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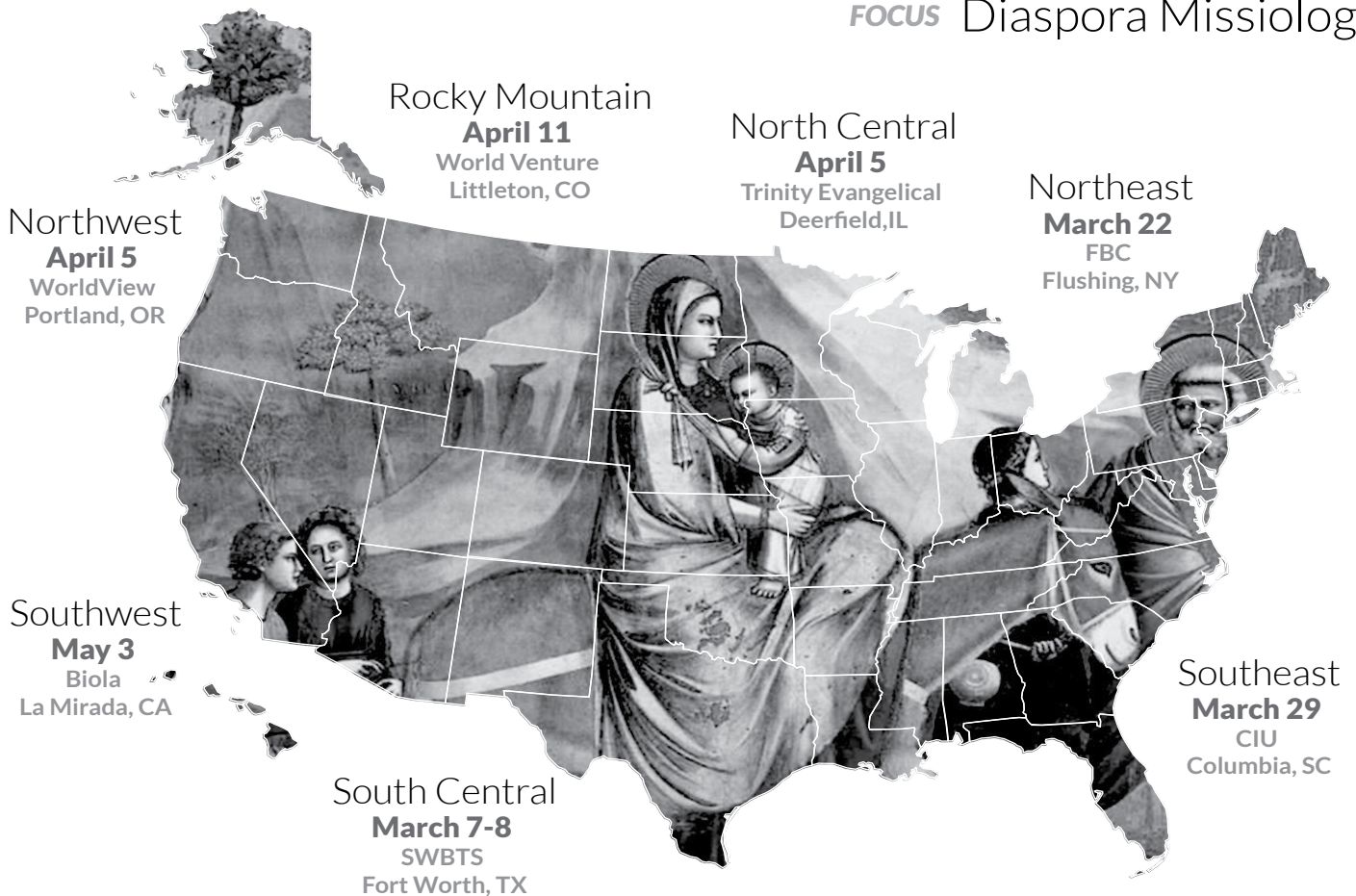
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### The Long Shadow of Alan Tippett

The *IJFM* welcomes two timely publications as an extensive backdrop to this issue's focus on how we understand movements to Christ. The first is David Garrison's *A Wind in the House of Islam* (see ad p. 181 and Bradford Greer's review pp. 182-83). This book is the culmination of three years of research on sixty-nine such movements that have emerged across the Muslim world since the year 2000—the broadest research effort of its kind to date. Garrison's careful phenomenological approach cuts through the more recent anecdotal hearsay and reflex judgment regarding movements and offers solid evidence that God is drawing Muslims to himself to an unprecedented degree. The second book, *Fullness of Time*, is the most recent in a series of previously unpublished works by Alan Tippett (see ad p. 170).<sup>1</sup> When it comes to understanding movements to Christ, few were as perceptive as this eminent mission anthropologist. This book is a collection of his essays on ethnohistory, a discipline thought to be Tippett's most innovative contribution to missiology. We've gotten permission to include one of the essays that captures Tippett's perspective on different types of movements in Oceania (see pp. 171-80). And don't miss Glenn Schwartz's review of Tippett's autobiography, *No Continuing City*, a 580-page "inside look" into the life of this rather private Australian (p. 183-85).

It's too easy to forget the missiological rigor of someone like Tippett. Now, just twenty-five years since his passing, the rapid-fire publication of his unpublished works is simply astounding. The conviction of this journal is that any understanding of movements would benefit from comparing his field experience in Oceania with that of a Garrison (or anyone else) in the Islamic world. You would expect the contextual dynamics to be radically different, but when it comes to movements, both are studying "actual dynamic processes at work," and both are alert to how God "can speak to men through social mechanisms."<sup>2</sup> Sure, one setting is the post-WWII colonial resistance of Melanesia and the other the global resurgence of a post-9/11 world, but notice that both represent periods subsequent to historical watersheds. As Tippett notes, most "movements are the result of stress situations which arise when two very different cultures clash or come into acculturative contact."<sup>3</sup> The intersection of Tippett's Oceania and Garrison's Muslim world should be a fertile field for comparisons.

All that said, there is growing attention to the study of movements among Muslims today. The research is growing, and for this we can be glad. The missiological forum on Muslim contextualization known as Bridging the Divide (BtD) has spent the past four years wrestling with different (often controversial) perspectives on

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insider movements in the Muslim world, and it's in that forum that each of the authors in this issue, as well as Garrison's research, has had a considerable impact. It's apparent that two vital developments are pushing the discussion of movements forward.

First, we're *willing to discuss our misanthological predispositions when it comes to movements*. It's quite apparent that our perception of those Jesus movements emerging in other religious terrain is often colored by the unexposed assumptions each of us brings to the table. Len Bartlotti recognized his own presuppositions and broke them down into nine categories, which he then offered to the BtD forum (pp. 137-53). He clarified the different "thought styles" and "group think" that can so easily captivate us. I witnessed the paralysis of misunderstanding at that meeting melt into significant dialogue. His contribution forces each of us beyond a posture of evaluation, beyond that immediate impulse to validate (or invalidate) movements, to a personal examination of those models of church, culture, or theology that drive our judgment.

Secondly, *more and more we're studying actual research from the field*.

Nothing impacts or disturbs presuppositions quite like a case study that holds surprising data. It can bend one's preconceived image of reality and force one beyond caricatures. Admittedly Garrison's research is broad and encompassing, but more focused research on actual movements in particular contexts is finally beginning to be published. A good example is the second installment of Ben Naja's empirical research on two Jesus Movements in Muslim communities in Eastern Africa—offered initially at the BtD and now published here in this issue (pp. 155-60).

The long shadow of Alan Tippett should convince us we have a way to go. It should encourage us to continue our pursuit of thorough field-level research. We can't afford to fall into the oversimplification that Tippett so often decried, what he amusingly called "cartoons," "exaggerating one feature at the expense of the others to the distortion of the general effect."<sup>4</sup> This is no easy mandate to fulfill, for we no longer live in Tippett's post-colonial world, and the role of the field researcher requires

some of the same sensitivity that Travis fleshes out in his description of the "Alongsider" (pp. 161-69). I think the barefoot, island-hopping Alan Tippett would second any motion to instill the cross-cultural habits Travis has outlined. Understanding movements demands it.

This year's ISFM in Atlanta (September 23-25) will offer this generation another look at world evangelization with the theme "Recasting Evangelization: The Significance of Lausanne '74 for Today and Beyond" (see ad on the back cover or on p. 169). Hope to see you there.

In Him,



Brad Gill  
Senior Editor, *IJFM*

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Missiology of Alan R. Tippett Series, available at <http://missionbooks.org/search/results/search&keywords=tippett/>

<sup>2</sup> Alan Tippett, *People Movements in Southern Polynesia*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1971, p. 6

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226

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- ☞ promote intergenerational dialogue between senior and junior mission leaders;
- ☞ cultivate an international fraternity of thought in the development of frontier missiology;
- ☞ highlight the need to maintain, renew, and create mission agencies as vehicles for frontier missions;
- ☞ encourage multidimensional and interdisciplinary studies;
- ☞ foster spiritual devotion as well as intellectual growth; and
- ☞ advocate "A Church for Every People."

Mission frontiers, like other frontiers, represent boundaries or barriers beyond which we must go yet beyond which we may not be able to see clearly and boundaries which may even be disputed or denied. Their study involves the discovery and evaluation of the unknown or even the reevaluation of the known. But unlike other frontiers, mission frontiers is a subject specifically concerned to explore and exposit areas and ideas and insights related to the glorification of God in all the nations (peoples) of the world, "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." (Acts 26:18)

Subscribers and other readers of the **IJFM** (due to ongoing promotion) come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Mission professors, field missionaries, young adult mission mobilizers, college librarians, mission executives, and mission researchers all look to the **IJFM** for the latest thinking in frontier missiology.

# Seeing Inside Insider Missiology: Exploring our Theological Lenses and Presuppositions

by Leonard N. Bartlotti

*Editor's note: This paper is a revised and updated version of a presentation to the first Bridging the Divide Consultation on Muslim contextualization, Houghton College, June 20–23, 2011.*

**A**s a scholar-practitioner, when I hear reports of movements of “Muslim followers of Christ” who retain their socio-religious identity “inside” the Muslim community, I find myself rejoicing within a zone of ambiguity. Annoying questions sometimes pop the effervescent bubbles of excitement over Muslims “following Jesus.” The cacophony of voices exuberantly affirming or stridently objecting to this “new thing” in the Islamic world suggests that I am not alone in my intellectual quandary.<sup>1</sup>

Part of my caution is based on my experience that some reports of insider movements appear to slide from the “descriptive” (what is, what appears, or what is said to be happening among Muslims *deus ex machina*, so-called “Jesus movements” attributable to sovereign acts of God) to the “prescriptive” (what could or should be modeled or allowed to happen elsewhere). Biblical, cultural, and historical rationales are then marshaled to defend, affirm, encourage, or endorse the rights and pioneering (some would say, aberrant, heterodox) practices and understandings of local believers and/or their defenders, promoters, and “alongsiders.”

Counterbalancing these doubts is the fact that this is truly great news! New communities of faith are springing up within a religio-cultural sphere that historically has seemed impervious to biblical faith. Innovative expressions of what it means to follow Jesus are being forged on the edges of the Kingdom of God.

I began to ask myself, “Why, then, am I reacting to these reports?” “Why is it so hard to accept some of the legitimizing arguments and missiological rationale for insider movements?” “What is really going on here—in their thinking, and in mine?”

I am no stranger to the challenges of gospel contextualization and theologizing in a global context. My family and I served fourteen years in a sensitive Islamic context. I strove to overcome barriers and explored bridges to communication.

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**T***his is because, on closer examination, insider missiology itself isn't saying one thing; it is saying many things.*

I have seen firsthand the challenges and dangers Muslims face in “following Jesus” in communities of faith (fellowships, house churches) that aspire to both biblical *faithfulness* and cultural *fit*. I empathize with the desire to remain “inside” pre-existing social networks, and appreciate the gospel potential of what McGavran famously called the “bridges of God” (2005 [1955]).

Nevertheless, the way insider missiology has been framed and promoted raised unsettling questions in my mind. Finally, I realized that I was not reacting to one thing, but to many things.

This is because, on closer examination, insider missiology itself is not saying one thing; it is saying many things. Like a fiber optic cable, multiple theological “strands” have been bundled together to present what appears to be a singular case for biblical faith and Jesus community “inside” Muslim identity, networks, and community. This complicates theological assessment.

Similarly, for observers, one’s own presuppositions function like ocular lenses, or visual and photographic filters. These, too, affect the intensity, color, and clarity of the light and the resulting image.

Thus, for proponents and critics alike, our presuppositions or background beliefs affect what they *say* and what we *see* when we assess insider movements or evaluate similar attempts to apply the biblical text to new contexts.

I realized that if we can identify these presuppositions—the background understandings on which insider missiology appears to be grounded, or by which it is being judged—we may be in a better position to examine each assumption from a biblical, theological, and missiological perspective.

Rather than accepting, or rejecting, insider missiology outright or *in toto*, we can explore a range of possible understandings of each associated concept. Then, in a spirit of biblical truth-seeking and evangelical collegiality, we may discern truth and error, explore alternative understandings, and advance the theory and praxis of frontier mission.

What are some of the lenses, filters, and theological presuppositions that affect what we see when we look inside and evaluate insider movements?

This paper proposes that there are at least nine alternative lenses by which we can see “inside” insider movements and assess insider missiology and its nexus of associated theories and praxis. The beliefs and assumptions associated with each concept raise questions, highlight issues and problems, and provide an opportunity for biblical and missiological reflection and evangelical dialogue. The nine lenses are:

1. Ecclesiology
2. Authority
3. Culture
4. Pneumatology
5. History
6. Doing Theology
7. Other Religions
8. Islam
9. Conversion-Initiation

Admittedly, the nine subject areas are broad, and entire books have been written about each one of them. It will not be possible to explore these themes in any detail. We shall touch upon only those dimensions that shed light on diverse approaches to Muslim contextualization, and that suggest some additional lines of inquiry and dialogue to advance our understanding of insider missiology and insider movements.

Sincere Christians hold a range of views on each concept, and each functions as an evaluative criterion. Thus, viewed singly or taken together, the lenses or filters help us evaluate insider missiology along a spectrum—a decidedly biblical and evangelical (rather than deviant or heterodox) spectrum of faith and practice.

At the first Bridging the Divide Consultation (Houghton, NY, June 2011), participants were encouraged to reflect on their own position along the spectrum of understandings for each issue. They then discussed how their own position, ecclesiastical tradition, views, or presuppositions on each issue affected their critique, positive or negative, of insider movements. The presentation (humorously dubbed “Len’s Lenses”) drew an enthusiastic response, and more importantly, facilitated robust interaction.

The utility of this conceptual approach is itself based on three interrelated assumptions:

*Assumption 1:* There are boundaries of orthodox biblical truth, and sincere Christians can and do hold differing positions within these explicit or implicit endpoint boundaries.

*Assumption 2:* Believers and groups may be described as holding positions weighted to the right or left of a presumed mid-point on each issue. That is, the scale is not so much “1-10” (from least to most extreme) as “Plus 1-5” or “Minus 1-5” around a near-consensual midpoint: -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3 +4 +5

*Assumption 3:* Positioning oneself on the broad spectrum is first a reflective and descriptive exercise, not an evaluative one. The suggested starting point is not to judge oneself or another as right or wrong, but to understand how a given position affects how and what one might “see.”

As you look at insider movements through each of the following lenses

or filters, consider how these lenses—your underlying beliefs about each issue—affect how you *see* insider movements and assess insider missiology: “Where am I on the evangelical spectrum of faith and practice?”

## Lens 1: Ecclesiology

Word • Sacraments •  
Discipline • Order • Leadership •  
Pauline Emphasis

—or—

Word • Spirit • Two or Three  
Gathered • Simple Church •  
Synoptic Jesus Emphasis

A major theological presupposition of insider theory and praxis involves ecclesiology. Certain understandings of what it means to be and do “church” are used to promote or defend developing faith communities in Islamic contexts.

At the minimalist end of the ecclesiological spectrum, insider advocates emphasize the spiritual and ecclesial DNA within even the smallest communal structure: “For where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst” (Mt 18:20 NASB). In this view of church, believers who gather around the Word and the Spirit of Christ have essentially all they need to grow and develop in faith, practice, Christlikeness, and witness.

This side of the spectrum values simplicity, freedom, informality, and a synoptic “Jesus style” somewhat removed from Pauline theologizing and complexities, but not removed from Pauline dynamics. Similar to the Radical Reformation as described by Haight (2005, 218ff.), the emphasis to carry the movement forward is on small voluntary groups, meetings in houses, diverse low-level leaders, and vibrant inner faith—rather than on superimposed concepts, structures, and organization. They share the vision of Roland Allen’s *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* (1997 [1927]) and raise

# Certain understandings of what it means to be and do “church” are used to promote or defend developing faith communities in Islamic contexts.

similar questions: *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (2010 [1912]).

At the other end of the spectrum, traditional Reformation ecclesiology, and its Evangelical derivatives, values the Word rightly preached and the sacraments or ordinances (Lord’s Supper and Baptism) rightly administered. Additional criteria include church order, discipline, and approved leadership (official, trained, certified, or ordained), within the more textured ecclesiology usually associated with Paul (e.g., 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians). Moving toward the pole, the “Eucharistic Ecclesiology” of Lutheran, Catholic, and Orthodox theology positions the Lord’s Supper at the heart of the church; the Eucharist is the center of the Spirit’s action for the transformation of both the elements and the people (McPartlan, 1995, 8–9).

There are many historical precedents linking gospel breakthrough with ecclesial tensions. The religious energy of the sixteenth-century Reformation resulted in new ecclesial structures, with their own views of church polity, doctrine, spirituality, practice, and engagement with society. According to Littell (1964), for dissenting Anabaptists, the real issue was not the act of baptism, but “a bitter and irreducible struggle between two mutually exclusive concepts of the church” (quoted in Haight, 2005, 223).

At the heart of the Wesleyan Movement was a desire to experience true spiritual transformation in Christ. Importantly, “perfect love” for God and others was to be worked out in community, leading to the classes, bands, or societies of early Methodism. The early nineteenth-century Restoration Movement advocated abandoning formal denominationalism, creeds, and traditions altogether, in favor of practices

modeled solely on the pattern of the New Testament church.

As Benjamin Hegeman observes, *ecclesia* is used in six different ways in the New Testament; various models of church may be associated with differences in governance, models of worship, and “joints and ligaments” (Col 2:19) to hold it together: universal (Mt 16:18), global (Eph 3:10), national (Gal 1:2), regional (Acts 9:31), urban (Acts 8:1), and household (Rom 16:5). Hegeman notes that liturgical churches (following a “Temple worship” model) are least attractive to Muslim followers of Christ, but “ironically, new African initiated churches find that model most attractive” (Hegeman, personal communication, May 22, 2012). Yet churches in Iran and Algeria follow patterns that Western and Middle Eastern churches would recognize, such as styles of worship, buildings, home groups, and so on.

Whichever side we lean toward, our heritage, understanding, and experience of “church” may affect our assessment of “insider” communities of faith.

## Lens 2: Authority

Scripture • Apostolic Teaching and  
Ministries • Outside Resourcing

—or—

Scripture • Local Believers •  
Local Decisions

A second lens through which to view and assess insider missiology and movements involves the related concept of authority. By this I mean the processes and influences by which decisions are made in a pioneer context. “Who decides?” and how are decisions made related to biblical faithfulness and cultural fit?

Theoretically, the answer is local believers. However, one need simply revisit the missiological discussions surrounding the words “contextualization,” “indigenization,” and “inculturation” to appreciate the nuances involved. Early literature on contextualization was faulted for over-emphasizing the role of the missionary in the contextualization process. Today, there is welcome sensitivity to issues of *power* and *process*.

The current emphasis on insider dynamics and movements represents a pendulum swing in the opposite direction: the processes of biblical decision-making and local theologizing lie in the local community. Local believers make local decisions based on their own understanding, however limited at the time: “Give them the Bible and the Spirit, and leave them alone—they’ll work it out!”

Those on the other side do not deny this as a goal, or diminish this expression of the “priesthood of all believers.” All would recognize that local assemblies are in *process* toward maturation. But the *relationship* with missionaries, teachers, and other representatives of the wider Body of Christ, while not essential, is validated as biblical and “apostolic.”

Similarly, Scripture is the final authority on both sides of the spectrum. But one side tends to emphasize the local *discovery and application* of biblical truth, and the other, the *discernment and impartation* of biblical truth by those who embody the teaching ministry of the church.

This is not a matter of mere pedagogy, for both approaches utilize discovery methods of teaching. In reality, the underlying presuppositions involve understandings of the degree to which, and the manner by which, the church in this generation, through its apostolate to the nations, functions as a faithful “steward of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor 4:1) and “contends earnestly

for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3).

The other side of the spectrum draws its energy and very identity from apostolic mandates to “Command and teach these things” (Col 4:11), “Preach the Word ... correct, rebuke and encourage ... discharge all the duties of your ministry” (2 Tim 4:2-5). “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present every one perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy which so powerfully works in me” (Col 1:28-29).

Interestingly, in one Asian context, local believers responded indignantly to what they considered a condescending



notion: that they did *not* need outside teaching and resources (e.g., books and teaching on the Ancient Near East, social background of the NT, church history, councils, doctrinal disputes, etc.). Outside resources were considered assets for growth and local decision-making about contextual issues.

In another context, a leader who works extensively with Muslim background believers described his experience at a recent meeting:

As we discussed I began with the Apostles Creed. One leader said “this is wonderful, someone has already done this for us. When was this written?” I was overjoyed by his embrace but saddened that after so many

years (of his) working with other ex-pats and western agencies that this basic biblical and historical creed was not a foundation stone to his faith! He had never heard of it. We googled it together so he could understand its value and the importance of being tied to the historic faith.<sup>2</sup>

As we affirm Scripture as the final authority for faith and practice, to what degree does the local decision-making process involve elders in the faith as teachers *cum* advisers, and welcome the wisdom of the historic and global church?

### Lens 3: Culture

Christ *against* •  
Christ *over* or *in paradox* with

— or —

Christ *of* •  
Christ *transforming*

A third lens by which to view insider missiology involves understandings of the relationship between the gospel and culture. Richard Niebuhr’s seminal typology, *Christ and Culture* (1956), sets out five positions: Christ “against” culture, “over” or “in paradox with” culture, “of” culture, or “transforming” culture. He enriches the discussion with a range of historical examples from every period of Christian history.

While there are clear weaknesses in Niebuhr’s schema,<sup>3</sup> for the purposes of this paper, the typology provides another useful way to view insider missiology. Insider followers of Christ—who talk or pray (in Jesus’ Name) in mosques and wear a Muslim cultural identity—follow the Christ “of” culture who eats with “tax collectors and sinners” and who sparks what some advocates consider an “insider” Messianic movement when conversing with a woman at the well in Samaria. Insider proponents emphasize the *continuity* of socio-religious identity as one follows Christ and lives out biblical faith in a given context.



These kinds of “Jesus movements” are viewed hopefully as “salt and light” transforming culture—including the constituent socio-religious structures and/or social networks—from *within*. Gospel meaning can be ascribed to and co-exist within virtually any form, including religious forms, except those that specifically contradict Scripture. Meaning is negotiated by the local believer in his or her context.

The objective is for believers to remain in the social role and networks in which they were called and to transform this context from within. Using Acts 15 as a hermeneutical guide and paradigm, Gentiles do not have to be circumcised and become Jews. Rather, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (I Cor 7:20 KJV), sacrificially serving family and community. All become the best possible fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers, sisters, and citizens of their community, embodying not only biblical ideals, but also the highest social and spiritual aspirations of their people and culture—in Jesus’ Name.

