# Do’oma site-specific topic: Expansion of Protestantism

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## Kalihiwot Protestant followers

### Young man

 The respondent says that he joined the Kalihiwot church when he was a child. As he explained, his parents are followers of Kalihiwot church so that they took him to the church when he was a child. As he explained, he became more interested in the church because there is a large congregation and songs.

The respondent says that the expansion of Protestantism has brought changes to the community. As he explained, followers control themselves from adopting bad habits as well as being involved in violent threats against other community members, particularly women. The respondent says that people have started to live in harmony in their respective households.

The respondent says that the Protestants are different from the Orthodox Christians in their culture of cooperation with each other. As he explained, Protestants share whatever they have with their neighbours and they are cooperative with the kebele in any manner.

The respondent says that he has benefited a lot from the Kalihiwot church. As he said, the church education and preaching helps him to have good behaviour that enables him to live peacefully with the rest of the community. In addition, he said that because of the church action, he could not have more than one sexual partner and that prevents him from sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

The respondent says that he has never accessed benefit from the church other than religious satisfaction. As he elaborated, the church leaders teach the followers to change their living standards and to cooperate with government interventions. He says that the church leaders teach about HTPs and their bad consequences in health, bad habits and their impacts on health and so on. The church has condemned sexual relations before marriage. As the result, the church expelled two girls who gave birth before they got married from church membership.

The respondent says that in general there is no significant change in Protestants’ way of living such as dressing as compared to followers of other religions.

### Young woman

The respondent is 20 years old. She joined Kalihiwot Protestant church when she was a child. All the household members are followers of the same church. She became aware about the religion because she used to go to church with her parents when she was a child.

The respondent says that the expansion of Protestantism, particularly the Kalihiwot church, has brought social cohesion. It makes people care about each other and reduce the selfish behaviour of the past. Within the household, there is a spirit of helping and respecting each other.

The respondent says that Kalihiwot Protestant followers help each other such as they contribute in kind or in cash to poor lactating mothers, to seriously ill members of the church, and so on. The respondent explained that there is no religious institution that makes the community aware of HTPs with a clear punishment mechanism. she elaborated, ”Kalihiwot church preaches not only the Bible but also new government interventions such as women’s rights. The church clearly condemns polygamy, sex before marriage, rape, abduction and female circumcision. Because of these interventions, there is a considerable change in the community. Kalihiwot Protestants at least stopped getting their daughters and granddaughters circumcised as if they have the right. Many people may continue the practice but they do it in secret. However, the Orthodox Christians are openly practicing it.”

The respondent says that Protestants are different from Orthodox Christians in several perspectives. As she explained, Protestants help each other in times of harder time and they treat all people whatever their ethnicity and social status equally. They are very respectful to the community.

As she said, the social network between Kalihiwot Protestants and Orthodox Christians is becoming loose. She explained, the people have started to hate each other. They are not willing to help those peoples who need support but do not belong to their religion. They do not eat meat together. They stopped slaughtering bulls and sharing meat as the Orthodox want to dominate the Protestants in blessing the bulls. The Orthodox Christians want to have their own praying before slaughtering and the Protestants have the same position. There was also a quarrel on who was going to slaughter the bull. Because of this, they celebrate holidays such as Meskel separately. In holidays, they do not exchange happy wishes between them. They do not contribute to the family of a deceased outside of their respective churches.

The respondent says that Kalihiwot Protestants have no difference from the Mekane Eyesus Protestants besides the name. As she says, though one is free to participate in the congregation of the other church, they do have separate social organisations like iddir. Members of the churches do not support each other in harder times.

The respondent says that there is a church preaching that prohibits members from social relations with traditional believers. However, as she explained, Protestants visit their families of deceased people whatever religion they follow.

The respondent says that she has never accessed support from the church. However, as she explained, she got education on the above-mentioned issues.

The respondent says that there is no difference in the way of dressing and eating between different religious followers in the community.

### Older man

The respondent says that he joined the church in 2011. As he said, he prefers Kalihiwot church because members are very cooperative each other in harder times. As he mentioned, his children joined the church earlier. The respondent does not access any preaching but he feels that Protestants are doing better in the community.

