

Copyright © 2011 J. Henry Wolfe

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

INSIDER MOVEMENTS:
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VIABILITY OF RETAINING
SOCIO-RELIGIOUS INSIDER IDENTITY IN
HIGH-RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
J. Henry Wolfe

May 2011

APPROVAL SHEET

INSIDER MOVEMENTS:

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VIABILITY OF RETAINING

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS INSIDER IDENTITY IN

HIGH-RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS

J. Henry Wolfe

Read and Approved by:

M. David Sills (Chair)

George H. Martin

James D. Chancellor

Date _____

To [redacted]

“Many women have done excellently,

But you surpass them all.”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
PREFACE	xi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background	9
Statement of the Problem	12
Purpose Statement	14
Assumptions and Explanation of Terms	15
Christian	15
Church	16
Contextualization	18
Syncretism	21
High-Religious Contexts	23
Socio-Religious Forms	24
Methodology	25
Limitations and Delimitations	26

Chapter	Page
2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSIDER MOVEMENT METHODOLOGY	29
People Movements, Church Planting Movements, and Insider Methodology	30
People Movements	30
Church Planting Movements	35
Insider Movements	39
Church Planting Issues in High-Religious Contexts	49
Theological Resistance	50
Cultural Resistance	51
Persecution.	52
The Groundwork for the C-Continuum	55
Theoretical Suggestions Addressing the Shift of the Cultural Problem	57
Reports of Experimentation.	66
C5: Logical Conclusions of Dynamic-Equivalence	83
The C-Continuum.	87
Conclusion	95
3. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR INSIDER MOVEMENTS	98
God’s Inspired Casebook	100
Fulfillment Theology.	105
General Revelation	111
Fulfillment Theology in Insider Literature	114

Chapter	Page
Fulfillment and General Revelation in Acts 17:22-31	121
A Narrow View of Fulfillment	129
General Revelation as Preparation for the Gospel	135
Kingdom of God	138
Kingdom Circles	140
God Given Identity and Community?	145
Samaritan Insiders?	149
Acts 15	153
Flaws in the Kingdom Circles	158
Conclusion	164
4. MISSIOLOGICAL FORMATION OF INSIDER MOVEMENTS	170
Models of Contextualization	172
Robert Schreiter's <i>Constructing Local Theologies</i>	176
Stephen Bevans's <i>Models of Contextual Theology</i>	179
Gilliland's Synthetic Model of Contextualization	185
The Critical Model of Contextualization	190
The Dynamic Equivalence of Charles Kraft	191
Form and Meaning in the Contextualization Process	208
Strengths and Weaknesses of Insider Methodology	214
A Biblical View of Culture	218
Incarnational Ministry	224
Starting Point Plus Process	226

Chapter	Page
Conclusion.....	234
5. HISTORICAL CASE STUDY: SADRACH'S COMMUNITY OF FAITH.....	238
The Javanese Context	239
Javanese Cultural and Religious Context.....	245
The Spread of Christianity in Java.....	250
Sadrach's Insider Movement.....	261
Sadrach's Biography and Community Development.....	262
The Organization of Sadrach's Community.....	278
Contextualization and Syncretism in Sadrach's Community.....	281
Lessons Learned from Sadrach's Insider Movement.....	293
Conclusion.....	303
6. CONCLUSION	307
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	314

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMS	Baptist Mission Society
CPM	Church Planting Movement
<i>EMQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Missions Quarterly</i>
GKN	<i>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland</i> (Dutch Reformed Churches)
<i>IBMR</i>	<i>International Bulletin of Mission Research</i>
<i>IJFM</i>	<i>International Journal of Frontier Missions</i>
IMB	International Mission Board (SBC)
ISFM	International Society for Frontier Missions
HUP	Homogeneous Unit Principle
MBB	Muslim Background Believer
NBBC	Non-Baptized Believers in Christ
NGK	<i>Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerken</i> (The Netherlands Reformed Churches)
NGZV	<i>Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging</i> (Dutch Reformed Mission Union)
VOC	<i>Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie</i> (United East India Company)
ZGKN	<i>Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland</i> (Mission of the Dutch Reformed Churches)

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. The C-Continuum	3
2. Church growth statistics for the mission churches	277

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. <i>Oikos</i> church network	42
2. Aggregate church network	43
3. Components of a true church in an emerging Christ-centered community	93
4. The Kingdom Circles	141
5. Lewis's Kingdom Circles	142
6. Acts 15 and the kingdom of God	162
7. Bevans's map of the models of contextual theology	180
8. Bounded set Christianity.	197
9. Fuzzy set Christianity.	198
10. Map of modern Indonesia	242
11. Equality in Christ: Jacob Wilhelm and Sadrach Surapranata.	272

PREFACE

My entire post-baccalaureate study had one goal: to be a well-honed instrument that proclaims Christ to those who have never heard. This dissertation marks the joyful completion of a significant stage of that honing process. As in most things, my study and writing has been a community affair. I owe Dr. Sills an enormous debt of gratitude, not only for introducing me to the great benefits of cultural anthropology in the missionary task in my M.Div. classes, but also for his extreme patience and guidance throughout the organization and writing of this dissertation. This dissertation was completed on his sabbatical, yet his gracious and timely remarks have made this project much sharper than it would be otherwise.

In a similar way, the community of professors and students in the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism have been instrumental in helping the concepts and categories of this dissertation take shape. Lectures, discussions, and a great many good books have all played a critical role in developing my thinking as it relates to Insider Movements and missiological strategy. In particular, Dr. Lawless, Dr. Chancellor, Dr. Martin, and Dr. Galloway have all made invaluable contributions to my development and education. May the Lord generously reward their excellent service in educating and preparing the next generation of Christian workers.

The inter-library loan staff has also played a crucial role in the research reflected in this dissertation. Hannah Wymer and Ben [redacted] in particular have been

supportive in listening to my ideas, creatively helping me find resources, and have stretched the limits of our partner libraries' patience by extending my loan date for innumerable books, often on their own initiative. Ben in particular has devoted hours of his time to reading through these chapters and making suggestions and editorial corrections simply because he was interested in the topic. All of their time, effort, and initiative are deeply appreciated.

The pastors and congregation of [redacted] Baptist Church have contributed an untold amount to this dissertation. I could never have completed this project without the year-long sabbatical from my pastoral duties. Their concerns and prayers for me during the writing process were always extremely encouraging. I look forward to our continued partnership in the gospel to build communities of all cultures where Christ is King.

I am also especially thankful to my family. My parents have constantly encouraged me to persevere and have never complained when I have neglected to call while writing. My wonderful in-laws, Dr. Jim and Shelby [redacted], have been a continual source of encouragement and help throughout this program. Jim's war-stories from his own dissertation process have helped me to press forward even when the way seemed bleak.

I have no words to express my deep love and thankfulness to my wonderful wife, [redacted]. Our adoption of two infants—[redacted]—at the very beginning of this dissertation process has certainly made this year a challenging one, yet [redacted] has been a continual source of motivation, encouragement, and unwavering support. She has suffered more through this process than anyone else, doing without me for the past year more than any wife should while I have tried to juggle family, work, and writing. I have

never known anyone else as strong, brave, intelligent, and resolute as [redacted]. I know my joy at the completion of this project is exceeded only by hers, and I am eager to move forward with her in a lifetime full of laboring together for the sake of the gospel.

My hope and prayer for this dissertation has been that God would be glorified, the church edified, that all sides would be represented fairly and in a balanced way, and that much-needed clarity would begin to inform the increasingly widespread and polemical conversation related to evangelism, church planting, and contextualization in high-religious contexts. Only time will tell whether my goal has been realized. Nevertheless, through the research and writing process, I have learned that God works in mysterious ways, that I generally know far less than I think I do, and that listening first is the beginning of wisdom. I pray that the reader will approach this subject as a listener and a learner so that God will lead us all to more God-honoring and effective strategies of evangelism and church planting.

Finally, I am humbled and amazed at the Lord's work in my life. Grace alone has brought me to this point, and grace—I am confident—will lead me on. May the Lord continue to help me serve with the strength he provides, and may he continue to produce in me increasing measures of Spirit-wrought fruit. May blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.

J. Henry Wolfe

Louisville, Kentucky

October 2010

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What are Insider Movements? In the October 2005 edition of *Mission Frontiers*, Ralph Winter strongly advises his readers to learn the new term, asserts that it is the very strategy that Paul employed in the New Testament, and then indicates that opposition to the strategy primarily comes from non-field personnel.¹ The label “Insider Movement” first gained wide exposure at the 2004 International Society of Frontier Missiology (ISFM) and the subsequent publication of those papers in the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*. It was a term designed to draw under one umbrella several similar streams of contextualizing practice among different religious blocs, most notably high-religious contexts such as Islam and Hinduism.

Though a widely accepted definition of Insider Movements is still being established, the concept generally refers to the paradigm of keeping converts from high-religious traditions like Hinduism, Islam, or Buddhism inside the political, social, and religious structures of their births. For example, Muslims who have turned to Christ for the forgiveness of sin and freedom from the bondage of Satan would remain Muslims in a merely cultural sense: they continue going to the mosque, using Islamic worship forms, observing Ramadan, giving alms, and even making the pilgrimage to Mecca like other

¹Ralph Winter, “Editorial,” *Mission Frontiers* 27, no. 5 (2005): 4.

devout Muslims. These Muslim believers still follow the forms of religion set down by Muhammad, with only slight modification to make the religious rituals Christ-centered. By remaining “inside” the religious structures of their birth and using religious forms meaningful to their community, these believers are able to boldly evangelize their family, friends, and neighbors without encountering any of the issues brought about by socio-cultural conversion.

Doubtless, the Insider Movement conversation flows most directly from the ongoing debate related to Islamic contextualization, specifically those debates generated by John Travis’s spectrum of Muslim Christ-centered communities.² Travis’s spectrum was published first in *EMQ* in 1998 and categorizes fellowships of Muslims Background Believers (MBB) solely using the criteria of language and socio-religious forms. There are three main categories of fellowships in Table 1: C1-C2 comprise traditional church forms, C3-C4 are contextualized communities borrowing Islamic forms to various degrees, and C5-C6 maintain Islamic identities:

Common themes found in other high-religious contexts have been emphasized and combined together with the Islamic commonalities in order to form the basis for Insider Movement methodology. For example, Travis’s scale of Muslim Christ-centered

²John Travis, “The C1 to C6 Spectrum,” *EMQ* 34 (1998): 407-08; idem, “Must all Muslims leave “Islam” to follow Jesus?” *EMQ* 34 (1998): 411-15. An entire issue of *IJFM* was devoted to C5 support in 2000, the most notable articles being Stuart Caldwell, “Jesus in Samaria: A Paradigm for Church Planting Among Muslims,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 25-31; Jonathan Culver, “The Ishmael Promise and Contextualization among Muslims,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 61-70; Bernard Dutch, “Should Muslims Become ‘Christians’?” *IJFM* 17 (2000):15-24; Joshua Massey, “Editorial: Muslims Contextualization,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 3-4; idem, “God’s Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 5-14. It is important to note that Travis was simply *describing* the types of believers he had encountered in the Muslim world and was not primarily proposing a new type of strategy when he first published his spectrum in 1998. This succinct version of the C-Spectrum has been renamed “The C-Continuum” and is found in John Travis and Anna Travis, “Appropriate Approaches in Muslim Contexts,” in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 400.

C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
Traditional church using a language different from the mother tongue of the local Muslim community	Traditional church using the mother tongue of the local Muslim community	Contextualized Christ-Centered community using the mother tongue and some non-Muslim local cultural forms	Contextualized Christ-centered community using the mother tongue and biblically acceptable socio-religious Islamic forms	A network of Muslims who follow Jesus yet remain culturally and officially Muslims	Secret Muslim followers of Jesus with little or no community

Table 1: The C-Continuum

communities above has been similarly used in Hindu and Buddhist contexts to describe and inform the kinds of contextualized language and forms currently being employed there.³ Many of the proponents who argued for the validity of C5 levels of Islamic contextualization in the late 1990s are the same people strongly endorsing Insider Movements. The Insider Movement idea is every bit as controversial as C5 contextualization was when Travis first published his scale in 1998.

For those who are reading about a C5/Insider strategy and have not seen or encountered C5 Christ-centered communities firsthand (i.e., the majority of the evangelical community), three immediate questions tend to arise about these Insider believers. First, is it even possible for Muslims to go to the mosque and participate in community prayer without communicating some type of anti-biblical allegiance to Muhammad? Can Hindus participate in community festivals without demonstrating a

³Paul H. DeNuei, "A Typology of Approaches to Thai Folk Buddhists," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 419.

fundamental belief in one of the three million deities and an adherence to the worldview behind that worship? How can public participation in socio-religious forms that intrinsically deny crucial elements of the gospel actually advance the kingdom of God and what does that whole-hearted participation communicate about their allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the world? Is it possible to separate out the religious connotations and simply communicate solidarity by participating in Islamic, Hindu, or Buddhist worship?

Second, how is the worship and the understanding of the triune God of these Insider believers expressed and shaped by these worship forms? Are Islamic or Hindu worship forms suitable to contain biblical meaning or are the forms so saturated with old, anti-biblical meaning that believers who use them become as twisted and untrue as the spirit of the anti-Christ that stands behind that meaning? What are the chances that these Insider Movements would turn into an Islamic version of Mormonism, that is, that they would become neither Islamic nor Christian, but a third religious movement that veils the gospel altogether?

Third, how are these insiders identifying themselves as a part of a separate, larger, and universal community, namely, as members of the Body of Christ? Are these insiders following the Lord's commands to be baptized in water in his name and to remember his body and blood in a meal together? How are these believers resolving the tensions of being new members in a world-wide community that has been vilified as impure, immoral, and imperialistic by their birth communities?

The controversy around the strategy producing these kinds of believers rages intensely. Since the initial conference introducing the concept in 2004, numerous articles

and editorials advocating, defining, critiquing, and denouncing Insider strategy have appeared not only in the pages of *International Journal of Frontier Missions* and *Missions Frontiers*, but also in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, *Missiology: An International Review*, and several on-line publications, including *Lausanne World Pulse.com* and *St. Francis Magazine*. Recently, the blog, *Biblical Missiology*, has been formed by Georges Housenney to gather a community of missiologists who are opposed to Insider Movements. Additionally, conferences both advocating and condemning Insider Movements and the methodology behind the strategy have been held to broaden awareness and garner support for the respective positions.

At this point in the published debate, the evangelical missiological world is polarized on the issue. On one side of the debate, some proclaim Insider methodology as the best and most viable missiological strategy to reach adherents of high-religious systems. On the other are those who believe that Insider strategy represents the quintessential problem with missiological practicality, where what “works” is the criteria used to bend and shift theological boundaries. For instance, Travis argues for the necessity of Insider Movements when he writes, “We have little hope in our lifetime to believe for a major enough cultural, political and religious change to occur in our context such that Muslims would become open to entering Christianity on a wide scale. But we do have great hope that an ‘insider movement’ could get off the ground.”⁴ In response, John Piper writes, “It seems to me that a growing number of pastors and missionaries

⁴ Travis and Travis, “Appropriate Approaches,” 402.

have . . . concluded that the gap between the glory of Christ and the . . . religion of the nationals is simply too great for the fullness of God’s Word to overcome.”⁵

Clarity is desperately needed. Unfortunately, as Timothy Tennent writes, “There is currently no single source where a reader can find a complete case for C5 [read Insider Movements] that sets forth all of the evidence found in the literature.”⁶ Over the past eleven years since Travis’s spectrum appeared, articles related to the subject have been widely spread over five major periodicals in addition to numerous minor ones; also, several books, blogs, church websites, and privately circulated letters. Additionally, the articles and books that gave birth to the categories Travis describes in his spectrum date back to early Islamic missionary/scholars and a number of seminal articles and conferences in the sixties and seventies. As Insider methodology gains increasing momentum and its advocates travel the world conducting seminars and training sessions, many new missionaries are exposed to the premise that it encapsulates the best way to win the non-Christian world, but they often do not have all the information necessary to make a biblically balanced judgment. Corwin notes the twin danger of a lack of information combined with aggressive recruiting in a question posed to Insider advocates:

While not in itself a disqualifier in that our God may indeed always do a new thing, should it not have dictated a greater tentativeness and humility to what you are doing? Should not that, in turn, have been reflected in a more self-conscious pursuit of genuine peer review rather than advocacy seminars to recruit impressionable new

⁵John Piper, “Minimizing the Bible? Seeker-Driven Pastors and Radical Contextualization in Missions,” *Missions Frontiers* 28, no. 1 (2006): 17.

⁶Timothy Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 200.

laborers to your point of view?⁷

Though peer review can be challenging when security issues are so sensitive in high-religious contexts, Corwin is absolutely right to call for deeper theological and methodological reflection. Many missionaries agree that God, through the Spirit, may spontaneously produce an awakening among a people in a high-religious context, and that in some cases it may be acceptable for those believers then to remain inside the religious structures of their birth for a season as they sort things out.⁸ To employ a strategy, however, that seeks to start those kinds of movements without systematically thinking through the implications for discipling Insider believers while, at the same time attempting to keep them inside, is something different altogether.

Moreover, one major difficulty in approaching the Insider discussion is that the language employed by the C-Spectrum is not accurate enough to bear the weight of a complex and nuanced conversation. Thus, the type of miscommunication between Travis and Piper, or Corwin and Winter, is the norm rather than the exception. One person's C5 is borderline C4, while another's C5 is actually utterly non-Christian. For example, a regional leader with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board provided one example of Insider ministry. An MBB leader of one Insider Movement practices baptism

⁷Gary Corwin, "A Humble Appeal to C5/Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates to Consider Ten Questions (with responses from Brother Yusuf, Rick Brown, Kevin Higgins, Rebecca Lewis, and John Travis)," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 8. While Travis denies conducting "advocacy seminars," both the seminars and the recruiting of national personnel is happening around the globe. Barry Yeoman reports on one seminar conducted by Rick Love at Columbia International University. Barry Yeoman, "The Stealth Crusade," *Mother Jones* 48 (May-June 2002) [on-line]; accessed 16 August 2009; available from <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2002/05/stealth-crusade>; Internet. I have also received reports of one organization seeking nationals to start an insider ministry from within churches planted by another missions organization. J. F. Cecil, email to author, 8 September, 2009.

⁸The most comprehensive treatment of the subject so far is by Timothy Tennent, who reaches this conclusion. See Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 217.

by immersion, has fellowship times centered around the teaching of the Bible, and attempts to disciple new believers by the teaching of the Word. Since he had been an Islamic religious teacher, he was able to conduct public and private debates with other religious teachers about the veracity of the Bible and the centrality of Jesus. Currently, he maintains an Islamic identity and is leading Muslims to Christ from within Islam. His position as an Islamic teacher and his evangelism within Islam makes his ministry explicitly C5. Though these believers have not made a public break with Islam or their communities, the centrality of Jesus and the Word of God and the total transformation of their lives has resulted in the elevation of an identity centered around Jesus and the demotion of an identity that centers around Islam.

Another IMB missionary told of a missionary cultivating an Insider ministry that does not seek to be baptismal. In other words, these missionaries minimize explicitly “Christian” forms in order to foster an increased interest in the person of Jesus, even though by minimizing the forms of baptism and communion they lead men and women to neglect the commands of the very Jesus they preach.

Both ministries have been labeled as C5 even though the first example has strong C4 elements and is hoped to transition down the spectrum sometime in the near future. However, both examples are not equally biblical; the second is far more problematic than the first. A simple C5 designation of both ministries cannot do justice to the issues peculiar to each movement. Therefore, it is necessary to build upon some of the terms and create new categories.

Without the aid of clear biblical thinking and an understanding of the missiological premises that support Insider contextual methodology, the very real danger

is that missionaries will unwisely commit personnel and resources to a methodology that may never produce a true biblical church. An effort is desperately needed to balance the strengths and weaknesses of an Insider approach, critique the theological and methodological elements of the strategy, and evaluate its ability as a strategy to produce orthodox, Bible-believing, and Christ-exalting believers and churches.

Background

During my senior year of college in the fall of 1999, I studied as an exchange student in [redacted]. I was an anomaly among the other American students there. Unlike the other students, I was not there to acquire fluency in French or Arabic. Indeed, the last modern language class I had taken was a course in Spanish in my junior year of high school. Instead, having been recently shocked by the utter lostness of the Muslim world and compelled by that need to go and tell them about Jesus, I went to [redacted] to evangelize Muslims, going alone and using school as my platform. Though I was attending a local Baptist college to prepare for vocational ministry, I had not taken any missions classes. At the time, with all the naiveté of youth, I thought I was well prepared to proclaim the gospel and defend the faith. As I learned more about Islam through my courses there—Arabic Dialect, Arab History, Islamic Civilization, and Islamic Art and Architecture—I became familiar with the common Islamic arguments against Christianity. With my background in biblical studies and knowledge of the transmission of the Greek New Testament, I was able to effectively and decisively counter all of the arguments that the [redacted] students posed against Christianity. Every day I talked to students about Jesus, and I never once saw anyone even remotely persuaded by my apologetic approach. I left [redacted] with a broken vision of missions, despairing over

how Islam seemed to have effectively inoculated Muslims against the message of the gospel.

As I finished my last semester of college, the Lord renewed my hope for the Muslim world and my zeal for missions. Soon after graduation, I began to seek opportunities for missions training. I eventually began studying the U. S. Center for World Missions' *World Christian Foundations* curriculum—at the time it was an expanded version of the *Perspectives* course. It was in that curriculum—and in the *Perspectives* book in particular—where, along with the thousands of other students who have taken the *Perspectives* course or read through the book, I encountered Travis's spectrum of Christ-Centered communities in the Muslim world. I understood that my time in [redacted] was such a dismal evangelistic failure not simply because Muslims are inoculated against the gospel, but because I was communicating the gospel across cultures so badly. I had no consideration for the forms that godliness takes in Muslim culture, and, consequently, appeared to be the worst type of hypocrite, one who advocates Western religious superiority but who seemed a typical, godless American who never prayed, fasted, nor, in any meaningful way, communed with God. I felt like my whole world had been transformed and exciting new possibilities for contextualization awaited me on the mission field.

I immediately resonated with the C5 position because it so effectively removed what I saw as the greatest obstacles for Muslim evangelism: double conversion and a deep-rooted aversion to Western culture. I felt like I had found the silver bullet for Muslim missions, something that resolved all of the issues that I encountered in [redacted]. However, as I investigated more, I began to hear of problems resulting from

C5 ministries, including the emotional and spiritual implosions of mission personnel attempting to live as devout Muslims. Moreover, as I began to systematically think through the enormous ethical and biblical issues involved in a C5 ministry, I realized that I would need to build a much better biblical, theological, and missiological foundation if I were to undertake a ministry seeking a C5 movement. Because of the number of unresolved issues and the biblical problems I saw in C5 ministry as it was outlined in the literature, I increasingly favored a C4 position.

In 2002, I came to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to complete a M.Div. in International Church Planting. Through the course of my studies, I took every opportunity to apply what I was learning to a Muslim context. I wrote a paper on Phil Parshall's model of Muslim evangelism, investigated issues of folk Islam, and undertook literature-based ethnographic research on various Muslim people-groups. Above all else, I wanted to be better equipped for the mission field so that I would grow to understand my context of ministry, and, out of that understanding, to boldly proclaim the gospel in a culturally sensitive way. I did not want to experience again the stumbling block of culture that obscures the cross. Through the course of my studies, as I gradually became more versed in the issues and complexities intrinsic to the Muslim missions, I encountered many missionaries to Muslims who were struggling in varying degrees with how to think about a C5 position. I also became acquainted with missionaries who felt strongly one way or another about a C5 position, yet who had settled the issue with a woefully inadequate picture of the issues and arguments. In the face of this confusion, I had an increasing desire to help bring clarity to the issue so that field personnel could see the whole picture and make informed and biblically-balanced decisions.

My first doctoral colloquium in Missions with Dr. George Martin exposed me to ethno-hermeneutics through the writings of Larry Caldwell and helped me to see the common root between the translation theories of Eugene Nida and C5 ministry. The colloquium on Islam with Dr. Bryan Galloway allowed me to investigate that connection further through the writings of Charles Kraft. It enabled me to understand the missiological foundation of C5 and why proponents felt so confident in the face of possible syncretism that new Christ-centered “Messianic Muslims” would become progressively orthodox. Finally, the colloquium dealing with future trends in missions gave me an opportunity to focus on Insider Movements and investigate how the conversation surrounding a C5 position has grown to include all high-religious contexts.

Statement of the Problem

The Insider conversation is incomplete in many fundamental ways. Currently, the advocates of Insider Movements lack a cohesive definition and any solid biblical support. But they are scrambling to supply biblical ground for the Christ-ward movements they have seen happen on the mission field. Simultaneously, mission organizations have seen those Christ-ward movements happening inside high-religious communities, and some have seized on the methodology simply because it is working when most strategies experience significantly slower conversion rates. Several major missions organizations are aggressively recruiting and paying national partners to start Insider ministries.

Meanwhile, opponents generally only see problems with the methodology and are dismayed to see national partners and fellow missionaries invest resources in a methodology they doubt will ever produce an orthodox community of believers.

Additionally, naysayers find it unbelievable that advocates of an Insider approach would continue endorsing a C5 position and advise opponents to “pray and give them more time” when the biblical and theological support is so weak.⁹ Advocates of an Insider approach believe the Bible eventually produces orthodoxy for these movements and that only time will tell how these Christ-centered believers will form a community identity in relation to their high-religious context.

It is difficult for opponents to interact constructively with a “wait and see” argument, and advocates believe that little more can be said about an Insider approach until more field research is done to shed light on the issue. It is likely that the need for more field research is the very reason that the ISFM’s conference in 2009 dealt with “best practices,” which was informed by the research done for the book *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues among Muslims*. While quantitative data related to missionary practice is an essential part of the Insider Movement conversation, the conversation as a whole simply needs more clarity and crystallization.

It is my hope that this dissertation will add to the conversation in at least three helpful ways. My first hope is to provide a resource to fill the need Tennent mentions above, namely, to produce one resource that will systematically set forth both the strengths and weaknesses of the Insider case.

Second, I hope to provide a helpful biblical and methodological framework with which to evaluate current Insider methodology. One aid to that framework will be

⁹John Travis, “Four Responses to Timothy C. Tennent’s ‘Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques,’” *IJFM* 23 (2006): 124-25.

the introduction of a tool, like Travis's spectrum, that missionaries can use as a shorthand way to identify their ministries or as a guide to improve their ministries. Travis's spectrum overtly deals with only two elements: socio-religious cultural forms and language employed in worship. His spectrum primarily aims at identifying extractionistic elements in Muslim church planting ministry and highlighting models that avoid those tendencies by introducing the concept of Insider identity. The discussion needs to include a way to judge biblical fidelity, including, but not limited to, the practice of the ordinances. Third, I hope that an historical investigation of a Christ-centered movement in a high-religious context will address the "wait and see" argument of Higgins and Travis.

Purpose Statement

To fulfill these three goals, this dissertation will first present the development of Insider Movement methodology. Next, the biblical and theological arguments will be categorized and analyzed in order to identify where the biblical support is weak and to suggest ways to build upon the biblical strengths. Third, the missiological and methodological arguments supporting Insider Movements will be identified, analyzed, and assessed in order to develop a theory related to the long-term missiological viability of an Insider strategy. Last, this dissertation will present the development of Sadrach's contextualized MBB community in the late nineteenth century as a case study to test the theory and identify one possible trajectory for the future development of Insider Movements currently taking place. Throughout, this dissertation takes the stance that Insider methodology as it is currently articulated is biblically weak and methodologically unwise, and that the indefinite maintaining of an Insider identity will prove detrimental to

the new community of faith.

Assumptions and Explanation of Terms

Any discussion of contextualization and Insider methodology needs clear definitions. Using terms like “Christian,” “church,” “contextualization,” “syncretism,” “high-religious contexts,” and “socio-religious forms” without clearly delineating what I mean by them is simply unhelpful. While a detailed discussion of the above terms will be an essential component throughout the dissertation, abbreviated definitions of the terms follows below:

Christian

The term “Christian” is loaded with possible meanings. It is often used in some countries as a simple ethnic description of a minority culture. Sometimes it is used as a term to encapsulate the totality of Western immorality or Western imperialism. In America, the term is broadly used to describe groups ranging from legalistic fundamentalists, to cultural Catholics, and to the Spirit-filled members of local churches. When I use the term “Christians,” I mean to indicate a group who has been immersed in cultural Christianity, that is, a people who have been born into the religion based on the person of Jesus and who may or may not actually be regenerated and Spirit-filled followers of Christ. The term “believers” will be used throughout the dissertation to describe people who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God (Titus 3:4-7), who have repented of their sins and have been born again (e.g., Acts 3:19; John 3:3-7; 1 Pet 1:23), who are growing in sanctification through imbibing the Bible (John 8:31-32) and the practice of prayer (1 Thess 5:17), who meet together as a new and distinct community (Acts 2: 42-47; Heb 10:25) who strive to follow the commands of Christ (John 13:34; Lk

22:19; Matt 28:19), and who actively put to death the deeds of the flesh (Rom 8:13). Believers have been adopted into a new family by the electing grace of God (Rom 8:15; Eph 1:5), and have demonstrated their trust in the person and work of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins by being baptized in his name (Acts 2:38). Mature believers will display these characteristic with more consistency than new believers, since the above description is of an ideal believer, yet all believers will display some degree of the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. While it may take some time for believers to understand the regenerating work of the Spirit in their conversions from darkness to light (1 Pet 2:9-10), they will be marked by repentance (2 Cor 7:10-12), fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-24), and an overwhelming love for the community of faith (1 Pet 4:8).

Church

The term “church” is likewise laden with unhelpful cultural baggage both because the word is so strongly associated with a building rather than a group of believers, and because churches are often repositories of an imperialistic or minority culture. Travis uses the phrase “Christ-centered communities” in the upper registrars of his spectrum of contextualization in order to get away from the term “church” and to designate that Christ is the crucial element drawing the group to meet together. However, this dissertation continues to use the term “church” for the sake of simplicity.

In any discussion of evangelism and church planting, the first and obvious question is, “What is a church?” The word *ekklesia*—the Greek New Testament word translated as “church”—simply means “assembly.” It is used both in the LXX translation

of the Old Testament and in the New Testament to describe the congregation of God.¹⁰ The New Testament uses the word to describe the universal church—the community of all true believers throughout time (Eph 1:22-23)—as well as entire regions and cities (e.g., 1 Cor 1:2; Acts 9:31; Rev 2-3). However, the most basic New Testament use of *ekklesia* describes local congregations, which likely met in houses (e.g., Rom 16:5). In the Insider conversation, it is important to distinguish clearly between a true church and assemblies that distort the gospel message like the “synagogues of Satan” in Revelation 2:9 and the assemblies of pagans offering worship to demons in 1 Corinthians 10:20.

It is not accurate to describe a group meeting for an exegetical Bible study as a church. Bible study—or, more precisely, the correct proclamation of the gospel—is one important component of a true church. However, unless that group also seeks to implement the ordinances of Jesus, it does not truly function as a separated community of Christ-centered faith. The practice of the ordinances serves several functions in the local church, as Grudem traces out: “Baptism is the means of admitting people into the church, and the Lord’s Supper is the means for allowing people to give a sign of continuing in the membership of the church—the church signifies that it considers those who receive baptism and the Lord’s Supper to be saved.”¹¹

True churches are marked by three basic components: the proclamation of the pure gospel, the practice of baptism for those who believe the gospel, and the observance of the Lord’s Supper for members of the new community. While Insider methodology

¹⁰Wayne Grudem relates that *ekklesia* is the word that the LXX most often uses for the Hebrew *qabal*, which the English Standard Version (ESV) translates as “assembly.” See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 852.

¹¹Ibid., 866.

emphasizes the importance of keeping believers within their social units, it is vitally important to acknowledge that believers form a *new and separate community* distinct from their non-believing family and friends. The *Baptist Faith & Message's* definition of a church marks well the goal of any church planting ministry:

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth... While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.¹²

Contextualization

As a missionary term, the general consensus is that the term “contextualization” was first used in the 1972 Conciliar publication *Ministry in Context*.¹³ The document describes contextualization as going beyond the term indigenization:

It means all that is implied in the familiar term 'indigenization' and yet seeks to press beyond. Contextualization has to do with how we assess the peculiarity of the Third World contexts . . . [taking] into account the process of secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical movement of nations in the Third World.

Authentic contextualization is always prophetic, arising always out of a genuine encounter between God's Word and His World, and moves toward the purpose of challenging and changing the situation through rootedness in and commitment to a given historical moment. It is therefore clear that contextualization is a dynamic and not a static process.¹⁴

¹²My definition of the church is a pared-down version of the Southern Baptist Convention's. See *Baptist Faith and Message* [on-line]; accessed 2 October 2009; available from <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>; Internet. I also base my definition on the following passages of Scripture: Matt 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; Eph1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11, 21; 5:22-32; Phil 1:1; Col 1:18; 1 Tim 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Heb 11:39-40; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Rev 2-3; 21:2-3.

¹³*Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1971-1977)* (Bromiley, England: Theological Education Fund, 1972), 20-21.

¹⁴David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and*

The document goes on to describe the contextualizing process resulting in a “theology of change,” which recognizes the theological significance of issues related to justice, poverty, liberation, and dialogue with other faiths.¹⁵ However, while the originators of the term were participants in the World Council of Churches Conciliar movement, evangelicals adopted the term while rejecting Conciliar overtones.¹⁶

Ultimately, evangelicals have used the term “contextualization” as a capstone to describe the activity of relating the gospel to local cultures and contexts. For many it better signifies a dynamic and changing environment and, therefore, serves as an umbrella for terms like “indigenization,” “indigenous,” “adaptation,” “incarnation,” “translation,” and “accommodation.” However, as Flemming indicates, the very popularity of the word and its use by a variety of groups of different theological persuasions makes it both slippery and fuzzy.¹⁷ Some use the word to describe hermeneutical activity, others use it to describe the process of developing local theologies, and still others use it to describe various missiological activities such as cross-cultural communication and translation.¹⁸ Ultimately, what Hesselgrave affirmed more

Models (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 20-21. A “static process” is an oxymoron, since “static” by definition means “unchanging.” Nevertheless, their point concerning the dynamic nature of contextualization is clear.

¹⁵This vision of the process of contextualization gave rise to aspects of South American Liberation Theology.

¹⁶See Daniel R. Sanchez, “Contextualization and the Missionary Endeavor,” in *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Eddie Smith, and Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998), 319-28. Sanchez lists specific consultations and conferences that contributed to the current understanding of the term.

¹⁷Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 18.

¹⁸For instance, see D. A. Carson, ed., *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984); Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*

than twenty years ago is still true today: “There is not yet a commonly accepted definition of the word ‘contextualization,’ but only a series of proposals, all of them vying for acceptance.”¹⁹

This dissertation takes the perspective that a proposed model of contextualization must be rooted deeply in the tenets of the Reformation and its emphasis on the role of Scripture and the teachings of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. Scripture is both the starting point and final authority in the contextualization process; it alone can be trusted to guide us in communicating the gospel in such a way that the receiving culture is dynamically impacted and prophetically confronted. From this perspective, contextualization is something that has been modeled for us in the Scriptures and can be described as the comprehensive process by which the gospel and the whole counsel of God is made known to both an individual and to a people. The results of contextualization are authentic expressions of Christ-centered worship and radical transformation within local contexts. Though contextualization is shaped by the receiving culture, the boundaries of contextualization are determined by Scripture, the only sure guide and guard against error.

Conversations about contextualization often take one of two directions. Some, like Hesselgrave, emphasize the communication element of contextualization. The

(Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984); Charles H. Kraft, *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001); and David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981).

¹⁹Hesselgrave and Rommen, *Contextualization*, 35. See also Flemming, *Contextualization*, 19, and A. Scott Moreau, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), s.v. “Contextualization,” by Dean S. Gilliland.

communication focus investigates the linguistic and theological elements of contextualization and strives to make the gospel become indigenous to a culture through the use of appropriate words, idioms, and names. Additionally, a communication focus seeks to contextualize biblical themes and concepts that prophetically speak to the context. While Insider advocates are concerned about both the linguistic and theological elements of contextualization, their questions often center around the appropriate incorporation of cultural forms in contextualized worship and the biblical validity of using those forms. Insider advocates adhere to what Gilliland calls the Critical Model of contextualization, which will be addressed at length in chapter 4.²⁰

Syncretism

Either not contextualizing or badly contextualizing inevitably leads to syncretism.²¹ Syncretism is best viewed as a spectrum along which essential gospel truths are replaced, augmented, or diluted through the incorporation of non-Christian elements.²² At its worst, syncretism fatally compromises the message of the gospel in its essentials. This compromise is the driving concern for those questioning Insider methodology.

This dissertation uses the term “syncretism” in two ways. The first is as a

²⁰Dean S. Gilliland, “Appendix,” in *The Word among Us*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas: Word, 1989), 317.

²¹This can be viewed as Hiebert’s description of the first two of three approaches to contextualization: “Rejection of contextualization” and “uncritical contextualization.” See Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 184-86. However, even “critical contextualization,” if undertaken with a wrong view of Scripture or a wrong view of culture, can still result in syncretism.

²²A. Scott Moreau, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), s.v. “syncretism,” by A. Scott Moreau.

broad category that ought to be avoided in the missionary task of communicating the gospel, church planting, and in theologizing. Second, this dissertation distinguishes between fatal syncretism—the gospel is completely veiled and salvation is not possible—and non-fatal syncretism—the gospel is augmented or diluted but not compromised so much that the message of salvation through Jesus alone is lost. While non-fatal syncretism is far from ideal, discipleship within a process of critical contextualization—investigated in detail in chapter 4—will eventually resolve or lessen many instances of non-fatal syncretism.

A process of diagnosing syncretism looks past the forms of both culture and language to the understood meanings behind the words, phrases, and forms of worship used by local churches in a particular context. If normative cultural values have replaced biblical meaning, or if the gospel has become a means to attain culturally induced felt needs that results in the removal of a radical call to discipleship, then syncretism is in progress.

An undiluted biblical message will ultimately confront culture where it transgresses the law of God. Intrinsic to the gospel is a prophetic voice to the macro-culture so that where the gospel is robust culture is confronted. Syncretism diminishes radically the gospel's ability to speak to the culture, to confront it and cry out against it where necessary, and, by extension, to the people living in it. Through the incorporation of cultural values, churches are reshaped in the image, not of God, but of the culture. The syncretistic church has nothing to say to the culture because it does not see anything wrong. More than that, the syncretistic church does not have the right answers to supply to hurting people in need of a mighty and loving Savior. In fatal syncretism, salvation is

not even possible. The goal of contextualization then, is to give the gospel to a culture in such a way that syncretism is avoided while the messenger's culture does not overpower and overrule authentic, indigenous expressions of worship.²³

The deep danger presented by Insider methodology is the inadvertent transmission of non-biblical meaning through the use of forms saturated with Islamic or Hindu theology. In other words, is there a point in which a form is so tainted by its original meaning that it fundamentally distorts the gospel by carrying overtones of the old meaning into the new? Is it possible for a strategy that avoids overt missionary discipleship of new believers that the meaning behind a particular form can be utterly transformed by the Spirit and the Word? Insider advocates answer with an excited affirmative, while opponents object with a resounding negative. The re-use of forms is exponentially complicated in high-religious folk contexts.

High-Religious Contexts

The four world religions—Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity—are considered high religions. They, along with a handful of other smaller religions like Judaism and the Sikh tradition, are characterized by at least four similarities:

First, they are concerned with the cosmic questions of life. They answer questions concerning origins . . . destiny . . . and the ultimate meaning of life. Second, they have written texts, like the Bible, Qur'an, and Rig Veda Third, high religions are institutionalized. They have their own specialized leadership roles, bureaucratic

²³The primary culture in view here is the resulting fellowship's culture, *if they remain within the culture*. That is, if double conversation has taken place, where believers have been converted not only to Christ but also to the messenger's culture, syncretism may still be taking place, just not the type envisioned here. The doubly converted believer is no longer a true member of the receptor culture and therefore cannot effectively serve as a prophetic voice to that culture. Effective prophetic confrontation best comes from a cultural insider's perspective (C3-C5 on Travis's spectrum). In chapter 2, I argue that a third culture is born any time a fellowship comes into existence, but that third culture—what I call a "people of God" culture—will have one foot firmly planted in their culture and the other in heaven.

organizations, and creedal formulations that set them apart from other institutions. Temples, church buildings, and schools for training leaders provide locations for institutional activity. Fourth, high religions provide ethical and moral directives for religious participants. A moral god or gods are in conflict with the forces of evil.²⁴

Low, or folk, religions are concerned primarily with everyday questions related to health, fertility, wealth, and power. They are contrasted in many ways with the four characteristics above. They focus on an intermediate realm of spirit intercessors, usually transmit beliefs through oral tradition, are informally organized, and do not have an ethical system rooted in the character of God.

Most high-religious contexts, including American Christianity, are a mix of high and low religious elements. The forms of religion (i.e., the Catholic Eucharist, the Pentecostal laying on of hands for healing, Muslim fasting) are used as a magical means to manipulate spiritual powers.²⁵ Therefore, in folk high-religious contexts, a particular religious form can have dual meanings: an official organizational meaning and a magical meaning.

Socio-Religious Forms

To further complicate the picture, high-religious contexts often have fused the concept of ethnic identity with that of religious identity. The American mindset does not readily grasp the fusion of political, familial, and religious identities that results in an almost unassailable belief that to be Somali, Malay, or Moroccan is to be Muslim.

²⁴Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Communicating Christ in Animistic Cultures* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1991), 57-58.

²⁵For examples of folk Islam, see Bill Musk *The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims at Street Level*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004); and Phil Parshall, *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

Islamic religious forms, like Ramadan or Friday prayer, are not simply expressions of religious belief but a statement of community solidarity. Similarly, social forms, like weddings and harvest festivals, contain overt expressions of religious belief. When Hindus or Muslims refuse to participate in the social aspects of the religious forms, they effectively communicate dissolution of community, family, and even political ties. At a basic level, Insider methodology seeks to remove the obvious problems inherent in religious conversion by keeping the socio-religious community intact.

Methodology

This dissertation is a study of the phenomenon of Insider Movements and the arguments interacting with Insider methodology as a missions strategy, for the purpose of proposing a theory related to the viability of retaining insider identity in high-religious contexts. The theory is gradually developed through the collection of information and interaction with the arguments for and against Insider strategy. The arguments are categorized into three primary groups: biblical, theological, and missiological. The ground for each individual argument is analyzed to determine whether the argument proves true or fails using the criteria of logical consistency and biblical fidelity. Once the arguments have been categorized and analyzed, a theory is proposed and tested against an historical case study of the Javanese people movement led by Sadrach in the late nineteenth century.

I have gathered information in three primary ways. First, the vast majority of this dissertation is based on bibliographic research. However, since so much of the literature dealing with C5/Insider methodology is *ad hoc* and reactionary, it is important to gain a fuller picture of the scenario than what is currently available from the literature

alone. So, in order to gain a fuller picture, I have also worked through the training material of a missions consultant group that focuses on equipping Western missionaries to facilitate Insider Movements, and listened to the audio of conferences designed to combat Insider strategy.

Last, a small portion of the research draws upon the experiences and feedback of front-line missionaries who both oppose and advocate Insider strategy. Gathering the stories and experiences of field-personnel has two purposes. First, it ensures that the largely theoretical discussion of this dissertation deals with actual mission-field realities and avoids a caricature of either position. Second, it identifies strengths and weaknesses not present in the written discussion. Insider opponents who have either seen an Insider Movement from afar or who have seen Insider advocates operating within their spheres of ministry have a unique and important perspective. While they do not often have the time to participate in the written discussion, they are able to identify specific weaknesses of the methodology and how those weaknesses are affected by the context. Similarly, front-line Insider advocates—along with agencies and faculty involved field-research—are in a position to know specific strengths and whether the use of a specific socio-religious form is syncretistic or an expression of biblical Christ-exaltation. The stories and experiences of missionaries were gathered by email correspondence, phone conversations, and personal interaction, though, because of security restrictions, the stories have not been included in this dissertation.

Limitations and Delimitations

Security concerns limit access to actual Insider Movements and, while some research has been undertaken to investigate these movements, none of that research has

been made available in explicit form to the wider missiological community.²⁶ Currently, field work that could inform and sharpen the Insider conversation is either impossible to conduct or unavailable. Moreover, the Insider conversation has been shaped by the ongoing conversation related to Muslim contextualization but has grown to include Hindu, Buddhist, and even Mormon elements. However, very little from Hindu, Buddhist, or Mormon contexts has actually shaped or informed the growing conversation. As a delimitation, this dissertation does not seek to help offset that imbalance.

Over the past decade, a large body of English-language literature has grown out of Travis's continuum of Christ-centered communities. While it is possible that other nationalities have joined the Insider conversation or have written pertinent material related to contextualization, I did not have access to those libraries or read the languages in which this type of material was likely to be written. This dissertation primarily interacts with English language material but, where pertinent, delves into Arabic, Dutch, and Indonesian material. The James P. Boyce Centennial Library has a large selection of books and periodicals dealing generally with missions. These resources were supplemented by my personal library, the Ekstrom Library at the University of Louisville, the Ernest Miller White Library at the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, and through the excellent efforts of the Inter-Library loan department. While a few English

²⁶For example, Kevin Higgins shows that Woodberry and others have conducted a long-term study on an Insider Movement. See Kevin Higgins, "Acts 15 and Insider Movements among Muslims: Questions, Process, and Conclusions," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 34, 39-40. Those results have not been published, and Higgins claims in the above article that the elements of that study used by Phil Parshall have been taken out of context and viewed in the most negative possible light. For Parshall's study, see Phil Parshall, "Danger! New Directions in Contextualization: Do Some Approaches to Muslims Cross the Line into Syncretism?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998): 404-41, and, most recently, idem, *Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization* (Waynesboro, GA: Gabriel, 2003), 69-70.

language resources—especially periodical articles dealing with Hindu contextualization—are only available in Europe or India, the project was not seriously handicapped by this lack. The internet was also a valuable and powerful tool for research and provided examples of Insider evangelism in addition to connecting to researchers and missionaries around the world through email correspondence.

To be clear, this dissertation investigates the possibilities of Insider Movements as a *strategy*; it does not address the possibility of these movements spontaneously arising without the input or direction of missionary personnel. While the question related to the spontaneous nature of Insider Movements is certainly interesting, the answer does not add significantly to the overall research question, largely, because a concerted effort is being made by Insider advocates to keep those movements inside the majority religion, even if they did start spontaneously. Nevertheless, the conclusions of this study will bear significant implications for ministries dealing with spontaneous Insider Movements.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSIDER MOVEMENT METHODOLOGY

Insider methodology is the culmination of decades of missiological reflection directed at the peculiar obstacles to and difficulties of gospel proclamation and church planting in high-religious contexts. It is simply the logical conclusion of methodology that was proposed in the middle of the twentieth century, experimentally developed, refined, taught, experimentally implemented again, and now introduced as Insider methodology. It is difficult to understand clearly the nuances of Insider methodology without also understanding the missiology from which it springs or the problems Insider methodology is attempting to address. Too often in the literature dealing with Insider methodology, straw man arguments are lobbed from either side of the debate. Given that the majority of back-and-forth conversation and debate has taken place primarily through articles appearing in a number of different journals over the course of the last five years, inaccurate representations of opposing positions have served to muddle the picture in especially unhelpful ways.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to trace the development of Insider methodology in an attempt to present a clear and complete picture of the arguments raised by Insider proponents. The first section will investigate the relationship of Insider Movements to People Movements and Church Planting Movements. The second section will explore the missiological issues of church planting in high-religious contexts. The

third section will trace the missiological formation of the C-Continuum. The fourth section will interact with the strengths and weakness of the C-Continuum and propose modifications to the continuum that should bring clarity and a biblical focus to the Insider discussion.

People Movements, Church Planting Movements and Insider Methodology

As Greg Parsons indicates, the conceptual framework for Insider ideology borrows heavily from the contemporary idea of “People Movements.”¹ When Winter attempted to define the essence of Insider Movements in the 2005 October issue of *Missions Frontiers*, he included a piece written by Donald McGavran in order to demonstrate the basic idea behind both Insider Movements and Church Planting Movements (CPM).² As a starting point for discussion, it is helpful to compare the differences and similarities in how the concepts of People Movements, CPM, and Insider Movements are articulated. This section will explore these three missiological concepts in order to arrive at a working definition and a clear picture of what Insider proponents are attempting to achieve, and how they intend to move toward their goals.

People Movements

David Hesselgrave defines People Movements as the “phenomenon of a significant number of the people of one tribe, class, or caste converting to Christ

¹Greg H. Parsons, “Insider Movements: A New Phrase for an Old Idea” [on-line]; accessed 3 February 2008; available from <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/research.php/418/07-2006>; Internet.

²Donald McGavran, “A People Reborn: Foundational Insights on People Movements,” *Mission Frontiers* 27, no. 5 (2005): 16-17.

together.”³ People Movements were first articulated by J. W. Pickett in the 1933 publication *Christian Mass Movements in India*, and then developed and analyzed for a much wider audience in Donald McGavran’s *Bridges of God*.⁴ McGavran was primarily interested in accomplishing two purposes with his widely influential book. First, like Roland Allan and the best publications of World Dominion Press, McGavran sought to convince evangelical missions to finally abandon the mission station (i.e., colonial) approach to evangelism and church planting. Second, he attempted to prove that “Christward movements of peoples are the supreme goal of missionary effort,” which is to say, that missionaries should make every effort to study *why* these movements occur and then to use the newly discovered principles to facilitate and encourage the growth of People Movements.⁵

In *Bridges of God*, McGavran powerfully highlighted the problems of the one-by-one extractionistic efforts of colonial missions:

Had the question arisen as to how peoples became Christian, the answer would have been given that it was by individual after individual becoming soundly converted. . . . Peoples were thought of as aggregates of individuals whose conversion was achieved one by one.⁶

However, the great problem for the spread of the gospel was that the one-by-one method

³A. Scott Moreau, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), s.v. “People Movements,” by David Hesselgrave.

⁴Donald McGavran, *Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Mission* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2005; reprint, New York: World Dominion Press, 1955). See also, J. Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India* (Lucknow, India: W. W. Bell, 1933); idem, *Christ’s Way to India’s Heart* (Lucknow, India: W. W. Bell, 1938). Both of Pickett’s works studied mass movements within middle caste groups.

⁵McGavran, *Bridges of God*, 91.

⁶Ibid., 9.

of evangelism only served to sever the new convert's ties to his family and community:

Those who did . . . [accept Christianity] were usually forced out of their own homes by fierce ostracism. They came to live at the mission colony, where they were usually employed. Orphans were sheltered. Slaves were bought and freed. Women were rescued. Some healed patients became Christian. Many of these usually came to live at the mission station. They were taught various means of earning a livelihood and directed into various forms of service. They formed the gathered colony.⁷

The view of colonial missions was that “to be a Christian was to come out and be separate.”⁸ Obviously, to colonial missionaries, separation meant leaving the birth community and joining the believing community of Western expatriates. But McGavran argued that extractionistic conversion failed to understand the sociological nature of decision-making within a society and that extraction forced a great loss of opportunity for the spread of the gospel:

A people is not an aggregation of individuals. In a true people intermarriage and the intimate details of social intercourse take place within the society. In a true people individuals are bound together not merely by common social practices and religious beliefs but by common blood.⁹

In order to see Christianity spread throughout a people group, McGavran strongly reacted against extraction and instead argued that evangelists and missionaries should allow the new convert to stay within his own society. A new convert should remain among his own blood relatives, friends, and neighbors and live amidst them in such a way that his light shines before unbelieving men. As individuals testify to the gospel and demonstrate transformed lives within society, more and more people join

⁷Ibid., 43.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., 9.

together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

McGavran recognized that the “Christianization” of any society will inevitably be mixed with a number of unconverted who change allegiance for reasons unrelated to inward spiritual rebirth. For this reason, he distinguished between mass movements and People Movements:

We do not use the term “mass movement”. This unfortunate term implies unthinking acceptance of Christ by great masses. While it does fairly represent one aspect of a People Movement—that the group usually numbers many persons—it totally obscures the facts (a) that any one group is usually small in numbers, (b) that each member of the group has usually received much instruction in the Christian faith, and (c) that large numbers are achieved only by the conversion of a series of small groups over a period of years.¹⁰

According to McGavran, a true People Movement is a group decision made by new creations in Christ to change group allegiance away from an old way of life into a new, Christ-centered identity. “The Christianization of a people requires reborn men and women . . . ; the power of any People Movement to Christ depends in great measure on the number of truly converted persons in it.”¹¹ McGavran also acknowledged that the cost of discipleship is not minimized during the spread of Christianity within a people:

Yet becoming a Christian also meant leaving relatives. Every such decision involved separation from those not yet convinced: “A man against his father and a daughter against her mother.” What produced this dividing force was not merely individual conviction. It was individual conviction heated hot in a glowing group movement in a human chain reaction. Very few individuals standing alone could renounce father and mother and kinsmen. But reinforced by the burning faith that our people are following the new way, such fathers and mothers and kinsmen as refused to follow the Messiah could be renounced. There were heartbreaks and tears, the parting was tremendously difficult, but to men borne forward on the wave

¹⁰Ibid., 13.

¹¹Ibid., 11.

of group action it was possible.¹²

As the phenomenon of People Movements underwent study and scrutiny after the 1955 publication of *Bridges of God*, it was found that these movements to Christ generally happened among low-religious groups. Moreover, these studies highlighted the role of social networks in the spread of the gospel. The gospel traveled best where relationships were the closest. In Hesselgrave's article in *the Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, he describes one study where a People Movement traveled almost entirely along on the natural web of relationships within families and communities. Consanguineal and affinal kin made up the majority of the movement while non-related coworkers and neighbors were a minority. According to Hesselgrave, these movements

represent the way in which people actually communicate with each other and the way in which they "like" to come to Christ. People communicate and relate most often and effectively with their own kind of people. And they resist being wrenched out of the families, extended families, and other groupings with which they are most intimately associated.¹³

It was studies like the above that enabled McGavran to formulate what eventually became the foundation of the Church Growth Movement: the Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP). Put simply, the HUP states that "people like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers."¹⁴

¹²Ibid., 22.

¹³Ibid., 744.

¹⁴Donald A. McGavran and C. Peter Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 163. The efforts of McGavran, Winter, and others made clear to the evangelical community that having a mission station or a national church present in every geo-political unit in the world did not mean that the nations had been reached with the gospel. Instead, they argued, the Scriptures talk about *panta ta ethne*. People Groups—homogeneous units related by culture, language, and ethnicity—became the focus of missions after Ralph Winter's 1974 Lausanne address. See Ralph Winter, "The Highest Priority: Cross Cultural Evangelism," in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide, 1975), 226-41.

Unfortunately, while the concept of People Movements was a sociologically sound way to *describe* the phenomenon of a society being Christianized, it is somewhat problematic from a biblical point of view to *prescribe* the methodology without some care and modification. The most obvious concern of People Movements as a methodology is that people will align themselves to the visible church without actually being converted. McGavran anticipated this concern and—as I have shown above—attempted to address it by differentiating between mass movements and People Movements. Still, McGavran notes that the “difficulty in the fundamental theology of group movement churches will loom particularly large to those churches which practice believers’ baptism, and which broke with the older branches of Protestantism over questions similar to this.”¹⁵ It not surprising, then, that Church Planting Movements (CPM)—which resolves some of the baptistic ecclesiastical problems in People Movements—is a methodology articulated and endorsed by Baptist missionaries.

Church Planting Movements

CPM is defined by David Garrison as “a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.”¹⁶ Garrison acknowledges that a CPM always travels along the bridges formed by the HUP but asserts that the CPM does not necessarily stay within homogeneous units. Because the “DNA” of these churches is intrinsically missional, the bold evangelism of CPM

¹⁵McGavran, *Bridges of God*, 95.

¹⁶David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 21.

members often begins to cross cultures.¹⁷

Moreover, Garrison distinguishes between People Movements and CPM by the existence of reproducing churches.

Church Planting Movements are not just people movements. Beyond mass evangelism is mass conversion where great numbers of lost people respond to the gospel. These are sometimes called “people movements,” which should not be confused with Church Planting Movements. In several locations around the world, these people movements are occurring today, but they do not always lead to multiplying churches.¹⁸

Garrison references a people movement among the Algerian Berbers and expresses concern because of the conspicuous absence of churches. He warns,

For a variety of reasons, many of these mass conversions aren't producing the pool of new churches needed to assimilate the converts. When this disparity occurs these mass conversions run the risk of being a miraculous *flash in the pan*, like a quick burst of light that dissipates into nothing. Mass conversion is part of Church Planting Movements, but in church planting movements, the new believers gather into rapidly reproducing new churches.¹⁹

The similarity between CPM and People Movements is the conversion of great numbers of people. For Garrison, the crucial difference between Church Planting Movements and People Movements is the gathering together of those new believers into house-based communities. The overt and intentional focus on forming churches is the point of departure from People Movements. Garrison does not define the formation of churches as the construction of buildings but as communities of people gathered together.

Though Garrison nowhere articulates the following benefits, CPM neatly addresses the ecclesiastical issues baptistic Protestants have with group conversions.

¹⁷Ibid., 23.

¹⁸Ibid., 24.

¹⁹Ibid.

First, the formation of believing communities recognizes that the people of God “have been called out of darkness and into God’s marvelous light. Once, they were not a people, but now they are God’s people” (1 Pet 2:10). The church is the visible manifestation of God’s kingdom on earth, and it serves to differentiate between the world and the people of God. This is especially true in the early stages of any movement when the growing members of the new community of faith need a family of faith to offer support.

Second, the formation of churches recognizes the fundamental reality that a different and new community exists that supersedes all earthly ties. The church is the new family, a concept powerfully demonstrated by the prevalence of familial language in the New Testament.²⁰ Though the gospel still travels fastest and best along the bridges of close relationships, as McGavran indicated above, the cost of discipleship will necessarily involve wounding family solidarity.²¹ New believers, indeed, all believers, need the spiritual help that comes from meeting together with brothers and sisters in the faith, the encouragement that comes from the Word of God studied within community, and the uplifting that comes with community worship of the triune God. Growth and discipleship cannot thrive in contexts where antagonistic or apathetic family members strive against the Word of God.

²⁰One poignant demonstration is Jesus’ response to his mother: “Who are my mother and my brothers? And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother’” (Mark 3:33-35).

²¹Jesus promised that some type of adversity would naturally result between those who respond to his message and those who do not: “Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law” (Luke 12:51-53).

Third, a helpful component of a good church planting strategy is the recognition that church members, by joining in the new covenant through Jesus' blood, are also in covenant with one another. An indelible promise is exchanged among members to help sanctify one another, to encourage one another's faith, to rebuke one another, and to help one another to press on to the end. If needed, the community performs church discipline by expelling an unrepentant sinning member from the new community. Church discipline has power when the new family—with all the support structures that the word "family" entails—ostracizes a member.

Fourth, churches are groups that practice the commands of Christ to be baptized in his name, and to remember his death, resurrection, ascension, and promised return by a meal together. The ordinances serve to bind the community together, which is one of the God-given methods to aid retention of church members. Baptism is the means to enter the new community, and the Lord's Supper is the means to reaffirm that membership by looking forward as a community to the promises of Christ being fulfilled. Taken together, these four elements assume that members of churches in CPMs are all regenerated believers, a driving concern to baptistic sensibilities.

Moreover, as Garrison hints at above with the Algerian example, the formation of churches is a means to ensure that new disciples do not revert back to their old religion. The new self-identity formed by regeneration and membership in a faith-community makes it more difficult for the old identity to overcome it. Reversion is less attractive and much less likely when the faith community is strong.²²

²²As a point of clarification, Garrison's work is not without its flaws. For starters, he is perhaps too optimistic about the CPM as a usable strategy throughout the world for every context:

Insider Movements

A working definition for Insider Movements is made difficult by the variety of nuances given it by different camps. Rebecca Lewis—Ralph Winter’s daughter—has produced two definitions so far. She first defines Insider Movements as:

any movement to faith in Christ where a) the gospel flows through pre-existing communities and social networks, and where b) believing families, as valid expressions of the Body of Christ, remain inside their socio-religious communities, retaining their identity as members of that community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible.²³

Notice that Lewis makes no mention of churches or explicit gatherings of believers in this definition.²⁴ Her more recent definition rectifies this deficiency:

The gospel takes root within pre-existing communities or social networks, which become the main expression of “church” in that context. Believers are not gathered from diverse social networks to create a “church.” New parallel social structures are not invented or introduced.²⁵

“Without exaggeration we can say that Church Planting Movements are the most effective means in the world today for drawing lost millions into saving, disciple-building relationships with Jesus Christ” (Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 28). Much later in the book he identifies ten elements that exist in every CPM (172) and “seven deadly sins that will hamper CPM” (239-57). Among the several highly problematic ecclesiological elements in Garrison’s articulation of CMP strategy, one includes an overemphasis of the “wrinkle in time” concept that is borrowed from Madeline L’Engle’s work of fiction, *Wrinkle in Time*. Garrison asserts its necessity in order to combat the slowness of “sequentialism.” For a thorough critique of the ecclesiology of CPM see John D. Massey, “Assessing the Shape of Ecclesiology in Church Planting Movements Missiology” (paper presented at the quarterly regional meeting of the Evangelical Missiological Society, Memphis, TN, 15 October 2007).

²³Rebecca Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities,” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 75. This definition is the result of a small IJFM sponsored meeting of twenty or so participants “acquainted with these movements” (75) It is an “attempt to clarify the discussion” of insider movements between advocates and critics, highlighting the differences as the advocates perceived them (75). This meeting hints at the truthfulness of Corwin’s accusations related to “advocacy seminars.” See Gary Corwin, “A Humble Appeal to C5/Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates to Consider Ten Questions (with responses from Brother Yusuf, Rick Brown, Kevin Higgins, Rebecca Lewis, and John Travis),” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 5-20.

²⁴Lewis does, however, discuss the nature of *oikos* churches in greater depth. Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ,” 75.

²⁵Rebecca Lewis, “Insider Movements: Honoring God-Given Identity and Community,” *IJFM* 26 (2009): 16. Lewis raises important theological questions related to the nature of conversion and

According to Lewis, Insider Movements differ from People Movements in that the family and community groups coming to Christ remain *inside* their socio-religious communities, retaining the entirety of their former *religious* identity. “People Movements, like Insider Movements, keep the community intact, but unlike Insider Movements, the community’s religious affiliation and identity are changed.”²⁶ Lewis has articulated her definition of Insider Movements in response and in contrast to David Garrison’s definition, who defines Insider Movements as “popular movements to Christ that bypass both formal and explicit expressions of the Christian religion.”²⁷ For Garrison, CPM is preferable to Insider Movements because the small house church model fosters the faith community in such a way that the “back door”—where those who have committed to Christ fall away from visible expressions of faith and are absorbed back into the unbelieving community—is essentially closed. He argues that Insider Movements are extremely porous in nature and therefore suffer from greater attrition rates because they “refuse to identify themselves with public expressions of the Christian religion.”²⁸ He further emphasizes the differences by stating that CPMs “make a clean break with their former religion and redefine themselves with a distinctly Christian identity.”²⁹

community, which I will simply note here and address in greater length in chapter 3.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷David Garrison, “Church Planting Movements vs. Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 21 (2004): 151. Garrison presented his paper at the 2004 conference on Insider Movements and was therefore one of the first to define the term.

²⁸Ibid., 154.

²⁹Ibid.

Lewis has responded by arguing that the kinds of churches formed by CPMs can be described as “aggregate churches” made up of individual believers who are often strangers to one another being formed together in a new community of faith.³⁰ She argues that these “aggregate churches” extract believers from their families and community networks of relationships, forming a church that is “rarely able to provide the community support thereby lost or to continue to spread the gospel through its members’ families, who now perceive the ‘church’ as having ‘stolen’ their relative or friend.”³¹ Insider Movements, by contrast, form New Testament *oikos* (household-based) churches, “where families and their pre-existing relational networks *become* the church as the gospel spreads in their midst” (emphasis Lewis’s).³² She asserts further that “when the gospel is implanted in this manner, the families and clans that God created are *redeemed and transformed*, instead of broken apart.” (emphasis Lewis’s).³³ Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate Lewis’s conception of how the gospel spreads in an *oikos* strategy of evangelism and church planting as opposed to an aggregate method. Whereas Figure 1 keeps the social unit intact, Figure 2 results in extraction, community breakdown, and the break-up of the extended family. In an aggregate method of church planting, the new believers in the foreign Christian community do not have any support structures.

