual/religious factors, and the final three deal with anthropological issues.

Sociological Components

Birth Community Identity (BCI) Factor

The first and most important factor identified for allowing a Jesus movement to emerge into high practice and high identity areas is for new believers to retain their birth community identity. The more identity they retain, the stronger and more effective will be their testimony and witness through their new life in Christ. The following areas are critical in this regard.

1. Family Identity. Great effort must be exerted to preserve one’s place in the family and retain one’s legitimate relationship as a son, daughter, mother, father, or husband. The new believer is taught to honor their father, mother, and elders, and to give them a high place of honor in their lives in accordance with the fifth commandment as long as this does not compromise their faith. This translates into not exchanging their name for a foreign one as has often been customary for baptismal candidates. Changing one’s name is interpreted as a blatant affront to one’s family and a source of deep shame for the family in their community. Also, the new spiritual identity of the believer does not need to be asserted by belittling the tenets of the family’s faith and practice or by putting down their Holy Books or their Prophet. Witness should rather focus on lifting up the truth of God as found in the Bible. Truth has a way of exposing falsehood in God’s appointed time. Finally, it is foundational for the new disciples to be able to convey their new faith and relationship with God in Christ by using means that are familiar to their family. The new believer’s identity is not to be described in institutional terms but rather in relational terms and in terms of a new heart experience and spiritual growth.

2. Society and Citizenship. Disciples need to be sensitive to the “neural points” of their community. They need to be careful not to provoke
unnecessary tension. For example, publically insulting the Prophet Mohammad among Muslims is bound to provoke an angry response and even endanger the new believer’s safety. In some cases, women who are Muslim background disciples have chosen to retain their headscarf to avoid being perceived as women who have lost their morals and respect toward their husbands.

3. Religious and Spiritual Identity. Disciples from major world religions might chose not to join a formally organized Christian church for a variety of reasons. Churches often are associated with a foreign presence or minority groups in their country that use forms of worship or even a religious language not familiar to the new believer. Converting to Christianity in some parts of the world is equated to becoming a traitor to one’s community, family, and country since this was the faith of the colonial masters. Thus, the new disciples might choose to fellowship with groups of other believers from their own cultural background who are also part of a local Jesus movement where they can grow in Christ and bond with each other.

Often these disciples do not refer to themselves as Christians—which is a term that has often been distorted in that cultural setting and which carries heavy immoral baggage. Instead they often use locally appropriate terms that more accurately describe their new identity in Christ. Over the years I have come across a variety of expressions that local believers feel could better convey their new faith. Unfortunately, these terms have sometimes been misunderstood by outsiders as a denial of one’s faith, disloyalty, or a way to conveniently seek to avoid persecution out of fear. I do not believe that this is the case.

Those who choose to retain their birth identity feel called to remain as an active witness in the place and community where they received a call to become followers of Jesus. They feel love for their land and people, but above all retain a deep desire to serve God as yeast in the dough for God’s end-time local people and thus remain as a sustainable, local witness. Does this mean that if they choose to retain the name of their former religion that they are falling into syncretism? Not if they qualify that former term. A common qualification is to describe themselves as a Messianic Jew or a Muslim follower of Isa al-Masih, or even a Hindu Bakhti. This enables them to safely explain themselves by retaining some of their own content in their identity, rather than being mislabeled before they even have a chance to open their mouth. I have noted that those who qualify their identity are often asked what it means and this gives them an opportunity to witness. In my case, as an outsider, I have favored the use of an Adventist identity over
any other term. Again, this is helpful but often the inquirer wants to know, do you mean Christian? Even when I qualify what Christian means for me, there is a still a barrier that Muslim Background Believers do not face.

Note that there are also varying degrees of involvement that a new believer might choose to experience in the religious life of the birth community.

A. There are those that do not attend any religious services or participate in any rituals or ceremonies. But neither do not criticize or attack those who follow the old ways in the old religion. These disciples usually see themselves as secret Christians, but they have a somewhat split identity and their influence is limited.

B. There are those who attend certain services such as burials, births, and other high festivals from time to time. Attendance at these events does not prove they are an actual part of the community, but at least it keeps them involved at the fringes.

C. There are also some that regularly attend community and religious functions as active change agents, as “the yeast or leaven” that will draw the community closer to the center of the kingdom of God. Field experience and research has shown that those who are engaged in the center of religious life are more prone to lead a local movement. This challenges the old myth that in mission it is better to reach out to the secular sector or the lukewarm adherents (at times referred to as moderates) while avoiding the deeply religious people. Once again, experience has shown that often deeply religious people are also more receptive and committed to the gospel when they become believers. They are the ones seeking God and connecting with him through the means and forms that are familiar to them in their faith community.