Critics of insider movements and missiology propose an alternative view of culture. They would not say that they are against transformation; nor are they unengaged with Muslims as people. Rather, their critiques emphasize the extent to which “false” understandings permeate every dimension of Islamic religion and Muslim culture. Sin and Satan have defiled and distorted the hearts and minds, understandings of God, social relationships, practices and structures of Islam—and every other socio-cultural and religious expression of humankind—at the deepest level. Properly understood on their own terms, Islam and biblical faith are simply incompatible.

Following Christ, then, involves a *radical break* with the past; regeneration and sanctification through the sacrifice and Spirit of Christ inevitably “rescue[] us from the dominion of darkness” and bring us “into the

**T**he way forward is far more complex than either proponents or critics of insider missiology have acknowledged.

kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col 1:13-14).

Importantly, this “rescue” has visible and dramatic *social* consequences beyond an inner conversion of heart and worldview or an ethical change, viz. a *new social identity*. As universally understood by social scientists, identities by definition are constructed, re-constituted, negotiated, and contested vis-à-vis the “Other.” For insider critics, following Christ means a rejection, not retention, of Islam as embedded within Muslim cultures. Most markers of “Islamic” identity are eschewed, in favor of a new identity in Christ and with His people that is visible, if not always socially viable without persecution. “However, if you suffer as a Christian”—the word is a term of derision used as a socio-linguistic marker—“do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Peter 4:16).

Fortunately, we do not have to choose one or another of Niebuhr’s types. The way forward is far more complex than either proponents or critics of insider missiology have acknowledged. According to contemporary critiques, Niebuhr’s construction of “culture” (as in “Christ against culture”) lacks an appreciation of the multiple issues, dynamics and groups operating within cultural settings, and of the way individuals negotiate their own multiple identities and contest them within social groups.

Thus, D. A. Carson emphasizes, our understanding of the relation between Christ and culture is contextually shaped; and it depends, in part, on “the concrete historical circumstances in which Christians find themselves” (2008, 65). There is no single model. Christians shaped by Scripture, “who are taking their cue (and thus their

worldview) from outside the dominant culture, not only shape and form a Christian culture recognizably different from that in which it is embedded but also become deeply committed to enhancing the whole” (Carson, 2008, 143-44).

Therefore, one agenda for insiders, observers, and alongsiders of “Jesus Movements” in Islamic contexts is a thoroughgoing exploration of biblical and historical models of the relation between the gospel and culture.

#### *Lens 4: Pneumatology*

Spirit-appointed Leadership •  
Sacraments and Channels of Grace •  
Disciplined Growth • “Wind”

— or —

Spirit-anointed Leadership •  
Sovereignty of Spirit • Spontaneous  
Expansion • “Rushing Mighty Wind”

A fourth theological presupposition of insider missiology involves an understanding of pneumatology, the work of the Holy Spirit. Advocates defend insider movements as a unique work of the Holy Spirit in our day. Sometimes Christian witness and teaching is not present. The Spirit is sovereignly using a variety of means to lead Muslims to Christ—from signs, wonders, dreams, and visions, to references to “Isa al-Masih” (Jesus Christ) in the Qur’an.

What we are witnessing, then, is a Spirit-inspired movement to Christ, the “rushing mighty wind” of the Book of Acts, resulting in the spontaneous expansion of the church. Yes, it’s messy and may appear chaotic to outsiders, but give it time. Trust the irrepressible Lordship of the Spirit, and surely things will eventually work out. “The Counselor, the

Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

In this, as with early champions of the Charismatic movement in Roman Catholic and Conciliar denominations in the 1960s and 1970s, we hear echoes of the compulsion that took the Apostle Peter across cultural frontiers: “And the Spirit bade me go with them” (Acts 11:12 KJV). Indeed, one of the contributions of insider missiology is a strong, prophetic call for the church to discern, embrace, and rejoice in the “out of the box” and “out of the Temple” work of the Spirit of God in the hearts and lives of tens of thousands of our Muslim cousins in Abrahamic faith.

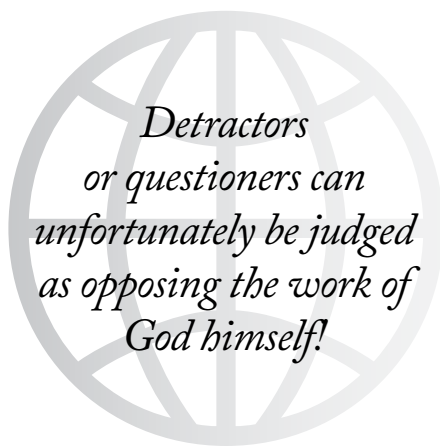
Confronted with indicators of true faith in Isa al-Masih in the lives of Muslims,<sup>4</sup> detractors or questioners unfortunately can be judged as opposing the work of God himself! Likened to Judaizers in the Book of Acts, these doubters are said to be hindering Gentiles from coming to Christ “by faith alone,” apart from the religious accoutrements associated with “Christianity” as we know it.

The argument is that, if God is doing a new thing, then of course “we” (usually meaning anyone not directly familiar with the persons or situation involved) do not understand it and do not know “them.” Thus, we do not have the right to criticize what is happening. Neither the “home base” nor any outsider should hamper field initiatives or innovation. Nor do we have the right to “impose” (the verb is pejorative, backed by sensitivities to and resentment of power dynamics) “our views” on “them” (who must remain anonymous for security reasons, and whom we must protect from outside interference).

Leaving aside the hints of independence and dysfunctional social dynamics in church-mission relations, other theological assumptions are at work.

Concerned observers at the opposite end rightly emphasize that Spirit-appointed leaders are also “gifts” to the Body of Christ: “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12 NASB). Leadership and ministry are spiritual gifts given by God.

In this broad view of the Spirit’s work, gifted leaders, sacraments (ordinances), and the variegated wisdom of the church through the ages, including the rich spiritual insights of non-Western churches, are channels of grace to every part of the Body of Christ.



Thus, insider advocates must also recognize that to minimize these potential avenues of spiritual growth is to risk “quenching” the Holy Spirit, the voices of prophets and teachers, and the “word of wisdom” through His people. The disciplines of 1 and 2 Corinthians and the “wind” blowing through the Pastoral Epistles are no less “spiritual” than the “mighty rushing wind” and rapid growth in the Book of Acts. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17).

At all points along the spectrum, believers are more or less comfortable

with certain aspects of the workings of the Spirit. The challenge for everyone is to have “ears to hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev 2:7).

### *Lens 5: History*

Spirit Active throughout History  
• Church’s Wisdom (Theologies, Creeds, Councils) • Faithfulness • “Faith Once Delivered”

— or —

Spirit Active Now in Local Context  
• New Insights & Expressions • Freedom • “A New Thing”

One’s understanding of culture and the work of the Spirit are interrelated with Lens 5, presuppositions involving history. As suggested in Lens 4, insider proponents have an optimistic, open-ended view of God at work in human history by His Spirit.

The emphasis, however, is on the activity of the Spirit in the “now,” in our day. Insider movements are thought to represent a *kairos* moment in two ways: (1) at the *macro* level, in the history of the Muslim-Christian encounter (usually contrasted with polemical, hostile, or hopeful but largely ineffective evangelistic endeavors of the past); and (2) at the *micro* level, gospel breakthroughs in specific local Muslim contexts (sometimes in contrast with decades or centuries of perceived unfruitfulness or resistance). New expressions of the faith are springing up in what was rocky ground.

Appealing again to the historic Jerusalem Council, advocates report insider movements as a breakthrough on par with the gospel breaking out from its Jewish soil into the Hellenistic cultural sphere. Here, too, Acts 15 is used as a template and “globalizing hermeneutic” (Strong and Strong, 2006) to argue that Muslim followers of Jesus should have the same freedom as Gentiles

to retain their socio-religious identity and live out their faith with minimal cultural imposition from other “Christians” (Judaizers?). “Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles” (Acts 15:19).

But history is a two-edged sword. Without imputing authority to tradition, cautious observers argue that the Spirit has been active throughout the history of the church, as represented for example in the historic creeds, confessions, and traditions of the Christian faith. Thus, even notoriously independent evangelicals retain the Nicene Creed as a plumb line of orthodoxy, while affirming with the Westminster Confession that Scripture is “the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” Faithfulness to the “faith once delivered to the saints” is the primary evaluative criterion.

What is important to recognize is that both sides use history, but in different ways. One side of the spectrum uses history to argue that diversity, heterodoxy, and the danger of syncretism are *normal*—a natural consequence of the messy-but-mighty expansion of the Christian faith across cultural boundaries. The *fact* of theological heterodoxy, and its *cultural* roots, are justification for tolerance today.

The other side uses history to defend orthodoxy (as represented in the Western theological tradition) as *normative*—in the face of the slippery slope of syncretism, cultural relativism, and the dreaded “H” word (“Heresy”) perceived in some of the principles and practices of the insider approach.

Bosch (1991, 485) summons us to humility:

Humility also means showing respect for our forebears in the faith, for what they have handed down to us, even if we have reason to be acutely embarrassed by their racist, sexist, and imperialist bias. The point is that we have no guarantees that we shall

**T***his shift has theological implications. No longer do Westerners sit alone at the theological table or dominate the discussion.*

do any better than they did ... We delude ourselves if we believe that we can be respectful to other faiths only if we disparage our own.

### *Lens 6: Doing Theology*

Universal Truths •  
Western Theological Tradition •  
“Pilgrim Principle”

— or —

Local (Contextual) Theologies •  
Theologies from Majority World Church • “Indigenizing Principle”

A sixth lens for viewing insider movements is suggested by my earlier comments on the use of history, and perhaps is best encapsulated in the title of Timothy Tennent’s book (2007), *Doing Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology*. Christianity is a global movement. Secularization, the decline of Christendom in the West, and the concurrent growth of the church in the non-Western world, have led to a shift in the center of gravity of Christian faith to the Global South, where the majority of today’s Christians now live.

This demographic shift has theological implications. No longer do Westerners sit alone at the theological table or dominate the discussion. But as Tennent observes, “The Western church has not yet fully absorbed how the dramatic shifts in global Christianity are influencing what constitutes normative Christianity” (2007, xviii). “The universal truths of the Gospel are being revisited and retold in new, global contexts” (2007, 2). Tennent calls this process “theological translatability,” which he defines as “the ability

of the kerygmatic essentials of the Christian faith to be discovered and restated within an infinite number of new global contexts” (2007, 16).

Accordingly, some of the difficulty discussing matters of Muslim contextualization appears to arise from tensions in the way various parties conceive of “doing theology” in the twenty-first century. In the well-known words of Andrew Walls (1996, 7-9), the missionary movement in history involves a tension between two principles: the “pilgrim principle” and the “indigenizing principle.” The pilgrim principle is the “universalizing force of the gospel,” which provides a common “adoptive past” and identity that transcends the particularities of the local, associating them with people and things outside their cultural sphere. The indigenizing principle is the particular force of the gospel as it impacts and takes root within specific cultures, enabling followers of Christ to be at home with their group and context (see also Tennent, 2007, 1-24).

Those who lean toward the insider side of the spectrum seem more comfortable with the move toward “local (or “contextual”) theologies” as one aspect of the inculturation of the gospel in particular contexts (see Schreiter, 1985, 1-21). Schreiter describes this shift from traditional theological reflection: “Rather than trying, in the first instance, to apply a received theology to a local context, this new kind of theology began with an examination of the context itself,” and “a realization that all theologies have contexts, interests, relationships of power, special concerns—and to pretend that this is not the case is to be blind” (1985, 4).

Here’s how one respected practitioner in the Middle East described the

process, in the context of discussing the translation of key terms:

If we start with our denomination's theology, or a creed, etc., instead of the NT, we may be guilty of imposing our theology on people, instead of giving them the meaning of the NT words and allowing the Holy Spirit to show them how it applies to their culture. Theologies are developed to answer the issues of a certain culture in a certain time and are not necessarily relevant to other times and places. For instance, how many American seminaries teach courses on idolatry or witchcraft? It is not a major issue in our culture, so we don't develop detailed theologies to deal with it.<sup>5</sup>

This description—beginning with context, rather than the text—tends to make those schooled in Western seminaries very nervous, with their traditional curriculum of Systematic Theology, Historical Theology, etc. The latter have learned to contend for universal biblical “Truth” in the face of “Tolerance,” cultural relativism, and the declining influence of Christianity in government, education, and the public square. Voices raised against the relativistic tide decry a kind of “anthropological captivity of missiology,” and reaffirm the importance of doctrine, propositional truth, and the “transcendent message” of the gospel.<sup>6</sup>

For example, in a 2008 conference address, Dr. John MacArthur famously decried contextualization as “zip-code ministry”:

The apostles went out with an absolute disdain for contextualization. The modern drive for cultural contextualization is a curse, because people are wasting their time trying to figure out clever ways to draw in the elect. Contextualization is “zip-code ministry.” The message of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is transcendent. It goes beyond its immediate culture or sub-culture. It crosses the world, and ignores the nuances of culture. It never descends to clothing or musical style, as if that had anything to do with the message of the gospel.<sup>7</sup>

But as some respondents wryly noted, MacArthur's ministry is itself culture-shaped and zip-code based. All truth is expressed in cultural forms, from the language and literary structures of Scripture (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek; proverbs, poetry, epistles, law, treaties, genealogies, stories, parables, laments, curses, blessings, etc.) to the supreme paradigm of the Incarnation itself, when the “Word became flesh.” The Son of God did not clock “hang-time” somewhere between heaven and earth, like a demi-god or jumping athlete. He taught and ate and left his footprints in Nazareth, Galilee, and the rural routes of Palestine. He suffered, died on a cross, and rose from a tomb left empty in the urban “zip-code” of



Jerusalem. In the process, He dignified space and time, culture and creation.

As a final note here, one detects in Schreiter's comments above, as well as MacArthur's, the nuance that local theologizing is taking place—must, should, will take place—in apposition to the real or imagined imposition of a “received theology” from the outside. The identity of local theologies is being constructed, contested, negotiated; local/contextual theologizing takes place vis-à-vis critique of (or by) the *perceived* “Other,” a universal, usually Westernized church and theology. In the words of Kwame Bediako, “Western theology was for so long presented in all its particulars as *the* theology of the Church,

when, in fact, it was geographically localized and culturally limited, European and Western, and not universal” (quoted in Vanhoozer, 2006, 88).

This helps us situate insider missiology and movements within the vestiges of the post-colonial project, as part of the Majority World church and the trend toward global theologizing, with all the attendant challenges and sensitivities involved.

Thus, the development of local theologies in Islamic contexts (represented by insider missiology—with more or less input from outsider “alongsid-ers”) is taking place in an environment sensitized to issues of power, injustice, oppression, economic inequities, etc., as well as the troubled history of Islam and the West. If we add the post-9/11 steroids of prejudice, bigotry, hate, fear, mistrust and misunderstanding in relation to Islam and Muslims, we end up with a toxic brew that threatens to distort our visual acuity and poison our discussion of theological issues and the process of theological reflection.

As Tennent (2007, 13) advises, we must find a “proper balance” between the universal and the particular, or (as Walls puts it) between the “pilgrim principle” and the “indigenizing principle”—affirming the universal truths of the gospel for all peoples in all places and times, while remaining open to new insights into gospel truth as the Word takes root and bears fruit in the soil of new hearts and minds and cultures.

### *Lens 7: Other Religions*

Discontinuity • Exclusivism •  
Radical Disjunction

— or —

Continuity • Fulfillment •  
*Praeparatio Evangelica*

The seventh and eighth lenses are closely related: the seventh involves our philosophical approach to other religions,

while the eighth lens looks at approaches to *Islam* and Muslims in particular.

The New Testament clearly affirms the uniqueness and exclusivity of Christ as the only way to God and salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). There are different understandings, however, of the notion of “religion” itself, and different Christian attitudes and approaches toward non-Christian religions and faith communities (Bosch, 1991, 474-89). These are usually classified as three broad positions generally known as Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism (Wright, 2000, 951-53), or Exclusivism, Fulfillment, and Relativism (Bosch, 1991, 478-83). Bosch contends that “the two largest unsolved problems for the Christian church” today are “its relationship (1) to *world views which offer this worldly salvation*, and (2) to *other faiths*” (1991, 276-77, emphasis his).

In the debate over insider missiology, one issue is the continuity or discontinuity between religions and religious worldviews. On one end of the spectrum, Christian faith comes as the fulfillment of the aspirations of other religious traditions, and becomes what Scottish missionary J. N. Farquhar (1861-1929) called the “crown” (of Hinduism) (1913; see Netland, 2001, 33ff.). Insider missiology is clearly sympathetic to this perspective in relation to Islam. Elements of culture and other religions function as *praeparatio evangelica*; these prepare the way for the gospel (for the discussion related to the Islam, see Singh, 2010).

Thus, Lamin Sanneh (2003, 2009) argues that divine preparation for the gospel preceded the arrival of missionaries in Africa. The coming of gospel light “rekindles” the sparks “entrusted to all living cultures” into a “living flame” of faith. This provides a theological basis for translating the Scriptures into all vernacular cultures. He notes further that the response to Christian faith in Africa is linked to those societies where the indigenous name for God was used. Thus the notion that “Christ does not arrive as a stranger to any culture.”

## To what degree is public identification with the heritage and adoptive past of a religious community relevant to following Jesus?

The contrasting side is aligned with Kraemer’s position (1947 [1938]), rejecting continuity and compatibility between Christianity and other religions and instead asserting radical discontinuity and a clear line of distinction (cf. Singh, 2010, 234). The differences, then as now, involve intense dispute.

In a separate but related argument, some insider advocates, following post-Enlightenment and contemporary Western critiques of religion (cf. Bosch, 1991, 474-76), use the terms “religion,” “church,” and “Christianity” in a pejorative sense, in juxtaposition to their preferred terms “Kingdom” and “Jesus-centered new movements.” Analysis of their argumentation exhibits a method of defending insider missiology and movements by painting their critics as historically and culturally rooted defenders of the (Western) faith, whose now-reduced place in the global Christian movement serves to undermine the legitimacy of their claims to superior wisdom and insight.

The net effect is to allow for an escape from the burden of Christian history and the “common adoptive past” affirmed by Walls: Who wants to be left “holding the bag” in defense of “Christianity” and two thousand years of real or imagined Christian sins?

As E. Stanley Jones argued in 1925, perhaps more hopefully than presciently, “India can now take from Christ because she is able to disassociate him from the West.... [T]he centering of everything upon the person of Jesus clears the issue and has given us a new vitalizing of our work” (1925, 109-110). In a similar vein for Sunder Singh and N. V. Tilak, “the direct experience of Jesus” was foundational to their faith and led them to walk outside the boundaries of the organized church (Singh, 2009).

Granted, insider proponents argue that insider believers do, in fact, identify with the larger body of Christ. But this identity would appear to be largely in their hearts, in the meeting room, and with select individuals who, in effect, mediate that relationship. For *security* reasons, for *social* reasons, and now for *theological* reasons, Christian identity is not assumed or marked in public, or in the now globalized public square.

One major question, therefore, involves our understanding of “identity,” one of the most complex and well-researched concepts in every branch of the social sciences today. To what degree is public identification with the heritage and adoptive past of a religious community—as it is commonly understood, even by the Muslim *um-mah*—relevant to following Jesus?

There are pragmatic reasons for saying it is not. Certainly anyone with experience sharing the good news with Muslims wants to maintain distance from exterior religion, false or nominal Christians, and the historical and highly charged stereotypes associated with Christianity. The focus is on the Person of Jesus himself as embodying “the gospel.”

But some insider theorists and practitioners are saying more than this. “Religious identity” is contrasted with “Following Jesus.” The former is reified as a negative category, an idol of human fabrication (cf. the discussion of Calvin and Barth in Bosch, 1991, 478-79). It is reduced to historically conditioned human efforts, ethics, and cultic observances; and it is associated with identity in a largely Western, bounded social group (see, e.g., Medearis, 2011).

The boundaries associated with faith communities are also rejected. This reductionist generalization about “Religion” is contrasted with a “Kingdom”

ideal based on the New Testament, to promote and defend the emergence of Restoration-type movements to (and communities of) Jesus that retain and/or reframe their former “religious” identity within their faith community. In this view, according to Bosch (1991, 477), “What is really called for, however, is not just *inculturation* but *inreligionization*,” the implanting of a new faith and spiritual center within an existing religious tradition, community and system.

Note in passing that in insider missiology, public identification with one faith community’s socio-religious identity (Christian) is rejected, while the other (Muslim) is affirmed as necessary, or at very least acceptable, for the sake of a larger *telos* (e.g., rapid evangelization, church-planting movements, cultural transformation from within).

But really, this is nothing new. One again hears echoes from the past, for example, E. Stanley Jones’ *The Christ of the Indian Road* (1925, 59):

Christianity is actually breaking out beyond the borders of the Christian church and is being seen in most unexpected places. If those who have not the spirit of Jesus are none of his, no matter what outward symbols they possess, then conversely those who have the spirit of Jesus are his, no matter what outward symbols they may lack. In a spiritual movement like that of Jesus it is difficult and impossible to mark its frontiers. Statistics and classifications lose their meaning and are impotent to tell who are in and who are not.

For Jones, “Jesus told us it would be so,” by describing Kingdom growth in two ways: (1) “outwardly,” like a mustard seed growing into a tree, that is, “men coming into the organized expression of the Kingdom, namely, the Christian church”; and (2) “silently,” like leaven permeating the whole: “this tells of the *silent permeation of the minds and hearts of men by Christian truth and thought* until, from within, but scarcely knowing what is happening, *the spirit and outlook of men*

*would be silently leavened by the spirit of Jesus*—they would be *Christianized from within*. We see these two things taking place with the impact of Christ upon the soul of the East” (1925, 59–60, emphasis added; cf. Morton, 2013).

Few descriptions capture better the Christo-centric passions and dreams of insider practitioners. Jones’ prediction is certainly true in the Muslim world that Christianity is actually “breaking out beyond the borders” of the church and is “being seen in most unexpected places.” Jones raises a probing parallel question: “Will the Christian Church be Christ-like enough to be the moral and spiritual center of this overflowing Christianity?” (1925, 69).



This suggests that the way Muslim followers of Christ understand and work out their new identity in Christ in a given context is not merely a local affair. How does this “overflowing Christianity” relate to the “moral and spiritual center” represented by the Christian church? The manner by which new identities are constructed, negotiated, or contested by others—in the national/regional/global Christian community, as well as in the Muslim *ummah*—is critical.

The reality is that the Christian faith is an historical religion like any other, with characteristics common to all. This enables us to speak of and understand other religions and their adherents without judgment (Singh, 2010, 230; cf.

Smart, 1998), even as we invite them, with love and respect, to follow Christ.

To inform the ongoing discussion, we need to draw not only on mission field surveys, but also analyses from the fields of psychology, sociology, religious studies, church history, the history of religions, conversion studies, and other disciplines, including historical studies (e.g., the heated controversy over the theology of religions in the 1920s and 1930s). An appreciation for the church’s diverse and “shifting perspectives” on other religions (see, e.g., Netland, 2001, 23–54) can broaden our frame of reference and foster much-needed patience, intellectual humility, and understanding in the contemporary dispute over engagement with other religions such as Islam.

## Lens 8: Islam

“Islam” •  
Historically Essentialized • “Muslims” •  
Islamic Tradition

— or —

“islams” (lower case plural) •  
Culturally Embedded • “muslims” •  
“Which Islam?” “Whose Islam?”