There are several crucial differences between Figures 1 and 2. First, the line

³⁰Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities,” 75. See especially n. 1 for how she contrasts Insider Movements and CPMs.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

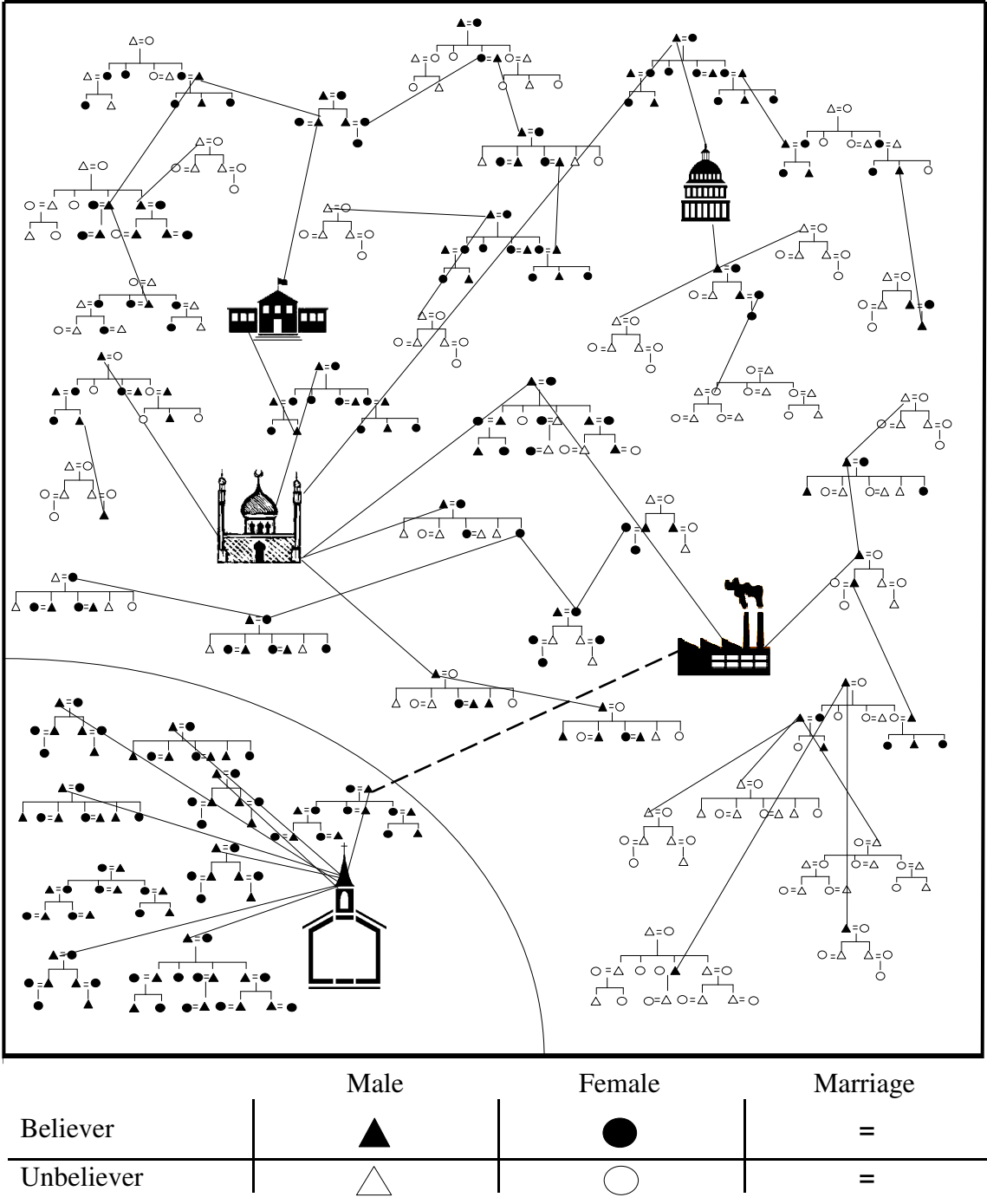


Figure 1. *Oikos* church network

separating the Christian community and the Islamic community is dotted in Figure 2 to indicate Lewis's assertion that believers unsupported by a new family structure are more

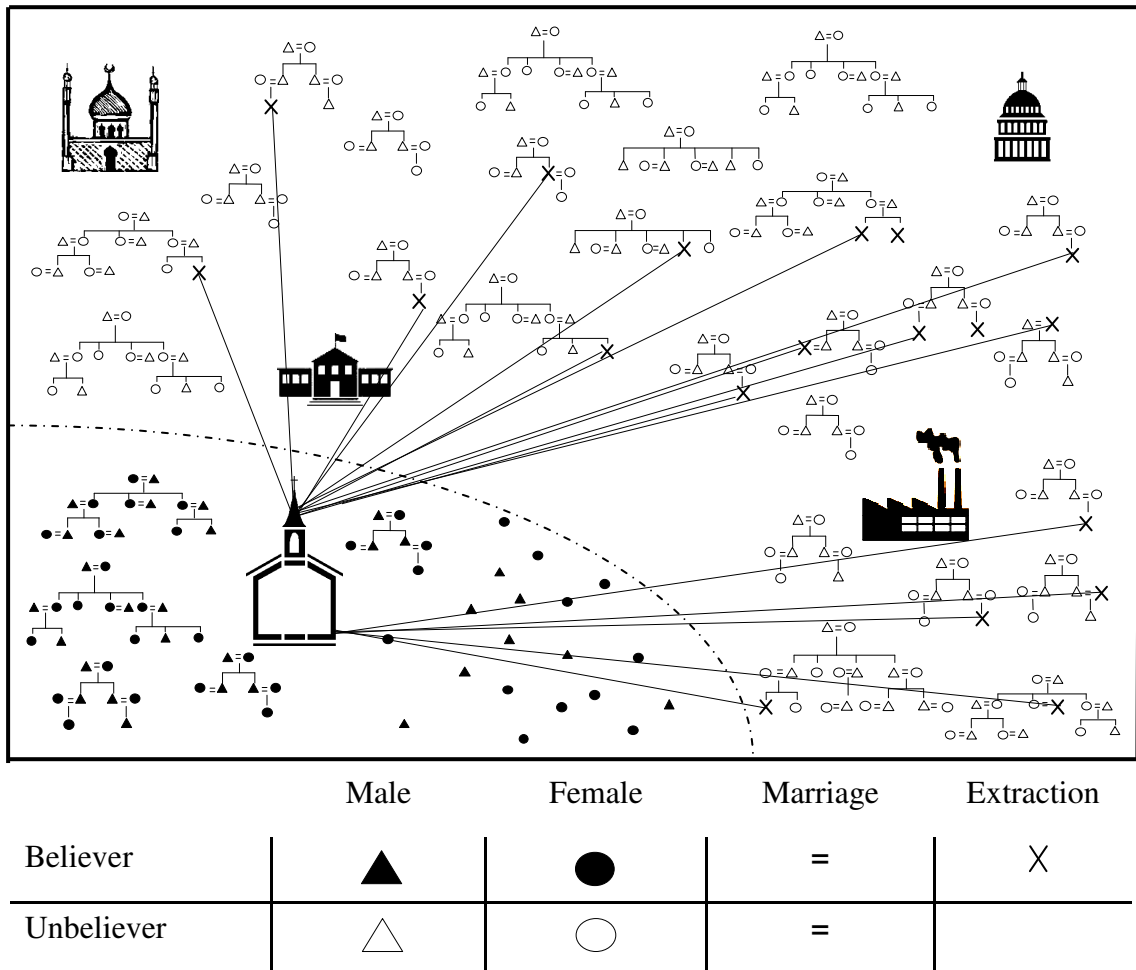


Figure 2. Aggregate church network

likely to revert back to Islam. The solid line in Figure 1 indicates that no transfer of community membership takes place in an *oikos* network. Second, Figure 1 is a basic kinship diagram combined with elements of social networking to indicate how the HUP operates. The dotted line indicates where the gospel starts from within the Christian community and then branches off to work places, other families, and the mosque. This demonstrates how Lewis believes the gospel travels in an *oikos* network. No family unit is untouched in a social network. So, while extraction is a fundamental reality of Figure 2, it is not present in Figure 1. By contrast, initial contact with the gospel in almost every

instance of conversion in an aggregate network originates from the Christian community. Far less people are affected by the gospel in Figure 2 than in Figure 1.

It is important to note here that Lewis is not presenting new arguments in her defense of Insider Movements. In actuality, she only echoes the arguments of McGavran as to the benefits of group conversion. Nevertheless, her description of the aggregate nature of CPM is designed to address Garrison's charge related to the greater attrition rates of Insider Movements. For Lewis, aggregate models of church planting need parallel social structures to form new family bonds of support and encouragement when unrelated people are forged into one community. *Oikos* churches maintain strength and cohesion because the family bond is never broken. Lewis never answers directly Garrison's charge of greater attrition rates. So, as of yet, it is unclear whether the polity of Insider Movements is able to prevent significant reversion.³⁴ In either case, it is quite apparent that the *oikos* church model Lewis envisions is difficult to reconcile with both baptistic ecclesiology and the biblical example of church formation.

Ultimately, Lewis's contrast between the aggregate nature of CPMs and the *oikos* nature of Insider Movements is invalid. Though Garrison has not responded to Lewis's reaction to his first article, he has clearly identified "family based conversion patterns" to be a common element in most CPMs: "The extent to which conversions follow family lines may vary from culture to culture, but in most Church Planting Movements the gospel flows through webs of family relationships."³⁵ Moreover,

³⁴*Ad hoc* conversations with Insider missionaries indicate that reversion is a significant element in the second generation of believers growing up within the convoluted identity of an Insider Movement. Insider advocates have not addressed this reality of Insider Movements thus far.

³⁵Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 227.

Garrison indicates that family-wide evangelism is an important component of the overall CPM strategy: “Missionaries in Church Planting Movements turn evangelistic encounters into family harvest times, resisting the temptation to extract converts one-by-one.”³⁶

Unfortunately for Lewis’s definition, the main contrasting component of Insider Movements with People Movements and CPM is not the *oikos* nature of the new community of faith. After all, both People Movements and CPM experience conversion patterns that follow the web of natural relationships within a community or society. Figure 2—which is a visual representation of Lewis’s conception of aggregate churches—is not an accurate representation of how the gospel travels in CPM.

The main contrasting element is the desire to prevent extraction through discouraging the formation of parallel faith communities by the retention of socio-religious insider identity. It seems that what Lewis attempts to accomplish with her contrast is to argue against the necessity of new believers forming a separate faith-based community. Lewis’s preoccupation with the *oikos* nature of the church in Insider Movements flows out of a desire to prevent the community from fracturing due to new religious allegiances. It is important to Lewis that “believers are not gathered from diverse social networks to create a “church,” [and that] new parallel social structures are not invented or introduced.”³⁷ However, CPM neither assumes or requires such fracturing.

Models of church formation and structure aside, Insider Movements attempt to prevent the fracture of believers and non-believers within a community:

³⁶Ibid., 229.

In societies with tightly-knit communities, the community is undermined when believers are taken out of their families into new authority structures. The affected families frequently perceive the new group as having “stolen” their relative, and the spread of the gospel is understandably opposed. Even if the new fellowship group is very contextualized to the culture, the community feels threatened and the believers feel torn between their family and the group. By contrast, a church is “implanted” when the gospel takes root within a *pre-existing* community and, like yeast, spreads *within* that community. No longer does a *new* group try to become like a family; instead, the God-given family or social group becomes the church.³⁸

Lewis is absolutely right to pinpoint the detrimental affect extraction has on both the immediate and wider community, yet the solution she proposes is the core controversy in Insider methodology. The means by which new believers prevent social dislocation is by staying inside the religious structures and maintaining the religious identity of their birth. She validates the decision to stay inside the religious structures in two ways.

First, Lewis equates membership with a believing community outside of the *oikos* structure as extraction and sociological conversion: “The new spiritual identity of believing families in insider movements is in being followers of Jesus Christ and members of His global kingdom, not necessarily in being affiliated with or accepted by the institutional forms of Christianity that are associated with traditionally Christian cultures,”³⁹ and “usually CPMs consist of newly created fellowships with a clear Christian identity, which tends to associate them with Western Christianity.”⁴⁰ That is, Lewis asserts that membership in a believing community (presumably by baptism), no matter how contextualized that community may be, necessarily means leaving or being

³⁷Lewis, “Insider Movements,” 16.

³⁸Ibid., 17.

³⁹Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities,” 76.

⁴⁰Lewis, “Insider Movements,” 16.

forced out of the birth community. Lewis's argument assumes that any strategy not involving an Insider approach involves extraction. For this reason, Lewis asserts that "today we should likewise free people groups from the counter-productive burden of socio-religious conversion and the constraints of affiliation with the term 'Christianity' and with various religious institutions and traditions of Christendom."⁴¹ This issue will be explored in later chapters, but for now it is sufficient to say that Lewis is guilty here of gross overstatement and faulty equivocation. Her argumentation is a classic fallacy of the excluded middle. Lewis has effectually excluded the middle category of contextualization that breaks with the overtly religious traditions of high-religious cultures yet remains a functioning part of society. To put it in terms of the C-Continuum, missionaries are not faced with either a C1-C2 option or C5. Lewis does not do justice to the nuances of C3-C4 in her argument.

Second, Lewis validates the choice to stay inside the birth religion with several arguments from Scripture. The biblical and theological arguments made to support Insider Movements will be addressed in detail in chapter 3. For now, it is sufficient to say that Lewis equates Insider believers as being in an analogous situation as the Gentile converts in Acts and that the gospel of faith alone "reveals that a person can gain a new spiritual identity *without* leaving one's birth identity, and without taking on a new socio-religious label or going through the religion of either Judaism or Christianity" (emphasis Lewis's).⁴²

Lewis does not address any of the theological considerations of the dangers of

⁴¹Lewis, "Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities," 76.

dual allegiance of new Insider believers to the old religious structures. Higgins is helpful at this point. His definition includes a consideration that Insider believers will necessarily make modifications to the old belief structures: “In other words, I suggest that followers of Jesus can continue to embrace at least some of their people’s religious life, history, and practice without compromising the gospel or falling into syncretism.”⁴³ It is helpful to note that Higgins assumes that the old religious practice will necessarily change along with a new allegiance and identity as a follower of Jesus. He believes that the change of religious practice will take place over time as believers are led by the Spirit and disciplined through the Word within a community of believers:

Faithful discipleship will express itself in culturally appropriate communities of believers who will also continue to live within as much of their culture, including the religious life of the culture, as is biblically faithful. *The Holy Spirit, through the Word and through His people will also begin to transform His people and their culture, religious life, and worldview* (emphasis Higgins’s).⁴⁴

Proponents of Insider Movements, then, see the key to forming People Movements among resistant religions like Hinduism and Islam as keeping new believers *inside* their birth religion and culture and by refraining from introducing new, faith-based communities. By encouraging new believers to resist changing religious affiliation, they avoid dislocation and community dissonance, thereby allowing them to reach their families and communities with a culturally relevant gospel.⁴⁵ The next section delves into

⁴²Lewis, “Insider Movements,” 18.

⁴³Kevin Higgins, “The Key to Insider Movements: The ‘Devoted’s’ of Acts,” *IJFM* 21 (2004): 156.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 155, emphasis mine.

⁴⁵It should be noted here that Lewis’s strong emphasis on the ‘*oikos*’ nature of Insider Movements, specifically that “no *new* communities [i.e., no ‘aggregate’ churches] are formed to extract believers from their pre-existing families and networks, so that they naturally retain their former identity,”

the issues and problems that have led to the Insider experiment.

Church Planting Issues in High-Religious Contexts

From the advent of the modern missionary movement, Protestant missions has struggled to make inroads among high-religious contexts. William Carey did not see fruit among the caste-locked Indians for seven full years.⁴⁶ Adoniram Judson labored five years before he saw any response to the gospel among the Buddhist Burmese. Conversely, Judson's fellow missionary George Boardman, working among the animistic Karens, saw fruit almost immediately. Great crowds thronged around the missionaries and national workers to hear the words of life.⁴⁷ High-religious traditions have acted like an inoculation against the gospel for much of the modern missionary movement. The archipelago of Indonesia—revisited in detail in chapter 5—serves as a case-in-point. While low-religious tribal groups throughout Indonesia generally responded positively to the Christian message, Islamic groups like the Javanese, Acehnese, Sundanese, and Minangkabau have proven almost completely resistant to the Christian message. Over the years, missionaries have identified three reasons for high-religious resistance to the

probably serves to relegate Insider Movements to the rural areas where family structures are stronger. Urbanites are often in search of new communities or have recently become part of an established community, the membership in which is often more fluid. Since over half of the world now lives in cities, it is likely that this element of her definition will need to be modified. Additionally, Lewis's definition lacks any emphasis on the worshipping community of faith (intentionally not called, "the church"), and so demarcation between believers and nonbelievers is difficult and is often not attempted in Insider literature.

⁴⁶When Krishna Pal—out of his growing faith in Christ—broke caste to eat with the European community of faith, mobs of outraged Indians threatened his life, abducted his daughter, and shunned him from the community. Carey's method is the quintessential model of extraction; Krishna underwent sociological conversion in addition to spiritual conversion. Timothy George, *Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey* (Birmingham, AL: Christian History Institute, 1998), 129-32.

⁴⁷Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 130-41.

gospel proclaimed by western missionaries: theological resistance, cultural resistance, and persecution.

Theological Resistance

Intrinsic to the proclamation of the gospel is a clash of worldviews. Low-religious cultures generally have no written text, and so the meanings behind religious rituals are usually more fluid and have been easier to replace with different Christian/Western forms. Conversely, the meaning behind high-religious rituals has been cemented by centuries of doctrine, practice, and clergy reacting against opposing religious movements. The introduction of a new religious system in high-religious contexts is therefore significantly opposed from the very beginning for strictly religious reasons. The worldview formed by high-religious tradition is far more anchored by tradition and culture. The opposition against Christianity is especially fierce in the Muslim world, which has interacted with and against Christianity since Islam's inception. As missionaries encountered theological resistance, they formulated arguments to confront the theological error of the opposing high-religion. Missionaries were convinced that if they were able to show the intellectual superiority of Christianity to Islam people would flock to join the church.⁴⁸ However, it slowly became apparent that theological barriers were not the sole, or sometimes even the greatest, source of

⁴⁸The apologetic missionary mindset above traces back to Aquinas's attempt in the *Summa contra Gentiles* to show to Spanish Muslims the superior rationality of Christianity according to Aristotelian logic. Since Muslims and Christians do not have a common authoritative text, Aquinas's method was to appeal to what the two groups do hold in common, namely, "natural reason, to which all men are forced to give their assent." Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1, *God*, trans. Anton C. Pegis (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1955), 62. The starting point in evangelism for Aquinas was Aristotelian logic.

resistance.

Cultural Resistance

Less visible to early missionaries was a high degree of cultural resistance. The term “double conversion” has been used by missionaries in high-religious contexts to describe the type of evangelism that required converts to forsake their culture and join the “Christian” community. The concept was first used by those reacting against the cultural colonization demonstrated by early missionaries where the receiving culture was viewed as intrinsically evil, and, as a result, the forms of Western Christianity were imposed upon new converts. Double conversion required converts to turn away from their culture and most of its forms in addition to turning away from sin. The result of double conversion is extraction. As noted above by Hesselgrave, individuals resist being pulled out of relationship with the people with whom they are the most intimate, and, as a result, extraction is a slow type of evangelistic method. For this and a variety of other reasons, Insider methodology views the cultural resistance stemming from the results of extractionism as the primary barrier to the gospel in high-religious contexts.

The reason for that assumption is easily discernable. Double conversion has been an often unfortunate characteristic of missions around the world, even up to the present. But what makes double conversion especially problematic in high religion cultures like Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism is the welding of religious practice and cultural identity. The entire rhythm of daily life in these cultures revolves around religious practice. In other words, community events are religious events and even political realities are validated by, and tied into, religious structures. Therefore, in these cultures, missionaries believed that double conversion was the only possible option for

converts. For Hindus to leave behind the practice of idol worship essentially means that they must acquire a new vocabulary, new religious structures, new relationships, and often a new name. Converts have essentially been extracted out of one community and planted into another.⁴⁹

Persecution

Further complicating the issue, missionaries and their view of culture were not always the cause of extractionism. Community members converting to Christianity is a source of great persecution. Families of new converts often feel a great deal of community shame if a family member—especially sons or daughters—undergo Christian baptism. Even if the convert had no intention of leaving their family, the family is often so overcome by shame of the perceived abandonment that drastic actions are taken to save face within the community.⁵⁰ At the very least, new converts are generally expelled from the community. In these cases, the new convert's only recourse is to flee to the only other community willing to accept them. That kind of expulsion/extraction has been so common in high-religious contexts that missionaries considered it a normal component of the cost of discipleship in high-religious contexts.

Where extraction and persecution is normative, the cost of discipleship is monumental. Converts stand to lose nearly everything they ever knew. Unbelieving spouses generally react so negatively to the shame that they abandon the new believers or

⁴⁹George Houssny, "Distinctive Religious Barriers to Outside Penetration: Demonstration of the Problem," in *Media In Islamic Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974), 81-82.

⁵⁰A classic illustration of family shame and persecution is vividly portrayed by Brother Andrew and Al Janssen. See Brother Andrew and Al Janssen, *Secret Believers: What Happens When Muslims Believe in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2008).

put intense amounts of pressure on them to renounce their faith. Either one's inheritance is revoked, or one's property is confiscated by the family. Children can be snatched by relatives or are unable to marry within the community because the community has totally rejected the new believing family. New believers may find themselves unemployable in a community that suddenly and completely reviles them.

Even more problematic, the church culture offered to new believers often has strong odious connotations to indigenous sensibilities. For high-religious groups where cultural identity is fused with religious identity, to be Christian is to be either Western or an ancient minority community that is generally despised by the greater society. In the first case, to be Western is to be, among other things, ritually unclean, sexually promiscuous, unreservedly immodest, and unabashedly consumerist. The church culture taking in new converts is culturally foreign and altogether unappealing.⁵¹ Moreover, the extracting Western culture many times devalues, ignores, reacts against, or even mocks many of the cultural values found in the high-religious receptor culture. In the second instance, the minority Christian groups still existing in pockets within the high-religious society generally feel significant amounts of antipathy toward the high-religious culture that has oppressed them for centuries.⁵² These minority groups many times suspect that someone claiming to be a new believer simply wants to infiltrate the Christian

⁵¹See Phil Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization* (Waynesboro, GA: Gabriel, 2003), 63-68, 195-96; and Frank Decker, "When 'Christian' Does Not Translate," *Mission Frontiers* 2, no. 5 (2005): 8.

⁵²The Coptic church in Egypt and the Thomas Church in India are both examples of this type of oppression. Despite the historic and mutual antipathy between Muslims and Christians in Egypt, according to John Stringer, editor of *St. Francis Magazine*, the Egyptian church has seen a great amount of fruit in recent years (personal correspondence with author, 10 February 2010).

community for a variety of nefarious reasons. In either case, new converts from high-religious contexts have no option that will allow them to feel culturally “at home.”

A cord of three strands is not easily broken, and the three areas of resistance have proven quite difficult to overcome throughout the history of high-religious evangelism. While Insider methodology addresses all three areas of resistance to some degree, the central thesis is that cultural resistance and extraction are the *primary* sources of resistance among these religious blocs.⁵³ That is, high-religious people are not rejecting the gospel itself but are stumbling on the cultural elements missionaries have placed around the gospel. Insider methodology is primarily focused on removing the cultural barrier so that people can hear a contextually appropriate gospel message.

So, while Insider methodology *does* address the theological elements of resistance and the consequences of persecution, it has not been developed to sufficiently address those concerns.⁵⁴ Rather, the fundamental belief of Insider methodology is that contextualization provides the primary key to allow converts to maintain their cultural identity *and* respond to the gospel at the same time. Preventing extraction ensures that the persecution that does arise against believers will happen for the sake of the gospel and not because of cultural resistance. Sam Schlorff has traced the problem of extractionism

⁵³Don McCurry asserts that “double-conversion . . . may well be the single most important reason for the greater lack of results in work among Muslims.” See Don McCurry, “A Time For New Beginnings,” *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium* (Monrovia: MARC, 1979), 14. His sentiment is found throughout much of the material from the 1978 conference and is echoed and affirmed in almost all of the popular Muslim contextualization literature from the 1980s to the present.

⁵⁴A common argument against Insider Movements is the charge that they are seeking escape from persecution. Persecution is thought to be a driving concern of the methodology. However, Insider literature nowhere states a desire to avoid persecution nor is it attempting to sidestep persecution altogether. Rather, Insider methodology seeks to ensure that persecution happens for biblical reasons and not over cultural stumbling blocks put in place by the missionary culture.

among Muslims and its answer of contextualization back to 1938. The wider debate informed by the social sciences, however, has raged in missiological circles only since the 1970s.⁵⁵

It is the emphasis on extractionism and the problem of culture or religion fusion in high-religion cultures that led to Insider Movement methodology. Again, Lewis, in her definition of Insider Movements, emphasizes that converts retain “their identity as members of that community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁶ In order to further understand the formation of Insider methodology it is important to understand how extractionism became the main problem in high-religious church planting for Insider proponents and how missiological answers to that problem have developed. Since Insider methodology flows directly from models of Muslim evangelism and church planting, tracing the development of the methodology represented on the C-Scale is a helpful way to follow the formation of Insider methodology.

The Groundwork for the C-Continuum

Extractionism has not always been seen as the main problem in seeing Muslims turn to faith in Christ. For the majority of Christian mission history, the greatest obstacle was seen to be the theological differences. For that reason, the earliest methods of evangelism were primarily polemical in nature. Christian missionaries, for example, often attacked Islam as a monolithic theological system.⁵⁷ Since all of the socio-religious

⁵⁵Sam Schlorff, “The Translational Model for Mission in Resistant Muslim Society: A Critique and an Alternative,” *Missiology* 28 (2000): 307.

⁵⁶Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ,” 75.

⁵⁷For example, Lull, Aquinas, Phander, Martin, and Zwemer all utilized polemics to various

practices of cultural Islam were thought to be tainted, missionaries strongly encouraged converts to join either Western expatriate congregations or local, minority Christian congregations. Travis has described this method of evangelism and church planting as C1 and C2. In the early history of Muslim evangelism the missionary view of Islamic culture allowed no other possibilities.

However, with the increasing influence of the social sciences came an increased degree of respect for the culture receiving the gospel. Schlorff identifies the influence of the social sciences as the main impetus behind the new methods proposed to reach Muslims:

Undoubtedly, the most important influence behind these changes has been the social sciences, and especially the increasing number of missionary scholars trained in these disciplines. I include here cultural anthropology, sociology, linguistics, translation theory, and communication science. These have changed evangelical attitudes toward culture and non-Christian religions and have revolutionized the evangelical missionary enterprise through the infusion of new ideas. The explosion of missiological studies by evangelicals in recent years has been nothing short of phenomenal.⁵⁸

The transformed view of the role of culture allowed new possibilities for reaching Muslims. Spurred on by the example of evangelical ecumenical bodies like the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism, a wide number of international meetings were held throughout the world to discuss evangelistic approaches to Islam. The enormous impact of the cross-fertilization provided by these meetings cannot be overemphasized. Two early and influential conferences were the Marseille Conference on Media in Islamic Culture in 1974 and the North American Conference on Muslims

degrees in their gospel presentations.

⁵⁸Schlorff, "The Translation Model for Mission," 306.

Evangelism in Colorado in 1978. Phil Parshall, who attended the 1978 conference, comments:

A landmark conference took place in Colorado Springs that Fall of 1978. Don McCurry gave leadership to a broadly representative group of people involved in Muslim outreach. The papers presented, along with the stimulating interaction, were exciting. I gave a case-study on our Bangladesh ministry. Out of this gathering was birthed the Samuel Zwemer Institute.⁵⁹

What is important about this quote is the timeline. Parshall had completed a missiology degree at Trinity in 1973 where he was exposed to the ideas published by professors at Fuller (Kraft, McGavran, Wagner, Winter, etc.). He remarks, “This exposure to the principles of cross-cultural evangelism done in a contextual mode formed the foundation for what our team would be doing in Bangladesh in the next few years.”⁶⁰ His case-study of the experiment done between the years 1973 and 1977—which was eventually published as the book *New Paths of Muslim Evangelism*—served to validate the cultural approach advocated by the 1974 conference and earlier by the Fuller faculty. The following pages will trace chronologically key articles that have shaped the conversation toward an Insider approach. The conversation can be divided into two parts: theoretical suggestions and the reporting of experimentation.

Theoretical Suggestions Addressing the Shift of the Cultural Problem

One of the most influential and widely quoted articles was a lecture Charles Kraft gave at the 1974 Marseille conference entitled “Psychological Stress Factors among

⁵⁹Phil Parshall, *Divine Threads within a Human Tapestry* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 128.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 110.

Muslims.”⁶¹ In his lecture, Kraft addresses the need to remove the cultural barriers of conversion—what he calls Cultural Conversion—in Muslim ministry.⁶² He offers several suggestions as to what Christ-centered movements would look like in Islamic culture:

A truly Arabic expression of a faith relationship to God though Christ will, first of all not look foreign; secondly will not require that Arabs learn or convert to another culture; thirdly, will allow the message to flow freely; and fourthly, will carry to both the in-group and the out-group an impact equivalent to that of the early churches that turned their Greek world upside down. Brother, that’s an impact.⁶³

Further, Kraft suggests that Arab Christians would be organized “on a kinship basis . . . focused more on group security rather than individual freedom.”⁶⁴ The doctrinal patterns Kraft suggests will reflect an Islamic background by being monotheistic, and conceiving God as more distant. In this way, it would likely reflect the fatalism of extreme Calvinism. He proposes that Arabs will likely be looking for a kingdom rather than a church, they will likely meet on Friday, pray five times a day, and chant the Scriptures.⁶⁵

Kraft’s most startling suggestion was that missionaries “bend every effort

⁶¹Charles Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors among Muslims,” in *Media in Islamic Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974), 137-44.

⁶²Ibid., 139. See also Charles H. Kraft, “Christian Conversion or Cultural Conversion?” in *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 392-402.

⁶³Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors,” 141. “Impact” is the main result the dynamic-equivalence model of contextualization is aiming for.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., 142-43. Kraft is well aware of the implications of his model of dynamic equivalence and has prophetically identified all the areas on which Insider proponents have since expanded extensively. See Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God: Church Planting among Folk Muslims* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 39-48; J. Dudley Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars,” *IJFM* 13 (1996): 171-86; Martin Parsons, “Unveiling God: Presenting Jesus to Muslims through a Confessional Recitation,” *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 6 (2006): 17-21; and idem, *Unveiling God: Contextualizing Christology for Islamic Culture* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005).

toward stimulating a faith renewal movement *within* Islam.”⁶⁶ He admits to being provocative and not definitive in this address, but he goes on to say, “I think that this approach of developing a faith renewal movement within Islam is Biblical, since this is exactly what Jesus and His disciples did within Judaism. The catch here is whether you agree with my paralleling Judaism with Islam.” He continues, “I am seriously suggesting that we encourage some Christians to become Christian Muslims in order to win Muslims to Muslim Christianity”⁶⁷

The point here is not whether Kraft found broad approval for his suggestions. Rather, it is that Kraft’s ideas—which were representative of a growing group of missiologists deeply trained in the social sciences and committed to experimentation—were heard by a wide group of missionaries and caught the imagination of some of them. Moreover, it reflects the material that he was teaching in his classes at Fuller. Since Fuller at that time was the rising star in mission theory, the school attracted many students and carried wide influence.

The audience grew even wider in the 1976 *Missiology* article by John D. C. Anderson, “The Missionary Approach to Islam: Christian or ‘Cultic.’”⁶⁸ Anderson begins by introducing the historic barriers to Muslim conversion and concludes that the greatest missionary mistake has been extractionism. He particularly addresses the opinion that

⁶⁶Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors,” 143, emphasis mine.

⁶⁷Ibid., 143-44. With the publication of *Christianity in Culture* in 1979, Kraft moved from the provocative to the definitive. Chapter 3 will deal more with the paralleling of Messianic Judaism and Islam. See Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005).

⁶⁸John D. C. Anderson, “The Missionary Approach to Islam: Christian or Cultic?” *Missiology* 4 (1976): 285-300.

persecution of new believers is the major barrier to the conversion of Muslims. He questions whether persecution is actually for the cross of Christ, or for cultural conversion:

The explanation for this would not be far to seek if we only took the trouble to ask the persecutors one simple question: “What is this man’s sin, that you treat him so?” They might well answer like this: “His sin is, first, that he is a blasphemer of our Holy God; second, that he is a traitor to our country and culture; thirdly, that by his apostasy he has brought great dishonor and disrepute on his parents, who not only brought him into this world, and taught him the true Islamic faith from his childhood, but who have given him love and care all his life.” And they would be sincere, and perhaps also right, according to their understanding. For the Christian has somehow produced the image of being not a true worshipper of Allah, but a blasphemer; not a good citizen of his country, but a quisling; not a man who honours his father and mother, but a reprobate son.⁶⁹

Anderson’s solution to the problem of extractionism is to move away from the view of “cultic Christianity,” that is, Christianity expressed through membership in a social organization, which is contrasted to a view of Christianity as membership in the Kingdom of God. Instead of taking Muslim background believers out of the culture, Anderson argues for “the Muslim and his culture being changed from within.”⁷⁰ For Anderson, missionaries have the obligation and mandate to “‘accept’ [Muslims] and ‘accept’ Islam as the culture into which, by God’s will, they were born. Jesus ‘accepted’ humanity and identified with it in his incarnation.”⁷¹ Ultimately, Anderson argues that missionaries must work toward the transformation of Islamic society by keeping converts within that society; he grounds his assertion in the model of the incarnation. He offers

⁶⁹Ibid., 289-90.

⁷⁰Ibid., 292.

⁷¹Ibid., 294. Note that Anderson presents Islam more as a culture than a religion, and that he makes no distinction between the religious tenets of Islam and the cultural components surrounding them.

several practical suggestions for how his proposal may be accomplished.

Anderson suggests that missionaries should refrain from encouraging “disciples to repudiate Islam *per se*,” using 1 Corinthians 7:20 as biblical support.⁷² He also suggests that one should refrain from being “rigid” about the specifics of Islamic belief and practice. In other words, Anderson suggests that the forms of Islam—prayer, fasting, almsgiving, etc.—can be redefined. His approach to the confession of Islam, while recognizing that this is the point of radical opposition between Islamic and Christian teaching, is simply to avoid arguments and lovingly chase after the heart.

A year later, John Wilder published the article “Some Reflections on Possibilities for People Movements among Muslims.”⁷³ From the title, it is obvious that Wilder has advanced the conversation from personal evangelism and individual conversion to the discussion of and hope for the development of People Movements. Wilder echoes the shift from theology as the primary source of resistance among Muslims to extractionism: “Perhaps our greatest sin has been that of trying to persuade Christian disciples to come out of Islam when we should have told them to witness for Jesus within the culture in which God had placed them.”⁷⁴

Wilder then investigates the Messianic movement among Jews in search of

⁷²Ibid., 295. Chapter 3 will deal with the biblical and theological arguments of Insider Movements.

⁷³John W. Wilder, “Some Reflections on Possibilities for People Movements among Muslims,” *Missiology* 5 (1977): 301-20. Woodberry asserts that Wilder’s article grew out of a year-long focus on Islamic contextualization at Fuller Seminary. See J. Dudley Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars,” *IJFM* 13 (1996): 171.

⁷⁴Wilder, “People Movements among Muslims,” 303.

missiological principles.⁷⁵ He identifies the similarities between the Jews and Muslims as “their unitary tradition of ethical monotheism . . . , their concept of social solidarity and national identity, and their common abhorrence of the apostate. Above all . . . , both have been resistant to the Christian message.”⁷⁶ The one significant difference is that Islam does not have a unique place within biblical theology: “Thus, both because of its deep theological variance from Christianity, and because it lacks any historic Christian authentication such as the Jewish nation has, an Islamic parallel to Messianic Judaism would be lacking very important legitimizing factors.”⁷⁷

Nevertheless, despite the lack of important legitimizing factors, Wilder asserts that Muslim Insider believers do exist. He then presents a case study of a group who has existed in Turkey for forty-five years at the time of his writing. He describes the group in the following way:

The group was established by a young man who had studied the Bible under the guidance of a missionary in Istanbul, spent years in medical training in the United States, and come to faith and open profession of Christ, but not baptism. Upon his return to Turkey he continued to meet with a like-minded circle of friends, and out of these meetings a group emerged which came to call itself “Jesus-ists”. The group is considered by other Muslims to be one of many Sufi or “dervish”-like mystical orders. They maintain separation from the local Christians. They welcome the fellowship of visiting missionary friends known to their group, but are under their own leadership. In the two or three cities where the group exists, their members meet together weekly on Sundays for family worship and Bible study. In their Bible study they use the Gospels only, and their theological beliefs are in some important respects at considerable variance from orthodoxy; yet devotion to Jesus Christ is at

⁷⁵Messianic Judaism first appeared in the latter part of the nineteenth century in England. However, it began to grow exponentially in America during the 1960s. By the time of Wilder’s article, it was establishing itself as a vibrant religious movement. Since Wilder’s use of Messianic Judaism as a model for contextualization, that parallel has been repeatedly referred to in Insider literature. Note 125 exposes the phenomenological inaccuracy of this parallel of the two movements.

⁷⁶Wilder, “People Movements among Muslims,” 304.

⁷⁷Ibid., 305.

the center of their existence.⁷⁸

Wilder then goes on to suggest why this group may be reluctant to overtly join the ranks of the Christian Church. First, he suggests that the church is making unrealistic and unnecessary demands, “requiring submission to special legalisms, cultural idiosyncrasies, and minute points of theology.”⁷⁹ Secondly, he cites the Muslim conception of community and deep antipathy concerning apostasy, the psychological barriers toward the Christian community, and the social trauma of switching communities.

Having laid the groundwork for the cultural resistance of Muslims toward the gospel, Wilder then describes the formation and characteristics of a hypothetical movement to Christ within Islam based upon the model of messianic Judaism.

But if it grew or exerted influence, opposition would start. Yet—and this is important—it would be likely to be the opposition which a strange new sect attracts, not the utter rejection awarded the apostate. For the movement would be *within* Islam. Its defenders would say something like “We’re the *real* Muslims. We have rediscovered Jesus. Our own Quran honors him as Prophet, and we have found in our earlier Scriptures that he is also divine Savior. He says so himself. Can a prophet lie?”

The crucial questions asked by other Muslims would be to ascertain the positions the new sect took toward Muhammad and the Quran. The sect might deny Muhammad’s prophethood, but it seems far more likely that it would only redefine

⁷⁸Ibid., 306-07. Wilder’s comfort level with the variance of this group’s theological beliefs is striking, though not surprising. Though he does not quote Kraft in the bibliography of this article, Wilder echoes almost verbatim the same concerns and comfort Kraft expressed in 1974. Kraft is comfortable as long as the group in question has a good translation of the Bible, because he is confident that the leading of the Spirit will bring them into greater orthodoxy. Kraft’s confidence in growing orthodoxy as an inevitable outcome is questionable given the history of emerging orthodoxy in quasi-Christian sects like Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witnesses. This will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 4.

⁷⁹Ibid., 307. Wilder references a Jewish convert’s frustrations with the legalistic injunctions of evangelical Christianity, including the prohibition of movies, cards, dice, and alcohol in n. 14. One major difficulty in assessing this statement is that he does not include specifics of demands that are cultural and therefore biblically unnecessary, and demands that are simply a part of becoming a disciple of Jesus.

it—or even accept it.⁸⁰

For Wilder, the important component to his hypothetical people movement is that the group would grow into a sect of Islam that achieved stability and permanence: “After all,” Wilder writes, “the important thing to a sect is not what others say about it but what its members hold to be true.”⁸¹

Theologically, Wilder proposes that a Christian sect within Islam would hold some theological deviances like retreating from the concept of the Trinity, a de-emphasis on the “Son-ship” of Jesus, a denial of Christ’s death, and a select use of the biblical canon. The crucial point for Wilder is not whether the group is doctrinally sound; rather, it is that the group maintains contact with the universal church so that it would not become isolated. Hopefully, over time and with patience on the part of the universal Church, the Christian sect will be drawn out of heresy and into a fuller understanding of the biblical revelation. “Thoughtful Christians,” Wilder suggests,

would probably remember that theological consistency and impeccability have never been a hallmark of the Christian church. They would distinguish the essential theological centralities from the non-essential cultural accretions, and be not too greatly disturbed by the new movement’s changed modes of worship [and despite heretical positions of Muhammad’s prophet-hood or the person of Christ] maintain a charitable, open and accepting spirit.⁸²

Finally, Wilder suggests that failing to show the type of cultural sympathy to emerging movements in the way he described would be to commit the sin of the Judaizers in Acts 15. Accordingly, Wilder’s reference to the Jerusalem Council has been

⁸⁰Ibid., 310-11.

⁸¹Ibid., 311.

⁸²Ibid., 312.

repeatedly echoed in Insider literature to demonstrate the biblical grounds for allowing converts to maintain religious identity. The argument will be treated at length in chapter 3.

Taken altogether, though Wilder is only attempting to propose how Christians should react to movements that develop as a result of mass evangelism, his sentiments and proposals foreshadow an increasing amount of prescriptions for contextualized missionary strategy. The Insider proponent does not want to wait for a movement within Islam to emerge; they want to work toward developing one themselves using contextualized strategy.

The papers presented at the Lausanne-sponsored 1978 North American Conference for Muslim Evangelization makes clear that missionaries had widely embraced several foundational elements that led to an Insider approach. Consequently, it can be identified as dramatic turning point in the contextualization conversation. First, as has been shown so far, the problem of resistance had shifted from mainly theological barriers to cultural barriers. Twenty-nine of the thirty-two papers presented at the conference dealt with culture; only three grappled with theological issues. Donald Rickards articulates this shift as he suggests new tools to aid in the development of Muslim evangelism and comments on the similarity of resistance between Jews and Muslims:

We are all aware that many of the problems are common in the ministry to both Jew and Muslim. For many years, Gentile believers insisted that the Jew leave his cultural heritage and identify cross-culturally with the Gentile Christian. Deep resistance was the result throughout those centuries.

Yet, it was, or should have been, obvious that *not theology but culture was the barrier preventing Jews from coming to their Messiah . . .* In the past 10 years, thousands of Jews have become messianic Jews, meaning they have accepted Christ as their Savior. Since they feel the name Christian was an epithet thrown at

believers and not necessarily a name God would use of them, they have chosen to be known as messianic, or completed Jews. . . . Such a development is not only wonderfully exciting, it is also instructive to us who are concerned with the Muslim world.⁸³

That shift is certainly reflected in the C-Continuum in that the only criteria used to judge a position on the scale are classified according to the use of culture. Theological elements are not included at all.⁸⁴

Second, missionaries have widely embraced to various degrees the translation model of contextualization in order to address the cultural resistance of high-religious societies. Chapter 4 will interact with that model of contextualization in greater detail. As an introduction, it is sufficient to say that the translation model of contextualization applies the linguistic theory of dynamic equivalence both to language and to cultural forms. A contextualized word or form is only as useful as its ability to convey the message of the gospel in the same dynamic way the original receivers heard the message. The pertinent concern of this type of contextualization is the degree to which the old form carries non-biblical or unhelpful meaning into the gospel message.

Reports of Experimentation

C3 though C5 on the C-Continuum depend, to various degrees, on the translation model of contextualization. In essence, each position above C2 offers a

⁸³Donald R. Rickards, "The Development of New Tools to Aid in Muslim Evangelism," in *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry (Monrovia: MARC, 1979), 433, emphasis mine. It is no coincidence that the first name for Insider Muslims was "Messianic Muslims." The Jews for Jesus model has been an important example for Insider practitioners.

⁸⁴I do not mean to imply that Insider advocates are not concerned with theological issues in church planting, only that the cultural issues articulated through anthropological and social sciences far outstrip the theological ones to the extent that theology appears to be an afterthought in Insider literature. Hopefully, this perception is simply a result of the Insider's focus on cultural forms and the issue of deception.

different answer to those socio-religious forms that can be re-used and those that must be discarded. The following case studies demonstrate the approaches taken to answer this question.

The Lombaro case study. Parshall published *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism* in 1980, which presents a case study of an experiment in contextualization he led his team to undertake in Bangladesh in the mid-1970s. *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism* was the report and defense of that experiment written as his Ph.D. project at Fuller, and Lombaro was the code name he gave his context of ministry. Parshall divides his book into several important sections. He first defines contextualization and syncretism and then discusses the difference between form and meaning. His discussion of the subject flows directly out of Kraft's position in *Christianity in Culture*; his experiment is an outworking of the following philosophy:

The principle here seems to be that Christianness lies primarily in the functions served and the meanings conveyed by the cultural forms employed, rather than in the forms themselves God seeks to use and to cooperate with human beings in the continued use of relative cultural forms to express absolute Supracultural meanings. The forms of culture are important not for their own sake but for the sake of that which they convey.⁸⁵

The second section is devoted to developing and explaining his application of contextualization in the Lombaro case study. For the most part, Parshall supplies practical answers related to the observance and use of time, finances, housing, food, dress, and family—issues missionaries have grappled with throughout missions history. But he goes further by suggesting that Muslim culture should inform issues like the day

⁸⁵ Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 66.

of worship, designation of believers, and the roles of clergy and laity.⁸⁶ Moreover, he strongly suggests the creation of homogenous churches for Muslim background believers.

However, it is Parshall's re-use of Muslim religious and social rituals that truly separates his experiment from missionary methods of the past. The theoretical discussions and suggestions outlined in the previous section take shape in Parshall's experiment. In particular, Parshall advocates the re-use of the Islamic forms of prayer, fasting, music, and chanting of poetic translations of Scripture, as well as borrowing elements from Muslim festivals, wedding ceremonies, celebrations surrounding the birth of a child, and funerals.⁸⁷

Though the theoretical framework had been developed slowly over the previous decade, the picture of contextualization Parshall advocated was, at that time, considered radical by many in the evangelical world. Criticism at some points was quite severe. Generally, however, the direction suggested by Parshall was broadly accepted, especially as he further delineated in subsequent publications lines he personally refused to cross. Today, it represents the limits of what many organizations are comfortable recommending in Muslim contextualization.

In particular, for significant theological reasons, Parshall concludes that missionaries need to encourage new converts to transition out of the mosque. While some missionaries eagerly advocate re-using almost the entirety of Islamic forms, Parshall strongly disagrees:

I cannot agree with my friend when he states that 98 or 99 percent of Muslim

⁸⁶Ibid., 157-80.

⁸⁷Ibid., 199-219.

worship can be utilized by us. There is a large area of commonality . . . ; most of the content of the ritual is acceptable to the Christian Yet, there are a few items of such weighty theological significance that I conclude any true believer who permanently continues to participate in the prayer ritual is indeed compromising his faith in Christ. I hasten to add that I recognize the value of and need for a proper transitional time for movement out of the mosque. This may take weeks and even months To demand an immediate cessation of all that has been practiced for years leads only to extractionism.⁸⁸

Within the mosque is continual confirmation of the prophethood of Muhammad and, while some missionaries formulated arguments to redefine prophethood to make the Muslim confession, the *Shahadah*, usable for new converts, Parshall concludes that the arguments were invalid: “A Christian's participation in the ritual is a confirmation of the message of Islam—regardless of what he is privately thinking or praying.”⁸⁹

By strongly advocating transition out of the mosque, Parshall demarcates the difference between C4 and C5, namely, the moral inability of Christian converts to remain within the Islamic religious system.

Although I advocate that Muslims remain an integral part of their community, I am forced to stop short of encouraging continued involvement in prayers at the mosque. The ritual is too closely connected to Islamic belief, theology, and religious practice. I conclude that participation involves either compromise or deceit. Neither is acceptable for a Christian. Therefore, we must move “beyond the mosque” and explore other areas wherein our objectives can be fulfilled.⁹⁰

When Parshall follows Kraft’s advice to attempt to start movements within Islam, he attempts to keep converts as members of their social community while taking

⁸⁸Phil Parshall, *Beyond the Mosque: Christians within Muslim Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 182-83.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 183. Specifically, the confessor of the Islamic creed is communicating to the community his belief in the Islamic articulation of the prophethood of Muhammad, his rejection of the incarnation of Jesus, and other things that directly support Islam and attack historic Christian doctrine. As Parshall has said elsewhere, the “mosque is pregnant with Islamic theology.” Phil Parshall, “Danger! New Directions in Contextualization,” *EMQ* 34 (1998): 409.

⁹⁰Parshall, *Beyond the Mosque*, 184.

them out of the religious expressions of their community. Though Parshall expressed deep reservations related to the theological content of the Islamic forms of the confession and the message communicated by staying within the mosque, evidently other missionaries were pushing for a more inclusive approach to incorporating Islamic forms—virtually unchanged—into the religious practice of Muslim converts.

Teeter and the Friendship Center. David Teeter’s experiment in Muslim contextualization stems most directly from Kraft’s model of Dynamic-Equivalence and Harvey Conn’s 1978 Colorado conference paper, “The Muslim Convert and His Culture.”⁹¹ Teeter’s article, “Dynamic Equivalent Conversion for Tentative Muslim Believers,” was written to explain the view of conversion supporting the “Muslim followers of Jesus” model of contextualization he was field testing in Bethlehem.⁹²

While Teeter’s article does not overtly deal with contextualization of Islamic forms, his proposed model of conversion is a foundational element of Insider strategy. Teeter’s main point was to challenge the predominant evangelical view of conversion as a one-step process and to suggest that a slow process of “becoming” is more culturally appropriate in an Islamic society.⁹³ Teeter proposes a term he calls “tentative believers” to describe Muslims who have heard the gospel, but who have not made the overt step of declaring Jesus to be their Lord. The “tentative believer,” according to Teeter, “is being

⁹¹Harvie M. Conn, “The Muslim Convert and His Culture,” in *The Gospel and Islam*, ed. Don McCurry (Monrovia: MARC, 1979), 78-92.

⁹²David Teeter, “Dynamic Equivalent Conversion for Tentative Muslim Believers,” *Missiology* 5 (1990): 307. At the time of publication, his model had been in operation for six years.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 307. In challenging the predominant evangelical paradigm of conversion, he is merely providing a case study of Kraft’s “starting point plus” process view of conversion presented in *Christianity in Culture*. Chapter 4 will deal with Kraft in more detail.

deeply and profoundly changed, but he is not fully aware of this change. He has not made any deliberate “decision for Christ,” but is aware, on some level, that Christ has entered into his life.”⁹⁴ Teeter hopes that these men will emerge as committed believers, especially as they become heads of households and can influence their families to likewise move toward Christ and become a dynamic equivalent, *oikos* expression of church. He uses an inference from Mark 16 to ground his strategy’s goal to produce tentative believers:

Jesus said, “whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” Mark 16:16. We can infer three categories of people from this:

<u>Response</u>	<u>Status</u>
Believes and is baptized	Salvation assured
Does not believe	Condemnation assured
Believes, but is not baptized	Outcome unresolved ⁹⁵

Overall, Teeter is comfortable with the ambiguity of the third category, and believes that tentative believers have actually—though unknowingly—been born of the Spirit, and are slowly moving toward greater obedience as they continue to walk with Christ. He admits that “we cannot know the final outcome Perhaps the person will change his mind and be baptized. Or perhaps Jesus will deal with the person as he did with the thief on the cross. Or maybe he or she will be lost Who but God knows at this point?”⁹⁶ While Teeter recognizes that the assurance of salvation is impossible without the overt steps of verbal allegiance to Christ, he is hopeful that these tentative

⁹⁴Teeter, “Dynamic Equivalent Conversion,” 308.

⁹⁵Ibid., 309.

⁹⁶Ibid., 310.

believers, “who are walking with Christ without actually converting to Christianity,” will find favor with God at the Judgment Day.⁹⁷

It is not clear what Teeter is actually aiming to do with his model. Does he hope that these tentative believers will actually emerge as the vanguard of a people movement that will lead believers out of Islam? Possibly. Unfortunately, his third category, which is derived from an argument of silence in the text, is by no means a good goal for missionary strategy. The Great Commission commands believers to make disciples, and it is difficult to comprehend how missionaries can be satisfied with the uncertainty and nebulous nature of “tentative” belief. The gospel of Jesus Christ demands nothing less than full obedience to Christ’s commands and overt confession of Christ as Lord. Missionaries ought to make every effort to work toward that end and should not be satisfied when tentative believers selectively choose the areas of their obedience.

Again, Teeter does not overtly address the contextualization issue in this article. As a result, the specifics of his contextualization model are not known. However, his proposal for dynamic equivalence applied to conversion in his experiment in Bethlehem supplied a case study for those committed to dynamic equivalence. The overarching theme was the ability of new believers to stay within Islam. He demonstrated that receptivity to Jesus—not necessarily the gospel—can be increased by de-emphasizing certain Christian emphases like baptism.

Woodberry’s re-use of common pillars. In 1989, J. Dudley Woodberry

⁹⁷Ibid., 312.

published a watershed article in *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, which was reprinted in *IJFM* in 1996. Woodberry argues that the common roots between Jewish, Christian, and Islamic rituals enables those rituals to be incorporated more easily into contextualized Christ-centered worship. He builds his argument in the following way.

First, Woodberry underscores the urgent need for contextualization. He skims the literature dealing with contextualization from 1977-1987 and then supplies anecdotes from Muslims who find Christian literature incomprehensible.⁹⁸ Second, he describes how both national Christians and Islamic groups have both severely criticized efforts to contextualize.⁹⁹ Third, he extensively demonstrates, through literature review, the Jewish and Christian roots of the Islamic forms of confession, prayer forms, prayer postures, types of prayer, ablution, almsgiving, fasting, the pilgrimage, and the function of the Mosque.¹⁰⁰ He concludes, “If all these elements were used by God in His schoolhouse for His people Israel, can they not serve again for lessons as He gathers a new people for Himself?”¹⁰¹ Finally, Woodberry presents a short case-study that has incorporated his suggested re-use of the Islamic pillars. It is important to separate and analyze the

⁹⁸Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims,” 171-73. See also J. Dudley Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars,” in *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas: Word, 1989), 282-312. Citations are from the *IJFM* article since it has been expanded and revised.

⁹⁹Interestingly, he quotes a source in Malaysia that reports on a bill suggested by the Selangor state government that attempted to forbid non-Muslims from using a large list of Arabic religious language. Even as early as 1988, missiologists had taken significant and widespread strides to contextualize in Islamic contexts. See Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims,” 173.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 173-82. This section of Woodberry’s article is exceptionally well documented.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 182.

individual components of the case-study to understand exactly what Woodberry is suggesting with his model of contextualization. It is quite evident that the theoretical suggestions of the 1970s have matured in the following case study.

Around 1984, a natural catastrophe struck a Muslim country that had a long-term missionary presence but that had seen very little fruit among Muslims. A group of about twenty Christian families moved into the area to serve the community, but only one came from a Muslim background. Though God was shown to answer powerfully prayers in Jesus' name and though the message the missionaries preached was believed to be true, no Muslims converted until the Christians were seen performing ritual prayer and incorporating cultural practices to remove ritual impurity.¹⁰²

In 1986, missiology taught at Fuller was introduced to the mission group, and as a result, it adopted a more intentional contextual approach. "Only Muslim converts," according to Woodberry, "were employed in the villages and many thousands have since responded."¹⁰³ Presumably, the rationale behind the shift away from Christian presence was an attempt to remove all culturally foreign elements in an effort to follow the HUP. The missionaries used a translation of the New Testament that incorporated Muslim vocabulary rather than the Christian words for God, prophets, Jesus, etc.¹⁰⁴

Significantly, Woodberry attributes the missionaries' deep knowledge of the Quran as an important factor in the spread of the gospel in the region. The Christians

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Woodberry does not describe whether the translation used the phrase "Son of God," or used an equivalent like "Spirit of God."

approached the Quran in two ways. First, and most importantly, it was used by the Christians as a theological starting point and a source of truth. Starting with the Quran, Christians confronted the local belief that Muhammad would be an intercessor at the Day of Judgment in the following logical progression:

1. The Quran does not mention Muhammad as an intercessor.
2. The Quran tells that only the one whom God approves can intercede.
3. The Quran approves of the *Injil* as a source of truth.
4. The *Injil* says that God approves of Jesus and that he is the only mediator between God and man.
5. Therefore, Jesus is the intercessor at the Day of Judgment.¹⁰⁵

Second, the missionaries attempted to diminish the importance of the Quran by relegating a Quranic verse to a position of authority only for the region of Mecca during the time of Muhammad. In a similar way, Muhammad was re-interpreted to be a prophet to the Arabs only.¹⁰⁶

Third, in a public debate, one of the Muslim background missionaries presented himself as a Muslim. By claiming to be a completed Muslim—having completed his submission to God through Jesus—he was able to transition the debate into

¹⁰⁵Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims,” 182. Chapter 3 will investigate the issues surrounding using Islam or Hinduism as a theological starting point and source of truth. At this point, it is sufficient to say that Paul in Acts 15 is generally used as the model for incorporating the Greek poets into his dialogue in front of the Aeropogas. However, Paul started with general revelation and moved to the specific, rather than starting within the highly developed religious system of the Romans and moving toward Christianity to show how Christ fulfills polytheism.

¹⁰⁶While Woodberry admits that this interpretation of Muhammad is not in line with the entire Quranic testimony, he is silent on whether it is acceptable to essentially deceive uneducated and uninformed Muslims about the testimony of the Quran in order to build a better case for Muslims to follow Jesus. See Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims,” 182, 186.

a conversation between “brothers.”¹⁰⁷ By claiming to be “Muslims,” the missionaries were trying to separate themselves from the distain associated with the Christian community in that country and around the world. The group of followers has come to be called “believers” by the surrounding community, which has served to maintain their community ties by avoiding association with the minority Christian community.

Fourth, the missionaries overtly pursued a group decision for Christ. “Conversions are following along family, friendship, and occupational lines. When whole villages come, the mosque remains the center of worship.”¹⁰⁸ In order to keep the family unit intact, missionaries refused to baptize believers unless the head of the household was baptized first.

Last, and Woodberry’s main object of interest in the article, the missionaries incorporated scripturally modified Islamic forms in their strategy. Woodberry only discusses the transformation of the prayer rituals and does not mention mosque attendance in communities that remain mixed with unbelievers. Nor does he discuss the other pillars of Islam like confession, almsgiving, fasting or pilgrimage to Mecca. The form of the ritual prayers remained basically unchanged; only the content was modified and saturated with a number of Scriptures (Ps 23; Matt 6:9-13; John 1:12; John 3:16; Ps 117:1-2).¹⁰⁹

Woodberry mentions four factors that could weaken the blossoming movement. First, leadership training is exceptionally important when the meaning

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 182.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 183.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

inherent in the Muslim forms are being radically stripped away and replaced with new meaning. Vestiges of the old meaning will haunt the forms unless significant teaching is continually given to new believers. Training leadership to recognize the dangers of syncretism, especially when using the old forms, is quite difficult in a fast-growing people movement.

Second, Woodberry recognizes the importance of reaching out to the existing Christian community so that isolation does not lead to the movement being swallowed back into Islam.¹¹⁰ Yet, the problem with forming connections within the existing Christian community is that the growing contextualized community will slowly move to an overtly Christian identity. Since the great attraction of the contextualized community is their ability to remain within the greater Islamic society, any move out of that society will have a corresponding affect on its ability to be attractive to the Muslim community. The believing community sits on a razor's edge between two societies, and the leadership is uncertain how to make positive forward progress.

Third, Woodberry recognizes the dangers of retaining Islamic meanings by using Islamic forms. At the same time, he discusses the dangers of “an ossified contextualization that inhibits maturity.”¹¹¹ Here, Woodberry is alluding to an article presented by Denis Green at the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization conference in 1987, which centered on Islamic-Christian themes. The majority of those presentations were published in *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*. Green uses the phrase “stagnated contextualization,” which he defines as “contextualization

¹¹⁰Ibid.

which has been employed as a means of facilitating the transition of Muslims from Islam to Christianity, but which then comes to operate as a barrier to their proceeding to a complete experience of Christ and his salvation.”¹¹² Yet, Woodberry concludes, despite the challenges and dangers, God is “blessing the refurbishing of these pillars in our day as they bear the weight of new allegiance to God in Christ.”¹¹³

One major difficulty in assessing Woodberry’s case study is that the descriptive nature of the article does not present a detailed account of the entire strategy. Woodberry only describes several aspects of the strategy through relating situations in the case study. He does not attempt to provide biblical support for the missionary practice of describing oneself as Muslim, of using the Quran as a theological starting point, nor does he attempt to describe a long-term plan to address the concerns he raises. As of yet, more than twenty years after the publication of this article, there remains no case study that systematically builds a theological framework for this method of contextualization. While Woodberry has continued to study the development of this movement, he has refrained from widely advertising the results.

Despite these weaknesses, Woodberry’s case study presents a contextualized approach that attempts to keep converts within Islamic society. The article is not entirely clear whether the missionaries attempted to follow Parshall’s method and transition

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Denis Green, “Guidelines from Hebrews for Contextualization,” in *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry (Monrovia: MARC, 1989), 245. Green goes on to say that “the evangelists [to the Hebrews] apparently felt comfortable with allowing their converts to retain certain beliefs and practices which were not wholly compatible with Christianity, expecting these things to fall away as spiritual maturity was reached. Yet the expected growth had not occurred (Heb 5:12-14); on the contrary, the Christian experience of the converts had stagnated (Heb 5:11)” (247).

¹¹³Woodberry, “Contextualization among Muslims,” 183.

believers out of the mosque and Islamic *religious* society or whether the converts are encouraged to stay in the mosque. However, Travis, who has a great deal of inside knowledge of this movement, quotes Woodberry's article as "an excellent case study of a C5 movement in one predominately Muslim nation."¹¹⁴ Whatever the missionaries' ultimate approach, Woodberry laid the theoretical groundwork for the re-use of Islamic forms and supplied a case study where that type of re-use in select circumstances has seemed to produce much initial fruit.

Herbert Hofer's *Churchless Christianity*. Hofer's study is different than previous studies, not only because it comes from the Hindu world, but also because it has developed independently from the theoretical suggestions surrounding Muslim missions. Additionally, Hofer's book was organized so that the research data could be interpreted independently of his own conclusions, with the result that his suggestions are a relatively small portion of the entire book. His work has been referenced countless times to demonstrate the problem of extraction and double conversion, and to argue for the Insider approach as the solution to those problems.

In the early 1980s, Herbert Hofer heard about a phenomenon in the rural areas of the southern Indian state of Tamilnadu where people were believing solely in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior but had no plans to undergo baptism or join a local church. He then conducted a study to measure both the numbers of the phenomenon and the theological state of what he calls "other sheep."¹¹⁵ The 1991 publication of

¹¹⁴John Travis, "Appropriate Approaches in Muslim Contexts," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 398.

¹¹⁵Hofer continually refers to these people as "other sheep" to indicate his firm belief that they

Churchless Christianity contains a write up of that study, along with an additional study conducted in the city of Madras. It concludes with a short chapter that includes theological reflection on the ramifications of the study. The 2001 publication includes, among other things, more theological reflection, a paper interacting with the sociological affects of “conversion,” an explanation of caste, and a rave review of the original *Churchless Christianity* by H. L. Richard.

Chapter 1 consists mainly of an introduction to the situation and faith of a number of Non-Baptized Believers in Christ (NBBC). Since these people do not habitually go to church, there is great deal of diversity in worship practice. Some have private devotions, some go to church occasionally, some still participate in the Hindu festivals, some do not, some have a picture of Jesus in their back room, and some place Jesus’ picture along with a picture of the other gods. In almost all cases, the driving factors that keep these followers of Christ from publicly joining the visible Christian community is the extraction that would inevitably follow. Fathers would have difficulty finding husbands for their daughters, and business owners would have difficulty finding workers for their shops or factories. Each interview mentioned the cost associated with breaking caste to join the caste of the local believing community. In some cases, the pastors themselves advised the NBBC to refrain from breaking caste by joining the church. Despite the variety of worship styles and beliefs of the NBBC, they are commonly recognized as authentic followers of Christ by the general community, the

are Spirit-filled Christians. Herbert Hoefler, *Churchless Christianity*, rev.ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 5.

pastors of the Christian community, and by their extended family.¹¹⁶

Chapter 2 describes the factors that keep the NBBC from breaking caste and joining the local church. The study lists ten common characteristics of the NBBC interviewed, including a desire to maintain harmony in the marriage relationship, a respectful attitude toward relatives, the attempt to change religion without changing cultures, the sentiment that remaining unbaptized affirms the family mission and tradition, and the difficulty of finding good marriages for the children. Surprisingly, when these NBBC break caste to join the local church, they are not necessarily warmly welcomed in. The Christian community has often refused to provide marriage partners for NBBC who break caste to join the church through baptism, leaving the children of these rural NBBC without honorable prospects for marriage.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe the random study questionnaire that was conducted in Madras and draws conclusions from the data provided from that study. After explaining the study and research method at some length, Hofer outlines the results of the study:

Our statistics have shown that there is a solid twenty five percent of the Hindu and Muslim population in Madras City which has integrated Jesus deeply into their spiritual life. Half of the population have attempted spiritual relationships with Jesus and had satisfying and learning experiences through it.¹¹⁷

Hofer describes the devotional and spiritual life of these NBBC as intensely personal and non-communal: “Most of the time, these believers in Christ relate to Him only in their private prayer and meditations. Occasionally they go to church anonymously, but

¹¹⁶Hofer, *Churchless Christianity*, 5-44.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 106.

for the most part they are on their own to nurture their faith. Thus, they easily fall away from a disciplined worship life and into a syncretistic way of thinking.”¹¹⁸ Not surprisingly, since many of the NBBC discover Jesus on their own through TV or radio broadcasts, Hoefler says that the NBBC “provide an amalgamation of Hindu and Christian experiences in Christ.”¹¹⁹

The difficulty with Hoefler’s study is not the fact that the phenomenon exists; rather, the problem is with the theological implications that Hoefler attempts to draw from the situation. The most glaring difficulty is that Hoefler suggests that baptism be relegated to an adiaphora level of Christian teaching and practice: “Is the administration of baptism as essential function of the Gospel?”¹²⁰ In other words, if the requirement of baptism can be waived as an entry rite into the believing community, then these NBBC would not be required to break caste in order to receive teaching and fellowship from the Christian community. Additionally, Hoefler suggests that the only hope for Christ to reach India is the fulfillment of Hinduism by Christ:

Christianity grew out of Judaism because Christ was incarnated there. However, when He is grafted into” a totally new tree, we must only expect a new hybrid, a Church of Gentile customs and a theology of Gnostic and mystical ideas. Only then will Christ “of whom and to whom and through whom are all things,” be “all in all” among the varying cultures of the world (Rom 11:20-24, 36) We do not want to change the culture or the religious genius of India. We simply want to bring Christ and his Gospel into the centre of it.¹²¹

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 117. This sounds like a good description of syncretism.

¹²⁰Ibid., 155.

¹²¹Ibid., 200. Chapter 3 will deal with the fulfillment motif in Insider literature in more detail. For now, notice how Hoefler confuses the subject of Paul’s metaphor. Christ was not grafted into a Gentile tree in Rom 11; rather, the Gentiles were grafted into the Jewish tree of God’s covenant with Israel. The theological starting point is terribly misplaced in fulfillment theology.

In addition to *Churchless Christianity* being taken as an illustration of the problem of extraction and double conversion, the descriptive study in *Churchless Christianity* is used by Insider advocates as a basis to prescribe Insider Movements. Essentially, they argue that these Insider believers need to be protected from the national church. With missionary assistance, NBBCs should develop completely outside of the national church's traditions and structures:

Nonetheless, one must question whether Hoefler in the end is either too traditionally attached to the church or just not careful enough to define what he means in saying that this churchless Christianity needs the church. Did Gentile Christianity need the Jerusalem church? Arguably, it needed to be protected from that church India's NBBCs need to be guarded against a great deal of trouble that Christians will cause them . . . but they certainly need help.¹²²

Overall, while *Churchless Christianity* is not a document that proposes an Insider strategy—indeed, Hoefler strains to ensure that the developing NBBC community maintain ties with the traditional Christian community—it has been used by Insider advocates to prove the validity and necessity of an Insider strategy. Furthermore, as Hoefler has become aware of the contextualization debate in recent years, he has continually defended and advocated the Insider approach.¹²³

C5: Logical Conclusions of Dynamic-Equivalence

At this point, it should be clear that the taxonomy Travis prepared in the C-

¹²²H. L. Richard, "Review of *Churchless Christianity*," in *Churchless Christianity*, rev. ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 263.

¹²³See, for instance, Herbert Hoefler, "Proclaiming a 'Theologyless' Christ," *IJFM* 22 (2005): 98; idem, "Response to Gary Corwin from the Hindu Context," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 21; idem, "Rooted or Uprooted: The Necessity of Contextualization in Missions," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 131-38; idem, "What's in a Name? The Baggage of Terminology in Contemporary Mission," *IJFM* 25 (2008): 25-29; and John Travis et al., "Four Responses to Tennent's 'Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques,'" *IJFM* 23 (2006): 124-26.

Continuum is simply a description of dynamic-equivalence being applied to increasing areas of the targeted people group's religious culture. C3 avoids their religious culture. C4 incorporates their religious forms that do not overtly deny the biblical testimony concerning Christ and eventually transitions out of the Islamic religious community. C5 significantly redefines crucial Islamic terms in order to stay as a sect within the Islamic religious community. C5's re-use of Islamic ritual to keep believers inside the Islamic community is essentially the logical conclusion of dynamic-equivalence.

Travis traces his development along the logical progression of dynamic equivalence in his own ministry. He studied contextualized theory before he and his wife became missionaries and planned to make every attempt to strip the gospel seed out of its cultural shell:

Moving beyond these first three types (C1-C3), we, along with a number of national and expatriate coworkers, felt compelled to apply contextualization theory further. . . . Within a few years there were several hundred believers. The communities of faith they formed are at the "C4" point on the continuum and closely resemble the types of congregations described and commended by Parshall (1980).