I should clarify that in no way does participation in community life imply an uncritical acceptance of one’s birth religion. Indeed, new believers are led through a process of careful critical analysis of the old ways by applying the principles of the Bible. Aspects of the local culture that are incompatible with the Bible are to be clearly rejected or when possible, reinterpreted like the use of the Christmas tree (White 2001:481, 482) to convey biblical meanings (the biblical guidelines for the process of reinterpreting cultural forms will be discussed later in this chapter). It is in this reinterpretation context where the greatest convergences of Christ movements emerge as people transform their society and place it under the lordship of Christ from within.

4. Emotional Identity. New believers continue to feel a strong emotional attachment to their family and people. This emotional bonding grows even stronger as the new believers discover God’s activity among their own
people. Their hearts are moved when they realize the many ways God has left a witness of himself in their culture. This bond is further strengthened as they realize that God not only loves the world, but that he loves their very own community and wishes to see his rule fully established among them. As they come to understand Christ’s role in the great controversy they can more clearly see the strongholds and deceptions of the evil one. Many, at that point, have a growing desire to see their people and family experience the freedom they have found in Christ, so they become agents sharing a call to repentance for their blindness to God’s presence in their past and for their rebellion to his call in the present. Over the years I have sensed the Holy Spirit moving the hearts of the new believers to have great compassion for their own family and people and to have a growing sense of responsibility before God for the lost among their people.

The emerging movement, even though it remains a part of the birth community, has an end-time, remnant identity in Christ. This I believe was one of Jerald Whitehouse’s major contributions to Adventist mission thought as he discovered a redemptive window into the Islamic spiritual heritage and culture upon which to build an end-time remnant community. It is a window into the very heart of Islam, which when the gospel shines through, it has a powerful impact at the very heart of the Muslim. It impacts the key spiritual motivators in a culture and belief system (Whitehouse 2002:10-13). Thus, he helped give Jesus Muslims an identity, a remnant identity, that has been preserved within their culture to this day and proven to be a blessing for the thousands who have embraced it.

**Existing Social Networks Factor**

The second most important component in establishing groups among community oriented cultures is to do so within existing social networks. The discipler should see these networks as possible vehicles the gospel can penetrate and utilize instead of creating new social structures for the same purpose but which would not be as effective. New social structures are often perceived as competing structures and are more likely to be rejected or easily exposed as foreign implants in the indigenous soil. Therefore, it is better to establish work that is based around the family, clan, or tribe, or that uses the already existing social and religious associations. As faith develops within this context, it is easier to create the momentum needed for an ongoing people movement. Within these types of structures, small groups (using local forms) often emerge for study, worship, fellowship, and witness. Because of this dependence on existing associations these types of
ministries are generically known as insider ministries.

From a careful reading of the story of Israel in the Old Testament it is apparent that God does not disengage from culture or social structures, but instead works for the spiritual revitalization and purification of a culture from within. Therefore, when the existing social networks come in contact with the yeast of the gospel they do not remain the same, but are transformed, affirmed, and judged. In other words, FDIC attempts to establish redeemed social networks as God’s sovereignty through Jesus is once again reestablished among his people. This redemptive work results in a redefinition of the collective self and identity.

The more influence a person has among the existing social networks, the more they will have in the emerging Jesus movement. Usually the person with the most influence becomes the leader of the group on a national or regional level as they seek to transform their existing network, society, or religious organization.

The guiding questions in this regard that we seek to answer is, Is the leader ministering alongside already existing social networks or is the leader trying to create a parallel system? What is the possible impact of one approach versus the other approach?

This characteristic of working within existing social networks is at the very core of the FDIC approach and helps explain the growth the various ministries are currently experiencing. When the gospel enters into large groups (either families, clans, a whole mosque, or a tribe) what happens is that the new believers, from the very beginning, have a support community around them. They grow spiritually in this community and they witness in this community. For community oriented peoples this is very affirming and offers the support group conscious people desperately need.

### Spiritual Components

**Recognizing God’s Footprints in a Culture—The R Factor**

At the very core of FDIC is the need to identify God’s footprints in the local culture. Where is God already known or present in the religious heritage of the host community? Which core biblical truths are known? Where has truth been obscured, distorted, or forgotten?

These gems of truth become part of the building blocks for the path of spiritual progression that is used in the discipleship process. They affirm truth that is present and reaffirm truth that has been lost sight of within the local culture. Again, this was one of Dr. Whitehouse’s major contributions
as he sought the seeds of Adventist beliefs and practices in the qur’anic text.

Retrieving God’s truth from the local culture leads people to a deep ownership of the gospel as they realize that God has never abandoned them. He has, after all, been there all along as made clear in their new understanding of the meaning of ancient religious traditions, symbols, and ceremonies. God was always reaching out to them, even when they did not know it. Before, in their times of ignorance, this was pardoned, but now that they are aware of deeper truths they are faced with the question of what they are going to do with it. How are they going to respond, now that they are without excuse? Are they going to repent and turn from their time of ignorance and walk in the light?

