

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE INSIDER'S PRINCIPLE PARADIGMS (by Jay Smith)

Towards the end of January 2009 I was asked by my mission board, the Brethren In Christ World Mission (BICWM) to attend the 'Common Ground' Conference in Atlanta, a group promoting and teaching the 'Insider' methodological model of evangelism to Islam. I was asked to assess its viability as a model for our mission work to Muslims living in a Middle Eastern country.

I knew something about the 'model', which some have based on the C-5 category of the contextualization scale¹, due to my studies on contextualization at Fuller Seminary in the 1980s. Later on my colleagues and I tried a nascent form of contextualization in the late 1980s and early 1990s in a largely Muslim dominated West African country. We realized, however, that it caused a good bit of confusion, as some of our African Muslim friends felt we were being deceitful and dishonest, and trivialized what for them were time-honoured Islamic 'identity codes' of practice and belief.



Since then, we have now moved to London, where, for the past 17 years, I have engaged in a highly public confrontational and polemical ministry engaging with the more radical elements within Western Islam, a methodology which is probably as far removed from that of the Insider Movement as one could imagine (possibly a negative C-5 on the contextual scale). Ironically, 'Believers from a Muslim Background' (BMB) tell me that my model of evangelism is actually a truer form of contextualization, since, my forthright and public style is closer to the paradigm of what a religious man should be; one who is as willing to publicly go 'toe to toe' with the best, and just as willing to die for what he believes...as are they.

The assessment below, therefore, needs to be read with that history in mind. I make no apologies; after working for over 27 years with Muslims, on three continents, and having taught others to minister with Muslims in over 20 countries, I come to the table with a good bit of experience, both contextual and eirenical, yet also confrontational and controversial, much of the latter in an hostile environment. I say this all up-front so that you know where I stand, and so you can better understand why I take the positions I do.

Concerning the Common Ground Conference itself; I was not invited, so I had myself invited; to which they finally relented, with the proviso that I was not permitted to say anything about the teachers nor the countries they represented. I can say, however, that they were quite an impressive group, all eloquent, mostly my age (40-50s), all white, very American, and all well groomed.

Security was tight, with only delegates permitted to enter the sanctuary. I was not sure why they felt it necessary, since we were in Atlanta; besides only those who had been invited could attend. What's more we were all Christians, vetted and so quite knowledgeable, but this was their conference, not mine.

It was a slick operation, keeping to time, with good technical facilities, and around 300 in attendance. I understand that they do these conferences regularly, and they mentioned that it will even be held in a Muslim country soon. All of this to say that the movement and their advocates are not an aberration, representing a fringe group, but seem to be increasingly popular, especially amongst the young. What's more, from the adulation expressed by those seated all around me at the conference, we should expect that this movement will become increasingly mainstream within Evangelical Christianity.

As to my assessment, I wanted to make sure that what I was assessing was true and accurate, and not simply my impression of what the Insider missionaries were saying. I have been misquoted and misunderstood by many who have critiqued my approach over the last 20 or so years, so am patently aware of just how easy it can be to be misconstrued and misrepresented. Thus, after the conference I wrote down what I believed were 16-17 of their core beliefs or principle paradigms and sent them to the leadership of that conference. They in turn (from what I understand) asked 4-5 of the primary leaders to go through the bullet points you see below, and respond to them as a group. Simultaneously, John Travis (a pseudonym), considered by many to be the 'father of the Insider movement' also responded by personal e-mail with his reactions. Both the

¹ From the C1-C6 contextualization scale, made popular by John and Anna Travis (pseudonyms), "Maximizing the Bible! Glimpses from our context." *MissionFrontiers* [Jan.-Feb. 2006], pg.21

Common Ground (CG) and John Travis's responses are summarized below in blazing blue, while my assessment of their responses is in boring black.