This C4 lifestyle greatly helped the new follower of Christ remain a part of his family and neighborhood. Yet in time (usually about three months to one year), the community would realize the C4 believers were in fact no longer Muslims. Although they would still keep the fast, wear Islamic clothing, use Islamic terminology, keep Muslim dietary practices, and not change their names, they would generally not pray in the mosque and no longer referred to themselves as Muslims. Rejection would eventually come. Gradually the distance between C4 believers and their Muslim communities widened.¹²⁴

Presumably, the reason behind Travis's dissatisfaction with C4 ministry was the widening cultural distance between communities that resulted in a slowing of the gospel message along relational networks. Fewer people were being reached with the

¹²⁴Travis and Travis, "Appropriate Approaches," 400-01.

gospel. The goals of facilitating a people movement cannot be realized when homogeneity disintegrates due to a widening cultural distance. With dynamic equivalence, the way to solve the widening cultural gap between new Muslim background believers and their birth community is to minimize the cultural drift away from Islam. C5 is the best way to accomplish that task. Travis describes his journey toward his belief that believers could maintain a C5 Islamic identity:

During the time we were beginning C4 experiments (the late 1980s) we also began hearing about some cases of Muslims, many of them leaders, who had come to faith in Isa (both in our area and in other countries) and who chose to remain in the Muslim community, much like Jews of today's Messianic Jewish movement remain culturally and officially Jewish¹²⁵ These Muslim believers are able to set aside certain Islamic beliefs, interpretations and practices, yet remain a part of the Islamic community as they follow Isa. They do not change their name or legal religious affiliation. They continue to identify with the religion of their birth and participate in things Islamic insofar as their conscience and growing sensitivity to Scripture allows. This point on the continuum—a community of Muslims who follow Christ yet remain culturally and officially Muslim—is referred to as C5. Others refer to emerging networks of C5 congregations as “insider movements”, since the evangelism, discipling, congregating and organizing of C5 believers happens within the Muslim community, by Muslims with Muslims.¹²⁶

¹²⁵The Messianic Jews of America and Israel are considered neither culturally nor officially Jewish by their Jewish communities and families. American Jews who confess Yeshua as Messiah are usually ostracized by their families and generally unwelcome in Jewish community events, even if they are involved in Messianic congregations. Israelis who confess Yeshua as Messiah face greater persecution from their families than their American counterparts, along with hostility from the community and discrimination from the government. Their children face difficulty when enrolling in the National Health Insurance because of their questionable Jewish heritage. Messianic Jews have been denied Israeli citizenship, derided as cult members, and often subjected to bureaucratic intimidation. The parallel Travis attempts to draw here does not exist. Moreover, the Messianic Jewish movement is not an oikos fellowship. 48% of the members of the Messianic congregations in Israel did not come from a Jewish background, and 98% of the members of Messianic congregations in America were converted by Gentile Christians not affiliated with the Messianic Jewish movement. The only similarity between the Messianic Jewish movement and the Insider methodology Travis attempts to describe is how the leaders of both movements hope the gospel will spread through pre-existing networks. Despite efforts to the contrary, Jewish families have continued to be torn apart when a member turns to Yeshua in faith. See Jeffery Steven Wasserman, *Messianic Jewish Congregations: A Comparison and Critique of Contemporary North American and Israeli Expressions*,” (Ph.D. Diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 186-209.

¹²⁶Ibid., 401.

At this point in his ministry, Travis was attempting to use “religious forms commonly used by local Muslims which were either expressly biblical, or at least neutral, so that Muslims coming to Christ would need to change outward forms as little as possible.”¹²⁷ The biblical basis of Islamic forms presented by Woodberry led Travis and others to reject very little about Islamic worship. The resulting contextualized Christian worship looks very similar to Islamic worship. However, despite the similarities in rituals and the continued involvement and presence within Muslim society,¹²⁸ Travis was not satisfied with the ability of these believers to continue to reach their Muslim neighbors: “As we have continued to see the limits of C4 in our context, as our burden for lost Muslims only grows heavier, we have become convinced that a C5 expression of faith could actually be viable for our precious Muslim neighbors and probably large blocks [*sic*] of the Muslim world.”¹²⁹

If the main problem in Muslim evangelism is the foreignness of the message preached by Christians, and if extraction and the subsequent breakdown of the community network must be avoided at all costs, then C5 is by far the best solution to those problems. Travis expresses this sentiment as follows:

We have little hope in our lifetime to believe for a major enough cultural, political and religious change to occur in our context such that Muslims would become open to entering Christianity on a wide scale. But we do have great hope, as great as the promises of God, to believe that an “insider movement” could get off the ground—that vast numbers could discover that salvation in Isa the Messiah is waiting for

¹²⁷Ibid., 400.

¹²⁸This describes the limit of what Parshall recommends in *Beyond the Mosque*.

¹²⁹Ibid., 401-02.

every Muslim who will believe.¹³⁰

A question rarely asked in the current debate is whether extraction is truly the *main* cause of resistance in Muslim evangelism. Obviously, extraction, to some degree—whether converts are taken out of the religious culture only or out of society altogether—is an issue in any high-religious context where religion and culture are inseparably fused together. Chapter 4 will deal with the missiological issue of extraction and its rightful place in the ranking of missiological issues in high-religious context. At this point, it is sufficient to say that extraction, and the resulting breakdown of homogeneity, is the driving force behind the formulation of a C5 strategy. As Travis has shown, “We feel that fighting the religion-changing battle is the wrong battle.”¹³¹

However, the glaring issue in any proposed C5 strategy in a high-religious context is whether maintaining religious identity is even biblically acceptable. The vast majority of the Insider conversation has centered on the biblical and theological issues surrounding the proposal, and the C-Continuum has been the primary tool used to locate the discussion and delineate the issues in contextualization. Chapter 3 will deal with those issues in detail, but the use of the C-Continuum as a tool must be discussed first.

The C-Continuum

The C-Continuum has a number of strengths. It is a helpful representation of the progression of dynamic-equivalence brought to bear on a culture. As such, it is a great tool when used to introduce students and missionaries to the basics of

¹³⁰Ibid., 402.

¹³¹Ibid.

contextualization. While Travis originally aimed to describe contextualization in an Islamic society, the similar issues in other high-religious contexts make it applicable in those contexts as well. It is also a shorthand way to summarize the great mass of literature interacting with culture from a dynamic equivalent standpoint because it introduces students to the difficulties posed by high-religious cultures and the various attempts to answer those problems.

But the C-Continuum also has glaring weaknesses. The first and most obvious weakness is the functional blurring of the lines between C4 and C5. While the lines between C4 and C5 are clearly delineated by the continuum, the reality of mission field contexts tends to be far fuzzier, especially in C4-C5 type situations. The confusion mainly lies in the extreme difficulty of determining whether a believer or congregation is attempting to retain religious identity or whether they are attempting to maintain a place within society while simultaneously moving away from the mosque. Both groups advocate the re-use of Islamic forms. It is only the degree of re-use and degree of rejection that is in question. The fuzziness between C4 and C5 makes careful discussion difficult because fruitful discussion will need carefully defined terms, which rarely ever happens in the literature. For this reason, many have moved away from specific designations and use the more general term, “high-spectrum contextualization.”

Another problem is that the C-Continuum is often used as a shorthand way to describe a type of contextualized strategy. But the C-Continuum is not a comprehensive tool for contextualization. It is far too narrow in focus to be used in a comprehensive discussion involving contextualization because it only traces change in a religious community’s use of language or vocabulary, cultural or religious forms, and cultural or

religious identity. Issues of culture and identity are far more complex and touch on far more than three elements of culture. The three mentioned in the C-Continuum are helpful starting places, but, since every context varies considerably, the conversation will necessarily be changed by the individual context. Islam is by no means monolithic. The understanding and use of Islamic ritual—and even Islamic language—vary considerably from Indonesia to Morocco, which means that the indigenous understanding behind the form must be understood before the transformation of that form can be considered.¹³² Moreover, most Muslims in the world are neither Arab nor speak Arabic as their first language. In fact, the Continuum was developed in Indonesia among the Sundanese and models itself on non-Arab movements. It is questionable whether a C5 position is even viable in an Arabic speaking society.¹³³ Whatever the case, the cultural and linguistic particulars of each Islamic people group will necessarily affect a total strategy of contextualization.

While many involved in the Insider conversation do understand how and why context shapes contextualization strategy, these important distinctions are often absent for young missionaries and church planters who are introduced to contextualization through the C-Continuum. It is impossible to unilaterally prescribe the re-use of certain Islamic forms without a deep understanding of the particular Islamic culture in question. The sweeping nature in which Islamic forms are discussed by Insider proponents and the three

¹³²For instance, see Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); and Bill Musk, *The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims at Street Level*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregal Publications, 2004).

¹³³Roger Dixon, “Moving on From the C1-C6 Spectrum,” *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 4.

areas of culture portrayed by the C-Continuum combine to make the continuum's use as a label for various ministries problematic and nebulous.

Further, a massive, yet rarely recognized flaw in the Continuum, is that it is designed to recommend the C5 position but does so with an uncritical reliance on dynamic equivalence as a model of contextualization. Discussions of dynamic-equivalence rarely include any biblical interaction related to the fallen nature of culture and how culture—and specifically how particular cultural forms—actively suppresses the knowledge of God. That flaw is dramatically highlighted in the C-Continuum. Chapter 4 will investigate the view of culture that undergirds the Insider use of dynamic equivalence. But, at this point, it is sufficient to point out that C5 does not attempt to grapple with the truly problematic ways in which Islam actively *suppresses* the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The wisdom of re-using religious forms that have been instrumental in suppressing and distorting knowledge of the true God is highly questionable.

Possibly the greatest problem with the C-Continuum is that it is being used as the primary shaper of contextualization strategy among vocal groups who believe, like Travis, that Insider identity is the best way for the gospel to penetrate resistant societies, especially since it seems that the C-Continuum was designed to lead readers to a C5 conclusion. However, the C-Continuum is far too narrow to be helpful as the primary source for contextualization strategy. The C-Continuum was created as a descriptive tool. Travis used it to pinpoint a starting point for contextualization and to consider various possibilities. A comprehensive strategy of contextualization must look beyond a starting point and consider the particular ways the gospel will transform a society in its

entirety. It has to look beyond the three elements of the C-Continuum and deal with the totality of the cultural context. The gospel will confront the receiving culture in particular ways, missionaries need to identify these ways and consider what transformational discipleship looks like in a given culture.¹³⁴

Moreover, when the C-Continuum is used to shape church-planting strategy, the conversation often excludes important and necessary biblical elements of ecclesiology. Church formation—no matter what the actual community of faith decides to call itself—is central in the task of proclaiming the gospel. Undertaking a C5 strategy without a clear understanding of the end-goal for church formation and the transformation of the culture is, at best, extremely naive.

The lack of clear parameters dealing with ecclesiological formation and cultural transformation has made the conversation surrounding the Insider strategy far more convoluted than it needs to be. If Insider advocates continue to use the C-Continuum as a basis for strategy formation—indeed, all indications point to an increased use of the Continuum for informing contextualized strategy in a wide variety of contexts—it must be modified to better bear the weight placed on it. Specifically, it must include biblical criteria. As a starting point, the use of the C-Continuum to form strategy must take into account biblical data related to ecclesiological formation and cultural transformation. Contextualization is not static. Insider advocates would do well to interact with Green’s concept of “stagnant contextualization” and its dangers presented

¹³⁴To be fair, Travis and others have written extensively on the use of power in their folk-religious context. My argument is not that Insider practitioners are not seeking a transformed society. Rather, my argument is that they are not seeking a transformation that is comprehensive enough. See Travis and Travis, “Appropriate Approaches in Muslim Contexts,” 397-414, and Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God*.

by his study of Hebrews.¹³⁵

Figure 3 is a suggestion for incorporating necessary biblical elements into the Insider conversation. It is an attempt to add biblical criteria for ecclesiology, demonstrate the relationship between Christ-conformity and cultural transformation, and point to an end-goal of church planting. By adding a vertical component dealing with ecclesiological issues to the C-Continuum, I am demonstrating the necessity of a continual, dynamic model of contextualization.

The first point to notice about Figure 3 is that I have made some adjustments to Travis's C-Continuum for the sake of clarity. First, I have identified four different self-identities in the C-Continuum. The first three are implicit in the continuum: Christian background believers, Muslim background believers, and Muslim believers.¹³⁶ The fourth identity—Christ-centered community identity—is an emerging identity centered on Christ and a growing sense of “belonging” to his congregated people that develops over time through intentional discipleship. The first three identities represent strategies in church planting, while the fourth represents the goal of those strategies.

Second, I have removed C6 on the continuum because, though it accurately describes the situation of some believers, it has no valid place in either contextualization or in church planting. C6 believers are in hiding and do not congregate with other believers. One of the fundamental goals of evangelism and church planting is to see

¹³⁵See Green, “Guidelines from Hebrews for Contextualization,” 223-54.

¹³⁶“Muslim believers” is the helpful phrase Timothy Tennent has used to describe the difference between C5 Inside believers and those who come out of Islam. See Timothy Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 201.

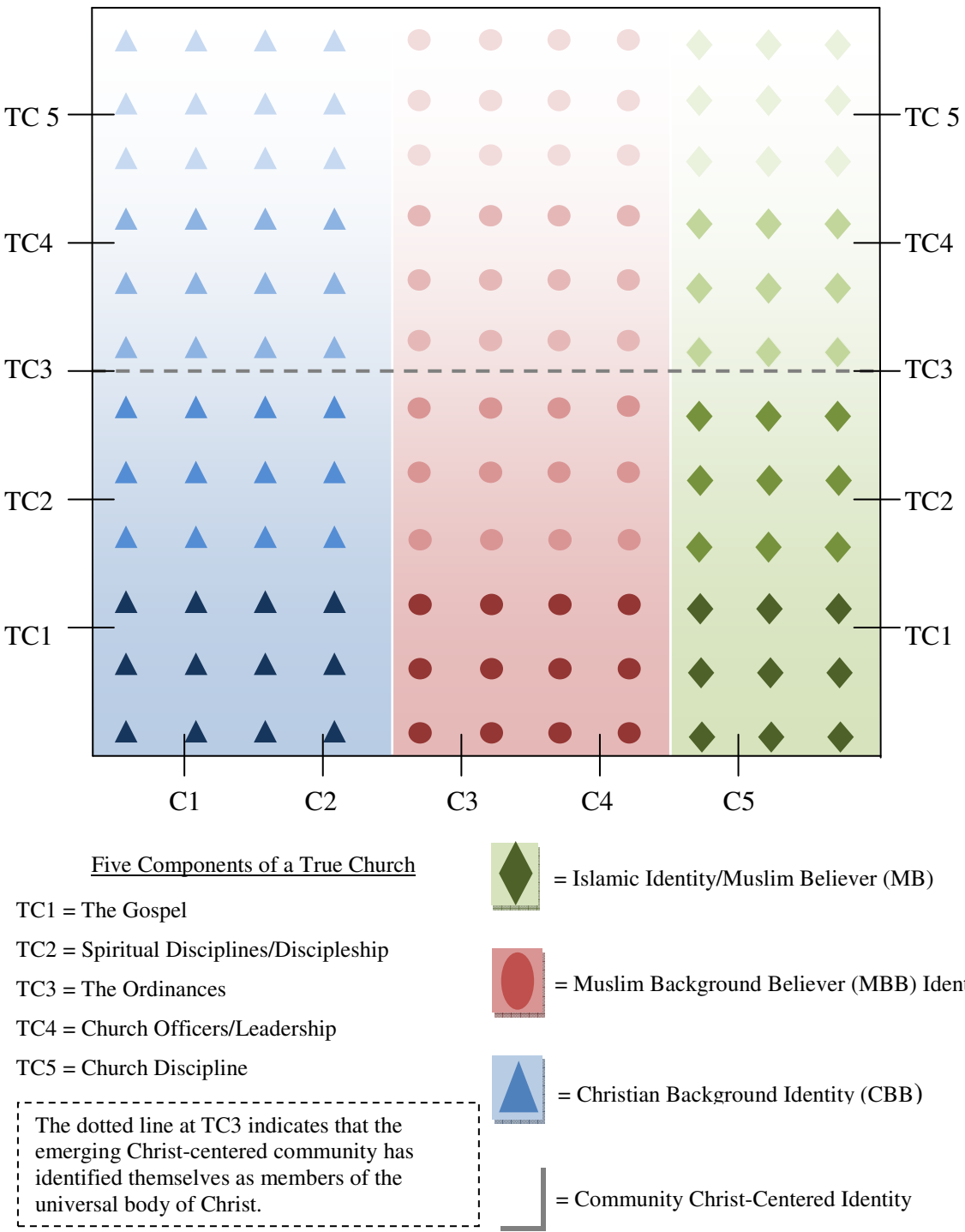


Figure 3: Components of a true church in emerging Christ-centered communities

believers congregate together in accordance with the Word of God (Heb 10:25).

Third, I have taken the three criteria of a true church as determined by the Magisterial Reformers and added several additional components to the vertical ecclesiastical direction of the diagram. The order of the elements—labeled TC to represent True Church—is meant to reflect the development of a church body as opposed to individual believers. For instance, the pattern of Acts for individual believers generally takes the following order: Gospel, Baptism, Lord’s Supper, Discipleship, Leadership, and, if need be, Church Discipline.¹³⁷ However, in church formation, similar to the Pauline Cycle described by Hesselgrave, the hearers must first be contacted, then the gospel communicated, then the hearers converted and then the believers congregated.¹³⁸ It is after the believers are congregated that they begin to have their faith confirmed by the practice of baptism and the Lord’s Supper in obedience to the commands of Christ. As the community coalesces together, leadership emerges and is consecrated, in much the same way as the church responded to the neglect of the Hellenist widows in the daily distribution of food in Acts 6. Finally, and as a true indicator that the community of faith has grown together so tightly that ostracizing a member has persuasive power, church discipline is enacted when members of the worshipping community fall into unrepentant sin (e.g., 1 Cor 5:1-5)

The dotted line crossing the width of the diagram at TC3 serves to indicate that

¹³⁷This order follows the descriptive account of Acts 2, 5, and 6.

¹³⁸See David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 111-307. In church planting, especially in *oikos* environments, the gathering may happen before, simultaneously, or after the group is congregated. In these instances, discipleship is mixed with evangelism so that TC1 and TC2 often happen together.

identity as a consecrated and set-apart member of a Christ-centered community begins to emerge at the institution of the practicing of Christ's commands. God's people are sojourners and aliens; they are in the world, but not of the world. While they are still vital members within society, they are also, in an important theological sense, separate and different from society. The ordinances are an essential part of Christ-centered worship and where they are neglected or ignored a movement "toward" Christ will never coalesce into a true church. Possibly the single greatest weakness of the Insider conversation is the absence of conversation related to the commanded forms of Christ-centered worship. Once the ordinances are being practiced, especially in high-religious contexts, the emerging group is, in important respects, set apart from their birth community and will be increasingly forming an identity centered on being a member of the people of God (1 Pet 2:9-10).

The lines of separation between communities of faith fade away as each community is increasingly transformed by conformity to Christ. The body of Christ is universal, and while components of culture will always be an important part of a believer's identity, the gospel prophetically confronts the receiving culture so that it is continually transformed. The individual elements of every culture that are fallen, or that work to suppress the knowledge of God, or that create chains of oppression or bondage to sin, are washed clean by the transforming power of the gospel and cease to be important elements in a believer's self-identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the formation of Insider methodology as a strategy in high-religious contexts. Insider methodology rests heavily on the concept of People

Movements and Donald McGavran's HUP. Additionally, it has been shown that proponents of Insider strategy are responding primarily to the problem of extraction in high-religious contexts, have minimized the theological issues to the point of neglecting them altogether, and have attempted to side-step the issue of unwarranted persecution by maintaining high-religious identity in *oikos* networks. The genesis of Insider methodology traces back almost forty years to the application of Kraft's model of dynamic equivalence to the issues in Muslim evangelism. Since 1974, and mostly as a result of the influence of the faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary, theory and experimentation have continued to seek solutions to the cultural problem in high-religious contexts. While some solutions, like Parshall's, have sought to differentiate between belonging to a faith community and membership within a social community, the Insider solution is to maintain the totality of religious identity. The model of contextualization behind the Insider methodology is dynamic equivalence. Generally, maintaining a religious identity is theologically validated by claiming—like messianic Judaism—to have been completed by faith in Jesus. The result of the completed faith is the formation of a Muslim sect or the transformation of Islam from within. By becoming a Muslim sect within Islamic society, believers retain the ability of the gospel to travel along the lines of a community network.

Despite the significant theological errors in the proposed Muslim sects—recognized in a theoretical sense by Kraft and Wilder, and objectively presented by Parshall alongside Travis's article in 1998—Insider proponents are convinced that the benefits of Insider Movements far outweigh the potential for disaster. Though the example of orthodoxy developing within Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses—both of

which started as Christian movements and maintain a Christian identity—give the opposite example, Insider proponents firmly believe that Insider Movements will grow toward orthodoxy as long as they have the Bible and are not isolated.

After the strategy was proposed to a much wider audience through the publication of Travis's *EMQ* article in 1998, proponents began to emerge and defend the C5 position against a variety of charges. As a result, a significant attempt was made by C5 proponents to produce a solid biblical and theological foundation in order to demonstrate the biblical validity of the Insider approach. The next chapter introduces and interacts with the biblical and theological framework developed by Insider advocates.

CHAPTER 3
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION
FOR INSIDER MOVEMENTS

The biblical and theological support offered in the past decade of C5/Insider literature is decidedly *ad hoc* and unorganized. The most significant force behind the defense of C5/Insider methodology undoubtedly has been the work of the editors of *IJFM*. Because of the general uproar caused by the introduction of Travis's C-Continuum, in 2000, *IJFM* published two entire issues devoted to topics in Muslim evangelism.¹ The first published mention of Insider Movements is Harley Talman's editorial in the 2004 spring edition of *IJFM*,² and soon after this edition, the International Society of Frontier Missiology fall 2004 meeting was entitled "Insider Movements: Syncretistic or Scriptural?"³ The vast majority of biblical and theological work done by Insider advocates has appeared within the pages of *IJFM*.

While *IJFM* has attempted to be a venue where the insider conversation could take place, criticism has appeared in other journals like *Missiology*, *EMQ*, and *St. Francis Magazine*.⁴ The criticism of Insider methodology has often been quite vocal and severe:

¹See *IJFM* 17 nos. 1 and 4, 2000.

²Harley Talman, "Guest Editor's Page," *IJFM* 21 (2004): 5.

³See "Announcement: Fall Meeting of the International Society for Frontier Missiology (ISFM), sponsor of the *IJFM*." *IJFM* 21 (2004): 52.

⁴*St. Francis Magazine* has published the most scathing rebuttals of Insider methodology, but

the point of attack generally focuses on the lack of solid biblical support offered for the methodology. Yet, as Higgins demonstrates in his response to “Phil” and Bill Nikides, some of the criticisms of Insider methodology stem from a fundamental misunderstanding about assumptions. Therefore, this chapter will not start with the textual arguments used by Insider proponents but rather with the assumptions that Insider proponents bring to the text.⁵ Since it is not possible here to interact deeply with every biblical argument offered by Insider proponents, this chapter presents arguments that provide the biblical and theological foundation for Insider Movements. Specifically, this chapter begins by introducing foundational theological concepts that support the Insider reading of the text. Unstated assumptions and presuppositions are behind much of the misunderstanding within the Insider conversation. One of the major unstated assumptions, which will be presented first, is exemplified by Kraft’s concept of revelation and the Bible as “God’s inspired case-book.”⁶ Next, this chapter describes the development of fulfillment theology and how the Insider arguments utilize the fulfillment

has recently become a venue where Insider proponents can respond to the criticism. For example see Kevin Higgins “Inside What? Church, Culture, Religion and Insider Movements in Biblical Perspective,” *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 74-91; Bill Nikides, “A Response to Kevin Higgins’ ‘Inside What?’” *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 92-113; Phil, “A Response to Kevin Higgins’ ‘Inside What?’” *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 114-26; and Kevin Higgins, “Speaking the Truth about Insider Movements: Addressing the Criticisms of Bill Nikides and ‘Phil’ relative to the Article ‘Inside What?’” *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 6 (2009): 61-86.

⁵It is important to note here that the following observations about Insider presuppositions are directed at the general consensus of Insider thinking, what Higgins refers to as “the circle of missiologists and practitioners with whom I am in communication” (Higgins, “Speaking the Truth about Insider Movements,” 64). My assumption is that the writing within the pages of the *IJFM* is from a group of Insider advocates who are more-or-less on the same methodological and biblical page. That stated, it is necessary to acknowledge that it is possible that not all Insider advocates will fall under the categories that follow.

⁶ See Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross Cultural Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 152-68, 310.

concept to ground their use of high-religious traditions as a theological starting point. Last, this chapter interacts with the Insider articulation of the Kingdom of God.

God's Inspired Casebook

The view of the Bible as God's inspired casebook is presented by Charles Kraft as one of the fundamental elements of his philosophy of cross-cultural communication and the inculturation of the gospel. More of that philosophy will be presented in chapter 4's discussion of the missiological elements of Insider methodology. Yet, the biblical arguments supporting that methodology flow out of the following view of inspiration, revelation, and Scripture.

First, Kraft emphasizes that the revelation of God is not simply information but rather the "actualization" of how that information impacts felt needs in the receptor.⁷ Further, Kraft asserts that God "still reveals himself in the same ways as are recorded in Scripture."⁸ By this assertion, he means that revelation continues in the same exact way as experienced by the writers of the various books of the Bible. For Kraft, the Bible is not as much the Word of God as it is the record of the acts of God within human history. Hence, he calls the Bible a "casebook."⁹ Kraft defines a "casebook" as

a collection of descriptions of illustrative real-life exemplifications of the principles to be taught. Such descriptions may (should) include interpretations . . . but as a part of the case studies or in response to a larger situation (case) not fully described

⁷Ibid., 153. Kraft's terminology derives almost entirely from the academic discipline of linguistics and communication.

⁸Ibid., 154.

⁹It is important to note that Kraft still uses the term "Word of God" and still claims to be inerrantist.

in the case study.¹⁰

Moreover, the Bible is a “classic casebook,” meaning that it exemplifies more widely applicable principles that have been collected through a four stage process:

(1) the occurrence of certain events, (2) the recording of many of the events (3) the experiential use of a number of the recorded accounts among a constituency, and (4) the selection and publication of those case studies felt by the constituency to be most valuable. When the period of time during which the case studies are experimentally used is lengthy and the size of the constituency large and varied (as with the Scriptures), the likelihood is increased that the cases chosen will be truly classic.¹¹

Fundamentally then, God’s inspired casebook is the result of a dynamic process of divine and human interaction. Kraft believes that “one of the major purposes of the Bible is to provide us with insight into the process, the dynamics, of God’s continuing leading.”¹² The most pertinent aspect of Kraft’s casebook theory for Insider methodology is his view of the continuing nature of God’s revelation: “It does not appear reasonable to believe that as soon as the last New Testament documents were committed to writing, God totally changed his method of operation to such an extent that he now limits himself to the Bible.”¹³ Kraft asserts that God will interact in a revelatory way with any human being who will respond to him. Kraft develops this assertion by redefining revelation and inspiration.

For Kraft, inspiration is “the process by means of which God reveals himself

¹⁰Ibid., 155.

¹¹Ibid., 158.

¹²Ibid., 161-62. Following this statement, Kraft investigates the nature of inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy. While he maintains the verbiage of the Evangelical articulation of inerrancy, he does so by significantly re-defining the terms, following the lead of Clark Pinnock in “The Inerrancy Debate among Evangelicals,” *News and Notes* (1976): 11-13.

¹³Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 165.

indirectly,” while revelation “always happens when God leads people.”¹⁴ Thus, by Kraft’s definitions, revelation is the direct leading of God in his interaction with humanity, while inspiration involves the things God uses to communicate his message to those who will listen and the process of God’s communication. Revelation can happen anytime, anywhere, to anyone who will respond to God. Thus, for Kraft, the terms “inspiration,” “general revelation,” and “specific or normative revelation”—as generally understood by the evangelical community he identifies with—are not accurate descriptions of God’s method of revelation to his people.¹⁵

He defines revelation primarily as God’s communication through “interacting with his human receptors.”¹⁶ Since God seeks to be understood, knows that we are limited by our cultural framework, and makes it his task to stimulate the desired meanings in our lives, he is receptor oriented in his communication with us. That is, God speaks to us through “person-to-person interaction . . . [where] credible human communicators . . . relate God’s messages specifically to the lives of the receptors and lead the latter to revelational discoveries.”¹⁷ Kraft asserts that God is continually communicating something about himself in receptor cultures around the world, which entails new frames of reference in which Spirit-guided people convey his message. Kraft

¹⁴Ibid., 166.

¹⁵Kraft continues to use the terms but redefines special revelation to mean the qualitative difference of information God reveals about himself within general revelation and the degree of impact that information has on the receptor. Ibid., 171. Kraft lays strong claim to being “totally within the Evangelical camp” (email to author, 9 September 2008). For a contrast of Kraft’s definitions, see the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, “Articles III, V and X” [on-line]; accessed 6 June 2010; available from http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.238325/k.AC1C/Chicago_Statement.html; Internet.

¹⁶Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 134.

¹⁷Ibid.

envisions these as “new events in the stream of history.”¹⁸ That is, using his Spirit, God can continue to reveal himself to humanity just like he did to Abraham, Melchizedek, and all of the other Old Testament prophets.¹⁹ So, the Bible, in Kraft’s view, is not merely God’s revelation to man; it is the basis of God’s continuing revelation and the measure by which all contemporary “revelations” are to be gauged.²⁰ In summary, Kraft’s presentation of the Bible as God’s inspired casebook means functionally that the Bible is the guide by which we can judge how people are already responding to God’s revelation (apart from the Bible) within their culture and how the same dynamic process God used to inspire the Bible is at work now in existing world religions.

Kraft’s view of revelation and the Bible raises important questions related to salvation and the missionary task, which will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter 4. At this juncture, it is clear that Kraft has an extremely high view of culture and of the ability of humanity to respond to God’s revelation. Furthermore, for Kraft, the Bible offers a model for encountering God in the same revelatory way as the prophets and apostles. The Bible itself is not divine revelation; instead, it contains God’s revelation and that process of revelation still continues. That is, in a very real sense, specific revelation is *dynamically* happening today. When the Bible is understood and applied correctly it provides the stimulus for God’s revelation to a particular frame of reference. By contrast, consider the definition of inspiration and revelation in the Chicago Statement

¹⁸Ibid., 140.

¹⁹Kraft’s view of God’s dynamic revelation process leads him to conclude that knowledge of Christ is not a necessary component to saving faith. See Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 198.

²⁰Ibid., 147.

of Biblical Inerrancy:

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God. We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity . . . We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings. We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.²¹

How widespread is Kraft's articulation of the Bible as God's divine casebook among Insider proponents? It is difficult to tell with absolute certainty, yet there is every indication that it is foundational. For example, Jack Colgate, writing about Bible storying in oral Muslim contexts, indicates the central role Kraft's theory has played:

In contextualized ministries to Muslims this interpretative category [i.e., the Bible as God's inspired casebook] for the Bible has played a significant role over the past two or three decades. The Bible has been used as a casebook for various themes and issues such as church planting, evangelism, discipling, intercession, ministries of healing and deliverance, developing contextualized theologies, and holistic ministry.²²

Essentially, when the Bible is used as a casebook, the descriptive elements related to the revelatory process God used are identified and then prescribed as models for how to bring the gospel into new contexts. The casebook view of the Bible forms the foundation for Kraft's dynamic equivalence, and it is illustrated by his application of the qualifications of eldership among African polygamists. Instead of taking the

²¹International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, "Articles III, V and X of the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy" [on-line]; accessed 6 June 2010; available from http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.238325/k.AC1C/Chicago_Statement.htm; Internet.

²²Jack Colgate, "Part II: Relational Bible Storying and Scripture Use in Oral Muslim Contexts," *IJFM* 25 (2008): 204-05. Colgate's article does not overtly claim to participate in Insider ministry, yet Colgate has pinpointed a central element of much of contextualized ministry.

qualifications at face value,²³ he asserts that the guiding principle Paul uses to determine eldership is the criteria of respectability among the community.²⁴ Since one of the criteria for respectability in an African context includes polygamy, Kraft believes that African elders can also be polygamists. At face value, Kraft's decision directly contradicts Paul's instructions. Yet, when the Bible is viewed as a casebook, the *way* Paul made the decision to appoint elders is far more important than what he actually says. Instead of adhering to Paul's conclusions, Kraft describes the criteria Paul uses in his hellenistic context and then prescribes those criteria in order to reach a new conclusion for a new context. The Bible as a casebook uses the cultural context as the normative interpretive grid, which helps create new interpretive possibilities as revelation occurs. Kraft's view of the Bible is demonstrated in a foundational area of Insider methodology: fulfillment theology.

Fulfillment Theology

What lies behind the idea of fulfillment? Foundationally, it rests upon Jesus' words in Matthew 5:17: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." Paul also utilizes the fulfillment motif in his sermon to the Jews of

²³"Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?" (1 Tim 3:2-5).

²⁴Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 253-54.

Antioch in Acts 13:32: “And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” Flemming notices three ways that Paul sees Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies:

First, . . . Acts 13:23 announces a Savior from David’s line who fulfills God’s promise to Israel, apparently echoing 2 Samuel 7:12. Second, the fulfillment theme is linked to Jesus’ crucifixion Third, Paul identifies the content of the gospel he proclaims with the idea that God has fulfilled the promise of a Davidic Messiah to Israel by “raising Jesus” The idea of the fulfillment of God’s messianic promise in Jesus becomes a keynote in Paul’s proclamation for his Diaspora audience.²⁵

The fulfilling of God’s covenant to Abraham and David through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus is the glorious center of the Christian missionary message. However, fulfillment as a theological proposal applied to other religious traditions outside of the covenant to Abraham has a long and varied history. Fundamentally, fulfillment theology takes one step beyond the Church Father’s approach to pagan Greek culture, commonly referred to as *praeparatio evangelica* (preparation for the gospel). As articulated by Eusebius, the approach proposes that God has left a testimony of himself in every culture throughout history and the world.²⁶ This concept is classically illustrated in Justin Martyr’s use of the Greek term *spermakos Logos* (the seed of the Word) to explain general revelation.²⁷ The Church Apologists and Fathers used the

²⁵Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 61.

²⁶ See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica* (Preparation for the Gospel, trans. E. H. Gifford (1903) [on-line]; accessed 14 April 2010; available from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/eusebius_pe_01_book1.htm; Internet. Eusebius used many of the earlier arguments of Apologists like Justin Martyr, Tatian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen.

²⁷Richard J. Plantinga, *Christianity and Plurality: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999), 30.

philosophical concepts within Greco-Roman culture, but fulfillment theology takes another step. It proposes that God has left traces of himself *and* his salvific plan in other religious systems: “[Religious traditions] have some insight into God, truth, spiritual riches but only partly rather than wholly. Hence, Christ fulfills them and brings them to perfection.”²⁸ In the same way that Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets of Israel, he fulfilled the philosophy of Greece and, by logical inference, other religious traditions.²⁹

Fulfillment theology as a concept reemerged in the modern world primarily as a result of liberal German theology worked out in the Hindu context. J. N. Farquhar’s work, *The Crown of Hinduism*, had been a standard textbook for missionaries in India. It concluded that Christ was the fulfillment of the very best of Hindu philosophy and religious affection:

We have already seen how Christ provides the fulfillment of each of the highest aspirations and aims of Hinduism Every true motive which in Hinduism has found expression in unclean, debasing, or unworthy practices finds in Him fullest exercise in work for the downtrodden, the ignorant, the sick and the sinful. In Him is focused every ray of light that shines in Hinduism. He is the crown of the faith of India.³⁰

Commission IV of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference offers a telling snapshot of the influence of fulfillment theology among missionaries around the world as the theology emerged. With one notable exception, the dominant motif of the

²⁸Mariasusai Dhavamony, *Christian Theology of Religions: A Systematic Reflection on the Christian Understanding of World Religions*, 2nd ed., Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity, vol. 109 (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 63.

²⁹Interestingly, no distinction is made between the Greek philosophy and Greek religious tradition. “In their attempt to demonstrate the open-mindedness of the early church toward other religions, [proponents of fulfillment] often refer to sections of the work dealing with philosophy. These insights are then applied, without due qualification, to contemporary religions” (Adam Sparks, “Was Justin Martyr a Proto-Inclusivist?” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 43 [2008]: 504).

³⁰J. N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), 457-58.

India responses in Edinburgh was that of fulfillment.³¹ Working under the fulfillment model, the missionary task was,

in a sympathetic spirit of humble enquiry to identify such “points of contact” in non-Christian religions and then use them to draw adherents of other faiths towards the full revelation of truth found in the Christ who was the perfect manifestation of the fatherhood of God.³²

Fulfillment theology, as articulated by the missionaries to Hindu India, was envisioned not to supplant Hinduism but rather to “transfigure” the non-Christian religion: “If all the great religious instincts, which have created the other faiths, find ultimate satisfaction in Christianity, then Christianity stands in a very definite relation to every other religion. It is the fulfilment and crown of each.”³³ Fulfillment theology, as presented by the missionaries to India, was almost entirely dependent on the theory of the evolution of religion viewed through the paradigm of the Cosmic Christ seen in natural revelation.³⁴ Furthermore, behind fulfillment theology is what Dhavamony describes as Logos Christology: “The whole of humanity partakes in the Logos through creation; the

³¹For example, Eric J. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil: The Contribution of J. N. Farquhar to Protestant Missionary Thought in India before 1914* (Uppsala: Gleerup, 1965) 278-82; Kenneth Cracknell, *Justice, Courtesy and Love: Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions, 1846-1914* (London: Epton Press, 1995); and Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions, ed. Brian Stanley and R. E. Frykenberg (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

³²Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 212. The “sympathetic spirit of humble enquiry” here is an allusion to an extremely high degree of respect, tolerance, and admiration of every good element found within the religious tradition in question. It forms the foundation of the WCC’s model of dialogue, and is a central element of Insider strategy.

³³J. N. Farquhar, “Commission IV replies, 154” 13-14, quoted in Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 219.

³⁴See F. Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion: Four Lectures Delivered at the Royal Institution in February and May, 1870* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1899) [on-line]; accessed 14 April 2010; available from http://books.google.com/books?id=6xXmUJzW0CEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Introduction+To+The+Science+Of+Religion&hl=en&ei=m8MRTOePMYKdlgeq_-TRBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false;

Cosmic Christ informs all persons and God is at work in their religions and brings them to perfection through the Logos who is Christ.”³⁵ The early form of fulfillment theology, therefore, was the combination of these two ideas. In other words, if all religious phenomena can be placed on a scale of progression of lower to higher forms of religion, and if the Cosmic Christ can be said to be at work in all forms of religion then Christianity is the fulfillment of all the best religious expressions around the world. It is, in this sense, that Christ is the “crown” of Hinduism.

Fulfillment theology was not a position shared by contributors to Commission IV from other fields of missionary labor. Significantly, the section of the report on Islam acknowledges the difficulty of applying fulfillment theology to the Islamic religion:

Islam presents a difficulty offered by no other religion. It cannot be regarded as anticipation, however defective, of the Christian gospel, a promise to which Christ gives fulfilment. It is not only later in point of time, but it has also borrowed from Christianity as well as from Judaism, degrading what it has borrowed, and it claims the right in virtue of its superiority to supersede and supplant Christianity.³⁶

The report goes on to quote a portion of Temple Gairdner’s *The Reproach of Islam*:

How can that which denies the whole essential and particular content of His message be said to prepare for Him, or to be a half-way house to His Kingdom? For that is what Islam does. Other religions know nothing of Christianity; one and all they came before it and speak of it neither good nor evil. But the whole theory of Islam is that it, the latest sent of all religions, does not so much *abrogate* Christianity with its Book, as specifically and categorically deny both as wilful corruption and lies. Point by point, each truth of Christianity, steeped through and through with the tenderness of the love of God, is negated with abhorrence by Islam. . . . Each of these truths is a blasphemy in the eyes of every Moslem, a lie which Islam came expressly to blast, taught by a Book which the Koran came expressly to

Internet.

³⁵Dhavamony, *Christian Theology of Religions*, 64-65.

³⁶World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report of Commission IV: The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions* (London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 140.

replace.³⁷

Gairdner's questionnaire response is even more blunt, asserting that the idea of Christ fulfilling Islam was "so transparently absurd [when applied] towards a faith which explicitly says it came to *supersede* the *original* revelation of Jesus and to *destroy* the *current* religion of Jesus."³⁸

Ultimately, because respondents from places like the Muslim world and Japan saw far more points of discontinuity than continuity, the 1910 report offered a mediating position. Instead of adhering to a fulfillment theology in the report, it recommended that missionaries seek "points of contact" with non-Christian religions in an effort to lead adherents further up the evolutionary scale towards Christianity.

The fulfillment theology of liberal missionaries like J. N. Farquhar differ in several very important respects from Insider proponents like Travis and Higgins. First, Insider proponents are evangelical in their use of the Word of God as the governing authority for faith and practice. The early proponents of fulfillment theology were articulating a type of inclusivism.³⁹ Second, Webber's evolutionary theory of religion plays no part in Insider methodology. Third, Insider proponents have made a significant modification from the early proponents of fulfillment theology. While Farquhar viewed "Christianity" as the goal of missionary labor, Insider proponents adamantly rejected the necessity of conversion into a religions system. Instead, Insider proponents replaced the

³⁷Temple Gairdner, *The Reproach of Islam* (London: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1909), 311-12.

³⁸Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 228.

³⁹See Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment: A History and Study of Fulfilment Theology in Modern British Thought in the Indian Context* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 27-29.

goal of fulfillment with the person of Jesus Christ so that the goal of missionary labors is to implant within a culture respect, love, and allegiance to Jesus.

Yet, the similarities between the fulfillment theology of Farquhar and Insider proponents goes beyond mere terminology. First, fulfillment theology has a unique view of the salvific ability of general revelation. Consequently, fulfillment theology expects to find what Commission IV calls “points of contact,” and what Insider proponents call “bridges,” or “redemptive analogies.” Moreover, it expects “redemptive analogies” to be fulfilled by Jesus in the same way he fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. Fulfillment theology looks for those elements within the culture *and* the religious system of the receptor that point to and find their crown in Jesus. First, this leads Insider advocates to take an extremely high view of the receptor culture, which is expressed by elevating the noblest aspects of the religious system and minimizing areas of obvious dissonance with the Christian message. Second, fulfillment theology is centered on the person of Christ and the Kingdom of God and tends to minimize the role of the community of faith, the church. The first will be expanded below, and the second will be treated in the next section.

General Revelation

Flowing out of Kraft’s view of the Bible as God’s divine casebook, general revelation is viewed as God’s communication to man designed to quicken faith in any who would give their allegiance to him. All revelation is designed by God to save those who commit themselves to him no matter the level or degree of knowledge they may have. Specific revelation is generally better to activate faith than general, but the level of knowledge involved in that activation of faith is irrelevant given that the activation of

faith in the Creator God within a human heart can happen with any degree of revelation.

As Kraft articulates,

If the message and method are the same today as they were in biblical times, we must ask the hard question concerning the necessity of the *knowledge* of Christ in the response of contemporary “pagans.” Can people who are chronologically A. D., but in terms of knowledge, B. C., or those who are indoctrinated with a wrong understanding of Christ, be saved by committing themselves to faith in God as Abraham and the rest of those who were chronologically B.C., did (Heb 11)? Could such persons be saved by “giving as much of themselves as they can give to as much of God as they can understand”? I personally believe they can and many have.⁴⁰

Revelation from God, without regard to either the quantity of revelation or the source, is potentially salvific to Kraft. For Kraft, the first goal of the missionary endeavor is to activate information already available in order to stimulate faith in the receptor. As previously mentioned, Kraft considers these new events in the stream of history. It is unclear whether the major proponents of Insider methodology—Rebecca Lewis, John Travis, and Kevin Higgins—share Kraft’s opinion of the salvific nature of all revelation. However, it is clear that Insider proponents adhere to a casebook view of the Bible and a belief that new religious movements can run parallel to, and not flow out of, the development of Judaism and then Christianity. Travis demonstrates a casebook view of parallel streams of revelation when he exclaims that God is doing a “new thing to reach these remaining sociocultural groups dominated by mega-faiths.”⁴¹

⁴⁰Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 198. Kraft does not believe he holds to universalism and adamantly protests against the position. Even though he believes that people can be saved without the information of the gospel, he does not believe that many actually are saved without it and the gospel message is often the stimulus people need to respond in allegiance to God. In his mind, the missionary motivation is unaffected because people will not ordinarily respond in faith with the information they now have. Further, the command of Christ to teach, baptize and disciple the nations still stands.

⁴¹John Travis and Anna Travis, “Appropriate Approaches in Muslim Contexts,” in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 414. See also John Travis, “‘God is Doing Something New’ Lausanne Global Conversation, responses to Joseph Cummings

The casebook view of the Bible and the resulting value put on general revelation combine to place a strong emphasis on finding and using what has variously been called points of contact, bridges, and redemptive analogies. Based on the phrase in Acts 14:17 that God “did not leave himself without witness,” some missiologists argue that the traditions and stories of a culture have significant potential for making the gospel understandable by fulfilling that which God has left to testify to himself. Don Richardson has popularized this idea in the concept of “redemptive analogies.” As a descriptive biblical case study, Don Richardson points to the example of the apostle John as an early communicator of the gospel message who attempted to ground the message within the cultural categories of the receptors:

With this vital juxtaposition of both Greek terms [in John 1]—Theos and Logos—in relation to Elohim and to Jesus Christ, Christianity presented itself as *fulfilling* rather than *destroying* something valid in Greek philosophy!

In fact, such terms and concepts were clearly regarded by Christian emissaries to the Greeks as ordained by God to prepare the Greek mind for the gospel! They found these fortuitous Greek philosophical terms to be just as valid as Old Testament messianic metaphors such as “Lamb of God” and “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” And they used *both sets of terminology with equal freedom* to set the Person of Jesus Christ within the context of both Jewish and Greek culture, respectively.⁴²

Elsewhere, Richardson argues strongly for “concept fulfillment”:

“When conversion is accompanied by concept fulfillment, the individuals redeemed become aware of the spiritual meaning dormant within their own culture. Conversion

‘Muslim Followers of Jesus?’ [on-line]; accessed 21 April 2010; available from <http://www.lausanne.org/global-conversation/god-is-doing-something-new.html>; Internet. Travis’s quotation of Isa 43:19 demonstrates his presupposition of the Bible as a case study. Travis envisions a parallel movement to Christ just like the “new thing” of Pentecost.

⁴²Don Richardson, *Eternity in Their Hearts*, rev. ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984), 25.

does not deny their cultural background, leaving them disoriented.”⁴³ Insider methodology takes Richardson’s concept fulfillment in a much wider sense, seeing the entire religious system as a *praeparatio evangelica*.

Whereas missionaries to low-religious cultures generally have the choice to find bridges for the gospel rooted outside of the religious tradition, missionaries to high-religious cultures are generally left without that choice. Insider methodology attempts to find bridges for the gospel within the actual religious system. The religious system is equated with general revelation and not as a system that suppresses the truth of God’s way of salvation through Christ. It is therefore considered a valid starting point for the gospel. The following section will trace the development of this argument in Insider literature.

Fulfillment Theology in Insider Literature

As was presented in the chapter 2, Kraft proposed the idea of starting a faith *renewal* movement *within* Islam based upon a paralleling of Judaism with Islam.⁴⁴ Using the language of *Christianity in Culture*, Kraft suggested that we aim for new revelatory events in the stream of history. These events (i.e., Insider Movements) are parallel to the revelatory events that brought the children of Israel to the knowledge of the truth. At times, fulfillment theology as used by Insider proponents goes even further and views the religious traditions on par with the revelation of the Old Testament. Just as Paul

⁴³Don Richardson, “Concept Fulfillment,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, rev. ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992), C60.

⁴⁴Charles Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors Among Muslims,” in *Media In Islamic Culture* (Wheaton IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974), 137-44.

describes the Law as a schoolmaster to bring us to faith (Gal 3:24), the religious traditions are also viewed as schoolmasters to bring those of their culture to faith in Christ.

As has been demonstrated, fulfillment theology takes other religions as a starting point *in the same or similar way* that Jesus took the revelation of the Old Testament as his starting point for his incarnational ministry. The biblical view of Jesus as the fulfillment and completion of Judaism is taken as a precedent for viewing Jesus as the fulfillment of other religions. In fulfillment theology, the theological and contextual starting point is in the receiving culture. Other religions are a source of truth that the body of new believers from that system may incorporate into church and personal devotional life.⁴⁵ The contextual/theological starting point is the religious tradition of the culture, and the texts most often used to support this conclusion are Matthew 5:17, Acts 17:22-31, and 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.⁴⁶ The following syllogism is an example of how these texts are brought together to give support to the view that other religions are sources of truth:

- a. Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, the truth source for the Jews.
- b. Paul used Greek religion as a bridge and source of truth in the same way Jesus used

⁴⁵Duane Miller has coined the phrase “Reappropriation” for Insider believers who have reinterpreted Quranic texts to validate the truth of the gospel. See Duane Alexander Miller, “Reappropriation: An Accommodationist Hermeneutic of Islamic Christianity,” *St. Francis* 5, no. 3 (2009): 3-36.

⁴⁶First Corinthians 9:19-22: “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

the Law and Prophets.

c. Therefore, Jesus also fulfills the truth found in other religious systems.⁴⁷

In order for the above syllogism to be true, Insider proponents need to demonstrate textually that proposition b. is correct, namely, that Paul first quoted an explicitly Greek religious source and, second, he built upon that truth in the same way Jesus built upon the Law and the Prophets.

The difficulty of addressing the argument explicitly in Insider/C5 literature is that it is often implied within the greater Insider argument. That is, fulfillment of Islam or Hinduism is often an unstated presupposition that intricate arguments are built upon.⁴⁸ For example, Jameson and Scalevich observe, “It would be more accurate to say that Paul and his Jewish background believing friends saw themselves as the only proper expression of Judaism. Similarly, twentieth-century Muslims are forging an identity for themselves within Islam.”⁴⁹ Muslims equate Paul’s understanding of Christian Jews within Judaism with MBBs who remain within Islam. The accuracy of their proposal is assumed but not defended.

The result of Insider proponent’s use of fulfillment theology is to make existing religious revelation—the Quran or the Vedas and other Hindu tradition—the contextual and theological starting point for truth. Furthermore, the religious forms

⁴⁷At times, a second conclusion is drawn using 1 Cor 9, namely, that it is also valid to identify with that religions system and use its truth in order to “save some.”

⁴⁸This presupposition is seen in the titles “Messianic Muslims” and “Krista Bhakti.” See John Travis, “Messianic Muslim Followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 53-59; and Raghav Krishna, “From ‘Krishna Bhakti’ to ‘Christianity’ to ‘Krista Bhakti,’” *IJFM* 24 (2007):173-84.

⁴⁹Richard Jameson and Nick Scalevich, “First Century Jews and Twentieth-Century Muslims,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 34.

springing from those revelations are consequently viewed as precursors and the basis of a completed Christian-Hindu or Christian-Muslim synthesis. So, Jameson and Scalevich further demonstrate the unstated assumption that the Quran is a source of truth similar to that of the Old Testament by making parallels between the Christocentric lens the Apostles used to “re-interpret the Old Testament” and the methods MBBs use to re-interpret the Quran in evangelistic opportunities.⁵⁰ *The New Creation Book For Muslims* is more explicit in its rationale for using the Quran:

Those who, for whatever reason, object to the frequent quotations from the Qur’an in this book should remember that Paul quotes “one of their prophets” verbatim in order to win the citizens of Crete when what “one of their prophets” said lines up with the Word. See Titus 1:12-13. This book follows the rather unorthodox route of Pauline methodology.⁵¹

The unstated assumption of the *New Creation Book for Muslims*, at least functionally, is that the Quran is not just a bridge to the gospel but a foundation for it.⁵²

However, even when Insider advocates explicitly articulate fulfillment as an

⁵⁰“Looking at the Qur’an through the lens of the *Injil* . . . prompted Rashid to begin reading the *Injil* until he too trusted Christ as his sacrifice.” Jameson and Scalevich, “First Century Jews and Twentieth-Century Muslims,” 36-37.

⁵¹Phil Goble and Salim Munayer, *New Creation Book For Muslims* (Pasadena, CA: Mandate, 1989), 10 [on-line]; accessed 15 February 2008; available from <http://www.afii.org/ncmreprt.htm>; Internet. Titus 1:12-13 reads, “One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said ‘Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they be sound in the faith.” In actuality, Paul is *not* saying what Goble and Munayer claim he is saying. In particular, Paul is not trying to “win” the Cretans in Titus 1; rather, Paul is instructing Titus on how to treat believers within the faith community who continue to be conformed to their old way of life. He simply uses the quote from Epimenides the Cretan to illustrate a truth found in general revelation, namely, that a particular people are fallen in a particular way. Paul’s method of using non-biblical sources will be examined below.

⁵²It should be said that the danger of using the Quran or the Vedas is demonstrated in the statistics Parshall quotes from the highly secretive case study of the religious movement in Bangladesh, namely, that 96 percent of the leaders in the Islampur case study affirm four heavenly books, and that 66 percent of them proclaim that the Quran is the greatest of the four books. See Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism*, 70. As noted in chapter 1 n. 26, Higgins refers to this case study and the unfavorable light Parshall gives to it. He defends the orthodoxy of these leaders by making the distinction between the cognitive and faith dimensions of belief in Christ, which will be treated in the next chapter.

aspect of Insider methodology, it is not a conclusion grounded by the text. For instance, Williams proposes a “reproducible paradigm” of fulfillment based on Jesus’ use of the Old Testament Scriptures on the Emmaus road.

[Jesus] was an insider who packaged his theological revolution as an insider who “fulfills” rather than “abolishes.” (Matthew 5:17) It was not something “new and foreign” to them as Paul’s message was to the Athenians. The ancient Jewish Scriptures provided the intellectual and spiritual bridge necessary for Jews to explore the new waters of Christianity.⁵³

Williams only asserts that the model Jesus used on the road to Emmaus is reproducible based on the assumption that the “Jewish scriptures provided the intellectual and spiritual bridge necessary for Jews to explore the new waters of Christianity.”⁵⁴

Likewise, Woodberry does not ground his conclusions in the text of Scripture. He attempts to assert that the Quranic law is fulfilled by Jesus simply because it is similar to the Mosaic Law:

Therefore, although there are some differences, much of Islamic law is similar to Mosaic Law, and can be internalized and interpreted as fulfilled in Christ Therefore, a case may be made for Muslims who follow Jesus to continue to identify with their Muslim community and participate, to the extent their

⁵³Brad Williams, “The Emmaus-Medina Intertextual Connection: Contextualization the Presentation of God’s Word,” *IJFM* 23 (2006): 68.

⁵⁴*Ibid.* There are a number of significant problems with Williams’s argument. First, he is anachronistic in his reading of the text, assuming that the current conflict between the two established religious traditions of today—Christianity and Islam—took place on the Emmaus Road between Christianity and Judaism. He has created a false comparison. For example, he writes, “Instead of juxtaposing ‘Christianity to Judaism’ and challenging others to ‘cross over,’ Jesus relates the two theological systems in order to provide the type of bridge that would facilitate passage from one to another” (68). Two theological systems did not exist immediately after the resurrection. Therefore, there was nothing for Jesus to juxtapose except clarifying that the entire intent of the Old Testament Scriptures was to point to the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the plan of God for the salvation of the world. Second, he does not take into account the intrinsic and fundamental role the Old Testament plays in the gospel message. The Old Testament motifs and prophecies are an integral part of the gospel, and the worldview of the Old Testament is what makes the gospel both necessary and understandable. The Old Testament is *part* of the gospel, not a *bridge* for the gospel!

consciences allow, in its religious observance.⁵⁵

Briefly, as Waterman points out, the similarity of two things does not mean that they are the same and can therefore be treated in the same way.⁵⁶ Not only are the differences between the two legal systems of the Mosaic and Quranic Law significant where they differ, Woodberry simply assumes it is accurate to speak of Jesus “fulfilling” a religious system not rooted in the themes of the Old Testament. Much of the literature defending an Insider strategy makes this same assumption without attempting to defend it.

Higgins is one of the few advocates of the Insider approach who offers a biblical argument for fulfillment from the Bible, specifically from Acts 17.

The true God has designed the cultures, seasons, and locations of the nations to further the process by which all peoples might seek after and actually find him. Based on this reading of Paul’s message to the Athenians, it is biblical to speak of the gospel as a fulfillment of the “seeking, feeling, and finding” process in every culture and religion. This is true not only in the Jewish religions (where we can point to direct Old Testament prophecies and “types” that are fulfilled in Christ) but also in pagan religious cultures such as that found in Athens. Thus, Insider Movements can be said to relate to their religious context from this perspective of fulfillment, as well as from the perspective that the gospel will correct and change the culture.⁵⁷

Higgins’s work will be the primary reference in the following section because he presents the most well reasoned and biblically grounded of the fulfillment arguments.

In his discussion of Acts 17, Higgins demonstrates that, to the degree that points of contact and bridges for the gospel exist, the text indicates that some socioreligious elements of culture serve as a *preparation* for the gospel. For example, he

⁵⁵Dudley J. Woodberry, “To the Muslim I Became a Muslim?” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 24.

⁵⁶D. L. Waterman, “Do the Roots Affect the Fruits,” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 60.

⁵⁷Kevin Higgins, “The Key to Insider Movements: The ‘Devoted’s’ of Acts,” *IJFM* 21 (2004):

points out Paul's assumption that the Athenians have been worshipping the true God without knowing it, and that the altar to the unknown god has prepared the Athenians for Paul's message. However, his argument is somewhat confusing. Higgins seems to be saying that fulfillment applies only to the process of people seeking after the true God: "[Paul] does not take that [one instance of preparation] to mean that everything in their religion and culture is *preparation* that can be fulfilled. Some things will need to be corrected or discarded, polytheism being an obvious example."⁵⁸ However, he clearly equates the religious traditions of the pagan Greeks with the religious traditions of the Jews: "This is true not only in the Jewish religions but also in pagan religious cultures such as that found in Athens."⁵⁹ While Higgins footnotes that statement to clarify he is not suggesting that the religious tradition of the receiving culture replace the Old Testament, he does believe that "Paul uses the pagan culture and religion of the Athenians *in the same way* he uses the Old Testament among the Jews and Gentile God-fearers."⁶⁰ That is, Higgins believes that Paul views Jesus as fulfilling the process of God-seeking in every culture *in the same way* that Jesus fulfilled the motifs and prophecies of the Old Testament.

As mentioned earlier, in order for Higgins and other Insider proponents' assertions about fulfillment in Acts 17 to parallel what is happening in Insider Movements, they need to show that Paul quoted an explicitly religious source and built upon that truth in the same way that Jesus built upon the Law and the Prophets. Higgins

⁵⁸Ibid., 161.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., 165, emphasis mine.

does not demonstrate those two things to be true, and, in fact, biblical scholarship points to the exact opposite conclusion.

Fulfillment and General Revelation in Acts 17:22-31

John Polhill asserts that “no text in Acts has received more scholarly attention than the ten verses of Paul’s speech before the Areopagus.”⁶¹ The burning question presented by this text pertaining to the Insider paradigm for evangelism is the source of Paul’s argument. Did Paul pull his sources primarily from the hellenistic world or from the Old Testament? It is helpful to quote the text in its entirety:

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “In him we live and move and have our being;” as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed his offspring.” Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

When Paul entered into the Areopagus, he was already on the defensive. The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers had found him in the marketplace reasoning with any who would hear him. Since the marketplace in Athens was historically a place where

⁶¹John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary vol. 26. (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 369.

ideas were exchanged, it was a natural place for Paul to encounter the polytheistic and pantheistic Greeks.⁶² By calling Paul a “babbler”—literally a “seed-picker”—they were insinuating that he was an inferior speaker who pilfered ideas from others and presented them amalgamated together as his own.⁶³ Though faced with an audience filled with scoffers, Paul begins boldly. The difficulty of Paul’s task to communicate the gospel was enormous.

First, he was faced with at least two philosophical schools. The Epicureans and the Stoics were both highly popular schools of philosophy that were centered in Athens. Much the same way that Islam and Hinduism is fused into every element of life, philosophy, in many respects, served a similar function for the Hellenist. Philosophical schools generally provided the worldview framework through which the Athenians and other Hellenists answered questions related to creation, purpose of life, ethics, and fate.

The Epicureans followed the philosophical teachings of Epicurus and were characterized by a materialism that denied the eternity of the soul, and an ethical system centered on pleasure. While later Epicurean hedonism was characterized by libertarianism in every element of life, pleasure, as conceived by Epicurus, was related more closely with the worry-free life, the “absence of disturbances.”⁶⁴ The Epicurean

⁶²Commentators point to a possible parallel being drawn by Luke between Paul and Socrates, who made himself available to the public in the marketplace of Athens. Whether this is true, since the marketplace was the urban hub of life in the ancient world, it was an ideal place for Paul to engage the focus of his ministry: the Gentile world. See C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary: The Acts of the Apostles* The International Critical Commentary, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 828-29; and David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 489.

⁶³Barrett, *Acts*, 830.

⁶⁴N. Clayton Croy, “Epicureanism” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [CD-ROM] (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

worldview radically differed from the New Testament worldview on a number of central issues:

Resurrection of the body had no place in Epicurean philosophy; neither did divine providence or judgment. Monotheism was never explicitly affirmed, and the Christian notion of divine incarnation would have violated Epicurus's belief in the gods' perfect blessedness.⁶⁵

Stoicism, by contrast, was altogether monistic and pantheistic. God, or *logos*, was an activating force that permeated the entirety of creation and that acted upon passive matter. "Since he is present in the whole universe and gives everything in it the character it has, God is in a sense identical with the universe. This God as immanent ordering principle is thus very different from a transcendent Creator, outside and distinct from the world."⁶⁶ Stoicism was also popular in Paul's native region, and several Stoic teachers lived in Paul's hometown of Tarsus.⁶⁷

Second, this diversity of worldview-shaping philosophical ideas was within a context of mass polytheism. It is in that overtly *religious* commonality that Paul makes his starting point for evangelism. Paul commends the Athenians on their religiosity and then references an altar "to the unknown God" (v. 23). Paul is obviously seeking points of contact with his audience in this discourse. He attempts to find common ground, and then logically builds an argument to Christ upon assertions grounded in his Old

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶J. C. Thom, "Stoicism." in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [CD-ROM] (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

⁶⁷Terence Paige, "Philosophy," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne; Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid [CD-ROM] (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998).

Testament monotheistic and covenantal worldview.⁶⁸ However, his starting point within the shared religious experience of the audience is their confessed ignorance of the divine and not their canon of religious material. While Paul eventually references Greek religious material, it is not his starting point.

Paul's next logical step was to move from the unknown to the created order. Verses 24 and 25 both contain allusions to Old Testament material and quotes from Greek religious sources. The Old Testament material provides the framework—the creator God—yet that framework is communicated in language seemingly designed to mimic popular Greek philosophical concepts.⁶⁹ The creator God being Lord over his creation would have resonated with the Stoic concept of creation, though Paul's meaning differed widely from the Stoic concept of matter emanating in waves from God.

While Paul starts his discourse by utilizing points-of-contact, verse 26 introduces the first element of the biblical message that would have offended the Athenians. The biblical idea that all the nations of the world can be traced back to one man challenged Athenian ethnocentrism. The Greeks divided the world into two classes: the racially superior Greeks and the inferior Barbarians.⁷⁰ Furthermore, verse 26 marks

⁶⁸Other scholars have attempted to demonstrate that the background behind Paul's speech was shaped by philosophy rather than the Old Testament. See, for instance, Martin Dibelius, "Paul on the Areopagus," in *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (London, SCM, 1956), 28-35. However, if the background of the speech is philosophical, then the ending of Paul's discourse seems a pure afterthought that does not fit with the entire speech. Polhill's explanation therefore is the most convincing. The weight of evidence leads one to the conclusion that the background of the speech is overwhelmingly rooted in the Old Testament. Polhill, *Acts*, 369-70 n. 75.

⁶⁹The Old Testament framework of the Creator God stems from verses such as Gen 1:1, Exod 20:11, Ps 50:7-15, and Isa 42:5.

⁷⁰The Greek word "barbarous" was onomatopoeitic and used to represent the incomprehensible babbling of non-Greek speakers. It was a pejorative term used especially by the Athenians. Barbarians were stereotyped as stupid, cruel, cowardly, and unable to speak or reason properly, as if they were actually

Paul's departure from general revelation to what has been specifically revealed in the Old Testament: "And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth" (v.26a). While Paul alludes to the creation account in Genesis 1-2, he refrains from making specific reference to the text. At this initial point, Paul is much more concerned to communicate the biblical concepts in categories understandable to his audience than to demonstrate the authority for his propositions. His general argument in verses 26-27 is to assert that the process of seeking after God is a natural, God-given, yet uncertain endeavor. Nevertheless, Paul indicates that God has given humanity a two-fold purpose: to dwell in the earth and to seek after him.

Interestingly, while Paul alludes to Genesis as the ground for God's two-fold purpose, he actually illustrates and supports his argument with two quotes from Stoic philosophy.⁷¹ Bruce points out that Zeus is not simply the leader of the Greek pantheon in these verses but "the supreme being of Greek and especially Stoic, philosophy."⁷²

mentally impaired. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 496; and Bock, *Acts*, 566.

⁷¹The first poem is attributed to Epmenides the Cretan, and is reproduced in the following way by the commentator Isho'dad in the ninth century, who probably received it from Theodore of Mopseustia:

They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one—
The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts idle bellies!—
But thou are not dead; thou livest and abidest for ever,
For in thee we live and move and have our being.

The second poem quotes the opening verses from the Stoic Aratus's *Phainomena*, a work that described the constellations.

Let us begin with Zeus. Never, O men, let us leave him
unmentioned. All the ways are full of Zeus,
And all the market-places of human beings. The sea is full
of him; so are the arbors. In every way we have all to do with Zeus,
for we are truly his offspring.

Aratus was also from Cilicia, which may explain Paul's familiarity with his work. The Stoic pantheism in Aratus' poem is clear. See Bruce, *Acts*, 338-39, and nn. 75-76. Polhill argues that the authorship of Epmenides is unlikely and asserts instead that the quote is a traditional Greek triadic formula. Polhill, *Acts*, 375. Whatever the case, the quote was certainly recognized by the audience.

⁷²Bruce, *Acts*, 339.

Furthermore, Bruce gives three possibilities behind Paul's quotation of Greek religious and philosophical sources. First, Paul could be equating the God of the Old Testament with the Greek concept of Zeus. Second, Paul could be simply extracting the Greek phrases out of their context and giving them new meanings. Third, Paul could be demonstrating that the Greeks have actually apprehended true knowledge of God as a result of the "seeking" process, and he is attempting to clarify what they have dimly perceived.⁷³

Paul is actually doing something between option two and three. The Stoic poetry Paul quotes was intended to emphasize the pantheistic view of God and the subsequent divinity within every human heart, a notion entirely incompatible with the biblical worldview. Yet the Greek text does recognize "the shared relationship all people have to God," that is, the way in which humanity longs for God and gropes after him.⁷⁴ Thus, Paul does illustrate his biblical argument with truth derived from Greek philosophy, yet subtly redefines the intended meaning of those Greek texts by the overarching point of his argument. Paul here communicates the truth about the personal and relational creator God and not the impersonal *logos* of Stoicism.

In verse 29, Paul begins to address his burning concern: the idol worship of the Athenians (v. 16). He asserts that it is inconceivable that the divine being could be represented by anything made by human hands. This idea, while deeply rooted in the Old Testament, was not foreign to the Greeks. Paul then carefully approaches the main point of his address by deliberately using the phrase, "divine being," to relate back to the

⁷³Ibid.

“unknown God” of verse 23. This approach sets him up for the next phrase, “having overlooked the times of ignorance” Everything prior to verse 30 is a carefully constructed argument that builds upon points of contact yet emphasizes the crucial differences between the Greek worldview and the biblical message. Starting at verse 30, Paul introduces the heart of the matter and presents material central to the Christian message: repentance, the Day of Judgment, and the resurrection.