It is also important to note that as the new believers edge closer to God via the path outlined in the Bible, that more and more allegiance is shifted until God’s Word as found in the Bible becomes the rudder for the new movement and the final source of authority.

Locating People of Peace—The Peace Factor

Integral to building an insider ministry is identifying within the existing networks the man or women of peace (see Luke 10:6). Many times entire groups have been located who are already being led by God within their given community and are preparing for the last days under the guidance of a person of peace. Once such a person or group has been identified, mutual spiritual dialogue should ensue and continue through a process of spiritual progression until the seekers come to full faith in Jesus. The person of peace often is then the catalyst for bringing the entire web of relationships among family and friends to a similar faith in Christ.

In practice this happens by recognizing where God has already been working through such a person or people who are known for showing hospitality, kindness, and other important kingdom values as outlined in the constitution of the kingdom as found in Matt 5-7. Christ taught his disciples to initiate their work through a person of peace in the communities where they went and not to move around from house to house. I have known several of these leaders, people of peace, whose influence has opened up entire communities to the harvest.

Anthropological Considerations—Developing Local Theologies

In this section I shall speak to the three main anthropological categories which FDIC considers significant in the development of local biblical
explanations that impact the deeper issues of a local culture. The development of local theologies weave biblical truths into the rich diamonds of truth that already exist in the religion of the host culture in such a way as to support biblical truth.

The Cultural Matrix—The Matrix Factor

Basic to an FDIC approach is comprehending the emic cultural matrix so that local biblical understandings can be developed for addressing indigenous issues and so that biblical explanations can be communicated more clearly. Take for example, the traditional Christian explanations regarding penal substitutional atonement.

If the traditional Western approach is taken to explain the message of the Cross for people in an honor/shame culture, most of those hearing such a presentation will feel that the Cross is meaningless or unnecessary. FDIC practitioners recognize the importance of using a variety of atonement metaphors and looking at them from the shame/honor cultural perspective. This approach enables the story of the Cross to convey its message with power, for after all, at the Cross Jesus dealt not only with our guilt but also with our shame (see chapter by Linda Smith in this book).

There are basically three important cultural matrixes. Every people group has some shade or mix of these three. Western peoples have a predominately redemption-guilt cultural matrix that pursues freedom from guilt; hamitic and tribal peoples have a peace-fear matrix that searches for protection and power; and Eastern peoples tend to follow an honor-shame cultural matrix that when shamed search for restoration of honor. Theologies developed in these various cultural settings must respond to the deep sense of need that each type of culture displays.

Emic Heart Felt Needs—The Felt Needs Factor

FDIC practitioners have found that for a message to be relevant it needs to address heart-felt needs that are already deeply embedded in the host culture. These could be existential questions that are not being fully or appropriately answered by traditional answers. These could include problems in the society that have spiraled out of control and that need spiritual solutions.

Jerald Whitehouse has pointed out two main heart-felt needs among Muslim peoples: fear, and the desire to receive blessings. Muslim fear is often associated with the Day of Judgment and the uncertainty of salvation, but can also include fear of jinns (evil spirits) which has led to a host of Islamic folk beliefs and practices.
The second heart-felt need is the need of blessing, which in the case of Islam is also a key religious motivator. Traditional Islamic societies yearn for blessings, both from God and their elders. This need is the glue that runs through the Bible studies that teach how to receive richer blessings from God. The Bible lessons also stress how those who receive God’s blessing can in turn bless others. These two heart-felt needs must be identified early on and then answered in the light of the gospel message.

Worldview—The Worldview Factor
FDIC recognizes the importance of the indigenous worldview and the need for the emerging Jesus movement to work within it and not impose a Western worldview on the people. The gospel not only answers the highest ideal of any given worldview, but must also challenge and transform it. In the case of Islam, “tawhid” (the oneness of God) is part of their ideal worldview, and yet, only in Christ can anyone be truly brought back to “at-one-ment” with God.

Four Key Indigenous Fruitful Practices Needed for the Development of a Movement

For a strong movement to develop, four fruitful practices have to be established: (1) an indigenous discipleship path to grow spiritual progression has to be developed from within, (2) the language used in the Bible translation must communicate to the heart of the people by using religious language that is familiar to the major non-Christian communities, (3) indigenous leaders and people of peace who are deeply connected to their land and people must emerge, and (4) in order for the movement to become strong it needs to reach the point of becoming financially self-sustainable.