As one might expect, upon receiving their replies I found that less than half of what I assumed were their core beliefs turned out not to be universal Insider principles or paradigms at all, since, as they state, there is a multiplicity of Insider opinions and practices. And there is the dilemma. How was I to assess something which not everyone could agree upon? What's more, much of what I thought I had heard at the conference in Atlanta they now considered either unimportant or irrelevant to their paradigm. Could it be that they were backing off some of what they said at the conference, knowing that I was now assessing them publicly, or had I and others simply miss-heard them? As one leading Christian intellectual stated, "*The Insider proponents are just too slippery to pin down. Even when you quote them, they say that is not what they really mean! The movement is so fluid and vague in many ways that it raises many questions of credibility*" [note: I have been asked not to give names or places by the leaders of the Common Ground conference. If there is a need to know whom I am quoting, feel free to e-mail me privately for further references].

With that in mind, let's nonetheless go into their responses, and then let me share with you my assessment of them.

(1) **Insider:** We [leaders representing the Common Ground, and John Travis] define "Insider" as "One who embraces Jesus, yet remains as a light in his 'oikos' (household) so that as many as possible might be saved" (Matt 5:15).

Jay's Assessment: I had wanted the leadership to define what they meant by 'Insider' here, but they declined, possibly because, as stated above, there are so many different definitions and practices within the movement. A recent definition calls it, "*a popular movement to Christ that bypasses formal and explicit expressions of the Christian religion*"². To be more specific, an 'Insider', as I understand it, is someone who considers Jesus as their 'Lord' and 'Saviour', yet who stays inside their culture (in this case their Muslim culture), inside their biological family (what they define as one's 'oikos'), continues to call themselves a Muslim (as defined in Sura 5:111), therefore believes the 'Shahada' (that God is one, and Muhammad is his prophet), continues to go to the mosque, attempts to pray five times a day, participates in the Ramadan fast, and some believe can go on the Hajj (pilgrimage). As one might imagine, there will be variations on this definition depending on whom you talk to and where they are ministering.

I will talk later concerning what they mean by 'Jesus' in their above definition, and focus at this point on their reference to one's 'Oikos', defined as one's biological Muslim family. There is nothing wrong with wanting to remain with inside one's own family and community, but not to the exclusion of one's greater family in Christ. I do question the use of 'oikos' as simply one's biological relatives. Jesus very clearly redefines the family in Matthew 12:46-50, where, pointing to 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*". Do not those coming out of a Muslim background therefore have a stronger allegiance to those in their/our Christian culture or with their local Christian community, those who are their new 'brothers and sisters in Christ' (as Christ defines it in Mathew 12), over and above their biological Muslim relatives, especially when they are being persecuted by their biological families, and so need the help of their near brothers and sisters in Christ?

'As many as possible...' seems to be a strong impetus within Insider circles. In every conversation I have had with those who promote the insider model, at some point in the conversation the reference to numbers is introduced...suggesting that one of the primary reasons the Insider model is so attractive is due to the immense success of 'believers' they are seeing in every country because of this model. I have heard anywhere from 100,000 to millions who have 'come to Christ' thru this methodology; therefore, how could it be wrong; implying that "*The ends justify the means*". This is not only seductive (i.e. success is always attractive, regardless of the cost), but dangerous, as it leads to blindly adopting practices without looking at the long term consequences to those practices, not only to the world wide Christian community, but to the

² David Garrison, "Church Planting Movements vs. Insider Movements: Missiological realities vs. mythological speculations," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 (2004), pg. 151

local 'Christian' community as well, which the new believer may or may not participate in. Some of those costs and consequences I will talk about later on.