The discourse to the Areopagites ended rather abruptly. It is possible that Paul was either interrupted at this point of his address, or was simply attempting to find people who were interested to hear more of his message. Whatever the case, the question at hand is whether Paul’s use of the Greek sources corresponds to Jesus fulfilling the Law in communicating the gospel message. From Acts 17, we can see that Paul did not start with either religious or philosophical texts, but from general revelation as interpreted through an Old Testament worldview. In particular, we see Paul making an argument for a particular view of the creator God, and carefully building that view out of points of contact in order to combat the greatest cultural sin, namely, the worship of idols. Paul is careful to make his concepts understandable to his Greek audience, and, while he alludes to biblical concepts, he does not cite any biblical sources. The Greek poets are used to illustrate a point Paul was trying to make about the creator God and man’s purpose to seek him. That view of the divine being was used then as the ground to condemn idolatry. The Greek poets are used primarily by Paul to underscore the relationship all mankind has to God, and, in the process, Paul modifies the pantheistic view of God into

⁷⁴Bock, *Acts*, 568.

the biblical view of a personal and relational God. However, the re-definition of the Greek concept of God is simply an implication of Paul's use of the Greek poets; his total argument nowhere depends on that redefinition in order to support the subsequent argument. Paul goes on to condemn idolatry and to introduce the core elements of the gospel message.

It is important to emphasize that Paul's starting point was within a frame of reference understandable to his audience. The "unknown god" was a familiar term with little religious meaning within Greek culture. Paul did not start with the popular conception of Zeus or of the Greek pantheon and transform those ideas into a preparation of the gospel message that is fulfilled by Christ. Even though the Greek poems Paul cited were addressed to Zeus, the original works were composed by philosophers who used the name of Zeus to represent their re-conception of deity within the Greek philosophical system.

Insider proponents are suggesting that missionaries do the exact opposite of Paul in this text, namely, start within the highly developed religious system already in place and redefine that system to make it a preparation for the gospel. That re-definition is then the ground upon which they build assertions about God, the Bible, Jesus, the Judgment Day, and eternal life.⁷⁵

It is obvious, at this point, that proposition b. from the syllogism above—Paul used Greek religion as a bridge and source of truth in the same way Jesus used the Law and Prophets—utterly fails. Again, in order for proposition 'b' to be true, it must be

⁷⁵For instance, recall from chapter 2 how Woodberry describes the work of the evangelists in "Common Pillars" and contrast his method with Gairdner's response to fulfillment theology applied to

shown that Paul (1) quoted an explicitly religious source and (2) built upon that truth in the same way Jesus built upon the Law and the Prophets. Paul *did* quote an explicitly religious source, though the poem Paul used was not nearly as central to the Greek religious system as the Bible, the Quran, or the Vedas are in their respective high-religious cultures.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the Greek sources were commonplace and did present a popular Greek belief about the nature of God. However, Paul absolutely did not build upon those sources as a foundation for his argument, only for the purpose of illustrations. Thus, he did not use the Greek poets *in the same way* that Jesus used the Law.

In fact, the Bible has no category for fulfillment that is outside of the Law and the Prophets. No religious system can be fulfilled by Christ in the same way he fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. It is not entirely clear what Higgins means by saying that the “seeking, feeling and finding” process in other religious systems are fulfilled by Christ. Whatever he means, it is not true that the religious practices and cognitive categories of other religions are fulfilled by Christ without first being significantly transformed. Throughout Insider literature, Paul’s strategy in Acts 17 and the concept of fulfillment is continually misunderstood and misapplied. While Insider proponents prefer a “wider” interpretation of fulfillment, the Bible presents a narrow view.

A Narrow View of Fulfillment

The words of Jesus recorded in the Sermon on the Mount play a specific role within the overall purpose of the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew was written to a

Islam.

⁷⁶Technically, he quoted a work related to the constellations, though it undeniably has religious connotations.

community of Jewish believers, and its overall purpose was to convince the Jewish community of the gospel.⁷⁷ One of the main devices Matthew uses in his argument throughout his gospel account is the category of fulfillment. That is, Matthew makes careful arguments concerning Jesus as Messiah by citing the Law and the Prophets.

For example, Matthew begins his gospel by tracing the genealogy of Jesus through David to Abraham in order to demonstrate that the two unchanging covenants—Genesis 17 and 2 Samuel 7—were fulfilled in Jesus. Whenever Matthew quotes from the Old Testament, he demonstrates how Jesus fulfills all of its expectations and prophecies (e.g., Matt 1:22; 2:17; 4:14; 5:5).⁷⁸ It is within that relationship between Old Testament motifs and prophecies that Jesus speaks of fulfillment:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5: 17-20)

The ministry of Jesus is indelibly rooted in the testimony of the Old Testament.

The salvation offered by Jesus actually makes no sense if it is not grounded in the

⁷⁷“The writer seems concerned throughout to show that Christianity is the true continuation of the Old Testament—the true Judaism, if we may put it that way” (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 2).

⁷⁸ Matthew uses the category of fulfillment to describe the life and ministry of Jesus over 17 times throughout his gospel. R. T. France argues that the central theme of the entire gospel of Matthew is that of fulfillment. In addition to the “fulfillment-formula quotations,” France lists 44 direct quotations from the Old Testament and an additional 262 allusions and verbal parallels. “It is thus for Matthew not only the explicitly predictive portions of the OT that can be seen to be ‘fulfilled’ in Jesus, but also its historical characters, its narratives, and its cultic patterns, even the law itself.” (R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 10-11).

revelation of the Law and the Prophets, and, specifically, in the covenants God made with the people of Israel. In this passage, Jesus is making two things clear to his audience. First, his overall teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is that there is a new community of the people of God, namely, those who follow Jesus as Messiah. Second, there is continuity between the new community and the old Israel and its institutions, especially in how God's people were to live in obedience to Him.⁷⁹ Jesus was presenting a model of obedience that transcended the Old Testament Law, yet which is built upon the foundation that the Old Testament provides.

As already mentioned at the beginning of this section, fulfillment was the main message Paul preached among the Diaspora Jews in Antioch in Acts 13. The promises of God to Abraham and David guide Paul to describe the salvation of the Gentiles as having been “grafted” onto the already existing olive tree of God's covenant people (Rom 11:17-24). The entire New Testament uses fulfillment in an extremely narrow sense and presupposes the entire weight of the testimony of the Old Testament to demonstrate the veracity of Jesus' claims. Ultimately, this is why Paul's speech in Athens was deeply rooted in Old Testament concepts, though it was expressed in categories understandable by his Greek audience.

Fulfillment theology, both the version articulated at the turn of the century and the current version presented by Insider proponents, takes fulfillment in a much wider sense. Where Paul says that “the law was our guardian [i.e., tutor] until Christ came” (Gal 3:24), a wide view of fulfillment insists that all religious traditions serve as a

⁷⁹France, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 178.

guardian or tutor until Christ fulfills those systems.⁸⁰ The biblical rationale given for taking fulfillment in a wider sense stems from the possible gnostic flavor of John, especially his use of *logos* within the first few verses of his gospel. A historical rationale is also given based on the Church Apologists and the Church Father's use of philosophy as a bridge to make Christ understandable to the wider Hellenistic culture.

As for the biblical rationale, John's gospel is now widely recognized as being overwhelmingly Jewish in tone, phrasing, and background.⁸¹ A great deal of academic discussion has taken place over the exact background of John's use of *logos*. Currently, evangelical scholars seem to generally agree that John was likely aware of the significance of the Greek term, but that his use of the term is innovative for both hellenistic and Jewish communities.⁸² Certainly, John built upon the Old Testament category of *logos* in order to communicate the divinity of Jesus as an introductory statement for his Gospel. "The deeds and words of Jesus are the deeds and words of

⁸⁰Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 19.

⁸¹D. A. Carson relates how the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the subsequent study of the Qumran community has revealed "countless parallels to the language and thought of the Fourth Gospel. . . . What they do show, however, is that it is altogether unnecessary to account for John's language, for his linguistic dualisms (light/Dark, from above/from below, *etc.*), even for some of his choice expressions (e.g. 'Spirit of truth,' 'the light of life,' 'the sons of light,' 'doing the truth,' 'the works of God') by appealing to a late *Hellenistic* environment." D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 34.

⁸²"When John used the term *logos*, then, he used a term that would be widely recognized among the Greeks John could have scarcely have used the Greek term without arousing in the minds of those who used the Greek language thoughts of something supremely great in the universe" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 4 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 103.) Similarly, Andreas J. Köstenberger asserts that John appears to have used the term "at least partly in order to contextualize the gospel message among his Hellenistic audience." (Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 4 [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 26-27). Carson, however, disagrees that John had any double meaning in mind. See Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 114-17. Nevertheless, evangelical scholars generally agree that out of the three proposed backgrounds for *logos*— Greek Philosophy (the Stoicism of Philo), the personification of Wisdom in Proverbs 8 and apocryphal literature, and Old Testament themes—the most likely option is the third.

God.”⁸³ However, his presentation of the personal and relational divine *Logos* is completely different than the detachment of the Greek philosophical *logos*.

Scholars cannot definitively determine if John used the term as an intentional bridge to contextualize his message to the Greeks. What is absolutely clear, however, is that John did not present the Greek concept of *logos* as fulfilled in Christ. As Morris states, “Though [John] would not have been unmindful of the associations aroused by the term [*logos*], his essential thought does not derive from the Greek background. His Gospel shows little trace of acquaintance with Greek philosophy and less of dependence on it.”⁸⁴ John did not use the term *logos* in a wider sense of fulfillment, which means that John 1 cannot be used as a text that provides a biblical example of a wide use of fulfillment theology.⁸⁵

As to the historical rationale, at most, the early church—especially the Apologists—were heavily involved in translating Jewish ideas into a hellenistic context. In particular, Justin Martyr’s articulation of the *logos spermatikos* is often cited as an outworking of a wider view of fulfillment. While Justin certainly utilized bridges from Greek philosophy, such as identifying closely with the Socrates’s type of atheism, his arguments were indelibly rooted in the themes of the Old and New Testament.

Furthermore, Justin was remarkably firm, even to the point of being offensive, about the discontinuity between Christianity and Greek philosophical and religious

⁸³Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 156.

⁸⁴Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 103.

⁸⁵Notice that Don Richardson’s use of John 1 as a biblical basis for redemptive analogies is also exegetically flawed. Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*, 15.

culture. Indeed, he claimed the reason for the continuity between Greek Philosophy and Christianity was that Plato and Socrates had read Moses, and, though they had apprehended some elements of truth, overall, they had significantly misunderstood the whole:

So when Plato said . . . he took this from the prophet Moses. For Moses was earlier than Plato and all the Greek writers. And everything that philosophers and poets said about the immortality of the soul, punishments after death, contemplation of heavenly things, and teachings of that kind—they took hints from the prophets and so were able to understand these things and expounded them. So it seems that there were indeed seeds of truth in all men, but they are proved not to have understood them properly since they contradict each other.⁸⁶

Moreover, while demonstrating similarities between themes of some of the Greek myths and truths about Jesus, Justin asserts that those similarities are actually corruptions of the truth resulting from demonic deception.⁸⁷ Throughout his works, Justin attempts to demonstrate why Christianity should not be illegal and why Christians are better citizens than other Romans. Undoubtedly, Justin was instrumental in helping to create language bridges that enabled the gospel to spread throughout the Roman empire, yet his stress on the discontinuity and corruption of Greek philosophical and religious ideas makes “fulfillment” a poor description of Justin’s method.

⁸⁶Justin Martyr, “The First Apology,” in *Christianity and Plurality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Richard J. Plantinga (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999), 49.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 54. Notice that Justin’s argument above is similar to the one that Woodberry makes in “Common Pillars.” Both are attempting to find Jewish roots for the similarity of beliefs or forms found in the receiving culture. Obviously, one of the glaring differences is that, unlike Woodberry’s argument, Justin’s hypothesis of the Jewish roots in Greek philosophy is not historically accurate. Nevertheless, though they are making a similar assertion, the conclusion each reaches is widely different. Justin stresses radical separation of Christians from socio-religious Greek culture. He believes the differences found in the Greek religious practices are due to an intentional effort by demonic forces to corrupt the truth and forms of true worship in order to keep men deceived and in ignorance. Admittedly, *The First Apology* was written to the emperor in order to explain why the Christian community did not fit in with normal Greek society. Woodberry, by contrast, is offering a missiological strategy. Nevertheless, the difference is striking.

At most, Justin's method points to an early example of ethnotheology and mirrors the example of both John and Paul in using bridges to illustrate biblical concepts. The example of the success of the early church only demonstrates the necessity of ethnotheology if the church is to become truly indigenous and incarnated into the culture. The model behind Justin's ethnotheology, namely, the model of Paul and John finding points of contact within the receiving context, should definitely be imitated by missionaries. However, fulfillment is the wrong term to describe that model.

General Revelation as Preparation for the Gospel

The crucial distinction lacking in Insider arguments related to the continuity/discontinuity in high-religious contexts is that of "preparation." While fulfillment as articulated by the Bible is not a concept that can rightly be applied to other high-religious traditions, preparation is a biblical concept. All of the highest religious expressions and desires expressed in non-Christian religions can only be seen as preparation for the gospel.

Higgins's article referenced above, "The Key to Insider Movements," is an attempt to "outline a framework for a biblical understanding of how a movement to Jesus could claim to be in some sense a fulfillment of the religion . . . inside of which it remains."⁸⁸ The difficulty of following Higgins's argument of fulfillment is that he seems to believe that preparation and fulfillment are connected or even equivalent in a way he does not articulate. He therefore assumes his conclusion is grounded in the text. For

⁸⁸Higgins, "The Key to Insider Movements," 162.

instance, he refers to Paul's use of the altar to the unknown God in Acts 17 as a preparation for the gospel message. He later lists, as an implication of Paul's reference to the Greek altar, the missionary expectation to find similar points of contact within their cultural context. He says of these points of contact: "These things are not accidents; they are there by God's design. They are, we might say, the fingerprints of God within the religions of the world."⁸⁹

The above quotes from Higgins are a classic example of the *praeparatio evangelica* concept popularized by Richardson as redemptive analogies. Higgins is referring to preparation for the gospel deposited within culture, not fulfillment of religious expressions of that culture by Christ. The two concepts are on opposite sides of the spectrum. Yet, Higgins proceeds from the concept of preparation to that of fulfillment, asserting that Paul's example in Acts 17 enables us to "speak of the gospel as a fulfillment of the 'seeking, feeling, and finding' process in every culture and religion." Higgins makes a logical jump from preparation to fulfillment, and his conclusion that Christ fulfills socio-religious culture in the same way that Jesus fulfills the Law is therefore invalid. In this section of the article, Higgins reads his conclusion into the text and essentially asserts that Christ fulfills socio-religious culture *in the same way* that he fulfilled the Jewish ritual Law. Preparation for the gospel is not the same as fulfillment, especially not *in the same way* that God shaped the religious culture of the Jews by the Law and then fulfilled that Law in Christ.

The difference in meaning between fulfillment and preparation applied to

⁸⁹Ibid.

culture is significant. Where culture is fulfilled like Jesus fulfills the law, the culture becomes the foundation, the source, and the primary shaper of the gospel message. Just as the Old Testament was the theological starting point for Matthew, so the socio-religious culture becomes the theological starting point in fulfillment theology. Where the culture is seen as preparation for the gospel, the biblical worldview is the foundation, the source, and the primary shaper of the gospel message. Just like Paul in Athens, a gospel presentation will begin by appealing to general revelation then move through foundational biblical concepts. Where appropriate, those concepts are illustrated or are supported through the elements of preparation found within the culture. Preparation will only use cultural elements as illustrations to make the biblical message understandable to the audience, while fulfillment uses cultural elements as a foundational starting point. Perhaps a better word to describe how the gospel interacts with the groping process of humanity is “satisfy.” The gospel does not *fulfill* the seeking, feeling, and finding process, but satisfies that process with Christ. All of the points of contact within a receptor culture are satisfied in Christ, not fulfilled by him.

It is obvious that fulfillment theology is not a model described in the Bible, whereas the idea of preparation and satisfaction is clear. Therefore, ideas like “Messianic Muslims,” “completed Muslims,” “biblical Muslims,” or even “true Muslims” do not have any biblical foundation if fulfillment is a central component of the definition of those terms. Missiological strategies that depend on fulfillment theology are not grounded in the Bible and are therefore dangerous. Those strategies may not prove fatal to a fledgling movement to Christ, though it very well may make it excessively difficult for the gospel to be truly prophetic to the culture. It may also make fellowship within the

universal church exceptionally difficult.

Kingdom of God

The second major biblical defense of Insider Movements stems from a focus on the biblical teaching of the kingdom of God. For instance, Rick Love believes that a focus on the kingdom of God as the overarching paradigm of church planting serves two purposes. First, the kingdom of God focuses “on the totality of God’s creation—the entire cosmos, as well as the spirit realm. Moreover, the kingdom of God provides us with a comprehensive framework for mission. It describes what missiologists call the *missio Dei*, which is the restoration of God’s rule over all creation.”⁹⁰ In other words, Love believes that a kingdom of God framework is better suited to interact with the animist worldview of folk Islam and can better grapple with issues of holistic evangelism, including freedom from both demonic bondage and social oppression.

Secondly, Love prefers to focus on the kingdom of God because it does not emphasize God’s acts in history but his rule over creation:

God’s sovereign rule as eternal king distinguishes the concept of the kingdom of God from other macro-theological models. For example, three major motifs of Scripture—the covenant, the promise and the salvation history approach—are all linked solely with the acts of God in redemptive history Moreover, the concepts of covenant, promise and salvation history focus on God and humankind.⁹¹

The kingdom of God approach, as articulated by Love, means that the distinctly Jewish and Christian roots of salvation are underemphasized in favor of focusing on the overarching rule of God in the universe. This second point is purely an aside from

⁹⁰Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic, and the Kingdom of God* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 40.

⁹¹*Ibid.*

Love's greater argument about the kingdom of God. To be fair, though Love is an Insider proponent, he is much more concerned with how to reach folk Muslims among the Sudanese in Indonesia in his book than with Insider ministry. Furthermore, Love attempts to create a balance between the kingdom and the Church. One of his main points in this books is the absolute necessity of church planting as both the focus and means of *missio Dei*. Nevertheless, Love is an early example of how Insider proponents use a kingdom paradigm as a theological foundation for Insider strategy.

John Span traces the emphasis of the kingdom of God in Muslim evangelism back to the 1978 North American Conference on Muslim Evangelism.⁹² Some of the writers referenced the gospel of the kingdom as a means to preach a holistic gospel that proclaimed justice for the oppressed and, like Love, freedom from the bondage of Satan.⁹³ Most recently, the emphasis in the gospel of the kingdom has shifted and has been used as a means to circumvent the Christian community and the millennia of Christian tradition.

The reliance on a theology of the Kingdom in this second way is found mainly in the writings of Lewis and Higgins and, most notably in an interpretation of two Bible passages: John 4 and Acts 15. Their interpretation of those passages is built upon a view of the kingdom of God that has been popularized by a diagram called "Kingdom Circles."

⁹²See John Span, "The Critical Kingdom Question: Can One Be Identified with the Kingdom of God and Islam at the Same Time? (Part 1 of 2)," *St. Francis* 6, no. 2 (2010): 310-15.

⁹³See Bruce J. Nicholls, "New Theological Approaches in Muslim Evangelism," in *The Gospel and Islam*, ed. Don McCurry (Monrovia: MARC, 1979), 155-63.

Kingdom Circles

Lewis repackaged the Kingdom Circles diagram in her article “Insider Movements: Honoring God-Given Identity and Community,” in order to illustrate her assertion that the Bible allows believers to retain their socio-religious identity.⁹⁴ She does not attribute her source, but it appears that the diagram was popularized in America by Buddy Hoffman at Grace Fellowship Church in Snellville, Georgia. The blog and seminar flowing out of that church’s ministry, *Jesus in the Quran*, depends heavily on this concept in their evangelism strategy to reach Muslims.⁹⁵

The primary focus of the diagram is to demonstrate that double conversion—both to Christianity and to Christian culture—is unnecessary for people to enter the kingdom of God. That is, a person has both a spiritual identity and a cultural identity, and that person’s cultural identity does not need to change when the spiritual identity changes by entry into the kingdom of God. The diagram is popular among evangelists and ministers to populations who disdain Christian culture, the institutional church, or both. Figure 4 is taken from a website intending to reach a non-Christian background demographic:⁹⁶

⁹⁴Rebecca Lewis, “Insider Movements: Honoring God-Given Identity and Community,” *IJFM* 26 (2009): 18. See also note “c” in Dick Brogden, “Inside Out: Probing Presuppositions among Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 27 (2010): 33.

⁹⁵“Jesus in the Quran” [on-line]: accessed 25 May 2010; available from <http://www.jesusinthequran.org>; Internet. John Span says that Kim Gustafson—one of the leaders of the Common Ground training conferences—is actually the author of the diagram and presented it at the 2005 Denver ISFM meeting. Span, “The Critical Kingdom Question,” 312.

⁹⁶Kingdom Circles Blog [on-line]; accessed 30 May 2010; available from <http://kingdomcircles.wordpress.com/muslims-click-here/>; Internet. The blog is an attempt to reach Muslims through the Kingdom Circles: “Entry into the Kingdom of God is found through accepting the teachings of Isa al-Masih as found in the Injil. Included in this is accepting Jesus’ teaching that one can only enter into the Kingdom of God by placing their trust and faith in Him. Notice however, that we are not talking about

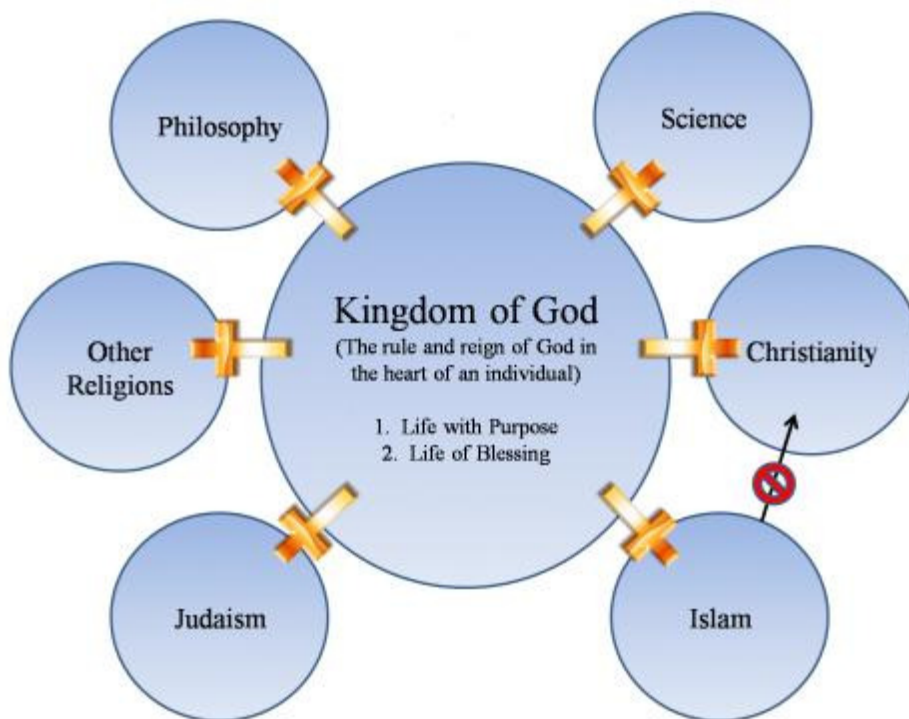


Figure 4: The Kingdom Circles

Figure 4 aims more at worldview identity than religious identity. The inclusion of philosophy and science as communities, along with other religious faiths, serves to strip the religious allegiances inherent within the religious communities of significant identity issues. Figure 4 also presents a view of culture that does not take into account the religious component of socio-religious identity. The point of continuity between Figure 4 and Lewis's suggestion in Figure 5 (i.e., entering the Kingdom) is that taking on a "Christian" identity is not a necessary step in salvation. Lewis's version of

becoming a 'Christian.'"

the diagram interacts specifically with John 4 and Acts 15:⁹⁷

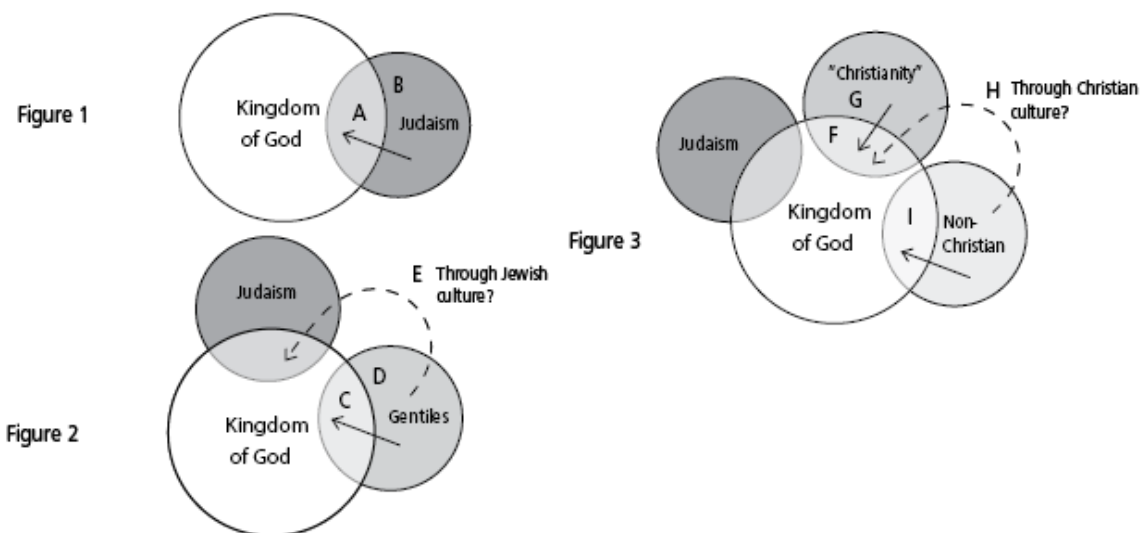


Figure 5: Lewis's Kingdom Circles

Lewis's overall argument in this particular article rests completely on the thesis

⁹⁷The caption for the diagram reads as follows: "This diagram distinguishes between two kinds of identity: *spiritual* and *socio-religious*. The center circle represents the Kingdom of God. People gain a new *spiritual identity* by entering God's Kingdom through transforming faith in Jesus Christ. The other circles represent various *socio-religious identities*. Figure 1 shows that many Jews in the book of Acts followed Jesus as Lord and thus entered the Kingdom of God (A). These early disciples gained a new spiritual identity but retained their Jewish socio-religious identity, continuing to follow the Jewish law and worship at the temple alongside non-believing Jews (B). Figure 2 likewise shows that many Gentiles in Acts followed Jesus as Lord and entered the Kingdom (C), though most Gentiles remained non-believers (D). In Acts 15, some Jewish believers insisted that non-Jews had to join the socio-religious system of Judaism to be saved (E) Paul disagreed and brought the issue before the apostles in Jerusalem. The apostles became convinced, by both the Scriptures and the fact that God gave the Holy Spirit to these Gentile believers, that non-Jews did not have to "go through" Judaism to enter the Kingdom of God. Figure 3 shows the situation we face today. Over the centuries, "Christianity" has become a socio-religious system encompassing much more than simply faith in Christ. It involves various cultural traditions, religious forms, and ethnic or political associations. While many people who call themselves Christians have truly believed in Christ and entered the Kingdom of God (F), others have not, though they may attend church (G). The Acts 15 question is still relevant today: Must people with a distinctly non-Christian (especially non-Western) identity "go through" the socio-religious systems of "Christianity" in order to become part of God's Kingdom (H)? Or can they enter the Kingdom of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone and gain a new spiritual identity while retaining their own community and socio-religious identity (I)?" Taken from Lewis, "Honoring God Given Identify," 18.

that socio-political-religious identity, as an entire package, are gifts from God, worthy of retention:

The Scriptures seem to indicate that this [socio-political-religious] identity, and the community a person is born into, were determined in advance by God. For example, Paul declares to the Athenians that God “made every nation of men . . . and determined the times set for them and the exact places they should live (Acts 17:26).”⁹⁸

The unstated part of her thesis is that God intends that the socio-religious identity and the community remain intact, and undamaged by entry into the kingdom. Lewis goes on to describe a process of church planting she calls “implanting,” where “the gospel takes root within a pre-existing community, and like yeast, spreads within that community. No longer does a new group try to become like a family; instead, the God-given family or social group becomes the church.”⁹⁹

Lewis makes two arguments to support her thesis. The first argument is from John 4, where Jesus distinguishes between “true faith” and “religious affiliation”:

The [Samaritan] woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:19-24)

Lewis asserts that just as God allowed the Samaritans to remain in their own communities and retain their Samaritan identity, so missionaries should allow believers from high-

⁹⁸Lewis, “Insider Movements,” 17.

⁹⁹Ibid.

religious backgrounds to retain their high-religious identify.¹⁰⁰

Second, Lewis claims that the conclusions reached by the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 validate Insider believers maintaining religious identity. In her argument, she equates the social-religious elements of Christianity with the Judaizers party and makes Insider identity in high-religious contexts analogous to the Gentile context and situation. She lists the two criteria of the giving of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of Scripture as the means by which we should determine whether something is from God:

These two criteria were sufficient for the apostles to conclude that *God was behind this new movement of believers who were remaining Gentile*. Therefore, they did not oppose it or add on demands for religious conversion. If we use the same two criteria today, insider movements affirm that people do not even have to go through the *religion* of Christianity, but only through Jesus Christ, to enter God's family.¹⁰¹

Furthermore, Lewis argues that refraining from religious conversion is a central part of the gospel, and that Paul's argument in Galatians 2:11-21 is that to "*add* religious conversion to following Christ would *nullify* the gospel."¹⁰² From her definition of the gospel, Lewis concludes that an undiluted gospel message will allow believers to retain socio-religious identity.¹⁰³

The arguments related to the socio-religious identity of the Samaritans, the conclusions of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, and the nature of the gospel will be discussed below. However, Lewis's assertion that God intends for socio-religious identity to be maintained intact and undamaged by the gospel needs to be assessed

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 18.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

biblically.

God Given Identity and Community?

Does God really intend to keep the family unit and social structure intact when the gospel penetrates a community? What missiologists have known since McGavran is that the gospel travels fastest through a community when the social network is maintained intact. But that sociological observation does not address the question biblically. Lewis attempts to answer the above question in the affirmative, and her argument rests totally on one passage: Acts 17: 26.

Unfortunately, Lewis puts too much weight on that one verse and ignores the total biblical testimony related to family structures. First, Acts 17:26 is not an assertion about the nature of culture or whether God has a specific purpose for the cultures within the geo-political units of the world. As demonstrated earlier, this section of the address is the first place that Paul introduces biblical truth that would have challenged the hellenistic worldview, namely, that the world is not divided into two classes of people: honorable Greeks and imbecilic barbarians. Rather, Paul asserts that the entire race of man has one common ancestor and one common purpose: to seek the creator God. Furthermore, Paul's reference to God "having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place" is mainly alluding to the sovereignty of God exercised in care of his creation.¹⁰⁴ One implication of God's sovereignty in this passage is that socio-political-religious identity *is* given by God and should therefore be honored and not extinguished.

¹⁰⁴Polhill, *Acts*, 374.

However, there are at least three reasons why the implications of this verse do not bear the weight Lewis attempts to place on God's sovereignty. First, Lewis does not grapple at all with the fallen nature of culture and the transforming nature of the gospel. Though culture is not bent in the same way that mankind was irrevocably changed by the Fall, cultures are just as bent as the people within them.¹⁰⁵ Because macro-level culture inevitably reflects the particular ways members of a society tend to sin, some aspects of every culture will therefore function as blinders and veils to the glory of God. The gospel cannot leave a culture unchanged, and biblically induced change will always bring dissonance of some type.

The second reason why Lewis's ground fails is because the "God-given identity" of every believer undergoes redefinition as progressive sanctification takes place. The type of change that happens within a believer at salvation will *always* bring about a transformed identity, including a new community. It is for this reason that Peter writes, "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Pet 2: 10). It is for this reason that Justin Martyr writes,

we who hated and killed one another and would not associate with men of different tribes because of [their different] customs, now after the manifestation of Christ *live together* and pray for our enemies and try to persuade those who unjustly hate us, so that they, living according to the fair commands of Christ, may share with us the

¹⁰⁵While Gilliland accuses Schlorff of personifying culture in Schlorff's description of the way that culture reflects the Fall, Schlorff's description is far more biblical. Moreover, Gilliland does not make the attempt to root his assertion biblically. See Samuel P. Schlorff, "The Translational Model for Mission in Resistant Muslim Society: A Critique and an Alternative," *Missiology* 28 (2000): 305-28; and Dean S. Gilliland, "Modeling the Incarnation for Muslim People: A Response to Sam Schlorff," *Missiology* 28 (2000): 330-38.

good hope of receiving the same things [that we will] from God.¹⁰⁶

Peter goes on to describe believers as sojourners and exiles in the world (v.11-12). Believers can no longer remain a part of their society in the same way they once did as unbelievers. Not only have they become salt and light to their friends and family that remain in darkness, but they have also become a source of tension and even violence. Peter's point is that the pre-existing community will not always accept and retain believers as authentic members of that community after what the new believers are becoming is made plain. It is likely that Peter is alluding to the total experience of the nation of Israel as being God's wandering-and-not-belonging people. However, it is also clear that Peter envisions the Gentile believers in his audience as the new Israel in 1 Peter 2:12. They no longer belong to the old community of unbelievers, but to a new community that has an identity centered around Jesus and rooted in the revelation of God in the Old Testament. Justin Martyr demonstrates the same reality. A dissimilar and ethnically diverse group was gathered together under their common identity in Christ, lived together, and, as a result, was rejected by their overall community. The cost of Justin's new identity eventually included his earthly life.

The third reason why Lewis's argument fails is because she does not take into account Jesus' words in Matthew 10:34-39:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is

¹⁰⁶Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*, 36, emphasis mine.

not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Similarly, the reality of Matthew 12:46-50 is overlooked.

While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

In these two passages, Jesus is actually saying the direct opposite of what Lewis describes as God’s intention to keep people within their God-given community and family structures: “When the gospel is implanted in this manner, the families and clans that God created are *redeemed and transformed*, instead of broken apart.”¹⁰⁷ One visible function of the gospel spreading like yeast throughout a community will undoubtedly be the healing of many broken relationships. Yet, these passages in Matthew indicate that the gospel will also be the source of other relationships breaking apart. Jesus taught his disciples that they should expect the gospel message to cause social and community upheaval, and he taught that his followers would actually become a *new* group with *new* allegiances that supersede family relationships. Moreover, Jesus may even have expected that believers, in general, and evangelists/missionaries/apostles, in particular, would leave family ties, inheritance, and all worldly goods in order to follow him (Matt 19:29).

It appears that Lewis has taken a sociological reality, namely the HUP, and bent Scripture in order to validate the Insider effort to keep social structures intact. She has simply not taken the entirety of the biblical witness related to social structures into account and, consequently, she has presented a skewed picture of how God views both

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 17.

culture and social structures. At the very least, the above critique has nullified both the ground and the thesis of her overall argument, namely, that socio-political-religious identity, as an entire package, are gifts from God, worthy of retention, and that God intends that identity and the community remain intact, undamaged, and relatively unchanged by entry into the Kingdom.

Nevertheless, Lewis and other Insider proponents make an additional argument that entry into the kingdom does not necessitate either cultural or religious conversion. As previously alluded to, the cases of the Samaritan believers and the Jerusalem Council are offered as biblical precedent for Insider Movements.

Samaritan Insiders?

The first biblical Insider Movement example comes from the stories of the Samaritan woman in John 4 and Philip's interaction with the Samaritans in Acts 8. Understanding the background of the Samaritans in Jewish culture is a fundamental part of understanding the comparison.

The Samaritans were a religious sect of Judaism that only accepted the Pentateuch as canonical Scripture. They had a modified form of the Pentateuch that expanded on Deuteronomy 27 in order to point to Mt. Gerizim as the worship site of God as opposed to Jerusalem. Consequently, they had their own temple site and a priestly organization that surrounded worship at the Mt. Gerizim temple.¹⁰⁸ Though Samaritans

¹⁰⁸ H. G. M. Williamson and C. A. Evans, "Samaritans," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [CD-ROM] (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

closely observed the levitical Law, they were considered unclean by the Jews.¹⁰⁹

Josephus traces their lineage back to their intermarriage with the Persian settlers after the exile and then a further dilution through mingling with the Greeks. It is difficult to tell with certainty the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans during the time of the early church; however, by the second century, intermarriage was not allowed between the two groups. Institutionalized disgust arose from the Jewish perspective mostly because the Samaritans were considered ritually unclean. Their offerings to God were considered unacceptable, their legal testimony was not admitted, and their holy days were either different or observed incorrectly. As Williamson and Evans demonstrate, the Rabbis of the “babylonian Talmud summarized the basic differences with the Samaritans by asking when the Samaritans would be acceptable to the Jews. The response: ‘When they renounce Mount Gerizim, and confess Jerusalem and the resurrection of the dead.’”¹¹⁰

In summary, the Jews hated the Samaritans, and the Samaritans hated the Jews. The communities lived in tension with one another, even though they traced their roots back to a common teacher, Moses, and a common ancestor, Abraham. The religious rituals were extremely similar and diverged mainly on the topic of the suitable location for God’s temple. Each sect viewed the other as aberrant. Importantly, both the Samaritans and the Jews viewed themselves as God’s true people.

Arguments based on the example of the Samaritans show up in three different articles.¹¹¹ The structure of each argument is basically the same:

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Lewis, “Insider Movements: Honoring God-given Identity and Community,” 16-19;

1. The irreconcilable differences between the two communities cause both communities to think of extraction as the only means of acceptance by God.
2. Jesus was careful to differentiate true faith from religious affiliation by saying that God was seeking “true worshipers who worship the Father in spirit and truth” (John 4:19-24.)¹¹²
3. Samaritan believers did not join the Jewish community but remained in their own communities, retaining their Samaritan identity, and their existing worship forms.

Higgins is struck by the fact that after this incident in John Jesus is found to be worshipping in the temple, a place he had just indicated was not a place of true worship. Higgins logically deduces that the Samaritans likely maintained the worship patterns familiar to them: “After their conversion recorded in John 4, they worshipped in spirit and in truth. But they did so in Samaria (in their prior place of worship) just as Jesus worshipped the Father in spirit and in truth in Jerusalem, in the Temple.”¹¹³ Higgins also argues that the Samaritans continued to remain *inside* the socio-religious community: “The believing but ‘young’ community Jesus leaves behind after only two days will presumably continue in its prior Samaritan religious life with a major difference: Jesus’ revelation of Himself has changed them.”¹¹⁴

In response, it should be noted here that Higgins and Lewis resort to an argument from silence to validate the Insider status of the Samaritan believing community. The kind of example they need to support Insider methodology is simply not

Higgins, “The Key to Insider Movements,” 155-65; Stuart Caldwell, “Jesus in Samaria,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 25-31. Higgins here uses the pseudonym “Stuart Caldwell.”

¹¹²Lewis, “Honoring God-given Identity and Community,” 17.

¹¹³Higgins, “The Key,” 159.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*

found in this story. The text is silent on the type of religious practices and forms the new community of believers adopt. Arguments from silence can go both ways: it could be that Higgins and Lewis are right that the Samaritans continued in their “prior religious life with a major difference;” it can also be argued that the two additional days of Jesus’ teaching included the kinds of instruction regarding church and community found in the rest of the Gospels and Epistles. Or, Jesus may have corrected or clarified the Samaritan belief about the appropriate place to worship God, the Davidic kingdom, and other important background elements of the gospel message such as the role and testimony of the Prophets.

We also cannot be sure of what Philip taught concerning worship forms in Acts 8, either those forms he encouraged or those he discouraged, because the text is silent on the issue of worship forms and the specific content of the teaching to the Samaritans. For the same reason, Insider advocates cannot determine what the Samaritans did or did not change with regard to their worship forms or how those changes may or may not have affected their involvement in the greater Samaritan community or their incorporation into the largely Jewish believing community. Neither John 4 nor Acts 8 provide the kind of biblical support that Insider advocates need in order to provide strong biblical support for keeping converts inside their birth religious structures.

Conversely, the Samaritan example does not give a strong biblical ground for those arguing against the Insider paradigm. The parallels between Islam and Samaritans should not be ignored. Both Muslims and Samaritans are monotheistic, both to various degrees have corrupted the original revelation of God, both have a strong high-religious tradition, and both have various levels of antagonism toward Christians and Jews.

Higgins has correctly identified Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman as a paradigm for church planting among Muslims. Although some of his conclusions go beyond what the text actually says, most are biblically solid and exceptionally helpful.¹¹⁵

Acts 15

The 2004 ISFM's conference introduced the topic of Insider Movements. By the time those articles were published in 2005, it became apparent that Insider advocates needed far more biblical and theological support to make the strategy palatable to the wider evangelical community. The 2006 ISMF's conference was an attempt to garner that biblical support. The topic of the conference centered on Acts 15 and was entitled "The Jerusalem Council Applied." Four articles in particular were published that attempted to demonstrate the validity of applying the Acts 15 process to Insider Movements as a means to supply biblical grounds for maintaining socio-religious insider identity.¹¹⁶ The conclusion of those articles is summarized well by Lewis: "Thus, the gospel reveals that a person can gain a new spiritual identity without leaving one's birth identity, and without taking on a new socio-religious label or going through the religion

¹¹⁵For example, Higgins discusses Jesus' approach to the Samaritan scriptures, his use of contextualized language, and ritual purity. While Higgins sometimes equivocates, his conclusions in general are quite helpful in moving missionaries away from a polemical strategy and providing biblical ground for a dialectical type of evangelism. *Ibid.*, 25-31.

¹¹⁶Kevin Higgins, "Acts 15 and Insider Movements Among Muslims: Questions, Process, and Conclusions," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 29-40; Brian K. Petersen, "The Possibility of a 'Hindu Christ-Follower: Hans Staffner's Proposal for the Dual Identity of Disciples of Christ within High Caste Hindu Communities," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 87-97; John Ridgway, "Insider Movements in the Gospels and Acts," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 77-86; and Dudley J. Woodberry, "To the Muslim I Became a Muslim?" 23-28. Ridgway's article is an excellent illustration of the type of circular argument common among the less nuanced Insider practitioners. The Insider paradigm is first assumed, and then it is read into the text, which then proves the paradigm to be biblical. Ridgway's exegesis has been utterly refuted point-by-point in Basil Grafas, "Evaluation of Scriptural Support for Insider Movements: Critique of John Ridgway's 'The Movement of the Gospel in New Testament Times with Special Reference to Insider Movements,'" *St. Francis* 4, no. 2 (2007): 1-16.

of either Judaism or Christianity.”¹¹⁷

Taken at face value, what Lewis says is true. Double conversion has no place within the gospel message. Yet, Lewis, Higgins, and Woodberry are fixated on believers not leaving their “birth identity,” and therefore introduce a focus to the text that is not present. The true focus of the text is not on what people were before conversion; rather, it is on the new worldwide and historic community new believers enter into upon conversion. A short look at Acts 15 will make this emphasis clear.

Without a doubt, Acts 15 is the hinge of the entire book of Acts because it relates how a Jewish messianic movement focused on Jesus became a world-wide phenomenon transcending ethnic boundaries. The occasion for the meeting among the leaders of the early church was the seemingly bizarre movement of the Holy Spirit among a people who had not marked their bodies with the sign of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:10-14). First, the Samaritans in Acts 8 and then a Greek, uncircumcised centurion in Acts 10 had received the mark of the New Covenant, namely, the Holy Spirit. Thereafter, in Acts, the gospel is proclaimed to the hellenists in Antioch, which was followed by Paul and Barnabus’s first missionary journey that saw a spectacular movement among non-Jews throughout the major cities of present-day Turkey and the island of Cyprus.

Upon their return to Antioch, a group of Jewish believers were teaching that a necessary step for salvation was to receive the sign of the Abrahamic covenant (v.1).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Lewis, “Honoring God-given Identity and Community,” 18.

¹¹⁸This teaching did not apply to the Samaritans, because they were already circumcised and also already obeying the Law of Moses in a way that did not affect ritual purity. Except for pre-existing ethnocentrism, Jews and Samaritans spoke the same language and ate the same foods.

Circumcision would have forever separated the hellenist believers from their birth community. That type of extraction from hellenistic society explains the existence of so many God-fearers like Cornelius, yet few actual converts to Judaism.¹¹⁹ In order to settle the dispute a party from the church of Antioch was appointed to go to Jerusalem and confer with the leaders there (v.2). After the two sides had presented their case, an intense debate ensued which was only settled when Peter reminded the assembly how God had worked through him among the gentiles in Cornelius' household (v.7-11).

Ultimately, the Jerusalem council is concerned with defining the heart of the gospel: whether belief in Jesus alone saved people or if additional requirements of obedience to God's covenant were necessary to enter into the covenant community. The decision by the early church leaders was that salvation was by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God himself had demonstrated that reality through Peter's decision to immediately baptize the Spirit-filled members of Cornelius's household and also by the many signs and wonders performed by Paul and Barnabus on their first missionary journey. The only requirements given to the hellenist believers by the Jerusalem council related to issues of fellowship.

If the hellenist believers were not required to adhere to circumcision or the Mosaic Law, then they were in a continuous state of ritual uncleanness, both in what

¹¹⁹Many social activities among hellenist men involved nudity: athletic competitions, working out in the gymnasium, baths, etc. Since many business deals or other kinds of social networking took place in those contexts, circumcision was not a secret affair between a man and his wife. In fact, true nakedness among hellenist men occurred when the head of the penis was exposed. Circumcision was therefore particularly vulgar among the Greeks and could not be hidden unless a man either withdrew from social engagement or underwent painful surgery. See Robert G. Hall, "Epispasm: Circumcision in Reverse," *Bible Review* 7, no. 4 (1992): 52-57, in *The Circumcision Reference Library* [on-line]; accessed 9 June 2010; available from <http://www.cirp.org/library/restoration/hall1/>; Internet.

they consumed and who they had sex with.¹²⁰ The four requirements given by James—“to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15: 20)—were all designed to make fellowship between believers possible.¹²¹

It should be clear that the very reason for the prohibitions in the first place is because the leaders of the Jerusalem church assumed that both Jews and Greeks would be regularly meeting together as one new community. The Greeks were not quarantined into a separate socio-religious church; a totally *new* community was formed where people from different cultural and religious backgrounds came together under the unifying power of saving faith and fruits of the Spirit. As mentioned previously, Lewis’s suggestion of church “implanting” is a practical sociological strategy, yet it overlooks important biblical realities like Jews and Greeks regularly meeting together to worship Jesus. James assumes this fundamental reality in Acts 15:19-21.

¹²⁰While sexual immorality falls largely within the moral sphere of the Law, it also has a distinct ritual component: “For the Jew sexual misbehavior was both immoral *and* impure” (Polhill, *Acts*, 331-32). It is likely here that though the Gentiles’ sexual behavior was culturally much more lax, the moral requirements of the Law—specifically the Ten Commandments—were generally already being taught and upheld among the Hellenist believers, especially if many of them were already God-fearers.

¹²¹Lewis dismisses these prohibitions as not binding by asserting that Paul later abrogated them in the Roman and Corinthian churches with his statements related to eating meat sacrificed to idols: “However, all of these laws, except the last one, were removed before the end of the New Testament by Paul, who reduced them to a matter of conscience (Rom 14; I Cor 8, and 10:23-11:1).” (Rebecca Lewis, “The Integrity of the Gospel and Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 27 [2010]: 44.) She footnotes the statement with the following: “The rules concerning kosher food were necessary if Greek believers wanted to eat with Jewish believers; however, they would likewise hinder Greek believers from eating with their non-believing relatives, so Paul makes it a matter of doing what least offends the conscience of the person you are eating with, noting that idols are nothing and therefore meat offered to them is not significant either. It seems clear that Paul does not consider it ‘syncretistic’ to adapt in this way” (48). Lewis’s assertion is far from being the best explanation of those texts. Instead, it is apparent that her sociological lens has controlled her interpretation. The fundamental force of James’s prohibitions was an outworking of obedience to Jesus’ command to “love one another.” Paul is using the same principle in the above texts, only in a different context. See, for example, Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 729-42; Polhill, *Acts*, 331-32; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 295-96; and Bock, *Acts*, 507-08.

Does the gospel teach that a necessary step in salvation must include adherence to foreign cultural forms? Absolutely not! Lewis is correct to say that double conversion has no place in the gospel message. Yet she fails to present biblical proof demonstrating that the gospel also reveals that people will never have to leave behind important elements of their birth identity, especially when that birth identity includes competing allegiances inherent in cultural and religious practices. In Islam, belief in Muhammad as the seal of the prophets who supersedes Jesus, the Quran as the very words of God, and a rejection of Jesus' identity as God's Son and the second member of the Trinity are all fundamental aspects of what it means to be a part of the Muslim community. Yet, to deny these things is to deny Jesus and to reject Jesus' community of people.¹²² Both Hinduism and Buddhism have similar core beliefs that attack the heart of the gospel. However, this contradiction of maintaining membership in a community that adamantly rejects Jesus and hates his bride would be far less important if Insider advocates could find biblical ground to validate their strategy.

The biblical support is not provided by Acts 15. Tennent demonstrates that for Insider advocates to find biblical support for their strategy in this text they need to demonstrate that the Jerusalem Council expressly allowed Greek religious practices to continue, practices such as visiting the local temple or brothel as an act of social solidarity. Yet, the text seems to communicate the exact opposite expectations of the Greek believers: "The prohibitions served to visibly separate the Gentiles from their former *religious* identity as pagans, since all four of these requirements are linked to

¹²²Notice that I do not say that a believer has to be able to articulate core Christian doctrines, only that those core doctrines cannot be rejected.

common pagan practices at the time.”¹²³

Flaws in the Kingdom Circles

The Kingdom Circles diagram fails on at least two points: one biblical and one logical. The logical failure is that Lewis is essentially utilizing a straw man approach to argue against the double conversion of a C1-C2 type of approach. Her diagram insists that people have to take on the cultural and religious identity of Christianity to enter the Kingdom of God or maintain Islamic identity. Her ambiguity on this point leads to a false dichotomy, creating a straw-man argument that has been a glaring issue in the Insider arguments since 2004. Lewis’s straw man argument has been so widely used among Insider proponents that Gary Corwin addressed it as one of his ten questions in his paper for the 2006 ISFM conference: “Have you considered that the biblical support for C4 approaches are identical to those offered for C5, yet the case is often made as if C5 is the only alternative to C1?”¹²⁴ Brown’s remarks on Corwin’s previous question only serve to highlight the prevalence of the Insider proponents’ tendency to exclude middle categories of contextualized ministry: “But if we insist on a traditional model of church for every situation, then we are following the idol of ecclesiastical tradition rather than

¹²³Timothy Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How The Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 204. Tennent also points out that even the Jewish-Christian religious identity changed when the vast majority of Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah so that even Jewish believers could not indefinitely maintain Insider status. Interestingly, in 2009, Lewis does not interact with Tennent’s article or attempt to demonstrate how his reading of the text is inaccurate. In the 2007 series of *IJFM*, no article is able to adequately address Tennent’s concerns of how Acts 15 is used to validate the Insider paradigm. Thus, despite subsequent attempts, Tennent currently has the definitive word on how Acts 15 relates to, addresses, and guides the discussion of Insider Movements. It would be helpful for Lewis and others to begin interacting with his concerns.

¹²⁴Gary Corwin, “A Humble Appeal to C5/Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates to Consider Ten Questions (with responses from Brother Yusuf, Rick Brown, Kevin Higgins, Rebecca Lewis,

following the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹²⁵ D. L. Waterman’s response to Brown was not published in *IJFM*, yet demonstrates that many who are arguing against Insider strategy adhere to higher levels of contextualization than they are given credit for:

This comment attacks the straw man of “a traditional model.” To my knowledge, everyone involved in this discussion favors contextualization of at least the C3 or C4 variety. No one that we know of (in this discussion) is trying to “insist on a traditional model of church” *at all*, let alone “for every situation.” This common fallacy (speaking as if anything that’s not “C5” or “insider” is a traditional model of church) not only slights the great work God is doing through C3 and C4 ministries, but also turns away many (both in traditional churches and MBBs) who, because they are uncomfortable with believers remaining Muslim, conclude that the only alternative is “traditional church.”¹²⁶

Lewis’s reproduction of the Kingdom Circles diagram only serves to further cement this logical fallacy as a core element of the total Insider argument. The options presented by the diagram are not the only options available for missionaries to high-religious contexts. Insider proponents must begin addressing the nuances of the concerns presented by the missiological community who are making efforts to inculturate the gospel in their context.

The biblical flaw in the Kingdom Circles diagram is that it excludes the central identifying mark of people who are in the kingdom of God, namely, identification with the people of God with the Church. Whatever else the kingdom of God is,¹²⁷ the Church

and John Travis),” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 15.

¹²⁵Ibid., 14.

¹²⁶D. L. Waterman, “A Few Comments on ‘The Jerusalem Council Revisited: Part I’ by D. L. Waterman” (unpublished.) Provided by *The International Journal of Frontier Missions* via email to author, 4 February 2010.

¹²⁷The literature related to and attempting to define the kingdom of God is impressive. For a sampling, see, George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959); Peter J. Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12 (2008): 37-39; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian

is the present manifestation of it on earth:

The church in fact manifests the kingdom without being identified with it under all circumstances. The church alone has been entrusted with ‘the keys of the kingdom’ (Mt. 16:18, 19), as it alone has been commissioned to preach ‘the gospel of the kingdom’ (Mt. 24:14). *The church and only the church is made up of the citizens of the kingdom, those who by repentance and faith submit to the redemptive lordship of Christ.* But the scope of his eschatological rule, the extent of his realm, is nothing less than the entire creation; all things are subject to him (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Mt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:27; Heb. 2:8). Paul has captured the requisite balance: the exalted Christ is ‘head over everything for the church’ (Eph. 1:22).¹²⁸

Insider proponents neglect this central component of the doctrine of the kingdom and instead attempt to “pit the kingdom of God against Christianity/the church/or religion and the pitting of kingdom against creeds or theological propositions.”¹²⁹ Throughout Insider literature, sentiments like the following are expressed: “Also, we are calling Muslims to enter into God’s kingdom, not change religions. Citizens of the kingdom include those of Christian, Muslim and even Jewish backgrounds.”¹³⁰ A similar sentiment is expressed from an Arab Christian:

The Muslim does not have to change his shape and identity in order to enter the kingdom of God. He can enter directly into *the wide gate of the kingdom, rather than through our narrow gate of twenty centuries of Christian identity and tradition.* As we saw with the stories of Cornelius and Naaman, they did not need to change their shape and become squares in order to enter the kingdom of God.¹³¹

& Reformed, 1962); Geerhardus Vos, *The Kingdom and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1972).

¹²⁸R. B. Gaffin Jr. “Kingdom of God,” *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson, and David F. Wright [CD Rom] (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), emphasis added.

¹²⁹Span, “The Critical Kingdom Question,” 310.

¹³⁰Harley Talman, “Islam, Once a Hopeless Frontier, Now? Comprehensive Contextualization,” *IJFM* 21 (2004): 7.

¹³¹Nabil Jabbur, *The Crescent through the Eyes of the Cross: Insights from an Arab Christian* (Colorado Springs: NAV, 2008), 240-41.

There are a number of problems with Jabbur's statement. First, Jabbur's allusion to Matthew 7:13-14 is taken completely out of context and actually reversed. In the verses directly following the Golden Rule, Jesus tells his followers, "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matt 7:14). Jesus is here contrasting the difficulty of following him and his teachings as the only way to salvation as opposed to following the approval of man. Secondly, Jabbur refers to an Old Testament passage that has overwhelmingly been dismissed as validation of the Insider strategy. The description of Naaman asking forgiveness from Elisha for kneeling with his master in front of the idol, Rimmon, is so ambiguous as to be useless in forming proscriptive strategic missiological practices. As Tennent concludes,

The ambiguities in the text do not allow for a substantial exegetical contribution to this discussion. The one thing we *do* know is that the context of the passage is about Naaman asking for *forgiveness* for doing something they both know is wrong. Clearly, the prophet is not *blessing* Naaman or promoting any strategy of Naaman as follower of Rimmon who actually worships Yahweh in order to draw other worshipers of Rimmon to the true knowledge of Yahweh.¹³²

Despite the biblical and theological inaccuracies within his statement, Jabbur echoes Lewis's sentiments presented in the Kingdom Circles diagram. In response, a valid question becomes: if the Kingdom Circles diagram is logically and biblically flawed, what would a biblical diagram of the kingdom look like if it attempted to take into account both socio-religious identity and identification with the Church?

Like the diagram from the "Jesus in the Quran" seminar, Figure 6 attempts to

¹³²Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 209.

make clear that entry into the kingdom is strictly through allegiance and obedience to the

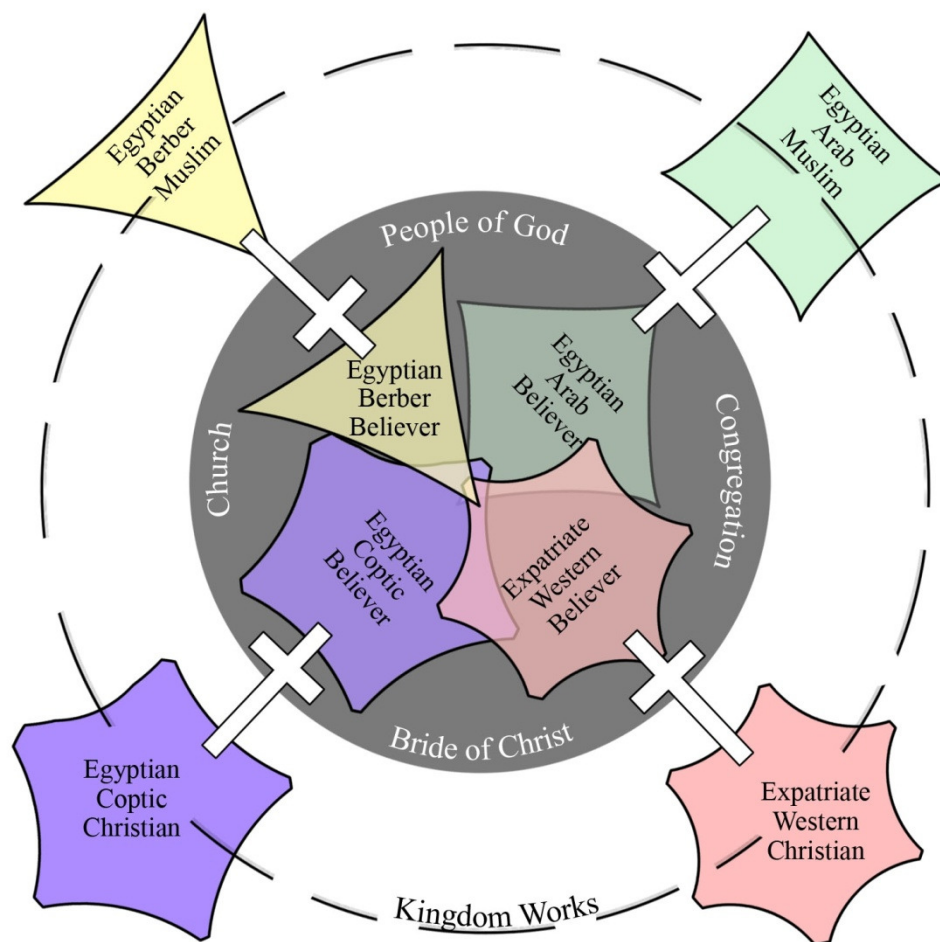


Figure 6: Acts 15 and the kingdom of God

Lord Jesus Christ. The message of Jesus and the kingdom was “repent and believe in the gospel.” So likewise, there needs to be both an emotive and a cognitive response that abandons all allegiances against Christ.

The kingdom is represented by two circles. The outer circle is an attempt to demonstrate that the reign of Jesus will impact the unbelieving world through Christ-followers who obey God’s call on their lives to combat injustice, heal the sick, and

confront demonic oppression. God working through the wide spectrum of the good works of his people is a significant element of the kingdom, yet those good works are the least visible part of the Kingdom. The inner circle represents the Church and therefore makes up the visible aspect kingdom of God on earth. Within the inner circle is a variety of shapes meant to represent the wide array of diversity within the universal church, which also find a unifying center and point of fellowship in Christ.

The outer circles are much more community-specific than the Kingdom Circles diagram, mainly because it is difficult to speak abstractly about “Christian” and “Muslim” communities when neither religious system is monolithic or even homogenous. As an example of the kinds and types of diversity found within religious systems, the diagram above includes four socio-religious communities reasonably found within Alexandria, Egypt: Egyptian Arab Muslim, Egyptian Berber Muslim, Egyptian Coptic Christian, and expatriate Western Christian. While Acts 15 does teach that extraction is unnecessary to conversion, it further teaches at least two things. First, some modification of lifestyle is necessary for the sake of fellowship among believers. Second, by implication, that new believers join an existing, multi-ethnic and worldwide community.

Contrary to what Lewis asserts about implanting a church and the pre-existing community becoming the church, a new group *is* formed when some accept the gospel and others within the community do not. Moreover, especially in frontier situations, that new community will likely be diverse. Not only does Acts 15 imply that type of diversity by the kind of ritual restrictions placed upon the Greek believers, it is the fundamental background of much of the New Testament. For example, Paul alludes to the diversity within the Antioch church when he describes his conflict with Peter in Galatians 2:11-14.

Peter had been eating with the Gentiles before “certain men came from James” (v. 12), but withdrew fellowship from them, presumably due to pressure from the Jewish quarter. Tensions was obviously high at times between the two groups of believers, yet fellowship between them was of paramount importance to the leaders of the early church, which is why Paul continually teaches on the unity and equality between Jew and Greek throughout his letters. For this reason, the diagram above attempts to show both diversity and fellowship within the inner circle. The fellowship will likely only result if an Acts 15 process—like the type Tennent describes—takes place within the believing community.¹³³ That process will need to work hard to allow a MBB to be faithful to Christ while maintaining a degree of socio-religious identity that does not cause them to disobey Christ’s commands or, either implicitly or explicitly, to deny Christ.

Conclusion

Altogether, the biblical and theological arguments offered by Insider proponents are incomplete or flawed in significant respects. The fulfillment theology offered by Insider proponents does not maintain sufficient roots in the actual revelation of God in the Old and New Testament to provide the type of support Insiders need. A narrow view of fulfillment—the view described in the Bible—excludes the possibility of viewing any other religious tradition being fulfilled by Jesus in the same way he fulfills the Law and the Prophets.

¹³³Tennent describes what he calls the Cairo Conference. The conference introduces modifications to Islamic practice that allow for fellowship between the different backgrounds found within the people of God. The modifications Tennent lists deny core elements of the Islamic faith—the centrality of Muhammad, the supremacy of the Bible over the Quran, and a trinitarian formula added to the ninety-nine names of God. Tennent believes these core Christian beliefs will eventually force MBBs out of the Muslim community. See Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 205-06.

In a similar way, general revelation serves to provide bridges to the gospel, not the foundation for it. The study of Acts 17 reveals that Paul used general revelation as a bridge in order to clearly communicate his biblical worldview to the pagan Greek audience within the Areopagus. In direct opposition to Paul's example, Insiders use high-religious systems as a foundation. Their practice is dangerous for two reasons: first, it is contrary to the biblical example, and second, it is dangerous to give any other tradition an authority equal to the Bible. The best explanation of the biblical data is to view all other religious systems as providing a preparation for the gospel, not a system that needs to be fulfilled by Jesus.

To be fair, it is important to note that the Insider's wider use of fulfillment is logically and biblically consistent if Kraft's casebook view of the Bible is true and serves as the foundation for the Insider approach. Where the Bible is treated as casebook, the process of God revealing himself to Abraham through socio-religious ideas like "covenant" is a process that can be paralleled in any other religious system. In a casebook scheme, the covenants of God with Abraham and David and the subsequent fulfillment of those revelations by Jesus is a model for how God plans to reveal himself in other religious systems. If God reveals himself in the way described by Kraft, then the Quran and the other high-religious traditions *can* serve as a foundation for the gospel. Yet, it appears that God does not actually reveal himself in the way that Kraft describes. At the very least, it can be said that the Bible provides no model for the kind of process Kraft outlines.

Additionally, Insiders increasingly proffer a theology of the kingdom that attempts to provide biblical support for believers from high-religious contexts who want

to maintain their socio-religious identity without having to join a new and often culturally different group. When the Bible is taken as a whole and texts are taken in their entire context, the type of church “implanting” Lewis describes is not completely consistent with the testimony of the Bible. In addition to entire households coming to faith, the New Testament mainly assumes the type of believing communities Lewis describes as “aggregate” churches, that is, communities made up of diverse, multiethnic groups that struggle to get along. Rather than find principles in the Bible, Lewis allows the sociological principles of the HUP to drive her hermeneutic.

The kingdom theology offered up by Lewis, Higgins, and others offers inadequate support for Insider strategy. Reference to what may have happened among the Samaritans is an argument from silence. Moreover, when Acts 15 and 17 are analyzed within their contexts, it is apparent that the texts actually mean the direct opposite of what Lewis has attempted to make them mean. It is unfortunate that Lewis’s 2009 article did not interact at all with Tennent’s 2007 presentation of Acts 15. Tennent’s exegesis remains the definitive word on the subject of the socio-religious nature of the prohibitions given by the Jerusalem council.

It is one thing for missionaries to substitute the term “Kingdom of God” for the term “church” as the believing community. It appears this is how Matthew uses the term “kingdom of Heaven” in place of “kingdom of God,” so that he would not offend his Jewish audience by using the divine name. In a similar way, it seems wise to avoid that same type of reaction due to the vast amount of cultural baggage terms like “Christian,” “Church,” and “Baptism” carry in Islamic and Hindu contexts. It seems this is what Fouad Accad is describing when he relates the story of how some young MBBs talked

more about being in the “kingdom of God,” rather than referring to their conversion as joining a religion.¹³⁴

Yet, it is something altogether different to use kingdom terminology as a means to avoid identification with the universal Church. Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck ask three penetrating questions at the beginning of their book, *Why We Love the Church*, that are relevant to the Insider situation: “Is a head still a head if it doesn’t have a body? Is a basement still a basement if there’s no house on top? Is a friend really your friend if you can’t stand his wife?” DeYoung continues, “Who wants a friend who rolls his eyes and sighs every time your wife walks in the room?”¹³⁵ All three questions flow from New Testament analogies of the Church. The sentiment expressed earlier by Justin Martyr is the only appropriate way to express the new believer’s relationship with the existing church. Hopefully, most Insider Movements do not bear a grudge against or reject fellowship with the national church, and hopefully the working relationship between the two communities is characterized by sweet fellowship. However, in some places around the world a dividing wall of hostility has been erected between the two communities over the question of whether to remain inside the socio-religious system.¹³⁶ This type of

¹³⁴Fouad Elias Accad, *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997), 43.

¹³⁵Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck, *Why We Love the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 2009), 10-11.

¹³⁶See, for instance, Edward Ayub, “Observations and Reactions to Christians involved in New Approach to Missions,” *St. Francis* 5, no. 5 (2009): 21-40. Ayub is a MBB church planter in Bangladesh. The following editorial comment introduces the context of Ayub’s article: “Although seldom named in the literature, Bangladesh has been both the laboratory and the parade ground for missiologists and practitioners committed to Insider ideology. For years this incubation was permitted to continue while clandestine reports were being circulated in American academies and among inner-circle missionaries. Bangladeshis for the most part were ignorant with regards to what was being reported about their country. . . . The Bangladeshi church was alerted by a controversial translation of the Scriptures and some key leaders were recruited to the Insider group. Some came back out and began to tell the story that was being

relationship does not characterize what it means to be filled by the Spirit and to bear fruits of righteousness. Resolving the hostility resulting from Insider methodology is one of the most urgent issues facing proponents of Insider Movements.

