Understanding Movements

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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The second book, *Fullness of Time*, is the most recent in a series of previously unpublished works by Alan Tippett (see ad p. 170). 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 Now, just twenty-five years since his passing, the rapid-fire publication of his unpublished works is simply astounding.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.” 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.” 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 (BrD) has spent the past four years wrestling with different (often controversial) perspectives on

*Editorial continued on p. 136*
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 consider-
able impact. It’s apparent that two vital
developments are pushing the discus-
sion of movements forward.

First, we’re willing to discuss our mis-
siological 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 study-
ing actual research from the field.
Nothing impacts or disturbs presup-
positions quite like a case study that
holds surprising data. It can bend
one’s preconceived image of real-
ity 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 begin-
ning 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 “car-
toons,” “exaggerating one feature at the
expense of the others to the distortion
of the general effect.” 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 evan-
gelization 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
1 The Missiology of Alan R. Tippett
search/results/search&keywords=tippett/
2 Alan Tippett, People Movements in
Southern Polynesia, Moody Press: Chicago,
1971, p. 6
3 Ibid., p. 5
4 Ibid., p. 226
As 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.

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.
This 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 (fellowship, household) 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 transmit to us 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 we say and what we are 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.

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

At the first Bridge 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, ecclesial tradition, views, or presuppositions on each issue affected their critique, positive or negative, of insider movements. The presentation (hilariously dubbed “Lens 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 = -3 - 2 = 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 minimalistic end of the ecclesiological spectrum, insider advocates emphasize the spiritual and ecclesial DNA within even the smallest communal settings. “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, 218f), 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 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 Mainline (e.g., 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians). Moving toward the pole, the “Eucharistic Ecclesiology” of Luther, Catholic, and Orthodox theologians 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, 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 “joists 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 church(es) (followed with apostolic 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 “inside” communities of faith.

**Lens 2: Authority**

Scripture • Apostolic Teaching and Ministries • Local Believers • Local Decisions

—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?
Theoologically, the answer is local believers. However, one need simply revisit the missiological discussions surrounding the words “contextualization,” “indigenization,” and “incul- turation” to appreciate the nuances involved. Early literature on con- textualization 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 expressiveness represents a pendulum swing in the opposite direc- tion: the processes of biblical decision-making and local theologizing lie in the local community. Local believers make local meaning 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 derry this as a goal, or diminish the ex- pression 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 author- ity on both sides of the spectrum. But one side tends to emphasize local discovery and application of biblical truth, and the other, the discernment and importation of biblical truth by those who embody the teaching min- istry 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 understands of the degree to which, underlying presuppositions involve those who embody the teaching min- istry of the church.

In one Asian context, local believers responded indignantly to what they considered a condescending years (of his) working with other ex- pats and western agencies that this basic biblical concept of the Petalord 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.3

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 (not advisers), and welcome the wisdom of the historic and global church?

Lens 3: Culture

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,4 for the pur- poses 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 speaks what some advocates consider an “insider” Messianic movement when conversing with a woman who is distasteful in Samaria. Insider proponents emphasize the continuity of socio-religious identity as one follows Christ and lives out bibi- cal 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, inclusive of 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 trans- form this context from within. Using Acts 15 as a hermeneutical guide and paradigm, Gentiles do not have to be circumcised and become Jewish. 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 transformative of people and/or social networks—from within. Rather, their critiques emphasize the extent to which “false” understandings permeate every dimen- sion of Islamic religion and Muslim culture. Sin and Satan have defiled and distorted the hearts and minds, under- standings of God, social relationships, practices and structures of Islam—and thus, in the natural 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 reorientation, regeneration- tion and sanctification through the sacrifice and Spirit of Christ inevita- bly “rescue[] us from the dominion of darkness” and bring us “into the

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

Importantly, this “rescue” has vis- ited the social and political consequences beyond an inner conversion of heart and worldview or an ethical change, vie, a new social identity. As universally understood by social scientists, identi- ties by definition are constructed, re- constituted, negotiated, and contested versus the “Other.” For insider critics, following Christ means a rejection, not retention, of Islam as embedded within Muslim cultures. Most markers of “Is- lamic” 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 Chris- tian”—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 indi- viduals negotiate their own multiple identities and co-exist within them in various social groups.

Thus, D.A. Carson emphasizes, our understanding of the relationship 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

workworld) from outside the dominant culture, not only shape and form a Christian culture recognizably differ- ent 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 alongside 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

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Lens 4: Pneumatology

Spirit-appointed Leadership • Sacraments and Channels of Grace • Disciplined Growth •“Wind” —or— Spirit-appointed Leadership • Sovereignty of Spirit • Spontaneous Expansion •“Rushing Mighty Wind”

A fourth theological presupposition of insider missiology involves an under- standing 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 (e.g., “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 faith in the midst of many may and may appear chaotic to outsiders, but give it time. Trust the imperious Lord- ship of the Spirit, and surely things will eventually work out. “The Counselor, the
Concerned observers at the opposite end rightly emphasize that Spirit-inspired leaders are also “gifted” 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.