Approaches to Islam (and Muslims) appear to move us to the heart of the divide. “The Nature of Islam” was chosen as one of three major topics at the Bridging the Divide Consultation 2012. This lens is influenced by the other lenses or filters, as well as by one’s academic-*cum*-disciplinary perspective, each of which has its own favored methodologies, aims, scopes, and agendas (Marranci, 2008, 3).

One primary dichotomy here is represented by the contrast between Islam viewed as (1) a unifying *essence* across disparate social, cultural, intellectual, and historical realities; and (2) a *social* phenomenon variously embedded in local contexts.

The traditional approach of Oriental Studies tends to be textual (Qur’an,

Hadith), focused on Arabic, philosophy, theology, history, and related literatures (Persian, Turkish, Urdu). Islam is also viewed developmentally as an historical tradition and phenomenon. Dominated by Western scholars, Orientalism has suffered well-known criticisms for perpetuating stereotyped representations of Islam and Muslims.

In contrast, the social and anthropological approach to Islam emerged in the 1970s and 1980s utilizing social science methodologies (e.g., participant observation). The focus is not on an essentialized Islam, but on the anthropology of Islam and its unique regional and local expressions.

Geertz's seminal *Islam Observed* (1968), followed by el-Zein (1977), Gellner (1981) and Gilsenen (1990 [1982]), influenced a generation of anthropologists. Eickelman (1982, 1997 [1981]), Caton (1990), and Abu-Lughod (1986, 1993) carried forward the study of "Islam in local contexts," albeit primarily in the Middle East/North Africa.

In 1977, El-Zein proposed that there is not one "Islam" but many "islams" (lower case, plural). Esposito (2002) emphasizes that diversity in Islam is also affected by leadership, authority, and global forces. Thus, we need to ask two major questions: "Whose Islam?", that is, "Who decides, interprets, leads, and implements" reform in a given context (rulers, military, clergy, activists, intellectuals, etc.); and "What Islam?", that is, is the Islam envisioned "a restoration of past doctrines and laws, or is it a reformation through reinterpretation and reformulation of Islam to meet the demands of modern life?" (Esposito, 2002, 70-71).

Textured ethnographic studies of everyday Islam ("lived Islam") among Muslim people groups have enormous value; they are greatly needed if servants of Christ are to move beyond stereotypes, sterile generalizations, and surface understandings of Islam as a lived religion.

## *The focus is not an essentialized Islam, but on the anthropology of Islam and its unique regional and local expressions.*

This challenge, and the studies cited above, inspired my own ethnographic research into Muslim identity and folklore in Afghanistan and northwest Pakistan (Bartlotti, 2000).

Anthropologist Marranchi (2008, 7) succinctly summarizes the shift: "We should start from Muslims, rather than Islam," and make the former our object of study. The emphasis is on understanding Muslims as people, what being a Muslim means to them, how Muslim identity is marked, and the distinct self-understandings, values, and emotions of Muslims in diverse contexts. The knowledge base is textured ethnographic studies.

Putting it another way, the dichotomy is between (1) "Muslims" understood as having a common way of believing, thinking, behaving, etc., despite disparities of culture, and (2) "muslims" (lower case) understood as cultural muslims, whose sense of religious identity is locally, ethnically, and culturally constructed. In a critical corollary for insider advocates, this leaves room for idiosyncratic expressions and constructions of Muslimness (viz. "Muslim followers of Christ").

The essentialism of the traditional approach tends to smooth out ethnographic particularities, leading to what Marranchi (2008, 6) calls "the fallacy of the 'Muslim mind theory.'" Generally, insider practitioners and advocates lean toward the other side of the spectrum.

The insider emphasis on particularities, however, risks overlooking historical influences, downplaying connectivities, and oversimplifying notions of causality. The local is sacralized.

In a globalized world, flattened lines of authority, multiple networks, transnational identities, economic migration, and social media add complexity to

our understanding of identity and ethnicity (cf. Banks, 1996) and the often-exoticized "local."

Whether the focus is on the macro or the micro, the state or local-regional dynamics, Eickelman reminds us that the "universalistic and particularistic strains" of Islam are "in dynamic tension with each other" (1995, 342), and they have come to constitute an important area for study. Scholar-practitioners across the divide must learn to appreciate the "dynamic tension" and drill down into new pools of knowledge, while drawing upon a wide range of resources and insights available via multiple disciplinary perspectives.

### *Lens 9: Conversion-Initiation*

Event •  
Believing, Behaving, Belonging •  
People of God • Bounded Set •  
Clear In/out Markers of Identity

— or —

Process •  
Belonging, Behaving, Believing •  
Kingdom of God • Centered Set •  
Moving toward Christ

A final lens through which to view insider movements is a sub-set of frontier missiology that may be called "Conversion Studies." In this case, I have chosen a broader heading based on the classic study by New Testament scholar James D. G. Dunn (1970) on the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. In the social sciences, the term "conversion" can refer to the complex of cognitive-emotional-religious meanings associated with personal change; "initiation" involves elements and behaviors related to recruitment, participation, and belonging to a new social group or movement.

Dunn shows that water baptism is one element in a “conversion-initiation” process. (In the phenomenology of Lukan theology, Luke is concerned not with the *ordo salutis*, but with visible markers of the age of the Spirit inaugurated by the Messiah.) Conversion-initiation in Acts involves five elements: repentance, faith, water baptism, Spirit baptism or the gift of the Spirit, and incorporation into the community of faith.

At issue, then, is the process of *how* people (Muslims) come to faith and begin to follow Christ as members of His people, and the biblical *markers* of change.

Traditionally, the truth encounter is in the foreground. Crisis conversion is followed by a discipleship process, leading to life change and incorporation into a (generally heterogeneous) group or church. There are clear markers of faith and new life, viz. public confession of faith, identification with the Christian community, water baptism, open witness, etc. Believers are to be bold in witness and renounce their former way of life. People know who is “in” or “out” of the family of faith.

On the other side of the spectrum, closer to the insider view, the notion of *process* and the concept of faith as a *journey* are central. This is expressed in the now-familiar “belonging-behaving-believing” schema popular in the “emerging church” model in the West. Faith emerges in the context of an “Emmaus Road” journey to faith with others, involving a gradual discovery of the Person of Christ, His truth and way of salvation.

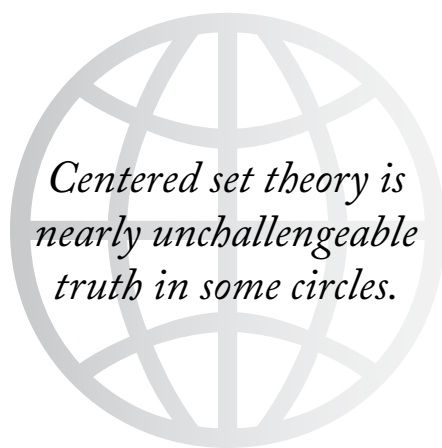
Hiebert (1994) introduced an analogy from set theory that is used to undergird this approach. He proposed viewing the church in terms of “bounded sets” versus “centered sets.”

In the former, the focus tends to be on who is “in” or “out,” and there are clear boundaries to the faith community. In a centered set, the focus is not on the boundaries but on the center, viz. Jesus

Christ; and the critical issue is one’s movement toward, or away, from him.

The “process” side of the spectrum is comfortable with conversion-initiation as a long road without clear mile markers or what most people consider “religious distinctives” associated with a particular faith community. The length of journey, timing of regeneration, and the boundary lines are fuzzy, as are the progress markers; the direction, however, is not.

Centered set theory is nearly unchallengeable truth in some circles, and appears to be one assumption of insider advocates. Moving “toward” Christ approximates “following” Christ and His teaching. Movement in turn is equated with “true” faith = follower



of Jesus = a real “Christian” (though not publicly so named). This contrasts with those who are so in name only, who are made to bear the weight of that maligned historical identity. The “distance” between various people and Jesus is reduced to a matter of personal contact or experience or degree of perceived obedience (not confession, regeneration, or baptism). The key issue is the direction of the arrow toward or away from Jesus—not the distance or relation to a boundary.

The conversion-initiation lens also focuses our attention on the theological issue of the *social* implications of spiritual *reconciliation* in Christ (e.g., between Jew and

Gentile). As Constantineanu (2010, 209) demonstrates in his study of Pauline theology, reconciliation is an essential aspect of salvation and contains “an intrinsic, social, horizontal dimension” that cannot be separated from vertical reconciliation with God: the two are “inseparable ... two dimensions of the same reality.” The new identity believers share as reconciled people in Christ is “the basis for their sharing in, or living out, a reconciled life with others.”

Can one argue for the liberty of Muslim followers of Christ (cf. Acts 15:7-11) to continue to identify with Muslims, but find it inconvenient for them to identify publicly with “Christian” brothers and sisters—due to the consequences or *social* stigma in the eyes of their own people? Peter tried it (cf. Gal 2:11-16) and was rebuked by Paul.

Relationships potentially *veil or reveal the reality of a redeemed humanity*. “The shared table was the acid test” (Walls, 1996, 78).

A concerted study of the complexity of conversion can shed light on critical issues. This includes field studies of conversion to Christ (on the order of Syrjänen, 1984), as well as Christian conversion to Islam, in various cultural contexts in the West and Global South. Manger’s (1999) study of the Lafofa of Sudan, for example, shows that Muslim identity is a dynamic process; “being a Muslim” is contested through the manipulation of the meaning(s) of a changing set of diacritical markers (individual customs and traits) that become symbols of Muslim identity.

It is well known that conversion is a multifaceted process involving personal, cultural, social, and religious dimensions. Thus, studies are needed that include, but go beyond, surveys and interviews with converts and assumptions about causality. Buckser and Glazier (2003, 212ff.) suggest studies of the “contextual matrix of conversion” (e.g., the role of the family and others in the individual intrapsychic



process); the processes of conversion, including the subtleties of “first contact”; longitudinal versus synchronic studies, to explore the long-term consequences of religious change; the definition of “conversion” itself (what exactly is changed?); differences between outsider and insider points of view (epistemologically, phenomenologically); and the role of theology in the way the process is understood and framed (see, e.g., Kraft, 2013).

The disciplines of theology, biblical studies, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and historical studies—all offer possible perspectives through which to understand the multifaceted processes involved in Muslims coming to faith in Christ in diverse contexts around the world. There is no single way to understand conversion. There are multiple theoretical approaches, multiple “lenses.” This brings us full circle.

### Conclusion

This paper has argued that *multiple theological presuppositions* lie at the heart of insider missiology. These presuppositions consciously or unconsciously affect the way proponents have presented, and concerned observers have critiqued, insider movements and insider missiology. The nine interrelated assumptions or background beliefs discussed above—ecclesiology, authority, culture, pneumatology, history, doing theology, other religions, Islam, and conversion-initiation—comprise an array of “talking points” for further dialogue and critique.

The question, “Are you for or against insider movements?” has been shown to be simplistic in the extreme. An individual observer—whether an advocate, insider, or alongsider, or a critic, concerned Christian, or scholar-activist—may deem one of these theological/missiological lenses more significant than others in assessing insider movements.

The right-hand column of Table 1 (next page) summarizes the primary theological presuppositions associated

**T**he question, “Are you for or against insider movements?” has been shown to be simplistic in the extreme.

with insider missiology. To date, most discussions of insider missiology have been complicated by the fact that advocates have braided these notions into one tight, multi-strand argument legitimizing or promoting insider approaches and movements. Likewise some critics have adopted a “zero-sum” approach that reduces the debate to winners and losers.

This analysis has shown that insider missiology is multivocal, not univocal: insider advocates are saying many things, not one thing. Thus, insider missiology must be assessed—and must be willing to be judged, and adjusted—accordingly. Each element involves critical theological issues.

*How we view any single element in this set of interrelated issues influences what we “see” when we look “inside” insider movements, and affects our judgment of what is true, right, fair, and biblical in relation to one of the most contentious subjects on the current mission scene*

Throughout this paper, my aim is not to defend or criticize a particular position, nor to argue for one approach over the other. I have taken the risk of over-simplifying and dichotomizing a set of immensely complex concepts in order to underline the point that there is a *spectrum of defensible and contested biblical positions* on each issue.

The doyen of Islamic Studies, Bernard Lewis, was recently described as someone who has always been “unusually alert to nuance and ambiguity; he is wary of his sources and tests them against other evidence.”<sup>8</sup> Alertness to nuance, tolerance for ambiguity, and a willingness to test sources against other evidence, are difficult qualities to cultivate in the high-octane world of missions, where pragmatics (“what works?”) can trump

diagnostics (“what’s really going on here?”) and biblical hermeneutics can become the handmaiden of our own cherished presumptions.

Thus, in addition to suggestions for dialogue and further study

interlaced with analysis throughout this paper, I would like to offer a few closing recommendations:

1. *Understand insider missiology and movements from within*, by talking with and listening to the voices of Muslim followers of Christ. In this, the emerging research and data from the field will play an important role in helping us move toward a “thick description”<sup>9</sup> of what following Christ means for these new believers and groups.
2. *Balance empathy with a sanctified hermeneutic of questioning*. Other voices must be heard as well. This recommendation applies particularly to sympathetic local workers, alongsiders, and researchers. In most insider contexts, we are dealing with cultures where interpersonal and intercultural communication are influenced by notions of honor and shame, patron-client relationships, economics, and power dynamics. Suspicion and intrigue are in the air. One mark of wisdom, understanding, and spirituality is the ability to distinguish the *outside* dimension (Arabic *zahir*, exterior, apparent meaning) from that which is on the *inside* (Arabic *batin*, hidden, inner, spiritual dimension). This applies not only to understanding the Holy Books and to spirituality, but also, importantly, to relationships. In the latter case, failure to question or discern inner intentions can be, in local eyes, both a sign of foolishness and patently dangerous.

Table 1. Theological Presuppositions of Insider Missiology and the Evangelical Spectrum

5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5
 Theological Lens						Insider Missiology ↓				
Word Sacraments Discipline, Order Leadership Pauline Emphasis	Ecclesiology/ Church					Word Spirit Two or three gathered Simple church Synoptic Jesus emphasis				
Scripture Apostolic teaching & ministries Outside resourcing	Authority					Scripture Local believers Local decisions				
Christ "against" Christ "over" or "in paradox with"	Culture					Christ "of" Christ "transforming"				
Spirit-appointed leadership Sacraments & channels of grace Disciplined growth "Wind"	Pneumatology/ Holy Spirit					Spirit-anointed leadership Sovereignty of Spirit Spontaneous expansion "Rushing mighty wind"				
Spirit active throughout history Church's wisdom (theologies, creeds, councils) Faithfulness "Faith once delivered"	History					Spirit active now in local context New insights & expressions Freedom "A new thing"				
Universal truths Western theological tradition "Pilgrim Principle"	Doing Theology					Local (contextual) theologies Theologies from majority world church "Indigenizing Principle"				
Discontinuity Exclusivism Radical disjunction	Other Religions					Continuity Fulfillment <i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>				
"Islam" Historically essentialized "Muslims" Islamic tradition	Islam					"islams" (lower case, plural) Culturally embedded "muslims" "Which Islam?" "Whose Islam?"				
Event Believing, behaving, belonging People of God Bounded Set Clear in/out markers of identity	Conversion-Initiation					Process Belonging, behaving, believing Kingdom of God Centered Set Moving towards Christ				

3. *Listen with discernment.* Alongsiders, analysts, and observers need to discern the full range of cultural, relational, economic, linguistic, and other dynamics at work in a given situation. The reality is that insider voices are generally mediated voices, due to security issues, language, and other factors. Sympathizers and critics alike bear a special responsibility to discern their own biases; to exercise discernment of spirits; to acknowledge the role of their own theological and missiological presuppositions; to recognize the line between description and prescription; and to speak with love and respect, boldness and humility. As a faculty at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, we used to challenge our PhD scholars to dig deeper into field realities by raising this one important question: "What's really going on when what's going on is going on?"<sup>10</sup>
4. *Ask the hard questions.* "Facts are friendly," one of my former colleagues used to say, quoting his doctoral supervisor. Let's not be afraid to ask critical questions, especially questions related to biblical exegesis and hermeneutics. The Word of God is our final authority. Notwithstanding the desire to be culturally sensitive and contextually relevant, we must discipline ourselves to think biblically and deeply about these matters. In this process, scholar-practitioners must resist the temptation to proof-text their case, or make hermeneutical leaps. This is a call for a deeper immersion in the Scriptures.
5. *Explore multi-perspectival views.* The same situation can be interpreted in different ways. A multi-disciplinary and multiple lens approach to insider missiology should be welcomed. This does not minimize or discredit more narrow disciplinary analyses. We must welcome expertise derived

**W**e used to challenge our PhD scholars to dig deeper into field realities by raising this one important question . . .

from Biblical Studies, Theology, Missiology, Islamic Studies, Anthropology, Linguistics, and other disciplines, and not dismiss the insights of those who may lack "field" experience. What is required is a Jesus-style of scholarship that (1) allows others to sit at the table and have a voice, even if we disagree, and (2) raises one's own voice with both courage and humility.

6. *Engage the ongoing process of "Globalizing Theology."* We need to hear again Hiebert's call for "metatheology," for local Christian communities to "do theology within their own local contexts but *in conversation with other Christians globally*" (Hiebert, 1994, 102-103, emphasis added). Netland (2006, 30) defines "globalizing theology" as "theological reflection rooted in God's self-revelation in Scripture and informed by the historical legacy of the Christian community through the ages, the current realities in the world, and the diverse perspectives of Christian communities throughout the world, with a view to greater holiness in living and faithfulness in fulfilling God's mission in all the world through the church."<sup>11</sup> Insider advocates in local settings bear a special responsibility to engage in both deeper theological reflection and a broader global conversation.
7. *Bridge the Divide.* The divide on matters of Muslim contextualization is both ideological and relational. Bridging the divide involves content and process, biblical interpretation and biblical fidelity, boldness of conviction and mutual respect, purity of heart and a Christ-like tone of voice. In the ongoing process, we must embrace the tensions and ambiguities, and persevere in love, listening, speaking, and learning with others

in the worldwide church. Let us affirm evangelical unity, delight in (or at least tolerate) evangelical ambiguity, and create space for evangelical diversity.

Joyfully we can affirm that this process of seeking spiritual wisdom and insight from the Word of God now includes new brothers and sisters with a Muslim heritage. These communities of faith in Jesus Christ are singing praises to the Lamb of God, who reigns on high and in thousands of hearts within the heart of the Islamic world. **IJFM**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of current issues related to insider missiology and movements, see Haskell, Rob and Don Little, eds. "Insider Movements: Bridging the Divide." Special issue. *Evangelical Review of Theology* 37, no. 4 (2013).

<sup>2</sup> Email message to author, January 28, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> For a current critique of Niebuhr, see D. A. Carson, *Christ and Culture Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Some evidence is anecdotal; other evidence is based on surveys and a growing body of field-based research in progress.

<sup>5</sup> Email message to author, May 18, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> See the website [BiblicalMissiology.com](http://www.BiblicalMissiology.com) for representative samples of vocal opposition to Muslim contextualization, including the debate over Bible translation principles for Muslim audiences. See also *St. Francis Magazine* published online at <http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/>.

<sup>7</sup> This text is from a detailed "summarized paraphrase" of MacArthur's message by Nathan Busenitz published in *Pulpit Magazine: A Ministry of Shepherds' Fellowship*, March 5, 2008. <http://www.sfpulpit.com/2008/03/05/opening-session-%e2%80%93-wednesday-morning/>.

<sup>8</sup> Eric Ormsby, "The Tale of the Dragoon," review of *Notes on a Century* by Bernard Lewis, *Wall Street Journal Online*, May 11, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304743704577380390207004120.html> (accessed May 16, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> A key term in the anthropology of Clifford Geertz, “thick description” of a culture goes beyond factual description to analyze the conceptual structures and complex layers of meaning and interpretation ascribed to specific contextual happenings. See Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Bernard Farr, Senior Residentiary Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, for this insight.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Hiebert, “Metatheology: The Step Beyond Contextualization,” in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 102-103, emphasis added.

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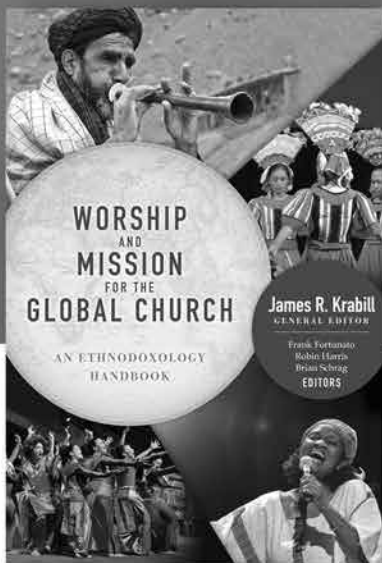


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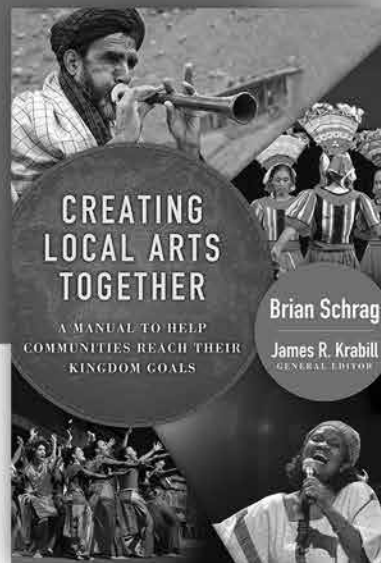
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# Sixteen Features of Belief and Practice in Two Movements among Muslims in Eastern Africa: What Does the Data Say?

by Ben Naja

*Editor's note: In a recent issue of IJFM (30:1, pp. 27-29, "A Jesus Movement among Muslims: Research from Eastern Africa"), we presented the background story to the main movement referred to below as well as some initial findings from the author's research. Readers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with that account.*

**I**n a previous article in this journal, I briefly related how a movement to Christ began and then grew over a thirty-year period in a Muslim area of Eastern Africa. I also offered some preliminary findings of an in-depth study that showed how these Muslim followers of Jesus share their faith, meet for fellowship, and relate to the wider Muslim community.

In this second article, I describe sixteen features of belief and practice identified in two movements, including the one documented in the previous article. I then touch on three vital issues I hope will contribute to the ongoing discussion concerning "insider movements."

## *Sixteen Features of Belief and Practice Identified in Two Eastern African Movements*

The following sixteen features derive from my field data, which was obtained using a 70-question questionnaire administered to 390 people in two movements. 322 interviews were conducted with believers from the first such movement that occurred in a particular African country (primary research group). These findings were compared with interview data from 68 believers from a second movement in the same country (comparison group). Where relevant, the findings from these movements have been complemented by other available data of movements around the world (which I reference in my footnotes). Each of these features (except two) was true for at least 50% of those interviewed in both groups, and in the majority of cases, these features in fact reflected the responses of a full two-thirds or more of those interviewed in both groups.

### **Feature 1: Trust in Jesus alone for salvation, forgiveness, blessing and protection**

Salvation through Jesus alone is foundational to any biblical Jesus movement. Four questions addressed this crucial topic and all received clear answers. In both contexts, over 92% of all participants agreed (in response to all related

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questions) that they trust in Jesus for their salvation, blessing, forgiveness and protection.

Compare this to the strikingly low positive response for the other options on the questionnaire. Indeed, less than 7% trust in Muhammad's intercession for salvation; 11% believe that Allah will forgive them because Muhammad prays for them; 4% perform the *salat* to obtain God's forgiveness of their sins; 2% trust in *talismans* for protection; and 2% trust in the local *sheiki's* power to intercede. These findings are all the more significant considering that, for most respondents, these features of popular Muslim piety were likely all part of their pre-conversion practices. Thus, feature 1 is clear testimony to the powerful transformation that has occurred in their lives.