As the situation currently stands, Insider proponents do not have biblical support for their conclusions or for the strategy they are implementing. Overall, it seems unlikely that Insider proponents will find biblical answers to support the Insider paradigm as a strategy for missions and evangelism, especially where that strategy attempts to retain Insider identity indefinitely. Functionally, an Insider strategy may be useful as a transitional plan, but Insider identity of the kind Lewis describes cannot be maintained indefinitely without significant and harmful implications for the spiritual growth of individuals and for wider fellowship within the universal Church (cf., Hebrews).

As Insider proponents continue to search for biblical support and seek to incorporate biblical balance to their strategies of church planting and evangelism, they should emphasize three things. First, the gospel is indelibly rooted in the Old Testament worldview, and Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets in an important and unrepeatable way. It is unbiblical to use any high-religious system as a foundation for the gospel. At most, hidden within any socio-religious system will inevitably include some points of contact for the gospel, which—following the example of Paul—can be used as powerful

spun by Insiders. Pastors and church planters began to encounter all kinds of deviant theologies and practices in the field. There was an explosion of awareness in the church. While missionaries were urging unity, church leaders were crying foul, reacting against western money that was turning the Muslim background church into a lab rat. At the center of this reaction was a small group of Muslim background church leaders who formed the Isai Fellowship of Bangladesh. They have all spoken out strongly but I am only aware of one, Rev. Ayub, who has published anything in English. With broad based support from every corner of the Bangladeshi church, their chief strategy is to establish a strong network of visible Muslim background churches, thus proving that Insider/C5 strategies are unnecessary in Bangladesh” (21).

illustrations. God, in his incomprehensible mercy, has left a testimony of himself within the cultures of the world as a preparation for the gospel message. These points of contact create bridges for the gospel, making the gospel more understandable within the framework of their worldview. These bridges function, not as a foundation, but as a means of clarifying and illustrating how Jesus satisfies humanity's longing for and groping after God.

Second, the marks of a truly converted person include being sealed by the Holy Spirit, an undiluted allegiance to Jesus, and a faith in his Word. It is both undeniable and incredibly exciting that the Holy Spirit is powerfully working to save many within major world religions. An undiluted and uncompromised gospel message will insist that allegiance to Jesus alone saves, which is characterized by repentance and obedience to his commands. The above is overwhelmingly expressed by Insider proponents. Yet, what is explicitly denied is the adoption of additional, non-salvific requirements for fellowship within the body of Christ and of the necessity of that fellowship for the discipleship and maturity of the new community of believers.

Third, it is vitally important for these new believers to have fellowship with the existing community of God's people. Just as with the Jerusalem Council, the necessity of believer's fellowshiping together will likely spur an Acts 15 process that will result in both sides reaching a compromise that has both lifestyle and wider community implications. As in Acts 15, both sides will need to make concessions for the sake of fellowship. Whatever concessions are made will not affect the purity of the gospel; they will only reflect the deep love, respect, and brotherhood resulting from new family created by those who are in Christ.

CHAPTER 4

MISSIOLOGICAL FORMATION OF INSIDER MOVEMENTS

It is evident that the development of Insider missiology has not primarily grown out of biblical reflection by the fact that Insider proponents are scrambling to find biblical support to validate their current practices. Furthermore, it is clear that the missiological development of Insider methodology has followed closely along the theoretical suggestions of several key faculty members from the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. In particular, Kraft, Gilliland, and Woodberry have paved the way for the current practices in Insider methodology. In order to complete the assessment of Insider Movements, this chapter presents and interacts with the key missiological ideas that form the unstated foundation of Insider practice.

The lack of a comprehensive defense of the Insider methodology means that Insider proponents have not presented a foundation from which their methodology springs. John and Anna Travis have done the most comprehensive work in attempting to present ten premises that shape Insider methodology:

1. For Muslims, culture, politics, and religion are nearly inseparable, making changing religions a total break with society.
2. Salvation is by grace alone through relationship/allegiance to Jesus Christ. Changing religions is not a guarantee of salvation.
3. Jesus' primary concern was the establishment of the kingdom of God, not the founding of a new religion.

4. The term Christian is often misleading—not all called Christian are in Christ, and not all in Christ are called Christian.
5. Often gaps exist between what people actually believe and what their religion or group officially teaches.
6. Some Islamic beliefs and practices are in keeping with the Word of God; some are not.
7. Salvation involves a process. Often the exact point of transfer from the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light is not known.
8. A follower of Christ needs to be set free by Jesus from spiritual bondages in order to thrive in his/her life with Him.
9. Due to the lack of church structure and organization, C5 movements must have an exceptionally high reliance on the Spirit and the Word as their primary source of instruction.
10. A contextual theology can only properly be developed through a dynamic interaction of actual ministry experience, the specific leading of the Spirit and the study of the Word of God.¹

Yet, even in this list, the *way* Insider proponents approach a particular premise is not offered. For instance, in premise 6 above, the Travises include a discussion of critical contextualization, the problem of syncretism, and their approach to deciding what practices to avoid. As far as their discussion goes, it is a brief and helpful glance into *how* insider methodology is being implemented. Using the analogy of a website, what the Travises present is the part that users look at, interact with, and use. It is full of instructional text, pictures, and other helpful descriptions. What this chapter intends to do is to go underneath the exterior interface and look at the source code that, when combined together, creates and supports all the functions the website offers.

The discussion revolving around Insider Movements is fundamentally a

¹See John Travis and Anna Travis, “Appropriate Approaches in Muslim Contexts,” in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 403-09.

discussion about contextualization. As chapter 1s introduction to contextualization indicated, the term has a wide semantic range, not only among the ecumenical community that coined the term, but also among the evangelical community. It is, therefore, vital that the particular way Insider proponents talk about contextualization is carefully located within the wide variety of suggestions and meanings. The first section of this chapter will present a number of models of contextualization, focusing on the Critical model of contextualization preferred by the missions faculty at Fuller Seminary. The second section then focuses on the specific components present within the Insider proponents' use of the Critical model. The last section interacts with the strengths and weaknesses of the Critical model as it is used by Insider proponents. Though there is no comprehensive presentation of the missiological components that make up Insider methodology, what has been written by Insider proponents provides sufficient evidence to identify and assess the missiological formation of Insider methodology.

Models of Contextualization

Cultural sensitivity is not a new missiological phenomenon. In Protestant missions, Adoniram Judson conducted worship services in a style designed to mimic a Buddhist place of worship.² Hudson Taylor adopted local dress and other customs in his attempt to reach the interior Chinese.³ Using the term "accommodation," the Catholic Jesuits led by Matteo Ricci in China attempted to re-use Chinese festivals, religious rites, and other cultural forms in the growing Chinese Catholic community in the sixteenth

²Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 135.

³Ibid., 188-89.

century.⁴ Under the term “indigenization,” Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson introduced the three selfs of the indigenous church.⁵ However, after World War II and the decolonization efforts of the European powers, missiologists began to feel that indigenization in the form of self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting churches did not create truly indigenous churches. A Western face still lurked underneath the structures, forms, and agenda of the “indigenous” churches.⁶

In the face of the growing sense that true indigeneity needed something more than the traditional three-self church approach, and along with a growing realization of the importance of cultural anthropology to the missionary task, Shoki Coe and Aharon Sapsejian—the directors of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches (WCC)—began using the term “contextualization” in the 1972 TEF report, *Ministry in Context*. As already mentioned in chapter 1, the Conciliar originators of the term were seeking to go beyond the practice of indigenizing and to interact more deeply with the context of the indigenous people. The ecumenical group was especially concerned with the need to address issues of injustice, poverty, and human suffering that was increasing in the Third World.

For about a decade, the term contextualization was a flashpoint in a wider debate between liberal ecumenical theologians represented by the WCC and conservative evangelical missionary/theologians eventually represented by the Lausanne International

⁴A. Scott Moreau, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), s.v. “Accommodation,” by George R. Hunsberger.

⁵*Ibid.*, s.v. “Indigenous Churches,” by John Mark Terry.

⁶Taber, “Contextualization, Indigenization, and/or Transformation,” in *The Gospel and Islam: a 1979 Compendium* (Monrovia: MARC, 1979), 144-46.

Congress of World Evangelism. Because the term originated with the WCC, many missionaries who advocated a traditional view of evangelism and the importance of historic orthodoxy were deeply suspicious of the term. For instance, James Buswell asserted that “contextualization” does not necessarily take context in deeper consideration than “indigenous,” and argued that indigeneity is neither a static metaphor nor past-orientated.⁷ Nevertheless, the tide of popular sentiment formed through the writings of Alan Tippett, Ralph Winter, Charles Taber, Charles Kraft, Paul Hiebert, Harvie Conn, Dean Gilliland, David Hesselgrave, Bruce Nicholls and Bruce Fleming eventually brushed aside the concerns and made contextualization standard jargon in missiological circles.⁸

One of the difficulties in pinpointing how a particular author is using the term contextualization is the significant variety of tasks contextualization covers. For instance, theologians generally discuss contextualizing *theology*, while linguists discuss contextualizing gospel *communication* and missiologists generally suggest contextualizing *ritual forms*. Nicholls describes these three tasks as two levels of contextualization: cultural and theological.⁹ Cultural contextualization is more

⁷James O. Buswell, III “Contextualization: Theory, Tradition, and Method,” in *Theology and Mission: Papers and Responses Prepared for the Consultation on Theology and Mission, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, School of World Mission and Evangelism, March 22-25, 1976*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 93-94. Despite his complaint, in this paper Buswell capitulates to the use of the term contextualization and limits its use biblically.

⁸Interestingly, Kraft avoids the term “contextualization” in his 1979 publication of *Christianity in Culture* because the term still elicits volatile reactions from the evangelical community. Instead, he uses the term “indigenous.” In the 25th edition of *Christianity in Culture*, Kraft has sparingly introduced the term but uses both terms as synonyms to describe the “dynamic relationship . . . Christians are intended to have with their culture” (Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 2nd ed. [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009], xxv).

⁹Bruce J. Nicholls, *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture* (Downers Grove, IL:

phenomenological and concerned with the visible elements of culture. As a result, it utilizes the social sciences extensively. Theological contextualization deals with deeper, less visible worldview issues and the resulting moral and ethical values.

Comprehensive contextualization will interact holistically with both levels, but writers usually emphasize only one of the tasks within those levels. Moreover, within the variety of tasks contextualization covers, each writer a different degree of authority to the context to determine the boundaries of contextualization. This chapter will demonstrate that Insider proponents' starting point is culture, and their discussion revolves largely around cultural contextualization.¹⁰ It is important to note that while the Insider discussion revolves around the appropriate use of forms and gospel communication, theology is also in the process of being contextualized.¹¹ At this point in the discussion, the theological contextualization happening in Insider Movements is almost completely unknown.

InterVarsity Press, 1979; reprint, Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2003), 24.

¹⁰For instance, Rick Brown has been instrumental in presenting a contextualized communication and translation strategy aimed to address the Muslim cognitive difficulty with the Sonship of Jesus. See Rick Brown, "Explaining the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslims Contexts," *IJFM* 22 (2005): 91-96; idem, "Muslim Worldviews and the Bible: Bridges and Barriers (Part I-III:)," *IJFM* 23 (2007): 5-12; 48-56, 93-100; idem, "Contextualization without Syncretism," *IJFM* 23 (2006): 127-33; idem, "Selecting and Using Scripture Portions Effectively in Frontier Missions," *IJFM* 18 (2001): 10-25; idem, "The 'Son of God': Understanding the Messianic Titles of Jesus," *IJFM* 17 (2000): 41-52; idem, "Translating the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslims Contexts," *IJFM* 22 (2005): 135-45; idem, "Who is Allah?" *IJFM* 23 (2007): 79-86; idem, "Why Muslims are Repelled by the Term 'Son of God,'" *EMQ* 43 (2007): 422-29. Other Insider proponents, most notably the Common Ground consultant group, attempt to find theological grounds for accepting the prophethood of Muhammad. See Kevin Higgins, "Identity, Integrity and Insider Movements," *IJFM* 23 (2006): 121.

¹¹Information on how the gospel is being theologically contextualized is scant because of the reluctance of missionaries—concerned with security and the safety of Insiders—to get too close to these movements. However, one example is the ethnohermeneutical approach of reappropriation described in Duane Alexander Miller, "Reappropriation: An Accommodationist Hermeneutic of Islamic Christianity," *St. Francis* 5, no.3 (2009): 3-36.

The result of the extremely nuanced conversations within a wide variety of theological communities is that the term “contextualization” can mean far more than a particular community or even a particular writer intends. Therefore, in order to bring clarity to the use of the term, a variety of taxonomies have been suggested to describe the types or models of contextualization.

Robert Schreiter’s *Constructing Local Theologies*

Schreiter was the Dean of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago in the late 1970s, and developed a series of lectures in 1977 that eventually became the book *Constructing Local Theologies*.¹² His emphasis is not on the adaptation of Christian forms, but on Christian teaching. He suggests three classifications to describe emerging models of contextualized theology.

The first classification includes translation models, which Schreiter describes as the most common. In translation models, localizing theology is a two step procedure illustrated by a kernel and the husk. In the first step, the Christian message is freed from its previous cultural context and in the next step translated dynamically into the receiving context.¹³ Foremost among the translation models is the dynamic-equivalence of Kraft, which extends Eugene Nida’s translation principle to a theological procedure.

The translation model is generally the first model utilized in pastoral settings because the context of a growing faith community demands instant adaptation of ritual so that Christianity is incarnated into the receiving community. Schreiter, however, lists

¹²Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984).

¹³*Ibid.*, 7.

two weaknesses of the translation approach. First, the translation approach, at times, incorporates an uncritically positive understanding of culture:

Cultural analysis is not done not on the terms of the culture investigated, but only to find parallels with patterns in previously contextualized Christianity (i.e. American Christianity). Questions are rarely asked as to whether there really are such parallels, whether the parallels have the same place of significance in the new culture, or whether other more significant patterns might better be drawn upon.¹⁴

The second weakness described by Schreiter is the inadequacy of the kernel and husk theory. It assumes a supra-cultural meaning that can be divorced from the form of the original revelation and minimizes the intrinsic effect form and meaning have on each other.¹⁵

Schreiter calls the second classification the adaptation model of localizing theology. These efforts usually appear in the second stage of development, and generally attempt to take an existing system of philosophy or systematic theology and adapt it to a local context. The strength of this approach is that the foreign system often provides a deep level of understanding about the local culture. Yet, at the same time, the very foreignness of the system prevents the localized theology from ever becoming truly local.

Another type of adaptation is that of Vincent Donovan, which he presented in *Christianity Rediscovered*. The gospel seed is planted in local soil and allowed to develop, as long as it remains faithful to the apostolic faith.¹⁶ While Schreiter commends

¹⁴Ibid., 8. In other words, Schreiter is concerned with a naive combination of form and meaning.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 11. See Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982). It is interesting that Schreiter places Donovan in the adaptation category, even though it seems that Donovan is actually doing more translating and dynamic equivalence than adaption. See, for instance, his suggestion for baptism. However, Donovan includes in his work an African Maasai adaptation of the Apostle's Creed. So, perhaps, that is the basis for Schreiter's classification.

Donovan's approach, he also recognizes that most contexts do not offer a *tabula rasa*. Certain perceptions and patterns of Christianity are already formed within the receptor culture and those patterns are often already associated with basic Christianity. Because of the interconnectedness of the modern world, the development of a native and pure Christianity completely outside the influence of western Christianity is extremely unlikely.

Schreiter calls the third classification "contextual models of theologizing" and lists two different models: ethnographic approaches and liberation approaches.¹⁷ By ethnographic approaches, Schreiter means those theologies that are concerned with identity, like Black Theology or Feminist Theology. While the ethnographic theologies have the benefit of starting with the context and the felt needs of the receptors, the danger of starting with the culture often creates a cultural blindness to those things the gospel should confront. In a similar way, liberation theology starts with the felt needs of the context, especially the dynamics of social change. Yet, these models are generally so controlled by the social situation that the biblical witness and counsel of other churches are drowned out by the cacophony of social distress.¹⁸

Altogether, Schreiter's classification is rudimentary and incomplete in several key areas. Yet, the reason for the inadequacy of his classification system is because his main purpose is to describe the localization of theology, not necessarily to contextualize Christianity as an entire package. His critique of the models he describes remains when assessing particular models of contextualization.

¹⁷Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 13.

Stephen Bevans's *Models of Contextual Theology*

Catholic scholar, Stephen Bevans, introduced what has become the most influential classification system describing models of contextualization. In 1985, Bevans published a small article in *Missiology* introducing his five models and then expanded the article into a book in 1992, which was revised and expanded to include a sixth model in 2002.¹⁹

Bevans's models are formed by the way four different elements are combined in the attempt to localize theology:

Contextual theology can be defined as a way of doing theology in which one takes into account: the spirit and message of the gospel; the tradition (identity) of the Christian people; the culture in which one is theologizing; and social change in that culture, whether brought about by western technological process or the grass-roots struggle for equality, justice, and liberation.²⁰

He lists the six models as Countercultural, Translation, Synthetic, Praxis, Transcendental, and Anthropological.²¹ He places the models along a spectrum that demonstrates how the models weight the actual biblical message and Christian tradition (past), the role of

¹⁸Ibid., 15-16.

¹⁹Stephen Bevans, "Models of Contextual Theology," *Missiology* 13 (1985): 185-202; idem, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992); and idem, *Models of Contextual Theology* rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002). The chronology is important because Gilliland borrowed heavily from Bevans in the Appendix of *The Word among Us*, which was published in 1989. See Dean S. Gilliland, "Appendix," in *The World Among Us*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989). See also idem, "The Incarnation as Matrix for Appropriate Theologies," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005) 493-519. The vast majority of literature dealing with models of contextualization interact only with the five models listed in the 1985 article and the first edition of *Models of Contextual Theology*. The editions referred to in subsequent references will be indicated by the publication date.

²⁰Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (1992), 1. The revised edition only lists the two elements of the experience of the past and present. Since the first definition is more descriptive of what he actually means, it is used here. See Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, (2002), xvi.

²¹Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (2002), 32.

culture, and the necessity of social change (in the present context). His diagram is presented below:²²

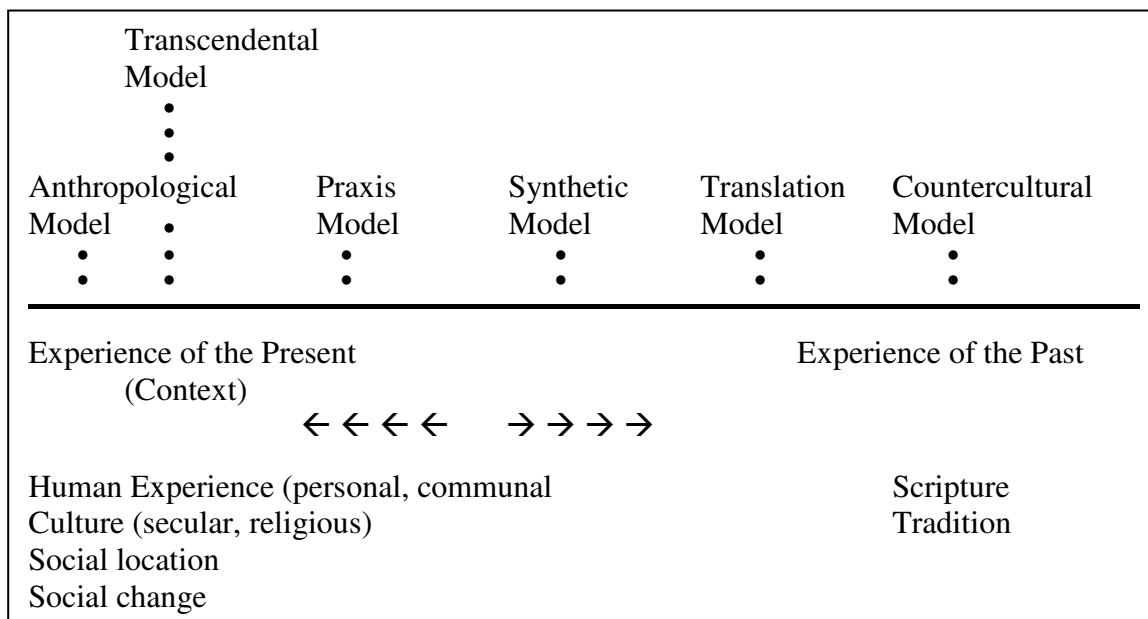


Figure 7: Bevans's map of the models of contextual theology

The translation model of contextualization is almost exactly like Schreiter's model of the same name. Charles Kraft's *Christianity in Culture* provides most of the material Bevans uses to formulate the particulars of the translation model. Fundamentally, this model of contextualization takes the principles of translation and applies them to theologizing. Formal-correspondence is the approach that attempts to keep much of the same grammatical structure, using a word-for-word style that can result in a wooden translation that is, at times, incomprehensible. Dynamic-equivalence, on the

²²Reproduced from Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (2002), 32.

other hand, does not attempt to translate the *words* but the ideas and meanings behind the words. Translation, in other words, is idiomatic.²³ Kraft's model of dynamic equivalence will be treated later in this chapter. For now, it is important to reaffirm Schreiter's criticism of this model. It assumes that a supra-cultural meaning can be stripped of its forms and given an entirely new shape within a new context. It also assumes that the context is generally a neutral vehicle and fertile soil for the gospel seed.²⁴

The Anthropological model is the system that takes the context as the most determinative and gives both the Christian identity and biblical text the smallest roles in the contextualization process. This model often depends on a fulfillment reading of Scripture and sees revelation as a continual process.²⁵ It is fundamentally man-centered in two important respects. First, the model is primarily concerned with seeking the wellness of the human being in context and placing value on the human person: "Human experience, as it is limited and yet realized in culture, social change, and geographical and historical circumstances, is considered the basic criterion of judgment as to whether a particular contextual expression is genuine or not."²⁶ Second, the Anthropological model makes use of cultural anthropology to arrive at a clear understanding of the particular needs and issues in a given context.

Bevans's Anthropological model is similar to Schreiter's contextual classification and is intrinsically shaped by the "special concern with authentic cultural

²³Ibid., 39.

²⁴Ibid., 46.

²⁵Ibid., 54.

²⁶Ibid., 55.

identity, [where] human nature, and therefore human context, is good, holy, and valuable.”²⁷ Warren demonstrates the parallels between this model and the sentiments expressed by Insider proponents:

When we approach the man of another faith than our own it will be in a spirit of expectancy to find how God has been speaking to him and what new understandings of the grace and love of God we may ourselves discover in this encounter.

Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are standing is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men’s dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was here before our arrival.²⁸

While this model of contextualization has the benefit of taking the cultural context seriously, it falls prey to a naive view of the receiving culture, in addition to having a non-biblical view of revelation and the prophetic role of the Bible in a culture.²⁹

The Praxis model of contextualization is mainly concerned with social change. It falls within the liberation approach to contextualization. The Praxis model focuses attention on the fact that theology ought to be practical for a given context, and that Christianity is not purely an inward faith characterized only by personal holiness; godliness is always immediately followed by responsible Christian action. Liberation theology is the most developed version of the Praxis model, but the model includes any approach that highly values Christian action. Usually, the Christian action envisioned by the Praxis model takes place in the sphere of political and social action, and is accompanied by the following view of revelation: “The Praxis model understands revelation as the presence of God in history—in the events of everyday life in social and

²⁷Ibid., 55-56.

²⁸Quoted in Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, (2002), 56.

²⁹Ibid., 61.

economic structures, in situations of oppression, in the experience of the poor and the marginalized.”³⁰

The Synthetic model presented by Bevans is a conglomeration of all the models: “This is the model that tries to balance the insights of each of the [models] . . . and reaches out also to insights from other people’s contexts—their experiences, their cultures, and their ways of thinking.”³¹ The synthesis of a given synthetic model of contextualization is controlled by the demands and needs of the context. Since each context offers points of continuity with the human experience, and discontinuity with other contexts around the world, each situation requires a different and nuanced approach. In other words, the practitioners of a Synthetic model borrow and modify elements from the other models as the situation dictates. While the end result is quite diverse, the *modus operandi* of the Synthetic model tends to be uniform: dialogue. “It is only when women and men are in dialogue that we have true human growth. Each participant in a context has something to give to the other, and each context has something from which it needs to be exorcised.”³² The weakness of this model is its tendency to abhor exclusivism and move toward universalism. Bevans locates Schreiter within this model.

The Transcendental model depends on the philosophical thought of Immanuel Kant and has personal human experience as its starting point for theology. But, while the starting point is human experience, the model presupposes that that experience can be

³⁰Ibid., 75.

³¹Ibid., 88.

³²Ibid., 91.

meaningful to others when shared. Since revelation is perceived in this model to be something intensely personal—not located in the words of Scripture but in the human encounter with the Scripture—the Transcendental model seeks to share the experience of divine encounter with others. Another basic presupposition is that “the human mind . . . operates in identical ways in all cultures and at all periods of history.”³³ Obviously, this model’s major weakness is that the universal sameness of the human mind is a western philosophical proposition that is meaningless to the rest of the world. The abstract nature of this model makes it difficult to use, understand, and appreciate, which is why it is one of the least used models of contextual theology.

Last, Bevans’s newest model is the Countercultural model, which views culture as something that must be prophetically confronted and changed with the gospel. “What this model realizes more than any other model is how some contexts are simply antithetical to the gospel and need to be challenged by the gospel’s liberating and healing power.”³⁴ While this model recognizes that the challenge of the gospel message needs to be communicated in appropriate ways for the context, and that sectarianism must be avoided, the means of that communication is generally the church-as-subculture living in contrast to the macro-community. The weaknesses of this model are its tendencies to be anti-cultural as opposed to countercultural and to incrementally slide toward sectarianism.

Taken together, these models of contextualization demonstrate an enormous variety of approaches, presuppositions, theology, and methodology. Both Schreiter and

³³Ibid., 105.

Bevans are writing to the ecumenical liberal community and the vast majority of the models they present fail to uphold a biblical view of Scripture and revelation. Nevertheless, each model presents an approach that offers elements usable for evangelical practitioners. Gilliland presents a modified version of Bevans's and Schreiter's models in his presentation of how the faculty at the School of World Mission at Fuller approaches contextualization.³⁵

Gilliland's Synthetic Model of Contextualization

By all appearances, the model that Gilliland presents is best classified as a Synthetic model of contextualization because it uses a variety of different approaches depending on the context. However, Gilliland is suspicious of Bevans's Synthetic model because he believes it will eventually slide into universalism. So, he differentiates between the Critical model and the Synthetic model by presenting a narrower definition of Bevan's Synthetic model. Gilliland highlights the fact that the type of ecumenical dialogue preferred by the WCC is the most striking example of the Synthetic model at work, and he critiques the Synthetic model because of the universalist position of the WCC dialogue. Additionally, because the Synthetic process can only be implemented by highly trained academics, it suffers the same weaknesses as Schreiter's adaptation

³⁴Ibid., 118.

³⁵There are significant and important differences in how individual members of the missions faculty at Fuller approach contextualization, and those distinctions are somewhat lost in the following discussion. The reason for not making those distinctions clear in the following section is the precedent established by Woodberry, who writes of the missiology taught at Fuller as a cohesive unit. See Dudley J. Woodberry, "Contextualization among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars," *IJFM* 13 (1996): 182; and Gilliland, "Appendix," 313-17.

approach.³⁶

Even though Bevans places the Translation and Anthropological models on opposite sides of his spectrum, the missions faculty at Fuller accepts a combination of elements from both models as the preferred model for contextualization. Gilliland calls this combination the “Critical Model,” springing from Hiebert’s proposed process of critical contextualization. Given the widely different presuppositions of the translation and anthropological models, the combination holds a number of tensions. Yet, Gilliland is confident that the model will result in a balanced and culturally appropriate Christianity. His definition and defense of the model is here quoted at length:

The School of World Mission has made use of both the linguistic (translational) and anthropological models because of the facility of these models for such issues as form and meaning and dynamic equivalence. The Critical Model has the advantage of taking both the culture and the Scriptures seriously and asks the church as a body to participate in the hermeneutical task.

Critical contextualization is carried out through an exegesis of the culture as one exercise and a fresh study of corresponding biblical themes as another. With the culture and biblical information in hand, these two sources are critically reviewed with the objective of making a new response, which is culturally authentic and biblically appropriate. As culture passes through the biblical filters, some existing forms will be brought across the bridge, so to speak, while others can be used in the Christian context with modification. Others must be rejected. The goal of the critical method is to arrive at contextualized practices which have the consensus of the redeemed community. Critical contextualization must take responsibility for the wider sociopolitical issues, or it is in danger of being a narrow cultural exercise. Further, it must be balanced by insights from historical theology and checked against theologies developed outside the particular locale if it is to be a responsible discipline.³⁷

³⁶Gilliland, “Appendix,” 316. Gilliland does not emphasize that ecumenical theologians have usually turned to this model as the grid to guide their universalist dialogue with other faiths. It is likely Gilliland wants to separate himself from that group and their theological orientation. Whatever the case, it is apparent that Insider methodology is just as difficult to implement in a context as the Synthetic model that Gilliland criticizes. Woodberry relates that the evangelistic work being done in the area under study did not truly thrive until contextualized methods learned at Fuller were implemented. In other words, according to Woodberry, it took a specialist to start the process of contextualization.

³⁷Gilliland, “Appendix,” 317. Even though “The School of World Mission” at Fuller

The critical model of contextualization takes its name from Paul Hiebert's seminal article, "Critical Contextualization."³⁸ Hiebert's process of critical contextualization is perhaps the definitive word as it relates to the contextualization process for evangelicals. He offers his process in response to two abuses, which he calls "rejection of contextualization" and "uncritical contextualization." When messengers reject contextualization the messenger's culture is fused with the biblical message and results in double conversion. Uncritical contextualization, on the other hand, is where old cultural practices from the receiver's culture are uncritically incorporated into the church with no regard given to, or perhaps, no awareness of, the pagan meanings brought with them.³⁹ In either case, syncretism is the result.

In contrast, Hiebert offers a four step contextualization process that aims to deal biblically with the old, non-Christian meanings associated with cultural forms. First, when confronted with deciding how the Christian faith should inform culturally-based customs, an individual or congregation decides to deal biblically with all aspects of life. Second, the local leader or missionary guides the congregation in analyzing the traditional customs. Third, the leaders help the congregation examine how the Bible

subscribes to the "critical model," it should be noted that both Hiebert and Kraft were, at the time of this writing, both faculty members at Fuller. A vast distance exists between Kraft and Hiebert's approaches to contextualization. This point illustrates the fuzziness of language and terminology in the contextualization conversation.

³⁸Paul G. Hiebert "Critical Contextualization," *IBMR* 11 (1987): 104-12; also idem, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 75-92. Hiebert's process is most often referred to as a model of contextualization, that, depending on how the word "model" is defined, is generally true. Throughout the following pages I refer to Critical contextualization as a process rather than a model, because it is generally used as only one component of a complex combination of anthropological and theological interactions within a given context.

³⁹Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 184-86.

speaks to the issue. Finally, the entire group critically evaluates the custom in light of their new biblical insights.⁴⁰ In combination with the self-theologizing process that Hiebert recommends, the critical contextualization process provides sufficient checks and balances to produce a deep level of Christian impact on the culture while, at the same time, guarding against syncretism. Gilliland's reliance on Hiebert's contextualization process is clear.

Though Hiebert's proposal is widely accepted as the most applicable evangelical process of contextualization, missionaries or pastors undertaking "critical contextualization" may end up with widely different methods and results. Several reasons for this divergence exist. First, Hiebert's suggestion is better classified as a process of contextualization and not a model. Critical contextualization is a proposal for how missionaries and new believing communities should pursue the contextualization of the gospel. Hiebert's critical contextualization only comes into effect once a particular model of contextualization has produced results of some kind. Critical contextualization is a guide to judge and balance those results. Second, the Anthropological model and the Translational model have two different starting points. One begins with Scripture and is informed by the cultural context, while the other begins with culture and is informed by Scripture. The starting point inevitably affects outcome, even if only minutely. Third, critical contextualization—whether one begins with Scripture or culture—is only going to be as good as the exegetical skills and theological acumen of those leading the process. Two missionaries in the same context will produce two different results nearly every time

⁴⁰Ibid., 186-90.

if they approach the biblical text with different theological presuppositions and different levels of exegetical ability. The complexity of dealing with the three horizons in missional hermeneutics dramatically underscores the necessity of robust theological training of missionaries and strategists.

The critical model of contextualization presented by the missions faculty at Fuller in the book, *The Word among Us*, and implemented by Insider proponents is the Synthetic model. At heart, it attempts to balance the benefits of a number of models as well as to take the insights from the receiving culture seriously in the contextualization process.⁴¹ Additionally, it relies on “theories of doctrinal development that understand doctrine as emerging from the complex interaction of Christian faith and changes in culture, society, and thought forms.”⁴² The form this argument takes in Insider literature is what I have called in chapter 1 the “wait and see” proposal, which acts almost like a trump card in the sense that Insider proponents feel that time will validate their efforts because emerging movements will increasingly move toward orthodoxy as long as they have a good Bible translation.⁴³

The tension between the Translation and Anthropological models is demonstrated acutely in the conflict surrounding Insider Movements. Though Insider proponents have used the critical contextualization process in their contextualization

⁴¹Bevans, *Models of Contextualization* (2002), 88.

⁴²Ibid., 88-89.

⁴³Charles Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors among Muslims,” in *Media In Islamic Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974), 144; John Travis, “Four Responses to Timothy C. Tennent’s ‘Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques,’” *IJFM* 23 (2006): 124-25. Chapter 5 interacts with the “wait and see” proposal.

efforts, the anthropological concern for the context drives Insider proponents to maintain socio-religious insider identity for new believers.⁴⁴ The particular elements and emphases of their model (i.e., how the synthesis between the Anthropological and Translation models takes place) is the topic of the next section.

The Critical Model of Contextualization

Kraft's translational model of dynamic-equivalence is by far both the most evident and the most influential force behind Insider methodology. While Kraft himself may not have worked out the implications of his theoretical suggestions for Insider contexts, as chapter 2 demonstrated, C5 methodology is simply the logical conclusion of his theory of ethnotheologizing.

It is difficult to locate the genesis of some of the anthropological ideas present in Insider methodology because Kraft's model is a blend of communication and translation theory along with insights from cultural anthropology. Many of the anthropological elements in Insider methodology can also be found in Kraft's work. Yet, as Kraft freely indicates, his presentation of those elements leans heavily on the work of many other faculty members at Fuller, principally that of Alan Tippett and Paul Hiebert. Since Insider missiology has mainly emerged from graduates of Fuller, it is inappropriate to credit only one member of that faculty for the overall strategy. Consequently, while this section mainly traces the missiological suggestions of Kraft that form the basis of

⁴⁴See Travis and Travis, "Appropriate Approaches in Muslim Contexts," 406. Travis calls critical contextualization both a model and a framework. However, as a framework it only provides guidance on how to gauge an already implemented contextualization model. Kevin Higgins relates how his organization, Global Teams, uses Hiebert's fourth self (self-theologizing) in the critical contextualization process implemented by socio-religious insiders. See Kevin Higgins, "The Key to Insider Movements: The 'Devoted's' of Acts," *IJFM* 21 (2004): 160.

Insider methodology, other foundational missiology suggestions from Fuller faculty are also included.

The Dynamic Equivalence of Charles Kraft

Kraft's seminal book, *Christianity in Culture*, was first formulated as a textbook for his seminary class in 1973. It was officially published in 1979, slightly revised for the 25th anniversary edition in 2005, and has never gone out of print. For over a quarter of a century, Kraft's ideas have been foundational in one of the most influential missionary training centers in the world. Though he has written prolifically concerning contextualization, his textbook will be the primary source used to understand his position.

Presuppositions. One of the most significant tensions between the Translation and the Anthropological models is the role of culture in the contextualization process. Kraft argues for an extremely high view of culture. Though his use of culture does not completely belong in Bevans's Anthropological model because he does not consistently assign the controls to the context, his starting point in dynamic-equivalence is culture. He argues that God is supracultural, and he uses culture as a vehicle for interaction with human beings. God has shown his determination to communicate his truths through culture, both in the Old Testament and in the New, by using the *lingua franca* of the people.⁴⁵

For Kraft, theology is bound by culture, and it is not appropriate to transfer one theological model to a different culture. It is therefore necessary to develop

⁴⁵Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 88-90.

“ethnotheologies”—theologies that are developed within a culture and for that culture. Anthropologically-driven hermeneutics are used to uncover the meaning behind the forms of the Bible.⁴⁶ The meaning is then wrapped into the cultural context of the receptor culture. Neither the form nor the language used to communicate the meaning is particularly important to God; rather, “it is the meaning conveyed by a particular doctrine that is of primary concern to God.”⁴⁷

A vast majority of Kraft’s articulation of dynamic-equivalence derives from communication theory (Sender [S] → Message [M] → Receptor [R]), a result of which is the “receptor oriented” approach for effective cross cultural communication.⁴⁸ The ultimate meaning is formulated within the receiver’s head. Therefore, the message needs to be tailored as much as possible to the frame of reference of the receiver. Foundational to his model and theory of receptor orientated communication is that meaning is only ever approximate in the communication process: what is communicated may or may not be wholly grasped by the receiver. Additionally, cultural conditioning plays a vital role in the communication process. The frame of reference of the receiver has not only been developed by a long acculturation process, but words and forms all have a range of meaning. Therefore, it is essential that the cross cultural communicator and the receiver

⁴⁶See Larry Caldwell, “Receptor-Orientated Hermeneutics: Reclaiming the Hermeneutical Methodologies of the New Testament For Bible Interpreters in the Twenty-First Century” (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990). Caldwell’s dissertation is an application of dynamic-equivalence in the realm of hermeneutics. Kraft was the Chair of Caldwell’s committee, and employed Caldwell as an editorial assistant. Kraft also worked closely with Caldwell on projects such as the publication of Alan Tippett’s compilation of essays found in Alan Tippett, *Introduction to Missiology* (Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, 1987).

⁴⁷Kraft, *Christianity In Culture*, 93.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 115.

agree on what that cultural symbols actually mean.

As mentioned in the chapter 3, revelation to Kraft is primarily the communication of God through “interacting with his human receptors.”⁴⁹ Since God seeks to be understood and knows that we are limited by our cultural framework, his purpose in revelation is to stimulate the desired meanings in our heads. Therefore, God is receptor-oriented in his communication with us. That is, he speaks to us through “credible human communicators [who] relate God’s messages specifically to the lives of the receptors and lead the latter to revelational discoveries.”⁵⁰ As mentioned in the last chapter’s section of the casebook theory of revelation, Kraft asserts that God is continually communicating something about himself in receptor cultures around the world in the same way that he revealed himself to the Old and New Testament writers. So, the Bible, in Kraft’s view, is not God’s revelation to man; it is instead the basis of God’s continuing revelation and the measure by which all contemporary “revelations” are to be gauged.⁵¹

Kraft affirms the inspiration of the meanings of the Bible rather than its words.⁵² It contains supracultural truths, but they are wrapped in a cultural cocoon because of the receptor-orientated nature of God’s communication to the Jewish people. For him, the Bible is an inspired casebook which provides models and methods designed to guide our communication, giving us both a yardstick to measure how we are

⁴⁹Ibid., 134.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., 147.

⁵²Ibid., 160.

communicating and a leash to keep us from overstepping.

Kraft and conversion. One of the foundational elements of Kraft's model is the way he describes the conversion process. Kraft first makes a distinction between actual Christian conversion and cultural conversion. True conversion does not entail responding to the gospel in the cultural categories of the messenger's culture, or of taking on the trappings of the messenger's culture in the process. According to Kraft, the Western missionary has conceived of conversion to Christianity primarily along cultural lines, highlighting Western morals and spiritual needs and ignoring the receiver's culture and felt needs. For Kraft, this traditional missionary requirement leads to a new kind of Law and commits the Judaizer's heresy of proselytism, which required conversion to Judaism in order to become a Christian.⁵³ Conversion, ultimately, is the changing of allegiances to the creator God as revealed in the Bible. While that change of allegiance results in new behavior, that behavior is determined by the cultural categories of the receiving culture as impacted by Scripture.

Leaning heavily on his anthropological background, Kraft notes that Christian conversion is ultimately about the beginning of a relationship. Quoting Maslow, he states that that relationship "involves many 'peak experiences,' of which the first may or may not be the most significant."⁵⁴ The evangelical community often presents the conversion of Paul as the standard model of conversion, a dramatic experience that first generation

⁵³"I fear that the heresy of the Judaizers is perpetrated every time a Western-originated rule forbids the baptism of a polygamist to whom God has vouchsafed his Spirit." (Charles H. Kraft, "Christian Conversion or Cultural Conversion?" in *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft* [Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001], 401.)

⁵⁴Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 259.

Christians easily identify with. But Kraft challenges the Pauline experience as the guiding model of conversion by asking,

But what about the disciples, when were they converted? And the majority of the major characters of the Old Testament? There is no doubt that these people were consciously committed to God. But how did their commitment come about? Must we postulate for every one of them a dramatic type of experience that somehow escaped the notice of those who recorded their experience? Certainly not.⁵⁵

The key concept of conversion is that of “turning” or “returning.” It is a reversal from wherever one is headed toward God, obeying him rather than rebelling against him. Especially in the New Testament, the concept of turning is united with the idea of repentance of whatever error or sin that leads one away from God. But, anthropologically speaking,

*the requirement is specified as a function, a dynamic response to an invitation by God. The form that that response takes is not determined once and for all by God or by some statement of Scripture or tradition The biblical focus is upon a relational interaction that may be entered into via a number of culturally and psychologically appropriate ways. Each of these relationships is both entered into and continued on the basis of a human faith-response (allegiance) to the divine invitation.*⁵⁶

Starting point plus process. The phenomenological model undergirding the above statements is something that Kraft calls the “starting point plus process.” The dependence of Insider methodology on this model is seen in premise seven above. Taking Hiebert’s lead by using a mathematical concept called bounded sets and fuzzy sets, Kraft says that the focus is not on the position and uniformity of the points (i.e., behavioral changes, faith statements, etc.) but on the orientation and direction of the

⁵⁵Ibid., 260.

⁵⁶Ibid., 261, emphasis Kraft’s.

points.⁵⁷ Traditionally, Western Christianity has used a bounded set model to determine who is in the community of faith and who is not.

Kraft's missionary experience under his mission board is a classic example of bounded set Christianity. The mission board required a six month training course before they would allow a candidate to be baptized, and believer's baptism by immersion was a requirement for church membership. In other words, a prospective member had to believe certain things and live a certain way, and then undergo a specific entry rite before being admitted as a church member. If a man was a polygamist, for instance, he had to first divorce all but one of his wives, preferably keeping the eldest. Additionally, certain cultural elements were conceived by the missionaries as evil and demonic (drums, dancing, alcohol, tobacco, etc.). A person had to reject these cultural elements before they could be admitted into church membership. The candidate's meeting certain external criteria was the guiding element of the mission board's allowing them to become church members.⁵⁸ The mission board's bounded set could be diagrammed as follows in Figure 8.⁵⁹

A fuzzy set, on the other hand, focuses on the direction and orientation of movement. The line of a fuzzy set is drawn, not by proximity to the ideal, but by direction toward it. Kraft sees the biblical data describing God's interaction with

⁵⁷Ibid., 186-200. See also Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections*, 107-36.

⁵⁸The driving elements of the mission board's criteria were a mixture of theological concerns (i.e., the cognitive element of the Gospel), fear of syncretism, and the identification-mores of evangelical Christianity during the 1950s—monogamy, teetotalism, etc.

⁵⁹This diagram is modified from Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections*, 112. See also Rick Brown, "Biblical Muslims," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 69; and the same diagram in Leith and Andrea Gray, "Paradigms and Praxis Part II: Why are Some Workers Changing Paradigms?" *IJFM* 26 (2009): 69.

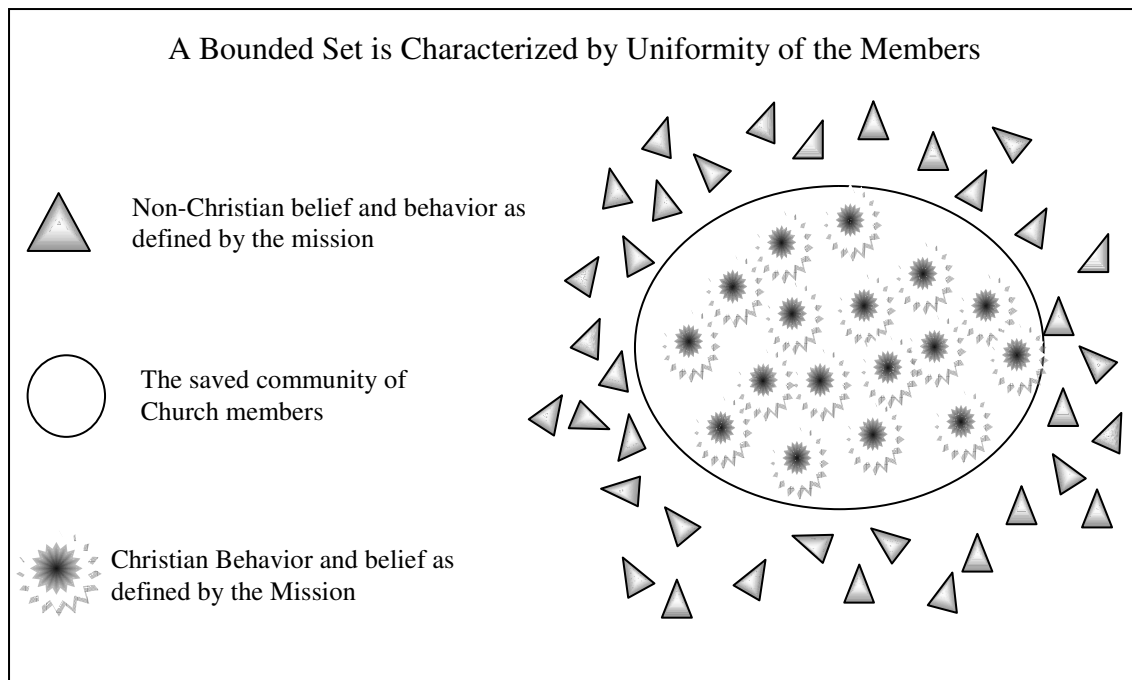


Figure 8: Bounded set Christianity

humanity on a *directional* basis rather than a positional one, so that “God starts with us in [*sic.*] the basis of faith and counts that faith as righteousness.” In his view, God accepts sub-ideal behavior as long as we are traveling in the right allegiance direction.⁶⁰

One major component in maintaining the right direction in the faith is a faith community. So, Kraft argues that the only entry-rite for the believing community is a declaration of allegiance to God. His position could be diagrammed as in Figure 9.

Given a fuzzy set model of conversion, Kraft describes a conversion process that

focuses in on the fact that the process of conversion is made up of a multitude of (often very small) decisions by human beings in interaction with God. Each of these decisions may be conceived of as the result of a process involving points of

⁶⁰Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 186-87.

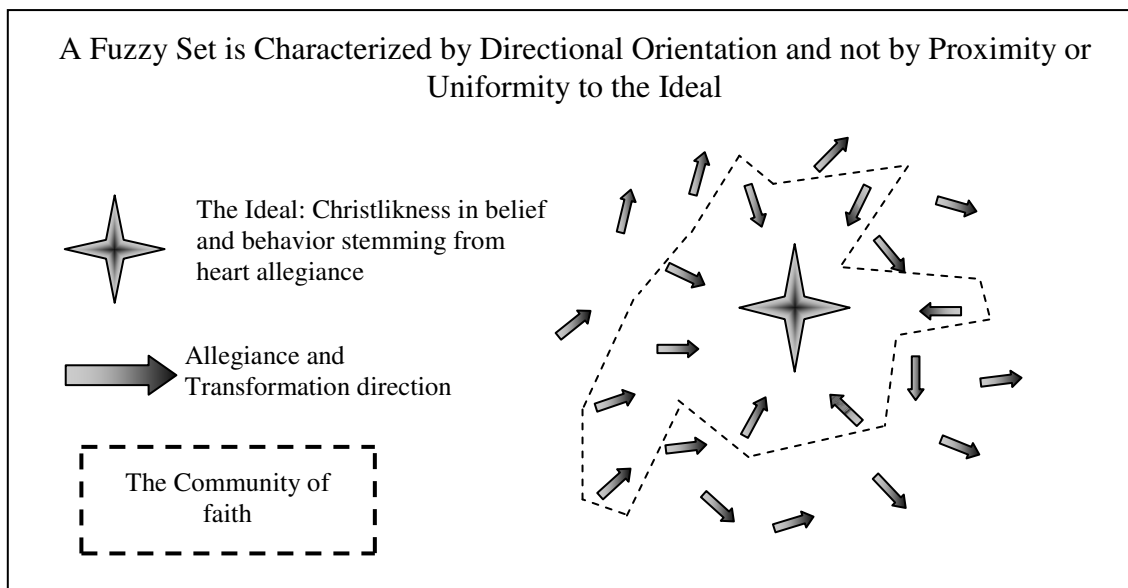


Figure 9: Fuzzy set Christianity

stimulus, realization, decision, and “new habit,” interspersed with periods of developing awareness, consideration, and incorporation.⁶¹

The process begins with a stimulus, which may be new information, an observation, or even a new thought. The stimulus is then contemplated and followed by an increased awareness of the implications. The awareness then leads to the realization of the relevance to the person or group and is followed by a decision-making process leading to an actual decision to act on the new information. After the decision is made, the implications are incorporated into the person’s life, resulting in new patterns of behavior. For some, like Paul, the decision may be a “peak” experience. Others, however, will experience no “peaking.” The emotional level of the conversion experience depends entirely upon the degree of release and relief given from the tension

⁶¹Ibid., 263.

of living with an unresolved issue.⁶² Whatever the emotions experienced during conversion, the process of conversion begins prior to the decision or series of decisions, leads up to it, and many decisions still occur after the conversion point. Based on the starting point plus process model, Kraft does not distinguish between conversion and sanctification: “God is working with us performing the process of ‘wooing’ while our decision making leads us to greater awareness, regenerating us as we are converting and sanctifying us while we are maturing.”⁶³

Constants and principles of the conversion process. Though Kraft blends his theological categories, he gives five constants in the conversion process. First, a convert makes a conscious allegiance to God through a faith commitment. “For it is by faithfulness to God that a relationship is established and maintained. And faithfulness implies conscious allegiance There is a newness and *discontinuity* of such an allegiance with their previous religious commitment.”⁶⁴ Second, a relationship is established through a dynamic interaction between God and human beings based on that conscious allegiance. Third, there is growth and maturation in the conversion process, both in understanding and implementing the cognitive aspects of the gospel and in growing in freedom from bondage through the power dimension of the gospel. Fourth, the conversion or maturation process happens best in the context of a faith community: “It is in the context of relationship with other people of God that the initial allegiance is

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., 264.

⁶⁴Ibid., 262.

to be fed until it becomes the central point of reference in terms of which believers make all decisions and around which they reorient all living.”⁶⁵ Fifth, the conversion process happens best when it retains the sociocultural context in which the person is immersed rather than when it extracts a convert out of their home socio-religious culture. Given these five constants, certain principles of conversion emerge out of Kraft’s model.

In preaching the gospel, missionaries need to avoid the Judaizer’s heresy by refusing to advocate an extractionistic mentality whereby converts are denied the ability to respond in faith using the sociocultural forms familiar and meaningful to them. Also, since Kraft views conversion as primarily a paradigm shift that ultimately leads to a new worldview, he cautions that the conversion and sanctification process is likely to be an especially slow one. Because of the slow process of addressing deep cultural and worldview change, he advocates patience in order to allow the behavioral implications of a biblical worldview to take root at the level of understanding, rather than simple behavior modification. Furthermore, since the Holy Spirit working through Scripture and prayer is the primary agent for addressing worldview change, it is important to allow Christianity to grow toward God as an indigenous expression of culture rather than to grow culturally closer to the messenger. Conversion should also follow the decision making patterns inherent in the cultural rather than the forced paradigm of a Pauline experience. Finally, conversion happens when the stimulus addresses deeply felt needs. The perceptive missionary thus strives to discover the felt needs of the receptors and

⁶⁵Ibid., 264.

present the gospel in relation to those needs.⁶⁶

Incarnational ministry. The best means to discover the felt needs of the receptor is for the communicator to become human in the way that the receptor defines humanity. That is, cross-cultural communicators need to enter into the cultural and linguistic frame of reference of the receptor in order to make the message both understandable and dynamic.⁶⁷ Incarnational ministry, as defined by Kraft, follows Jesus' example of starting within a context rather than demanding that listeners understand and accept his frame of reference as a prerequisite for understanding what he was communicating:

Jesus . . . presented his message in highly specific, non-generalized, even non-theological forms. The message was both lived and illustrated in very specifically life-related fashion. Jesus seldom used Scripture texts as his starting point. He chose to base his communication on the life and interests of his hearers rather than on statements of the theological principles that may be derived from his teachings. Missionaries must imitate our Lord's approach by searching out, learning and employing the culturally appropriate forms of specific life-related communication available among the people to whom they are called.⁶⁸

Starting within the cultural framework of the receptor, Kraft recommends communication that does not correct or contradict but rather affirms what is actually true within the

⁶⁶Ibid., 268-69.

⁶⁷Kraft's preface to the second edition of *Christianity in Culture* implies that the totality of his book describes how to make ministry incarnational. Essentially, for Kraft, the terms incarnational ministry, receptor-orientated communication, and dynamic equivalence all describe different parts of the total ethno-theologizing process. See Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, xix-xxi. Hesselgrave describes three different types of incarnational ministry—Liberation-Incarnationalists, Holism Incarnationalists, and Conversion-Incarnationalists. Kraft and the Fuller faculty fall into the Conversion-Incarnationalist camp: "They understand the mission of the church in terms of discipling the *ethne* . . . by proclaiming the gospel, bringing people to Christ, baptizing converts, instructing them in the faith, and incorporating them into responsible reproducing churches" (David Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005], 147).

⁶⁸Charles H. Kraft, "The Incarnation, God's Model for Cross-Cultural Communication," in *Culture, Communication, and Christianity* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 201.

context. He then adds information that is specific to the gospel.⁶⁹ Kraft contrasts incarnational communication with extractionism, which “requires a high degree of indoctrination involving a longish period of dependence on the communicator for instruction in order to be effective.”⁷⁰

Gilliland asserts that the primary goal of good contextualization is incarnational witness: “The Word beyond culture must be expressed from within culture.”⁷¹ Where contextualization leads to incarnation the message makes sense for each place and people, it elevates the self-perception and self-worth of the people, it utilizes cultural elements that are consistent with the gospel, it calls for a participatory model of seeking for truth, and it touches on all aspects of life.⁷² The first task of the messenger in incarnational ministry is to enter into the context through inculturation so that the message can then be communicated from within the culture. The cultural framework becomes the theological starting point for this type of incarnational approach and is designed to produce three types of encounters.

Power, allegiance, and truth encounters. Kraft presents three primary dimensions that the gospel must encounter in order to transform the whole person and lead to biblical Christianity. The first and most comfortable dimension for western Christians is the cognitive component of the gospel. Kraft speaks about “truth

⁶⁹Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 120.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Dean Gilliland, “Contextual Theology as Incarnational Mission,” in *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean Gilliland (Dallas: Word, 1989), 28.

⁷²Ibid., 23-28.

encounters”⁷³—encounters where the information of the gospel is brought in to confront the false worldview assumptions of a particular person in a particular culture:

In the truth-understanding dimension are all of the cognitive aspects of Christianity, doctrinal and theological tenets such as our understandings of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, humanity, sin, redemption, faith, Satan and demons, the Church, the Kingdom of God, and all the rest of the things we believe fall in this category.⁷⁴

Knowledge about the gospel combats ignorance, and, according to Kraft, it is the simplest of the dimensions because it involves merely the transmission of information. It is the cognitive dimension that Western training and theology largely emphasize, often resulting in neglect of the second dimension—which Kraft emphasizes as the most important—that of experience and relationship.

The central component of the gospel is an allegiance commitment that leads to a relationship with the risen Christ, progressively deepening in intimacy and knowledge. The gospel must confront and conquer all other heart allegiances and lead to a relationship with God. It is that “relationship [that] saves, whether or not we have a lot of knowledge to go with it.”⁷⁵ Kraft acknowledges that Jesus spent a large proportion of his time teaching the truth about himself and the Father because the understanding component of the truth is part of what brings people into a deeper relationship with Christ. However, the goal of his teaching was not simply to impart knowledge *about*

⁷³Charles H. Kraft, “Allegiance, Truth and Power Encounters in Christian Witness,” in *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism: Essays in Intercultural Theology*, ed. Jan A.B Jongeneel (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 217-18. This term was coined by Neil Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1990).

⁷⁴Charles Kraft, “Contextualization in Three Crucial Dimensions,” in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 101.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 102.

God but to bring about the experience of relationship.⁷⁶

Finally, Kraft believes that the third major component of the gospel addresses the freedom/power dimension: “Jesus said He came to set captives free. In making such a statement, He implied both that there is one who has captured many people and that people need the freedom God offers. People need freedom so badly that He, Jesus, came to earth to offer this freedom.”⁷⁷ Kraft emphasizes the power that Satan has over the world and the confrontation that comes through the power of God. Though Kraft, in places, speaks of sin, his overwhelming emphasis is on freedom from the bondage of satanic forces: “Jesus did all this to demonstrate God’s love (a relational thing), to teach what God and the Christian life are all about (knowledge/truth things), and to free people from Satan (a power thing).”⁷⁸ “Power encounters,” a phrase coined by Kraft’s Fuller colleague Allen Tippet, are often necessary, not only to show the veracity of the truth dimension of the gospel, but to give people freedom to enter into the relationship offered through the gospel: “Only when they are freed will they be able to understand the gospel, and building on that understanding, to commit themselves to Christ.”⁷⁹ For Kraft, the power of Satan cannot be broken simply by truth or knowledge. Power is offered through the gospel, and power ought to permeate our Christian lives: power to heal our hurts, power to bind up our wounds, power to free us from the captivity forced upon us by the demonic powers struggling to maintain their mastery over us. It is the power of God that

⁷⁶Ibid., 107.

⁷⁷Ibid., 108.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., 109.

allows us to grow in our relationship to him and knowledge of him. Power, wielded through prayer, saturates the entirety of the Christian faith and message.

Insider methodology leans heavily on the power dimension of the gospel. As Travis presents throughout the article, “Appropriate Approaches,” his context demands a significant emphasis on power: “In our work, what seems to most hinder the new Muslim believer’s relationship with Christ is not so much wrong theology or even allegiance to Muhammad, but instead it is bondage due to former occult involvement and heart wounds. From these he must be freed and saved.”⁸⁰

The dynamic equivalence model. Flowing out of the above foundation, Insider methodology incorporates the dynamic equivalence model of contextualization. Dynamic equivalence is a translation concept that was originally proposed by Eugene Nida.⁸¹ Briefly, dynamic equivalence is far more concerned with the intended meaning of the author than the grammatical construction used to communicate that meaning. For instance, the Cotton Patch version of the gospel by Jordan uses the theory of dynamic equivalence to communicate the message in understandable categories to an audience in Georgia. The purpose of dynamic equivalence is to reproduce understanding in the current audience that corresponds to the understanding of the original audience. Therefore, Jordan changes many of the personal and place names within the Bible to

⁸⁰Travis and Travis, “Appropriate Approaches,” 407. For a treatment of power encounter in the same mission field, see Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic, and the Kingdom of God* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 19-38; and Richard Jameson and Nick Scalevich “First-Century Jews and Twentieth Century Muslims,” *IJFM* 17 (2000): 38.

⁸¹See Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1960), 37; and Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1969).

make the audience feel much more familiar and comfortable with the message:

When Jesus was born in Gainesville, Georgia, during the time that Herod was governor, some scholars from the Orient came to Atlanta and inquired, "Where is the one who was born to be governor of Georgia? We saw his star in the Orient, and we came to honor him." This news put Governor Herod and all his Atlanta cronies in a tizzy. So he called a meeting of the big-time preachers and politicians, and asked if they had any idea where the Leader was to be born. "In Gainesville, Georgia," they replied.⁸²

Building upon Nida's translational model of dynamic equivalence, Kraft applies those principles, not just to translating God's "casebook," but to theology and transculturating the message, planting dynamic equivalent churches, and conversion. In other words, the entire spectrum of church ministry and missionary work is to be undertaken from a framework that seeks the meanings behind the biblical text, seeks to recreate the impact of the original message using different and local cultural forms, and participates in God's communication by person-to-person incarnation of that message to receptors.

In that process, the forms of the biblical message are discarded for new forms that are meaningful within the receptor's frame of reference. So, dynamic equivalent conversion is not conversion from one culture to another; it is fundamentally a "change of direction, reversing the direction in which one is headed so that it is toward rather than

⁸²Clarence Jordan, *The Cotton Patch Version of Matthew and John* (New York: Association, 1970), 16. Kraft extensively quotes this same passage from the Cotton Patch Version in Kraft, *Christian in Culture*, 223. Importantly, Kraft is talking about transculturating the message in his reference to the *Cotton Patch Version*, not necessarily translating the message. In transculturation, there should be person-to-person interaction that seeks to "represent the meanings of those historical events as if they were contemporary events" (219). While Kraft says that "it is inappropriate to give the impression that Jesus walked the streets of Berkeley or London or Nairobi" in a translation, in transculturation, the messenger seeking dynamic equivalent impact in the audience will do "exactly that" (222). It is not clear why the localization of the message is preferable in transculturation but not in translation, especially in view of Kraft's recommendation of the *Cotton Patch Version*.

away from God.”⁸³ Dynamic equivalent “churchness” is the process undertaken by every generation of Christians who join with God to find appropriate cultural forms that communicate God’s intended meaning.⁸⁴

In Kraft’s dynamic equivalence model, form is only important insofar as it can hold God’s intended meaning. The actual forms of the Bible are relatively unimportant in the communication process and any parallel form in the receptor culture carries potential for use in communicating God’s meaning. Kraft’s discussion of baptism serves to illustrate this point. For Kraft, baptism is a form intended to communicate a particular meaning, namely, an initiation into the people of God. Kraft asserts that the form was particularly appropriate for the early Jews and Greeks because both Judaizers and Greek mystery religions employed water initiation rites.⁸⁵ The form was understood by the culture at large and was therefore meaningful both to the participants and to the observers. However,

the fact that the ritual is a foreign one, borrowed from another culture, unknown in American culture outside the church, and labeled by a Greek word that has never been translated, affects its meaning at both the general and individual level. It very easily comes to mean a sacred, even magical ritual that one goes through only because it is required by God and an antique church organization.⁸⁶

Because water baptism is a foreign form, it is filled with other meanings for many receptor cultures. For Muslims, it signifies a complete severing of family and ethnic ties and an embracing of Western culture. When the form has become bloated with unhelpful

⁸³Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 261.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 247.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 259.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 55.

meaning, as in the case of Muslims around the world, Kraft suggests discarding or revising the form:

Many non-western societies have indigenous initiatory rites that would in their cultural contexts more adequately convey scriptural meanings to them than . . . water. Such forms should be experimented with if contemporary incorporation with the people of God is to have an impact on today's people equivalent to that of baptism on the New Testament peoples.⁸⁷

When dynamic equivalence is taken to its logical conclusion—as it appears to in places of Insider methodology—the receptor church is not obligated to pattern itself after either the sender's church or even follow historic Christian tradition. Forms, both linguistic and cultural, are completely negotiable in the communication process in which God's Spirit-led, incarnational spokesperson conveys the meaning of God's revelation in order to begin the process of a people coming to know God.

Form and Meaning in the Contextualization Process

The negotiability of biblical forms in Kraft's linguistic model of dynamic equivalence is not a comfortable concept to the vast majority of evangelicals. Kraft's discussion is primarily theoretical. He describes a process for lifting away biblical forms and cloaking the supracultural biblical meaning within appropriate forms of the receptor culture. Insider methodology systematically applies his theory and process within high-

⁸⁷Ibid., 260. Phil Parshall took this challenge seriously in his earliest writings, especially *New Paths*, which was written under Kraft's doctoral supervision. See Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 189-9). Though Parshall himself was reluctant to accept a substitute for water baptism as an initiation rite, after some years he became more firm on his refusal of a functional substitute for baptism. Since Parshall offered his suggestion related to a dynamically equivalent substitute for baptism in 1980, very little has been written about the form of baptism in Muslim contexts, though a Hindu water ritual as a replacement has been suggested in Brian K. Petersen, "The Possibility of a 'Hindu Christ Follower' Hans Staffner's Proposal for the Dual Identity of Disciples of Christ within High Caste Hindu Communities," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 94.

religious contexts.⁸⁸ The single most pressing question related to the contextualization method of Insider methodology revolves around what socio-religious forms to contextualize and which to abandon. Travis describes using Hiebert's process of critical contextualization as a framework to arrive at this decision and shares the position his team has reached in his particular context: "Our tentative conclusion is that most Islamic forms are Biblically sound, that several ceremonies can be modified, and that a number of Islamic teachings must be rejected in order to avoid harmful syncretism."⁸⁹

Yet, questions remain: Is it really possible to pour new meaning into existing cultural forms as if the form were an empty vessel waiting to be filled? Are the meanings behind receptor forms as fluid as the dynamic equivalence of Kraft suggests? If the latter question is answered in the affirmative, then syncretism resulting from retaining certain forms is not a pressing concern because consistent biblical teaching will eventually overwhelm the non-biblical meaning introduced by the recycled form.⁹⁰ However, if the question is answered in the negative, then syncretism, and possibly reversion, is the most likely result of the re-use of certain forms. Hiebert's discussion of form and meaning seems to be Fuller's best attempt to strike a balance between non-contextualization due to

⁸⁸See Joshua Massey, "Living Like Jesus: A Torah-Observant Jew," *IJFM* 21 (2004): 13-22, 55-71.

⁸⁹Travis and Travis, "Appropriate Approaches," 407. This statement by itself is unhelpful and ambiguous. The article goes on to describe—utilizing Kraft's model of conversion as a shift in primary allegiance with secondary allegiances remaining—how the maintaining of Islamic forms can be an acceptable level of secondary allegiance. Ultimately, the Travis' affirm that the context is what primarily shapes the decision. The reuse of certain high-religious forms may be permissible for one believer in one context but not for another believer in a different context. Culture and context are the starting point for the Travises.

⁹⁰See, for example, Kraft's case study of polygamy as a marker for an elder-qualified man in an African society. In the process of theological development aided by a good Bible translation, polygamy as a cultural value will eventually be changed to conform to God's ideal of monogamy. See Kraft,

the fear of syncretism and uncritical contextualization where the original meaning of a form is not critically assessed for compatibility with biblical meaning.

While Hiebert appreciates dynamic equivalence as an important step in the missionary process, he also criticizes that model's tendency to completely divorce form and meaning in contextualization.⁹¹ Ultimately, dynamic equivalence uncritically applied presents a simplistic and unrealistic view of culture:

It does not take seriously enough the fact that symbols are created and controlled by social groups and whole societies One of the great powers a society has is to impose its views of reality on people Ultimately, this definition of reality begins by controlling the definitions of key words. When we call people to become Christians, we call them to accept a new definition of reality, and, therefore, new definitions of key concepts. The result is a struggle to control meanings of important words.⁹²

Hiebert goes on to say, "The ability to control the definitions of words that people use is one of the greatest powers dominant groups in society have, for in controlling definitions, they control the way people see reality."⁹³ The difficulty Hiebert describes is the reason why high levels of indigenization in high-religious contexts have historically been rejected by missionaries. The dominant groups of society control all the religious terminology, and, where the total way of life is shaped by a codified religious system, every element of life is defined and shaped by that religious system. Extractionism was the only way to completely remove believers from Islam's far-reaching shadow.