The respondent says that Protestants are modern people so that they fight against HTPs. As he explained, they are different from Orthodox Christians because they fight developing bad habits seriously. In addition, Protestants have a good culture of working on farmland together. They also give concern for other members. Protestants have played a role in their good behaving to make the community the safer place to live. As he explained, though he did not get any benefit until now, the church give him assurance for the future difficulty.

The respondent says that the church initiate members to participate actively in community projects; the church organise members and participated in the watershed management project in the last year.

The respondent says that there is no difference on the way of dressing, eating and in doing other activities among different religious followers

### Older woman

The respondent is 70 years old woman. She was born in other community but the with Deremalo wereda(where the community is found). She has joined Kalihiwot Protestant church when she was 10. As she explained, she was the first to join the church from her household. Her mother was a follower of Orthodox Christian church.

The respondent says that she became familiar with the religion through preaching. As she described, preacher from other community were giving education about the religion by organising the community members, particularly youth’s in-group. In addition to bible, they had given them informal education such as Amharic alphabets and simple mathematical operation. The respondent says that some preacher call the community to congregation as if their main objective is avoiding illiteracy. Each month, there was at least three to four preaching programme. The respondent explained that at that time she heard there are foreigners who support the preachers financially. The preaching was in local language, Gamo. As she elaborated, the community did not resist accepting the religion and immediately many joined the church. There was high tolerance with the religion difference. There were people who follow the Orthodox Christianity, Kalihiwot Protestant church and traditional believers (Kalichas). One might get members of these different religions in a given household. For instance, the respondent says that her sister was non-religionist as well as her parents were Orthodox Christian. As she says, the religious difference had never been issue of discussion and argument.

Similarly, after she settled in the community she came across with expansion of Kalihiwot Protestant church by preaching. However, in the community, the preaching was house to house and they had been networking the community members to preach each other and recruit new followers.

The respondent says that the expansion of Protestantism, particularly Kalihiwot church has brought a change in people’s way of behaving in the community. She explained, “In prior time, people were brave in their social relation. There was a security problem like theft and robberies. There was violation against women. People do not want to share what they have with the destitute. Some section of the society was discriminated such as craft workers. There was no cooperation on farm work. There was polygamy.”

However, as she explained, after the expansion the Kalihiwot church people become very cooperative and help full as well as respect full. She says, “The Kalihiwot church followers have good manner of behaving. Violent action against women is already abolished from the community. Exclusion of some groups reduced because of the church condemnation. There is group work on farmland and community labour. “

The respondent says that the church contribute much to the government intervention against HTPs affecting women. There is intra church rule that punish the practitioners and those who get the service. The church expels violent men from the congregation. The church declared that female circumcision is against bible. If there is concrete information, the circumcised as well as the practitioners would be expel from the church congregation for five to six months.

The respondent explained that the church is working on HIV/AIDS control and prevention. The church condemned having sexual relation before marriage. There is an education on the means of transmission and control of HIV/AIDS as well as importance of diagnosis before marriage. If couples want to hold their wedding in the church, there are obligated to bring HIV/AIDS blood testing result to the head of the church. Those people who smoke cigarette and drinking alcohol are not allowed to enter in to the church.

The respondent says that the followers of the church have no conflict with the other religious followers. However, there is no cooperation to help other religious followers. As she said, they would not contribute for those non-member people who face problems. Nevertheless, they visit ill people as well as family of deceased whatever their religion is. The respondent says that since four years the Kalihiwot Protestants’ social network with the other religious followers has drastically reduced. As she says, they do not eat meat with Orthodox Christian followers.

The respondent says that the Kalihiwot Christians are different from the Orthodox Christians in many dimensions. She explained, “Firstly, the Orthodox Christians are still developing bad habits, they are violent people, they discriminate against some social groups such as craft workers, they are not positive, and helpful to each other. Orthodox Christian followers had been using dead livestock for meat. We do not want to share knives with them.”

 As she says, they separate themselves from the kebele iddir because they do not want to follow the Orthodox’s way of behaving. They have started to establish Kalihiwot church followers’ iddir to fight against social exclusions.