#### Feature 2: Belief that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for their sins

The evidence from Scripture is clear: Jesus is the Son of God, and without the cross, there is no salvation. The customary interpretation of the Qur'an is equally clear: Jesus is not the Son of God, and he didn't need to die on the cross for the salvation of humanity. Two questions addressed this critically important topic and again the response was overwhelming. In both contexts, 95% of Jesus followers hold to the biblical truth that Jesus is the Son of God and 95% also believe that he died on the cross. In response to each of three related questions, over 92% agreed that they are saved, forgiven and loved by God because Jesus died for their sins.

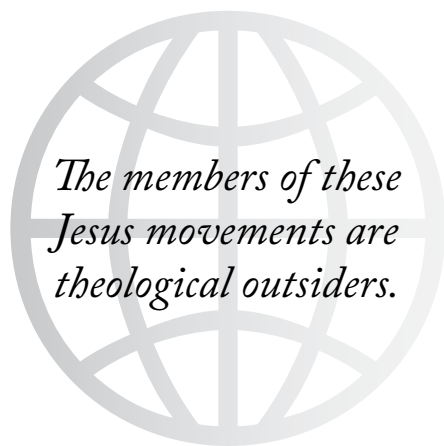
#### Feature 3: Baptism

The overwhelming majority (80%) of all followers of Jesus in both movements have been baptized. Among believers who have been following Jesus for more than a year, over 90% of respondents in the primary research group have been baptized, a full 100% in the comparison group.

#### Feature 4: Pursuit of a dual identity: social and cultural insider, spiritual outsider

This feature has been—and continues to be—one of the most disputed areas in the current debate. According to my research, the followers of Jesus in these two movements are *insiders* on a cultural and social level, but *outsiders* on a theological and religious level.<sup>1</sup> They pursue a dual identity, which is possible for some to maintain but impossible for others.

Some 80% of these disciples identify themselves as Muslims in a qualified sense, namely, Muslims who follow Isa al-Masih. By adding the qualifier "... who follow Isa al-Masih," they already identify themselves as religious



outsiders, for it is not possible to be an insider theologically or religiously and trust in Jesus alone for one's salvation, blessing, forgiveness and protection. Only a small minority identifies as Muslim (13%); an even smaller percentage identifies as Christian (4%).

Thus, while these followers of Jesus define themselves as Muslims in the social and cultural sense, they are clearly religious outsiders since their spiritual identity is in Jesus alone. Nevertheless, not all disciples actually succeed in remaining socially and culturally inside the Muslim community; 51% responded that they are no longer accepted as a member of the wider community. But when asked whether

they still feel part of the wider Muslim community, 59% of those interviewed said yes. This ambiguity may reflect a tension between (1) the new believer's own sense of belonging to the wider community and (2) their perception of acceptance by unbelievers; however, further research is required to clarify this important aspect of their identity.

What the data seems to indicate, then, is that most of these followers of Jesus define themselves as Muslims in a qualified sense, but about 40% no longer feel part of the wider Muslim community.

#### Feature 5: Muhammad is not acknowledged as a true prophet nor do believers in these two movements trust in his power to intercede

To acknowledge Muhammad as a true prophet is part of the first pillar of Islam. My research revealed a clear trend in this regard. Although some major differences do exist between the research and the comparison groups, in neither context do a majority still consider Muhammad a true prophet (only a tiny minority [3%] of the comparison group, and a more significant minority [34%]—but still a minority—in the research group).

#### Feature 6: The Qur'an is no longer considered as the sole and highest authority

Six questions sought to discern the place of the Qur'an in the lives of these followers of Jesus. Only a tiny minority (3% in the primary group, 0% in the comparison group) seeks to follow the Qur'an alone. When asked which book is the greatest, only 8% chose the Qur'an, ten times as many chose the Bible.

Although few hold to the Qur'an as their sole authority, around 60% do read it or listen to it at least occasionally. One cultural feature of the Muslim community is to read or listen to the Qur'an, so it is not surprising that many of these followers of Jesus (being cultural insiders) would do so as well.



As religious outsiders, however, they no longer acknowledge the Qur'an as their sole or highest authority.

Features 5 and 6 confirm the findings in feature 4, namely that the members of these Jesus movements are theologically outsiders—they do not believe in Muhammad as a true prophet nor consider the Qur'an their highest authority.

#### **Feature 7: Diverse practices with regard to mosque attendance**

I found no clear majorities concerning mosque attendance.<sup>2</sup> Nearly 60% of the research group and more than 40% of the comparison group in these two movements never go to the mosque. Related to this were two questions regarding *salat* performance. Not surprisingly, the data on the *salat* and mosque attendance are similar: more than 40% of respondents in both groups say that they never perform the *salat*.

#### **Feature 8: Believers in these movements feel that they are a part of the worldwide family of God**

I have already mentioned that many of these followers of Jesus maintain a Muslim identity and feel part of the wider Muslim community (see feature 4). But they also have the sense of being fully part of the worldwide spiritual family of God. My research found that an overwhelming 97% of all respondents feel they belong to God's beloved people.

Despite what some Western writers contend should be the case,<sup>3</sup> these believers apparently do not perceive this dual identity as a harmful, or compromising, contradiction. They feel a sense of physical belonging to their community of birth, which happens to be a Muslim community. At the same time, they feel a sense of spiritual belonging to God's worldwide family in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Feature 9: Participation in weekly or even more frequent *ekklesia* gatherings**

The spiritual sense of belonging to God's worldwide family manifests

**A**mong the believers who have been following Jesus for ten years or more, an impressive 73% have read the entire Bible.

itself in regular attendance at local, visible *ekklesia* (fellowship) gatherings with other believers from a Muslim background. (Note that for the purposes of this study I am using the term *ekklesia* to refer to "the gathering of those who follow Jesus.")

In both groups, our research found that over 92% of respondents participate in such gatherings, the majority doing so at least once a week.<sup>5</sup> They come together primarily to pursue four main activities: the reading of Scripture, prayer, worship, and fellowship.

#### **Feature 10: Regular Bible reading**

The Bible has a special place in the lives of these followers of Jesus. 88% of them read or listen to the *Injil* at least weekly, with 85% of the leaders indicating they read it even daily. Among the believers who have been following Jesus for ten years or more, an impressive 73% have read the entire Bible.

#### **Feature 11: Evangelism**

A full 92% of these believers share their faith.<sup>6</sup> Their primary means of evangelism are verses about Jesus in the Qur'an, personal witness, the Bible, and prayer for the supernatural intervention of God (especially prayer for the sick).<sup>7</sup>

#### **Feature 12: Numerical growth along the lines of pre-existing social and family networks**

In the research group (two-thirds of all cases) and—to an even greater degree—in the comparison group (78% of all cases), respondents had immediate family members who also follow Jesus. The gospel is flowing through their community mainly, though not exclusively, along family lines.

#### **Feature 13: Persecution**

I include the area of persecution because, while not a clear majority, nearly

half of the disciples of Jesus in these two movements do suffer for their faith (47 percent in the research group, 52 percent in the comparison group). Note that persecution for faith in Jesus seems to be the experience of the majority of followers of Jesus in other Jesus movements around the world, as highlighted by several authors.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Feature 14: Experience of the supernatural power of God**

These believers have experienced the supernatural power of God in their lives, both before conversion and in evangelism. 41% indicated that a supernatural event influenced their decision to follow Jesus prior to their conversion (31% had a vision of some kind, while 10% experienced a supernatural healing or deliverance).<sup>9</sup>

Possibly because of the role such experiences played in their own conversion process, some include the supernatural dimension in evangelism, with 27% praying for the sick when they share the gospel. Since we don't know the extent of the overlap between these two groups—those having had dreams and visions and those who pray for the sick when evangelizing—it would be safe to conclude that somewhere between 41% and 68% of the respondents have experienced the power of God. This figure is actually much higher in some of the other movements of Jesus followers in other parts of the world.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Feature 15: Believers are commonly from a *Sufi* or other non-*Wahabi* background**

Different, even contradictory, Muslim movements exist in the wider geographic area of Eastern Africa in question. Although potentially from a number of backgrounds, in neither group (research or comparison) did the

majority belong to any of the various sects with stricter interpretations of Islam, such as the *Wahabi*. Believers from non-Wahabi backgrounds accounted for 77% of the research group and 57% of the comparison group.<sup>11</sup>

### Feature 16: Believers grow into more biblical expressions of faith and practice over time

As time goes on, these disciples grow in their closeness to God through Jesus; their understanding of God and Jesus becomes more biblical;<sup>12</sup> and they share the gospel more frequently. This growth over time is a central feature of both movements.

Mosque attendance and *salat* performance decrease among older believers. Over time, disciples participate more regularly in local ekklesia gatherings and identify increasingly with the worldwide spiritual family of all who confess Jesus as Lord. While the percentage of those still perceived as Muslims by the wider Muslim community decreases significantly over the years, about half are able to remain in the Muslim community. That said, how disciples identify themselves does not change over time. Even after many years the oldest believers still refer to themselves primarily as Muslims who follow Isa al-Masih.

In relation to the Scriptures, the percentage of those who read the *Injil* on a daily basis significantly increases the longer they have been following Christ. Their habit of reading (or listening to) the Bible much more than they do the Qur'an reflects the fact that they no longer consider the Qur'an the sole or even highest authority in their lives. Indeed, only a very small minority still seeks to follow the Qur'an alone.

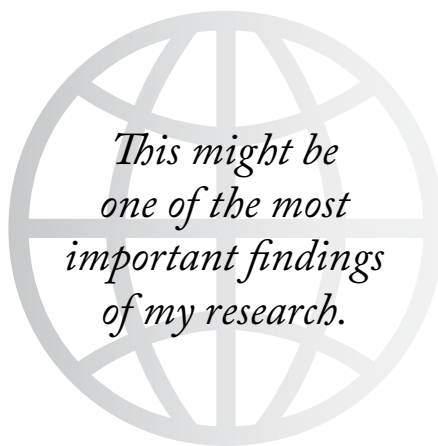
### *Some Observations about Jesus Movements Based on Empirical Research*

My research provides empirical evidence that Jesus movements are

a God-given way in which many Muslims are coming to saving faith in Christ. In addition, two features of these movements—pursuit of a dual identity and regular ekklesia gatherings within the Muslim community—are not simply theoretical possibilities, but actual reality.

### Jesus Movements as a God-initiated phenomenon

In the literature on insider movements, supporters and opponents are divided as to whether such movements are a modern theoretical construct concocted by Western missiologists or whether they are actually happening as a God-given phenomenon in the Muslim world today. My research on these two Jesus



movements in Eastern Africa seems to suggest the latter. These movements appear to have been divinely initiated and are not the result of a new strategy developed by a few mission strategists from the West. In fact, no Western gospel worker even knew about them at first. Only at a later stage, as more things were happening, were these movements brought to the attention of field practitioners. These practitioners then sought to find biblical guidelines and answers to the missiological questions these believers were asking.

Whatever their origin, the data make it clear that Jesus movements among Muslim communities are happening; they are an undeniable reality today.<sup>13</sup>

### The possibility of a dual identity

My findings show that many followers of Jesus in these two movements pursue a dual identity. Culturally and socially, these believers are Muslim, while spiritually they are disciples of Jesus. They are still part of the wider Muslim community, even though their thinking diverges theologically and spiritually from that of mainstream orthodox Muslims. Their Muslim communities do not seem to mind that much what these disciples actually believe and practice, as long as they do not bring shame or offense to the community.

Within the wider umbrella of at least some expressions of Islam, there seems to be room for many deviant views, practices, and opinions. This is true not only for members of Jesus movements, but also for the very numerous members of Sufi orders or other Muslim sects.<sup>14</sup>

### The reality of a “visible/invisible” ekklesia

The findings presented here show discreet gatherings of disciples of Jesus within a wider Muslim community to be a reality (and one that can now be carefully documented). The existence of “visible/invisible” informal groups of disciples (ekkklesia) who regularly gather in the midst of Muslim communities might be one of the most important findings of my research.

These informal ekklesia are “invisible,” in that they do not actively seek public recognition by displaying Christian symbols or engaging in practices generally connected with Christianity (such as large buildings, loud music, or full-time clergy). But they are nonetheless very real or “visible” fellowships because actual people are meeting at actual times in actual places on a regular, at least weekly, basis.

Structurally, these ekklesias usually follow the lines of natural family and other pre-existing social networks. Rather than extracting members from their networks into an aggregate church, the kingdom of God and its values are implanted into them.<sup>15</sup>

Given the rather authoritarian character of Islam, open or normal ekklesia gatherings do not seem to be an option. Nevertheless, my research shows that—however unlikely on a theoretical level—a new redemptive community within the old is an actual reality.<sup>16</sup>

### *Sixteen Features Summarized*

To conclude, we can see that followers of Jesus in these two Jesus movements in Eastern Africa, share—to a greater or lesser degree—several key characteristics.

Followers of Jesus in these movements:

1. trust in Jesus alone for salvation, forgiveness, blessing and protection
2. believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for their sins
3. have been baptized
4. pursue a dual identity (social and cultural insider, spiritual outsider)
5. do not acknowledge Muhammad as a true prophet nor trust in his power to intercede
6. no longer consider the Qur'an as their sole and highest authority
7. pursue diverse practices with regard to mosque attendance
8. feel that they are a part of the worldwide family of God
9. attend ekklesia meetings at least once a week
10. read or listen to the Bible frequently
11. share their faith
12. have family members who also follow Jesus
13. have been persecuted
14. experience the supernatural power of God
15. are frequently from a Sufi or other non-Wahabi background
16. grow into more biblical expressions of faith and practice over time.

I hope that my research and description of the sixteen features identified in two Jesus movements in Eastern Africa will help the mission community to understand more accurately some of the possible dynamics happening

*However unlikely on a theoretical level, a new redemptive community within the old is an actual reality.*

inside such movements. However, this is only a humble beginning. As Jesus movements emerge in many other contexts around the world, more such empirical research is needed in order to better understand what God is doing in Muslim communities today and how we might possibly contribute. **IJFM**

### *Endnotes*

<sup>1</sup> I adopted the term “Culturally Insider, theologically outsider” (CITO) from an unpublished paper written by an East African movement leader. He writes: “In one of the ... case studies, we have a church called People of the Injeel. This group is generally culturally or socially an ‘insider’ church, but especially, religiously or theologically ‘outsider,’ or CITO.... When we use terminology from the Muslim religious context such as the words Allah, Isa, Al Messiah and some other religious terminology it makes us an *insider*. However when we give biblical meaning for Allah as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Allah so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, Isa al Messiah is Lord, Isa died for our sin according to Scripture.... it makes us an *outsider* because we are not interpreting any more Allah, Isa Al Messiah as Muslims interpret or define them... this assembly is generally or Culturally or Socially Insider but Specifically or Theologically or Religiously Outsider CITO.”

Disciples in the two Jesus movements would keep their Muslim names; wear their Muslim clothes; follow Muslim dietary regulations; follow Muslim customs; participate in Muslim ceremonies; and identify themselves as Muslims or Muslims in a qualified sense; read the Qur'an; and occasionally attend the mosque. But they would not hold to Muslim doctrine or theology when it contradicts the Bible. Some examples of this include the fact that they define Jesus not only as prophet, but as Saviour and Son of God; they do not consider the Qur'an as their highest authority; they do not believe in Muhammad as the final and greatest prophet; and they believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1990s, researchers from Fuller Theological Seminary studied an insider

movement in South Asia. Regarding mosque attendance, their findings differ considerably from my Eastern Africa data inasmuch as, in their context, almost all respondents attended the mosque regularly, and in that the majority of the believers still regularly practiced *salat*.

<sup>3</sup> Two examples of such writers are Dixon (2011) and Nikides (2009).

<sup>4</sup> Mazhar Mallouhi, a prominent Muslim background believer from the Middle East, vividly describes how this dual identity manifests itself in his life (2009).

<sup>5</sup> The percentage of regular ekklesia participants is very similar in South Asia (according to the Fuller study).

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller description on how these believers come to faith and evangelize, see my article, “Welcoming Muslim Neighbors into God’s Kingdom in East Africa,” *Mission Frontiers*, July/August 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Kim, describing a movement to Jesus in “Anotoc,” mentions the same four factors that led many Muslims to Christ. (Kim in Greenlee, 170).

<sup>8</sup> For example, Travis in Reisacher 2012, Jameson 2000, and Ali and Woodberry 2009.

<sup>9</sup> The four main factors that are part of their conversion journey are, in order of importance, verses about Jesus in the Qur'an, demonstrations of love and verbal witness, supernatural experiences, and the Bible.

<sup>10</sup> Other Jesus movements in other parts of the world where the supernatural factor seems to be present, if not predominant, include Jameson 2000, Travis in Reisacher 2012, or Daniels 2013.

<sup>11</sup> As there was no similar data available from other Jesus movements in the world, it is not possible to make further comparisons at this point. In my study, at least, it seems that Jesus movements are more likely to emerge in contexts where popular Muslim piety or Sufi expressions of Islam predominate.

<sup>12</sup> Feature 16 specifically refers to faith practice and less to theological understanding. I added understanding here because it seems clear that these believers grow into a more biblical understanding of God and Jesus over time. Abu Jaz (see footnote 1), in describing a Jesus movement, summarizes this well: “They progressively understand

him, from prophet and messenger to Savior and then to Lord. But this takes time and the Holy Spirit, as it also did for Peter" (Abu Jaz in Daniels 2013, 26). Although I do not have empirical data to prove this point, there is much anecdotal evidence for this progressive understanding of Jesus.

<sup>13</sup> Garrison clearly confirms this.

According to Garrison, by the end of the twentieth century, there had only been ten movements to Christ among Muslims. However, "In the first 12 years of the 21st century an additional 64 movements of Muslims to Christ have appeared. These 21st-century movements are not isolated to one or two corners of the world. They are taking place across the Muslim world: in sub-Saharan Africa, in the Persian world, in the Arab world, in Turkestan, in South Asia and in Southeast Asia. Something is happening, something historic, something unprecedented." (Garrison 2013, 9)

<sup>14</sup> Green mentions several other examples of sects and reform movements that have emerged within Islam, such as the Alevi, the Druze and the Ismailis. Although each of these are deviant, they are counted as Muslims and tolerated as Muslim sects under the wider umbrella of Islam (Green in Greenlee 2013).

<sup>15</sup> The Grays highlight the importance and effectiveness of the transformational model over the attractional model of church planting and base their argument on the Fruitful Practices research. They found that worldview and identity issues are more decisive than contextualization (Gray 2009a, Gray 2009b). The findings of my research confirm their argument in that church planting mainly happens through transformation from within pre-existing social networks and that the gospel usually spreads along family lines.

<sup>16</sup> Based on his global research, Garrison found that in more than sixty separate locations in at least seventeen countries new communities of Muslim-background followers of Christ have emerged over the past two decades (Garrison 2013). It seems therefore safe to say that ekklesia gatherings inside Muslim communities are not a phenomenon unique to the Eastern Africa context.

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# Roles of “Alongsiders” in Insider Movements: Contemporary Examples and Biblical Reflections

by John and Anna Travis

**D**o insider movements<sup>1</sup> occur spontaneously as sovereign moves of the Spirit, or do they involve the activity of God’s people from outside the community as well?

History and Scripture suggest that all movements to Jesus involve human *and* divine action. In what would at first appear in Acts 2 to be a spontaneous movement—namely, the outpouring of the Spirit, followed by 3,000 decisions to follow Jesus—divine and human activity are both apparent.<sup>2</sup> In the insider movements with which we are familiar, both the hand of God and the labors of Jesus followers are clearly seen.

The present study focuses on ministry-related roles that certain Jesus followers (termed *alongsiders*) can play in advancing insider movements. We share examples from the lives of alongsiders we know, along with relevant passages from Scripture, to give input and encouragement to those called to alongsider ministry.<sup>3</sup>

## *Alongsider* Defined and Described

The term *alongsider* refers to a follower of Jesus from another culture or area whom God has prepared to walk “alongside” insiders in their faith journey with Jesus. Alongsiders we know devote themselves to understanding the language, culture and hearts<sup>4</sup> of the peoples God calls them to serve. They have learned to view the *other*—regardless of religion or culture—as a fellow creation of God equally in need of the salvation and transformation that following Jesus brings.

Regardless of age, gender or background, alongsiders have two traits in common. First, they have what we would term a *kingdom-centered*, rather than *religion-centered*, ministry focus. As they work with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and others, they are focused on seeing the Kingdom of God enter and transform these socio-religious groups from the inside out, rather than encouraging separation and change of religious identity.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, alongsiders are willing to minister with little or no formal recognition. For security reasons, they generally cannot announce to the outside world what

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God is doing in the movements they have seen. They realize that serving a movement is not about *them* or about building up *their* ministry or the ministry of their denomination or organization. Rather it is about seeing fellowships of Jesus-followers blossom in situations where often the alongsider's name and labors will be known only to God and to a handful of insiders.

### *Six Challenges of Alongsider Ministry*

We have had the privilege of knowing a number of alongsiders and have witnessed firsthand how God has used them to advance insider movements. As we have listened to their stories, we have identified seven ministry roles they frequently assume.<sup>6</sup> Most of these roles are similar to those exercised in the ministries of followers of Jesus in other types of movements as well. The main difference in alongsider ministry is how they face and overcome the following six challenges.

#### **Challenge 1: Helping Without Directing**

Alongsiders often come to the field with years of ministry experience, training and strong Bible study skills. The first challenge these alongsiders face is how to find and develop the first few believers (or people of peace<sup>7</sup>) without overwhelming them with all the alongsiders' knowledge and expertise, an action that could inadvertently undermine the confidence of emerging insider leaders. Alongsiders involved with the first few believers in a movement must introduce the good news in ways that empower, impart, encourage, facilitate, catalyze, and enable reproducible ways of engaging Scripture, all without controlling or directing the emerging movement.

#### **Challenge 2: Sharing Truth without Undermining Insiders**

The second (related) challenge is how to share biblical truth in ways that do not undermine insiders or separate

them from their own people, thereby inhibiting their ability to influence their families and communities. Christians have often tended to view other faiths or cultures primarily in terms of what is wrong or unbiblical in them. At times alongsiders do help insiders critically examine various beliefs and worldviews (see below), but the first step is always to affirm what is already biblically good and praiseworthy. Too often well-intentioned outsiders have spoken ill of the new believers' culture, causing insiders to reject their family and culture.

#### **Challenge 3: Letting Scripture Be the Final Authority**

How can alongsiders help new followers of Jesus think biblically and



critically about religion and culture, allowing the Word of God illumined by the Spirit of God to inform and transform local beliefs and practices? This is a dynamic process, one where the new followers of Jesus may over time arrive at interpretations of the Scriptures that do not necessarily match the interpretation of either the alongsider or of certain Christian traditions. In the movements with which we are familiar, we observe that as insiders look at their traditional practices and study Scripture, they choose to *retain* certain key aspects of their culture and religious community, *reinterpret* others, and *reappraise* or *reject* still others. Trusted alongsiders have often helped facilitate this sensitive, crucial process.

#### **Challenge 4: Understanding the Need to Self-theologize**

Related to the previous challenge is the question of how to help insiders develop a biblical worldview and *self-theologize*,<sup>8</sup> expressing the message of Jesus in ways understandable and meaningful to their family and friends. While ideally this should happen whenever the gospel crosses any cultural or religious barrier, it is especially crucial in insider movements, where communities may already be predisposed against the gospel. Self-theologizing helps insiders incorporate the old (from the existing community), as long as it does not contradict the new (following Jesus and the Bible), finding vocabulary, thought forms, subject matter, and communication styles that are culturally appropriate. Failure to do so can result in a foreign-sounding gospel, as if it were a message for others but not for them.<sup>9</sup> Self-theologizing helps a people see that Jesus is truly for them, the savior for all people.