Christianity in Culture, 253-54.

⁹¹Paul G. Hiebert, "Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel," in *The Word among Us*, ed. Dean Gilliland (Dallas: Word, 1989), 107. Form, in his discussion, equally applies to both words and rituals.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 106.

⁹³*Ibid.*, 110.

Contextualization, then, is the effort to introduce new meanings into the social system. But, since words and rituals have a deep history within a context, it is not wise to arbitrarily link old forms to new meanings based on surface level similarities. Hiebert introduces three categories of linkages between form and meaning in symbols to guide the critical contextualization process. First, some symbols have a loose linkage between form and meaning. The first category of symbols is usually related to how humanity expresses itself in a particular context—how they dress or what they eat.⁹⁴ Second, some symbols have an extremely tight linkage between form and meaning and, because of that bond, are difficult to change. Hiebert includes ritual symbols in this category.⁹⁵ Last, in some symbols the form and meaning are inseparable and to change one irrevocably changes the other.⁹⁶ Historical symbols fall into this category; where specific facts are tied to specific places. Performance rituals like marriage are also included in this category.

The easiest forms to contextualize are those that have a loose linkage between form and meaning; the most difficult are those where form and meaning are tightly linked. The third category of forms is impossible to contextualize without ruining the meaning altogether. However, since all cultures are continually and dynamically changing, the level of linkage between form and meaning may also shift over time. Consequently, Hiebert affirms that contextualization ought to be a long term process over the course of generations. The tight relationship between some cultural forms—African

⁹⁴Ibid., 111-13.

⁹⁵Ibid., 114.

⁹⁶Ibid., 115.

drums and demon worship, for example—softens in the second and third generation. In other words, a form that would be fundamentally incompatible to a first generation believer might seem perfectly natural and right to a third generation believer.

Obviously, the difficulty in contextualizing forms in high-religious contexts—labeled generally as high-spectrum contextualization—is that the original meaning of various forms is fiercely guarded by the social majority. As a result of the salvation-point-plus process, Kraft, Higgins, and Travis all believe that a Spirit-guided process will lead new believers into ever-increasing orthodoxy as they are transformed by the renewing of their minds.⁹⁷ Yet, in high-religious contexts where high levels of contextualization are attempted, the long-term effect of the pervasive social power applied to contextualized religious rituals is in question. How long can a believer remain in a mosque without succumbing to the majority belief about the Islamic faith? How long can a new believer continue to articulate the prophethood of Muhammad without eventually sliding back into the majority view?

In other words, given the cultural power of the dominant socio-religious group, how long can a minority of people maintain their hold on biblical reality in the face of constant pressure to conform to social expectations? How many people does it take to form a critical mass that can maintain the new definitions in the face of the macro-culture's pressure to conform to old definitions? How many people in high-spectrum contextualization experiments eventually revert back to Islam or Hinduism? What is the

⁹⁷See John Travis, "Must all Muslims leave "Islam" to follow Jesus?" in *EMQ* 34 (1998): 411; Joshua Massey, "Misunderstanding C5 and the Infinite Translatability of Christ, Why has C5 been so Misunderstood by its Critics," *EMQ* 38 (2004): 2 [on-line]; accessed 24 February 2008; available from http://www.winint.orf/downloads/Misunderstanding_C5-unabr.pdf; Internet; and Kraft, "Psychological Stress," 144.

effect of high-spectrum contextualization on the second generation? Given their identification with the majority culture, do the children of Insider believers understand the difference between their parents' explanation of Islamic forms and what they learn from the Islamic school? The question facing Insider methodology is not only what is feasible during the initial years of a movement to God, but what that movement must turn into in twenty or forty years in order to maintain a hold on biblical reality in the face of social pressure to conform to the majority. How can Insider believers shape their households so that they are an oasis of biblical lifestyles and so that their children do not fall back into Islam?

Ultimately, these are the questions that face every generation of Christians around the world: How can we, as believers, be in the world but not of the world? How can we be conformed to Christ, and how can we raise our children so that they are guarded against the overwhelming power of the context we live in that draws them into the vortex of a syncretistic lifestyle? As American Christians, we guard against secularism, consumerism, and the prevalent force of contemporary sexuality. For believers in Islamic contexts, it will be reinclusion into the Ummah, and, in many contexts, the manipulation of spiritual powers. The way that missionaries, evangelists, and pastors answer these questions will determine the viability of an authentic, biblical, and long-term movement toward Christ in any context.

Refusing to contextualize is not an option. Nor is the utterly subjective type of contextualization that uncritically separates forms and meanings. For, "the greatest danger in separating meaning from form is the relativism and pragmatism this

introduces.”⁹⁸ Hiebert offers a middle way through critical contextualization applied through the epistemological foundation of critical realism.

Briefly, the critical realism that Hiebert articulates is an approach to reality that recognizes the absoluteness of God, his Word, and his actions in redemptive history, yet also acknowledges that human understandings of that reality can only ever be partial. Critical realism does not give into the view that knowledge is totally subjective and relative: “We see ‘through a glass, darkly,’ but we do see. We see enough to live in a real world, and through divine revelation, we see the path to salvation and fellowship with God.”⁹⁹ The result of critical realism is an approach that can balance the detrimental slide into subjectivity with the absolute nature of truth, that is, an approach that can listen to different perspectives to gain fuller understanding while maintaining fidelity to God’s Word.¹⁰⁰ The central question related to Insider Movements is whether the methodology employed adequately captures the balance Hiebert recommends.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Insider Missiology

The synthetic model of contextualization offered by Fuller and implemented to a variety of degrees within Insider methodology is somewhat shocking in the odd combination of outstanding strengths and blatant weakness. The words of one who reviewed Kraft’s *Christian in Culture* are applicable to the Insider outworking of his

⁹⁸Hiebert, “Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel,” 108.

⁹⁹Ibid., 108-09. See also Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections*, 19-34. There, Hiebert compares a variety of epistemological positions and their influence on missions.

¹⁰⁰See also the discussion on biblical absolutism in Stephen A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 19-31.

principles: “I felt strongly that this was at the same time both the best book and the worst book I have read on this subject.”¹⁰¹

By way of strengths, it is undeniable that Kraft’s systematic presentation of conversion in *Christianity in Culture* and subsequent treatments of the subject are some of the most important contributions to missiology in the past forty years, mainly because he so skillfully uses the social sciences to aid the task of missions. His conclusions continue to shape discussions on appropriate kinds of contextualization. While the biblical foundations and theological conclusions of his model are troubling at points,¹⁰² he presents many helpful ideas to facilitate the task of gospel communication.

First, it is helpful to make a distinction between actual conversion and cultural conversion, even when the cultural distance is extremely small. God is after the hearts of men, and he is concerned about matters of dress or food or festivals as they relate to reflecting his glory lived out within gospel-transformed lives. Outward conformity to a set of biblical ideals is not necessarily a satisfactory indicator of a truly regenerated person.

Second, Kraft offers helpful conceptual categories when presenting the three

¹⁰¹Robert L. Ramseyer, “Christian Mission and Cultural Anthropology,” in *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert Shenk (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 115.

¹⁰²See Enoch Wan, “A Critique of Kraft’s Use/Misuse of Communication and Social Sciences In Biblical Interpretation and Missiological Formation,” in *Missiology and the Social Sciences* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996), 121-64; Harvie M. Conn *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Mission in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 163-205; and David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 59-69, 193-96; Edward N Gross, *Is Charles Kraft an Evangelical? A Critique of Christianity in Culture* (Elkins Park, PA: E.N. Gross, 1985); Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 18; D. A. Carson, “The Limits of Dynamic Equivalence in Bible Translation,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9 (1985): 200-23; and Carl F. H. Henry, “The Cultural Relativizing of Revelation,” *Trinity Journal* 1 (1980): 153-64. Each of these works contains critical interactions with Kraft.

dimensions the gospel addresses and advocating the allegiance/relationship category as the way of salvation. It is far too easy for Western Christians to focus on the cognitive and relational aspects of the gospel and completely neglect the power aspect. It is also a prevalent trap for Western pastors and seminary students to get caught up in the cognitive aspect and neglect the relational aspect of the gospel. Christianity is ultimately about following Jesus; it is vitally important that relational intimacy is both modeled and cultivated through repentance (freedom/power element), Scripture reading (cognitive element), and prayer (relational element). By using the conceptual categories Kraft offers, it is best to present a balanced, holistic gospel message that adequately addresses the total receptor worldview and, consequently, avoids syncretism by transforming the entire person.

Third, it is helpful to incorporate a directional orientation as opposed to a positional orientation when thinking about the conversion process. While it is true that a person is either in Christ or outside of Christ, outward criteria are not necessarily the best gauge for judging which category a particular person belongs to, and it may not be evident exactly when the point of regeneration and justification takes place in the life of a believer who slowly comes to the realization that Jesus Christ is a precious, wonderful, and glorious savior. Especially with regard to children, it is helpful to use a directional orientation model of conversion rather than a Pauline model simply because the decision to follow Christ may be not be accompanied by a significant emotional release.

Finally, thinking about felt needs helps shape the gospel message for a particular context. While the gospel message should not be controlled by the cultural

context—an extreme Insider methodology seems to fall into¹⁰³—the context of the audience ought to shape at least the initial presentation of the gospel. As J. D. Greear writes, “Many of the questions the gospel answers for us as Western Christians are ones that Muslims are not asking! But there are a number of questions about God and salvation that Muslims *are* asking.”¹⁰⁴ For instance, forensic justification is the foundational paradigm that guides Protestant Western Christians’ articulation of the gospel message. It is a message that is received well in an individualistic, guilt-based society. Yet, forensic justification and atonement by themselves are an inadequate treatment of the total biblical data related to justification. If forensic justification is a concept that is completely alien to the Muslim worldview and something Muslims care nothing about, and if the biblical data includes other material pertinent to the heart questions related to atonement in a particular context, what rational reason lies behind forcing the gospel message to start with and center on forensic justification? At the same time, the gospel message cannot be controlled by the context. The gospel *does* speak about forensic justification, and, though it is an alien category to the Muslim mind, the discipling process must introduce that category of thought in order to transform the entire person.

Perhaps the best way to refer to the challenges and issues with regards to

¹⁰³For an example of how Kraft presents a possible African Islamic background expression of Christianity, see Charles H. Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors Among Muslims,” in *Media In Islamic Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974), 137-44.

¹⁰⁴J. D. Greear, *Breaking the Islam Code: Understanding the Soul Questions of Every Muslim* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2010), 61.

orthodoxy and syncretism in Insider methodology is to use the term “imbalances.”¹⁰⁵ It is possible that Insider methodology is fatally flawed and is not a viable, biblical, long-term strategy for church planting. At this point in the Insider discussion, it seems a distinct possibility. As this dissertation has shown so far, Insider methodology has not yet provided any biblical support to demonstrate the viability of believers retaining an Insider identity. Yet, it is also completely possible that significant attention to the areas of imbalance will result in a positive and biblical method of contextualization in high-religious contexts. The following missiological areas of culture, incarnational ministry, and starting point plus process must be addressed biblically by Insider proponents in order to result in a balanced and biblical methodology.

A Biblical View of Culture

The most significant issue for Insider methodology is how culture controls the gospel message. Insider methodology has too high a view of the receptor culture and does not interact well with the fallenness of every society and the propensity of every culture to suppress the knowledge of the truth in unrighteousness. The trainers of the Common Ground conferences who train workers in an Insider approach are the most striking example of the unbalanced view of Islamic culture. At times, it almost seems that some of the trainers are infatuated with the Quran and Islamic culture and are

¹⁰⁵Harvie Conn uses the term “overextension.” He describes Kraft’s model as being “out of kilter” (Conn, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds*, 164-65). In critiquing Insider methodology, I use the term “imbalance” as opposed to overextension because it is possible to find a biblical balance in a synthetic combination of a variety of models of contextualization and because “overextension” best describes the excesses of *one* model and not a combination of models.

altogether convinced that the Quran actually proclaims the gospel.¹⁰⁶ While theirs is not the majority position, at the very least, Insider proponents are often guilty of so emphasizing the areas of continuity with regards to the seeds of truth God has left in every culture that the areas of discontinuity are neglected.

Though the continuity and discontinuity involved in the evangelism and conversion process are deeply significant, the central issue relates to the view of culture as applied to the problem of form and meaning. In particular, the question revolves around whether cultural forms and structures are viewed as positive, fallen, or neutral. The answer to this question affects the entire shape of any contextualization strategy.

At best, the dynamic equivalent model offered by Kraft leans toward a neutral view of culture. *Christianity in Culture* is explicit in its view of the neutrality of culture, though Kraft later balances his position in *Anthropology for Christian Witness*:

Though culture may not be as neutral as I once thought it was, it is not the structures of a culture that lock people in prisons but, rather, the sinful choices of *people* who are continually affected by the unseen playing field of the structures but are not totally determined by them. Within those structures other people put pressure on us or attempt to entice us to use our cultural structures sinfully. We may or may not go along with them. *But it is people-pressure and people-choices that determine whether the structures will be used as instruments of Satan or of God, not the slantedness of the structures themselves.*¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶See Jay Smith, "An Assessment of the Insider's Principle Paradigms," *St. Francis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 20-51; and John Span and Anne Span, "Report on the Common Ground Consultants Meeting, Snelville (Georgia)," *St. Francis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 52-73. Additionally, conference notes and the Common Ground workbook from the Common Ground meeting in Minneapolis on 9-12 June, 2010 verify the two reports above. The presenters of the Common Ground conference are careful not to equate the Quran as revelation on the same level as the Bible. They say that the Quran is only used for evangelistic purposes and does not play a role in the discipleship or encouragement of believers. At the same time, Common Ground presenter Dave McCullum is excited about the wide variety of "signs" that appear in the Quran that point to Jesus: "If you look at the Quran without the Holy Spirit in your heart, you don't see much. But if you look at it with the Holy Spirit, you see some golden strands." I received notes from the conference from [redacted]. Email to author, 29 June 2010.

¹⁰⁷Chalres H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 34,

In other words, Kraft views culture as *generally* neutral so that cultural structures can equally be used by Christians with positive results. While the structures may be slanted toward suppression of the knowledge of the truth, and though Christians may be fighting an uphill battle to use those slanted cultural structures to display godly obedience, those slanted cultural structures are redeemable.¹⁰⁸

In contrast to Kraft's position is a view of culture, and especially religious culture, that is generally negative. Schlorff presents this view in response to what he perceives as abuses of Kraft's model of dynamic equivalence applied in the Islamic world.¹⁰⁹ His position is derived from J. H. Bavinck's articulation of general revelation in *The Church Between the Temple and Mosque*. Bavinck starts with Romans 1:18-25:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

Bavinck points out that while God deals with man, his context, and his world, fallen man's response is to repress the truth that God reveals to him: "He knows God, even

emphasis Kraft's. Kraft is primarily responding to Lingenfelter's view of culture in his book *Transforming Culture*.

¹⁰⁸Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 35.

¹⁰⁹Samuel P. Schlorff, "The Translational Model for Mission in Resistant Muslim Society: A Critique and an Alternative," *Missiology* (2000): 305-28.

though he never comes to real knowledge because he is always busy subtly repressing this knowledge.”¹¹⁰ Every non-Christ exalting religious expression flows out of man’s natural response to God in the suppression of the truth. For Bavinck, religious expression proves both that God seeks a relationship with mankind and that man seeks a relationship with God because religious expression, by its very nature, is a response to God: “It is never man seeking and speaking spontaneously, it is always an answer on his part to something that he feels as a revelation.”¹¹¹ Yet, at the same time, every non-Christ exalting religious expression demonstrates the pervasive suppression of the truth and consequent distortion of the knowledge of God that is fallen man’s natural response to God. As an example, Bavinck presents the case of Buddhism and Islam:

In the night of the *bodhi*, when Buddha received his great, new insight concerning the world and life, God . . . revealed himself in that moment. Buddha responded to this revelation, and his answer to this day reveals God’s hand and the result of human repression. In the “night of power” of which the ninety-seventh sura of the Koran speaks, the night when the “angles descended” and the Koran descended from Allah’s throne, God dealt with Mohammed and touched him. God wrestled with him in that night, and God’s hand is still noticeable in the answer of the prophet, but it is also the result of human repression The history of religion contains a dramatic element. It includes the divine approach and human rejection. This rejection is hidden because man apparently is seeking God and serving Him, but the God he seeks is different from the true God because of the uncanny process of repression and exchange that enters in.¹¹²

Consequently, all of the highest and best religious expressions of non-Christian religions fundamentally create structures that actively perpetuate repressions of God’s revelation to mankind. These socio-religious structures simultaneously point to two

¹¹⁰J. H. Bavinck, *The Church between Temple and Mosque: A Study of the Relationship Between Christian Faith and Other Religions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 120.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 125.

¹¹²*Ibid.*

realities for missionaries. First, socio-religious structures which have resulted from the fallen reaction of suppression and substitution chain high-religious adherents to a false conception of God. The overwhelming conclusion is that there must be discontinuity with the socio-religious system. Those bonds must be broken. And they can only be broken by the power of the Spirit and the Word.¹¹³ Second, those same socio-religious structures point to the undeniable fact that God has already been working within a particular time, culture, and place to bring man to the true knowledge of God. There is also continuity with the socio-religious system because it provides the pattern that expresses a particular people's means of groping after God. The question that concerns the relationship between form and meaning is how to strike the balance between continuity and discontinuity.

Given the above view of world religions, Schlorff asserts that the primary reason for Muslim resistance is not extraction—as the proponents of high-spectrum contextualization affirm—but rather suppression of the knowledge of the truth.¹¹⁴

¹¹³The words of Charles Wesley's hymn "And Can It Be" are appropriate here: "Long my imprisoned Spirit lay, Fast-bound by sin and nature's night. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free! I rose, went forth and followed thee. Amazing Love! How can it be, That thou, my God, should die for me."

¹¹⁴Gilliland takes an extremely negative view of Schlorff's assertion: "It is unacceptable for Schlorff to say that we Christians have not demanded 'that converts turn against their culture.' This is patently not true. Nor, given the failure of all extractionists approaches, is it helpful to write off recent experiments that seem to be working by saying that 'it is still an open question whether the Muslim church model is workable, let alone biblically valid.'" Dean S. Gilliland, "Modeling the Incarnation for Muslim People: A Response to Sam Schlorff," *Missiology* 28 (2000): 334. Gilliland's response is not entirely fair because Schlorff—being a different generation of missionary in a different part of the world (North African Arab context), and exposed to a different paradigm of missiology—does not have the same experience with the extractionistic approach that Gilliland refers to in his sub-Saharan missionary, pastoral and teaching experience from 1955-1976. Schlorff is referring to the type of extraction that is demanded by the convert's birth community and not the paternalistic extraction that characterized colonial missions. The distinction is crucial. Additionally, as a side note, this remark by Gilliland is an example of the prevalent tendency of Insider proponents to side-step arguments with a straw-man approach. Gilliland has missed the thrust of Schlorff's point about extraction versus suppression by misunderstanding how Schlorff uses the

Furthermore, every Islamic form—which Schlorff differentiates from Arab forms—at its core suppresses the true knowledge of God. Consequently, any approach that naively separates Islamic meaning from Islamic form will inevitably fall into “semantic distortion and theological confusion.”¹¹⁵ Schlorff adamantly rejects the validity of high-spectrum contextualization of a translation model that utilizes a theological and contextual starting point from *within* Islam. In Schlorff’s view, the Islamic forms are not neutral. Instead, he recommends that Islamic words and forms should only be used or re-used if the original semantic and symbiotic range of the historic Islamic community can be maintained. If Schlorff’s approach is followed, the overwhelming difficulty Hiebert mentions of maintaining a new, minority and socially aberrant definition of a particular Islamic form is completely circumvented.

Schlorff identifies his model with the C3 position of Travis’s Continuum. Gilliland calls Schlorff’s approach an “adaptionist model of contextualization,” one where “only the Bible and a fixed theological system can be brought to the culture.”¹¹⁶ More accurately, where Gilliland endorses a synthetic blend of the Translation and Anthropological models, Schlorff presents a synthetic blend of the Adaption and Countercultural models.¹¹⁷ In terms of classification of approaches, the distinction is the

term “extraction.” Gilliland then offers an emotionally charged assertion about extraction, which, while partially true, because it only deals with half of the issue, is really a straw-man argument. Finally, Gilliland attaches his protest of Schlorff’s critique that the translation approach may neither be workable nor biblical. Altogether, his argument sidesteps Schlorff’s valid critique by labeling it “negative” and, consequently, neglects to deal with the actual components of Schlorff’s argument.

¹¹⁵Schlorff, “The Translation Model for Mission in Resistant Muslim Society,” 320.

¹¹⁶Gilliland, “Modeling the Incarnation for Muslim People,” 330.

¹¹⁷Blevins’s newest model was not available as a reference point for Gilliland at the time of his writing.

primary difference between Insider proponents and those speaking against Insider Movements.¹¹⁸ Insider advocates must deal with the powerful cultural forces that war against infusing biblical meaning into forms that have sprung out of man's efforts to suppress the knowledge of the true God.

At this point in time, the Insider response does not appear balanced because it offers an inaccurate view of the relationship between form, meaning, and the controlling power of the dominant cultural group in their efforts to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Kraft has correctly identified the uphill battle involved when changing the meaning behind cultural forms. Like gravity, the macro-culture exerts a force to homogenize the meanings of cultural and religious forms. Insider advocates need to critically assess whether the uphill battle is actually a losing battle. That is, especially in a long term strategy, is it feasible for Inside believers to maintain an Insider identity for the entirety of their Christ-centered lives? As Insider proponents have undeniably shown, *individuals* can modify and live by a substitution of meaning in any given form. The question is whether that modified meaning can be both perpetuated and maintained within a Christ centered community active within an Islamic majority that continually, and on a variety of levels, challenges and confronts the modified definitions.

Incarnational Ministry

The core theological support offered for Fuller's Critical model of

¹¹⁸As an example, many who are against Insider Movements do approve of the use of ancient Christian creeds as a means to maintain orthodoxy, which is an adaptionist approach springing out of a countercultural mindset. Insider advocates are often opposed to this type of orthodoxy-check because of their insistence that creedal formulations spring out of particular contexts and are intrinsically inappropriate in any other context, thus demonstrating their anthropological approach that starts from within the culture.

contextualization is the model of ministry presented by the example of the Incarnation. Insider proponents start from within culture because they desire to mimic the example of Jesus who became flesh and dwelt among us. As Gilliland demonstrates concerning the overarching grid that controls the contextualization methods of Fuller's faculty, it is the "Incarnation idea that underlies all that can be said about 'appropriate Christianity.'"¹¹⁹ Using the Incarnation as a "matrix," missionaries are led to bring their self-inclinations under control, to connect with the deepest needs of the people, and to reach into every aspect of life.¹²⁰

Yet, the example of the Incarnation as a missionary model is flawed in some crucial respects. First, as Gilliland himself concedes, the Incarnation cannot be fully imitated. Yet, though most Insider proponents are against missionary conversion to Islam as a component of Insider strategy, this unfortunate strategy is still being practiced in some camps with the Incarnation as its basis. Second, the Incarnation is used by Insider advocates as a basis of fulfillment theology. The last chapter demonstrated the bankruptcy of fulfillment theology applied to world religions.

More important, though the Incarnation as a model has strong biblical support, it is not the best model for missionary activity. Hesselgrave believes that "almost any version of incarnationalism creates or perpetuates more problems than does representationalism."¹²¹ If the problems inherent in the incarnational approach in Insider ministry are any indication, Hesselgrave is likely right. As an alternative, Hesselgrave

¹¹⁹Gilliland, "The Incarnation as a Matrix," 515.

¹²⁰Ibid., 498-504.

¹²¹Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 151.

suggests using Köstenberger's "representational model," which emphasizes the discontinuity between Jesus and his apostles and emphasizes the apostle's task of witnessing to Jesus.¹²²

A representational model has the benefits of providing a basis for the same types of activities that Gilliland deems central to incarnational missionary activity and contextualization, yet it also provides balance to the unfortunate overemphasis of incarnationalism by missionary conversion to Islam. Where the apostle Paul is taken as the quintessential example of Christ's ambassador, missionaries have an excellent model for how to enter into the receptor's context. Holistic ministry, social ministry, and didactic ministry, combined with deep identification with the receptor culture, are all core elements in representational ministry. In incarnationalism, missionaries can become Muslims. In representationalism, missionaries can become *like* Muslims. All of the best components Gilliland proposes in his incarnationalism—the necessity for missionaries to control their own preferences and self-inclinations, to address felt needs in the receiving culture, and to address the total worldview of the receptor—are also present and central in representationalism. Altogether, representationalism solves many of the methodological imbalances in Insider ministry.

Starting Point Plus Process

One of the most problematic areas of Insider strategy to address is the argument of historical process in theological development. As a basic foundation, and

¹²²Andreas Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel: With Implications for the Forth Gospel's Purpose and the Mission of the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 3-4.

with a Muslim context in view, Kraft states that God “starts where they (people) are culturally and strongly influences the course of their culture from that point on.”¹²³

Kraft’s “starting point plus process” idea plays out in two main ways in Insider methodology. The first is the process of the salvation and discipleship of individuals; the second is the transformation of the worship forms of particular cultures.

Briefly, since it plays a less striking role in Insider methodology, the starting point plus process theory of salvation and discipleship recognizes that God does not start working in a person only when they have entered the kingdom. It is important to recognize that people may be pointed in a God-ward direction years before they are saved and that process and direction are more important than crisis-point decisions.¹²⁴ The innovative element of Insider methodology is a re-pointing of the God-ward direction. Instead of new believers turning away from worldly, sinful structures and turning towards “churches” (the social ramifications of being a member of a new “spiritual” community), the existing social structures and religious forms are deemed acceptable forms of true worship to God.

Kraft asserts that God works in culture in the same way he works in people. His primary concern is allegiance, and he is only secondarily concerned with forms. Kraft illustrates this point with a comparison between the worship forms of the early Jews and the Canaanites. Though they had similar Semitic religious structures, one group

¹²³Kraft, “Dynamic-Equivalent Churches in Muslim Society,” in *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium* (Monrovia: MARC, 1979), 117.

¹²⁴Travis and Travis, “Appropriate Approaches,” 407-08. The starting point plus process was the foundational presupposition of Teeter’s Friendship Center in Bethlehem. See David Teeter, “Dynamic Equivalent Conversion for Tentative Muslim Believers,” *Missiology* 5 (1990): 305-13.

employed those forms to express allegiance to Yahweh, while the other group used those same forms to express their allegiance to Baal.¹²⁵ Similarly, first century Jews responded with faith allegiance to Jesus by expressing their devotion and worship through Judaic worship forms, including temple worship and sacrifice.¹²⁶

The basic presupposition of Insider methodology assumes that God wants to work among Muslims in the same way he worked among the early Jews coming out of Canaanite religion and among the first century Jews who responded to Jesus. It is in the above sense that “a faith renewal movement *within* Islam” is supposedly possible.¹²⁷ If a group is moving towards God in terms of allegiance, that group’s forms of worship and devotion are able to be filled with new meaning as long as the true God is the sole and unadulterated object of their worship and devotion. Whether those forms are ancient polytheistic Canaanite forms, ceremonial Judaic forms, or Islamic forms, they all can equally be used to express worship to God.

The exceptions, of course, are those forms whose entire function expresses allegiance to another god. So, for instance, the Islamic ritual prayer must be modified or

¹²⁵Kraft, “Dynamic-Equivalent Churches,” 118-19. The parallel that Kraft is drawing between the way God worked in revealing himself to the early Jews and the Hellenistic Jews is one of the foundational presuppositions in Insider methodology, that is, God is less concerned with forms than he is about heart allegiance. While his theory has the benefit of stressing the importance of the “thoughts and intentions of the heart,” it is not an evangelically valid way to view the revelatory process among new people groups. See Enoch Wan “A Critique of Kraft’s Use/Misuse of Communication and Social Sciences In Biblical Interpretation and Missiological Formation,” 121-64. As Kraft has said elsewhere, “The catch here is whether you agree with my paralleling Judaism with Islam” (Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors,” 143). While the theological grounding for this statement is fulfillment theology, the methodological grounding is the salvation point plus process theory.

¹²⁶For examples, see Acts 3:1 (Peter and John going to the temple to pray), Acts 5:12 (the temple area as the gathering place for the early church), and Acts 21:26 ff. (Paul undergoing purity rituals and making vow offerings in the temple).

¹²⁷Kraft, “Psychological Stress Factors,” 143.

reinterpreted in order to avoid dual allegiance because its object of devotion includes Muhammad as well as Allah. The Insider proposals so far include modifications of the ritual form¹²⁸ and modifications of the meaning of the word “prophet” as applied to Muhammad.¹²⁹ As the discussion above on the relationship between form and meaning indicates, it is at these points that the controversy swirls. Which forms must be modified? To what degree? What are acceptable reinterpretations? Or, in other words, how far is too far in Muslim contextualization?

Advocates of Insider methodology are less concerned with these questions than critics primarily because of their view of theological development in the historical process. Insider advocates are concerned with how a movement’s orientation in a Godward direction eventually resolves most syncretistic tensions. For Insider advocates, the answers to these questions come through “a dynamic interaction of actual ministry experience, the specific leading of the Spirit, and the study of the Word of God.”¹³⁰ That is, faith movements must be given both time and space to reach their own conclusions. If their answers now seem dissatisfying or unorthodox—as in the results of the study quoted by Parshall—the present is only one point in their process. Since these believers have the Spirit and the Word, Insider proponents are convinced that the new believers will become more and more aligned with what they say.¹³¹ For example, speaking about the

¹²⁸Massey, “Living Like Jesus,” 13-22, 55-71.

¹²⁹Brown, “Biblical Muslims,” 70-74.

¹³⁰Travis and Travis, “Appropriate Approaches,” 409.

¹³¹This “wait and see” argument was frequently used in early C5 literature. See John Travis, “Must All Muslims Leave ‘Islam’ to Follow Jesus?” 411; Joshua Massey, “Misunderstanding C5,” 2; and Bill Nikides, “Evaluating Insider Movements,” *St. Francis Magazine* 2, no. 4 (March 2006): 9 [on-line];

movement from which Parshall utilizes statistics to criticize C5 methodology, Higgins says:

It is a fundamental principle of that movement that the *Spirit of God* through the *Word of God* will build up, correct and establish the *People of God* The important thing is that we understand this to be a process. Moreover, we see this process to be under the leading of the Spirit working within “insiders,” through the Word in the hands of “insiders.”¹³²

Or, as John Travis writes in response to Tennent’s critique of C5 methodology,

From a missiological point of few [*sic*], these are all new movements still in their infancy. If they are seen by outsiders as deficient, let the observers pray and give them more time. The C5 movements with which I am personally familiar are all based on the bedrock of inductive Bible study. I believe that as they continue to come together in Christ around his Word, they will become more or [*sic*] more like Jesus and more mature in their faith.¹³³

As Higgins and Travis highlight, outsiders exercise patience as “insiders” interpret Scripture among themselves. The Insider/C5 debate has consistently emphasized two things. First, social elements are involved in religious forms, and second, believers in Christ may participate in aspects of the socio-religious activity and

accessed 27 January 2008; available from <http://www.stfrancis magazine.info /issue4/ francis4007.pdf>; Internet. The “wait and see” argument explains why Kraft is not concerned with either the theological aberrance in the Insider church he envisioned in 1974, or with the cult-like unorthodoxy of some of the African Independent churches. He believes these movements are moving in a God-ward direction. For Kraft, as long as a group has a Bible they can understand, God will use it to draw them back to orthodoxy: “When a group that splinters off into independence has the Bible in intelligible form, that is, intelligibly in its own language, it tends to grow towards greater orthodoxy. Quite often these independent churches go off into some fairly weird kinds of heresy, but if they have the Bible they tend to move back towards orthodoxy” (Kraft, “Psychological Stress,” 144).

¹³²Kevin Higgins, “Acts 15 and Insider Movements among Muslims: Questions, Process, and Conclusions,” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 34-35. Higgins essentially argues that the faith dimension outstripped the growth of the cognitive dimension so that the transformed lives bore witness to the work of God, even if that movement’s confession of faith was insufficient at that time. It is odd that none of the Insider advocates reasonably deal with the possibilities of these movements becoming a third religious system, a system that is neither orthodox Christianity nor orthodox Islam.

¹³³John Travis et al., “Four Responses to Tennent’s ‘Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques’” *IJFM* 23 (2006): 124-25.

still express sole allegiance to God through Jesus. However, it seems that many Insider advocates demand isolation for Insider believers involved in the process of critical contextualization. From the above quotes, it seems that Higgins and Travis prefer that Insider Movements have little to no contact with any missionary personnel, regardless of how long the missionaries have been involved with the leaders of the movement.

Their statements raise a host of questions about leadership training and the critical contextualization process. If syncretism is invisible to the syncretistic person, then it may take many years before the isolated Insider leadership of national pastors has the wisdom and insight to diagnose theological errors. Though a person may be saved in an Insider movement, that person's worldview is not instantaneously transformed. An Insider will interpret the Bible through their already existing worldview grid unless they are taught otherwise. As David Sills comments,

It is neither responsible nor accurate to say that a Bible and the Holy Spirit is all someone needs. Many dogmatic preachers are genuinely saved and have a Bible, but they see in the Bible only what they want to see. Many well-meaning but untaught brothers are wrongly interpreting the Bible and leading people astray. All of us appreciate the training that we have received and realize that we have been taught truths that we may never have seen for ourselves—or at least not for many years.¹³⁴

Without significant and on-going teaching and training of the leadership, Insider leaders will zealously but wrongly interpret the Scriptures, because they are approaching the Bible through the worldview lens crafted by the Quran or the Veda. The inevitable result is unchecked syncretism, and the possible development of heresy.¹³⁵

¹³⁴M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody, 2010), 25.

¹³⁵It is possible that Higgins and Travis are underemphasizing the role of leadership training in the Insider Movements they discuss in the literature. Hopefully, there is a program of leadership

In response to this imbalance, it is only fair to point out that the process of critical contextualization—which highlights the autonomy of local, Spirit-led congregations to make their own decisions and their own mistakes—must also be combined with the process of self-theologizing offered by Hiebert. One of the crucial steps in assessing localized theology is a variety of truth tests, including not only the Word and the Spirit, but also the extended Christian community:

We in the West, with our extreme forms of individualism, need to rediscover this corporate nature of the church, whereby the body checks the errors of the individual and the community of churches checks the errors of the individual congregation. Just as others see our sins more clearly than we do, so also do others see our heresies more clearly.¹³⁶

The insidious danger of syncretism is its invisibility to the syncretistic person. The same is true of syncretistic churches. Most Americans do not realize that they have welded the idol of the American dream with the God of the Bible. It is a core component of their worldview, one that the Bible addresses, yet one that is rarely questioned within American Christianity. To an outsider, however, the idolatry involved is as evident as night and day. Which is more loving: An outsider who prays and gives us more time as we come to our own conclusions? Or, one who prophetically urges American Christians to address biblically the American Dream? In a similar way, Insider advocates should not relegate the missionary community or the universal church to passive roles, in order

discipleship and training that attempts to provide basic skills in hermeneutics. Many who are critical of Insider Movement methodology would be appeased by knowing the content of the leadership training model that prepares indigenous leaders to guide their people in knowledge and depth of insight into God's word. It would also be helpful to know how the leadership is appointed, whether Kraft's suggestions related to the polygamous African elders are being implemented or whether the specific criteria set out by Paul in Titus 1:5 and 1 Tim 3 are being upheld. Paul's model of carefully selecting overseers for God's flock, of not appointing new believers, and of putting trusted co-workers like Timothy over the process is abandoned with great detriment to the purity of the church.

¹³⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 203.

to give Insider Movements more time. As Nicholls points out, most of the issues in contextualization today have historic precedents that address the situations of Insider believers.¹³⁷ There is absolutely no reason to isolate Insider believers from the evangelical missionary community who truly *do* understand the issues and complexities involved in church planting in high-religious contexts. Worldwide Christianity offers a wealth of history and resources to sharpen, enrich, and help these emerging movements. Balance would suggest that Insider proponents allow Insider Movements to be shaped by historic Christianity through a long term discipleship process that utilizes outside perspective.

The crucial balancing point is intentional discipleship for leaders, so that they will grow in their ability to rightly handle the word of truth. Error does not generally correct itself, as the national church in Nigeria illustrates. Though Southern Baptists have been active in Nigeria since 1851, the animistic view of power still holds a central place in the Nigerian's Christian worldview. Even some of the pastors at the Baptist seminary are unconvinced that certain magical forces are an outworking of demonic power. Some large churches regularly sacrifice cows in order to gain the power to attract large crowds.¹³⁸ Even after 150 years, it is clear that an outsider's involvement in the discipleship and training process is still exceptionally helpful to a group struggling to apply God's Word to the deep worldview issues prevalent in the macro-culture.¹³⁹

¹³⁷Nicholls, *Contextualization*, 51-52.

¹³⁸Sills, *Reaching and Teaching*, 20-21.

¹³⁹It should be clear at this point that Western Christianity would also be exceptionally helped by an outsider's perspective since our own syncretistic tendencies are invisible to the vast majority of us. It also needs to be noted that while error does not *generally* correct itself, God has been kind to restore and

While there is a sense that God is doing a new thing by shredding the veil of deceit over the eyes of people in high-religious contexts, God is, in a greater sense, doing an *old* thing. That is, God is building his church through the revelation of the magnificence of Jesus Christ. Historic Christianity, in all its diversity, is also marked by certain commonalities. Insider Movements are not so utterly different from historic Christianity that they are exempt from displaying those commonalities, including both the doctrinal issues that remain a flash point in the discussion and the training that will guard the movement from error.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the missiological foundation of Insider Movements by exploring the variety of models of contextualization and identifying Insider methodology as a synthetic blend of the Translation and Anthropological models. An incarnational approach to inculturation is the matrix that guides the implementation process of Fuller's Critical model of contextualization in a given context.

While Fuller's model is not fatally flawed, weaknesses in the Insider strategy revolve around three points. First, Insider methodology is unbalanced in its approach to the recombination of Islamic forms and Christian meanings. The power a majority group has over cultural and religious definitions is underestimated in the Insider approach, especially when that approach is envisioned as a long-term, generations-spanning strategy. Second, the incarnational matrix creates far more problems than it solves. Last,

correct his people though insiders who did not have the benefit of an outsider's diagnosis. For instance, Luther's reclamation of justification by faith alone is an example of the correction of error by an insider who depended on the Spirit and the Word alone. Yet, discipleship is the normal means God uses to purify error, and discipleship from an outsider's perspective will provide a unique and helpful perspective.

the salvation point plus process view of cultural change gives Insider proponents a false sense of comfort and confidence in the likelihood of increasing orthodoxy within Insider Movements through the involvement of the Spirit and Word alone. Though Insider proponents may ultimately be correct about the length of the development process, their tendency to undervalue the role of intentional discipleship and to ignore the balancing comments of the Christian community involved in the Insider conversation is unfortunate and extremely troubling. Critical contextualization should be combined with the self-theologizing process in an intentional program for discipling the leaders of the movement.

Insider proponents cling to the validity of their methodology despite the lack of biblical support and despite criticism against the model of contextualization employed by them. There are two reasons for their apparent stubbornness. First, something is happening. People seem to be getting saved and lostness is being impacted in wonderful ways in places that have been resistant for generations. Though high-spectrum contextualization is not the only way God is moving in high-religious contexts, it is a startling way. Second, Insider proponents have an unshakable confidence in the power of the Spirit and the Word to confront syncretism in these growing movements. The “wait and see” argument is the trump card that erases all criticism of Insider methodology. Yet, there does not seem to be an end goal so far in Insider strategy. Insider proponents do not know what these movements are becoming, but they do feel like the only way to keep these movements going is to keep them within the socio-religious structures of the context.

The purpose of the last two chapters was to develop a theory related to the

long-term viability of a strategy incorporating Insider methodology. The biblical data does not support the methodology as it has been articulated so far by Insider proponents. The methodological data leads to the conclusion that a healthy Christ-ward movement will eventually need to move away from the cultural hegemony of the majority religious expression. Overall, Insider Movements do not lead to a healthy long-term strategy, and it is apparent that a directional orientation toward some type of historic Christian identity is vitally important in the first generation of believers. Otherwise, simple thinkers, like children growing up in the movement, will likely succumb to pressure to conform to the majority culture. Consequently, the movement will lose significant momentum as its future evangelists and pastors revert back to the high-religious culture.

From the lack of biblical support, it is also apparent that Insider strategy, as employed by Western missionaries, is excessively problematic. It is one thing for Insider Movements to spontaneously develop. It is something entirely different for an outsider to reappropriate high-religious forms in an attempt to produce extreme cultural contextualization. Outsiders do not necessarily have the best understanding of specific ramifications a particular form will have in a particular context. Moreover, the theological rationale that supports strategic efforts to produce Insider Movements is a house of cards. Insider strategy—both for existing spontaneous movements or for missionary attempts to start movements—while it employs many solid and helpful missiological principles, needs careful reconsideration by its proponents.

However, if a movement can continue to maintain its cultural identity while shedding the religious component—the C4 position on the continuum—then cultural extraction and social ostracization is not inevitable, and the danger of reversion is

lessened considerably. The next chapter will investigate the historical development of one movement to Christ in an attempt to demonstrate the necessity of moving toward an historic Christian identity in a healthy and sustainable Christ-ward movement.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORICAL CASE STUDY: SADRACH'S COMMUNITY OF FAITH

The study so far has concluded that Insider methodology is not supported by biblical foundations, and, additionally, employs a dubious method of arbitrarily linking form and meaning. Despite the biblical and methodological flaws, Insider proponents are pressing forward using Insider methodology in order to start Insider Movements in high-religious contexts. The pressing question, therefore, revolves around Insider proponent's "wait and see" argument. How should we expect to see Insider Movements develop over the course of time? The theory developed throughout chapter 3 and 4 indicates that a healthy Insider Movement will increasingly develop a strong identification with an historic Christian identity similar to the way Travis's C4 believers transitioned out of Islam within a year. Since Travis's main concern with C5 congregations is to prevent the process he observed of believers withdrawing from their existing social networks, questions remain: What is the long term result of a biblical, Christ-centered faith on pre-existing social networks? What happens to identity when Insider believers encounter cultural and social resistance to the gospel message?

Sadrach's community of faith in Central Java provides a unique opportunity to address the questions historically. The purpose of this chapter is primarily to validate the theory developed by discussing the long-term viability of Insider Movements as a strategy and to demonstrate a realistic trajectory for an indigenous Insider church in a

high-religious context. To that end, this chapter presents the Javanese historical and cultural context first, followed by a brief biography of Sadrach, including the growth and development of his community of faith. The parallels to and departures from Insider methodology are identified so that this historical movement is clearly shown to be a precursor to modern methodology. In addition to providing an example for how one particular community developed in terms of identity, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, a number of helpful lessons related to contextualization and missionary partnership can also be derived from this case study; they are presented as balancing comments.

The Javanese Context

Since the beginning of the first millennium after Christ, Indonesians were sailing to China, India, and even to Africa, trading goods and returning to their homeland enriched by material wealth and cross-cultural experience.¹ Empires developed on the islands of Java and Sumatra along the coasts in order to harness the resources of the hinterland and profit from the trading interests of India and China. As a result of contact with these civilizations, Hinduism and Buddhism began to infiltrate the country through the aristocracy and royal patronage. These religious ideologies mixed irrevocably with the animistic views of numerous groups of native Indonesians so that high-religious expression became a common method for gaining power through magic and other occult arts. During the thirteenth century, Sufi Islam began to trickle into Indonesia through

¹Scholars commonly divide Indonesia's history into five categories or perhaps more accurately, layers: the indigenous village, the Indic Kingdom, the Muslim sultanate, the Dutch colony, and the Indonesian Republic. The history presented here is a summary of those categories. See Robert Preston Sellers, "Power and Ministry in Indonesia: Christian Models and Cultural Myths in Conflict" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993), 65, 371-72.

Indian mercantile activity, and the Indic princes of the trade principalities in Java slowly turned to Islam. Yet, it was only the ruling and merchant classes that initially converted; the peasants and farmers, especially in the hinterlands, maintained their distinct blend of animistic Hinduism.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Islamic powers had a stranglehold on the sea lanes around the Mediterranean, Red, and Arabian seas. However, the European powers—especially Portugal and Spain—were beginning to set their aspirations toward cutting out the Muslim middle man on goods and spices from Asia. When Spain had completed its reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula by retaking Granada in 1492, the nation turned its attention outward. Maritime technological advances in both sea vessels and navigation allowed explorers to travel longer distances from shore so that the promise of riches was just over the horizon. Gold, spices and glory were the recruiting themes for these voyages. Consequently, the caliber and character of many of these explorers was excessively debased. Men of honor generally entered other professions and stayed closer to home. In 1511, the Portuguese captured the trading port of Malacca and set about securing a monopoly on the spice trade.²

Sadly, it was the appearance of the Portuguese and the military pressure placed on the coastal sultanates that accelerated the Islamization of the interior of Java. As the Javanese rulers lost control of the seas, they turned their attention inward toward the consolidation of interior Java. By the sixteenth century, the majority of the Javanese had taken on an Islamic identity, and central Java was united under Islamic rule by the first

²Bernard H. M. Vlekke, *The Story of the Dutch East Indies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945), 55-58.

quarter of the seventeenth century.³ Orthodox Sunni Islam was not the norm but the exception. Islam became the form of religion for most Javanese, though the heart of their religious expression continued to be a mystical, contemplative animism steeped in Hinduism.⁴

Other European powers soon joined the scramble for tradable goods, completely unaware of their inadvertent role in accelerating the spread of Islam in Indonesia. In 1602, the Dutch had formed the United East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie [VOC]).⁵ The Dutch government gave the VOC sovereign control to enlist personnel, wage war, build fortresses and conclude treaties throughout Asia. Only the greediest, most desperate and debased men were attracted to the lifestyle offered in the maritime trade. “Adventurers, vagabonds, criminals, and the unfortunate from throughout Europe took its [VOC] oath of allegiance. Inefficiency, dishonesty, nepotism and alcoholism were widespread in the VOC.”⁶

³Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed; Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 25-26. See also, M. C. Ricklefs, “Agung,” in *Encyclopedia of Asian History*, ed. Ainslie T. Embree, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 2:29.

⁴Sellers, “Power and Ministry in Indonesia,” 174-76. Geertz further analyzes the myths surrounding one of the nine fathers of Islam in Indonesia: Sunan Kalidjaga became a Muslim and a teacher having never seen a mosque or Quran. He did not recite the Confession upon conversion, nor study Islam; he received his knowledge through yoga-like meditation and silence. See Geertz, *Islam Observed*, 27-29. An important caveat needs to be made here. The Islamification of the interior of Indonesia was a long and complex process which differed among the various ethnic groups throughout Indonesia. The result of this process resulted in slightly different forms of Islam practiced throughout the archipelago. For example, the proximity of the Sundanese to the Arab merchant community resulted in a much more orthodox form of Islam, whereas the rich Hindu background of the Javanese produced a far more mystical experience. This general overview focuses on the Javanese experience and Javanese Islam, which, while similar, is not exactly like the Islam practiced by other Indonesians.

⁵M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1300*, 2nd ed. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 27.

⁶*Ibid.*



Figure 10: Map of modern Indonesia

The hold of the Dutch on the islands making up Indonesia was always tenuous in the first two centuries of colonial activity.⁷ The monopoly over the islands was a desperate race between European powers. Additionally, Arab, Chinese, and European pirates continually harassed merchant ships on the seas, while alienated tribal chiefs in the interior loomed menacingly on the edges of Dutch control. Following a policy of desperate brutality, the Dutch slowly consolidated their control over the islands against other European forces, Muslim traders, Chinese merchants, and Indonesian princes. Finally, in 1777, after engineering vicious massacres, treachery, war, starvation, disease, enslavement, and even outright theft, the VOC mastered the seas and lands of what is now the country of Indonesia. However, the enormous expense incurred by generations of constant warfare was financially ruinous, forcing the VOC to declare bankruptcy. The Dutch government took over the company's debts and direct control of the colony's

⁷University of Texas, "Map of Indonesia" [on-line]; accessed 25 October 2008; available from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/Indonesia_adm_2002.jpg; Internet.

administration in 1799 and, except for a brief interruption by the British, ruled the archipelago until the Japanese captured the islands in 1942.⁸

The Dutch were single-minded in their quest for the colony to make as much money as possible through any means available. Every administrative policy and decision revolved around that near-sacred purpose. The Dutch enslaved men and women from outlying islands and sold them into bondage as plantation workers in Sumatra and Java. The wars for control of the hinterlands annihilated entire populations. Treachery, deceit, and manipulation were all hallmarks of a Dutch administration whose sole purpose was to plunder the land and people of Indonesia. The Dutch thought of themselves as thoroughly superior to the Indonesians in an evolutionary way. Indonesians, to the Dutch administration, were not even people in a proper sense. Tutelage in civilized living habits was necessary to bring Indonesians closer to the Dutch level of humanity. Condescension, prejudice, indifference, and outright disdain exemplified the Dutch attitude toward Indonesians.

After the defeat of the last great Javanese king, Diponegoro, in 1830, the Dutch military was uncontested. The Dutch administration of the colony went through three distinct phases: The Cultural System (1830-1870), the Liberal Period (1870-1900), and the Ethical Policy (1900-1930).⁹ The Cultural System was a program of forced cultivation of cash crops in lieu of taxes.¹⁰ The Liberal Period was characterized by an

⁸Vlekke, *The Story of the Dutch East Indies*, 213-22.

⁹Frank L. Cooley, *Indonesia: Church and Society* (New York: Friendship, 1968), 16.

¹⁰Avery Thomas Willis, *Indonesian Revival: Why Two Million Came to Christ* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1977), 65.

attempt to reform the devastating effects of the Cultural System on Java's population. The Ethical Policy's emphasis on infrastructure and education flowed out of the white man's burden to repair the devastation caused by generations of Dutch oppression.

The effects of Dutch colonialism on the Indonesian cultural psyche cannot be overstated. The Cultural System forced Javanese farmers to use the bulk of their time and land growing cash crops. As a result, farmers could barely produce enough food for what the community needed and had no margin for error when the rice crop failed. In years of natural disaster—events common in the so-called “ring of fire”—rice production was so disrupted that famine, disease, and sickness swept through the country. At the turn of the twentieth century, conditions for the Javanese had worsened considerably due to rapid population growth. Many Javanese no longer owned land, and, consequently, more pressure was placed on an already tenuous food situation. Drought and volcanic activity resulted in famine throughout Java. The picture recounted by a Dutch missionary is staggering:

In the year 1900 . . . every morning people sick with skin ulcers came to beg, and out of compassion the minister not only gave them money but also treated their sores . . . Conditions were even worse after the eruption of Mt. Kelud in 1901; suffering multiplied because the vegetable plots yielded no harvest and in the years 1902-1903 there occurred a famine, and epidemic illness rampaged . . . At this moment the greatest need is past, because the rice has just been harvested. But during the first months of this year, one met walking skeletons everywhere on the road and the children died of hunger at their mother's breasts; there were men who collapsed from exhaustion in the streets.¹¹

The nineteenth century in Java was a time of great turmoil and numerous

¹¹D. Baker, *De Heidenbode* 88 (July 1902): 1020. The English translation of this missionary publication can be found in Thomas Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads: Indigenous Churches, European Missionaries, Islamic Association and Socio-Religious Change in Java 1812-1936* (Jakarta, Indonesia: Pt BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993), 76-77.

religious movements. Javanese tradition holds to a four-stage cyclical view of history. The fourth and final stage is characterized by intense and pervasive suffering. The end of the fourth stage is the end of the cycle and the beginning of a new four-stage cycle introduced by a harmonious empire characterized by peace and prosperity.¹² The *Ratu Adil* “Just King” is the Javanese messianic figure responsible for ushering in the new era of *Tata Tentrem Karta Raharja* “such an ideal situation.”¹³ The sheer misery of the Javanese people during the nineteenth century led many to expect the *Ratu Adil* to arrive to bring the Javanese into the new era of peace and prosperity.

Javanese Cultural and Religious Context

The Javanese have an incredibly rich and complex culture which continues to produce extraordinary amounts of research and study for both anthropologists and poets.¹⁴ The nuances of the Javanese cultural situation are beyond the scope of this survey. However, four areas, in particular, shape the context of Sadrach’s ministry: codified social behavior, religious development, classes of people, and leadership models.

First, the Javanese are a people who have been shaped by generations of rice cultivation through water irrigation:

Wet rice-cultivation encourages very much all activities directed at restraining the wild forces of nature; it stimulates the population to achieve a high degree of mutual

¹²Philip van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ: A Study of the Indigenous Church in East Java* (London: Lutterworth, 1969), 27.

¹³Gani Wiyono, “*Ratu Adil: A Javanese Face of Jesus?*” *Journal of Asian Studies* 1 (1999): 71. The concept of *Ratu Adil* is immensely important in the Sadrach affair and will be discussed later in greater detail.

¹⁴One little known fact is that the Javanese language is the basis for the mage-language in the immensely popular *Drangonlance* franchise. Tracy Hickman, one of the creators, served as a two-year Mormon missionary in Jakarta and Bandung.

co-operation and aid; peace must be maintained with neighbouring villages. Technical ability, organizational skill, special care for the preservation of social peace and a harmonious development of the community and other social virtues have in the course of two or three thousand years formed the special character of the Javanese people.¹⁵

Harmony in relationships is a central value to the Javanese and has been developed and maintained in Javanese life through a complex set of oral tradition called *adat*. *Adat* is a total system of life that supplies guidance for every relationship and every life situation.¹⁶

Adat governs Indonesian life in two important ways. First, it makes change so difficult that the average peasant prefers conforming to tradition rather than opposing neighbors and kinsmen. Second, *adat* controls community decision-making so that harmony in village life is attained at almost all costs. Because of the family's authoritative role and the necessity for community approval in the average Javanese mind, conversion out of community religion is extremely difficult. By the nineteenth century, Islamic identity and Islamic ethical teaching had permeated the system of Javanese *adat*. The experience of Christian missionaries today was every bit the experience of the Dutch pietistic missionaries of the nineteenth century: "The real explanation of the great power of Islam over the Indonesian people seems to . . . be that in their mind it has been completely fused with their *adat*."¹⁷

Second, the religious development of the Javanese is incredibly intriguing because two different high-religious systems have been layered over the still-apparent original Javanese animistic religion. Javanese religious expression in both the nineteenth

¹⁵Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 5.

¹⁶Sellers, "Power and Ministry in Indonesia," 95.

¹⁷Willis, *Indonesian Revival*, 127.

century and today is the embodiment of syncretism. The *Ratu Adil* is a good example of how all three religious systems have blended together to form a coherent and core Javanese belief. The *Ratu Adil* is a pure Javanese chiliastic myth that is rooted in the idea that all of society's ills will be cured by a messianic leader who returns society to the ideal past. The Javanese myth has built upon the "Indian *yuga* scheme for the course of events in the world," but the Hindu ending involving Vishnu has been replaced with the messianic expectations of the *Ratu Adil*.¹⁸ Additionally, as the Dutch moved inexorably into the Java hinterland, the Javanese reaction to the political and cultural offenses of the Dutch was a resurgence of Islamic identity as a symbol of their opposition. As a result of Islamic resurgence, the *Ratu Adil* became "associated with a Mahdi figure and assumed characteristics of *Jihad*."¹⁹ These Islamic elements were incorporated in the myth when Diponegoro, the national hero of Indonesia, fulfilled the Javanese expectations of the Muslim *Ratu Adil* by leading the last major Javanese rebellion against the Dutch administration during a grueling five year campaign that ended in 1830.²⁰

The above pattern of religious blending and borrowing has repeated itself in Javanese life and tradition in a myriad of ways. In fact, the Javanese indigenous religion, especially as practiced by rural farmers, is characterized by its ability to incorporate high-religious systems into existing worldview patterns without significantly changing the original foundation:

In the days before the Hindus . . . it seems likely that the sort of "animism" common

¹⁸Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 41.

¹⁹Sellers, "Power and Ministry in Indonesia," 246.

²⁰Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 42-43.

still to many of the pagan tribes of Malaysia comprised the whole of the religious tradition; but this tradition has proved, over the course of the centuries, remarkably able to absorb into one syncretized whole elements from both Hinduism and Islam. . . . Thus, today the village religious system commonly consists of a balanced integration of animistic, Hinduistic, and Islamic elements, a basic Javanese syncretism which is the island's true folk tradition, the basic substratum of its civilization.²¹

Third, Clifford Geertz categorizes present-day Javanese religious expression into three classes of people represented by three socio-structural elements of Javanese society: the village, the market, and the government.²² The nineteenth century had fewer economic opportunities than the twentieth; consequently, Partonadi divides Javanese religious expression in the nineteenth century into two groups: Islam *abangan* and Islam *putihan*.²³ The village *abangan* hold to an amalgamation of Islamic belief, magic, and views of spiritual power. They were also often lax with regard to Islamic expression, which is why they were sometimes called “pork eaters.”²⁴ The educated *putihan*, on the other hand, were characterized both by Islamic belief and Islamic expression. The vast majority of the Javanese in the nineteenth century fall into the Islam *abangan*

²¹Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (New York: The Free Press, 1960), 5. See also Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 28.

²²Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 5-7. His book investigates the religious tradition, expression, and variation within these three broad categories. Geertz' thesis of a corrupted Javanese Islam is still the prevalent explanation of the Javanese religion today, though his thesis has been challenged on a number of fronts. In general however, Geertz' classification of Javanese system is accepted in broad form, though Javanese anthropologists either prefer to add the nuance of many different sub-layers within Javanese society and religious expression, or to speak of the categories as points on a continuum. See Gani Wiyono, “*Ratu Adil*” 65.

²³Sutarman S. Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community and Its Contextual Roots: A Nineteenth Century Javanese Expression of Christianity* (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1990), 20-21. *Abangan* means “red” and is often used as a description of the village life. *Putihan* means “white” and is used to describe the ruling class of the Javanese. Geertz's third category related to the market refers to a mercantile class of people who have recently arisen within Javanese society.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 21.

classification, which holds to Islamic belief but Javanese religious expression.

Traditional Javanese religion holds that spiritual energy, or power, resides in all objects with different degrees of concentration. Some places have more spiritual power than others and some animals have more than others and certain people have more than others. Javanese traditional religion has an almost Manichaean conception of the cosmic order: the forces of evil plague humanity and visit upon them bad fortune, drought, sickness, etc., and the forces of good visit upon humanity good fortune, successful harvesting, and health. Spiritual powers of either good or evil can be interacted with and often appeased or warded off with special power objects made by knowledgeable power people.²⁵ The Javanese worldview conceptualizes the spiritual world prevalently working in the physical world, and the class of people dealing with the supernatural held a significant place in Javanese society.

Fourth, power people in Javanese society can be divided into two categories. The first are the *dukuns*, men and women who are involved in the practical practice of power through magic or the occult. The second group are the *kyai* or *gurus* who seek after *ngelmu* “spiritual knowledge”. Generally, all *kyai* also practice various types of magic, but not all *dukuns* are *kyai*. In either case, power people are able to mysteriously weave together different power elements to positively or negatively affect communal life.

²⁵Sellers, “Power and Ministry in Indonesia,” 373-79. Sellers lists five categories of spiritual beings: (1) *Memedi* are frightening spirits like ghosts who simply scare people but who often do no other serious harm; (2) *Lelembut* are possessing spirits that cause illness, insanity or death; (3) *Tuyul* are familiar spirits who do good and can help people become rich; (4) *Demit* are spirits who inhabit places like rice fields, trees or ruins; and (5) *Danyang* are guardian spirits, including ancestors, like a particular founder or first chief who will provide help for the community against threat. Rick Love categorizes them this way: (1) Angels; (2) Islamic spiritual beings; (3) evil spirits; (4) ancestor spirits; and (5) gods and goddesses. See Rick Love, *Muslims, Magic, and the Kingdom of God: Church Planting Among Folk Muslims* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000), 25.

Dukuns perform exorcisms or cast curses on people they dislike. Sympathetic magic is utilized through fingernail clippings or hair. These things were believed to hold a person's spiritual essence and could be used against that person by a *dukun*'s spell or curse. Charms, talismans, or fetishes hold special power to protect or bless people.²⁶

Kyai, on the other hand, were the product of various mystical schools developed around the seeking of *ngelmu*. High *ngelmu* dealt with questions involving the meaning, origin, and destiny of life:

The mystery of life was to be grasped through the human experience of unity with the highest reality known as God, the Absolute, or *Gusti* (Master), among other names. The life of the mystics was one of harsh discipline which included fasting, refraining from pleasure, deliberately seeking hardship, asceticism, and meditation. They usually became moralists who emphasized good conduct.²⁷

During the unrest caused by the oppressive climate created by the Dutch in the nineteenth century, religious and social movements that focused on *ngelmu*, morality and ethics, magic, and the occult abounded. *Kyai*, claiming special supernatural knowledge, were often the leaders of these movements if they were able to sufficiently prove their spiritual power over cosmic forces.

The Spread of Christianity in Java

Four types of agents were behind the spread of Christianity throughout the Javanese. First, European missionaries dedicated their lives to see Christianity planted among the Javanese. However, especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth

²⁶An example of the Indonesian belief in the efficacy of these protective objects can be seen in the ways nationalistic Indonesians tried to overthrow Dutch rule in the late nineteenth century. Weaponless, or with sharpened bamboo sticks, amulet-bearing Indonesians rushed against Dutch machine guns confident that they would be protected against harm. See Willis, *Indonesian Revival*, 68-69.

²⁷Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 22.

centuries, the restrictions placed on missionary activity by the government relegated European missionaries to an extremely small role in propagating Christianity. Both the VOC and the Dutch colonial government's policies were actively suppressed and discouraged missionary activity. The colonial government had a tenuous hold on the interior of the islands and felt that missionary activity could cause enough upheaval to spark civil unrest. For many years, ministers of the government's Calvinist church were the only clergy allowed in the colony and, with few exceptions, were not allowed to minister to the Javanese. These ministers of the *Indische Kerk* (the Dutch government sponsored church) were the second agents of Christianizing, but, as employees of the colonial government, government policy and the censure of the Dutch congregations prevented any effective work from gaining momentum.

When the British took control of the colony from 1811-1816, Thomas Raffles—who had close ties with the British Baptist Missionary Society—allowed missionary activity for the first time on Java.²⁸ However, out of the handful of missionaries who entered the country during the British interim, only the German pietist, Glottob Brückner, was allowed to remain when the government was returned back to the Dutch.

Brückner worked continuously on Java for forty-three years without recording a single person as the “fruit” of his task of proclaiming the gospel. He did not baptize anyone. Yet through his long life, with mental and physical stamina that was extraordinary, Brückner succeeded in translating the entire New Testament into Javanese.²⁹

²⁸Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 5-6.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 13. After Brückner's death in 1857, the Baptist Missionary Society decided to discontinue work on Java. Baptist work among the Javanese was interrupted until the fall of China to communism relocated Southern Baptist missionaries to Indonesia. See Jan Sihar Arintonang and Karel

Brückner finished the Javanese New Testament in 1823, but a variety of circumstances delayed publication until 1831. Brückner was forced to travel to Serampore in 1828 and wait three years before finally being able to print 3,000 copies.³⁰ Unfortunately, upon his return to Java, the Dutch authorities confiscated all but a few of the copies and stored them away for seventeen years. Most of the New Testaments were eaten by termites, but the few that remained were finally distributed in 1848.³¹

The first two types of Christianizing agents were largely unsuccessful in Java. Two immediate reasons are apparent for their failure. First, the Christian religion was closely associated with the Dutch, whose behavior to, and treatment of, the Javanese was often reprehensible. Additionally, not only are the Dutch cultural opposites of the Javanese, but Dutch behavior was a continual offense to Javanese morals and mores.³² As a result, the Javanese wanted nothing the Dutch had to offer. Second, the Dutch ministers and missionaries approached evangelism with a classic extractionistic approach.³³ Javanese converts were required to completely abandon their own culture and embrace Dutch culture. For the Dutch, conversion was signified by taking baptism, wearing Western clothes, mimicking Western haircuts, and refraining from almost all community involvement:

Steenbrink, eds., *A History of Christianity in Indonesia* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 640, 870.

³⁰Arintonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 640.

³¹Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 14.

³² Sellers, "Power and Ministry in Indonesia," 225-41.

³³Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 25. Geertz identifies the Slametan community meal as the core communal ritual in Javanese society, which is closely followed by shadow puppet plays which retell Javanese myths, moral stories, and fables. By forbidding these things to the Javanese, the missionaries ostracized them utterly from their birth community. See Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 11-118.

The Protestant Church in Surabaya baptized without realizing that this baptism implied the rejection by these people of their Javanese social environment It is impossible to describe what these people must have suffered through their trust in the white brethren, when they returned to their village in European garb—which had never before been seen there—and were mocked by the Muslims. In short, here were people socially dislocated through religious fallacy.³⁴

Derogatory terms arose to describe these cultural traitors: *Kristen Landa*

“Dutch Christians” or *Landa wurung Jawa tanggung* “failed Dutchmen and half-baked Javanese”.³⁵ It is apparent that the Javanese were not open to the gospel presented by Europeans; they were largely unwilling to give up their communities and culture for a foreign religion: “Javanese resistance was partly on the grounds of cultural identity [and when a missionary] was given a series of reasons why Javanese refused to convert, most of them related to cultural identity.”³⁶

The last two types of agents behind the spread of Christianity were far more effective in reaching the Javanese with the gospel. Though missionaries were not allowed much freedom in proclaiming the gospel, Dutch lay Christians had significant and vibrant ministries. Several notable names fall into this category. The first, Frederik Lodewijk Anthing, was a Dutch lawyer and judge whose evangelistic success led him to form a mission agency for training and sending out Javanese evangelists.³⁷ He fully funded the ministry himself and was responsible for discipling many of the significant founding fathers of Javanese Christianity. He was so zealous in his support of the

³⁴Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 72-73.

³⁵M. C. Rickfefs, *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and other Visions c 1830-1930* (Leiden: KITLV, 2007), 106, 118.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 107-08.

³⁷Arintonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 651.

Javanese evangelists—no less than fifty-seven national evangelists at any given time—that he bankrupted himself and was forced to return to the Netherlands in order to raise additional funds for the ministry. When the Dutch mission board declined to support his work, he turned to the Irvingite Catholic Apostolic Church and returned to Java as an “apostle.” From 1855 until his death in a tragic tram accident in 1883, Anthing evangelized among the Javanese, trained Javanese evangelists, and planted a number of small churches among the plantation workers around Batavia (present day Jakarta).

Additionally, several wives of wealthy Dutch plantation administrators undertook a campaign to evangelize the workers on their plantations. Among these women was Christina Petronella Stevens-Philips, a Euro-Javanese married to a Dutch plantation supervisor. Raised in a devout Christian home, her bi-cultural background allowed her to interact feely with her household staff and to speak naturally about the gospel: “When time permitted, she held Bible studies with her servants in the evenings. Sitting on a chair with her servants on a mat around her, she would explain the verses which the servants had recited. In this way she introduced the Christian faith to the Javanese people.”³⁸ She worked with her sister-in-law to translate portions of the Hiedelburg catechism, the Lord’s Prayer, the Apostle’s Creed, and the Ten Commandments into Javanese.³⁹

The most well-known of the European lay evangelists is the controversial figure, Coenraad Coolen (1773-1873). Born of a Russian father and a Javanese aristocratic mother, Coolen became a Christian at the age of forty-three through the

³⁸Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 44.

ministry of a German watchmaker named Emde. Though he had married a Dutch woman and had five children with her, he left them behind to take a post with the government in the interior of Java.⁴⁰ At this point, it appears that Coolen turned from his European heritage and embraced his Javanese roots. After some time, he married one—possibly two—Javanese women and had several more children.⁴¹ In 1829, he was given a long lease by the government on some uninhabited land and, in the time-honored Javanese way, marched into the jungle with his new Javanese relatives and cleared room for a village. It was there, at the newly formed village of Ngoro, that Christianity grew Javanese roots.