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 hairesis moment in two ways: (1) at the micro level, in the history of the Muslim-Christian encounter (usually contrasted with polemical, hostile, or hopefull 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 gospel are springing up in what was rocky ground.

Regarding the pilgrim principle, the trend is away from the model of mission, with its “missionary agent” and “missionary goal” in the local church, to the idea of “contextualization,” the process of applying core biblical principles in specific cultural expressions. Traditionally, this has been a gradual process of adaptation to the local culture. But now, with the rise of “postmodernism” and the “global village,” this process is happening at an accelerated pace.

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

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 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 Ten- nett observes, “The Western church has not yet fully absorbed the impact 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 Ten- nett, 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 to angrily and briefly to apply 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 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, the question of whether 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? Is it not a major issue in our culture, so we don’t develop detailed theologies to deal with it?

This description—beginning with the relativistic tide decry a kind of corruption in government, education, 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 theological taking is place must, should, will take place in apposition to the real or imagined imposition of a “received theology” truths the outside. The identity of local theologies in being constructed, contested, negotiated; local-contextual theologizing takes place vis-a-vis critique of or by the received “Others” a universal, universalizing 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 culture universal” (noted 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 its 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 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 the meaning of the Word taken root and bears fruit in the soil of new hearts and minds and cultures.

Discontinuity • Exclusivism • Radical Disjunction

— or —
Continuity • Fulfillment • Praeparatio evangelica

The seventh and eighth lenses are closely related: the seventh involves its philo-sophical approach to other religions, while the eighth lens looks at approach-es 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 worldviews 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 identity or disconti-nuity 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 “crowns” (of Hinduism) (1913; see Netland, 2001, 33ff.). Insider missiology is clearly sympathetic to this perspective in relation to Islam. Elements of culture and other religious function as praeparatio evangelica; these prepare the way for the gospel (for the discussion related to Islam, see Netland, 2001).

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 new form of Christianity 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.”

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). In these 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, 476-70), 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 adaptive 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 dissociate him from the West…” (The centering of everything upon the person of Jesus clears the issue and has given us a new vision of our work (1925, 109-110). In a similar vein, N. V. Tidale, “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 identification would often be largely formed 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, in-volves our understanding of “identity,” one of the most complex and well-researched concepts in every branch of the social sciences today. What degree is public identification with the heritage and adoptive past of a religious community— as it is commonly understood, even by the Muslim am- rahab—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 exter-nal religion, false or nominal Christians, and the historical and highly charged stereotypes associated with Christian-ity. The focus is on the Person of Jesus himself as embodying “the gospel.”

But some insider theologians and practi-tioners are saying more than this. “Religious identity” is contrasted with “Following Jesus.” The former is reified as a negative category, an idol of hu-man fabrication (cf. the discussion of Calvin and Barth in Bosch, 1991, 478- 79). It is reduced to historically condi-tioned 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”
Christians is rejected, while the other (Christian) is accepted, 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 Christianness?” (1925, 69).

The Christian church is actualizing itself beyond the borders of the Christian church and is being seen in most unexpected places. This is happening, the spirit and outlook of men until, from Christian truth and thought the Christian church — (1) “mustard seed growing into a tree, that no one can pluck it out of the ground” (Matt. 13:31), and (2) “sowing the seed of the word of life” (1 Cor. 4:15-16), by describing Kingdom growth...}

...to 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 behavior, thinking, feeling, 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 open room for religiously constructed 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 Marranci (2008, 6) calls “the fallacy of Islam,” and make the former and the latter “universalistic and particularistic dynamics.”

Seeing Inside Insider Missiology: Exploring our Theological Lenses and Presuppositions

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 Christianness” relate to the “cultural 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 umma and its sub-communities—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, 25-54) 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

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Lens 8: Conversion-Initiation

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Seeing Inside Insider Missiology: Exploring our Theological Lenses and Presuppositions

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Lenses description capture better the Christo-centric thoughts and dreams of insider practitioners...
Dunn shows that water baptism is one element in a “conversion-initiation” process. In the phenomenology of Lutheran theologian Eberhard Bethge (next page) summarizes the primary theological presuppositions associated with insider missiology. To date, most discussions of insider missiology have been complicated by the fact that advocates have briddled 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 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 dozen 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.”6 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 handmaidens of our own cherished presuppositions.

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” of what following Christ means for these new believers and groups.

2. Balance empathy with a sanctified hermeneutics of question. Other voices must be heard as well. This recommendation applies particularly to sympathetic local work- ers, alongsiders, and researchers.

In most insider contexts, we are dealing with cultures where interpersonal and intercultural communicative interaction are influenced by notions of honor and shame, patron-client relationships, economies, and power dynamics. Suspicion and intrigue are in the air. One mark of wisdom, understanding, and spiritual discernment is the ability to distinguish the outside dimension (Arabic zahir, exterior, apparent meaning) from that which is 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.

Leonard N. Bartolotti

Centered set theory is nearly unchallengeable truth in some circles. This centered set theory of spiritual implication of spiritual reintegration in Christ (e.g., between Jew and Gentile). As Constantineau (2010, 209) demonstrates in his study of Pauline theology, reconciliation is an essential separation 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 sharings 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 inconceivable for them to identify publicly with “Christian” brothers and sisters—despite the consequences of social stigma in the eyes of their own people? Peter tried it (cf. Gal 2:11-16) and was rebuked by Paul.