#### **Challenge 5: Encouraging Intentional Fellowship in the Absence of Familiar Models**

This challenge concerns how to encourage Jesus-centered corporate life among insiders when the alongsider cannot directly model or participate in regular insider gatherings. Since insiders do not join local pre-existing traditional churches, where they might find certain elements typical of other Christ-centered communities (e.g., corporate prayer, worship, a designated meeting place, youth programs), they must create alternative ways to gather that are both biblical and viable. Small insider home groups, which often meet in ways similar to underground churches in certain closed countries, must rely heavily upon inductive group Bible study, the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the use of spiritual gifts (e.g., teaching, healing, discernment, helps, vis-à-vis Eph. 4:7-13, Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-31).

## Challenge 6: Ministering in Spite of the Lack of a Recognized Position

The sixth challenge involves the status and identity of the alongsiders. Alongsiders serve the insiders in a variety of roles, yet they are often in the awkward place of neither being insiders themselves, nor officially holding leadership positions in the movement. In addition, few mentors or role models exist for alongsiders, and home churches are just now beginning to understand this type of ministry. Like the insiders, most alongsiders are pioneers, learning as they go. Some alongsiders thrive in this environment more than others.

Having briefly considered these six challenges, we now turn to ministry roles exercised by alongsiders and relevant Scriptures related to each role.

### *Seven Roles for Alongsiders*

The following seven roles are presented with two caveats. First, by combining various roles, or further delineating others, some may see either more or less roles than seven. Secondly, these seven roles are based on personal observations of alongsiders we have known as well as our own ministry experience,<sup>10</sup> thus there may be roles we have missed due to our own limited exposure to other fields and ministries.

#### 1. Intercessor

We place the role of intercessor first as prayer is central in any type of movement to Jesus.<sup>11</sup> Most alongsiders would say that breakthroughs took place *after* intercession and that insider movements are sustained *through* intercession. Intercession paves the way for a movement as intercessors ask God to cause signs and wonders to take place,<sup>12</sup> move on human hearts, hold back demonic strongholds, call workers, and bring about maturity in new believers.<sup>13</sup> In addition, God speaks to intercessors and gives them love for those they are called to serve.<sup>14</sup>

**T***his small movement continues to this day and has gradually spread to several neighboring towns and villages.*

*Example:* We know groups of alongsiders who set aside regular seasons of intercession and fasting for their adopted people. This may be several hours daily for extended periods of time, all night once a week, an entire month, or one full day every week over many years. We were part of one such four-year period of intercession. This time was preceded by utter desperation for God to move and, thankfully, was followed by the beginning of a Jesus movement within the religious community of our adopted people. This small movement continues to this day and has gradually spread to several neighboring towns and villages.

*Biblical reflections:* To understand intercessory prayer, we look first to the life of our Lord. At every key juncture in his life we find Jesus off alone, interceding before the Father. Prayer was central to his ministry.<sup>15</sup> Before Jesus, men such as Moses, Daniel and Ezra demonstrated intercession as they repented for the sins of their forefathers.<sup>16</sup> After the ascension of Jesus, we find that intercession was integral to the ministry of the apostles in the earliest Jesus movements.<sup>17</sup> Today, intercessors continue this work, joining Jesus in his intercession at the right hand of God.<sup>18</sup>

#### 2. Learner

Alongsiders are learners. While they do bring a vital message to be shared, they first seek to understand before insisting on being understood. For alongsiders, the pursuit of a deep understanding of the people often involves living with local families who do not yet follow Jesus, which helps facilitate a process that Tom and Betty Brewster have called *bonding*.<sup>19</sup> In addition, most alongsiders try to gain insight into the religious heritage and worldview of those they

are called to reach by engaging, over an extended period of time, in some form of ethnographic interviewing. While cross-cultural field workers in other types of ministry often do the same, the knowledge gained through such research and participation in the community is particularly crucial for alongsiders as they need an in-depth understanding of how God is already at work in the religion and culture of those they serve. Without it, they may find it hard to see what is already biblical and praiseworthy—or truly wrong, even demonic—in the religion or culture in question. Those who intimately understand the hearts and minds of the people are better positioned to recognize these dynamics.

*Examples:* Many alongsiders have lived with Muslim families for several months, and in some cases, years. We know one team of alongsiders who were not able to live in the homes of local families, so they rented attached rooms close to them in the very center of Muslim neighborhoods. We lived with two different families—first for one month in a village setting followed by two months with a family in a large urban area. All our ministry coworkers, both expatriates and nationals, live with local non-Christian families for at least one month. Living with a family not only creates bonds of friendship, it also opens an entire web of extended family relationships that allow participation in weddings, holidays, funerals, and other key life-cycle events. Several alongsiders who eventually saw Jesus movements take place within the religious community around them, first studied with their local friends the holy book(s) viewed as authoritative in that context (e.g., the Qur'an with Muslims), before going on to study the Bible with them.

*Biblical reflections:* Scripture abounds with examples of people powerfully used by God who, through life’s circumstances, learned the language and culture of others. Daniel learned the language, sciences, culture, and religion of the Babylonians, eventually becoming a change agent for God’s purposes in that polytheistic culture.<sup>20</sup> Moses knew firsthand the ways and language of the Egyptians. Joseph lived in Potiphar’s household,<sup>21</sup> a situation God used to prepare him for a work far beyond what he could have ever imagined.

Jesus sent out the seventy two-by-two to the villages where he would later go. He had them stay with local families, eating and drinking what was offered them. He told them not to travel from house to house so they could discover who those people of “peace” were who would receive the message of the kingdom.<sup>22</sup> Upon their return from the field, we find them “debriefing” with Jesus, the one who had sent them out to learn and grow spiritually, staying with families other than their own.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Friend

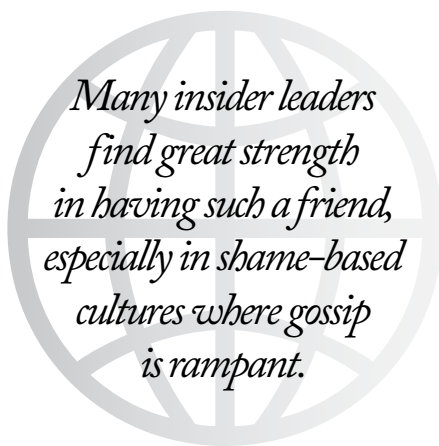
We use the word *friend* here in two ways. First, alongsiders become friends with those who do not yet follow Jesus. As these cross-cultural relationships form, the subtle “us” versus “them” mentality begins to disappear. Our Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist neighbors become dear friends, and sometimes our children’s adopted uncles and aunties. From this level of intimacy, heart-to-heart discussions can happen, making it more natural to speak of Jesus and how someone can know him.

*Examples:* Alan (not his real name) is an alongsider whose closest friend, next to his own family members, is the leader of a mosque near his home. Alan began his relationship with this man by volunteering to teach English to children in the mosque. What amazed us about Alan is that he spends much of his free time at his friend’s house watching TV or drinking coffee. To Alan this is not a ministry strategy; he

simply does this because he loves to share life with this mosque leader.

A second type of friend is one who has deep, long-term relationships with key leaders of insider movements; these friendships often span decades. Many insider leaders find great strength in having such a friend, someone from outside their group who can be a confidant and counselor, especially in shame-based cultures where gossip is rampant. These insider leaders are pioneers who face dilemmas of many kinds, particularly in cultures where leaders are expected to play a large role in the lives of the people in their groups.

*Examples:* We think here of two long-term alongsider friends we know who



have stood by their insider friends through thick and thin—seeing children get married, grandchildren born, and many new people put their faith in Jesus, as well as illnesses, imprisonments, torture, depression, slander, and marriage difficulties. These friends, who often live in other countries much of the year, keep in touch regularly as best they can in light of security concerns. They meet face-to-face whenever possible. Both insider and alongsider sense that God has put them together and equally benefit from this unique cross-cultural friendship.

*Biblical reflections:* In Scripture we discover that Paul not only counted on the friendship of his co-workers,<sup>24</sup> his

work was marked by friendship with those he served.<sup>25</sup> Jesus, too, longed for the friendship of his disciples, especially in the hour of his greatest need.<sup>26</sup>

### 4. “Worker of Miracles”

We use the term *workers of miracles* for alongsiders whom God has gifted and uses regularly in physical healing, inner healing, deliverance from the demonic, the interpretation of dreams, prophecy, and so on. Their ministry benefits those who follow Jesus and those who do not follow him yet. An alongsider can assume the role of a worker of miracles without becoming a leader in the movement. Miracle workers can serve at strategic moments when deep-seated spiritual problems arise. While all believers may pray for miracles, these alongsider workers of miracles are recognized by trusted insiders as being especially gifted and experienced, likely having what the Bible refers to as gifts<sup>27</sup> of healing,<sup>28</sup> discernment of spirits,<sup>29</sup> prophecy,<sup>30</sup> and/or other gifts.

*Examples:* We know alongsiders gifted in inner healing and deliverance who have been great resources to insider movements. Especially in places where folk practices are common, those who come to faith often need freedom from demonic strongholds. This usually involves renouncing magical practices, getting rid of charms and amulets, and breaking ties with shamans and power practitioners. Another aspect of this type of prayer is the healing of past traumas and emotional wounds, a ministry that greatly assists in spiritual transformation. This healing of heart wounds also helps new followers of Jesus learn to forgive others, a vital part of forming Jesus-centered communities of faith.

One alongsider we know prayed for Muslim women in her neighborhood concerning a variety of physical, emotional and spiritual problems. She then invited them to her home where they talked about health, stress and the healing Jesus brings. With the alongsider’s



help, this group eventually embraced Jesus and became a “covenant community” where together they studied the Bible, shared their lives, and prayed for each other and their neighborhood. They also became familiar with healing prayer and how to stand against evil powers. Within a number of years, this original group experienced growth and multiplication, meeting in several homes and branching out to a neighboring town. This movement now involves entire families and brings the blessings of the kingdom of God through Jesus to their neighborhoods. God powerfully used the alongsider and her prayers to see this small insider movement begin.

*Biblical reflections:* Scripture is filled with accounts of anointed workers of miracles<sup>31</sup> whom God used in early Jesus movements, powerful evidence of the initial fulfillment of Jesus’ words to his followers, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”<sup>32</sup> We are inspired to read how the Lord worked miracles through the disciples,<sup>33</sup> Peter<sup>34</sup> and John,<sup>35</sup> Stephen,<sup>36</sup> Phillip,<sup>37</sup> Ananias,<sup>38</sup> Paul,<sup>39</sup> Barnabas,<sup>40</sup> Paul’s friends,<sup>41</sup> Agabus,<sup>42</sup> and the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews.<sup>43</sup> Paul shared how much patience was required in his ministry of miracles.<sup>44</sup> James urged that elders should pray with people, and that believers should confess sins and pray with each other, and God would make them workers of miracles.<sup>45</sup> As miracle workers take risks to see God work, they may need patience like Paul, remembering that even Jesus met with resistance to miracles at times.<sup>46</sup> Many miracles may be required before the fruit of allegiance to Jesus results, as we see when the ten lepers were healed by Jesus, and only one came back to pledge his allegiance to the Master.<sup>47</sup>

## 5. Proclaimer

The gospel does not come out of thin air; whenever the good news is proclaimed in a new area, it is because

**E**quipping generally calls for a high level of language skill, cultural understanding, and relational wisdom.

someone or some form of media from the outside has crossed a religious and social barrier. In every insider movement we have seen, the growth of the movement can be traced back to one or two insiders who first received the gospel and then persuaded their family and friends to embrace it as well. Although some of these movements began with a dream or vision, the Lord often directed the first insiders to an alongsider who could proclaim to them the full message of the gospel.

What makes alongsider proclaimers unique is that they do not link following Jesus with the concept of “changing religions.” In addition, they are constantly looking for potential “people of peace”<sup>48</sup> whom God will use to help lead groups of their fellow Muslims, Hindus, Jews, etc., in following Jesus.

*Examples:* While all Jesus followers are called to share the good news, proclaimers seem to have what Scripture calls the gift of evangelism.<sup>49</sup> One alongsider proclaimer we know illustrates this well. He loves to go to the mosque and wisely yet boldly share with the imam how Isa the Messiah in his great love came for all people and how he, the imam, could come to know Isa as a Muslim. God has used this particular proclaimer to help lead some of the first Muslims to Jesus in what later became an insider movement across a number of villages. For years he mentored five men who were the leaders of this still growing movement. Because so many millions have yet to hear the good news, alongsider proclaimers will always be needed both to catalyze new works and to work alongside leaders in insider movements.

*Biblical reflections:* Scripture records the creative work of proclaimers in diverse religious contexts. We see Jesus with Jews,<sup>50</sup> the disciples with Jews,<sup>51</sup>

Peter and John with Jews,<sup>52</sup> Ananias with Saul the Pharisee,<sup>53</sup> Paul and Silas with Jews,<sup>54</sup> Jesus with a Samaritan woman,<sup>55</sup> Phillip with a Samaritan sorcerer,<sup>56</sup> Peter and John in Samaritan towns,<sup>57</sup> the healed and delivered man with Gentiles,<sup>58</sup> Peter with a Roman God-fearer,<sup>59</sup> people of Cyprus and Cyrene with Hellenists,<sup>60</sup> Paul with philosophers,<sup>61</sup> and many more.

## 6. Equipper

Whereas proclaimers are often the first to bring the good news to a particular group of people, equippers are alongsiders whom God uses to help mature or assist certain key insider leaders in later stages of the movement.<sup>62</sup> These equippers can suggest specific activities that could help advance a movement without undermining its indigenous leadership.

Equippers may provide spiritual mentoring, marriage counseling, training in inductive Bible study methods, tools for Bible translation, help in creating films and other materials, or technical assistance in various health and community development projects. They may help insiders wrestle with the transformation of certain traditions that could be contrary to Scripture.<sup>63</sup> At times they may wisely connect insider leaders with others from outside the community who have specific needed expertise. Equipping generally calls for a high level of language skill, cultural understanding, and relational wisdom.

*Examples:* One equipper worked with a seasoned leader of an insider movement for many months to create a two-year leadership development curriculum for newer movement leaders, based on Luke and Acts. While this seminary-trained equipper could have attempted to develop the curriculum on his own, the result would have been a less indigenous training experience and,

more importantly, it would have short-circuited something that God wanted to do in a key leader he had raised up for this movement. Instead, the pair worked through Luke-Acts carefully and inductively, and together they discovered key principles under the guidance of the Spirit. Insider leaders then introduced the Luke-Acts curriculum to eight fellow insider leaders. In less than ten years, scores of home group leaders in the movement were engaged in this two-year leadership training.

In another country, a working group of alongsiders was formed to serve developing insider movements across several different language groups. The pressing need was for culturally and linguistically relevant Bible translations. The alongsiders assisted the insiders in training translators, checking translations, field testing key terms, and using tools to check the meaning of Greek or Hebrew words. One such translation in a widely spoken language has been a major factor in seeing thousands come to faith across a number of distinct ethnic groups through inductive Bible study.

*Biblical reflections:* In the earliest Jesus movements, we see God preparing certain men and women to equip others, who in turn empower yet others.<sup>64</sup> Peter and John assisted Philip the Evangelist in his ministry among the Samaritans, and were used by God to pray for the believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter and John may have been positively impacted by their experience with Philip regarding ministry in non-Jewish religious communities, because before returning to Jerusalem, they entered several other Samaritan towns to bring the good news.<sup>65</sup>

An important aspect of equipping is to make the right connections at the right time. Note Paul's explanation of his interactions with the leaders of the Jesus movement in Jerusalem, especially regarding the timing involved. After his miraculous encounter with the Lord (and his call to the Gentiles

three days later), he did not immediately connect with the leaders already in place. Did this give time for God's radical call on Paul's life to be developed, away from the strict, long-standing religious boundaries observed by godly leaders like James?<sup>66</sup> Yet the time did come for those connections to be made.

God used Ananias,<sup>67</sup> Barnabas,<sup>68</sup> Peter<sup>69</sup> and James<sup>70</sup> in the life of Paul. Ananias gave Saul his earliest spiritual input in the way of Jesus. He obeyed the Lord's voice (though it went against everything he knew and had heard), found Saul, prayed for his healing, and spoke prophetically to him concerning his calling. Barnabas saw Saul with eyes of faith, believing God was



calling him, though he was certainly a diamond in the rough when Barnabas first started encouraging him. Peter assisted Saul (by this point called Paul) when Jewish followers of Jesus heard that Gentile followers of Jesus were remaining uncircumcised. He verified the legitimacy of Paul's calling with the testimony of his own experience with Cornelius. James listened well when Paul shared with the Jerusalem leaders how the good news was breaking out of the known Jewish religious structures. James gave his spiritual input, backed by Scripture, and kept the door open for Paul's radical ministry among Gentiles. Years later, Paul sought out those leaders in response to a revelation from God, and even dared to take

an uncircumcised Gentile follower of Jesus (Titus) with him. He was greatly relieved when the Jewish leaders did not pressure Titus to change religious identity (to be circumcised).<sup>71</sup> James welcomed Paul, giving him wise counsel, though the contrast between the callings on each of their lives had only increased. While these relationships were not without some conflict,<sup>72</sup> Paul greatly benefited by input from those God sent to equip him.

Paul then poured into many other lives, like Priscilla and Aquila,<sup>73</sup> Timothy,<sup>74</sup> and Onesimus.<sup>75</sup> Priscilla and Aquila helped equip Apollos,<sup>76</sup> who was a blessing to many. Timothy equipped many believers in the Gentile movements, and Onesimus was of great value in the work as well. In the later years of ministry, Paul could say that nearly all those he equipped were non-Jewish<sup>77</sup> leaders in the Gentile Jesus movements.

Another aspect of equipping is depicted clearly in the New Testament. Paul and others helped support growing Jesus movements through the writing of letters to individuals, groups and networks.<sup>78</sup>

## 7. Interfacers

God used Paul, Barnabas and Peter to explain Gentile ministry to their fellow Jewish believers, advocating for the right of Gentiles to follow Jesus without being circumcised and taking on a Jewish religious identity.<sup>79</sup> In a similar way the Lord will also call some who have seen insider movements firsthand to explain to fellow Christians what God is doing behind the scenes inside other socio-religious communities. We call this alongsider role that of an *interfacers*.

*Examples:* In recent years, some carefully planned meetings have taken place involving a few English-speaking leaders of insider movements, alongsiders who serve as interfacers, national pastors, and some foreign Christian leaders. During these face-to-face

meetings (which take place over several days), it becomes apparent that while the participants are different from each other in many ways, all present are true followers of Jesus.

In one such meeting, several national pastors (who might typically be suspicious of insider movements) saw the grace of God in the lives of the insiders and spontaneously decided to wash their feet; everyone was moved to tears. A year later, at a gathering in another location, the insider leaders washed the feet of the Christians, saying, "Please forgive us. When you sent people to bring the gospel to our people years ago, our people killed many of them." Again, many were in tears. This kind of strategic interface—where one group does not dominate the other, and where each comes to learn—can be a beautiful example of the body of Christ in action.<sup>80</sup> Another positive outcome of this type of meeting, and the work that interfacers can do, is that it helps insiders see how they can relate to the wider body of Christ.

*Biblical reflections:* Looking only at the outward forms used in certain Jesus movements within Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist or Hindu communities, the outside Christian world might assume that these believers are not being true to God, or are not even part of his kingdom. A similar situation existed in Joshua's day. When the tribes who had settled to the west of the Jordan observed from afar a large altar built by the two and a half tribes who had settled to the east, they jumped to the conclusion that their brothers to the east had fallen into idolatry, treachery and rebellion. Fearing God's judgment (not only upon their brothers, but themselves as well), the western tribes prepared to make war. Thankfully, the leaders from both sides met first. When confronted with accusations of idolatry, the eastern leaders were shocked. They explained that their altar was not built for idolatrous sacrifice, as was assumed, but as an

**W**hen confronted with the accusation of idolatry, the eastern leaders were shocked.

eternal witness to coming generations. They wanted everyone to know that even though their tribes had settled on the east side of the Jordan, they were fully part of God's people and one with the western tribes. Their God was the same God, the one true God. This satisfied the western leaders; they brought the good news back to their tribes and never again talked of making war on their eastern brothers.<sup>81</sup>

Jesus had to rebuke his own disciples for incorrectly judging and wanting to stop the deliverance ministry of someone "who did not follow them." (This incident took place not long after the disciples had tried—and failed—to cast a demon out of a mute boy.) Jesus told them: "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us."<sup>82</sup> Thus Jesus affirmed this ministry being done in his name. Yet in a different situation described in Acts, the seven sons of Sceva tried to bring deliverance in Jesus' name and ran into severe difficulties. Apparently they didn't know the Lord Jesus and thus did not have authority in his name.<sup>83</sup>

In Acts 15, certain Jewish followers of Jesus reacted negatively to the news that Gentiles had become part of the people of God through Jesus without being circumcised. Those insisting on circumcision claimed that those without it were not yet saved. After hearing case studies from the field, going through long deliberations and taking a deeper look at Scripture, it was decided that these Gentile followers of Jesus, although uncircumcised, were indeed saved and part of the people of God.<sup>84</sup>

In each of these events as recorded in Scripture, God used interfacers to explain, testify and interpret to his

people what was actually happening in other groups. The leaders of the eastern tribes explained to their western counterparts the intent behind their altar. Jesus explained to his disciples that the person doing deliverance in his name was actually on their side. Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and James spoke to the other leaders in Jerusalem on behalf of the Gentile Jesus followers, advocating their legitimate place within the people of God as equals to the Jewish followers of Jesus.

### Conclusion

Alongsiders are part of a process that frequently begins with intercession for a particular people group. Many then live among the people for whom they have prayed, often with local families. In time, deep friendships are forged. When alongside serve as proclaimers, their experience as learners and friends helps them know how to share the good news in ways that make sense. Some alongside serve as workers of miracles, or as equippers as movements begin and develop. And some alongside attempt to explain what they have seen and experienced to those eager to know what God is doing inside other religious communities, thus interfacing between insider believers and Christians outside the situation.

Not all insider movements have alongside. When they do, alongside may only be involved in a few of the roles mentioned in this article. While most of the roles described here are most needed in the early stages of a movement, some are needed at later stages. May God, as the one who longs to draw all people to himself, continue to sovereignly connect alongside and insiders so that the full harvest will be realized. **IJFM**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The term "insider movement" refers to groups and networks of non-Christian peoples who follow Jesus as Lord and Savior and the Bible as the word of God, but remain a part of the socio-religious community of their birth. A synonymous term used for insider movements is "Jesus movements within" with mention of the particular socio-religious community/communities being described, such as "Jesus movements within Muslim communities" or "a Jesus movement within the Hindu community." (See John J. Travis and J. Dudley Woodberry, "When God's Kingdom Grows Like Yeast: Frequently Asked Questions about Jesus Movements within Muslim Communities," *Mission Frontiers* July-August 2010 24-30).

<sup>2</sup> This movement, recorded in Acts 2, was preceded by the translation of the Old Testament into Greek (before 200 BC); the ministry of John the Baptist calling the people to repentance; the miraculous birth of Jesus; the training of the twelve, the seventy-two, and the women who accompanied them; the miracles and preaching of Jesus and his band; Jesus' death, resurrection, appearances for forty days, and ascension; and the 120 obediently praying and waiting, as described in Acts 1.