The respondent says that though the church does not condemn having social networks with the traditional believers, the followers have no interest in having relations with them. The Bible is against social life with those people who do not believe in the mercy of Jesus Christ.

The respondent says that Kalihiwot church followers have no basic difference with the Mekane Eyesus followers. As she says, each Protestant church has their own iddirs because the membership would be too much if they came together.

The respondent says that she never has any benefit from the church except the religious one.

The respondent says that the church followers are supporting her for the last 5 years. As she said, the followers work on her land and give her grain in harder times. However, as she says, she gets the support from the followers, not from the church budget.

The respondent says that there is church intervention against HTPs affecting women and bad to health. The church has started to intervene in the community since five years. The traditional practitioners, those who cut uvula, circumcise females and so on, are not Protestant, that makes it difficult to punish them. The church had punished a girl who got circumcised in the forest hiding from the community. The church got the information because she faced severe health problems. She had been treated in the health centre.

The respondent says that though there is no significant difference in the way of dressing, Protestants are modernised people in some respects.

## Mekane Eyesus Protestant followers

### Young man

The respondent says that he joined Mekane Eyesus Protestant church when he was a child. Her mother is a follower of Kalihiwot church while his father is a follower of Mekane Eyesus Protestant church. His brother and sister are followers of Kalihiwot church.

The respondent says that he has started to go to Mekane Eyesus church with his peers in the community. His parents were not believers of any religious institution. He advised them to join religious institutions, whatever they liked. As he said, at the beginning, people were preaching, visiting each household residential area.

The respondent says that the church does not expel those individuals who act against the church rules such as people with bad habits. However, those individuals who divorce from their marriage would be punished; they would not be allowed joining the congregations for six month. The respondent says that individual member of the church who get married to a woman belonging to another religious institution will be expelled for life from the church.

The respondent says that there are development interventions by the church since last year. For instance, in the last year the church launched a community work on the watershed management.

### Young woman

The respondent says that she has begun to go to Mekane Eyesus church when she was young. As she says, her parents are followers of Kalihiwot church. She prefers to go to Mekane Eyesus church because her peers were Mekane Eyesus church followers.

The respondent says that she does not notice any change associated with the expansion of Protestantism. She says that there is no difference between Mekane Eyesus and Kalihiwot Protestants in the community. The respondent says that the church has been fighting against polygamy and HTPs since its establishment. In addition, she elaborated that the church initiates the followers to be hard workers in their respective livelihoods.

Beside religious education and praying, she has never benefited from the church. The respondent says that she has no social relations with Orthodox Christians and traditional believers. As she describes, the church teaches followers not to cooperate with non-believers. The respondent says that there is expansion of Protestantism because people are attracted by the big congregations.

### Older man

The respondent says that he joined Mekane Eyesus church in 2005. Before 2005, he was not a member of any religious institution. His parents were followers of the Orthodox Christian church. As he explained, he joined the church because many people join religious institutions, that initiated him to be included in Mekane Eyesus church. He prefers Mekane Eyesus church because his neighbours were followers of the church.

The respondent says that he does not know about the difference between Orthodox Christians and Mekane Eyesus church. As he explained, the church followers have been supporting him in farm work. He says, “I could not plough my land without their help because I have no ox and I am too old to work on the farm.”

The respondent says that the church initiates followers to participate actively in community works and to work on their land effectively. In addition to this, the church made the followers aware of HTPs and their bad effects on health. As he elaborated, the church prohibits circumcised women from giving church service such as singing songs. As he said, two individuals had attended training on how to preach and expand Protestantism in the neighbouring wereda.

The respondent says that there is expansion of Protestantism because there are church services throughout the week.

The respondent says that their social network with the Orthodox Christians is very loose.

### Older woman

The respondent said that she was a follower of Orthodox Christians until 2005. After 2005, she joined Mekane Eyesus church. As she said, she changed her religion because she has no relatives who could join her to go to the Orthodox Church. The respondent says that her neighbours were followers of Mekane Eyesus so that she could join them when they go to church. She did not know about the doctrines of the church before she became a member.

The respondent says that followers of Mekane Eyesus church are free from bad habits while the Orthodox Church followers have this problem. The respondent says that there is no difference in working culture between different religious followers.