Relationships potentially vitally 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 Syriac, 1984), as well as Christian convert’s customs and rituals 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. Buckner and Glazier (2003, 212f) suggest studies of the “contextual matrix of conversion” (e.g., the role of the family and others in the individual intraporphic process); the processes of conversion, including the sub-textes of “first contact”: longitudinal versus synchronic studies, to explore the assumptions and 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 inter-related assumptions or background beliefs discussed above—ecumenicity, authority, culture, philanthropy, 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 alongsiders, 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
### Table 1. Theological Presuppositions of Insider Missiology and the Evangelical Spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theological Lens</th>
<th>Insider Missiology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Sacraments Discipline, Order Leadership Pauline Emphasis</td>
<td>Word Spirit Two or three gathered Simple church Synoptic Jesus emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture Apostolic teaching &amp; ministries Outside resourcing</td>
<td>Scripture Local believers Local decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ “against” Christ “over” or “in paradox with”</td>
<td>Christ “of” Christ “transforming”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit-appointed leadership Sacraments &amp; channels of grace Disciplined growth “Wind”</td>
<td>Spirit-anced leadership Sovereignty of Spirit Spontaneous expansion “Rushing mighty wind”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit active throughout history Church’s wisdom (theologies, creeds, councils) Faithfulness “Faith once delivered”</td>
<td>Spirit active now in local context New insights &amp; expressions Freedom “A new thing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal truths Western theological tradition “Pilgrim Principle” Doing Theology</td>
<td>Local (contextual) theologies Theologies from majority world church “Indigenizing Principle”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discontinuity Exclusion Radical disjunction Other Religions</td>
<td>Continuity fulfillment Prepeapration Evangelica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Believing, behaving, belonging People of God Bounded Set Clear in/out markers of identity</td>
<td>Process Belonging, behaving, believing Kingdom of God Centered Set Moving towards Christ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Endnotes


2 Email message to author, January 28, 2014.

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

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

5 Email message to author, May 18, 2012.

6 See the website BiblicalMissiology.com for representative samples of vocal opposition to Muslim contextualization, including the debate over Bible translation and a broader global conversation.

7 This text is from a detailed “summarized paraphrase” of MacArthur’s “Facts are Facts” review of MacArthur’s important question . . .


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14 Email message to author, May 18, 2012.

15 Email message to author, January 28, 2014.

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17 Email message to author, January 28, 2014.

18 Email message to author, January 28, 2014.

19 Email message to author, January 28, 2014.

20 Email message to author, January 28, 2014.
“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 specified to specific contextual happenings. See Clifford Geertz, “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture.”

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Worship and Mission for the Global Church
An Ethnodoxology Handbook
James R. Krabill, General Editor

Worship and Mission for the Global Church offers theological reflection, case studies, practical tools, and audiovisual resources to help the global church appreciate and generate culturally appropriate arts in worship and witness. Drawing on the expertise and experience of over one hundred writers from twenty countries, the volume integrates insights from the fields of ethnomusicology, biblical research, worship studies, missiology, and the arts.

This book is the first in a two-volume set on the principles and practices of ethnodoxology. The second volume, entitled Creating Local Arts Together, guides the practitioner through a detailed seven-step process of assisting a local community’s efforts at integrating its arts with the values and purposes of God’s kingdom.

Creating Local Arts Together
A Manual to Help Communities Reach their Kingdom Goals
Brian Schrag
James R. Krabill, General Editor

Creating Local Arts Together is a manual designed to guide an individual or group into a local community’s efforts at integrating its arts with the values and purposes of God’s kingdom. The practical, playful text reduces experience-based scholarly insights gained from multiple decades of incarnational ministry around the world into a flexible seven-step process.

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Brian Schrag, PhD, serves as head of SIL International’s Ethnomusicology and Arts Group.
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.

In 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
Feature 7: Diverse practices with regard to mosque attendance
I found no clear majority among those who follow Jesus in the research group to attend a mosque service at least once a week (41% of respondents in both groups say that over 92% of respondents participate in such gatherings, the majority doing so at least once a week. However, 95% of the comparison group in these two movements never go to the mosque. Related to this trend in feature 4 concerning prayer, the data on the salat, or daily prayer, is equally clear: Jesus is not the Son of God who died on the cross for salvation; 88% of the research group and more than 92% of the comparison group in these two movements never go to the mosque. Related to this trend in feature 4, namely that the members of these Jesus movements are theological outsiders—they do not believe in Muhammad as a true prophet nor consider the Qur'an their highest authority. 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, 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.