<sup>3</sup> Most of these alongsider roles are not unique to insider ministry and are similarly applicable in other ministry contexts.

<sup>4</sup> Many passages illustrate that Jesus is more concerned with the inside (heart) than with the outward appearance. He sees through the life circumstances of those he encounters, and he understands and speaks to the heart. Examples include Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, the Pharisees, and, in a parable recorded in Luke 18:9-14, the man who came to pray at the temple.

<sup>5</sup> Some insiders may in time wish to change religions, something they have every right to do. The point is that the decision was not encouraged or forced upon them by alongsiders or other outside Christians; it must be a choice the insiders have prayerfully and carefully made on their own.

<sup>6</sup> We are privileged to have personally served in each of these roles at one time or another over the last 25 years.

<sup>7</sup> The term "person of peace" refers to those individuals who first welcome the good news of the kingdom and open the door for others to also hear and believe (e.g., the village ministry of the seventy in Luke 10:5-9, and Cornelius and his *oikos* in Acts 10:24).

<sup>8</sup> Most churches and denominations over the centuries have relied upon catechism classes or rites of initiation (e.g.,

RCIA among Catholics) to instruct new believers in basic tenets of Christianity and the theological distinctions of their particular group. The insiders, on the other hand, have more of a self-discovery approach, where they read the Scriptures together, ask the Holy Spirit to lead them, interact with other groups of insiders with whom they have contact, and when helpful, interact with trusted alongsiders who may bring perspectives from other Christ-following communities worldwide, either past or present.

<sup>9</sup> See "Is There More Than One Way to Do Theology?" by Charles Taber (*Gospel in Context*, Jan 1, 1978, Volume 1:01, pp. 4-18; 22-40). Here Taber asks: "What is to prevent Africans, Asians, and others from using their culturally conditioned methodologies in the interpretation of the biblical texts, just as we do? If we want to insist that our approach is universal, we must justify the claim: what is it that might give our particular style transcultural validity? Why should we be in a privileged position? ...What is needed now is for Africans and Asians to start afresh, beginning with the direct interaction of their cultures with the Scriptures rather than tagging along at the tail end of the long history of Western embroidery."

<sup>10</sup> The movement in which we were involved as alongsiders is described on pages 240-242 of *Toward Respectful Understanding and Witness Among Muslims*, ed. Evelyn Reisacher (2012 William Carey Library: Pasadena, CA).

<sup>11</sup> The late church historian, Dr. Edwin Orr, spent a lifetime studying what factors led to the world's great revivals. He concluded that the only trait he saw in common in all the different revivals was that intentional, corporate, intercessory prayer preceded all of these movements. Orr, J. Edwin, *The Role of Prayer in Spiritual Awakening*, Oct. 1976, accessed on 6 June 2013 <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ix0QgVbVlNc>>.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 4:19

<sup>13</sup> Epaphras' work as an intercessor is mentioned in Col. 4:12.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Cor. 2:4, 12:15, Phil. 4:1, 2 Tim. 1:3.

<sup>15</sup> The New Testament records Jesus praying at his baptism (Luke 3:21), early in the morning (Mark 1:35), in the wilderness (Luke 5:16), all night before a big decision (Luke 6:12), with thankfulness (Matt. 11:25, Luke 10:12), when facing bad news (Matt. 14:13), before saying or doing anything (John 5:19, 12:49, 14:10), before raising the dead (John 11:41), after exhausting ministry (Matt. 14:22, Mark 6:47, John 6:15), before

challenging his followers (Luke 9:18), at his transfiguration (Matt. 17:8, Mark 9:8, Luke 9:28), when teaching his followers how to pray (Matt. 6:9, Luke 11:1), for children (Matt. 19:3), for his follower facing temptation (Luke 22:32), for his followers to be indwelt by the Spirit (John 14:16-17), for all his future followers (John 17), before facing the cross (Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 12), for God to forgive his enemies (Luke 23:34), in his pain (Matt. 27:46, Mark 15:34), with tears (Heb. 5:7), and as he died (Luke 23:46).

<sup>16</sup> See the prayers of Moses (Ex. 32, 34), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29), Jeremiah (Jer. 14, 31), Daniel (Dan. 9), Nehemiah (Neh. 1), Ezra (Ezra 9, 10) and Solomon (1 Kings 8).

<sup>17</sup> Acts 6:4

<sup>18</sup> Heb. 7:25

<sup>19</sup> Thomas and Betty Brewster, in their seminal book *Bonding and the Missionary Task* (Dallas: Lingua House, 1982), advocate living with local families when first arriving on the field as a way for cross-cultural workers to acquire language and culture and understand the hearts and lives of the people they will serve. They refer to this process as bonding, likening it to the *bonding* that occurs between a mother and child as the newborn first enters the world.

<sup>20</sup> We see in Dan. 1:4,17; 4:8 that Daniel studied the Chaldeans' literature, wisdom and language, and was even named after one of their gods.

<sup>21</sup> Gen. 39:2

<sup>22</sup> Luke 10:1-9

<sup>23</sup> Luke 10:17-20

<sup>24</sup> Paul's friends treated him with kindness and cared for him (Acts 27:3). Philemon was both a co-worker and friend for Paul (Philemon 1:1).

<sup>25</sup> Paul and his co-workers shared their very selves as well as the good news (1 Thes. 2:8). Paul took risks by opening his heart and expressing deep affection for those he served (2 Cor. 6:11-13).

<sup>26</sup> Jesus asked for friendship and prayer support when facing his darkest hour (Matt. 26:37, 38).

<sup>27</sup> Many who were taught that such gifts ceased after the New Testament era have modified their views after witnessing the Spirit work through some of God's servants in these miraculous ways.

<sup>28</sup> 1 Cor. 12, 28,30

<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor. 12:10

<sup>30</sup> Rom. 12:6

<sup>31</sup> 1 Cor. 12:10: where working of miracles is a spiritual gift

<sup>32</sup> John 14:12: greater works

<sup>33</sup> Mark 16:20, Acts 2:43, 5:12

<sup>34</sup> Acts 5:15  
<sup>35</sup> Acts 3:1-16: Peter and John on the temple steps  
<sup>36</sup> Acts 6:8: Stephen  
<sup>37</sup> Acts 8:6, 13, 14: Phillip  
<sup>38</sup> Acts 9:10-18: Ananias with Saul  
<sup>39</sup> Acts 19:11, Rom 15:19: Paul  
<sup>40</sup> Acts 14:3, 15:12: Paul and Barnabas  
<sup>41</sup> Acts 14:20: Paul's friends may have raised Paul from the dead  
<sup>42</sup> Acts 11:27-30: Agabus  
<sup>43</sup> Heb. 2:3-4: miracles among the Hebrews  
<sup>44</sup> 2 Cor. 12:12: Paul with utmost patience  
<sup>45</sup> James 5:13-16: prayer of faith  
<sup>46</sup> Mark 6:1-6: Jesus sees doubt in Nazareth  
<sup>47</sup> Luke 17:12-19: ten lepers healed  
<sup>48</sup> Luke 10:6-7; Mt 10:11-14  
<sup>49</sup> Eph. 4:11  
<sup>50</sup> Matt. 4:23-24  
<sup>51</sup> Matt. 10:5-8: disciples sent to lost sheep of Israel  
<sup>52</sup> Acts 4:1-2: Peter and John at the temple  
<sup>53</sup> Acts 9:10-20, 22:12-16: Ananias with Saul  
<sup>54</sup> Acts 17:1-3: the Jews in the synagogue

<sup>55</sup> John 4:7-41: the woman at the well  
<sup>56</sup> Acts 8:5-24: Phillip with the sorcerer  
<sup>57</sup> Acts 8:25: Peter and John in Samaritan villages  
<sup>58</sup> Mark 5:18-20: the Gentile demoniac  
<sup>59</sup> Acts 10:1-48: Cornelius  
<sup>60</sup> Acts 11:20: the people of Cyprus and Cyrene with Hellenists  
<sup>61</sup> Acts 17:18-34: the philosophers  
<sup>62</sup> Some alongsider equippers may be active in the lives of potential leaders before movements begin, trusting that their service will equip future leaders and movements.  
<sup>63</sup> Which can be retained? Which need to be confronted by the gospel? Or rejected, reinterpreted, or reassessed?  
<sup>64</sup> 2 Tim. 2:2  
<sup>65</sup> Acts 8:14-17, 25: Peter and John in Samaria  
<sup>66</sup> Gal. 1:18-24: Saul's early development away from existing leaders  
<sup>67</sup> Acts 9:10-20: Ananias for Saul  
<sup>68</sup> Acts 4:36-37, 9:26,27, 11:21-26: Barnabas for Saul  
<sup>69</sup> Acts 15:7-11: Peter for Paul  
<sup>70</sup> Acts 15:13-21, 21:17-26, Gal. 2:9: James for Paul  
<sup>71</sup> Gal. 2:1-10: Paul's later connections with leaders of the Jewish Jesus movement

<sup>72</sup> Paul had conflict with Peter (Gal. 2:11), friends of James (Gal. 2:12) and Barnabas (Acts 15:39).  
<sup>73</sup> Acts 18:2-3, 18: Paul for Priscilla & Aquila  
<sup>74</sup> Acts 16:3, 1 Tim. 1:18, 2 Tim. 3:10: Paul for Timothy  
<sup>75</sup> Col. 4:9, Philemon 1:10: Paul for Onesimus  
<sup>76</sup> Acts 18:24-26: Priscilla & Aquila for Apollos  
<sup>77</sup> Col. 4:11: Paul mostly equipped non-Jews in the later years  
<sup>78</sup> Paul (Col. 4:16), Peter (1 Pet. 5:12) and others were inspired by the Spirit and went to great effort to write letters.  
<sup>79</sup> Acts 15: Jerusalem leadership gathering where the question was addressed: Can uncircumcised non-Jews be fully recognized as the people of God through Jesus?  
<sup>80</sup> The insiders we know personally all see themselves as a part of the Body of Christ.  
<sup>81</sup> Josh. 22:10-34: the altar of the two and a half tribes to the east of the Jordan  
<sup>82</sup> Mark 9:38-41: another person's deliverance ministry  
<sup>83</sup> Acts 19:11-20: sons of Sceva  
<sup>84</sup> Acts 15:1-35: Here leaders deliberate as to whether uncircumcised non-Jewish Gentile followers of Jesus are actually saved.

## Int'l Society for Frontier Missiology

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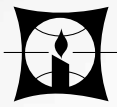
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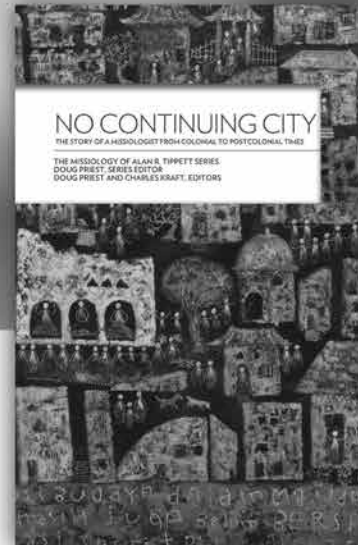
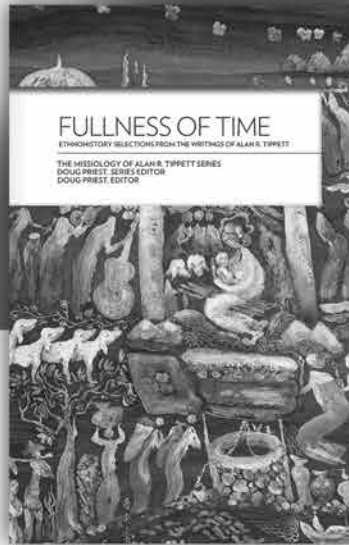
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# Contemporary Departures from Traditional Christianity in Cross-Cultural Situations: A Melanesian Ethnohistorical Case Study

by Alan R. Tippett

No topic has generated more enthusiasm for research in Melanesia than the study of its nativism, by which I mean the large homogeneous ethnic units, sometimes whole lineages, breaking away from the traditional Christianity which emerged in the era of colonial missions.<sup>1</sup> It has been argued that these movements are the result of stress situations which arise when two very different cultures clash or come into acculturative contact. The clash is said to derive from: (1) the inherent cultural differences, (2) the conflicting values and attitudes of the two societies, (3) the precise nature of the dominance/submission situation, and (4) the effect of forces which emerged with World War II in the Pacific, with the G.I. in particular as the catalyst.<sup>2</sup> The movement may be resistive or reformative, perpetuative or accommodating, aggressive or passive.<sup>3</sup> It may seek to reintegrate the whole subject society, or merely some subordinate homogeneous unit within it; either by the rejection of alien elements in it, or the modification of new elements (i.e., by accepting the forms but ascribing their own meanings to them), or a syncretism of basic ingredients from the two cultures. The literature on the subject is tremendous,<sup>4</sup> and the typologies are numerous.<sup>5</sup> In the literature the movements may be viewed negatively as (“nativistic movements” or “cargo cults”) or positively (as “people movements” or “revitalization” [these two are distinguished by the possibility of a foreigner or outgroup person being the catalyst in the people movements, whereas revitalization may be stimulated only by an ingroup person]). Figure 1 (p. 172) illustrates some of the various approaches in the literature.

*Editor's Note:* Taken from *Introduction to Missiology* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1987), 270–84. Used by permission.

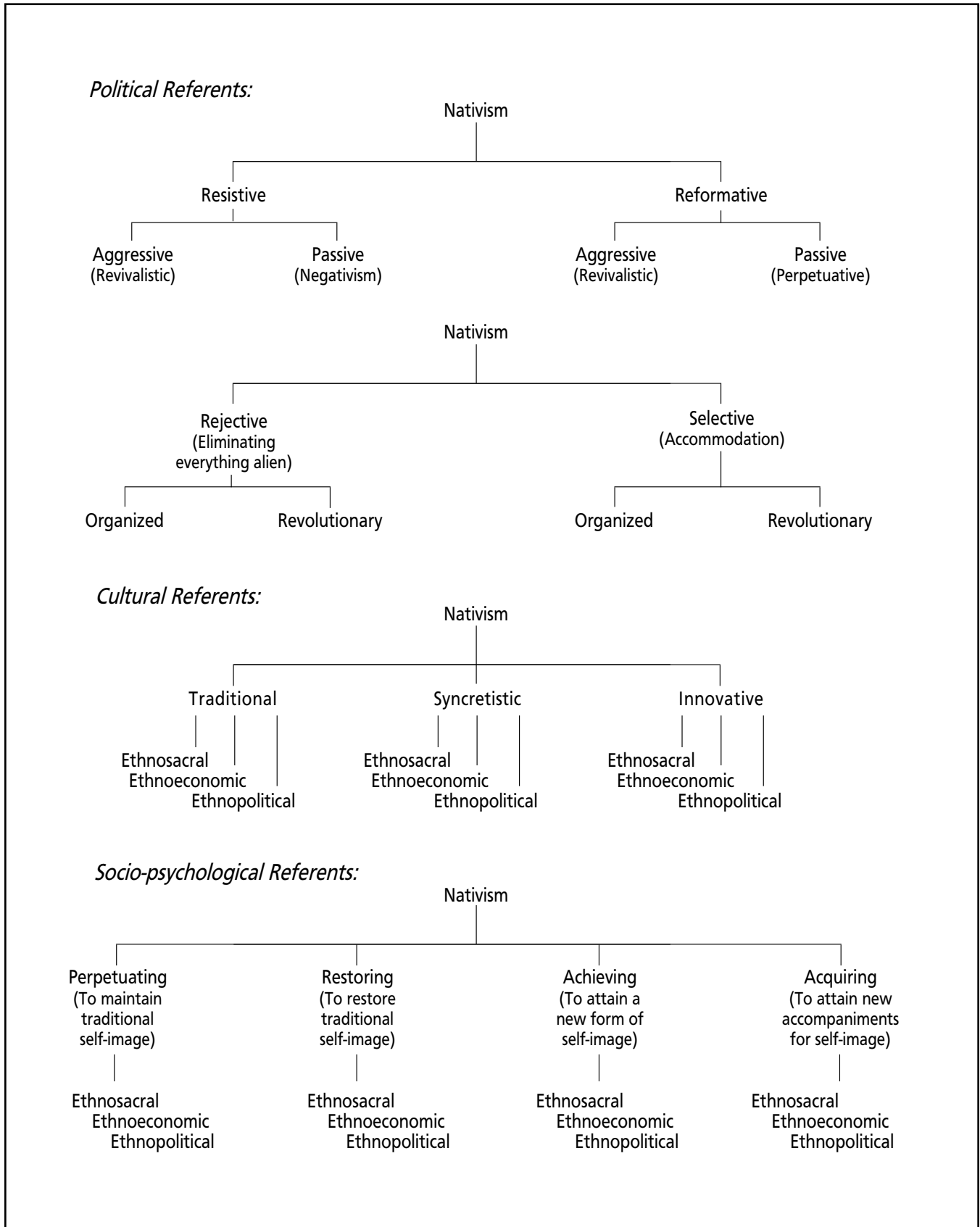
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*Alan Tippett's publications played a significant role in the development of the discipline of missiology. His initial pastoral ministry in Australia and then twenty years as a missionary in Fiji provided a rich data base for his graduate degrees in history and anthropology, and made Alan R. Tippett a leading missiologist of the twentieth century. Tippett served as Professor of Anthropology and Oceanic Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary from 1965 to 1977.*

This chapter is focused on Melanesia as far as the database is concerned (although there is even more data for Africa, which would also introduce us to concepts like “Negritude”).<sup>6</sup> The findings, I believe, apply also to Africa.<sup>7</sup>

In Melanesian research most of the investigation has been focused on the components of the nativistic movement or cargo cult, pinpointing such

Figure 1. Approaches to the Analysis of Nativism





features as messianism or millenarianism in the eschatology, its antigovernment or antimission motivation, its aspect of counterconversion, and endless speculations as to the real causes of the defection from traditional Christianity. We have also been weighed down with generalised speculations about a “theory of nativism.” This is a somewhat negative approach which has suited the mood of the cultural relativists, who since the 1930s set themselves up as “judges over Israel.” I think a more positive approach to our subject is possible when we ask, not what was lost (or thought to be lost) but what really emerged in Melanesia after World War II. This is not to reject the existing research, or the numerous typologies, which all provide different frames of reference for investigation, and certainly aid our ethnological description. But a positive approach will certainly save us from the error of interpreting these movements as necessarily disintegrative or chaotic.<sup>8</sup>

We need to see that, although the traditional missionary Christian worldview of the colonial age has been rejected (either in part or whole), the new emergent state is not one of chaos. It is an integrated and homogeneous structure, functioning as an autonomous, ongoing concern. The notion that change has to be disintegrative is entirely wrong.

In 1964 I was sent by the World Council of Churches to the Solomon Islands to investigate why some twenty or more villages had broken away from traditional Christianity. It was a breakaway from a church whose members had received fifty years of Christian instruction.<sup>9</sup> My Western and some Anglo Solomon Islander informants mostly saw the whole thing as chaotic and disintegrative.<sup>10</sup> But however tacit a Christian missionary may consider the heresy which emerged in the breakaway of these tribal groups, one cannot honestly say they were in a state of chaos. They were dynamic,

**W**hen I sit down with the data of religious innovation, I find the case studies fall into three basic categories.

vibrant with life, self-expressive, with a cohesive structure and a programmed daily life and religious routine.

When I sit down with the data of religious innovation in Melanesian Christianity since the war, I find the case studies fall into three basic categories. I am not analysing on a basis of my own conceptualisations of forms, function, or attitude, but rather I find the data falls into three “heaps,” with different views of selfhood. We discover (1) the cultic group, nativistic movement, or “cargo cult” which emerges with an aggressive, syncretistic theology and is in direct opposition to regulations and beliefs, and sometimes its morals; (2) the indigenous church, which has emerged from a Christian mission structure by a process of evolution, and retains a character of faith and practice (and sometimes a structure) indigenised, but very little different from the mission prototype; and (3) the independent church, which breaks away on a revolutionary principle, has often assumed folk elements in the process, and demonstrates its autonomy by featuring strongly those elements which were either paternalistically controlled or neglected altogether—say, a healing ministry.

The African data which has come my way will fit the same three categories. How does it come about that the same set of causative factors suggested above can lead to three quite different but equally autonomous solutions? Furthermore, how is it that in no case do we find the breakdown of traditional Christianity leads to anything resembling a state of chaos? For better or for worse we are dealing with dynamic, functioning, autonomous living organisms.

Most of the missionary churches of Melanesia and Polynesia were planted as the result of people movements,

which I have described elsewhere at length,<sup>11</sup> and mostly these were power encounter situations in which the old animistic divinities or their shrines were formally (i.e., ceremonially) rejected by the groups concerned by means of an ocular demonstration in which the responsible official (headman of the village, chief of the lineage, priest of the temple, or head of the household) destroyed or abused the *mana* repository or symbolic locus of power (skull houses, ceremonial skulls, fetishes, idols, monoliths, sacred groves, or taboo totem animals). The mode of destruction was by burning, burial, drowning, or devouring according to the local conception of *mana* disposal.

These people movements usually led to the planting of Christianity as a functional substitute for the original animistic religious structure; and although they took from one to ten years to run through the sometimes scattered tribal unit, from subunit to subunit, they resulted in reasonably total substitutions.

These Christian churches have continued in some parts of Melanesia since about 1840. Most parts (except for the New Guinea Highlands) had a time depth of more than half a century of Christian history by the beginning of World War II in the Pacific, which means they had survived the first generation of Christian converts from animism.<sup>12</sup> Quite apart from the psychological effect the war had on them, Melanesian Christians of the postwar period were mostly persons who had been born to Christian parents in traditional missionary island Christianity. They had never themselves rejected animism, burned their fetishes, buried their *mana* skulls, destroyed their idols, or cut down their sacred groves. That is, they had never experienced a power

encounter deliverance from the old life, and frequently (but not always) they had been quite cut off from the animistic worldview and mental set by mission education.

Historically the period following World War II was not only one of rapid social change due to acculturation, but the changes in technology and electronics going on in the West itself were also being felt in the islands. These changes were social and political as well as religious, and I think we are wrong if we assume we can really study the religious change in isolation; politics, medicine, economics, electronics are all part of the picture, and the religious life suffered no more than any other of these configurations, or “integral institutions” as Malinowski calls them.<sup>13</sup> I make the point, not because I want to discuss it here but because it is often overlooked, and this chapter is really not a complete study without this dimension.

The experience of the war introduced the Pacific islanders to resources far greater than anything they had ever dreamed of—the number of warships, the power of their armament, the quantities of canned food in the cargo ships, the aircraft in the sky—the islanders were completely bewildered by such resources of power and quantity. Added to this was the vocal anticolonialism of the average G.I., who saw a good deal of the people in his off-duty time.<sup>14</sup> We do not wonder that many of the innovative reactions to traditional Christianity and colonial government grasped on “cargo” and “airplanes” and “ships” as their symbolic reference points,<sup>15</sup> as they also did of the American military system itself,<sup>16</sup> and the notion of administrative authority.<sup>17</sup>

Recognising that this capacity for group movement with some symbolic reference point was inherent in the Melanesian situation anyway, whenever some prophetic or charismatic leader emerged to grasp control of it,

it is not difficult to see how the war first, followed by technological and electronic change, led parts of Melanesia into periods of innovative religious movements.<sup>18</sup> Melanesia began (if she had not already thought of it before) to see herself as deprived of her “place in the sun.” Sometimes she felt she had lost something from her past by culture contact. Her old religion was gone. Had the white colonial administrators and missionaries robbed her of her birthright: her cultural heritage, authority, wealth, and religious power? Were these to be regained by totally rejecting the government and the missions? Sometimes she felt she had something valuable in traditional Christianity which she should not cast



lightly away. How could she master it, deal with it, and use it in her own way, as something indigenous rather than foreign, autonomous rather than paternalistic? Soon after the war many missionaries were found working towards this end, especially from about 1945 to 1946, and indigenous churches began to emerge.<sup>19</sup> Where this did not happen, many ethnic groups broke away and established independent churches or, better called perhaps, “folk churches,” which though they claimed to be Christian, were inclined to be syncretistic or bibliomythical.