Coolen, though a wild and controversial figure, was both undoubtedly syncretistic and unreservedly Christian:

Coolen embraced Javanese culture with style. He spoke Javanese perfectly, we are told, although it is possible that it was defective in some measure, as was his Dutch. He led the Sunday service in Ngoro himself, in which his charismatic personality held worshippers spellbound. He performed *wayang* and *gamelan*, which most European missionaries thought to be heathenish things best wiped out. He was acknowledged as a *kyai*, but a Christian one, the first such in Javanese history. He solved riddles and had visions.⁴²

As the founder of a new and thriving community, he became renowned throughout rural Java for his wisdom, power, and strength. The rental fee was fair to those who rented land from him, and the land produced so abundantly that the villagers

³⁹Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 20.

⁴⁰Apparently this practice was common at the time. In Coolen's case, he either left his wife in the city of Surabaya for the children's education or because she simply refused to follow him to the interior. A Dutch minister attributed their separation to the latter reason. See Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 53.

⁴¹Rickfefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 109.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 110.

soon were uncommonly prosperous. Coolen's ability to coax abundance from the Javanese soil was a type of power encounter because the Javanese assumed that he had authority over the spirits that inhabited the land. Consequently, many of the Javanese who were attracted to the prosperous conditions of Ngoro soon converted to Coolen's version of Christianity.⁴³

Above all, Coolen was concerned that the Javanese maintain their Javanese identity when they decided to accept Christianity. He did not allow converts to cut their hair in the Dutch style, be baptized, which was a sign of social conversion to Dutch culture, or to wear Western clothes. Moreover, he actively translated Christian ideas into the cognitive categories of the Javanese by creating what are now called "functional substitutes." Javanese tradition required that a man possessing magical powers must cut the first furrow of the planting season so that spirits of the earth and sky are reconciled. Coolen played that part in the true Javanese style by singing the traditional *tembang*, yet with modifications that communicated the lordship of Jesus over the spiritual forces.⁴⁴ Christian marriage was given new forms, Dutch hymns were translated and put into Javanese *tembang*, and the Muslim confession was replaced with a Christian equivalent along with other creeds. The new Christian creeds were sung in the traditional *dikir* style by being repeated over and over again in order to induce a trance-like state.⁴⁵

⁴³Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 61.

⁴⁴Ibid., 63. In this song, Coolen acknowledges the power of Dewi Sri—the goddess of the land and rice. While he dedicates the song to Jesus and pleads for Christ's power to aid the planting, the song is undeniably henotheistic.

⁴⁵Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 136; and Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 66. Van Akkeren translates the Christian creed as follows: "I believe that Allah is one. There is no God but Allah. Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Allah have power over everything. There is no God but Allah, Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Allah." While this translation is more trinitarian, the natural translation from the Muslim

Two things are abundantly clear about Coolen's Christian village. First, it was syncretistic in the way that Javanese religious, mystical, and magical elements were combined with Christian moral teaching.⁴⁶ It is not exactly clear how orthodox Coolen himself was, but it is obvious that the first Javanese Christians viewed Coolen's religion as a source of *ngelmu* that provided protection against malicious spiritual forces. It is noteworthy that the community did not have a Javanese Bible. Everything they learned about Christianity was through Coolen's translation of his Dutch or Malay Bible, the creeds he created, and the hymns he translated.

Second, despite the obvious syncretism of Javanese, Islamic, and Christian elements, the new community identified itself with historic Christianity. They believed themselves to be Javanese Christians who followed the moral teachings of Jesus as their *guru*.⁴⁷ Coolen stressed the ethical teachings of Jesus, and, as a result, Ngoro was known throughout the region as a place devoid of theft, opium, and gambling—common ailments of the Javanese at the time.⁴⁸ The new Christians were obligated to attend Sunday and midweek services and had times of morning and evening prayer. Some of these new Christians were zealous in their faith, and as a whole, the entire community was remarkably indistinguishable from their Muslim neighbors:

perspective is that "Jesus Christ is the Spirit of Allah," which is the Quranic title for Jesus. In this case, the creed is not trinitarian at all. Van Akkeren's translation is the exception because most who write about Coolen in the twentieth century translate Coolen's confession of faith in the Islamic sense. See also Rickfefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 110.

⁴⁶For example, "Father God, Son of God, Holy Spirit, three Gods who are one; venom and poison, dangerous land, woods inhabited by evil spirits, all of them become no more dangerous. Our Lord give good fortune and safety forever, Amen!" See Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 25.

⁴⁷They used the Dutch name for Jesus, "Yesus Kristus" instead of the Islamic "Isa al'Masi."

⁴⁸Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 61.

Muslim-Christian relations in East Java region were good. There were many similarities between them, only it was said that Javanese Christians did not always wear their *kris* [ceremonial dagger with supernatural significance] . . . Even though they had become Christian, there was no conspicuous difference; they continued to follow the former life-style of their society.⁴⁹

Finally, the last agent in the Christianization of Java in the nineteenth century was the most influential: Javanese *ngelmu* seekers who, once convinced of the superiority of Christianity as *ngelmu*, served as powerful evangelists. A number of men served in this capacity, such as those employed by Anthing and several *ngelmu* seekers won to Christianity through Coolen's power to solve riddles.⁵⁰ The life and ministry of *Kyai Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung* serves as an example of how the gospel traveled along the web of relationships formed by the Hindu-Javanese tradition of master-disciple relationship of the Javanese *kyai*.

Tunggul Wulung⁵¹ was born as Raden Tondokusumo in central Java around the year 1800. His origins are shrouded in mystery, but it seems he was born an aristocrat and served in the Dutch administration until he fought against the Dutch in the Javanese

⁴⁹Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 27. At the height of Coolen's popularity, the village proper numbered about a thousand people, with an additional thousand impacted in some way, through seasonal work or family relatives. In terms of the entire population of Java, it was an exceedingly small movement toward Christ that did not spill over to other villages. The reason for their lack of effective evangelism is that Coolen established Ngoro as a Christian village with Christian *adat*. The only way to propagate Coolen's system was to establish new villages, an endeavor fraught with both financial risk and physical danger.

⁵⁰See, for instance, the story of Singotruno and Pak Dasimah in Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 67-71.

⁵¹Tunggul Wulung is the name of a famous twelfth century Javanese general; the name usually signifies a claim to absolute power. The general's spirit is said to be the guardian of Mout Kelud. Local *gurus* who adoption that name essentially proclaimed that he believed his *ngelmu* to be superior. For a time, Tunggul Wulung also went by the name of "Ngabdullah," the Javanese version of the Arabic "Abdullah," meaning "slave of God." See Lawrence McCulloh Yoder, "The Introduction and Expression of Islam and Christianity in the Cultural Context of North Central Java" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987), 284-90.

War of 1825. After the war he fled to north-central Java, where he eventually became a wandering hermit and *guru ngelmu*. In typical Javanese *guru* fashion, he spent his days practicing asceticism and meditating on the slopes of Mount Kelud.⁵² Legend has it that he mysteriously received a copy of the Ten Commandments on his mountain hermitage, and he was persuaded that he had been called to become a Christian. He came down from his mountain, encountered Coolen in Ngoro, and went from there in search of Dutch missionaries. After studying under Jellesma for two months, he was sent out as an evangelist. He was eventually baptized four years later in 1857, after which he added Ibrahim to his name.⁵³ His baptism by a Dutch missionary was a significant sign of his commitment to becoming a Christian, because the missionaries required the external signs of Javanese cultural to be discarded upon baptism.⁵⁴

Yet, Tunggul Wulung did not discard his cultural identity, but, in typical Javanese fashion, layered it on top of his existing worldview. His appearance and mannerisms conformed to the Javanese expectations of a powerful *kyai*: “[He] was tall and imposing, with long hair and a wispy beard under his chin. He spoke in riddles and allusions in the Javanese style, conveying the charisma and supernatural authority that

⁵²Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 46.

⁵³Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 113; Yoder, “The Introduction and Expression of Islam and Christianity,” 292-94.

⁵⁴For instance, Emde, the missionary who converted Coolen, imposed an additional “Ten Commandments” upon Javanese converts: “1. Thou shalt cut thy hair short, 2. Thou shalt take off thy head-kerchief in the church, 3. Thou shalt not listen to *gamelan* music, 4. Thou shalt not attend a *wayang* performance, 5. Thou shalt not be circumcised, 6. Thou shalt not attend a *slametan*, 7 Thou shalt not read Javanese verse, 8. Thou shalt not care for the graves of thy ancestors, 9. Thou shalt not decorate thy cemeteries with flowers and trees, 10. Thou shalt forbid thy children to play idle games,” (Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 79-80).

was associated with a Javanese hermit and *kyia*.”⁵⁵ According to Jansz, the missionary in the area Tunggul Wulung eventually settled, the *kyia* still taught various *ngelmus* and was of the opinion that Tunggul Wulung’s Christianity was nothing more than a bid for power through Javanese superstitions:

In 1854, Tunggul Wulung told Jansz personally another version of his magical conversion involving a disembodied voice ordering him to go to Jellesma. He also related his defiance of tigers who roamed near his hermitage and how he had thrice leapt into the sea only to be thrown back to the shore. All of this Jansz thought to be not miracles but richly embroidered tales from a charlatan. Javanese, however, believed in such tales. One missionary was told by Javanese Christians that Ibrahim Tunggul Wulung could run at amazing speeds, but before he became a Christian he had been able to fly at infinite speed so that he could appear in two places at once. This was, however, a devilish art that he had abandoned on conversion.⁵⁶

Despite the syncretistic nature of Tunggul Wulung’s Christianity, he was far more effective in winning converts than the European missionaries. Likely, one of the significant reasons for his success compared to missionary evangelism is that he did not focus on sin and guilt, which was a central felt need in Pietistic Western Christianity but almost entirely non-existent in nineteenth century Java. Instead, Tunggul Wulung focused on the Ten Commandments, which display God’s power and superior ethical system, thereby addressing the Javanese felt need of protection from harmful spiritual forces.⁵⁷ Tunggul Wulung wandered East Java making converts and, in the pattern of Coolen, established three new Christian villages north of Jepara. His method of evangelism was the “public debate” following the tradition of warring *guru ngelmus*, and,

⁵⁵Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 113.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 113-14.

⁵⁷Yoder, “The Introduction and Expression of Islam and Christianity,” 331-33.

in worship services, he used *tembang* and short Javanese prayers.⁵⁸ His converts were called *Kristen Jawa*, as opposed to the *Kristen Landa*, the “Dutch Christians” that conformed to European missionary requirements.⁵⁹ Though Tunggul Wulung tried numerous times to cooperate and partner with the Janz, he was continually rebuffed and criticized. By the time of his death, Tunggul Wulung had over one thousand members in his congregations, while Jansz had only one hundred and fifty. It is clear that the Javanese were intrigued and moved by the message of Jesus, yet largely refused to give up their culture in order to follow him. It is likely that Tunggul Wulung’s teaching was a blend of Islamic, Buddhist, and Christian doctrine.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Tunggul Wulung’s communities were successfully drawn into the Mennonite church after his death and his tomb is a place of pilgrimage for Javanese Christians in the area.⁶¹

Sadrach’s Insider Movement

Kyai Radin Abas Sadrach Surapranata belonged to the last group of agents involved in spreading the message of Christ throughout the Javanese people. This section will provide a brief biography of Sadrach and his community, then discuss the organization, theology, and practice of the community and conclude with a discussion of contextualization and syncretism within the community.

⁵⁸Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 47.

⁵⁹Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 113.

⁶⁰Yoder is convinced that Tunggul Wulung was not a heretic. While Tunggul Wulung was not concerned with guilt over sin, he did emphasize that Jesus had the power to deliver his people from oppression, and that he could protect them from spiritual harm, that God was a loving father, and that to become a Christian necessitated repenting from sin and obeying Jesus’ commands. See Yoder, “The Introduction of Islam and Christianity,” 331-35.

⁶¹Arintonang and Steenbrink, *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, 673-74.

Sadrach's Biography and Community Development

Sadrach was born in Central Java around 1835, the year that the Dutch quelled Sultan Diponegoro in the Javanese rebellion. The context of Dutch oppression through the Cultural System and the resulting Javanese misery surrounded the life and ministry of Sadrach. The area of his birth was one of the most deeply Islamicized areas in Java at the time, and the name Radin suggests that he was born to poor peasant farmers in the *abangan* class of Javanese.⁶² The most merciless period of the Dutch Cultivation System occurred during Sadrach's early years. Sadrach attended Quranic school from the ages of six to ten. There, he learned Arabic and how to read the Quran. After his circumcision, Sadrach became the pupil of Kurmen, a *guru ngelmu*, who eventually adopted him into his family.⁶³

Kurmen taught him mystical secrets and folk medicine, such as spitting or urinating on a sick body part in order to heal it. He also taught Radin how to lead the ritual communal meal, called *selamatan*, that dominates Javanese village life. Radin continued to use this traditional mystical knowledge he learned from his adopted *guru*. Becoming a *guru ilmu*, like Kurmen, gave special status to *abangan* (mystical) Javanese Muslims, who mix traditional Javanese beliefs with Islam. This mystical, secret power was viewed with awe and fear by Javanese and confirmed Radin's Java-ness. Knowledge in Javanese society was power for it enabled one to manipulate the spirits, overcome bad circumstances, and gain respect from men.⁶⁴

When Sadrach was about seventeen years old, he traveled to East Java where he enrolled in a traditional Islamic school called a *pesantren*. These schools taught

⁶²Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 55.

⁶³Apparently, adoption in Javanese culture served as a type of apprentice system and had less to do with inheritance.

⁶⁴Donald Dent, "Sadrach: The Apostle to Java" (D.Miss. paper, Malaysian Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), 7-8.

students not only to memorize and recite the Quran, but also to exegete both the Quran and commentaries on the Quran.⁶⁵ *Pesantrens* were designed to produce independent thinkers in the *santri* class of the Javanese—those who practiced a purer form of Islam. Though at this point he had come in contact with Jellesma and possibly some Javanese from the *Kristen Landa* communities in East Java, Sadrach was fully committed to a Javanese socio-religious identity. After graduating from the *pesantren*, Sadrach moved to central Java to live in an exclusive Arab/Muslim community in Semarang and changed his name to Abas to signify his commitment to a *santri* lifestyle.⁶⁶

The path to Sadrach's conversion was through his old *guru ngelmu*. After reconnecting with his old teacher in Central Java, he was shocked to discover that Kurmen had become a Christian. Javanese *gurus* commonly conducted battles to determine the most powerful *ngelmu*, and Kurmen had been defeated by Tunggul Wulung. Consequently, Kurmen and his students became followers of Tunggul Wulung's *ngelmu*. Sadrach went himself to meet with Tunggul Wulung in order to hear his teaching. Here, he learned for the first time that becoming a Christian did not necessitate giving up his culture and leaving Javanese *adat*.

⁶⁵Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 57. Peacock describes the *pesantren* in the following way: "By 1600 the Sufis had established throughout Java small schools known as *pesantren*. In these, Sufi teachers taught an ascetic individualism alien to the feudal Hinduistic kingdoms. The student in the school, known as a *santri*, rose at dawn, cooked his own simple breakfast, worked in the fields and chanted by day, and engaged in meditation, mysticism . . . at night . . . Together with these more emotional aspects of Islam, the *santri* learned the orthodox pillars . . . Affecting quasi-Arabic modes of dress, the *santri* had also learned to enjoy Arab music, chant in Arabic, utter Arabic incantations . . . and most important, to rely on the Muslim doctrine and text as his ultimate guide to proper conduct" (James L. Peacock, *Consciousness and Change: Symbolic Anthropology in Evolutionary Perspective* [New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1875], 185). From this description it is obvious that through the *santris* practiced a purer form of Islam than the *abangan*, it was still heavily fused with Javanese mystical elements.

⁶⁶Dent indicates that this name change signifies his status as a *kyai*, and that he was qualified to start a mosque and become a religious teacher. See Dent, "Sadrach," 9-10.

At this point, Sadrach demonstrated intense interest in Christianity; he often walked five hours to and from Semarang to attend Hozoo's worship services.⁶⁷ The cognitive dissonance for Sadrach must have been extreme. On the one hand, Sadrach had seen Tunggul Wulung's model of evangelization and how the old *guru* had organized new communities and adapted Javanese *adat* to Christian teaching. On the other hand, the Dutch missionary Hozoo taught that converts must make an extreme break with Javanese culture in order to follow Christ.⁶⁸ However, at some point during this time, Sadrach decided to follow Christ in the pattern set forth by Tunggul Wulung.

It is unknown whether Hozoo knew of Sadrach's decision or whether he simply disapproved of Sadrach maintaining his Javanese identity. In either case, Sadrach continued in his spiritual role of *kyai* as a Christian religions teacher. In 1866, he and Tunggul Wulung traveled to Batavia to meet Anthing and become one of his evangelistic helpers.⁶⁹ While there, Anthing placed him under the instruction of a Dutch minister of

⁶⁷It should be noted here that Sadrach may have first been attracted to Christianity as a result of the long-standing Javanese belief that religion comes from the ruler: *cuius region, eius religio* (the religion of the ruler shall be the religion of the people). Gerry van Klinken, *Minorities, Modernity and the Emerging Nation: Christians in Indonesia, a Biographical Approach* (Leiden: KITLV, 2003), 9-15. See also Charles E. Farhadian, *Christianity, Islam and Nationalism in Indonesia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 10-41. Van Akkeren describes the tendency for the trickling down of the ruler's religion gaining momentum in nineteenth century Java: "Without any inducement from the government—it was rather concerned to let things remain as they always had been, except of course for the new fact of Dutch supremacy on Java—there sprang up after 1830 a spontaneous movement toward acculturation . . . Where previously there had been a tendency to desire the Arabic cultural pattern, which was easily adapted to Javanese forms, many now looked to the European forms of the 'Christian' West. This was not due to loyalty to the Dutch government, but rather to an effort to be inspired afresh by the national identity, strengthened by new Western patterns of loving" (Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 43).

⁶⁸Unsurprisingly, Hozoo only baptized nineteen people in his entire ministry. See Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 35.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 58.

the *Indische Kerk*, who eventually baptized him on April 14, 1867.⁷⁰ In compliance with Protestant and Catholic tradition, Sadrach took a biblical name to signify the spiritual reality of his new birth in Christ.⁷¹ The choice of “Sadrach” as a name may indicate that Sadrach identified with the Jewish men in the book of Daniel who were held in captivity by a colonial government, yet who boldly stood against the colonial power for the sake of maintaining both God’s word and their cultural identity.

Sadrach spent several years working within Anthing’s network of Christian evangelists. As a distributor of Christian literature, he was effective in expanding and building up the growing Christian community around Batavia. In 1868, Sadrach left Batavia and joined Tunggul Wulung’s work in Bondo to strengthen the surrounding Christian villages. Up to this point, the *modus operandi* of the Christianizing agents was to separate the Javanese from their existing communities and create new communities akin to the aggregate church planting method described by Lewis.⁷² Because of the population boom happening in Java during this time, it was not uncommon for landless Javanese to migrate to other areas seeking opportunities to become landowners.⁷³ The new villages sprouting in Java’s interior provided a release valve for the exploding

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Dent indicates that according to colonial law, the Dutch colonists had New Testament names while the Javanese believers were required to take Old Testament. By this rule, ethnic differences were apparent with a simple glance at the church role. See Dent, “Sadrach: Apostle to Java,” 11.

⁷²Rebecca Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities,” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 75.

⁷³“For in all this, one should never forget that until the end of the nineteenth century there was still the possibility of migration in Java. The history of the Javanese people teaches us that one of the characteristics of the *desa* [village] is a centrifugal force, which compels the population to move elsewhere when subjected to strong political or economic pressures, in order to build up a new existence and a new *desa*” (Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 39).

population growth.

However, for unknown reasons, Sadrach decided to employ a different method in his evangelism and church planting. After a year of working with Tunggul Wulung, Sadrach decided to leave Bondo. Three reasons are given for Sadrach's departure. Cachet, who was inclined to see the absolute worst in Sadrach, ascribed his departure to a power struggle between the young evangelist and the old *guru*.⁷⁴ Adriaanse, who was closer to the situation and understood more of the factors involved, asserted Sadrach's departure was a way of demonstrating his disapproval of the moral laxity of Christian elders without actually confronting the situation. Tunggul Wulung had decided to take a second wife and Kurmen was addicted to opium.⁷⁵ Yotham Martareja, Sadrach's adopted son and Javanese biographer, relates that Sadrach understood himself to be obeying God's call, like Abraham, to leave his comfortable and prosperous home for the unknown hardships of the wilderness.⁷⁶

Thus, Sadrach entered the phase of his career where he became an independent Javanese *kyai*, who built a network of disciples who adhered to the Christian *ngelmu*. From Bondo, Sadrach moved to Purwareja, possibly because of the network of Christians associated with Christina Stephen-Philip's efforts in evangelizing the Javanese. At first, he worked alongside two of her evangelists, but it was quickly apparent that he far exceeded them in his evangelistic ability. Sadrach's evangelistic method was similar to Tunggul Wulung's in that he entered into public debate with other

⁷⁴Cachet, *Een Jaar*, 364.

⁷⁵Adriaanse, *Sadrach's Kring*, 51.

⁷⁶Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 60.

guru ngelmu and defeated them. Like Kurmen, the defeated *gurus* would submit themselves and their pupils to Sadrach.⁷⁷ Within a short period of time, Sadrach became widely known as a powerful *guru* and a prominent Christian evangelist.⁷⁸ It appears that Sadrach saw his role primarily as an evangelist because he continued to send his converts to the Dutch religious authority for instruction and discipleship in Christian doctrine until the Dutch ostracized him as a heretic. He did not believe himself to have the right or authority to baptize believers or administer the Lord's Supper since he was not an ordained minister of the established Dutch church.

In 1870, around the age of thirty-five, Sadrach, independent of other Javanese evangelists or Dutch authorities, established a community of Christians in the city of Karangjasa. It was here that his community began to take shape and grow. Through his method of public debates, he won the allegiance of several influential *kyais* in the region. Consequently, he soon saw a large in-gathering of converts to his Christian *ngelmu*. In order to support himself, he rented an uncultivated rice field that was reputed to be cursed. These types of fields were called "widowed rife fields" because of the powerful spirits that were said to attack suddenly and kill the person who cultivated them. Sadrach planted his rice in these fields and survived.⁷⁹ Power encounters like these soon earned him the reputation as a powerful miracle worker who nullified evil powers with his

⁷⁷Apparently, it was common for the Islamic *santri gurus* to refuse to submit when they were "checkmated" or "slain" in a debate. See Yoder, "The Introduction of Islam and Christianity," 302. The fact that many still did submit to Sadrach indicates that his evangelistic message was both powerful and persuasive.

⁷⁸Ibid., 62-63.

⁷⁹Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 67.

Christian *ngelmu*.

He maintained a close working relationship with Stevens-Philips until she was bedridden in 1873. She was his bridge to the Dutch Christian authorities, and, because of her validation of him to the missionaries, his converts were able to be baptized by Dutch missionaries. By the end of 1873 almost 2,500 Javanese had been baptized by Dutch missionaries through his ministry.⁸⁰ The movement began to take on a life of its own. Sadrach's use of the office and role of *kyai* allowed him to take over the Javanese system of *guru/murid* "teacher/disciple." When Sadrach defeated a *guru ngelmu*, all of that *guru*'s disciples became Sadrach's, even if Sadrach himself never instructed them personally. After a period of time, the *murid* naturally traveled back to their home region and talked about their new Christian *ngelmu*, making their own disciples who also viewed Sadrach as their *guru*. Thus, a spontaneous Christ-ward movement began among the rural Javanese in the Bagelen region.

Unfortunately, the Dutch ministers of the *Indische Kerk* grew jealous and resentful of the success Sadrach was having. Dutch government regulations prevented missionaries from ministering in certain regions, but the rule did not apply to national evangelists like Sadrach. When several groups of Javanese who lived in Vermeer's territory were converted under Sadrach's ministry, Vermeer accused Sadrach of territorial expansion. Because of her illness, Stevens-Philips could not intercede for him, and the resulting broken relationship had far reaching consequences for Sadrach's community. No one but the Dutch ministers were allowed to administer the ordinances for the several

⁸⁰Ibid., 68.

congregations that dotted the region.

After Stevens-Philips died in 1876, Sadrach became the uncontested leader of the Christian community in the region, despite his break with the *Indische Kerk*. At this point, in accordance with Javanese tradition, he took the name Surapranata (“he who is courageous to rule”) to signify his leadership of the rapidly growing community of believers.⁸¹ However, because of the prevalence of Javanese political movements and the consequent Dutch fear of political instability, both the established church and the government grew apprehensive about the rapid and spontaneous movement that was spreading throughout the region. The Dutch authorities and the ministers of the *Indische Kerk* conspired to find a way to exile Sadrach or remove him from his position of authority.

The pressure from the Dutch ministers came from two directions. First, the *Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereniging* (Dutch Reformed Mission Union, NGZV) missionary Bieger wanted to take over Sadrach’s community for his own ambitious aims. Second, Heyting, the new local minister of the *Indische Kerk*, believed that since a minister had baptized the converts and were included on the roles of his church, they rightly belonged under his authority. A part of their strategy to gain control of Sadrach’s community was to make Bieger an associate minister of the church so that when they were able to legally oust Sadrach from his leadership position, Bieger planned to take control of the community, which would then bring them into the fold of the

⁸¹Adriaanse, *Sadrach’s Kring*, 75-76. Cachet misinterpreted Surapranata to mean “the Lord who governs,” or the “divinity who rules.” See Cachet, *Een Jaar*, 336. Adriaanse, who actually served as a missionary in Java and understood the context and language, indicates that the name, though not common, was given to district heads or police chiefs, that is, administrators who had no direct superior.

Indische Kerk. The sudden influx of numbers would have a dramatic effect on their ministerial careers.

Their machinations came to a head in 1882 in what has since been called the “vaccination affair.”⁸² A smallpox epidemic broke out in Central Java and the government legislated that everyone must receive a smallpox vaccination. Sadrach refused vaccination because of a misinterpretation of 1 Timothy 5: 6-7 and 2 Corinthians 6:3. Some members of his community, following his example, did the same.⁸³ The governor of Bagelen promptly arrested Sadrach so that his influence in rejecting the vaccination would not spread and immediately appointed Bieger as the new leader of the Javanese Christians. Sadrach was in prison for three weeks and then released in Bieger’s custody under house arrest for three months. However, because of the flimsy legal ground, the charges were dropped by the Governor-General, and Sadrach was released.⁸⁴

Sadrach’s victory over the Dutch government and ecclesiastical authority significantly improved his prestige among the *abagran* Javanese as a powerful *kyai*. The work of evangelism and church planting continued unabated upon his release, with one important change. During his house arrest Sadrach met and was befriended by the young missionary Jacob Wilhelm. Wilhelm was remarkably different from any of the missionaries Sadrach had encountered. He demonstrated a combination of deep humility

⁸²Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 64.

⁸³“The Javanese words . . . can be interpreted to mean ‘physical scar.’ Since a vaccination usually leaves a scar on the body, Sadrach, according to Adriaanse, probably misunderstood these verses and used . . . [them] to reject vaccination” (Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 75).

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 75. The governor soon “retired” for personal reasons, and Bieger returned to the Netherlands.

and remarkable patience with the inappropriate incorporation of Javanese religious practices into the lives of Sadrach's community of believers. Shortly after his release, Sadrach led the elders of his community to call Wilhelm as their minister. As a group, they chose the name *Golongane Wong Kristen Kang Mardika* "The Group of Free Christians."⁸⁵

The years 1882-1893 were marked by a type of partnership rare in the colonial world. While most colonial missionaries around the world worked within a supervisor/helper relationship, Wilhelm viewed himself as an equal partner with Sadrach. The equality of that relationship was visually demonstrated in the following picture of Wilhelm and Sadrach sitting together. The Dutch Europeans treasured the prestige and authority they held over the Javanese and expected the Javanese to abase themselves before European social, cultural, and intellectual superiority. That Wilhelm actually sat together with Sadrach implied that they also ate together as equals at the same table. The idea was absolutely scandalous to Dutch sensibilities and alienated Wilhelm from the other European ministers and missionaries.⁸⁶

Sadrach continued his efforts of evangelization and church planting, while Wilhelm took the task of discipling, teaching, organizing, administering the ordinances, and acting as an advocate before the Dutch authorities. During the next nine years, Wilhelm created a Christian handbook designed to shape the emerging movement toward Wilhelm's Calvinistic and pietistic understanding of Christianity. At this point, the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 76.

⁸⁶ Adriaanse, *Sadrach's Kring*, 124-27. The following picture in Figure 10 is copied from 124.

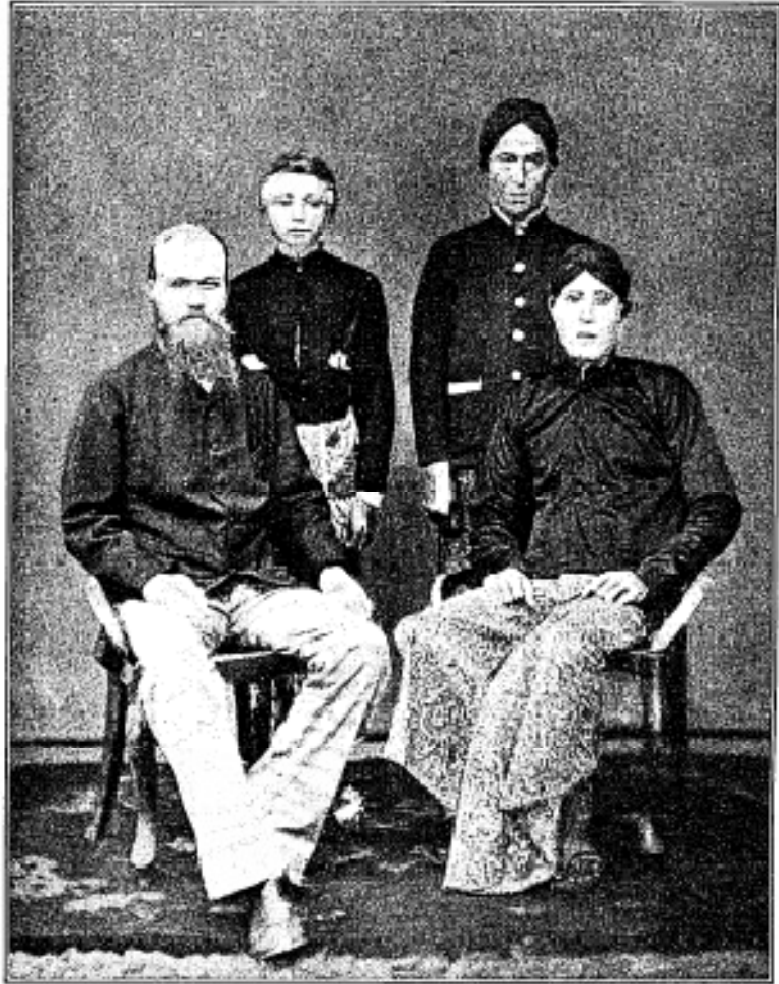


Figure 11: Equality in Christ: Jacob Wilhelm and Sadrach Surapranata

Javanese had the Bible in their own language, though they needed to learn the Latin script in order to read it. Additionally, Wilhelm gave them the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg catechism, and the confession of faith of the Dutch Reformed church, all of which were designed to improve and purify the cognitive elements of the community's faith allegiance in Christ.⁸⁷

⁸⁷Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 80. Arguably, many in the community had their primary

Unfortunately, this partnership did not last because of internal strife and controversy among the leadership of Wilhelm's mission agency over Sadrach's questionable orthodoxy. At first, Wilhelm's reports back to his agency engendered a great deal of excitement and several missionaries were commissioned to join him in his task. However, though some of those missionaries supplied positive reports, others accused Sadrach of being a false teacher. Consequently, the NGZV appointed a member of their board, Franz Lion Cachet, to investigate the issue and supply a report of his findings. Cachet was an experienced missionary and minister. He had spent fifteen years among a South African tribe and many years as a minister in the Netherlands. Complicating the issue was a doctrinal controversy in the Netherlands that had caused a transition of the Dutch missionary efforts in the colony to a different missionary agency. The NGZV had increasingly been influenced by German liberal scholarship, and the reactionary *Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerk* (The Netherlands Reformed Churches, NGK) had formed to combat the liberal slide of the Dutch church and mission work. Cachet traveled to Java as a representative of both boards, and was also tasked to aid the transition to the NGK mission society's administration, the *Zending van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (ZGKN).

The NGK, which was formed by the desire to purify wrong doctrine, took a similar approach to Sadrach's community:

Not long before, the *Gereformeerde Church* [NGK] in Holland had experienced a sufficiently heavy struggle with the *Hervormde Church* concerning orthodoxy. For

allegiance to Sadrach himself as their *kyai* and *dukun* and, by implication, the *ngelmu* he taught. See also Quarles van Ufford, "Why Don't You Sit Down," in *Man, Meaning and History: Essays in Honour of H. G. Schulte Nordholt*, ed. R. Schefold, J. W. Schoorl, and J. Tennekes (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980), 204-24.

that reason it was understandable if a tendency emerged in the *Gereformeerde Mission* [ZGKN] to defend in a strong and uncompromising manner its teachings on the mission field. They had become overly sensitive towards all tendencies that seemed to deviate from the official teaching, particularly towards forms of syncretism such as had appeared in Sadrach's teachings.⁸⁸

Their primary concern was that Sadrach and his community be doctrinally pure according to the standards of the Dutch Reformed Church. Among other things, they demanded that the community show that it was in conformity with the polity of the Reformed church, that a pure confession of faith could be articulated by members of the community, and that the converted Muslims "sufficiently displayed the image of the true Church of God."⁸⁹

It appears that Cachet set out from the Netherlands with the intention to denounce Sadrach's community and recommend to the ZGKN that missionaries disassociate themselves from Sadrach: "His highly elaborate description of the year long journey clearly indicates that, even before his arrival in Batavia, he was resolved to end the existing relationship between Sadrach and Wilhelm."⁹⁰ Though he only met Sadrach once for less than an hour, Cachet reported that the Javanese evangelist was nothing more than "a Javanese swindler who cunningly falsified Christian teachings in order to enrich himself materially and exalt himself socially."⁹¹ Cachet was deeply critical of Wilhelm's involvement in the community. Wilhelm accompanied Cachet through many of the tours of the Christian communities associated with Sadrach's leadership; he was continually on

⁸⁸Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 65.

⁸⁹Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 82.

⁹⁰Van Ufford, "Why Don't you Sit Down," 221.

⁹¹Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 83.

the defensive, attempting to help Cachet understand the cultural situation. His explanations of why Sadrach's community did not mirror the communities of extracted national believers in most of the other colonial mission work and why censuring Sadrach would leave the mission agency completely estranged from the Javanese community were utterly rejected by Cachet. As a missionary under Cachet's authority, Wilhelm was powerless to stop the approaching break and was often reprimanded for his lax attitude toward the doctrinal purity of the Javanese church. The stress resulting from Cachet's visit left Wilhelm spiritual, emotionally, and physically broken. He died of dysentery in March of 1892.⁹²

The break with the mission agency again left the community without an ordained minister to administer the ordinances. Rev. L. Adriaanse was sent to Java in 1894 and spent his first four years undertaking a study to uncover the hidden issues of the "Sadrach affair." He was of the opinion that Cachet had made a hurried and somewhat crude decision regarding the issues. Though he was sympathetic toward Sadrach and though Sadrach received him warmly—even providing one of his trusted evangelists as Adriaanse's helper—the restrictions of the ZGKN proved insurmountable, and they would not acknowledge Sadrach's leadership of the community.⁹³ At the same time, after Anthing's death, representatives of the Irvingite Apostolic Church offered Sadrach the position of the new Apostle of Java. When it was absolutely clear that the ZGKN would

⁹²Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 62, and Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 84-85. Cachet's trip marked the beginning of a number of significant setbacks for the NGZV. Two missionaries and a missionary wife all died during Cachet's stay in Java, a third missionary was fired due to decisions he made concerning taking care of his five children after his wife's death, and the last missionary remaining with the NGZV was totally shunned by Sadrach's followers.

⁹³Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 64-66.

not provide the same type of partnership Sadrach had enjoyed with Wilhelm, Sadrach turned to the Apostolic Church. He was ordained as an apostle in 1899, which finally severed any possibility of a relationship with the Dutch mission.⁹⁴ At this time, Sadrach's community numbered around seven thousand people spread over three districts. The community's departure left very few people on the rolls of the NGK's churches.

Sadrach spent the last twenty-five years of his life less in direct evangelism through debates and more involved in the administration and consolidation of his community. At a time when the Dutch were calling on a moratorium for mission work because of the depressing lack of results winning the Indonesian Muslims, Sadrach continued to have unprecedented success among the Javanese. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Javanese Christians at the time of his death. His son reported a membership of 7,552 in 1933, but other reports estimated over 20,000 Javanese were members of Sadrach's community.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Sadrach made this decision simply because he had no other option. He believed that the ordinances were extremely important and that only an ordained minister could administer them. Partnership with the mission meant that he could leave matters of doctrine in their hands, which he felt ill-equipped to handle. Moreover, since his communities were in the extreme hinterland of Java, they were extremely poor. His communities suffered under the oppression of the Dutch Cultivation System along with all of the other Javanese in Central Java. The missionaries at this time were founding and funding schools as a means of Christianizing, and Sadrach realized the importance of a Dutch education as a means of upward mobility in the Dutch colony. Sadrach's adopted son attended a mission school. The definitive break with the GKN and the NGZV meant that the community could no longer count on missionary education or missionary arbitration with the government. See Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 66.

⁹⁵A number of different conflicting reports indicate that members of the communities in some areas were excluded in the record. The number of baptisms and other missionary reports suggest that Sadrach never lost a large number of his community, which added a few hundred members every year. If biological growth is included, it is possible that the community truly did number between 10,000 and 20,000 baptized people, out of which only seven thousand followed Sadrach's son's leadership. However, the upper range was only ever an estimate and is not exceptionally likely. See Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 126-40; and Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 123-24. Abdul Asad uses the more optimistic number of 20,000 in his treatment of contextualization in Sadrach's community. See Abdul Asad, "Rethinking the Insider Movement Debate: Global Historical Insights toward an Appropriate Transitional Model of C5," *St. Francis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 145-46.

Ten years after Sadrach's death in 1924, the community fragmented into several groups. His son, Yotham, was not a strong leader and could not hold the community together. Several of the more prominent *gurus* split off and took a few hundred members with them. Yotham, who had been educated in a missions school eventually led the vast majority of the community to come under the authority of the ZGKN. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, the ZGKN had become a well-organized endeavor that focused on education and medical aid. The promise of employment within the mission hospitals or schools was a powerful incentive for the growing number of poor landless peasants. A small number of people stayed in the Apostolic Church, while others joined the Catholic mission. As the following table illustrates, the influx of Christians from Sadrach's community quadrupled the ranks of Christians on the rolls of the missions churches.⁹⁶

Year	1913	1918	1922	1925	1930	1933	1936	1943
Number of Christians	1,634	2,415	2,307	4,465	7,520	9,701	14,665	16,492

Table 2: Church growth statistics for mission churches

In all but one case, the community drew closer to an explicitly Christian identity that became more associated with the Dutch colonial missions agency than with their rural *abangan* folk-Muslim background. The missionaries attempted to root out all explicitly contextualized Muslim-Javanese elements from the worship forms of Sadrach's

⁹⁶Adapted from Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 103.

community until they conformed to Dutch polity and worship.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the Javanese Christians managed to maintain their identity as Javanese, and were able to become an authentic national church after the Dutch leaders were removed during the Japanese invasion. The Javanese-ness of their faith is one of the reasons Christianity is one of the five accepted religious systems in modern-day Indonesia and why Christianity was such an attractive alternative to over two million Indonesians during the political upheaval of the late 1960s.⁹⁸

The Organization of Sadrach's Community

The structure and organization of Sadrach's community shifted over the course of Sadrach's life as the needs of the community expanded. However, the initial development of Sadrach's community was purely Javanese because it spontaneously grew out of the efforts of indigenous men who were not associated with the Dutch mission. Sadrach intentionally moved away from the pattern of starting Christian colonies like Coolen and Tunggul Wulung. Instead, he moved into an existing village and took control of the *pesantren* by winning the debate with the local *guru*. The *pesantrens* formed a network of religious teachers around the countryside who were connected to each other through a common allegiance to a *guru* or a system of thought. Sadrach utilized that network as the means of spreading his Christian *ngelmu* and maintaining contact with his *murids*. The resulting house churches utilized many of their original worship forms with new Christian meanings:

⁹⁷Ester Pudjo Widiasih, "A Survey of Reformed Worship in Indonesia," in *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present*, ed. Lukas Vischer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 185.

⁹⁸See Willis, *Indonesian Revival*, 34-35.

Because Sadrach was not able to directly handle the problems of each local community, he appointed local leaders to represent him. These were primarily chosen from among the first Christian generation converted by Sadrach, and were usually well advanced in years. They were called *sesepuh* (elder), *guru igama* (religious teacher), or *imam* (priest, *voorganger*), titles which were commonly used in the Javanese Moslem community. Their tasks dealt not only with spiritual matters, such as conducting religious ceremonies, but with all other needs of the community as well.⁹⁹

As the movement developed, Sadrach needed men who could devote their time on a supra-local level, men who could travel to the spontaneously growing communities and help instruct the *imams* and maintain lines of communication with the other communities. Sadrach appointed three men he had converted early in his ministry as his deputies. Each of them had an extensive *ngelmu* background.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, Sadrach hosted regular meetings for the *imams* and his deputies as a means to discuss issues and to maintain unity. Overall, Sadrach's system was based on the Javanese family structure, which resembles an Episcopal organization system.

Sadrach made an intense attempt to maintain Javanese identity for the new believers. Above all, Sadrach desired to keep the *abangan adat* as intact as possible, with the result that many cultural aspects that had been flavored by Islam were kept or slightly modified. One prominent example related to church structure and organization was the church building that was constructed in his yard in Karangjasa:

The building was built on the pattern of the Javanese mosque, yet the symbols were reinterpreted in a uniquely and completely Christian way. The three-tiered roof was a symbol of the Holy Trinity. The *cakra*, which replaced the Moslem crescent, was itself taken from Javanese lore, and was reinterpreted to symbolize the power of

⁹⁹Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 110-11.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 113.

God's gospel to pierce even the most obstinate of human hearts.¹⁰¹

Sadrach's efforts to harmonize the Christian message with Javanese tradition is demonstrated by the way that he transformed the *pesantren* educational system, the *gurulumurid* relationship, and the use of local *gurus* to function as *imams* of local communities. Sadrach's desire was primarily for the Javanese believers to maintain their Javanese identity as Christians. A secondary aim was to honor the central Javanese cultural value of village harmony through perpetuating a cordial relationship with the Muslim community. Since Sadrach was not forming new Christian cities, Muslims and Christians lived side by side. For the most part, Sadrach's community lived at peace with its Muslim neighbors, yet harmonious relations were not always possible:

Not only Europeans opposed Sadrach and his Christians. Muslims sometimes attacked them as well. In the 1880s, Sunday services were harassed, churches were burned, and Christians were driven out of villages. In two years, between 1882 and 1884, almost all the churches of Sadrach's community were burned. But thereafter incidents diminished. That Javanese could be both Christians and Javanese at the same time was perhaps becoming conceivable to Javanese Muslims.¹⁰²

One possible factor in the Muslim reaction against Sadrach's community is that the early 1880s was the period that Sadrach was imprisoned, released, and then officially organized his community with the Dutch word *church* in their name. Additionally, they invited the Dutch minister, Jacob Wilhelm, to live within their community as their pastor. It is possible that Wilhelm's residence and the concurrent organizational changes sparked Muslim reaction against the community.

Wilhelm's contribution to the community focused on the cognitive aspects of

¹⁰¹Ibid., 210.

¹⁰²Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 118.

the gospel. Not only did he implement an intense form of discipleship and leadership for the growing leaders of the contextualized community, he also gradually brought the community into conformity with Reformed polity and organization. The *imams* functioned in the office of elder and once a month traveled to Karangjasa for a time of teaching and asking questions related to pastoral issues. Wilhelm also added both the office of deacon and a board of elected elders in addition to the *imam*.¹⁰³ Wilhelm's changes introduced a foreign system into the Javanese community, which they freely adopted. However, upon Wilhelm's death, the community resumed the traditional Javanese system based on the family system, though the discipleship and leadership training continued in the monthly meetings at Sadrach's home.¹⁰⁴

Contextualization and Syncretism in Sadrach's Community

In the early years of the community, both the Dutch and Muslim Javanese did not know how to categorize Sadrach's network of Christians: "Resident Ligtvoet once stated that Sadrach's community was a new sect of Christianity heavily influenced by Islam and comparable to a Moslem Javanese community. The Moslems, on the other hand, regarded it as a new sect of Islam with a Christian color."¹⁰⁵ The reason for the confusion of the outside spectator is obvious: the new church buildings constructed by the community were called *masjids* (mosques). The building was usually constructed in the yard of the leader, who maintained his title of *imam*. "In some churches a small table

¹⁰³Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 116-17.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 111.

was used as a pulpit. The Scriptures were laid on the table much like the Koran was in the Moslem service. The worshipers sat on the floor which was covered with a rough woven mat or plaited palm leaves.”¹⁰⁶ As in their Islamic counterparts, the women and men sat on separate sides in places of worship.

Sadrach maintained the Islamic custom of the head covering for women where it was already being practiced and allowed polygamous men to become church members as long as they did not divorce their wives or seek additional wives.¹⁰⁷ Circumcision was not abolished and *slametans*, which Geertz identifies and the core Javanese ritual, were still held, though modified to remove the overt occult elements.¹⁰⁸ Overall, to the casual observer, almost nothing overtly distinguished the initial years of Sadrach’s Christian community from any other Javanese discipleship system in the folk-Muslim community. Sadrach’s attempt to maintain the Javanese identity of the members of his community is fundamentally what makes the initial years of Sadrach’s community, prior to Wilhelm’s involvement, an Insider Movement. What make Sadrach’s community different from the C5 position is that there was no attempt to refrain from an overtly Christian identity, only from a Dutch identity.

While the forms used by Sadrach’s community were almost entirely borrowed from traditional Javanese society, the content communicated in the worship services and discipleship material was all geared toward teaching the new Christian *ngelmu*:

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 131.

¹⁰⁷No objections were made if a woman wanted to leave her unbelieving polygamous husband. See Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 158, 209.

¹⁰⁸Ricklefs, *Polarising Javanese Society*, 115.

The imam began the service with an individual prayer or the Lord's Prayer, followed by congregational singing. This was followed by the Ten Commandments and the summary of the Law. Sometimes the Apostles' Creed was recited at this time. The Scripture was read from the New Testament in the morning and from the Old Testament in the evening, with singing during the interval between readings. The sermon was often based on personal experience rather than an exposition of Scripture. Worship was closed with a prayer of thanksgiving, followed by the blessing.¹⁰⁹

The worship services were held twice every Sunday and additionally on special holy days like Christmas, Passover, Ascension Day, and Pentecost. Though we do not have an extant copy, Sadrach composed a small handbook as a practical guide for his community. It is said to have contained the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the summary of the Law, and a variety of community and individual prayers.¹¹⁰ Sadrach utilized the existing patterns of aural communication and learning in his strategy to give every member of his community a minimum understanding of the gospel. Both appropriate and effective for his context, his communication patterns ensured a basic understanding of the expected level of ethical behavior and provided prayers that would address the worldview needs of the Javanese.¹¹¹

Sadrach set the content of his handbook to traditional Javanese music, borrowing both Hindu and Muslim terms to express Christian ideas: "The use of the *tembang* for communicating the gospel was significant. *Tembang* had been used in Javanese literature for centuries and was a very popular form of communication. It was

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 113.

¹¹⁰Adriaanse, *Sadrach's Kring*, 362.

¹¹¹Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 132.

used primarily for moral-ethical teaching, particularly in classical Javanese literature.”¹¹²

Sadrach utilized these popular religious instruction tunes in much the same way that Martin Luther utilized pub songs for his hymns. At least some of the material Sadrach used was originally composed by Coolen, including the inadequate trinitarian confession of faith based on the *Shahadah*.

Sadrach was not uncritical of traditional Javanese culture and ritual; he did reject certain forms as unredeemable. For instance, he rejected the Muslim marriage ritual and created a totally new Christian tradition. He also rejected the *slametan* to honor the spirits of the dead, the shadow puppet plays, and rituals that were closely tied to the Muslim calendar.¹¹³ Other forms, which were considered Javanese and not Islamic, were retained by the community in a modified form to emphasize their allegiance to Christ. Rituals related to land cultivation, death, birth, circumcision, exorcisms, and New Year ceremonies were all retained with new Christian content. Moreover, he introduced completely new and alien forms into the Javanese community. Sadrach considered baptism and the Lord’s Supper essential Christian practices, and made sure that they were conducted whenever a missionary would perform the task. He later conducted the ordinances after accepting the role of apostle.

Sadrach’s evangelism centered on presenting Christ in two overtly Javanese

¹¹²Ibid., 139. Partonadi investigates both the content and structure of the individual creeds and prayers used by Sadrach’s community, particularly noting where Sadrach borrows words or ideas from forms influenced by Hinduism or Islam.

¹¹³The Muslim calendar was only used to keep track of Islamic holidays in *abangan* Javanese culture. The Javanese have their own traditional calendar, which is similar to the Hindu calendar. They use their traditional calendar to determine auspicious days to conduct meaningful acts, such as *slametan*, marriage, circumcision, plowing, travel, etc. Dissociating the community from the Islamic calendar and emphasizing the Javanese calendar actually helped solidify the Javanese character of their community. See Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 30-37.

categories: Christ as *guru* who has superior *ngelmu*, and Christ as *ratu adil* who would come and redeem the Javanese from their current suffering. For the rural *abangan* Javanese oppressed by the Dutch Cultivation System, the message of Christ as *ratu adil* was an intensely powerful image that was persuasive to many. Additionally, since Sadrach was able to win every *guru* debate, he also demonstrated the superiority of Christ's *ngelmu*. Sadrach presented Christ as triumphant in every area of life and superior to any other prophet, including Muhammad. For Javanese living in fear and seeking protection against hostile spiritual forces, the protection and security Christ offered upon their repentance of their old ways, confession of him as Lord, and obedience to his commands was a sweet and welcome relief.

A result of Sadrach emphasizing Christ as *guru* was an emphasis on the necessity of living moral lives: "The claim that Jesus was the risen, living, and powerful prophet meant that his followers were required to faithfully obey Him in all areas of life. Therefore, Christian obedience, as expressed in good works, was also stressed by the Javanese evangelists."¹¹⁴ As in the *guru/murid* relationship, the disciple was expected to obey the master in every respect. Thus, Sadrach emphasized the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. When members of the community disobeyed Christ's commands as understood through the church regulations, they were considered apostates and excommunicated unless they publically repented of their sin.¹¹⁵ Common Javanese vices that were strictly banned and continually addressed by the leadership included gambling, participation in erotic dances, occult practices, and opium use. Polygamy and

¹¹⁴Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 141.

mixed marriages were also condemned. Church discipline, though, was not heavy-handed. Emphasis was placed on persuasion over punishment. Members were only excommunicated if they could not be persuaded to turn away from their errant ways.

After Cachet's report, the missionary community accused Sadrach of syncretism on three fronts, all of which were related to the ways Sadrach's community differed from the Dutch institutional church.¹¹⁶ First, they did not approve of Christ being understood or proclaimed as *ratu adil*. They felt that it distorted the biblical teaching of the kingdom of God and thought that the divinity of Jesus would be neglected since the *ratu adil* was the embodiment of the Hindu concept of the perfected man.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, the missionaries thought that the Javanese mythology surrounding the *ratu adil* could not be modified to fit the biblical pattern and therefore would fatally distort the gospel.

Second, the missionaries could not conceive of the gospel in the category of Javanese *ngelmu*. For the missionaries, *ngelmu* was no more than "the ability of humans to manipulate supernatural forces in the visible world—divine power which influences human life through fortune or misfortune—and direct it toward human interests."¹¹⁸ In

¹¹⁵Ibid., 155-56.

¹¹⁶The European missionaries also accused Sadrach of a variety of other matters, including proclaiming himself as the *Ratu Adil*, pretending to have superstitious powers, being a rebellious political leader, and enriching himself through selling magical objects and taking collections from the members of his community. The vast majority of these accusations stem from one of three things. First, the missionaries often misunderstood the situation because of language and cultural ignorance. Second, they believed gossip without verifying facts. Third, some simply wanted to discredit him in front of the government in order to take over the leadership of Sadrach's community. See Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 165-86. Since these accusations relate more to Sadrach's character and are not necessarily related to syncretism, they will not be dealt with here.

¹¹⁷Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 191-92.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 193.

other words, *ngelmu* was simply the superstitious use and practice of magic and the occult using high-religious forms from Hinduism and Islam as formulas of power. In the missionary's view, the gospel was the liberating force that offered to free the Javanese from their superstitious ways and fear of demonic powers. The missionaries feared that the Christian message, in the form of *ngelmu*, was also a fatal distortion of the gospel message and reduced it to nothing more than magic formulae.

Third, the missionaries were highly critical of Sadrach's preservation and modification of Javanese *adat* in shaping the practice and rules of the community. The missionaries viewed *adat* as another form of superstitious idolatry that must be replaced by Christian (i.e., Dutch) traditions and customs.¹¹⁹ The fight against Javanese *adat* is exemplified in the controversy surrounding circumcision. The missionaries consistently condemned the Javanese for retaining the practice of circumcision because in their minds it was irrevocably identified with Islamic ritual and religion. The Javanese, on the other hand, had incorporated circumcision into their *adat* as a rite of passage.¹²⁰ The strength of the Javanese feeling on the matter is exemplified by the defense offered to Wilhelm when an aristocratic Javanese convert circumcised his son: "Herewith I confirm that I do not Islamize my son, but will only have him circumcised. The reason is because I am Javanese. Even more, all the Christians in Yogyakarta have their sons circumcised."¹²¹

In chapter 1, syncretism was defined as "the replacement or dilution of the

¹¹⁹Ibid., 197.

¹²⁰See Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 51-67.

¹²¹Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 199. Partonadi quotes Wilhelm's diary entry written in 1888.

essential truths of the gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements.”¹²² By this definition, Sadrach’s community was indeed syncretistic. But how syncretistic was Sadrach’s community? Was the gospel fatally compromised so that Christ was actually veiled by their message? Was the community unable to prophetically confront their culture at crucial points? Did normative cultural values replace biblical meaning, or did the gospel become a means to attain culturally-induced felt needs? Was a radical call to discipleship absent? The answers to these questions are both “yes” and “no.”

Yes, Sadrach’s community was syncretistic in some areas. Normative cultural values and practices did replace biblical meaning especially in areas of deep worldview beliefs. The deep worldview beliefs of traditional Javanese religion did replace some biblical truth with the result that the entire gospel message was obscured. In particular, Sadrach’s community, especially in the early years, struggled to shrug off the cultural perception of magic, spiritual forces, and the appropriate use of God’s power:

In West Java, for example, there grew up an understanding of the Christian religion as a new form of esoteric knowledge. Because of the influence of persons like . . . Sadrach, various magical formulae were known which were taken from Christian teachings. An example of these formulae is, “Father God, Son of God, Holy Spirit, three Gods who are one; venom and poison, dangerous land, woods inhabited by evil spirits, all of them become no more dangerous. Our Lord give good fortune and safety forever, Amen!”¹²³

As another example, toward the end of his life Sadrach personally made brooms for each of his congregations scattered around Java, which for him was a sign of their unity and a message to them of the importance to maintain that unity in the face of

¹²²A. Scott Moreau, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000), s.v. “syncretism,” by A. Scott Moreau.

¹²³Sumartana, *Mission at the Crossroads*, 25.

opposing forces outside the community. However, to the members of the community, the brooms contained magical power that would protect and bless their church.¹²⁴ It would appear, then, by this description, that the issues surrounding the core worldview elements of the Javanese were not as dramatically affected by the gospel as their as external practices. While a propensity to practice Christian magic remained, the issue was continually addressed by the community's leadership, which had been systematically disciplined under Wilhelm. Consequently, a more biblical view slowly adjusted the worldview of the Javanese in Sadrach's community.¹²⁵

Yet, the answer to the charge of excessive syncretism is a resounding "no." Sadrach's community did not *fatally* compromise the gospel message. Christ was not veiled through Sadrach's message, the community was able to prophetically confront the greatest ills of their society, and Sadrach's message was a biblical call to radical discipleship. The most balanced contemporary treatment of Sadrach's community, *Sadrach's Kring*, states that the real reason for the accusations of syncretism was a reaction against Sadrach's authority over his community.¹²⁶ The image of Christ as *Ratu Adil* has continually been used by the Javanese Church even to the present day.¹²⁷ The fears that the Hindu and Muslim background of the *Ratu Adil* concept would corrupt biblical teaching have proven groundless. Instead, the Javanese concept has been

¹²⁴Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 95.

¹²⁵This is an illustration of Kraft's theory of salvation point plus process dealt with in chapter 4.

¹²⁶Adriaanse, *Sadrach's Kring*, 89.

¹²⁷See, for instance, Isa 58 and Luke 4:18-19. See Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 223-25; and Wiyono, "*Ratu Adil*," 74-79.

changed to fit the biblical data, and, in so doing, has emphasized an important element often neglected in Western teaching, namely that Jesus Christ is a just ruler who will free the oppressed, relieve suffering, and bring justice to the oppressor.

Christ's teachings presented as *ngelmu* is significantly more problematic because of how closely *ngelmu* is tied to Javanese occult practices. However, *ngelmu* is much more than simply magic; it is a body of teaching that encompasses all of life and is primarily a way in which to approach the divine.¹²⁸ The downside of Sadrach's appropriation of Christ's teaching as *ngelmu* was the perpetuation of the deep-seated worldview issues related to magic and power within Sadrach's community. The positive side, however, was that the gospel message was communicated in a category that enabled immediate understanding. The very reason Sadrach was immediately interested in the gospel and eventually converted to Christianity was because he was convinced that the message of Christ as *guru* who possessed a superior *ngelmu* superseded any spiritual knowledge he had ever encountered before. In Sadrach's mind, Christianity was not simply any *ngelmu*, but the perfect *ngelmu* that all of the Javanese *kyais* and *gurus* had been searching for in their mystical quest for spiritual knowledge.¹²⁹ Every powerful and renowned Javanese *guru* of Sadrach's time was defeated in debate by Sadrach's Christian *ngelmu*, proving to the community both the rationality and the superiority of Sadrach's gospel message. The Javanese were not simply accepting one system as better than another when they converted; they were repenting of what separated them from God and committing themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who they saw as their deliverer.

¹²⁸Partonadi, *Sadrach's Community*, 196-97.

Partonadi is convinced that Sadrach's Christology and soteriology were biblical. Sadrach was not a systematic theologian and did not attempt to fit all the pieces together, and he tended to deemphasize or neglect gospel elements Western Christianity emphasizes.¹³⁰ His evangelism and discipleship of his community presented a Javanese Christ in categories both persuasive and powerful to the *abangan* Javanese villagers. Sadrach's message was of a triumphant Christ that saved and protected his followers and promised a future release from the evils of oppression. In return, Christ's followers were expected to obey Christ as their *guru*.

Their obedience to Christ's teachings was a costly call of discipleship. New believers were required to give up many Javanese pastimes such as the Javanese puppet theater. Thievery and drug use, though common practices throughout Java, were non-existent in Sadrach's community. The status and role of women was also dramatically improved in Sadrach's community. The abolition of divorce supplied women with a security not available to them in Islam. Commonly, young wives were divorced if they had not born children within a year. Their only recourse to make a living was often to turn to prostitution or an extremely popular form of exotic dancing. This type of deplorable situation was addressed by the cultural reforms introduced by Sadrach's implementation of Christ's teachings. Families were made much more stable without divorce or polygamy, and Sadrach himself was an example of what he expected from his community. He and his wife were infertile, and though a high cultural value was placed on the ability to have children, he did not divorce his wife for a new one or take a second

¹²⁹Ibid., 220.

wife. Instead, they adopted a son. His decision to abandon Javanese cultural values for biblical obedience was costly, making him a living example of the prophetic proclamation of the gospel.

Altogether, it appears that the level of syncretism in Sadrach's community did not fatally distort the gospel message. Issues that arose were addressed as the community progressed in their faith. The identity issue within the community is also significant because they thought of themselves primarily as Javanese who were following Christ. Though there had been forerunners in Coolen and Tunggul Wulung, Sadrach's community was deeply involved in a process of creating a new cultural category among the rural Javanese. In the early years of the movement, outsiders—both Westerners and other Javanese—did not know how to categorize the new community. However, the Christ-centered self-identity of the community was never in question by the community. The nuances of their Javanese-Christian identity only became apparent to outsiders as the movement became increasingly well known. As time went on, the community was able to thrive and grow as long as the Muslims were certain that the community was not rejecting their Javanese heritage. Conversely, the movement stopped growing the further away the community turned from traditional cultural patterns. It is unclear whether the growth trend is related to the Dutch attempt to root out the Javanese elements in the church or an already existing trend within Sadrach's community to distance themselves from the Muslim community. Nevertheless, Sadrach's death, along with cultural distance from the ever increasing Islamized *abangan* Javanese, effectively stopped the rapid

¹³⁰Ibid., 224.

expansion of Sadrach's community of faith.

Lessons Learned from Sadrach's Insider Movement

It should not be surprising that this case study vividly illustrates many of the methodological components incorporated into Insider Movement methodology. Missiology has long focused on the social sciences, which are simply attempts to find patterns in, and categories for, social phenomenon. Much of the methodological components discussed in chapter 4 have been developed through the observation of movements much like Sadrach's community. It would be helpful to note the similarities here.

First, Sadrach's ministry was incarnational and intentionally attempted to translate Christ into Javanese society. As Andrew Walls affirms, the two concepts of incarnation and translation are inexorably linked:

Incarnation is translation. When God in Christ became man, Divinity was translated into humanity, as though humanity were a receptor language. Here was a clear statement of what would otherwise be veiled in obscurity or uncertainty, the statement "This is what God is like."¹³¹

The fact that Sadrach's community incorporated Christian ethics into Javanese *adat* exemplifies just how successful Sadrach was in translating the gospel message for his community of faith. As Schreiter has noted, the translation model of contextualization—intuitively applied by Sadrach in his ministry—is often the first model of contextualization utilized in pastoral settings.¹³² Yet, Sadrach's incarnational approach

¹³¹Andrew F. Wall, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of the Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 27.

¹³²Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1984), 7.

was problematic at one particular point. Sadrach had become so closely identified with the message of Christ, and so powerfully refuted opposing arguments and spiritual powers, that some in the community actually believed that Sadrach himself was the *Ratu Adil*.¹³³

Second, Sadrach took a critical approach to contextualization. Unlike Coolen and Tunggul Wulung, Sadrach was careful to guard against overtly Hindu or Muslim religious understandings that taint or destroy the Christian message. As mentioned in chapter 4, Hiebert lists three types of linkages of form and meaning in rituals and symbols in critical contextualization. Where the linkage of form and meaning is identical in certain rituals—as in performance rituals such as marriage ceremonies—it is impossible to contextualize those forms. Where the linkage is loose, contextualization is much easier. The loose connection between the Islamized Javanese vocabulary and Javanese religious practices made re-use of those forms natural. Therefore, much of the Islamized Javanese religious vocabulary was directly incorporated into the new Christian system with little modification. Throughout Sadrach’s lifetime, those words were able to carry Christian meaning against the macro-culture’s definitions because of a combination of the loose connection between form and meaning and sheer number of people using the new definitions.¹³⁴

¹³³Partonadi describes how the concept of *Ratu Adil* was a significant missionary bridge utilized in Sadrach’s ministry. Though Sadrach himself never claimed the exalted title for himself, one of his evangelists—a man who was from a *ngelmu* background and very close to him—was telling others that Sadrach was the Christ and the *Ratu Adil*. Though the source of the teaching was eventually identified and rebuked, and the situation was eventually rectified, this type of occurrence is far less likely in a representative model of ministry. See Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 182.

¹³⁴Almost all of the Islamicized language was abandoned after the missionaries took control of the movement after Sadrach’s death.

Sadrach seemed to understand intuitively that connection because he was careful to keep certain forms but rejected others like marriage ceremonies and occult practices. Certainly, some of Sadrach's decisions were flawed and had the consequence of introducing syncretism into the community. Yet most of his contextualization decisions were biblically sound and helped the Javanese maintain continuity with their cultural past.

Moreover, Sadrach believed that his community needed the expertise and greater experience of the universal church. One of the central recitations of the community was the Apostles' Creed. The community had obviously identified itself with the historic past of Christianity, even if they rejected identification with the Dutch community.¹³⁵ Moreover, Sadrach continually sought partnership with the Dutch missionaries and eventually found it in Jacob Wilhelm. Wilhelm's efforts focused on sharpening the cognitive aspect of the community's understanding of the gospel from his Western perspective and leadership training, which Sadrach obviously valued as an important part of the theological development of his community.

Third, Kraft's salvation-point-plus process—with some modifications related to leadership training—is vividly demonstrated as an accurate observation of the historical process of discipleship within mass movements. It appears that the vast majority of Sadrach's community, at least initially, became Christians in a group decision within a fuzzy set context as a result of losing a *guru* debate. The individual decisions within the members of the group were varied—some were committed to finding the most

¹³⁵“Perhaps the real test of theological authenticity is the capacity to incorporate the history of Israel and God's people and to treat it as one's own” (Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 15).

powerful magical knowledge, some may have been seeking union with the Divine, others may have been impressed with the moral code of Christ or simply impressed by Sadrach himself. The practice of church discipline ensured that the community as a whole was committed to following Christ as their *guru*, with the result that everyone in the community, at least theoretically, pointed each other to greater degrees of Christian experience. While there were certainly some Ananias and Sapphiras within the community, the vast majority had an authentic and personal faith in Christ. Whatever their initial starting point in their allegiance to Christ, they were directionally positioned to follow Christ. Through the discipleship gained from the community's leaders, who in turn gained it from Wilhelm, the community gradually increased in Christian knowledge and depth of insight.

The role of leadership training cannot be overemphasized. The existing worldview of the Javanese would have utterly corrupted the Christian message and relegated it to nothing more than an effective magical system to manipulate spiritual powers. The role of Wilhelm, and later the Dutch missionary schools, enabled the biblical message to confront the Javanese view of power with the result that the level of syncretism gradually diminished.

Fourth, it is evident that Sadrach pursued all three areas of encounter identified by Kraft.¹³⁶ His debates with other *gurus* won allegiance to the person and teaching of Christ. The use of the Apostles' Creed, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Ten Commandments in community worship indicates that Sadrach desired his community to

¹³⁶Charles H. Kraft, "Allegiance, Truth and Power Encounters in Christian Witness," in *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism: Essays in Intercultural Theology*, ed. Jan A.B Jongeneel (New York:

be rooted in their knowledge of Christ and his truth. That Sadrach functioned as a *dukun* and exorcist indicate that he proved Christ's power to the Javanese.