Feature 9: Participation in weekly or even more frequent ekklisia gatherings
The spiritual sense of belonging to God’s worldwide family manifests itself in regular attendance at local, visible ekklisia (fellowship) gatherings with other believers from a Muslim background. (Note that for the purposes of this study I am using the term ekklisia 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. 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 every day. When they read the Bible, however, they do so in a very different direction than most Muslims. Most Muslims believe God’s word is fully contained in the Qur’an. Many Jesus followers believe the Qur’an is the word of God, and they accept it as a holy book. But they do not accept it as authoritative. In fact, most Jesus followers believe the Bible is more authoritative than the Qur’an. They accept both the Qur’an and the Bible, but they do not accept the Qur’an as a holy book. They believe the Bible is more complete and accurate than the Qur’an. They believe the Bible is more accurate than the Qur’an. They believe the Bible is more complete and accurate than the Qur’an. They believe the Bible is more complete and accurate than the Qur’an.

Feature 11: Evangelism
A full 92% of these believers share their faith. Their primary means of evangelism are verbs about Jesus in the Qur’an, personal witness to the Bible, and prayer for the supernatural intervention of God (especially prayer for the sick).”

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.

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 healing or deliverance). Possibly because of the role such experiences played in their own conversion, 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—we cannot 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.

Feature 15: Believers are commonly from a Sufi or other non-Wahabi background
Different, even contradictory, Muslim movements exist in the Muslim world. While many Muslims claim to follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, they do so through the lens of their unique cultural and ethnic background. As a result, many Muslims follow different interpretations of the Qur’an and Hadith, and practice different forms of worship and ritual. While some Muslims are strict adherents of the Shari’a, or Islamic law, others are more flexible and allow for a wider range of practices. For example, some Muslims practice Sufism, a mystical form of Islam that emphasizes personal experience of the divine and seeks to achieve a direct experience of God through meditation and rituals. Sufi traditions differ greatly from one another, and some are more conservative than others. Regardless of these differences, Sufism is a popular form of Islam in many parts of the world, and many Muslims consider themselves to be Sufis. In the research group, 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 healing or deliverance). Possibly because of the role such experiences played in their own conversion, 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—we cannot 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.
Sixteen Features of Belief and Practice in Two Movements among Muslims in Eastern Africa: What Does the Data Say?

This might be one of the most important findings of my research.

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 Muslims, while spiri- tually 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 devout practices, convictions, 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.

The reality of a “visible/invisible” ekklesia

The findings presented here show discreet gatherings of disciples of Christ within a wider Muslim community to be a reality (and one that can now be carefully docu- mented). The existence of “visible/insu- bstantial” informal groups of disciples (ekklesia) who regularly gather in the midst of Muslim communities might be one of the most important findings of my research. These informal ekklesias 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 none- theless very real and “visible” for many, because actual people are meeting at actual times in actual places on a regu- lar, at least weekly, basis.

Structurally, these ekklesias usually follow the lines of natural family and other persisting social networks. Rather than extracting members from their networks into an aggregate church, the kingdom of God and its values are implanted into them.

Given the rather authoritarian charac- ter of Islam, open or normal ekklesia gatherings do not seem to be an op- tion. Nevertheless, these findings show that—however unlikely on a theoreti- cal level—a new redemptive community within the old is an actual reality.

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 these Jesus movements in my research:

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

Endnotes

1 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 ‘outsiders’; or CITO … When we use terminology from the Muslim religious context such as the words Allah, Is, 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, Is Al Messiah as Muslims interpret or define them … this assembly is generally or Culturally or Socially Insider but Specifically or Theologically or Reli- gion Frontiers, (according to the Fuller study).

2 For a fuller description on how these believers come to faith and evangelize, see my article, “Welcoming Muslims Neighbors into God’s Kingdom in East Africa,” Mis- sion Frontiers, July/August 2013.

3 Kim, describing a movement to Jesus in “Anoteo,” mentions the same four factors that led many Muslims to Christ. (Kim in Grenier, 1975).

4 For example, Travis in Reisacher 2012, Jameson 2000, and Ali and Wood- berry 2009.

5 The four main factors that are part of their conviction journey are, in order of importance, verses about Jesus in the Qur’an, demonstrations of love and verbal witness, supernatural experiences, and the Bible.

6 Other Jesus movements in other parts of the world where the supernatural factor seems to be present, if not predomin- ant, include Jameson 2000, Travis in Reisacher 2012, or Daniels 2013.

7 As there was no similar data avail- able from other Jesus movements in the world, it is not possible to make further comparisons. In my study, at least, it seems that Jesus movements are more likely to emerge in contexts where popular versus Islam predominate.

8 Feature 16 specifically relates to faith practice and less to theological understand- ing. I added understanding here because it seems clear that these believers grow into a more biblical faith as they believe of God and Jesus over time. Abu Jaa (see footnote 1), in describing a Jesus movement, summarizes this well: “They progressively understand

movements in South Asia. Regarding mosque attendance, their findings differ considerably from my Eastern African data insuch as, in context, almost all respondents attended the mosque regularly, and in fact, most of the believers still regularly practiced salaat.

2 Two examples of such writers are Dixon (2011) and Nikki (2000).

3 Mazhar Mallouhi, a prominent Mus- lim background believer from the Middle East, vividly describes how this dual identity manifests itself in his life (2009).

4 The percentage of regular ekklesia participants is very similar in South Asia (according to the Fuller study).

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

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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.