(2) **Extraction: New believers should not be extracted from their Muslim families (their 'Oikos'). Matthew 5:15 says to shine as a light in one's oikos. The dictum is actually 'remain in'. The Holy Spirit will tell them some things that are okay. The point is that a believer is uniquely gifted by virtue of bloodline and upbringing to reach those of his natural Oikos. So our desire is to see this natural gifting used for the sake of the Gospel. The goal is for people to be salt and light in their 'oikos'.**

Jay's Assessment: Unfortunately, the above paragraph does not explain just how far the new believer must 'remain' within one's oikos. For clarification, at the conference and in much of their literature the Insiders suggest that the new believer should continue to call themselves 'Muslims', should continue to pray the five ritualistic Islamic prayers, go to the mosque regularly, and participate in the yearly fast. In other words, for all practical purposes, they should be seen publicly as a Muslim, and to continue doing so till they die, promising in some cases that they don't ever have to 'leave Islam'.

This may not seem too alarming for some of us, at first glance, since in many C3-C4 ministries (which I adhere to), new converts are often encouraged to initially remain within their families as 'secret believers', with the hope that at a more convenient time they will 'come out' publicly as Christians, and therefore stave off any immediate persecution. What is problematic here is that most Insider proponents believe that remaining inside Islam, and calling oneself a Muslim is something that is not necessarily temporary, but permanent. There is much which needs to be questioned here, but that will be addressed later on.

Let's at this point look at the inference of '*shining as a light*' found in Matthew 5. In Matthew 5:15 it says, "*Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house*". I'm assuming that Christ here is speaking about the light of the gospel, evidenced by your 'good deeds' (verse 16). Does not light confront darkness, and should it not therefore confront the darkness of Islam in one's family, which will bring about rejection, leading to extraction, and persecution by the family?

If that is so, then I wonder how 'salt and light' can be construed to suggest acquiescing to a Muslim paradigm which already exists? If it confronts, then it stands against much in Islam which confronts the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, such as the ritualistic prayers, or the mosque, and the Rammadan fast, all of which I believe are rejections of those institutions modeled by Jesus himself. Perhaps, the Insiders are suggesting that these institutions are nothing more than benign practices, devoid of any spiritual overlay, which can be easily accepted, adopted and adapted within a Biblical framework...more about that later.

Returning to the problem of one's oikos; should not Matthew 5:15 be coupled with Matthew 10:35-37, which states very clearly that once we are Christ's disciples that we should expect to find a "*son against his father, and a daughter against her mother...*", and that "*a man's enemies will be the members of his own household*"? What this suggests to me is that our true family, as I have said previously, is no longer our biological relatives, but the new family we have in Christ Jesus, and that once one becomes a true believer, they should then expect to be "flogged", "arrested", "hated", "persecuted", and yes even "killed" (see Matt. 10:17-23) for being a '*light to the world*', which often in a Muslim context begins within the Muslim's biological family (their Oikos). There are many passages in the New Testament which propose extraction for the sake of Christ; Mark 8:34-38 or, 1 Corinthians 6:14-18 to name just two.

The early church assumed it as well. I'm not sure how the Insiders can read the story of the early church in the book of Acts, or the history of the first 300 years of Christianity (to say nothing of the last 2,000 years), and assume that extraction is to be avoided? Extraction was not only expected by Christ in Matthew 10, but was encouraged by the early church, and was the reason so many had to go into hiding. This extraction, due to new Christians being 'salt and light' in their Oikos, caused much persecution, yet brought about some of the greatest stories we have of the courage and resolve of those who loved and sacrificed for their faith. In fact, I would venture to say that in the last 2,000 years, it was during those times of extraction, followed by persecution that the church has been at its strongest and has grown at its greatest; for it is then that new

Christians have been forced to depend totally on their Lord to save and secure them, while refusing to acquiesce to the whims and desires of their own 'oikos'.