Indigenous Discipleship Path

In order to establish a mature, discipled community, a path of spiritual mentoring must take place. Through this procedure, the believer learns what it means to be part of God’s end-time community, what values should regulate life, and how the law of God, through the imbuing of the Holy Spirit, enables one to live a life of obedience. Each step contributes to a growing relationship with God in Jesus as biblical principles are embodied in real life situations. As the spiritual leaders walk alongside the new believers, they need to be able to identify the areas that are more difficult for people in that
context to understand and then build carefully and gradually a platform that can facilitate the indigenous discipleship path. Take for instance the issue of the divinity of Christ. If one were to focus in the beginning on this difficult matter, it is likely that one would never move past the first meeting.

Jesus, as he walked among people, offered a progressive revelation of his character and identity. As his followers, his example should guide our practice. Jerald Whitehouse developed a discipleship path based on a simple six-step model which gradually discloses Jesus for who he is. The process focuses on Jesus and his role in the great controversy. It invites those who are seeking after God to be a part of God’s last-day people who are preparing for Christ’s second coming.

Over the years, revised versions of that model (which Whitehouse called the Spiritual Progression Path) have been developed by various local leaders, but I have noted that even those who had not seen his model developed a similar path with similar steps. Whitehouse has carefully identified the biblical and doctrinal content that best fits each step so there is a gradual progression and growth in understanding of biblical truth. However, he would be the first one to admit that his work is but a guiding tool and not intended to limit what God can do. God has a variety of ways that can only be recognized once the trainer is in tune with him and his Word. No check list can ever replace that.

The most important agent active in bringing change is the Holy Spirit. Whitehouse had that clear from the onset, for it is the Holy Spirit who must convict of truth, and as I have been able to confirm by observation, it is he who in God’s time enlightens and brings about the life changing evidence that the spiritual leaders have advocated and worked for.

Again, Whitehouse knew this and consequently incorporated this important principle into his study guides in fourteen progressive stages that gradually presented Muslims with the evidence God has given to aid in understanding the role and identity of Jesus. Because of the nature of this approach, over the years he and I have encouraged, affirmed, and assisted local leaders in preparing their own relevant materials, rather than offering a one size fits all solution.

**Indigenous Language Bible Translation**

FDIC considers that a language-specific Bible is foundational to any Jesus movement. Though there are Bibles in many languages—Arabic, Bengali, Urdu, and so forth, these have usually been translated using the religious
language of minority people groups and are not easily understood by the majority Muslim population. In places where the complete Bible or even portions of the Bible have been translated using the familiar language of the Muslim majority population, those in Jesus movements have preferred this type of translation and those user friendly translations have been a key component in the growth and expansion of the Jesus movement.

Indigenous Leaders

FDIC practitioners are aware of the importance of enabling indigenous leadership to emerge out of existing social networks. When foreigners become the local leaders, the emerging church plants tend to depend on them and movements are unlikely to result. The return home of a foreign leader can also have devastating consequences for the emerging church. Because of this, FDIC has focused on equipping and affirming local leaders. This focus has proven to be crucial for sustainability. Foreigners can have a role as supporters, prayer partners, advisors, learners, or mentors for the local spiritual leaders, but leadership should be indigenous.

Financial Sustainability

Finally, it is important for FDIC sponsored groups to develop financial sustainability. Financial ties to foreign organizations can cause problems and endanger the lives and security of those involved in the movements. Financial dependence can also affect the spiritual health of the community by cutting the nerve of stewardship and giving the impression that the local believers are not responsible for the sharing of what they are learning.

The Process Involved in Spiritual Growth

What could be at first sight perceived as the coexistence of truth and falsehood in the context of “loving concern” is better explained as a gradual disclosure of truth in a lengthy and gradual process. Loving concern leads us to wait for the work of the Holy Spirit to take root before moving to the next stage of development. The whole process could take up to several years.

The process involved in spiritual growth is, like any growth path, never fully completed for there are always new developments ahead. But I can sum up what takes place in the three following modes: (1) personal discipleship, (2) formation of small groups within the existing social networks, and (3) a four-step process of critical contextualization.
Personal Discipleship

One-on-one discipling and mentoring is important. The spiritual leaders and disciple-makers lead the new disciples to live under the lordship of Christ in two main areas. First, by giving them a spiritual progression path, and second, helping them to gain freedom in Christ from any spiritualistic baggage or addictive activities that could be trapping them. We are learning about this area, but still have more work to do. We need to better understand the premises underlying certain spiritualistic practices and beliefs, and we need to learn how to more quickly expose the lies of the evil one embedded in a particular worldview.

Small Groups

As people discover more and more biblical truth it is important that they be organized into small groups where fellowship, worship, and inductive Bible study can occur. In the past few years, we have seen the Jesus movements becoming more and more adept in interacting with the Bible. Their leaders have also sought more training in how to lead inductive Bible study groups. Some have also introduced what is called in mission the “Manuscript Bible Study Method” which is an inductive study of a whole book or a large portion of a book using exegetical tools. This approach has resulted in a renewed appropriation of the Word of God from different perspectives that has enriched not only those being discipled but also impacted in positive ways the understanding of the spiritual leaders. On a personal note, as I have sat and listened to people from other worldviews read and interpret the Bible, I rediscovered an obvious truth—the Bible is not a Western book, and at times people from other communities are closer to the culture of the Bible than we are. This means that they can bring to light certain nuances in the Bible stories that we are blind to. In the past few years small group Bible study groups have been developed not only for men, but also for Muslim women.