13 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)

14 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).

15 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.

16 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 ekklisia gatherings inside Muslim communities are not a phenomenon unique to the Eastern Africa context.

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Understanding Movements

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

by John and Anna Travis

Do insider movements\(^1\) 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.\(^2\) 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.\(^3\)

*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\(^4\) 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.\(^5\) 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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\(^1\) insider movements

\(^2\) 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. In the insider movements with which we are familiar, both the hand of God and the labors of Jesus followers are clearly seen.

\(^3\) 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.

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six challenges of alongsider ministry

we have had the privilege of know-
ing 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. 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) without the 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 uniblical in them. at times alongsiders do help insiders critically examine various beliefs and worldviews (see below), but the first step is always to affirm that which is already biblically good and praiseworthy. too often well-inten-
tioned outsiders have spoken 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 fol-

lowers of Jesus think biblically and

critically about religion and culture, al-

lowing the Word of God illumined by the Spirit of God to inform and trans-
form local beliefs and practices? This is a dynamic process, one where the new followers of Jesus may over time arrive at interpretations of the Scrip-
tures 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 local traditions and study Scripture, they choose to retain certain key aspects of their culture and religious community, reinterpret others, and reappropriate 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 insid-
ers develop a biblical worldview and self-theologize, expressing the message of Jesus in ways understandable and meaningful to their family and friends. while doing so at times can undermine the gospel when the gospel crosses any cul-
tural or religious barrier, it is especially crucial in insider movements, where communicating the gospel and understanding of God are often opposed against the gospel. self-theol-
ogizing helps insiders incorporate the old (from the existing community), as long as it does not contradict the new (the Bible and the truth of Jesus), finding vocabulary, thought forms, subject matter, and communication styles that are culturally appropri-
ate. failure to do so can result in a foreign-sounding gospel, as if it were a message for others but not for them. self-theologizing helps a people see that Jesus is truly for them, the savior for all people.

challenge 5: encouraging interfacial fellowship in the absence of familiar models

this challenge concerns how to en-
courage Jesus-centered corporate life among insiders when the alongsider cannot directly model and follow 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 accessible and viable. small insider home groups, which often meet in ways similar to underground churches in certain closed countries, must rely heavily upon inductive Bible study and thoughtful reflection, helping facilitate an understanding of the Holy Spirit, and the use of spiritual gifts (e.g., teaching, healing, discern-
ment, help, sin-à-sin 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 alongsid-
ers. Alongsiders serve the insiders in a variety of roles, yet they are often in the awkward place of neither being insiders themselves, nor officially hold-
ing a position in the local church. 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 present-
ed in two caveats. first, by combin-
ing various roles or further delineating others, some may see either more or less roles than seven. second, these seven roles are based on personal observations of alongsiders we have known as well as our own ministry experience, 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 new groups. Missionaries and alongsiders will understand the awkward place taken after intercession and that insider movements are sustained through intercession and fasting. Small insider home groups, which often meet in ways similar to underground churches in certain closed countries, must rely heavily upon inductive Bible study and thoughtful reflection, helping facilitate an understanding of the Holy Spirit, and the use of spiritual gifts (e.g., teaching, healing, discernment, help, sin-à-sin Eph. 4:7-13, Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-31).

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 bond-
ing. in addition, most alongsiders try to gain insight into the religious heritage and worldviews of those they are called to reach by engaging, over an extended period of time, in some form of ethnographic interviewing. While there are many other types of ministry often do they 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 difficult to identify their 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 posi-
tioned 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—for first 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 for engagement in weddings, holidays, funerals, and other key life-
cycle events. several alongsiders who eventually saw Jesus movements take place within the religious community avoided core key aspects of study and 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.

This small movement continues to this day and has gradually spread to several neighboring towns and villages.

example: we know groups of alongsid-
ers who set aside regular seasons of intercession and fasting for their adopted people. this may idealize a daily or weekly cycle of 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. No one would have foreseen this emerging movement without understanding of how God is already at work in the religion and culture of those they serve. without it, they may find it difficult to identify their 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 posi-
tioned to recognize these dynamics.

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Roles of “Alongsiders” in Insider Movements: Contemporary Examples and Biblical Reflections
4. "Worker of Miracles"

We use the term "worker of miracles" for alongsiders whom God has gifted and uses regularly in physical healing, inner healing, deliverance from demonic influence, interpretation of dreams, prophecies, 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 alongsiders work miracles are recognized by trusted insiders as being especially gifted and experienced. Part of this is knowing what the Bible refers to as gifts of healing, discernment of spirits, prophecy, and/or other gifts.