Using then an ethnohistorical referent, I find that these three types of innovative movement have characterised

the postcolonial period: the nativistic cult, the indigenous church, and the independent folk church. The character of Melanesia as a missionary field has thus been completely transformed since the war. The old paternalistic type of traditional Christianity has been greatly reduced. I do not intend reconstructing in this chapter the nature of the old missionary traditional Christianity, except indirectly by way of comment in the following descriptions. It was too uneven to describe here. Let it suffice to say that it ranged on the scale from pathetically paternalistic to remarkably indigenous, and I do not need to do more than point out that traditional Christianity at the former pole tended to suffer after the war from nativistic cults, while those at the latter pole passed from mission to church with little serious culture shock. Let me now turn briefly to the three types one by one.

### *The Nativistic Cult*

This type of movement, commonly called a “cargo cult” (although in reality not all such forms of nativism feature cargo), utilises the term “cargo” to focus on a concept of wealth. It came out of the war, when white man’s wealth came to be envisioned in cases of canned meat, such as were seen in the army supplies. A whole mythology developed about it and described how the white man had stolen the islanders’ heritage and wealth back in primeval times.<sup>20</sup> These myths may be collected in hundreds, and they have been interwoven in the origin tales. This, in itself, is a return to pre-Christian values and aesthetic forms and is a rebellion against Christianity and a claim that something was lost at culture contact. The army stores of food and arms revolutionised the islanders’ conception of the meaning of plenty as unlimited, and it was natural for them to latch on to this symbol. This mental set is found in the church especially along the north coast of New Guinea, where the missionaries of today call it the “cargo mentality.”

Wealth in canned goods became an element of a new eschatology. It promised a new day which was about to dawn for the islanders when they would regain all they had lost—lands, authority, wealth—and which were rightly theirs from the beginning of time. This conception of Melanesian paradise was soon formulated into an apocalyptic belief structure, for which the model was sometimes the New Jerusalem in the New Testament, and new villages might even be given biblical names. When this Golden Age is articulated, we speak of the movement as millenarian.<sup>21</sup>

The millenarian element is often accompanied by the emergence of a prophetic or charismatic figure around whom the group rallies (though all prophetic movements are not millenarian). The interesting factor, in my experience at least, is that this leader usually turns out to be one who has previously been trained in some white man institution in a role of subordinate leadership: a teacher, a policeman, an orderly in the army, or a catechist. The man has had authority under authority, and has Melanesianised the white authority pattern in his nativistic cult.<sup>22</sup>

Most nativistic cults are highly structured after the nature of a church organisation, an educational complex, an administrative system, or a military organisation. They may include such features as drill parades, marching formation round a flagpole, with commissioned and noncommissioned officers and men, or an administrator in control behind a desk. The white man's authority, like his wealth, must be returned to the Melanesian in the Golden Age.

The key personality of the movement has a prophetic character. He is not always a natural orator, but gains power by his authoritative utterances in the specific situation of crisis—he is a man for the hour. The movement depends on him. It may be economic, political, or religious, depending on the nature

**W**e must remember that no two movements are exactly alike, and any classificatory system is . . . [an] abstraction.

of the situational crisis, and by the same criteria the role of the charismatic figure will be seen. It does not follow that a nativistic cult has to be religious. If the crisis is purely political, as in the case of Marching Rule, there may be no religious aspect. A number of Christian pastors actually held office in this particular movement, for example.<sup>23</sup>

However, it may well be that the movement is entirely religious, or religious and economic, as with the John Frum movement.<sup>24</sup> A religious (sacro-syncretic) cult will develop a religious doctrine of some kind, and perhaps a verbal creed and a liturgy. A collection of hymns emerges, usually quite heretical from the biblical standpoint. The institution of hymn singing will be regarded as an essential functional substitute for its Christian counterpart, and (in the absence of a printing press) there may be a handwritten hymnbook, which each member copies by hand as part of the reception into membership ritual.<sup>25</sup> Likewise we may expect an organised prayer system, and perhaps a few written prayers for worship.<sup>26</sup> The doctrine of the movement will be found in the hymns and liturgies, and may even be the composition of the charismatic leader himself. I found this myself in a Solomon Islands case. The theology reflects a syncretism of biblical ideas and elements from the ancient myths—either truly remembered or imagined.

Quite frequently this role of the prophet is extended as more and more extravagant claims are made of him. He becomes the promised one of imagined ancient myths. This type of situation acquires the descriptor “messianic.”<sup>27</sup> Once the figure becomes messianic the movement usually becomes millenarian, and in extreme cases (one known to me personally)

the messiah goes beyond this to deification. We now have on our hands a fully developed sacrosyncretic nativistic cult (in terms of cultural referents), and a sacrorestorative cult (in terms of sociopsychological referents) if the movement purports to restore the faith of the ancient heritage, as the act of deification may well do. In still another classificatory frame of reference we may say we have a revolutionary selective accommodation; in other words, a breakaway from traditional Christianity which selects its desirable elements for modification in terms of the pre-Christian past and validation by means of myth.

We must remember that no two movements are exactly alike, and any classificatory system is not only merely approximate, but is indeed in the mind of the observer as his or her own abstraction. As long as we have the large number of variables—cultural values, historical antecedents, complexities of the crisis situation, and different responses to the movement beginnings by the local authorities—we will never find two exactly alike. Neither will two be the same to two different observers. So within these limitations, and using my own ethnohistorical referent, let me identify the normal characteristics of a cultic nativistic breakaway from traditional Christianity as having the following features:

1. a new, accommodating mythology,
2. a symbolic locus of power transfer,
3. a new eschatology,
4. a syncretistic belief system,
5. a speculative reconstruction of pre-Christian values, and
6. a mythologization of the worship structure.

All these are dynamic and evolving factors. The extent of their development

will depend on the impact they make on the community and the reaction of the civil authorities and church, or any other against whom they may be directed. In the above features I have omitted the immoral dimension because it is not a constant, but when it appears it is usually the major factor, as in the case of the Hahalis Welfare Society, in which the Baby Garden was to provide the society ultimately with the birth of the messiah.

### *The Indigenous Church*

We should not imagine that the entire world of Melanesian traditional Christianity has dissolved into revolutionary nativistic cults. Statistically they represent only a small percentage of the island world population. Possibly the biggest of them would be covering twenty or so villages. Over against this we have numerous churches of 200,000 practising members. The process whereby these strong indigenous churches have emerged is clearly evolutionary rather than revolutionary or rebellious.<sup>28</sup> These churches conduct their own business, social, and religious affairs on the village, national, and international level; and where they still have white workers (fraternal workers rather than missionaries), they are under the authority and discipline of the island churches. These island churches manage their own property, administer their own finances, pastor their own churches, train their own leaders (except perhaps at the highest level for which they may be sent overseas), and integrate their own evangelistic efforts, publication programs, social service projects, and in every way represent the voice of the church in the community. Furthermore they belong to the new world of our day and interact with the representatives of other churches in international conferences.

Yet although they have retained many of the traditional church structures, they differ from their prototypes in many ways. They maintain a basic continuity especially in their theological foundations. They study the Bible in

groups all over the country and regard it as their norm for faith and practice. They retain many features of the old preaching pattern, although this had already assumed some indigenous features in former times. Their hymnologies are well developed and theologically biblical, and many of the hymns are their own composition, for island hymn writers are very creative when given the opportunity. They will have no dealings with any attempt to speculate on, or seek to recover anything of the pre-Christian mythology, and are quick to detect and oppose syncretism with old myths. They are vocal in opposition to anything approaching a nativistic movement, and if one arises in a small group or village they immediately



discipline the offender as “backsliders” who have “fallen from grace.”

On the other hand, they differ from the prewar missionary church structures at a number of significant points. The white foreign missionary has no longer any authority over them. Where they have fraternal workers, they have been invited to be there by the island church bodies and have been stationed by them through the regular elective and appointive mechanisms, which deal also with indigenous appointments.

I remember myself once being assigned a clerical task by my Fijian colleagues somewhere about thirty years ago. Two of us had to eliminate the adjectives

“European” and “Native” from the Fijian lawbook, which was in their language. A Fijian-controlled synod had appointed and instructed us in our assignment, and told us to bring a revised script for discussion and ratification at the following synod. If I remember correctly the Fijian to Australian ratio of that legislative body was about fifteen to one. When I first went down to Fiji before the war, the most critical issues were determined by a European synod, which was the highest court of appeal in the island church. It was comprised entirely of missionaries. About the end of the war I was involved in the procedures which disposed of their synod. It could only be done by the Europeans of the synod organising their own demise. The matter was discussed over a series of conferences by the composition of the text of a new constitution, which was then submitted to the Fijians, who discussed it for some days on their own. And suddenly the European synod had gone, and with it a century of white missionary authority. Fijians and missionaries alike were now “pastors,” “catechists,” “teachers,” and so on without adjectival descriptors. About a dozen white workers found themselves in the midst of 160 Fijians. They had no longer the power of autonomy. They were a minority voice. Thereafter the Fijians determined our appointments.

At the World Methodist Conference in 1956 I presented a paper on these developments, and I identified three highly developed configurations in the island world:

1. an increasing responsibility in leadership roles on the level of local church activities,
2. constitutional developments constructively moving in the direction of indigenous government and autonomy, and
3. the emergence of new and indigenous forms of evangelism.<sup>29</sup>

As far as Fiji was concerned, this stage lasted for seventeen years. Over this time as the European missionaries

retired one by one, they were frequently replaced by indigenous nominees. Theological training was strengthened, select people were groomed for responsible positions, and a bilateral curriculum was developed for ten transitional years to provide indigenous ministers for the very different rural and urban (and academic) ministries.<sup>30</sup> Some cooperative beginnings were launched to bring Fijian, Tongan, and Samoan programs into step as a move towards the standardisation of entrance requirements for a hoped-for central theological seminary in the South Pacific where a divinity degree might be obtained. Eventually after the T.E.F. (Theological Education Fund) Consultation on Theological Education in the South Pacific this dream materialised.<sup>31</sup> The Pacific churches now have both university and seminary resources in Fiji.

Today the Fijian church, over 200,000 strong, is completely indigenous, and by its own choice has affiliated with the Australasian General Conference as a full status and equal body with Australian and Island Conference on an international level. I have used the Fijian Methodists because I knew them best and have served under them, but this is only one of many examples I might have cited for an indigenous church.

The indigenous church is the diametric opposite of the nativistic cult, both at the theological level and at the level of harmonious working with the mother church. In both these respects one rebels and the other develops, one is revolutionary the other evolutionary. Both have in a way withdrawn from the parent body. Both have undergone dramatic change in the process, but one is reactionary, the other cooperative.

Before passing on to the third type, I should point out that the attitude of the white missionaries undoubtedly was one of the crucial factors in each case. In the former they were authoritarian, unbending, and paternalistic. In the latter they recognised that the

## *Sometimes we meet with borderline cases between the nativistic cult and the independent church.*

traditional missionary churches had to change with the changing times; that the church was a dynamic organism and could not be treated as a static organisation. They accepted the notion of change as appropriate. The task was not always easy. It was like navigating a banana raft on a flooded river and trying to keep in the current without upsetting the craft. The missionaries recognised this and let the current carry the raft, working themselves with their poling, not to increase momentum but to keep them facing in the right direction.

### *Independent Churches*

The question now arises: what happens when the people do not desire to return to pre-Christian mythology, and when the Christian faith meets their needs but the missionaries continue to be paternalistic and resistant to change?

The natural thing is for them to break away from the missionary church and to form an independent church of their own. To this extent they are revolutionary, and they may be quite anti-white; but they keep nearer to Christian Scripture, are strongly evangelistic, and their new theological emphases are Bible based. Often these are indigenous elaborations of some biblical ingredient which had been neglected in the missionaries' training program, maybe, say, the doctrine of the Spirit or the rites of healing, and there are some elaborate developments of baptism. Africa can supply us with hundreds of documented examples of this, but we do meet them also in Oceania. Another strong element is catharsis.<sup>32</sup>

They are often prophetic or charismatic, strongly liturgical, and present us with an abundance of functional substitutes for the Christian vestments, rituals, and

sacred paraphernalia. They have less syncretism than the nativistic movements, but some are borderline cases. Their main difference is that the independent movements are clearly Christian. They have not rejected the Christian religion of the white man and his sacred book. Rather they want to claim it for themselves, and they want to be able to achieve status beyond what they can in the white church, and to express themselves indigenously in participant roles. They do not strive to recapture the ancient animism from which their fathers departed.

The probability with this revolutionary departure from traditional Christianity is that it leads to a rapid institutionalisation of the breakaway movement that ultimately becomes quite rigid. The forms become set. They do not have the internal flexibility of the indigenous churches mentioned above, or their intellectual exchange from outside contacts, or the quality of their theological training. Most cases that I know or have read about have manifested these shortcomings, and I think it probably natural because whereas in the indigenous church, missionary controls have been phased out slowly over a period of time in a smooth evolutionary manner, in the other, the revolutionary cutoff has demanded a whole complex of institutions "overnight" and the new officials have not been properly trained for it.<sup>33</sup>

Usually such an independent church will be forced to work out its constitution to get public recognition, and if it has day schools they will be at a much lower educational level.<sup>34</sup>

Sometimes we meet with borderline cases between the nativistic cult and the independent church. The borderline marks not so much the degree of syncretism, as to whether or not it is

consciously and deliberately intended to go back to native values which predate the white man's presence, or whether it is a failure of a theologically unsophisticated prophet to discriminate between what is Christian and what is not. It may well be that the prophet believes he is biblical and claims the right to his own interpretation.<sup>35</sup> Such men have often argued that as each denomination interprets Scripture in its own way, why should not a Melanesian also do so.<sup>36</sup>

However, the common point between the nativistic cult and the independent church is the revolutionary character of the breakaway, as opposed to the evolutionary character of the passage from mission to church in the case of the indigenous church.

The common point between the indigenous and independent churches is the manifest intention to retain their Christianity, as against the intentional rejection of Christianity by the nativistic cult.

The tragedy of the independent church is that in all probability it need not have happened that way had the mission policy been different. The same may be argued of the nativistic cult. The number of Western features retained by all three types of movement demonstrates the Melanesian readiness for cultural borrowing from the West. Unless there are factors I have not identified, we are left with the following residue:

1. A process of change under the rapid acculturation and end of insularity was inevitable.
2. Ultimate resistance against Western paternalism and overloading authority had to come sooner or later.
3. The Melanesians inevitably had to develop a new self-image adequate for the new day.
4. World War II provided the crisis situation for the emergence of Melanesian prophets and saviors.

These were common factors for all three new and nontraditional forms of religiosity we have discussed. The

Melanesians found three different ways of reacting to these factors, and to some extent at least it may be argued that the manifest operations of the white traders, settlers, and especially the public servants, administrators, and missionaries influenced the precise form of the Melanesian reaction. **IJFM**

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The phenomenon is not peculiar to Christianity, to the postcolonial age, or to Oceania. History is replete with accounts of such movements in Africa, Asia, and America, but in Africa and Oceania especially they have increased by hundreds since World War II.

<sup>2</sup>Nativistic movements frequently follow in the aftermath of wars. One of the best studies of this theme is Wallace's investigation of the relation between war and religious group movement in the history of the Delaware Indians (1956, 1–21).

<sup>3</sup>The passive type, such as the Gandhi resistance in India, does not appear frequently in Melanesia. There have been a few minor strikes among students on mission compounds (see Crocombe 1954, 6–21), but Melanesian movements are notably aggressive, the aggression rising or falling according to the way in which the administration or mission handles the disturbance.

<sup>4</sup>See the bibliographies in Worsley's *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (1957, 277–83), Lawrence's *Road Belong Cargo* (1964, 276–80), Kamama's *Koreri* (1972, 300–19), and Leeson (1952).

<sup>5</sup>Typologies for nativism were developed by Linton (1943, 230–40), Kobben (1960, 117–64), Clemhout (1964, 14–15), Worsley (1957), Turner (1974), and many others.

<sup>6</sup>The concept of "Negritude" was used to describe the resurgence of Bantu paganism, and the exaltation of the African past (Steenberghen 1959, 287–88).

<sup>7</sup>The Christian church in Africa was made widely aware of this phenomenon by a growing body of literature on such movements which appeared about 1948. The most notable work was Sundkler's *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, published in 1948 and updated in 1961. But there are many others—Welbourn (1961), Barrett (1968), and Baeta (1962)—and by Comparative Religionists like Lanternari (1963) and many others.

<sup>8</sup>Early writers on "culture contact" used the term "culture clash," which was subsequently discarded because it gave the impression of a powerful culture destroying

a passive or static one. Later anthropologists pointed out that the less powerful one was not disintegrating, but that sooner or later, after the initial culture shock it would reformulate its structures and continue as an ongoing organism. Culture contact is a two-way process of interaction.

<sup>9</sup>For the report of the research, see *Solomon Islands Christianity* (1967) and in particular pp. 212–14, 217–66.

<sup>10</sup>Somewhere in the same source is a report of an interview on this subject with an Anglo Solomon Islander is an acculturated or Westernised native. In this case, despite his acculturation he still subconsciously cherished his tradition.

<sup>11</sup>*People Movements in Southern Polynesia* (1971) is entirely devoted to this subject. See also *Solomon Islands Christianity* (1967, 42–43, 60).

<sup>12</sup>Christianity entered Fiji in 1835. For a record of its diffusion in statistically large movements, see my monograph *The Christian: Fiji 1835–67* (1954).

<sup>13</sup>This concept developed in a most important essay on "The Functional Theory of Culture" found in *The Dynamics of Culture Change* (1961, 41–51). He also describes these institutions as "systems" and as "instrumental imperatives" (*ibid.*, 46).

<sup>14</sup>In my own field research on the Eto Movement, I repeatedly had expressions of this opinion from my Solomon Islander informants.

<sup>15</sup>Many movements had secret clearings in the forest with a model of an airplane, for example, setup as a symbol. One example of this was the John Frum movement. The symbol is illustrated in Attenborough's *Quest in Paradise*, facing p. 154.

<sup>16</sup>The Marching Rule Movement in Malaita was structured on the model of the U.S. Army. For a description see *Solomon Islands Christianity* (1967, 204–9).

<sup>17</sup>The classical example of the symbolization of administration was a wartime movement in Ysabel (Solomon Islands) which spread through Gela, Savo, and San Cristoval, which related to native representation on the Advisory Council. The Melanesians raised a flag together with a wooden chair and a wooden rule. They also agitated for higher wages. As an outcome of this movement, plans were initiated for native courts (see Belshaw 1950).

<sup>18</sup>This was certainly so in the Paliau Movement in the Admiralty Islands, researched by Margaret Mead (1961) and Schwartz (1962). (For Mead's reference to electronics see 1961, 141 and 1970, xvii–xviii, 58.)

<sup>19</sup> This was discussed in a lecture I delivered in Melbourne, Australia, in 1947. It was subsequently printed under the title "Fiji's Tomorrow" (1947).

<sup>20</sup> A useful aid in identifying the self-image of the movement is to ascertain whether it builds its ritual around a collection of hymns or myths. One might at least start from this position. This would place Etoism as an independent church, in spite of its heavy syncretism with pre-Christian elements.

<sup>21</sup> Millennial visions and apocalyptic aspects of these movements featured in Linton's original essay (1943) but he did not include them in the classification descriptors in his typology.

<sup>22</sup> Of the leaders of the Solomon Islands movements of which I gathered data, Silas Eto was a mission catechist, Paukubatu a teacher, Taosin trained as a teacher also but failed to graduate, Pekokoqore was a discharged policeman, and Timothy George had witnessed the Sydney dock strike in 1913 (Tippett 1967, 201).

<sup>23</sup> Fifteen percent of the leadership of Marching Rule was said to have been borrowed from the Christian churches (Allen 1950, 41). See also Fox's autobiographical account (1962, 127–35, especially p. 134).

<sup>24</sup> This movement sought to rid the land of the taint of European money, of European trade, of immigrant natives, and to return to the old customs prescribed by the theocratic Presbyterian Church, as Belshaw puts it (1950). It was both anti-Western economic and anti-Church. See also the writings of Guiart (1956, ix; 5, etc.; 1959).

<sup>25</sup> The Eto document did this. When I was living in Wanawana, I procured such a collection of hymns. It became a major source for *Solomon Islands Christianity* (1967, 253–64).

<sup>26</sup> The pietism of the Eto Movement prayer pattern was highly institutionalised. Members recorded the score of their prayers by inserting the midrib of a palm frond in the hair. These tallies marked the building up of merit (see Tippett 1967, 233).

<sup>27</sup> There is always a key personality in any group movement, either to or from Christianity. Even in communal groups where new group norms are sought, the momentum begins with an individual (see Tippett 1971, 199–214).

<sup>28</sup> For my own historical account of the evolutionary emergence of an indigenous church, see "A Church Is Built," which was the feature article of the inauguration program of the autonomous Methodist Conference in Fiji (1964).

<sup>29</sup> This was published in the *Transactions and Proceedings of the World Methodist Conference* held at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, in 1956, under the title "Methodism in the Southwest Pacific."

<sup>30</sup> A full account of the emergence of theological education in Fiji was multi-graphed and distributed to delegates at the Theological Education Fund Consultation on Theological Education in the Pacific in 1961. See also the report (Dearing 1961, 65–68) for a synopsis of the same.

<sup>31</sup> The Pacific Theological College at Suva Point, Fiji.

<sup>32</sup> The catharsis relates to the struggle with sin and may be violent. It may recur, and reduce in intensity each time. It is seen as a power encounter with Satan. It may well be stimulated by some kind of rhythmic beating, tapping, or clapping. It may have strong similarities to voodoo and may lead to possession.

<sup>33</sup> A schismatic indigenous church which breaks away from the main body (which retains the institutions and more sophisticated pastors) may be confronted with this same problem as it was the last century in Tonga.

<sup>34</sup> In 1967 I pointed this out in the case of Etoism (1967, 225). I understand that since then they have been forced to secure a constitution to gain their recognition, and even be permitted to run schools.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Silas Eto argued that the Bible was a reference book which he would cite when needed. It was not for the people to read.

<sup>36</sup> For example, the Hauhau Movement, which followed the Maori Wars, was established on this attitude to Scripture.