Four Step Process of Critical Contextualization

In critical contextualization, the Bible remains the ultimate source of authority in the development of faith and truth. Even when the sacred writings of the recipient communities are not rejected, they are brought under the supreme and final authority of the Bible. Anything that is incompatible with the biblical message has to be dealt with in biblically appropriate ways.
In other words, critical contextualization is an ongoing process that accords the gospel its rightful primacy within a culture by speaking both no and yes and giving both judgment and grace. In the critical contextualization process the new faith community moves through four steps of critical analysis to determine what in the local culture can be kept, what needs to be discarded, changed, or revised, and what needs to have a biblical functional substitute.

The biblical evaluation of religious beliefs and cultural practices could strengthen some of the traditions and identity of the people by purifying them, while others may need to be discarded. The biblical evaluation of beliefs and practices should be done with a group of local believers, qualified exegetes, and outsiders who are familiar with the culture and the process of critical contextualization. This is also where the larger body of Christ (the hermeneutical community) should assist the local believers as they work through this process and where the spiritual leaders and outsiders often contribute the rich insights that the universal church has gained over the centuries of its existence in various cultural settings.

It is important to understand that while the group working on this process seeks to understand how God speaks to their own group of peoples, they must also be aware that the larger body of Christ, the global church, has much to share with these local expressions of faith in context. In terms of theology, the church universal has a clarifying and enlarging role to play, especially when it can point out blind spots that exist in a particular community and can share possible themes and issues that the local group of believers was not aware of. In this interaction between the church universal, theology, and local communities there is a tremendous wealth of spiritual content and knowledge that cannot be achieved when the different entities work in isolation or when one of them tries to dominate or control the other entities.

In a very sketchy way, allow me to describe the basic steps of this crucial process.

**Step One: Exegesis of the Culture**

The first step, exegesis of the local culture, is a non-judgmental study of the various facets of the culture. This first step involves an uncritical gathering and analyzing of all the traditional customs and beliefs connected to the issue at hand. The local people should be intimately involved in this aspect of the process for they know the culture much better than any outsider ever could. This gathering of information phase should include the study of the
cultural element, the identifying of common practices, the origin of the cultural element, the various forms and current meanings it has within the culture, and a clear understanding of what kinds of beliefs and practices are tied to the cultural element in the people's existing socio-religious belief system. This step involves knowing the deep meanings and nuances of the issue being discussed. Foreign and local believers working together make a stronger team than either group working on their own.

**Step Two: Careful Bible Study Related to the Issue**

Step two involves careful Bible study to make sure the principles of God’s Word are understood in order to be applied to the issue at hand. This is again an area where it is important to have people present who know their Bibles well. But the experts must also be able to allow the local group of believers to discover biblical truths for themselves. This step should resemble the early Adventist Bible conferences where groups of believers spent hours and hours over several days struggling to discern God’s message in his Word.

**Step Three: Evaluation of the Custom in Light of Newly Discovered Biblical Understandings**

The third step evaluates each cultural practice or element in light of the newly discovered principles and truths from God’s Word. If a belief or practice is consistent with biblical principles it is allowed to remain a part of the believer’s practice. If it contains a redemptive analogy, it may be retained to convey biblical truth. If however, a practice is demonic or destructive or has spiritualistic implications it should be discarded and replaced by a new functional substitute consistent with biblical principles. This substitute should aim to preserve divine truth and social honor and should carry the deeper meanings of the culture that are in harmony with God’s Word. If the practice is not bad in itself but has a negative connotation it should be redefined or replaced with a biblical functional substitute. If it is not demonic or wrong, is part of the local culture, and breaks no biblical principle it may be left alone. All parts of a culture that do not go against biblical principles should be left alone so that the process does not become burdensome to the local people. There may be neutral elements in a culture that some may wish to discard, but before dropping anything of this nature it would be good to take into account the larger community and their reaction to dropping the practice. For example, in some places there are long months of fasting from certain foods which can be very burdensome. But if the practice should be dropped it is important to ask what if any impact the dropping of the
practice would have to the witness of the new believers in their community.

Some of the probable outcomes from this third step include the possibility that many cultural elements will be retained, some will be modified, some will be discarded, some new forms may be borrowed from other cultures where there are Jesus followers, and some biblical functional substitutes will be developed.