A Believer from a Muslim Background (BMB) here in London, when he read the above asked, *'What are [the insiders] saying to the hundreds of believers like me, who have obeyed Matthew 5:15, have refused to keep our faith in Christ hidden, or 'under a bowl', have been 'salt and light' to our families, have refused to compromise (i.e. claiming to be what we were not), and as a result have been persecuted for our obedience, tortured and some of us even killed; yet have a strengthened faith because of our extraction, which led to persecution, and now are blessed by the inclusion into a worldwide family?'*

We will deal with this later, but I do wonder how new believers who do not extract from their Muslim families will then be involved with the world-wide Christian community? Not only will we not be able to identify them, they will feel threatened and alienated by most everything we do. I travel all over the world as a public speaker, and in every country I go I am overwhelmed by the love and care I receive unconditionally from my Christian brothers and sisters, a love which just won't be there for these Insider believers, due to their self-imposed isolation.

Furthermore, it seems that the Insider's primary concern is that their 'new believers' be the agents to then bring others in the Oikos to Christ, thus the reason they ask them to stay in the family and retain many of the Islamic practices associated with Islam. Can this not be naive, by 'putting the horse before the cart'? New believers in Christ are the most vulnerable to the seductions of Islam, to the spiritual forces within Islam, and especially to the strong control Muslim families have over them, emotionally, socially, and physically. With little contact or discipling from more mature Christians (due to the constraints of an overwhelming Muslim family influence), the new believer can easily fall back into their old faith, and/or allegiances.

I have just returned from a Western country where a number of Western 'Christian' couples have chosen to voluntarily join their local Muslim community as hidden 'Christians' themselves. They have risen into positions of authority within this Muslim community, but, according to a Christian acquaintance, have now lost any view of Christ's divinity. If long standing Christians can so easily and quickly be seduced by the power of Islam, then why do we think the same will not happen to new believers?

(3) 7 Signs: It is one effective tool, of which there are others (i.e. shame/honor illustration is another). It has been field tested and is effective. It allows us to step into a Muslim's world dominated by the Qur'an. The 7 signs in skeletal form are found in the Qur'an. It is used primarily by the CG folks, but not necessarily by others.

Jay's Assessment: As is suggested here, it is really only one of many effective tools. It is similar to the 'Chronological Method', popularized by New Tribes Mission in the last century, another tool which we used in West Africa to good effect, as it begins with the stories of the prophets in the Old Testament, and points to the sacrifice which is yet to come, which then leads to the Messiah who is Jesus.

My only concern, however, is that, unlike the Chronological Method, which starts with the Bible, the 7 signs tool begins with the Qur'an, and may inadvertently give undue authority to the Qur'an, unless it is used only as a 'bridge' to then lead the Muslim to the Bible. I simply ask that in our zeal to bridge with the Qur'an we not give it undue authority, as it will make it more difficult later on to then be critical of it.

(4) Holy Books: We would say that the Tawrat, Zabuur, and Injil point to the Kingdom of God, while the Qur'an teaches a) Monotheism, b) against idolatry, c) Points to Jesus, d) Points to earlier books. Thus it can be used as a "stepping stone", a "candle" of light that shines toward Jesus and the Bible.

Jay's Assessment: Here is a case of moving the 'goalposts' from what was stated earlier. In the Atlanta conference they implied strongly that, due to the areas listed above, the Qur'an was one of four authoritative 'God breathed' books. In fact, there was an elderly female speaker whose adulation for the Qur'an bordered on incredulity. Having studied the Qur'an for 30 years she considered it almost divinely inspired, and so

naturally found hundreds of parallels with the Bible; such as, ‘The incarnate Christ’, whose Qur’anic equivalent, she believed was ‘al Baten’, or the ‘inner one’. Consequently, she accepted that Jesus spoke from the cradle, because the ‘al Baten’ certainly could, unknowingly crediting authority to the early apocryphal texts from which this story is sourced! (This anecdote is backed up by my notes as well as notes taken by two other missiologists at the conference, both with over 25 years experience in the Islamic world).