One interesting parallel between Insider Movements described by Insider proponents and Sadrach's movement seems to be a continued misunderstanding of the actual field situation. Sadrach's community was heavily criticized as heterodox. Some of the criticisms certainly had merit, but a great number of the missionary criticisms were based on misunderstanding and misinformation. First, except for Wilhelm, none of the Dutch missionaries understood that the distinct otherness of the Javanese culture could never be impacted simply by requiring obedience to Dutch cultural patterns. The Dutch missionaries were after proselytes, while Sadrach was attempting to make disciples by penetrating and invading Javanese culture, bringing it into relation with Christ and the Scriptures.¹³⁷ That penetration of Javanese culture by the gospel meant that the Javanese Christians were asking questions about issues the Dutch had never thought about, and, conversely, that the Javanese encountered issues within the Dutch discipleship system and the catechisms that were completely foreign and insignificant to the Javanese. The theological elements of the gospel were issues that continually separated strong Javanese Christian leaders and the Dutch missionaries. Sin and guilt over sin were foreign categories to the Javanese. Missionaries labored to get the Javanese first to recognize that they were sinful, feel guilt over their sin, and then repent of their sin in a Pauline type of conversion experience. Javanese evangelists like Tunggul Wulung and Sadrach emphasized the power of Jesus Christ, his coming as the *Ratu Adil*, and the supremacy of

Peter Lang, 1992), 217-18.

Christ's moral and ethical teaching.¹³⁸ While the Javanese still repented, they did not repent of sin in the same way a Westerner would repent of sin.

It is a distinct possibility that critics of Insider Movements may be falling in the same trap as the Dutch missionaries. Travis and Brown certainly think so. Notice, for instance, how Rick Brown responds to Corwin's question related to the necessity of an undiluted and unequivocal allegiance to God and Christ: "I felt deeply ashamed when Brother Yusuf [a leader in an Insider Movement] read this question [concerning the necessity of an undiluted and unequivocal allegiance to God and Christ] in my presence . . . but he was gracious . . . at being classed with Baal worshipers, spiritual adulterers, and cowards who bow the knee to Caesar."¹³⁹

Brown's response to Corwin exemplifies the attitude that Wilhelm likely felt when dealing with the accusations of the Dutch missionaries. To the Dutch, Sadrach was at worst a charlatan and at best a misguided and heterodox power-monger. To Wilhelm, Sadrach was a respected and beloved brother who had demonstrated radical dedication to Christ and a deep-seated piety. Similarly, Corwin assumes that Insider believers must intrinsically have a dual allegiance to both Christ and Muhammad, while Brown evidences a great respect for the Christ-centered piety and deep sacrifice Brother Yusuf has shown for the cause of Christ. Corwin's concerns are certainly valid, but are difficult to address from a theoretical level. This case study underscores the importance of first-

¹³⁷Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 43-55.

¹³⁸ Yoder, "The Introduction and Expression of Islam and Christianity," 302-11.

¹³⁹Gary Corwin, "A Humble Appeal to C5/Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates to Consider Ten Questions (with responses from Brother Yusuf, Rick Brown, Kevin Higgins, Rebecca Lewis, and John Travis)," *IJFM* 24 (2007): 16.

hand knowledge of the people and context involved before sweeping accusations and condemnations are leveled.

The conversation between Cachet and Wilhelm also parallels and highlights the level of distrust that is a central component of the Insider conversation. Critics simply do not believe Insider proponents. Some of the distrust comes because the material produced by Insider proponents is often not biblically based and sometimes not even logically sound. A robust biblical defense would go a long way to ease some of the significant concerns of critics. Yet, at the same time, critics are working out of a paradigm that is often antithetical to what appears to be happening on the mission field. Insider proponents generally have been exposed to the worldview and practices behind actual Insider Movements. Just as the Javanese pastor, Partonadi, served as a cultural informant to the Western world on the Javanese worldview behind Sadrach's practices through his dissertation, so Insider proponents are trying to serve as informants for Insider Movements.

Insider proponents have chosen an impossible task because their defense of Insider methodology centers on ambiguous macro-level Islamic practices. The actual local understanding of Islamic forms varies from context to context. Understanding the degree of connection between a particular Islamic form and the particular meaning behind that form within the context is thus a crucial component in both attempting and assessing critical contextualization.

In Sadrach's context of nineteenth century rural Java there was a very loose connection between form and meaning, simply because the Islamification process among the Javanese had yet to go very deeply into the Javanese worldview. Consequently,

mesjid could mean “a place to worship,” instead of only meaning “a place to say the Islamic prayers,” and *imam* could mean “pastor,” instead of “leader of prayer.”

Conceivably, contexts around the world offer similar depths of Islamification so that similar types of contextualization would be normative. Understanding the context well is the only way to determine the appropriateness of contextualization strategies. Insider proponents are therefore at a distinct disadvantage in their attempt to articulate a strategy that may only rarely be appropriate. However, in order to rebuild the trust between Insider proponents and Insider critics, it would be helpful for proponents to actually publish an extensive study that starts with the context, describes the missiological strategy, investigates the biblical and philosophical basis of the strategy, and then formulates a proposal for the continued discipleship and leadership training of the members of a given movement. Where believers have the Spirit, the Word, *and* the ability to rightly handle the word of truth, orthodoxy is sure to follow.

In a similar way, it is important to note that Sadrach’s movement had an increasing identification with the global church as the movement matured throughout Sadrach’s lifetime. In the beginning, the only contact the community had with outside Christianity was when Sadrach led a non-Javanese speaking missionary from village to village baptizing and offering the Lord’s supper. Eventually, Wilhelm joined the community, and Sadrach became involved in the Apostolic Church. Finally, after his death, Sadrach’s son led the community to join the Dutch churches. Overall, the pattern of Sadrach’s community follows the trajectory demonstrated in Figure 3, namely, that identification with Christ eventually leads believers to identify more with the worldwide Christian community than with the Islamic religious community. One case study alone is

not enough to categorically claim that every Christ-ward movement will follow a similar pattern. However, it does seem that the eventual emergence of a Christian identity that stresses continuity with the historic church, while at the same time emphasizes prophetic discontinuity with the cultural context, is the healthy and normative pattern for Christ-centered movements.

If this is true, then Tennent's conclusion related to the progression of high-levels of contextualization down the C-scale is the end result of Travis's emphasis on discipleship through inductive Bible study. Even if Insider proponents are attempting to maintain an Insider identity for as long as possible, the areas of discontinuity between Christ and culture will eventually create enough cognitive tension that true believers will eventually reject practices that pull their allegiance away from Christ. The Holy Spirit, through a believer's reading and rightly understanding God's word—which is exponentially helped by a good teacher—will confront these places of tension. For this reason, a new MBB might continue going to the mosque, but eventually come out of it. Or, they might feel freedom to recite the Islamic confession but eventually feel that it communicates an unbiblical level of allegiance to Muhammad. The crucial point is that it may very well take an entire generation for a balanced and overt Christian identity to emerge in places of high level contextualization. As Walls says:

discipling is a long process—it takes generations. Christian proclamation is for the children and grandchildren of the people who hear it. Just as personal discipleship involves the lifelong working of “holy word” through the personality, so national discipleship involves a generational penetration of the ways of thought, the springs of action, the points of reference, of people forming a nation.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 51.

Fifth and last, though Sadrach's community was eventually incorporated into the Dutch church, Dutch paternalism robbed the movement of most of its vitality. Sadrach's movement among the Javanese was halted because of the extractionistic approach of the Dutch missionaries. Until very recently, Sadrach's movement was one of the largest movement of Muslims out of Islam in the history of Muslim/Christian relations.¹⁴¹ Undoubtedly, one of the central methodological reasons¹⁴² behind Sadrach's success was his close identification with the Javanese culture. The gospel spreads best in native skin. As Van Akkeren noted about Coolen's ministry: "The gospel reaches the world most in those places where a maximum identification with that world takes place."¹⁴³ Sadrach's Christian penetration of the Javanese *guru ngelmu* system left it a total system, just as the Church father's efforts to bring the Hellenistic intellectual tradition into captivity to Christ left Hellenism a total system.¹⁴⁴ If only there had been a modern Jerusalem Council between Sadrach, the Javanese evangelists, Wilhelm, and the other Dutch missionaries. If the missionary community would have followed Wilhelm's example by helping Sadrach instead of ostracizing him and if Sadrach would have had a strong successor who could have kept the movement together instead of the weak leadership of his adopted son, then it is quite possible that the *Jawa Kristen* movement

¹⁴¹Though the reported number of converts continues to shrink in subsequent editions, Greeson claims that 20,000 Muslims have been baptized utilizing the evangelistic tool of the *Camel Training Manuel*. See Kevin Greeson, *Camel Training Method: The Secret of the Camel is out...Muslims Are Coming to Faith in 'Isa* (Bangalore, India: WIGTake, 2004), i.

¹⁴²It must be recognized that the primary reason for Sadrach's success was an undeniable anointing by the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's massive movement throughout Java during the nineteenth century.

¹⁴³Van Akkeren, *Sri and Christ*, 58-59.

¹⁴⁴Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 19.

might have swept through the Javanese. For that reason, it is important for missionaries to come alongside of indigenous movements and offer as much help in discipleship and leadership training as the movement is willing to receive.

Conclusion

From 1870 to 1882, Sadrach's community paralleled much of present-day Insider methodology. The nineteenth century Javanese had incorporated into their vocabulary and practices many Islamic and Arabic concepts, and Sadrach used the Javanese words available to him to describe his community. Within their own community the elevation of Jesus over Muhammad was entirely evident, but the outsider perspectives of both the Dutch and the Javanese Muslims did not notice those distinctives until the movement had been around for more than a decade. The community spread within existing villages, through the social networks of the *guru/mujad*, and among their extended families, though families were by no means always kept entirely intact. One charismatic leader was the focal point of the movement, and his efforts in evangelism were entirely directed to keeping believers within their existing Javanese context of important family and village relationships. Sadrach's movement illustrates Lewis's definition of Insider Movements:

any movement to faith in Christ where a) the gospel flows through pre-existing communities and social networks, and where b) believing families, as valid expressions of the Body of Christ, remain inside their socio-religious communities, retaining their identity as members of that community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible.¹⁴⁵

One crucial difference is that the new body of believers separated from the Islamic

¹⁴⁵Lewis, "Promoting Movements to Christ," 75.

mosque and built their own places of worship in the leader's front yard.

Syncretism was present in Sadrach's community, but the organization of the community's leadership and the content of the community's worship was designed as a didactic experience as well as an emotional one. As the Bible was taught through creeds and catechisms, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Ten Commandments, the natural and time consuming process of discipleship eventually addressed these issues in individual lives. Sadrach's practices are similar to the process Travis describes in current Insider Movement strategy.

Importantly, in order for people to start progress in discipleship they first made some type of allegiance commitment to Christ, to the community, or to Sadrach himself. Membership in the community was not based on a centered set approach but a fuzzy set directional approach. If members were making insufficient progress in discipleship, whether through magic practices, polygamy, fornication, drugs, or gambling, they were subjected to community censure through church discipline.

Higgins's conception of Insider Movements—namely, that some degree of religious life, history, and practice can continue without compromising the gospel—is true of Sadrach's community.¹⁴⁶ Even if the movement started with many theological errors, by the end of Sadrach's life many of the deep worldview issues that struck at the heart of the gospel, like magic practices, were addressed by the leaders because of the

¹⁴⁶Kevin Higgins, "The Key to Insider Movements: The 'Devoted's' of Acts," *IJFM* 21 (2004): 156. Higgins actually speaks of "compromising the gospel or falling into syncretism." Syncretism was a part of Sadrach's movement. But—as far as can be determined by cultural insiders and the Dutch missionaries closest to Sadrach—*fatal* syncretism where Christ is actually veiled did not occur. If that is the level of syncretism Higgins refers to and not a wider view of syncretism, then his statement holds true for Sadrach's community.

intensive leadership training they had received from Wilhelm. The involvement by an outsider—Wilhelm—is a departure from Travis’s and Higgins’s recommendation for Insider Movements.

Another crucial difference between Sadrach’s movement and the current strategy of Insider methodology is the purposeful re-using of Islamic forms, vocabulary, and concepts by outsiders as an evangelistic tool. Outsiders, who have a skewed view of the type of connection between form and meaning, are not the best people to make those decisions. Moreover, contemporary Insider methodology emphasizes the continuity between Islam and Christianity and between Muhammad as an actual prophet and the gospel.¹⁴⁷ Sadrach took the opposite approach; his evangelists commonly described the supremacy of Christ over against the teachings of Islam. For instance, one evangelist frequently compared his Islamic experience to his Christian faith, joyfully convinced that Jesus was far greater than Muhammad: “Is Christ not, then, greater than Mohammad? Granted, Mohammad was someone [But] Mohammad is in Arabia, the dead Mohammed is there! Christ, the living Christ, is in heaven.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷John Kim, “The Anotoc Story, Continued: The Role of Group Dynamics in Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 27 (2010): 98; Jay Smith, “An Assessment of the Insider’s Principle Paradigms,” *St. Francis* 5, no. 4 (2009): 20-51; and Gary Corwin et al, “A Humble Appeal to C5/Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates to Consider Ten Questions,” *IJFM* 24 (2007):11-12. Mazhar Mallouhi insists that Insiders should not be criticized for giving honor to a person who had a role in their conversion because they often have come to faith through the Quran: “Insider proponents argue that if something written by Muhammad leads some people ultimately to The Truth, then why shouldn’t these insiders have a positive view of Muhammad as the one who led them to Christ? I have not heard any insider proponents speaking of Muhammad as a prophet equal to Christ. But insider proponents are actually being judged because of what they will not say about Muhammad, rather than what they are saying. Many insider proponents will not denounce Muhammad or criticize aspects of Islam simply because they do not want to be “anti-Islam,” but would rather be “for Christ.” Unfortunately, detractors/critics of insider proponents insist on making the assumption that their silence means they believe the opposite. The point is that insider proponents (along with myself) want the emphasis placed on what Christ is, and not what Muhammad is not” (Mazhar Mallouhi, “Comments on the Insider Movement,” *St Francis* 5, no. 5 [2009]: 12-13).

¹⁴⁸Partonadi, *Sadrach’s Community*, 140. Partonadi here quotes Harthoorn’s missionary

Sadrach utilized socio-religious forms, but, from his perspective, they were Javanese forms and not Islamic forms. For this reason, it might be more accurate to label Sadrach's movement as C4.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Sadrach continually stressed the discontinuity between Islam and Christianity because he saw Christianity as superior to Islam. Contemporary Insider methodology takes the opposite track by calling Islam "incomplete" rather than labeling it as inferior to Christianity. The difference in approach is the fundamental reason why Sadrach's methodological strategies are helpful and why Insider methodology, which utilizes most if not all of those strategies, is still fundamentally flawed. General revelation is not salvific. Christ cannot fulfill any other religion in the same way he fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. A view of the kingdom that enables believers to keep their former religious identity intact, undamaged, and unchanged is simply not supported anywhere in the Bible. Islamic forms that have been incorporated into the cultural identity of a particular people can be redeemed. Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, as religious systems, are irredeemable.

correspondence.

¹⁴⁹However, Sadrach's movement is consistently referred to as a C5 phenomenon.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has investigated the growth and development of Insider Movement methodology, assessed the biblical foundation used for supporting Insider Movements, identified the missiological elements that form the basis of Insider Movements, and reached the conclusion that the methodology being implemented is not biblical based, not theologically balanced, and, at crucial points, is missiologically naive. At the same time, Insider missiology is based on methodology gleaned from decades, if not centuries of phenomenological study related to how the gospel spreads in Christ-ward movements. The historical case study of Sadrach's community indicates that most of the Insider methodology provides a useful framework to understand how the Christian message might best be communicated in high-religious contexts. Yet, the glaring problem facing Insider proponents is the extreme possibility that the tight connection between form and meaning in high-religious contexts will lead to a fatal form of syncretism that obscures the gospel.

Insider proponents cannot adequately address the charge of syncretism where Insider methodology is being implemented unless they are willing to become specific about individual contexts, language, and forms. As of yet, Insider proponents have not taken the necessary step to alleviate the concerns of the wider evangelical community, and critics of Insider methodology are become increasingly vocal and building momentum. Insider proponents find themselves in a difficult position. Publishing a

defense of Insider methodology being implemented in a particular context will most certainly have detrimental effects on the missionary personnel working there and possibly lethal effects on the national believers. At the same time, by not providing an adequate defense against the charge of syncretism, Insider proponents are increasingly open to the charge of propagating a defective form of the Christian faith.

How can the evangelical community move forward from this impasse?

Higgins has suggested that a small group of personnel from both sides of the conversation meet together in a small, face-to-face gathering to hear the hearts behind the defense or criticism of Insider methodology.¹ This type of setting would allow for the presentation of the type of context-specific research needed to reach helpful conclusions. Unless that type of meeting takes place, it is extremely likely that caricatures will continue to characterize the conversation. In addition, if that type of meeting were to take place, it should utilize the following outline to guide the conversation.

First, this dissertation has only investigated the biblical and theological foundations of Insider methodology, yet beyond these foundations Insider proponents have built an entire theological framework related to promises of God to Ishmael and how those promises may or may not extend to the forms of Islamic law and worship.² Interacting with these arguments on a deep level is an essential next step in the conversation. These theological arguments urgently need to be biblically assessed since

¹Kevin Higgins, "Beyond Christianity: Insider Movements and the Place of the Bible and the Body of Christ in New Movements to Jesus," *Missions Frontiers* 32, no. 4 (2010):13.

²See Jonathan Culver, "The Ishmael Promise and Contextualization among Muslims," *IJFM* 17 (2000): 61-70 and idem, "The Ishmael Promises in the Light of God's Mission: Christian and Muslim Reflections" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2001).

they are currently being utilized by Common Ground training consultants in their theological rationale for their approach to Islam. Also, critics of Insider Movements have increasingly labeled Insider methodology and the theological rationale that supports it as heresy. The charge might be accurate, yet heresy is such a broad term, and is used so sweepingly by Insider critics, that it is difficult to determine exactly what kind and level of theological deviance they intend to identify. Are first-order doctrines compromised? Second-order? Clarity on the side of the critics is also a deep need for the Insider conversation.

Second, Insider proponents need to supply a case study for the small group to interact with. That study needs to include the evangelistic strategy being utilized by the movement. It needs to identify how the Quran is used for evangelism, and it should acknowledge if the Quran continues to have a role in the spiritual formation of new believers. Obviously, Insider proponents must provide a theological rationale supporting its use in that way, along with a plan to move believers away from the Quran as a source of revelation. The particulars of a discipleship and leadership training program are also essential components to an overall Insider strategy. Travis indicates that Insider Movements are built upon the bedrock of indicative Bible study, yet this meeting would need to know specifically what Insider believers are reading. Are they studying the whole Bible in a year? Are they studying certain books like Leviticus, or Revelation, or the Gospel of Matthew? How is the Quran or other religious literature being used by the community? Are Insider believers utilizing any creeds or catechisms from historic Christianity like Sadrach's community or have they moved in Coolen's direction by transforming existing creeds and songs? Are the believers, and especially the leaders of

this movement, taught how to interpret the Bible, or is their existing worldview lens guiding their interpretation? Unless training is implemented, these movements will follow the patterns of many other movements to Christ in the history of Christianity. Surface level change of behavior will be affected by the gospel, but the deep rooted, worldview level of belief will only lead to greater orthodoxy in intentional discipleship and teaching of the leadership is combined with the Spirit and the Word.

The worship forms utilized by the Insider community also need to be addressed. Insider proponents need to discuss not only the modifications introduced in the forms, but also why the level of connection between form and meaning allows for the introduction of new meaning. They also need to discuss how the group of Insider believers is maintaining the transformed definitions and forms in the face of cultural pressure from the macro-culture. Baptism and the Lord's supper need to be addressed alongside Islamic forms that are being contextualized. If Kraft's suggestion that baptism should be contextualized in such a way that believer's baptism by immersion is changed, then the correct implementation of the ordinances will necessarily be a focal point of the discussion. In the arena of church planting, the definition of a true church utilized in chapter 1 should be the starting point for the conversation along with the progression of development in true churches suggested in Figure 3.

A significant element in the conversation about forms and meaning must interact with the contextualized translations of the Bible that jettison idioms like "the Son of God" for alternatives like "the Prince of God." The argument is far too extensive and nuanced to address here, but new contextualized translations are becoming a watershed issue in the conversation related to missions in high-religious societies. The translation

conversation is plagued by the same contextual problem that plagues the Insider conversation—context dramatically affects the viability of a particular translation proposal. A translation in Malay will have significantly different issues than a translation in Hindi or Arabic. Only people familiar with the context can determine the limits of dynamic equivalence, and the balance must come from the interaction of both outsiders and Insiders with a particular issue. Even more than contextualization, the conversation surrounding translation issues requires a deep knowledge of both the local context and the Word of God.

Moreover, the Insider conversation speaks to the cultural level of contextualization that deals with forms and language. Yet, underneath the visible forms and language being contextualized is another level of theological contextualization. As of yet, only one article has attempted to assess the theological contextualization taking place in communities of high-level contextualization.³ The theological level of contextualization is actually the place where syncretism will be the most difficult to detect and the most likely to occur and, consequently, needs to be the place of most intense scrutiny.

Third, the conversation will need to discuss the role of the missionary or evangelist in the overall Insider strategy. In particular, the question of how closely missionaries—whether they be Asian or Western—identify with Islam needs to be carefully studied. John Kim has discussed the terms “insider” and “inbetweeners” as

³See Duane Alexander Miller, “Reappropriation: An Accommodationist Hermeneutic of Islamic Christianity,” *St. Francis* 5, no. 3 (2009): 3-36.

categories of evangelist and missionary.⁴ In what way are these “inbetweeners” becoming like a Muslim? What is the theological rationale that supports “inbetweeners” reciting the Islamic confession? These questions and more related to the missionary role in Insider Movements need to be carefully analyzed.

Finally, the conversation, as a whole, needs to be characterized by love and brotherhood. Above every proponent’s articulation of Insider methodology, there needs to fly a banner of a deep passion that longs to see Christ glorified among the nations. In the heat of every give and take, in every disagreement and frustration, this important fact must be highlighted. Though the missionary community may disagree upon methods, men who stand on opposite sides of the line like Kraft and Corwin, Travis and Parshall, or Higgins and Nikides, should be united in their desires to give their lives for the cause of Christ. As methods are examined and presuppositions questioned, these men should be praying, loving Christ, fighting sin, and seeking the best methods to accomplish the task of world evangelism. Rhetoric, straw-men, false dichotomies, *ad hominem* arguments, and all of the other logical fallacies that belittle the opponent without actually dealing with the position are out of place in Christian conversation.

This dissertation has attempted to deal fairly with the actual proposals of Insider Methodology without falling into any of the traps listed above. While this study has concluded that Insider Movement methodology is defective in crucial respects, and does not supply sufficient biblical support to make it a suitable strategy for missionaries, it has also recognized that Insider methodology has many good and helpful missiological

⁴John Kim, “The Antoc Story, Continued: the Role of Group Dynamics in Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 27 (2010): 97-104.

elements to offer. As further research and study is conducted on Insider methodology, my hope is that the evangelical community will continue to critically assess Insider Movements and other missiological strategies to find a biblical balance that is also extremely effective in high-religious contexts. This may mean that Insider proponents reject the current C5 position as biblically permissible, renounce the strategy, and turn towards a healthier methodology. It will definitely mean that the critics of Insider methodology move away from perpetual criticism and instead offer robust alternatives.

Critics have made it clear that they are against Insider Movements, but they have not excelled in presenting alternatives. One of the dangers presented in chapter 1 was the naive adoption of Insider strategy by missionary personnel who search for the best way to reach their Muslim or Hindu friends. The most effective way to prevent these young missionaries from becoming infatuated with an unhealthy strategy is to present them a compelling biblical strategy that offers the same kind of hope for radical, Christ-exalting conversions. Insider Movement methodology may prove to be a short-lived missiological trend, but just as its suggestions borrow heavily from older theological proposals like fulfillment theology, a new strategy borrowing and modifying Insider methodology will likely take its place in the future. The solution is the reemphasis of the biblical categories of bold gospel proclamation, intense prayer, remarkable holiness, and radical commitment to Christ. A wise use of the social sciences will also prove extraordinarily helpful. Whether our strategies are wildly effective or singularly ineffective, as we seek to be a people who are transformed by the renewing of our minds through the teaching of his word, may God be glorified in all our efforts to see his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Accad, Foud Elias. *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997.
- Adriaanse, Laurans. *Sadrach's Kring*. Leiden: D. Donner, 1899.
- Akkeren, Philip van. *Sri and Christ: A Study of the Indigenous Church in East Java*. London: Lutterworth, 1969.
- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Meaning of the Glorious Quran: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, 4th ed. Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 2002
- Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962.
- _____. *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: and the Causes Which Hinder It*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962.
- Anderson, Neil. *The Bondage Breaker*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1990.
- Andrew (Brother), and Al Janssen. *Secret Believers: What Happens When Muslims Believe in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Revell, 2008.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: Summa Contra Gentiles. Bk. 1, God*. Translated by Anton C. Pegis. Garden City, NY: Image, 1955.
- Arintonang, Jan Sihar, and Karel Steenbrink, eds. *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Barrett, C. K. *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978.
- Bavinck, J. H. *The Church between Temple and Mosque: A Study of the Relationship Between Christian Faith and Other Religious*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966.
- Blevans, Steven B. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.
- _____. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Rev. ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002.
- Bock, Darrell L. *Acts*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand

- Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Book of the Acts*. Rev. ed. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Cachet, Frans Lion. *Een Jaar op Reis in Dienst der Zending*. Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser, 1896.
- Carson, D. A., ed. *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984.
- _____. *The Gospel According to John*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Chandler, Paul-Gordon. *Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road: Exploring a New Path Between Two Faiths*. Lanham, MD: Cowley, 2007.
- Conn, Harvie M. *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Mission in Trialogue*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.
- Cooley, Frank L. *Indonesia: Church and Society*. New York: Friendship, 1968.
- Cracknell, Kenneth. *Justice, Courtesy and Love: Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions, 1846-1914*. London: Epton, 1995.
- Cragg, Kenneth. *The Call of the Minaret*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956.
- Davis, John R. *Poles Apart: Contextualizing the Gospel in Asia*. Rev. ed. Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 1998.
- DeYoung, Kevin, and Ted Kluck. *Why We Love the Church*. Chicago: Moody, 2009.
- Dhavamony, Mariasusai. *Christian Theology of Religions: A Systematic Reflection on the Christian understanding of World Religions*. 2nd ed. Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity, vol. 109. New York: Peter Lang, 2002.
- Dibelius, Martin. *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*. Edited by Heinrich Greeven. London: SCM, 1956.
- Donovan, Vincent J. *Christianity Rediscovered*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982.
- Farhadian, Charles E. *Christianity, Islam and Nationalism in Indonesia*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Farquhar, J. N. *The Crown of Hinduism*. Oxford: Oxford University, 1915.
- Flemming, Dean. *Contextualization In the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.

- France, R. T. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Frost, Michael, and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.
- Gairdner, Temple. *The Reproach of Islam*. London: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1909.
- Garrison, David. *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World*. Midlothian, VA: WIGTake, 2004.
- Geertze, Clifford. *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968.
- _____. *The Religion of Java*. New York: The Free Press, 1960.
- Geisler, Norman L., and Abdul Saleeb. *Answering Islam*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- George, Timothy. *Faithful Witness: the Life and Mission of William Carey*. Birmingham, AL: Christian History Institute, 1998.
- Gilliland, Dean S. *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- Greear, J. D. *Breaking the Islam Code: Understanding the Soul Questions of Every Muslim*. Eugene, OR: Harvest, 2010.
- Greeson, Kevin. *Camel Training Method: The Secret of the Camel is out...Muslims are Coming to Faith in 'Isa*. Bangalore, India: WIGTake, 2004.
- Gross, Edward N. *Is Charles Kraft an Evangelical? A Critique of Christianity in Culture*. Elkins Park, PA: E.N. Gross, 1985.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Grunlan, Stephen A., and Marvin K. Mayers. *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988.
- Hedges, Paul. *Preparation and Fulfilment: A History and Study of Fulfilment Theology in Modern British Thought in the Indian Context*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Heofer, Herbert E. *Churchless Christianity*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001.
- Hesselgrave, David J. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.
- _____. *Paradigms in Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005.

- _____. *Planting Churches Cross Culturally: North America and Beyond*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Hesselgrave, David J., and Edward Rommen. *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.
- Hiebert, Paul G. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985.
- _____. *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.
- _____. *Cultural Anthropology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983.
- Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou. *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.
- Jabbur, Nabil. *The Crescent Through the Eyes of the Cross: Insights from an Arab Christian*. Colorado Springs: NAV, 2008.
- Jones, Stanley E. *The Christ of the Indian Road*. London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1925.
- Jordan, Clarence. *The Cotton Patch Version of Matthew and John*. New York: Association Press, 1970.
- Klinken, Gerry Van, and Geert Arend Van Klinken. *Minorities, Modernity and the Emerging Nation: Christians in Indonesia, a Biographical Approach*. Leiden: KITLVitlv, 2003.
- Köstenberger, Andreas. *John*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 4. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004.
- _____. *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples According to the Fourth Gospel: With Implications for the Forth Gospel's Purpose and the Mission of the Contemporary Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Kraft, Charles H. *Anthropology for Christian Witness*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996.
- _____. *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005.
- _____. *Communicating Jesus' Way*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999.
- _____. *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*. 2nd ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991.
- _____. *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001.

- Ladd, George Eldon. *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.
- Lingenfelter, Sherwood. *Transforming Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.
- Livingstone, Greg. *Planting Churches in Muslims Cities: A Team Approach*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Love, Rick. *Muslims, Magic and the Kingdom of God: Church Planting among Folk Muslims*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000.
- McCurry, Don M. *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.
- McGavran, Donald A. *The Bridges of God*. Edinburgh: World Dominion Press, 1955. Reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005.
- McGavran, Donald A., and C. Peter Wagner. *Understanding Church Growth*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Moreau, Scott A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to John*. The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 4. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- _____. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary, vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.
- Musk, Bill. *The Unseen Face of Islam: Sharing the Gospel with Ordinary Muslims at Street Level*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Krengal, 2004.
- Newbigin, Leslie. *The Finality of Christ*. London: SCM, 1969.
- Nicholls, Bruce. *Contextualization: A Theology of the Gospel and Culture*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979.
- Nida, Eugene A. *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1954.
- _____. *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1960.
- Nida, Eugene A., and Charles R. Taber. *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: Brill, 1969.
- Parshall, Phil. *Beyond the Mosque: Christians in the Muslim Community*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985.
- _____. *Bridges to Islam: A Christian Perspective on Folk Islam*. Grand Rapids:

- Baker, 1983.
- _____. *Divine Threads within a Human Tapestry: Memoirs of Phil Parshall*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000.
- _____. *Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization*. Waynesboro, GA: Gabriel, 2003.
- _____. *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980.
- Parsons, Martin. *Unveiling God: Contextualizing Christology for Islamic Culture*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Partonadi, Sutarman Soedeman. *Sadrach's Community and It's Contextual Roots*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988.
- Peacock, James L. *Consciousness and Change: Symbolic Anthropology in Evolutionary Perspective*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1875.
- Peterson, David G. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Pickett, J. W. *Christ's Way to India's Heart*. Lucknow, India: W.W. Bell, 1938.
- _____. *Christian Mass Movements in India*. Lucknow, India: W.W. Bell, 1933.
- Plantinga, Richard J. *Christianity and Plurality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999.
- Polhill, John B. *Acts*. The New American Commentary, vol. 26. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.
- Rheenen, Gailyn van. *Communicating Christ in Animistic Cultures*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1991.
- _____, ed. *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006.
- Rhodes, Ron. *Reasoning from the Scriptures with Muslims*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2002.
- Richardson, Don. *Eternity in Their Hearts*. Rev. ed. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984.
- Ricklefs, M. C. *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1300*. 2nd ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- _____. *Polarising Javanese Society: Islamic and other Visions c 1830-1930*. Leiden: KITLV, 2007.

- Ridderbos, Herman N. *The Coming of the Kingdom*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1962.
- Saal, William J. *Reaching Muslims for Christ*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.
- Schlorff, Sam. *Missiological Models in Ministry to Muslims*. Upper Darby, PA: Middle East Resources, 2006.
- _____. *Understanding the Muslim Mindset*. Upper Darby, PA: Arab World Ministries, 1995.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *Romans*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
- Schreier, Robert J. *Constructing Local Theologies*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985.
- Sharpe, Eric J. *Not to Destroy but to Fulfill: The Contribution of J. N. Farquhar to Protestant Missionary thought in India before 1914*. Uppsala, Sweden: Gleerup, 1965.
- Staffner, Hans, S. J. *Jesus Christ and the Hindu Community: Is a Synthesis of Hinduism and Christianity Possible?* Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1988.
- Stanley, Brian. *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*. Studies in the History of Christian Missions. Edited by Brian Stanley and R. E. Frykenberg. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.
- Stott, John., ed. *Making Christ Known: Historic Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Strong, Cynthia A., and Meg Page, eds. *A Worldview Approach to Ministry among Muslims Women*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006.
- Sumartana, Th. *Mission at the Crossroads: Indigenous Churches, European Missionaries, Islamic Association and Socio-Religious Change in Java 1812-1936*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Pt BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations: The Legacy of Brahmabandhav*. Upadhayay, Delhi: ISPCK, 2000.
- _____. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Thomas, M. M. *Salvation and Humanisation: Some Crucial Issues of the Theology of Mission in Contemporary India*. Indian Christian Thought Series, no. 11. Madras: CLS for the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1971.
- Tippett, Alan. *Introduction to Missiology*. Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, 1987.

- Tucker, Ruth A. *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004.
- Viswanathan, Gauri. *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Vlekke, Bernard H. M. *The Story of the Dutch East Indies*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1945.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *The Kingdom and the Church*. Philadelphia, 1903. Reprint, 1972.
- Walls, Andrew F. *The Cross Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002.
- _____. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996.
- Willis, Avery T. *Indonesian Revival: Why Two Million Came to Christ*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1977.
- World Missionary Conference. *Report of Commission IV: The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions*. London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910.
- Zwemer, Samuel M. *Islam and the Cross*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002.
- _____. *The Moslem Doctrine of God*. Boston: American Tract Society, 1905.
- _____. *The Muslim Christ*. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1912.

Articles

- Abdul, Asad. "Rethinking the Insider Movement Debate: Global Historical Insights toward an Appropriate Transitional Model of C5." *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 145-46.
- Accad, Foud. "The Qur'an: A Bridge to Christian Faith." *Missiology* 3 (1976): 331-42.
- Allman, Daniel von. "The Birth of Theology: Contextualization as the Dynamic Element in the Formation of New Testament Theology." *International Review of Mission* 60 (1975): 37-52.
- Anderson, John D. C. "Does the Church Make it Difficult for Muslim Enquirers?" *Evangelical Review of Theology* 20 (1996): 106-14.
- _____. "The Missionary Approach to Islam: Christian or Cultic?" *Missiology* 4 (1976) 285-300.
- Ayub, Edward. "Observations and Reactions to Christians Involved in New Approach to

- Missions.” *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 5 (2009): 21-40.
- Bevans, Stephen. “Models of Contextual Theology.” *Missiology* 13 (1985): 185-202.
- Bridges, Erich. “Of Jesus Mosques’ and Muslims Christians.” *Mission Frontiers* 19, no. 7 (1997): 19.
- Brislen, Mike. “A Model for a Muslim-Culture Church.” *Missiology* 24 (1996): 355-67.
- Brown, Rick. “Biblical Muslims.” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 65-74.
- _____. “Brother Jacob and Master Isaac: How One Insider Movement Began.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 24 (2007): 41-42.
- _____. “Contextualization without Syncretism.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 23 (2006): 127-33.
- _____. “Explaining the Biblical Term ‘Son(s) of God’ in Muslims Contexts.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 22 (2005): 91-96.
- _____. “Muslim Worldviews and the Bible: Bridges and Barriers (Part I: God and Mankind).” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 23 (2007): 5-12.
- _____. “Muslim Worldviews and the Bible: Bridges and Barriers (Part II: Jesus, The Holy Spirit, and the Age to Come).” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 23 (2007): 48-56.
- _____. “Muslim Worldviews and the Bible: Bridges and Barriers (Part III: Women, Purity, Worship and Ethics).” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 23 (2007): 93-100.
- _____. “Selecting and Using Scripture Portions Effectively in Frontier Missions.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 18 (2001): 10-25.
- _____. “The ‘Son of God:’ Understanding the Messianic Titles of Jesus.” *The International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 17 (2000): 41-52.
- _____. “Translating the Biblical Term ‘Son(s) of God’ in Muslims Contexts.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 22 (2005): 135-45.
- _____. “What Must One Believe About Jesus for Salvation?” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 14-15.
- _____. “Who is Allah?” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 23 (2007): 79-86.
- _____. “Why Muslims Are Repelled by the Term ‘Son of God.’” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43 (2007): 422-29.

- Brown, Rick, Bob Fish, John Travis, Eric Adams, and Don Allen. "Movements and Contextualization: Is there Really a Correlation?" *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26 (2009): 29-31.
- Buswell, James O., III. "Contextualization: Theory, Tradition, and Method." In *Theology and Mission: Papers and Responses Prepared for the Consultation on Theology and Mission, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, School of World Mission and Evangelism, March 22-25, 1976*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave, 87-111. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978.
- Caldwell, Larry. "Third Horizon Ethnohermeneutics: Re-Evaluating New Testament Hermeneutical Models for Intercultural Bible Interpreters Today." *Asia Journal of Theology* 1 (1987): 314-33.
- _____. "Towards the New Discipline of Ethnohermeneutics: Questioning the Relevancy of Western Hermeneutical Methods in the Asian Context." *Journal of Asian Missions* 1 (1999): 21-43.
- Caldwell, Stuart. "Jesus in Samaria: A Paradigm for Church Planting Among Muslims." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 25-31.
- Carson, D. A. "Church and Mission: Reflections on Contextualization and the Third Horizon." In *The Church in the Bible and the World: An International Study*, ed. D. A. Carson, 213-57. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.
- _____. "The Limits of Dynamic Equivalence in Bible Translation." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9 (1985): 200-12.
- Chapman, Colin. "The God Who Reveals." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 127-48. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.
- _____. "Rethinking the Gospel for Muslims." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 105-26. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.
- Chastain, Warren C. "Should Christians Pray the Muslim *Salat*?" *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12 (1995): 161-64.
- Croy, N. Clayton. "Epicureanism." In *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [CD-ROM]. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Colgate, Jack. "Relational Bible Storying and Scripture Use in Oral Muslim Contexts." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25 (2008): 135-41, 199-207.
- Conn, Harvey. "The Muslim Convert and His Culture." In *The Gospel and Islam*. ed. Don M. McCurry, 78-92. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.
- Corwin, Gary. "A Humble Appeal to C5/Insider Movement Muslim Ministry Advocates

to Consider Ten Questions (with responses from Brother Yusuf, Rick Brown, Kevin Higgins, Rebecca Lewis, and John Travis)." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 24 (2007): 5-20.

_____. "Insider Movements and Outsider Theology." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 42 (2006): 10-11.

_____. "A Response to My Respondents." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 24 (2007): 53-56.

_____. "Revising Assumptions about the Resistant." In *Reaching the Resistant: Barriers and Bridges for Mission*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 11-21. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1998.

Corwin, Gary, and Ralph Winters. "Reviewing the September-October *Missions Frontiers*: A Conversation about Insider Movements." *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 1 (2006): 17-20.

Culver, Jonathan. "The Ishmael Promise and Contextualization among Muslims." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 61-70.

D. O. "A Jesus Movement within Islam." *Interconnect* 5 (1991): 12-27.

Decker, Frank. "When 'Christian' Does Not Translate." *Mission Frontiers* 27, no. 5 (2005): 8.

DeNuei, Paul H. "A Typology of Approaches to Thai Folk Buddhists." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 415-36. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

Dibelius, Martin. "Paul on the Areopagus." In *The Book of Acts: Form, Style, and Theology*, ed. K. C. Hanson, trans. Mary Ling, 95-128. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2004.

"A Different Kind of Mosque," *Mission Frontiers* 19, no. 3 (1997): 20-21.

Dixon, Roger. "Moving on from the C1-C6 Spectrum." *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 3-19.

Dutch, Bernard. "Should Muslims become 'Christians'?" *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 15-24.

Engen, Charles E., van. "Five Perspectives of Contextually Appropriate Missional Theology." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft, 183-202. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

_____. "Reflecting Theologically about the Resistant." In *Reaching the Resistant: Barriers and Bridges for Mission*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 22-75. Pasadena, CA:

William Carey Library, 1998.

_____. "Toward a Contextually Appropriate Methodology in Mission Theology." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft, 203-26. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

Frykenberg, Robert Eric. "Avarna and Adivasi Christians and Missions: A Paradigm for Understanding Christian Movements in India." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 32 (2008): 14-20.

Gaffin, R. B., Jr. "Kingdom of God." In *New Dictionary of Theology*. Edited by Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright [CD Rom]. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988.

Gallagher, Robert, L. "The Hebraic Covenant as a Model for Contextualization." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 135-54. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

Garrison, David. "Church Planting Movements vs. Insider Movements: Missiological Realities vs. Mythological Speculations." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004): 151-54.

Gefen, Gavriel. "Indigenous Expressions of Biblical Faith." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 98-105.

Gentry, Peter J. "Kingdom through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image." *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (2008): 16-42.

Gibbs, Eddie, "How Appropriate is the Church Growth Paradigm in Today's Mission Contexts?" In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 293-308. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

Gilliland, Dean S. "Appendix: Contextualization Models." In *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean Gilliland, 313-17. Dallas: Word, 1989.

_____. "Contextual Theology as Incarnational Mission." In *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland, 9-31. Dallas: Word, 1989.

_____. "The Incarnation as a Matrix for Appropriate Theologies." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 493-520. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

_____. "Modeling the Incarnation for Muslim People: A Response to Sam Schlorff." *Missiology* 28 (2000): 330-38.

Glasser, Arthur F. "Power Encounter in Conversion from Islam." In *The Gospel and*

- Islam*, ed. Don McCurry, 129-42. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.
- Goldman, Bob. "Are We Accelerating or Inhibiting Movements to Christ?" *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 5 (2006): 8-13.
- Gordon, John. "Purity and Pluralism: Syncretism as a Theological Problem among Indonesia's Muslims and Christians." In *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change*, ed. Peggy Brock, 33-49. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Grafas, Basil. "Evaluation of Scriptural Support for Insider Movements: Critique of John Ridgway's 'The Movement of the Gospel in New Testament Times with Special Reference to Insider Movements.'" *St. Francis Magazine* 4, no. 2 (2007): 1-16.
- Gray, Leith, and Andrea Gray. "A Muslim Encounters the Gospel of Mark: Theological Implications of Contextual Mismatch." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25 (2008): 127-34.
- _____. "Paradigms and Praxis: Social Networks and Fruitfulness in Church Planting, and Why Are Some Workers Changing Paradigms?" *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26 (2009): 19-28, 63-73.
- Green, Denis. "Guidelines from Hebrews for Contextualization." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 233-50. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.
- Greer, Bradford. "Free to Live Under the Law: A Model for Islamic Witness." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 38 (2002): 444-52.
- Henry, Carl F. H. "The Cultural Relativizing of Revelation." *Trinity Journal* 1 (1980): 153-64.
- Hesselgrave, David J. "People Movements." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Edited by A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Hiebert, Paul G. "Critical Contextualization." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (1987): 104-12.
- _____. "Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel." In *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland, 101-20. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- _____. "The Social Sciences and Missions: Applying the Message." In *Missiology and the Social Sciences*, ed. Edward Rommen and Gary Corwin, 121-64. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996.
- Higgins, Kevin. "Acts 15 and Insider Movements among Muslims: Questions, Process, and Conclusions." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 29-40.

- _____. "Beyond Christianity: Insider Movements and the Place of the Bible and the Body of Christ in New Movements to Jesus." *Missions Frontiers* 32, no. 4 (2010): 13.
- _____. "Encountering Muslim Resistance." In *Reaching the Resistant: Barriers and Bridges for Mission*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 107-16. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1998.
- _____. "Identity, Integrity and Insider Movements." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23 (2006): 117-23.
- _____. "Inside What? Church, Culture, Religion and Insider Movements in Biblical Perspective." *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 74-91.
- _____. "The Key to Insider Movements: The 'Devoted's' of Acts." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004): 155-65.
- _____. "Speaking The Truth about Insider Movements: Addressing the Criticisms of Bill Nikides and 'Phil' relative to the Article 'Inside What?'" *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 6 (2009): 61-86.
- Hoefler, Herbert. "Proclaiming a 'Theologyless' Christ." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 22 (2005): 97-100.
- _____. "Response to Gary Corwin from the Hindu Context." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 21.
- _____. "Rooted or Uprooted: The Necessity of Contextualization in Missions." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 131-38.
- _____. "What's in a Name? The Baggage of Terminology in Contemporary Mission." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 25 (2008): 25-29.
- Houssny, George. "Distinctive Religious Barriers to Outside Penetration: Demonstration of Problem." In *Media in Islamic Culture*, ed. C. Richard Shumaker, 79-81. Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974.
- Huffard, Evertt. "Culturally Relevant Themes about Christ." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 161-74. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.
- Hunsberger, George R. "Accommodation." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, Edited by A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- _____. "Conversion and Community: Revisiting the Lesslie Newbigin-M. M Thomas Debate." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22 (1998): 112-17.
- Jameson, Richard, and Nick Scalevich. "First-Century Jews and Twentieth-Century

- Muslims.” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 33-38.
- Kim, John. “The Anotoc Story Continued: The Role of Group Dynamics in Insider Movements.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 27 (2010): 97-104.
- Kraft, Charles H. “Allegiance, Truth and Power Encounters in Christian Witness.” In *Pentecost, Mission and Ecumenism: Essays in Intercultural Theology*, ed. Jan A. B Jongeneel, 215-30. New York: Peter Lang, 1992.
- _____. “Appropriate Contextualization of Spiritual Power.” In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 375-96. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. “Appropriate Relationships.” In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 325-40. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. “Can Anthropological Insight Assist Evangelical Theology?” *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft*, 244-80. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001.
- _____. “Christian Conversion or Cultural Conversion?” *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft*, 392-402. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001.
- _____. “Contemporary Trends in the Treatment of Spiritual Conflict.” In *Deliver Us From Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnett, Bryant L. Myers, and Hwa Yung, 177-201. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2002.
- _____. “Contextualization and Time: Generational Appropriateness.” In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 255-74. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. “Contextualization in Three Crucial Dimensions.” In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 99-115. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. “Contextualizing Communication.” In *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland, 121-38. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- _____. “The Development of Contextualization Theory in Euroamerican Missiology.” In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 15-34. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. “Dynamic Equivalent Churches in Muslim Society.” In *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry, 114-28. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.

- _____. "Dynamics of Contextualization." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 169-81. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. "The Incarnation: God's Model for Cross Cultural Communication." In *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft*, 188-202. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001.
- _____. "Is Christianity a Religion or a Faith?" In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 83-97. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. "Meaning Equivalence Contextualization." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 155-68. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- _____. "My Spiritual Pilgrimage." In *Culture, Communication and Christianity: A Selection of Writings by Charles H. Kraft*, 1-7. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001.
- _____. "Psychological Stress Factors among Muslims." In *Media in Islamic Culture*, ed. C. Richard Shumaker, 137-44. Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974.
- _____. "Response to Herbert Hofer's 'Proclaiming a 'Theologyless' Christ.'" *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 22 (2005): 101.
- _____. "Why Isn't Contextualization Implemented?" In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 67-80. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Krishna, Raghav. "From 'Krishna Bhakti' to 'Christianity' to 'Krista Bhakti.'" *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 173-84.
- Lewis, Rebecca. "Insider Movements: Honoring God-Given Identity and Community." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26 (2009): 33-36.
- _____. "The Integrity of the Gospel and Insider Movements." *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 27 (2010): 44-48.
- _____. "Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 75-76.
- _____. "Sharing the Gospel through Open Networks." *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 1 (2006): 22-23.
- _____. "Strategizing for Church Planting Movements in the Muslims World." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004): 73-77.
- _____. "Underground Church Movements: The Surprising Role of Women's Networks." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004): 145-50.

- Lingenfelter, Sherwood. "Power-Giving Leadership: Transformation for a Missional Church." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft, 275-90. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Love, Rick. "Church Planting Among Folk Muslims." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 11 (1994): 87-91.
- Mallouhi, Mazhar. "Comments on the Insider Movement." *St Francis Magazine* 5, no. 5 (2009): 3-14.
- Martyr, Justin. "The First Apology." In *Christianity and Plurality: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Richard J. Plantinga, 29-61. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999.
- Massey, Joshua. "Editorial: Muslims Contextualization." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 3-4.
- _____. "God's Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 5-14.
- _____. "His Ways Are Not Our Ways." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 35 (1999): 188-97.
- _____. "Living Like Jesus: A Torah-Observant Jew." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004): 13-22, 55-71.
- _____. "Misunderstanding C5: His Ways Are Not Our Orthodoxy." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40 (2004): 296-304.
- McCurry, Don M. "A Time for New Beginnings." In *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don McCurry, 13-21. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.
- McGavran, Donald. "A People Reborn: Foundational Insights on People Movements." *Mission Frontiers* 27, no. 5 (2005): 16-17.
- Miller, Duane Alexander. "Reappropriation: An Accommodationist Hermeneutic of Islamic Christianity." *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 3 (2009): 3-36.
- Moreau, Scott A. "Syncretism." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Edited by A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Morton, Jeff. "Narratives and Questions: Exploring the Scriptures with Muslims." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40 (2004): 172-76.
- Moucarry, Chawkat Georges. "Theological Principles for Evangelizing Muslims." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 20 (1996): 178-81
- Newbigin, Leslie. "Baptism, the Church and Koinonia." *Religion and Society* 19, no. 1

(1972): 69-90.

_____. "Conversion." In *Renewal for Mission*, 2nd ed., ed. David Lyon and Albert Manuel. Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1968.

Nicholls, Bruce J. "New Theological Approaches in Muslim Evangelism." In *The Gospel and Islam*, ed. Don M. McCurry, 155-63. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.

_____. "The Servant Songs of Isaiah in Dialogue with Muslims." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 20 (1996): 168-77.

Nikides, Bill. "A Response to Kevin Higgins' 'Inside What?'" *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 92-113.

Paige, Terence. "Philosophy." In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid [CD-ROM]. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Parshall, Phil. "Courage in Convictions: Other Options for Muslim Evangelism." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998): 38-42.

_____. "Danger! New Directions in Contextualization: Do Some Approaches to Muslims Cross the Line into Syncretism?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998): 404-10.

_____. "Lessons Learned in Contextualization." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 251-65. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.

_____. "Lifting the *Fatwa*." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 40 (2004): 288-93.

_____. "Muslim Evangelism: Mobilizing the National Church." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 37 (2001): 44-47.

Parsons, Martin. "Unveiling God: Presenting Jesus to Muslims through a Confessional Recitation." *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 6 (2006): 17-21.

Petersen, Brian K. "A Brief Investigation of Old Testament Precursors to the Pauline Missiological Model of Cultural Adaptation." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 117-29.

_____. "The Possibility of a 'Hindu Christ-Follower:' Hans Staffner's Proposal for the Dual Identity of Disciples of Christ within High Caste Hindu Communities." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 87-97.

Phil. "A Response to Kevin Higgins' 'Inside What?'" *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 114-26.

Pierson, Paul E. "Renewal, Revival, and Contextualization." In *Appropriate Christianity*,

- ed. Charles H. Kraft, 437-52. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Pinnock, Clark. "The Inerrancy Debate among Evangelicals." *Theology, News and Notes* (1976): 11-13.
- Piper, John. "Minimizing the Bible? Seeker-Driven Pastors and Radical Contextualization in Missions." *Missions Frontiers* 28, no. 1 (2006): 16-17.
- Pocock, Michael. "Raising Questions about the Resistant." In *Reaching the Resistant: Barriers and Bridges for Mission*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 3-10. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1998.
- Racey, David. "Contextualization: How Far is Too Far?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 32 (1996): 304-09.
- Ramseyer, Robert L. "Christian Mission and Cultural Anthropology." In *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert Shenk, 108-116. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- Rawson, Katie J. "Contextualizing the Relationship Dimension of the Christian Life." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 341-60. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Redford, Shawn B. "Appropriate Hermeneutics." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 227-54. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Rheenen, Gailyn van. "Syncretism and Contextualization: the Church on a Journey Defining Itself." In *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn van Rheenen, 1-29. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006.
- Richard, H. L. "Community Dynamics in India and the Praxis of 'Church.'" *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 24 (2007): 185-94.
- _____. "Religious Movements in Hindu Social Contexts." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 139-45.
- _____. "Rethinking Community." *Dharma Deepika* 5, no. 2 (2000): 51-58.
- _____. Review of *Churchless Christianity*, by Herbert E. Hoefler. In *Churchless Christianity*, rev. ed., 255-64. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001.
- Richardson, Don. "Concept Fulfillment." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph Winter, C59-C63. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992.
- Rickards, Donald R. "The Development of New Tools to Aid in Muslim Evangelism." In *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don. M. McCurry, 429-41. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.

- Ricklefs, M. C. "Agung," In *Encyclopedia of Asian History*, Edited by Ainslie T. Embree. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.
- Ridgway, John. "Insider Movements in the Gospels and Acts." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 77-86.
- Sanchez, Daniel R. "Contextualization and the Missionary Endeavor." In *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson, 318-33. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1998.
- Schlorff, Samuel P. "Muslim Ideology and Christian Apologetics." *Missiology* 21, no. 2 (1993): 173-85.
- _____. "Theological and Apologetical Dimensions of Muslims Evangelization." *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1980): 335-66.
- _____. "The Translational Model for Mission in Resistant Muslim Society: A Critique and an Alternative." *Missiology* 28 (2000): 305-28.
- Scott, David C. "Baptism in the Indian Context – an Event of Separation or Human Solidarity?" *The Christian Century* 31 January (1990): 103-08.
- Shenk, Wilbert R. "Missionary Encounter with Culture since the Seventeenth Century." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles E. Kraft, 35-48. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Smith, Jay. "An Assessment of the Insider's Principle Paradigms." *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 20-51.
- Span, John. "The Critical Kingdom Question: Can One Be Identified with the Kingdom of God and Islam at the Same Time? (Part 1 of 2)." *St. Francis Magazine* 6, no. 2 (2010): 296-326.
- Span, John and Anne Span. "Report on the Common Ground Consultants Meeting, Snelville (Georgia)." *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 4 (2009): 52-73.
- Sparks, Adam. "Was Justin Martyr a Proto-Inclusivist?" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 43 (2008): 495-510.
- Staffner, Hans, S. J. "Christian Hindus?" *The Clergy Monthly Missionary Supplement* 2 (1955): 174-85.
- Sugirtharajah, Rasiah S. "From Orientalism to Postcolonialism: Hermeneutics Moving Eastward and Onward." In *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Contesting the Interpretations*, 3-28. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998.
- Taber, Charles R. "Contextualization: Indigenization, and/or Transformation." In *The*

Gospel and Islam: a 1979 Compendium, ed. Don. M. McCurry, 143-54. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.

Talman, Harley. "Guest Editor's Page." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004): 5.

_____. "Islam, Once a Hopeless Frontier, Now? Comprehensive Contextualization." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004): 6-12.

Tappeiner, Daniel A. "A Response to Caldwell's Trumpet Call to Ethnohermeneutics." *Journal of Asian Missions* 1 (1999): 222-23.

Teeter, David. "Dynamic Equivalent Conversion for Tentative Muslim Believers." *Missiology* 18 (1990): 305-13.

Tennent, Timothy C. "The Challenge of Churchless Christianity: An Evangelical Assessment." *International Journal of Missionary Research* 29 (2005): 171-77.

_____. "Equipping Missionaries for the Resistant." In *Reaching the Resistant: Barriers and Bridges for Mission*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 221-31. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1998.

_____. "Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23 (2006): 101-15.

Terry, John Mark. "Indigenous Churches." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, Edited by A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

Thom, J. C. "Stoicism." In *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [CD-ROM]. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.

Tienou, Tite, and Paul G. Hiebert. "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft, 117-34. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

Travis, John. "The C1 to C6 Spectrum." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998): 407-08.

_____. "Maximizing the Bible! Glimpses From Our Context." *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 1 (2006): 21-22.

_____. "Messianic Muslim Followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17 (2000): 53-59.

_____. "Must all Muslims leave 'Islam' to follow Jesus?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998): 411-15.

_____. "Two Responses." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998): 411-17.

- Travis, John, and Anna Travis. "Appropriate Approaches in Muslim Contexts." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft, 397-414. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Travis, John, Phil Parshall, Herbert Hoefler, and Rebecca Lewis. "Four Responses to Tennent's 'Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques.'" *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23 (2006): 124-26.
- Uddin, Rafique. "Contextualized Worship and Witness." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J Dudley Woodberry. 267-72. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.
- Ufford, Quarles van. "Why Don't You Sit Down?" In *Man, Meaning and History: Essays in Honour of H. G. Schulte Nordholt*, ed. R. Schefold, J. W. Schoorl, and J. Tennekes, 204-24. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980.
- Walls, Andrew. "Old Athens and New Jerusalem: Some Signposts for Christian Scholarship in the Early History of Mission Studies." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21 (1997):146-53.
- Wan, Enoch. "A Critique of Kraft's Use/Misuse of Communication and Social Sciences in Biblical Interpretation and Missiological Formation." In *Missiology and the Social Sciences*, ed. Edward Rommen and Gary Corwin, 121-64. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996.
- Waterman, D. L. "Do the Roots Affect the Fruits." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 57-63.
- Werff, Lyle vander. "Mission Lessons from History: A Laboratory of Missiological Insights Gained from Christian-Muslim Relationships." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 11 (1994): 74-79.
- _____. "The Names of Christ in Worship." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J Dudley Woodberry, 175-96. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.
- Whelcher, James R. "Ethnohermeneutics: A Response." *Journal of Asian Missions* 2 (2000): 125-33.
- Whiteman, Darrell L. "Contextualization: the Theory, the Gap, the Challenge." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21 (1997): 2-7.
- _____. "The Function of Appropriate Contextualization in Mission." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles Kraft, 49-66. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.
- Widiasih, Ester Pudjo. "A Survey of Reformed Worship in Indonesia." In *Christian Worship in Reformed Churches Past and Present*, ed. Lukas Vischer, 175-93. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Wilder, John W. "Some Reflections on Possibilities for People Movements among

- Muslims.” *Missiology* 5 (1977): 301-20.
- Williams, Brad. “The Emmaus-Medina Intertextual Connection: Contextualization the Presentation of God’s Word.” *International Journal of Frontier Mission* 23 (2006): 67-72.
- Williams, Mark. “Aspects of High-Spectrum Contextualization in Ministries to Muslims.” *Journal of Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2003): 75-91.
- Williamson, H. G. M., and C. A. Evans. “Samaritans.” In *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [CD-ROM]. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Winship, Jamie. “From Bandung to Baghdad: A Journey to the Inside.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25 (2008): 193-98.
- Winter, Ralph D. “Editorial.” *Mission Frontiers* 27, no. 5 (2005): 4-5.
- _____. “The Highest Priority: Cross Cultural Evangelism” In *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, ed. J. D. Douglas, 226-41. Minneapolis: World Wide, 1975.
- _____. “Living with Ill-Defined Words: A Response to Herbert Hofer and Rick Love.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25 (2008): 38-42.
- Wiyono, Gani. “Ratu Adil: A Javanese Face of Jesus?” *Journal of Asian Studies* 1 (1999): 65-79.
- Woodberry, Dudley J. “Contextualization among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars.” In *The Word among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland, 282- 312. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- _____. “Contextualization among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars,” In *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 13 (1996): 171-86.
- _____. “Different Diagnoses of the Human Condition.” In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 149-60. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.
- _____. “To the Muslim I Became a Muslim?” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 24 (2007): 23-28.
- _____. “Faith and Iman: The Human Response.” In *My Neighbor is Muslim: A Handbook for Reformed Churches*, 69-79. Geneva: John Knox International Reformed Center, 1990.
- Woods, Scott. “A Biblical Look at C5 Muslim Evangelism.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 37 (2003): 188-95.

Yeoman, Barry. "The Stealth Crusade." *Mother Jones* (May-Jun 2002): 48.

Dissertations

Caldwell, Larry Wayne. "Receptor-Oriented Hermeneutics: Reclaiming the Hermeneutical Methodologies of the New Testament for Bible Interpreters in the Twenty-First Century." Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990.

Greear, James. "Theosis and Muslim Evangelism: How the Recovery of a Patristic Understanding of Salvation Can Aid Evangelical Missionaries in the Evangelization of Islamic Peoples." Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003.

Sellers, Robert Preston. "Power and Ministry in Indonesia: Christian Models and Cultural Myths in Conflict." Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993.

Wasserman, Jeffery Steven. "Messianic Jewish Congregations: A Comparison and Critique of Contemporary North American and Israeli Expressions." Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997.

Yoder, Lawrence McCulloh. "The Introduction and Expression of Islam and Christianity in the Cultural Context of North Central Java." Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1987.

Unpublished Material

Dent, Donald. "Sadrach: The Apostle to Java." Unpublished D.Miss. paper, Malaysian Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007.

Massey, John D. "Assessing the Shape of Ecclesiology in Church Planting Movements Missiology." Paper presented at the quarterly regional meeting of the Evangelical Missiological Society, Memphis, TN, 15 October 2007.

Poston, Larry. "'You Must Not Worship Their Way. . .' When Contextualization Becomes Syncretism." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Missiological Society, St. Louis, MO, 23-25 November 2004.

Travis, John. "Inner Healing and Deliverance: Case Studies from an Asian People Group." Unpublished Ph.D. paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008.

Waterman, D. L. "A Few Comments on 'The Jerusalem Council Revisited: Part I' by L. D. Waterman." (unpublished.) Provided by *The International Journal of Frontier Missions* via email to author, 4 February 2010.

Internet

- Al Muredin. "Sunni or Shiite – Now What's Messianic?" Blog: Messianic Muslims July 24th 2005 [on-line]. Accessed 19 August 2009. Available from <http://messianicmuslims.blogspot.com>; Internet.
- Eusebius. *Praeparatio Evangelica: Book 1*. Translated by E.H. Gifford, 1903 [on-line]. Accessed 14 April 2010. Available from http://www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/eusebius_pe_01_book1.htm; Internet.
- Goble, Phil, and Salim Munayer. *New Creation Book for Muslims*. Pasadena, CA: Mandate Press, 1989 [on-line]. Accessed 15 February 2008. Available from <http://www.afii.org/ncmreprt.htm>; Internet.
- Hall, Robert G. "Epispasm: Circumcision in Reverse." *Bible Review* 7, no. 4 (1992): 52-57. In *The Circumcision Reference Library* [on-line]. Accessed 9 June 2010. Available from <http://www.cirp.org/library/restoration/hall1>; Internet
- Hesselgrave, David J. "Contextualization that is Authentic and Relevant." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12 (1995): 115-20 [on-line]. Accessed 21 February 2008. Available from <http://strategicnetwork.org/index.php?loc=kb&view=v&id=08530&fti=contextualization%20that%20is%20authentic&>; Internet.
- International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. "Articles III, V and X of the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy"[on-line]. Accessed 6 June 2010. Available from http://www.namb.net/site/c.9qKILUOzEpH/b.238325/k.AC1C/Chicago_Statement.htm; Internet.
- International Mission Board. "Definition of a Church." *News* 6 March 2006 [on-line]. Accessed 18 August 2008. Available from <http://www.imb.org/main/news/details.asp?LanguageID=1709&StoryID=3838>; Internet.
- Lausanne Committee on World Evangelism. "The Willowbank Report" [on-line]. Accessed 8 October 2008. Available from <http://www.lausanne.org/willowbank-1978/lop-2.html>; Internet.
- Massey, John D. "Misunderstanding C5 and the Infinite Translatability of Christ: Why has C5 been so Misunderstood by its Critics." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 38 (2004) [on-line]. Accessed 24 February 2008. Available from http://www.winint.org/downloads/Misunderstanding_C5-unabr.pdf; Internet.
- Müller, F. Max. *Introduction to the Science of Religion: Four Lectures Delivered at the Royal Institution in February and May, 1870*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co. 1899 [on-line]. Accessed 14 April 2010. Available from <http://books.google.com>; Internet.
- Nikides, Bill. "Evaluating Insider Movements." *St. Francis Magazine* 4 (March 2006) [on-line]. Accessed 27 January 2008. Available from <http://>

www.stfrancismagazine.info/issue4/francis4007.pdf; Internet.

Parsons, Greg H. "Insider Movements: A New Phrase for an Old Idea." *Lausanne World Pulse.com*, July 2006 [on-line]. Accessed 3 February 2008. Available from <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/research.php/418/07-2006>; Internet.

The Southern Baptist Convention. "The Baptist Faith and Message 2000" [on-line]. Accessed 2 October 2009. Available from <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp>; Internet.

Travis, John. "God is Doing Something New: Lausanne Global Conversation, responses to Joseph Cummings 'Muslim Followers of Jesus?'" [on-line]. Accessed 21 April 2010. Available from <http://www.lausanne.org/global-conversation/god-is-doing-something-new.html>; Internet.

ABSTRACT

INSIDER MOVEMENTS: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VIABILITY OF RETAINING SOCIO-RELIGIOUS INSIDER IDENTITY IN HIGH-RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS

J. Henry Wolfe, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011
Chair: Dr. M. David Sills

This dissertation examines Insider Movements, a missiological strategy where adherents of a high-religious system retain their socio-religious birth identity as a means of preventing extraction, thereby aiding the evangelistic and church planting task by keeping the social and family network intact. The strategy has produced a significant amount of controversy related to appropriate degrees of contextualization and the dangers of syncretism. The purpose of this dissertation is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an Insider approach, critique the theological and methodological elements of Insider Movements, and evaluate its ability to produce orthodox, Bible-believing, and Christ-exalting believers and churches. This dissertation takes the position that Insider methodology as currently articulated is biblically weak and methodologically unwise. Chapter 1 introduces a short history of the development of the Insider conversation, identifies the central problems surrounding the conversation, defines terminology, and outlines the trajectory of the study.

Chapter 2 traces the development of Insider methodology in an attempt to present a clear and complete picture of the arguments raised by Insider proponents. The

relationship of Insider Movements to People Movements and Church Planting Movements is investigated. This investigation is followed by an identification of the missiological problems in evangelism and church planting in high-religious contexts. The literature and conferences proposing the missiology that led to the C-Continuum are identified.

Chapter 3 deals with the biblical and theological foundation of Insider methodology. Kraft's concept of revelation and the Bible as "God's inspired case-book" is proposed as an unstated presupposition of Insider methodology. Moreover, the theological concepts of fulfillment theology and the kingdom of God are identified as the central arguments supporting Insider methodology.

Chapter 4 introduces the central missiological concepts supporting Insider strategy, starting with the model of critical contextualization and followed by a critical interaction with the central missiological proposals utilized in Insider strategy.

Chapter 5 is an attempt to assess the "wait and see" proposal of Insider advocates through an historic case study of Sadrach Surapranata's community in central Java, Indonesia. In addition to providing an example for how one particular community developed in terms of identity, orthodoxy, and orthopraxy, a number of helpful lessons related to contextualization and missionary partnership are presented as balancing comments for the Insider conversation.

The final chapter concludes with summary thoughts, proposals, and areas of future research and dialogue.

VITA

J. Henry Wolfe

PERSONAL

Born: December 20, 1977, Lawton, Oklahoma
Parents: [Redacted]
Married: [Redacted], February 28, 2004

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Halls High School, [Redacted], 1996
B.A., in Religion and Greek, [Redacted], 2000
M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006

MINISTERIAL

Staff Intern, [Redacted], 1999
Bivocational Pastor, [Redacted], 2008-

ACADEMIC

Garrett Fellow, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006-08

ORGANIZATIONAL

American Society of Missiology
Evangelical Missiological Society
International Society of Frontier Missions