**Step Four: Holy Spirit Guidance in Decision Making**

The fourth step involves seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit by the local believers in deciding just what can be retained, what needs to be modified, and what needs to be discarded. Often the local believers will throw out elements of the culture that the foreigners on the team were willing to keep because local people can discern the deeper cultural meanings that only they can see. This fourth step also engages the new believers from the very beginning in the process of reading God’s Word for themselves and not becoming dependent on someone else telling them what the Word says. This step also encourages local believers to take responsibility for deciding what to do, what not to do, and how to live as God’s end-time people. When biblical rules are imposed on a group, the rule-givers become the rule enforcers, but when a community decides what the Word says they live the biblical message they have discovered.

**FDIC Distinctive: The Great Controversy Paradigm**

The FDIC approach is not the only model that seeks to cultivate the Kingdom of God in indigenous soil (we are indebted to several other models). So a logical question would be, What is distinctive about this Adventist mission approach? While Adventists share much with other models, there is at least one distinctive trait that is foundational to the Adventist FDIC approach. There would be no FDIC without the Great Controversy Paradigm.

The Adventist understanding of the Great Controversy frames the Church’s distinctive views on God, on his Kingdom, on the role of Jesus, on the Sabbath, on the Judgment, and on the vindication of the character, law, and government of God. As inheritors of the 19th century Adventist Movement present day Seventh-day Adventists carry a distinctive mission that can be summarized in Jerald Whitehouse’s words based on Revelation 16:6-12 and 18:4 as follows:
1. Adventists have a special end time emphasis of the “good news” about God and his handling of the sin problem.
2. Adventists have a warning message of the nearness of the end of time and the coming Day of Judgment.
3. Adventists have a calling out message that calls people to faith in the One true God and to prepare for his second coming.
4. Adventists call people to worship God as the Creator as symbolized through faithful observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath that is a memorial of his creative work.
5. Adventists have a clarifying message regarding the great controversy that has taken place between God and the forces of evil in which the accusations have been leveled by Satan against the character and government of God that he is arbitrary, unfair, unjust, unloving, and unmerciful. God has allowed time to pass and has been involved in the affairs of peoples and nations in an effort to keep the issues clear in this controversy, allowing for intelligent and free choice on the part of each individual regarding matters of faith.
6. Adventists have a reconciling message that restores peace and quality to life in the midst of increasing chaos and destruction as evil displays itself out ever more strongly in the world.
7. Adventists share a message concerning the mediatorial role of Jesus in the context of this great controversy and in relation to the personal salvation of each believer.
8. Adventists have a message of hope that God will put all things right at the end of time when Christ returns. Putting things right involves a judgment process that will clarify all things and result in eternal life for the righteous and an eternal end to sin, evil, and those choosing to not believe and accept God’s gift of salvation.

It could be added that because of the Great Controversy paradigm FDIC practitioners put a special emphasis on healing the picture of God in the different receptor communities. In witnessing to people of other world religions, Jesus, his divinity, his lordship, and his place as Savior are disclosed, but it also is made clear that God was in Jesus reconciling the world to himself and that Jesus came to reveal the truth about the Father. In other words, people who accept Jesus and become his followers can no longer hold views about God and the Holy Spirit that cannot be substantiated by the Bible even if their understanding of Jesus is biblical.
Answering Issues of Identity and Ecclesiology

In this section I would like to give answers to some of the questions that are often asked about the FDIC approach or about views or practices that are said to be part of the FDIC approach.

1. Do proponents of FDIC encourage western missionaries to pretend or masquerade that they are members of world religions such as Islam? No, emphatically no. Albeit in the early days some practitioners did adopt a Muslim identity. However, in 2000, the Global Center for Adventist Muslim Relations (GCAMR) issued a paper in which it categorically opposed non-Muslims, especially westerners, engaging in any short-term mission activities while pretending to be Muslims. Furthermore, the paper clearly said that GCAMR did not support anyone pretending or masquerading to be someone they were not. It did, however, recognize as legitimate people holding a spiritual identity and in some rare cases it recognizes that God has called an individual or two to live out long-term ministries among people of monotheistic religions (for a copy of this article contact GMACR through www.global-mission.org).

2. Are believers in the FDIC Jesus movement baptized? Yes, by immersion, and in accordance with the biblical model.

3. Are the Jesus movements sponsored by the FDIC approach truly Seventh-day Adventist? Or are they only followers of Jesus? The FDIC communities are indeed Adventist for they hold firmly to all that any other Adventist would uphold as truth. They share in our beliefs such as the mortality of the soul, the soon return of Christ, the sanctity of the Sabbath, and they have a clear end-time self-understanding of their identity as part of God’s end-time remnant. Yet, for the reasons explained in the identity section, at this time they have chosen not to be official members of the organized Adventist Church. In other words, their spiritual identity is Adventist even when they might not be connected to the institutional and organizational structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

4. Are the people in a FDIC movement aware of their affinity with the Adventist Church? The leaders of these Jesus movements have deep connections with the organized Adventist Church and have in many cases come seeking some of its leaders after being led by dreams, visions, or other providential means. Even when they have sought the guidance of Adventist leaders, they have understood that they must continue among their people. Under the present circumstances and due to severe security concerns it would be unwise for the majority of the believers to have an open relationship with Christians. Such a relationship could also lead to the closure and loss
of official government church registration for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in some countries.