Being the member of the church helps her to get support to plough her farmland. As she mentioned, when she was a follower of Orthodox Christianity she did not receive support from the church or from the followers.

The respondent says that she has no relations with the traditional believers. As she says, she does not want to get into their home.

## Ethiopian Orthodox Church

### Young man

The respondent says that there is competition among different religious institutions that leads to religious conservatism in the community. As he explained, the preaching of Protestantism was very deep and wide as they had been going house to house as well as forming a networked communication among the stronger Protestants and non-followers. The church has been giving training outside the wereda for strong followers. He explained, “in prior time, the community did not give attention to religious difference among the household and neighbours. However, these days the community members have started to make religion a basis to form social organisations such as iddirs. This trend is promoted by Protestants. The Protestants organise their own iddirs and limit their social network among the followers. In finding a marriage partner, people have started to consider religious similarity as a basic issue.”

The respondent says that the expansion of Protestantism has promoted the rights of women as well as security of the community. Although in 2008 the wereda trained all religious leaders to fight against HTPs, the Kalihiwot church is the most effective in implementing the intervention. In addition, the wereda health bureau had given a direction to the religious leaders to put blood testing as compulsory to get married in the church. Similarly, the Kalihiwot church has shown a change in implementing the intervention. In cooperation, they are also a role model for the community.

However, the respondent explained that Kalihiwot Protestants waste their time on religious affairs. As he described, their working habit on farmland is less as compared to the Orthodox Christians.

The respondent says that there is no difference between Kalihiwot and Mekane Eyesus Protestants. As he described, in 1997, the NGO named Mekane Eyesus Synodios established Mekane Eyesus church in the community. Some Kalihiwot church followers joined Mekane Eyesus because they did not know the difference. Now, those individuals who have bad relations with the church leader shift to the other.

### Young woman

The respondent says that she joined the Orthodox Christian church in the last year. Her family were not a member of any religious institution they just worshipped in the name of God. The respondent says that Protestants are more friendly to each other and cooperate to support the worse off members of the church in harder times.

The respondent says that the Protestant church does not allow people with bad habits to participate in church programmes. Although the Orthodox Church condemned bad habits, it does not exclude people from the church. As she said, she does not appreciate the Protestant position because it make the individual lose the chance of getting out from the habit and she prefers the Orthodox church way of dealing with the problem as it gives enough time to show changes and progress.

The respondent says that the expansion of Protestantism has brought tolerance to the community. As she explained, tolerant culture makes a community to be safer place to live than before.

The respondent says that there is no difference in the way of eating and dressing among different religious followers.

### Older man

The respondent says that he joined the church four years ago. He said that Protestants have good intra church rule to punish those followers who practice HTPS such as female circumcision. These interventions become effective because the wereda church leader made the community aware of the practices effectively. In addition, the church has contributed to reduce the number of people who develop harmful traditional practices. These days, there is no one in the church who has developed bad habits such as chewing chat and smoking Gaya. The respondent says that Protestants have a good culture of supporting each other in farm work.

The respondent says that the working culture of Protestants has no difference from the other religious followers. As he explained, as compared to the Orthodox Christians, Protestants waste time in religious matters. They go to church every morning, that makes them ineffective in their work because they have irregular sleeping time.

The respondent says that the number of Protestant has increased in the last years because the community members become interested to be included in the big congregations. Most of them did not know about the doctrines of the church except the dos and don’ts.

As he elaborated, they do consider Orthodox Christianity as a backward religion.

### Older woman

The respondent says that the Protestants are different from the Orthodox Christian followers in their cooperation among themselves. As she said, they help each other on farms as well as support those members who have no relatives: cultivate crops for them in on their farmland, contribute money and grain and so on.

After the expansion of Protestantism, the community has become secure and peaceful; violence among people is reduced.

There is no difference in the way of doing things among different religious followers in the community.

## Traditional believers

### Older man

The respondent regrets to accept that he is a traditional believer. As he mentioned, although the other community members perceive that he is a traditional believer, he has joined the Orthodox Christian church in the last year. The respondent may fear to tell the truth because the leaders of the Orthodox Church iddir might kick him out from membership if he declares he is a traditional believer.