Examples: We know alongsiders gifted in inner healing and deliverance who have been known to work miracles. Alongside leaders find great strength in having such a friend, especially in shame-based cultures where gossip is rampant. Many miracle workers 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. Being an insider alongsider means knowing 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,22 his work was marked by friendship with those he served.23 Jesus, too, longed for friendships,24 especially in the hour of his greatest need.25

5. Proclaimer

The gospel does not come out of thin air; whenever the good news is proclaimed in a new area, it is because someone or some form of media from the outside has crossed a religious and social barrier.26 This is how 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. Working alongside 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" 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.49 One alongside proclaimer we know illustrated this well. He loves to go to mosque, and wisely yet boldly shares the iman with the imam how Isaa the Messiah in his great love came for all people and how he, the imam, could come to know Isaa as a Muslim. God has used this沿sider in many ways, especially among some of the first Muslims to Jesus in what later became an insider movement across a number of villages. For years he wisely connected insider leaders of this still growing movement. Because so many millions have yet to hear the good news, alongside proclaimers will always need both to catalyze new work 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,27 the disciples with Jesus,28 Peter and John with Jews,29 Ananias with Saul the Pharisee,30 Paul and Silas with Jews,31 Jesus with a Samaritan woman,32 Philip with a Samarian sorcerer,33 Peter and John in Samaria’s towns,34 the healed and delivered man with Gentiles,35 Peter with a Roman God-fearer36 people,37 and Cyrene with Hellenists,38 Paul with philosophers,39 and many more.

6. Equiper

Whereas proclaimers are often the first to bring the good news to a particular group of people, equipers are alongside leaders whom God uses to help mature or assist certain key insider leaders in later stages of the movement.40 These equipers can suggest specific activities that could help advance a movement without undermining its indigenous leadership. Equipers may provide spiritual mentoring, marital or court prayer, 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.61 At times they may wisely connect insider leaders with others from outside the community who have specific needed expertise. Equipment generally calls for a high level of language, 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 ministry. Paul 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 like 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 empowered others. 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 have been positively impacted by their experience with Philip regarding ministry in non-Jewish religious communities, because before receiving this vision, Philip entered several other Samaritan towns to bring the good news.63

An important aspect of equipping is to make the right connections at the right time. Note Paul’s explanation of his interactions in the Acts. He who was speaking leaders of insider movements, alongsiders who serve as interfaces, 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, Timas of one people group, 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 wished 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.64 Another positive outcome of this type of meeting, and the work that interfacters 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 with Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu communities, the outsider western leaders might wonder that these believers are not being true to God, or are extinct 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. Thank- fully, 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 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.46 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 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, for he who is not against us is for us.”65 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. They were 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 alongsiders. When they do, alongsiders mix other in many ways to those on 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’s development, needed at later stages. May God, as the one who longs to draw all people to himself, continue to sovereignly correlate alongsiders and insiders so that the full harvest will be realized.

When confronted with the accusation of idolatry, the eastern leaders were shocked.

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 alongsiders serve as proclaimers, their experience as learners and friends helps them know how to share the good news in ways that make sense. Some alongsiders serve as workers of miracles, or as equippers as movements begin and develop. And some alongsiders 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.

When confronted with the accusation of idolatry, the eastern leaders were shocked.
Endnotes

1 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,” Missions Frontier July-August 2010: 24-30).


3 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).

4 Acts 6:4

5 Heb. 7:25

6 Thomas and Betty Browse, 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 serve. They refer to this process as bonding, likening it to the bonding that occurs between a mother and child as the newborn first explores the world.

7 We see in Dan. 1:4, 17: 4 that Daniel studied the Chaldean’s literature, wisdom ministries, and was even named after one of their gods.

8 Gen. 39:2

9 Luke 10:9

10 Luke 20:37-20

11 Paul’s friends treated him with kindness and care for him (Acts 27:3). Philomen was both a co-worker and friend for Paul (Phil. 1:1).

12 The insiders we know personally all see themselves as a part of the Body of Christ. (See Joh. 22:10-14: the altar of the two and a half tribes to the east of the Jordan (Mark 9:36); another person’s deliverance ministry (19:11-20: sons of Shema (15:3). Leaders deliberate as to whether uncircumcised non-Jewish Gentile followers of Jesus are actually saved.

13 John 4:47-41: the woman at the well

14 Acts 8:25: Phillip with the sorcerer (Acts 8:1-25) and Peter and John in Samarian villages

15 Mark 5:28: The Gentile demoniac

16 Acts 10:14: Cornelius

17 Acts 11:20: the people of Cyprus and Cyrene with Hellenists

18 Acts 17:18-34: the philosophers

19 Some alongside equippers may be active in the lives of potential leaders before movements begin, trusting that their service will equip future leaders and movements.