5. Shouldn’t the believers be brave and come out into the open even if they are persecuted? Doesn’t the Bible say that God’s people must undergo persecution for his name? While it is true that the Bible does indicate that believers will face persecution for Christ’s name, not all persecution is for God’s sake. Some new believers have brought persecution upon themselves due to insensitive provocation in the name of God. For instance, some are persecuted, not for following Christ but for turning their backs against their families, others for attacking and shaming their former faith, or for causing what is perceived by their families and countrymen to be traitorous acts. They are persecuted for being perceived to be against social order and social institutions. On the other hand, I am aware of some people within the Jesus movement who have died for refusing to compromise their faith which was incompatible with local practices. A man was beaten for declaring Jesus to be his Lord, another punished by saying the shahada, but in the name of Jesus.

6. Is it possible that FDIC is just another mission fad that is doomed to disappear with time? The earliest Jesus movements did not start because someone had a great missiological idea and decided to seek a new method and called the results a Jesus movement. In the case of FDIC movements, theory is following the observation of what the Holy Spirit is doing. As in the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts, God is moving in this particular way and Adventist practitioners are trying to catch up by analyzing carefully what is taking place in this phenomenon.

7. Is it true that FDIC practitioners, in their desire to build on common ground, fail to offer a balanced view of Islam? Neither FDIC practitioners nor new believers see their primary role to denounce the evils of Islam or other world religion. Furthermore, such an attack would destroy almost any opportunity to minister to people in those religious systems. Over the years FDIC practitioners have chosen to uphold and focus on what is true. As Adventists we are reminded that “the way to dispel darkness is to admit light. The best way to deal with error is to present truth. It is the revelation of God’s love that makes manifest the deformity and sin of the heart centered in self” (White 1940:498). We are painfully aware of the shortcomings of some Muslim communities and we pray that God will make us into peacemakers thereby allowing for understandable presentations of the gospel.

8. What is the relationship between a FDIC Jesus movement and the larger hermeneutical community of faith in the Seventh-day Adventist Church? As
mentioned above all the ministry leaders I am aware of are connected in some way or another with the larger Adventist hermeneutical community. The recommended practice is that biblical evaluations of beliefs and practices should be done with a group of local believers that include qualified exegetes and outsiders who are familiar with the culture and the process of cross cultural witnessing. Exegesis of Scripture should be foundational to this process. Change agents and the spiritual leaders should guide the local people in study and should present the Adventist biblical teachings and concepts in culturally understandable ways. I believe that the relationship with the larger Adventist hermeneutical community is foundational for the spiritual growth of a FDIC Jesus movement.

The Vision of Jerald Whitehouse

I cannot finish this article without mentioning that it has been a great honor for me to work closely with Jerald Whitehouse over the last ten years. Whitehouse’s very raison d’être has been to champion the cause of liberating “the good news about God and how he resolves the sin problem” from being contained and controlled by any western Christian church. This has also been life transforming for me.

Dr. Whitehouse has indeed had an apostolic calling and has obediently cast a vision of how the kingdom of God can be established without the cultural trappings of traditional or western Christianity. Because of his hard work and sacrifice today we have seen the birth of many new Adventist communities of faith emerging in societies that had been resistant to traditional Christianity. Whitehouse’s passion and foresight of what is possible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit has ignited a movement that is unstoppable and only when we reach the other side of eternity will we know how far his influence has reached, for in recent years we have seen these ministries expand across the globe.

Who would have thought that such a small seed would grow to a worldwide movement? Who would have said that we will see the day when thousands of Bibles would be scattered like the leaves of autumn in so called “closed countries”? Who would have believed that some of those early believers would one day play key roles on changing even national policy in their homelands?

Dr. Whitehouse, your impact on mission within Adventism and the history of Christian mission will not go down in history unnoticed. Many more after you will carry the torch into the generations to come if our Lord
does not come to take us home. In fact, your impact on mission to Muslims is unprecedented in Adventism and I will dare say in mission history itself.

I still can hear the echo of Dr. Whitehouse’s initial challenge to me: “Marty are you willing to think and work outside the box”? Are you willing to plan far into the future, not looking for quick numbers, but doing all in your effort to firmly establish the kingdom of God in your or sphere of influence? Are you willing to become a disciple and discipler who is deeply concerned about the spiritual growth of those God has called you to? Are you willing to venture into the unknown and push your comfort zone? Will you allow the kingdom of God to develop naturally within other cultural frameworks and not try to impose your own cultural framework on others”? Are you willing to do this, Marty?