### Older woman

The respondent says that she has already joined the Orthodox Church because she does not want to be the only person in the community without attachment to religious institutions.

## Religious leaders

### Kalihiwot

The respondent says that Kalihiwot church has its own organisational structure to expand the religion starting from the last few years. As he described, in each village an organised group with at least 40 individuals as members work together in spreading the religion. The groups have leaders who are responsible to meet all members once in a week and preach the Bible.

The respondent says that the church preaches to members to be role models in community participation. In addition, he elaborated that the church has contributed a lot in making group work on farming common in the community.

The respondent explained that the followers of Kalihiwot church decided to separate from Orthodox Christians socially because Orthodox Christians do not want to cooperate with craft workers.

He says that the church has started to teach about HIV prevention, control and diagnosis since 2003. The wereda health bureau gave the direction. The respondent says that in 2007, the church had advised a woman who had been circumcising females to stop her practice and she immediately accept the advice and stopped her practice.

The respondent says that they are living in harmony with the other religious followers. Except meat, they share whatever they eat on the same plate with other religious followers.

### Mekane Eyesus

The respondent says that the church was established in the community in 2000. As he explained, at its establishment around 14 individuals from the Kalihiwot church shifted to the new established religious institution, Mekane Eyesus Protestant church. As he explained, he changed to the institution because he was not happy with the Kalihiwot church because there were loose networks and cooperation among followers. The respondent says that he was optimistic about the new church on this matter.

As he says, starting from 2001 he has been the chair of the church with commensurate authority to pray for ill persons, to lead church programmes and to initiate people to contribute to the support of worse off church members in the community.

The respondent says that the church membership expanded in the community not only as the result of preaching but also caused by the disagreements in the Kalihiwot church. As he explained, when individuals get into confrontation with each other, they leave the church and join Mekane Eyesus church.

The respondent says that at the beginning they were mobilising the community to join the church. The mobilisation took place house to house for three months. The NGO named Mekane Eyesus Synodios had sponsored the building of the church compound. Some followers from the wereda town took seriously ill people to the hospital by covering their medication expenses. Because of these reasons, people shifted from Kalihiwot church to Mekane Eyesus.

The respondent says that the majority in the community are followers of Kalihiwot church as a large congregation attracts them.

The respondent says that the expansion of Protestantism brought a working culture. As he explained, in prior time people thought there was no mechanism to cope with the drought because they believed God created them to live in that situation. However, now people have started to perceive that God created human beings for good and they are very optimistic to change the community into an appropriate area to live.

The respondent explained that the church used the organisation of many iddirs based on religion to recruit new members. The Kalihiwot church decided to separate socially from the Orthodox Christians because Orthodox Christians were excluding some social groups such as craft workers.

### Orthodox Christian

The respondent says that he came to the community in 2009 from Amhara region, north Shewa zone. He has been a church leader since he was 18.

The respondent says that the expansion of Protestantism has brought nothing to the community. As he explained, Protestants are wasting their time in attending church programmes as well as mehaber that transcend the community. As he explained, the mehaber lasts for two consecutive days and it is organised based on different age ranges.

 However as he elaborated, the Protestant church, particularity Kalihiwot, has contributed to the reduction of HTPs in the community as well as HIV/AIDS control and prevention. The respondent says that the wereda health bureau had given training for all religious leader though the others have no concrete rules to reduce HTPs and control HIV/AIDS.

The respondent says that when the Orthodox church preach to members not to develop bad habits, people stop their bad habits and join one of the two Protestant churches. As he described, most people consider Protestant religion as symbol of modernisation while they take the Orthodox Church as traditional.

The respondent says that in the main kebele, excluding the Amhara immigrants, there were only two Orthodox Christian households. In the last year, social organisations such as iddir based on religion differences led traditional believers or/and those people who are not included in any religious institution to join the Orthodox Church.

Following the settlement of the Amhara immigrants in the kebele, people have asked the kebele administration to allocate land to the church.

As he explained, the Protestants have a culture of helping each other. They support elderly individuals, orphans and blind persons in the community. In harder times, they contribute grain to those worse off people but to receive support from the Protestants one has to be Protestant; the support is confined to the religious followers.