20 Which can be retained? Which need to be confronted by the gospel? Or rejected, reintepreted, or reassessed?

21 Tim. 2:2

22 Acts 8:14-17, 25: Peter and John in Samaria

23 Gal. 1:18-24: Saul’s early development away from existing leaders

24 Acts 9:10-20: Ananias for Saul

25 Acts 4:36-37, 9:26, 27, 15:2-11: Barnabas for Saul

26 Acts 17:11-12: Peter for Paul

27 Acts 15:3-21, 21:17-26: Gal. 2:9

28 James for Gal. 2:1-10: Paul’s later connections with leaders of the Jewish Jesus movement

29 Acts 5:15

30 Acts 3:11-16: Peter and John on the temple steps

31 Acts 6:8: Stephen

32 Acts 8, 15, 14: Phillip

33 Acts 9:10-18: Ananias with Saul


35 Acts 14:3, 5, 15:2. Paul and Barnabas

36 Acts 14:20. Paul’s friends may have raised Paul from the dead


38 Heb. 2:3-4: miracles among the Hebrews

39 2 Cor. 12:12: Paul with utmost patience

40 James 5:13-16: prayer of faith

41 Mark 6:1-6: Jesus sees doubt in Nazareth

42 Luke 17:12-19: ten lepers healed

43 Luke 10:6-7, 10:11-14

44 Eph. 4:11

45 Matt. 4:23-24

46 Mark 10:5-8: disciples sent to lost sheep of Israel

47 Acts 41:2-12: Peter and John at the temple

48 Acts 9:20-22: Peter and John at the temple

49 Acts 17:13-17: the Jews in the synagogues

50 John 4:21-42: the woman at the well

51 Acts 8:25-26: Phillip with the sorcerer (Acts 8:1-25) and Peter and John in Samarian villages

52 Acts 6:8

53 Acts 8, 15, 14: Phillip

54 Acts 9:10-18: Ananias with Saul

55 Acts 11:20: the people of Cyprus and Cyrene with Hellenists

56 Acts 17:18-34: the philosophers

57 Some alongside equippers may be active in the lives of potential leaders before movements begin, trusting that their service will equip future leaders and movements.

58 Which can be retained? Which need to be confronted by the gospel? Or rejected, reintepreted, or reassessed?

59 We see in Dan. 1:4, 17: 4 that Daniel studied the Chaldean’s literature, wisdom ministries, and was even named after one of their gods.

60 Gen. 39:2

61 Luke 10:9


63 Paul’s friends treated him with kindness and care for him (Acts 27:3). Philomen was both a co-worker and friend for Paul (Phil. 1:1).

64 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).

65 Jesus asked for friendship and prayer support when facing his darkest hour (Matt. 26:37-38).

66 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.

67 2 Cor. 12, 28,30

68 2 Cor. 12:10

69 Rom. 12:5

70 1 Cor. 12:10: where working of miracles is a spiritual gift

71 John 14:12: greater works

72 Mark 16:20, Acts 2:43, 5, 12

John and Anna Travis

International Journal of Frontier Missiology 168

Recollecting Evangelization
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Tippett believed his writings on ethnohistory were his most original contribution to the discipline of missiology. The wealth of material in *Fullness of Time* is his best ethnohistory writing—most of which has never been published.

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Doug Priest, PhD, served as a missionary for seventeen years in Kenya, Tanzania, and Singapore. While at Fuller Theological Seminary, Priest was student and assistant to Alan Tippett. Like his mentor, Priest has an anthropology degree from the University of Oregon. He is the executive director of CMF International.

As a gift to Edna and the children on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary, Tippett completed his autobiography, ironically just months prior to his death. Containing personal reflections on his childhood and later mission experiences in the South Pacific, relationship with Donald McGavran and the founding of the School of World Mission, and retirement years in Australia, *No Continuing City* is the inside story. These are Tippett’s personal reflections that can be found in no other publication.

Charles Kraft is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Fuller Seminary. He has taught there for forty-one years and authored thirty books and many articles dealing with the relationships between Christianity, culture and spiritual power. He was a colleague of Alan Tippett from 1969 to 1977.
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. 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. The movement may be resistive or reformative, perpetuative or accommodating, aggressive or passive. 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, and the typologies are numerous. 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.

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”). The findings, I believe, apply also to Africa.

In Melanesian research most of the investigation has been focused on the components of the nativistic movement or cargo cult, pinpointing such
Contemporary Departures from Traditional Christianity in Cross-Cultural Situations

**Figure 1. Approaches to the Analysis of Nativism**

- **Political Referents:**
  - Aggressive (Revivalistic)
  - Passive (Negativism)
  - Nativism
  - Rejective (Eliminating everything alien)

- **Cultural Referents:**
  - Traditional
  - Ethnosacral
  - Ethnoeconomic

- **Socio-psychological Referents:**
  - Achieving (To attain a new form of self-image)
  - Acquiring (To attain new accompaniments for self-image)
  - Restoring (To restore traditional self-image)
  - Perpetuating (To maintain traditional self-image)

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

features as messianism or millennialism 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 generalized 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.\(^1\)

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 or chaotic is, they had never experienced a power movement 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 people movements usually led to the planting of Christianity as a functional substitute for the original anthropic 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.