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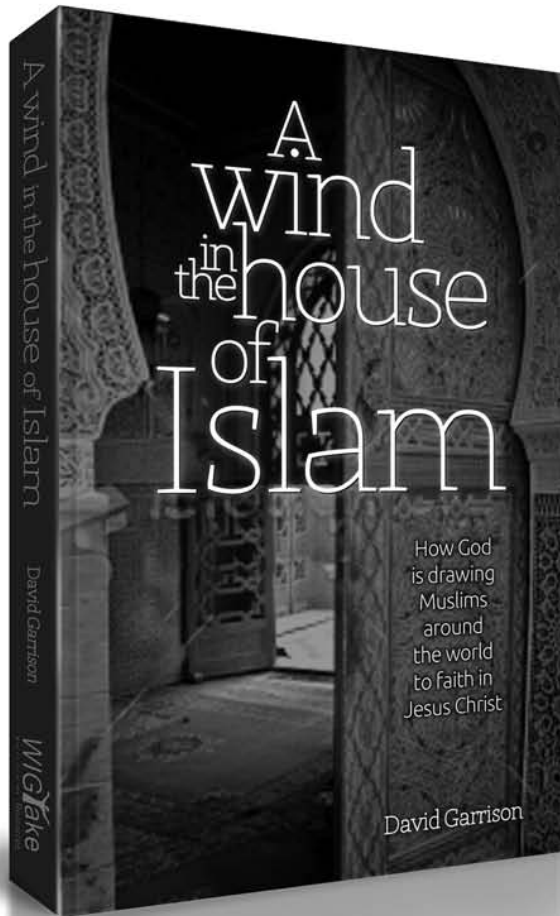
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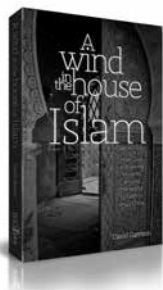
# A Wind in the House of Islam

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# Book Reviews

*A Wind in the House of Islam: How God is Drawing Muslims around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ*, by David Garrison (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2014, pp. 328)

—Reviewed by Bradford Greer, PhD



I am a perfectionist and a skeptic. My perfectionism impacts the way I view research. Well-designed, anthropological-missiological research often has limited parameters and develops well-grounded idiographic theory (descriptions of individuals or individual social groups). Once an idiographic theory has been validated in numerous

other studies, then I am willing to accept a wider application of the theory.

Admittedly, I came to David Garrison's new book, *A Wind in the House of Islam*, with some doubts. For example, how was he going to research in any reliable and valid manner these supposed sixty-nine contemporary Muslim movements to Christ (p. 231)—movements in twenty-nine countries spanning the Muslim world (p. 5)? The project seemed too broad.

Now, Garrison (PhD, Historical Theology, University of Chicago Divinity School) is eminently qualified to conduct this research. He has been immersed in the area of church planting movements for many years and has written a text of reference by that name.<sup>1</sup> He has broad experience, having served as a strategist and regional leader for the International Mission Board in South Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East. In addition, he has studied about a dozen languages and has visited some 100 countries.

Despite Garrison's impressive qualifications, doubts remained due to my field experience. I lived and worked in a specific Muslim context for over twenty-five years. I have seen what can happen in my area of the world. In that conservative context people can appear to have dynamic faith but this does not mean that they have truly encountered the Lord. Many are poor and faith is sometimes a negotiable commodity. I have also interacted with those who have worked in other areas of the Muslim world. Though I am confident that many of these sixty-nine movements are valid, I have heard reports that cause me to question some of them.

So, with a skeptic's eye I proceeded to follow Garrison on a tour through the House of Islam. The further I journeyed,

reading his assessments, the more I was pleasantly surprised. Garrison allayed most of my reservations; his goal was limited and he strove to describe accurately what was happening in these movements, not sensationalize them. He was realistic, cognizant of the potential impacts that could cause some of the claims to be called into question. His descriptions of these movements and the life stories he included as examples of these movements resonated well with my own field experiences and the knowledge that I have gleaned from others. I consequently gave him a very high score with regard to face validity.

Following the guidelines for describing one's research, Garrison begins by laying out the parameters of the project, providing definitions, and noting the limitations inherent in the act of researching. He interviewed believers from Muslim backgrounds in each of these areas. To increase the reliability of his findings he triangulated his data by consulting with seasoned missionaries and believers from Christian backgrounds in each area, and by conducting background research (for example, drawing from doctoral dissertations). He acknowledged that he and his team could not study all sixty-nine movements; his team had to limit their scope to forty-five movements in thirty-three people groups in thirteen countries.

Garrison defines a movement to Christ as at least 1000 baptisms or 100 new church-starts within a given people group or ethnic Muslim community over one or two decades (p. 39). Conversion is defined by a transformed life through a new relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament (p. 38).

Though this makes it sound like the book is a dry and dusty analysis, Garrison has made his research accessible by turning the vast geographical space from Morocco to Indonesia into a house with nine rooms: 1) West Africa, 2) North Africa, 3) East Africa, 4) The Arab World, 5) The Persian World, 6) Turkestan, 7) Western South Asia, 8) Eastern South Asia, 9) Indo-Malaysia (p. 23). He presents a brief history of Christian engagement in each room, and then he uses stories of specific believers from a Muslim background who exemplify how people have been responding to the gospel in that region. Garrison also adopted a phenomenological approach to his research, simply describing what was observed without editorializing about whether it was right or wrong.

As Garrison guides us through the rooms we discover that some have turned to Christ because they were dissatisfied with Islam; this was clear for many in the North Africa Room and the Persian Room. By contrast, others who have turned to Christ have retained their Muslim identity and have remained within their communities, the Eastern South Asia Room being a prime example. If these followers of Christ had adopted a Christian identity this would have been interpreted as a betrayal of their communities and they would have lost the

**I**n spite of these two weaknesses, Garrison's book has immense value. It provides a much-needed objective analysis of what God is doing across the Muslim world.

opportunity to propagate their faith among others. During his interviews with those from groups who retained their Muslim identity, Garrison sought to clarify the doctrinal accuracy of their faith. Believers repeatedly demonstrated a clear understanding of who Christ is, yet their primary concern was not doctrinal accuracy but a changed life. Garrison noted, "An unexpected response occurred again and again, as these Muslim background followers redirected the question away from doctrine and toward holiness and life transformation" (p. 63).

This book has two weaknesses. The first weakness is that it is limited on data. We are presented with a set of anecdotes, chosen because of their representative value. As a missiologist, I would have preferred much more. However, there were two justifiable reasons for this weakness: 1) the desire to make the research accessible to everyone, not just to the academic; and 2) security concerns. The second weakness appears in the analysis of the West South Asia Room. Though Garrison accurately presents both the interviews conducted in that room and the experiences of missionaries who serve there, some of us who intimately know that region would interpret the same data in a different manner.

In spite of these two weaknesses, the book has immense value. It provides a much-needed objective analysis of what God is doing across the Muslim world. Over the past few years there has been a bit of controversy over missiological trends in the Muslim world, in particular, over insider movements. Western missiologists who have worked alongside these movements have asserted that such movements were the result of what God was doing in the Muslim world. Others have doubted this claim because they cannot believe that God could allow a person to retain a Muslim identity after turning to Christ. The controversy at times has drawn into question the quality of the faith of these followers of Christ, with some stating that those who retain their Muslim identity only do this because they are either afraid of persecution or they have been negatively influenced by foreign missionaries. Garrison's research appears to demonstrate that neither of these accusations is valid. His research shows that there are those who feel that faith in Christ and retaining one's Muslim identity and remaining within one's community are not inconsistent. It also shows that adopting this stance does not eliminate the possibility of persecution.

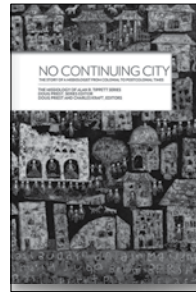
One must read the book to discover how this can be so.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World*, Midlothian, VA: WIGTake, 2004.

*No Continuing City: The Story of a Missiologist from Colonial to Postcolonial Times*, by Alan R. Tippett (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2013, pp. 580

—Reviewed by Glenn Schwartz



This is the autobiography of Dr. Alan R. Tippett who retired from the Fuller School of World Mission in 1978 and passed away in Canberra, Australia in September 1988. For those of us who knew him personally, this is a treasure for which we owe him a great debt. I consider it a privilege to have had a close friend-

ship with Dr. Tippett during the 1970s when he was on the faculty of Fuller.

Several themes surface repeatedly in this 580-page autobiography. The first is the struggle with the colonial missionary environment into which he was born and under which he served, particularly in Australia and Fiji. Of course, he encountered it in many other places as he traveled around the world, researching, writing and lecturing. Along with Dr. Donald McGavran and others, Dr. Tippett helped to create a new missiology adequate for postcolonial times. He did this by turning his own experience as a missionary into something that led to the independence of the church in Fiji. That struggle to overcome colonial missions surfaces again and again throughout this book.

A second theme that surfaces now and again is his disappointment—even disdain—for the organized church (particularly his own Methodist denomination), which tolerated a level of unhealthy spirituality that often left him disillusioned. He saw it in the local parishes of Australia where he served as a young pastor before becoming a missionary. His concern rose not only to the upper levels of the denomination in Australia, but also to the World Council of Churches, which he felt had left its moral obligation to maintain a missionary message, particularly following 1948.

A third recurring theme is how hard it was to handle separation from his family for the sake of what he felt God was calling him to do. During his twenty or so years as a missionary in Fiji he traveled barefoot for weeks at a time in the rural villages, while Edna stayed behind caring for the home and their three daughters. He spent an entire year in Washington D.C. doing a masters degree in history without his family. Later on, he spent two and a half years in Eugene, Oregon

again without his family helping to establish the Institute for Church Growth at the invitation of Dr. McGavran. During this time he enrolled in the University of Oregon and eventually earned a PhD in anthropology. At the end of that time he missed his family so much that he knew he had to leave for home as soon as a seat on the next plane could be found. He did not even attend his own graduation ceremony.

At one point in the book he gives a poignant description of what it was like to sacrifice family unity for the sake of his missionary career. For example, when he and Edna returned to Australia from Fiji, they left behind their daughter, Lynette, who stayed in Fiji all her working life. When he and Edna and Robyn left for the School of World Mission in Pasadena, they left Joan behind in Australia. When Alan and Edna finished their time in Pasadena and returned to Australia, they left Robyn behind in America.

A fourth frequent theme is his life-long battle for credibility among secular anthropologists. He was every bit as qualified as non-believing anthropologists and was determined to gain credibility for missionary anthropology. He never missed an opportunity to read a paper and give the Christian viewpoint at an annual or regional conference of anthropologists. One of the battles along this line is represented by his long-time challenge to James Michener for the way he wrote the book *Hawaii*. In that book Michener developed an anti-missionary stance, blaming missionaries for destroying and breaking up Polynesian religion and culture. Dr. Tippett felt that many young potential missionaries went into the American Peace Corps—or not into missionary service at all—as a result of the publication of *Hawaii*. Dr. Tippett had a serious disdain for the way missionaries were portrayed through Michener's writings. But this is only part of the story, and I am not sure that Dr. Tippett knew before his passing the results of his challenge to Michener. Over the years there was some change in Michener's position. During a TV interview in the 1970s, Michener was asked about his treatment of missionaries in the book *Hawaii*. Michener acknowledged that his blame of missionaries was not totally justified. He admitted exactly what Dr. Tippett often said, that animism in Polynesia was already breaking up before the arrival of Christian missionaries. So, Dr. Tippett's efforts paid off, but Michener's book had long since done its damage.

A fifth theme is Dr. Tippett's passion for philately—stamp collecting.<sup>1</sup> I knew that he was an avid stamp collector and that he had a weekly radio program for children in Fiji during which he told the stories behind the issue of a new series of stamps. But several things I learned were new to me. During the Great Depression, for example, things were so tight economically for him and Edna that he used stamp collecting to help make ends meet. He would use his weekly day off as a pastor (usually a Wednesday) to go into Melbourne on the train to attend the stamp auction. He would buy a small pack of stamps for a

few shillings and then go to the back of the room and separate them. When he had something worth reselling he would take it back to the auctioneer and resell it for a profit. Once when he was leaving home for the auction Edna said, "Try to make enough from the stamps so you can buy a chicken on the way home." In fact, stamp collecting helped to keep the family going financially at various times in their ministry.

While he kept his interest in philately as a hobby over the years, it was during his retirement in Canberra that his efforts began to pay off. By this time he became so accomplished in collecting and arranging stamps that he won one award after another for various collections he arranged. He and Edna joined the Philatelic Society in Canberra and used it not only for a good way to enjoy retirement, but as a place for Christian witness. Edna would attend the meetings with him and set up the displays while he interacted with other philatelists.

A sixth theme is Dr. Tippett's exemplary contribution to missionary literature. He produced volumes and volumes of research (the equivalent of book-length documents) that will never be published. But he left several volumes, including this autobiography, that were near enough to completion that a new series of heretofore unpublished manuscripts could be readied for publication. We are indebted to Drs. Doug Priest and Charles Kraft for moving these manuscripts from the idle shelf to the publisher; they deserve our deepest appreciation.<sup>2</sup>

A seventh theme that continues to surface, one that Dr. Tippett does not hide in this autobiography, is his struggle to adjust to unavoidable changes in his life. When he left Eugene, Oregon in 1966 he felt he was returning to the unknown in Australia. Upon his finishing the PhD program, he says:

... I was awarded the degree, but I felt no elation whatever. I did not wait for the conferring, which would have meant missing Joan's wedding. There were a few friends who wanted to celebrate, but it was no celebration. It was no achievement; it was a long, painful ordeal. I had never sought it. I had never wanted it, and I was utterly torn apart lest I had hurt those whom I loved more than life itself.

The next day I was on a plane heading home to Australia. I had the degree, but something had gone out of my life. I wondered if I could ever get it back again. I tried to satisfy myself with the thought that it wasn't just my degree. It belonged just as much to Edna and the girls, without whose support I could never have done it, especially in middle age. If it was an achievement, it was a family one, that I knew.

But was I still in the stream of God's will? ... It was a long and almost tearful journey. There was no interest in anything I saw, no taste in the food, no excitement in the return; just the depression of not knowing how I stood with those I loved and with my Lord. Not until I was actually home, and for the immediate present caught up with the activity of [Joan's] wedding itself, did the depression start to lift. ... I felt a little better with Edna by my side. . . (pp. 286-87)

*These words are a bold admission of a human struggle, and one that may sound surprising from someone who was in some ways quite private. But something seems to have changed after he and Edna retired in Australia.*

But this was not the only time he faced the challenge of adjustment. Consider his thoughts as he left the School of World Mission in Pasadena in 1978. He and Edna were flying to Australia on a 747 when he penned the following:

... Now we were returning to the land of our fathers — just the two of us, and we had no idea where we would eventually settle.

The years of my active ministry had been spent, and I had no longer any active status. My office as a missiologist I had relinquished, and I no longer had any sponsor for a project. I looked out of the plane window and beheld a wide, open space of nothingness. True, I was heading home to the land of my fathers. My father and now my mother had passed on hence, and I was the “patriarch of my tribe,” but as I returned there was no tribe that remained. I was heading home with no goal, no purpose, no mission, no set assignment, no certainty, and no responsibility to anyone. I wasn’t even sure what expectations I ought to have when I got home, or whether I would even recognize the place when I got there. The 747 droned on. I realized how terrible it was to have no purpose in life, not to know who you were or even what you were.

Sure, one felt that somewhere out there was a new life, that even at the age of retirement one could start again. Indeed, unless he did start again, with a new goal, and a new drive, he would surely die. True, my new passport now read, “Citizen of Australia,” and that was reassuring, but for all that, I knew in my heart of hearts that I had no continuing city and that Australia would be a very different place from that which I had left before World War II.

Like a man coming out of an operation, knowing he had lost an organ and wondering how things would go with him, with no status, no family, no home but a vast, half-empty land, no project, no sponsor, no knowledge of what one could do on a meager pension—not even a deadline to meet. It was a strange emptiness, as the 747 droned on.

Then I reflected that each time I had launched out into the unknown in faith it inspired something beyond myself to rouse that faith. And I knew the truth found in these words to the hymn penned by Anna Waring:

Father I know that all my life  
Is proportioned out for me.  
And changes that are sure to come  
I do not fear to see;  
But ask thee for a present mind,  
Intent on pleasing Thee.

The rhythm of the droning 747 changed. There was land beneath. (p. 435)

These words are a bold admission of a human struggle, and one that may sound surprising coming from someone who was in some ways quite private. But something seems

to have changed after he and Edna retired in Australia. I am guessing that the above words were written before he settled into life in Canberra. As one reads beyond this part of his story it becomes clear that he had quite a few invitations to address church groups and even to do some overseas travel and speaking. I was pleased to see that the above rather discouraging account gave way to a continuing and effective ministry during his retirement years. That fact alone gives a refreshing slant on the statements above. I heartily encourage anyone interested in missions to read the entire book and see how the life of a premier anthropologist/missiologist in the 20th century made his contribution to Christian mission.

As I bring this review to a close, several observations are in order. First, it crossed my mind many times while reading this story that all those books—published and unpublished—were prepared using a conventional typewriter, a machine without memory as we know it today. So Edna typed and retyped many manuscripts. Dr. Tippett was not one to be attracted to the latest fad, but imagine how much more he could have produced if those books and manuscripts had been saved in memory rather than having to be retyped each time.

A second observation regards Dr. Tippett’s demeanor as a missionary and missiologist. Being Australian, he frequently spoke with understatement. He had the credentials and experience to toot his own horn if he had chosen to do so. Instead, he discovered that understatement can be more powerful than overstatement—and have more credibility. The hundreds of missionaries and international church leaders who were his students experienced firsthand the quality of his spiritual life and professional competence. Both of those qualities come through on many pages of this autobiography.

In closing, this autobiography should be read by anyone who knew Dr. Tippett personally, especially his students. It should be recommended reading for all missionary candidates who want to know how a missiologist thinks. If you are interested in missiology—and you are only going to read one book this year—I heartily recommend *No Continuing City: The Story of a Missiologist from Colonial to Postcolonial Times*. **IJFM**

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> There is even a separate index of philatelic terms at the end of this book.

<sup>2</sup> The series published by William Carey Library is called “The Missiology of Alan R. Tippett Series” with Doug Priest, Series Editor and Doug Priest and Charles Kraft, Editors.

# In Others' Words

*Editor's note: In this department, we highlight resources outside of the IJFM: other journals, print resources, DVDs, web sites, blogs, videos, etc. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes give just the title of the resource, the main web address, or a suggested search phrase.*

## The Art of Mission

Distinguished historian Philip Jenkins began a series of blog posts in March called “The Art of Mission.” One painting depicts an East African ambassador receiving a Bible from a young Queen Victoria, a scene based on a popular, but unfounded, anecdote. According to the National Portrait Gallery site, when asked by a diplomatic delegation for the reason for her country’s rise to power, the queen handed the ambassador a Bible and said, “This is the secret of England’s greatness.” Not the answer you would expect from a modern prime minister or president. As you glance at the other arresting images, inevitable questions surface about the confluence of Christianity and colonialism, nationalism, and even pagan religions. (See the link to “Pre-Colonial and Colonial Images of the Kongo”).

## Indigenous Art Forms and the Gospel

One of IBMR’s 15 Outstanding Books of 2013 for Mission Studies in their April 2014 issue looks at art, drama, dance, music and film created by Christians in other cultures for the purpose of worship. Entitled *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*, it is accompanied by a very useful manual *Creating Local Arts Together* (see ad p. 154). Contextualized worship and indigenous theology (firmly rooted in excellent Bible translations) may prove to be a great preventative against syncretism.

## Cultural Encounters between Christianity and Korean Religions

If you’re interested in how cultures and religions interact with each other, don’t miss *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876–1915*. Chosen Books and Cultures’ 2013 Book of the Year, its author, Sung-Deuk Oak, a professor of Korean Christianity at UCLA, succeeds brilliantly at giving us a historiography of the cultural exchanges between Protestant missions and Korean religions and the impact each had on the other.

## One in Six Now an Urban Slum Dweller

The January 2014 issue of *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* brings us the latest statistical update on global Christianity, “Christianity 2014: Independent Christianity and Slum Dwellers” by Todd Johnson. Of special note is the new category “urban slum dwellers” as opposed to just “urban poor.” Johnson states that the number of urban slum dwellers “is

approximately one in six people in the world.” Read on to find out how few are actually working with the poor. Speaking of slums, don’t miss Katherine Boo’s *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, winner of the National Book Award for 2012. A non-fictional exploration of the world of trash pickers in Mumbai, the book is based on three and a half years of painstaking sociological research. See the *NYTimes* Sunday Book Review.

## Singles and Missions

A news brief in *Christianity Today* entitled “Matchmaker For Missionaries Tackles a Top Reason They Quit” highlights the launch this spring of a new website, *CalledTogether.us*, which is dedicated to helping singles with a global vision connect with each other (see ad p. 153). One of its founders, Gerin St. Claire, was interviewed by National Public Radio. The *CT* article quotes Rhonda Pruitt (Columbia International University) as saying that “the number of singles on the mission field has doubled in the 21st century.”

But Mike Delorenzo, in the powerful 2013 post “I Write to You, Young Men,” notes that only one of every five single missionaries is male. This upswing in single women missionaries has happened before, after the U.S. Civil War left 600,000 men dead. By 1900, over 50 Protestant mission agencies were led by women (“Women Rallied Around Missionary Cause”, *Christianity.com*). Are we approaching a similar demographic today? If so, why? Justin Long, on *The Long View*, speculates about some possible reasons in his series “Single Men in Missions.”

## The Gender Gap in Missions

We have no Civil War that has recently killed off over half a million young men. But boys have increasingly come under siege over the last three decades. Take officially-diagnosed disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). While 1 in 68 American children has been diagnosed with ASD—compared to 1 in 10,000 in the early 1980s—the disorder is nearly five times more common among boys than girls: 1 in 42 vs. 1 in 189! (See “Autism Statistics” CDC, March 2014.) Internet addictions have skyrocketed, with 50% of Christian men (20% of Christian women) now admitting to a pornography addiction. (Covenant Eyes 2014 Pornography Statistics).

Then there’s the puzzling loss of ambition among young men, examined in the widely reviewed 2008 book *Boys Adrift: Five Factors Driving the Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men*. In it, family physician and psychologist Leonard Sax claims that one-third of American young men ages 22–34 live at home, don’t want to get married, don’t want to get a job, and are playing video games—a 100% increase in the past twenty years! For more, see his book on Amazon or his “What’s Happening to Boys?” on *WashingtonPost.com*. **IJFM**

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*Editor's Note: The careful reader will notice that this October–December 2013 issue is partly composed of material created in early 2014. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience caused by such anachronisms.*

Whether you're a Perspectives instructor, student, or coordinator, you can continue to explore issues raised in the course reader and study guide in greater depth in **IJFM**. For ease of reference, each **IJFM** article in the table below is tied thematically to one or more of the 15 Perspectives lessons, divided into four sections: Biblical (B), Historical (H), Cultural (C) and Strategic (S). *Disclaimer: The table below shows where the content of a given article might fit; it does not imply endorsement of a particular article by the editors of the Perspectives materials.* For sake of space, the table only includes lessons related to the articles in a given **IJFM** issue. To learn more about the Perspectives course, visit [www.perspectives.org](http://www.perspectives.org).

## Related Perspectives Lesson and Section

### Articles in IJFM 30:4

	Lesson 5: Unleashing the Gospel (B)	Lesson 7: Eras of Mission History (H)	Lesson 10: How Shall They Hear? (C)	Lesson 11: Building Bridges of Love (C)	Lesson 13: The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches (S)	Lesson 14: Pioneer Church Planting (S)
<b>Seeing Inside Insider Missiology: Exploring our Theological Lenses and Presuppositions</b> Leonard N. Bartlotti (pp. 137–53)	X		X		X	X
<b>Sixteen Features of Belief and Practice in Two Movements among Muslims in Eastern Africa: What Does the Data Say?</b> Ben Naja (pp. 155–60)					X	X
<b>Roles of "Alongsiders" in Insider Movements: Contemporary Examples and Biblical Reflections</b> John and Anna Travis (pp. 161–69)			X	X		X
<b>Contemporary Departures from Traditional Christianity in Cross-Cultural Situations: A Melanesian Ethnohistorical Case Study</b> Alan R. Tippett (pp. 171–80)		X	X	X	X	X



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