**Other Contributors**

I cannot conclude this article without mentioning a few more names of people who have made a significant contribution towards FDIC.

Robert Darnell and his team laid the missiological and theological framework for FDIC work. He was a linguist and devoted years of study to the Bible from a missiological perspective while also studying the Qur’an as he sought for redemptive windows.

Glen Fleming laid the foundation for strategic missional thinking pushing people to discern where God had been at work in the past and where he is working in the present. His own thinking was profoundly impacted by Don Richardson who is the father of the concept of redemptive analogies.

I wish I could mention the names of several men and women after God’s own heart who as local leaders daily guide their people one step closer to the center of God’s Kingdom. They have helped us to understand the cultural, socio-religious, and other theological issues that often go ignored in mission to one of the world’s religions. For security reasons we cannot write your names in this book, but God knows who you are and we want to acknowledge your contribution. Many of you are laboring at great personal cost and even at the risk of losing your lives. Your names are written in a modern chapter of Hebrews 11. Thank you for laboring on and keeping your eyes on the goal of seeing your people come to faith in Jesus even when others foreign to your context do not understand you.

Carl Coffman’s book, *Unto a Perfect Man*, was of great importance in fostering Whitehouse’s understanding of what constitutes faith formation and the stages of spiritual development.
There have been additional people who have enabled FDIC in different capacities. Mike Porter has supported the ministries in three major ways: (1) as a sounding board for practitioners and by sharing his vast administrative experience he has proven to be crucial in the first stages of some ministries in the 10/40 Window, (2) by enables several people, like myself, to move forward, and (3) he has raised funds to cover thousand of Bibles for FDIC contextual ministries taking place in closed countries.

Louisa’s vision was and is still multifaceted. Not only did she set up the first educational program to train workers ministering among Muslims, but she had a clear vision to empower, affirm, and equip Muslim female leaders. Louisa’s curriculum of studies for the formation of Adventist practitioners has had a major impact in several educational centers where they have seen the wisdom of her progression and fine choice of content. Louisa is unknown to many, has never been one to call attention to herself, choosing instead the praise of God over the praise of people.

Thank you, Bruce Moyer, for your untiring help in providing financial and moral support to the majority of the FDIC ministry leaders.

There are many others that have contributed through their influence or thinking such as Jon Dybdahl who drove home the importance of the “new birth,” Jon Paulien who has developed an eschatological framework regarding remnant theology, Eric Baumgartner who brought to our attentions the importance of identifying the person of peace, and Bruce Bauer who has helped think through the use of proper terms and had the vision to produce the first published material in this area. There have been a host of other on the ground enablers that for security reasons are not mentioned.

The movements we have been involved in have been significantly enriched by other people outside our Adventist faith community, people of God such as Milton Coke, who pioneered the concept that believers of Jesus movements should legally retain their birth community identity. Others like John Travis who have helped us learn ways to communicate to those within the church what God is doing on the front lines of mission. Theologian and missiologist Rick Brown has also offered in-depth biblical research on several key Christological matters and his scholarly insights have helped us to better understand how to communicate Jesus’ role, identity, and mission. In the area of Christology there are also excellent works by Richard Bauckham on early Christology in the gospels and more recently Martin Parsons on Christology for the Islamic context have also proven useful to us.

The work of Common Ground on better understanding how to describe the centrality and nature of the Kingdom of God has been helpful as we have
learned to describe the theology that gives the framework to FDIC.

I do not want to finish without thanking my wife. She has been integral to my life and ministry, and over the years she has vested her passion and energies into writing, training, and encouraging women ministry leaders. My wife has traveled extensively and together we have reflected and grown together in our understanding of God.

**Conclusion**

I am not a prophet, but based on what I have seen and the projected trends that other Adventists and Christian practitioners are forecasting, in the next few years I believe that we are going to see large numbers of Jesus movements growing in places where the traditional extraction model of mission to Muslims is not allowed or tolerated.

I believe that our eyes will be open even further to discern God’s activity in places we had not even considered before. We will learn better ways to communicate the biblical message from within Islamic people groups. As we minister to others, God will minister to us, enhancing our own understanding of who he is that will result in a more vibrant end-time faith community. This new growth in understanding will allow us to see the blind spots we have in our own worldview and call us to walk ever closer with our Lord not only as individuals but as whole communities of faith.

In the years to come I do not see fewer in-context ministries but many more. I see more missiologists, theologians, local leaders, local followers of Jesus, and regular Adventist members who will be wrestling in a humble spirit trying to discern what this “new thing” is that the Lord is doing in these last days and searching how they can each come on board in unity as the body of Christ.

**Works Cited**