Most of the missionary churches of Melanesia and Polynesia were planted as the result of people movements, which I have described elsewhere at length,\(^10\) 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 occult 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.
calls them. I make the point, not and the religious life suffered no more electronics are all part of the picture, politics, medicine, economics, study the religious change in isolation as well as religious, and I think we These changes were social and political as well as religious and frequently (but not always) did of the American military system because it is often overlooked, and this because I want to discuss it here but because it is often overlooked in this chapter is really not a complete study without this dimension. The experience of the war introduced the Pacific islanders to resources 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 astonishingly powerfully 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 in the West it is not difficult to see how the war first, followed by technological and electronic change, led parts of Melanesia to periods of intense religious movement. 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 aside. The postcolonial period: the nativistic cult, the indigenous church, and the independent folk church. The characteristic of Melanesia as a missionary field has thus been completely transformed since the war. The old paternalistic type of traditional Christianity has been greatly strengthened. We do not intend reconstructing in this chapter the nature of the old missionary traditional Christianity, except indirectly by way of comment in the following discussions. It was too uneven to describe here. Let it suffice to say that it ranged from the scale of 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 cultural 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 nativist feature cargo), utilizes the term “cargo” to focus on a concept of wealth. It came out of the war, when white man’s wealth became 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.20 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. The 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 righteth them 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.21

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.22

Most nativistic cults are highly structured, with the islander 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 mission authorities, or 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 ethnobiographical referent, let me identify the normal characteristics of a cultic nativistic breakaway from traditional Christianity as having the following features:

1. a syncretistic belief system,
2. a symbolic locus of power transfer,
3. a new eschatology,
4. a messianic figure.

The messiah goes beyond this to deification. We now have on our hands a fully developed sacrosyncretic nativistic cult, a syncretistic belief system (in terms of sociopsychological referents) if the movement purports to restore the faith of the ancient heritage, and the particular 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 merely approximative, 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 ethnobiographical 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,
6. a mythologization of the worship structure.

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

Alan R. Tippett

International Journal of Frontier Missiology
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. 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 church. These island churches manage their own properties, their own composition, for island hymns are their own. These churches manage also the authority and discipline of the island church. It was comprised entirely of missionaries. At 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 organizing 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,” “teachers,” and so on without adjectival description. 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. Therefore the Fijians determined our appointments.

At the World Methodist Conference in 1948 I presented a paper on these developments, and I identified three highly developed configurations in the island world:

1. an increasing responsibility in leadership by the local level of 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.

As far as Fiji was concerned, this stage lasted for seventeen years. Over this time the European missionaries retired one by one, they were frequently replaced by indigenous nominees. Theological training was strengthened, selections were made, and they were responsible up to the ministerial level. A major theological development was the standardisation of entrance requirements for a hopeful-for-central theological seminary in the South Pacific where a divinity degree might be obtained. Eventually after the F.E.F. (Theological Education) Consultation on Theological Education in the South Pacific this dream materialised. The Pacific churches now have both university and seminary resources in Fiji.

The Indie Church, over 200,000 strong, is completely indigenous, and by its own choice has affiliated with the Australasian General Conference. It is now fully autonomous in every respect 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 diachronic 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 against the other. But both are revolutionary: one is the outcome of the internal conflict; the other is the outcome of the theological training. Most cases that I know 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. It is 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.

Sometimes we meet with borderline cases between the nativistic cult and the independent church. 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 need not be, in fact 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. 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 usually biblical, and many of the hymns are their own composition, for island hymns are very creative when given the opportunity. They will have no dealings with any attempt to speculate, to 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
consciously and deliberately intended to go back to native values which predate the white man's presence, whether it is a failure of a thoroughly assimilated and Christianized native youth to identify with the white man's culture, or whether it is the result of operations of the white trader, settler, and especially the public servants, administrators, and missionar- ians influenced the precise form of the Melanesian reaction. [45x86]These were common factors for all with the following residue:

- The tragedy of the independent church and Western paternalism and over- loading authority had to come sooner or later. Western 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 and economic and anti-Church. See also the writings of Guittard (1956, ix; 5, etc.; 1959).
- The Eto Movement in the Admiralty Islands, 1946–1954. I understand that since then they have been forced to secure a constitution to gain their recognition, and even be permitted to run schools. For example, the Hushau Movement, which followed the Eto Movement, was established on this attitude to Scripture.

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A Wind in the House of Islam
Available now at: www.WindintheHouse.org
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 test of reference by that name. 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 nine 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 to describe 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 as a transformation of 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) Turkistan; 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 background and the 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 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 noticeably 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 being concerned 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 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

In 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.

No Continuing City: The Story of a Missiologist from Colonial to Postcolonial Times, by Alan R. Tippett
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. Tippett was the son of Dr. J. H. Tippett, the first president of Fuller College. Dr. Tippett used his PhD from Yale University to become a missionary to Fiji during the 1950s 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 his 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 hundreds of miles and weeks at a time, left 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 earned a PhD in anthropology. At the age 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 the months before his wife and daughter would visit. While in Polynesia he told the stories behind the issue of a new series of stamps. 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 Canada 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 Canada 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 that 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.

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 it was returning to the unknown in Australia. Upon 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 few things 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 wished for it, and I was utterly torn apart lest I had hurt those whom I loved.”

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 that I was not satisfied with just the degree. It had been longed 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 I was 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 defeat 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. (p. 288-287)

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—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, and I was the ‘pathfinder of my tribe,’ but as I returned there was no tribe that remained. I was heading home with no goal, no project, 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 drooned 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 was reassuring, but for all that, I knew in my heart of heart 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 arm 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 experience to be on the 747 drooned 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:...

[Endnotes]

There are even a separate index of philatelic terms at the end of this book.

1 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.
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 NYT Times 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 40,000 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.
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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.

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