According to a study of C-5 believers carried out in 1998, 45 percent of the respondents said that they felt close to God when hearing the Qur’an read. Some 96 percent said that the Qur’an was a book revealed by God, along with the Torah, Zabur and Injil (three names of the earlier scriptures mentioned in the Qur’an), while 66 percent said that they considered the Qur’an to be the greatest of the four heavenly books³. Above, however, the leadership only say it can be used as a ‘stepping stone’ or ‘candle’, which no-one would dispute. Until they come out clearly with what they believe concerning the Qur’an I cannot give a fair assessment.

One might ask whether we should ever use the Qur’an with our Muslim friends? The answer is certainly, but only as a point of clarification, due to the fact that it is their authority (i.e. pointing out where the Qur’an gives authority to the previous scriptures [Suras 10:94; 21:7; 29:49; 4:136; 5:45-46,68, similar to point ‘d’ above], or to show them where even their revelation gives more authority to Jesus than to Muhammad [Suras 19:19-20; 3:46-49, etc..., similar to point ‘c’ above]). At no time, I believe, should we assume that the Qur’an is our authority, or that we can find the ‘gospel’ within its pages. Unfortunately, it seems that many Insiders, both at the conference, and in private discussions, do feel the Qur’an can be placed alongside the Bible as one of God’s ‘inspired revelations’.

As I said above, in an attempt to accommodate our Muslim friends, there is always the danger of giving authority where it doesn’t belong. In my doctoral studies, it has been made patently clear that the Qur’an is a fraud, written and compiled by men, with borrowed material from many apocryphal Jewish traditions and Christian Sectarian documents. Consider the below as simple examples:

(Note: The story of Cain and Abel (Sura 5:31-32), along with the story of the Raven (vs. 31) are taken from the ‘Targum of Jonathan-ben-Uzziah’, while the blood of vs. 32 is derived from the ‘Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5’. The story of Abraham and the smashed idols, along with the fiery pit found in Sura 21:51-71 is taken from the ‘Midrash Rabah’. The story of Solomon and Sheba found in Sura 27:17-44, which includes the delightful story of the missing and talking hoopoe bird, and the mirrored floor is borrowed from the ‘II Targum of Esther’. When we look at New Testament parallels, the story of Mary-Imran-Zachariah found in Sura 3:35-37 is borrowed from the ‘Proto-evangelion’s James the Lesser’, while Jesus and the Palm Tree in Sura 19:22-26 is taken from ‘The Lost Books of the Bible’. The account of Jesus talking as a baby, found in Sura 19:29-33 comes from ‘The first Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ’; while the reference to Jesus creating birds from clay, found in Sura 3:49 is borrowed from ‘Thomas’ Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ’).

It seems obvious to me that with so many borrowings from suspect sources, the Qur’an shares no place alongside our Bible as a holy book, and though certain ‘truths’ can be found in its pages, as one can say for almost any other religious or secular book, to accommodate it on this level will at the least lead to appeasement, and at the worst to syncretism.

(5) Muslim Compliant Arab Bible: Mazhar Malouhi’s user friendly ‘Muslim Compliant’ Arabic translation has attempted to translate the meaning in a way that the message will speak to Muslims. He replaces references to God as ‘Father’, changing them to: Allah, Rabb, Waliy, Al Aziz, Amri, Ruh Allah. We appreciate the difficulty in communicating the fatherhood of God in a Muslim context. The goal is to use meaningful terms for your audience, even if they are ‘Muslim compliant’.

Jay’s Assessment: Yes, I would agree, the intent is fine; trying to contextualize the Bible for the audience it is intended for is perfectly legitimate, or finding a ‘dynamic equivalent’ as an alternate is a practice which we do with all of our translations. The difficulty comes when you change the text itself, for the sake of a

³ Phil Parshall, “Danger!,” pg. 406

person's sensibilities, and in so doing give it a meaning the author never intended; that is not good exegesis, but 'eisegesis'. This is particularly problematic when in attempting to 'speak' to Muslims, Malouhi replaces references in the Gospels and the book of Acts to God as 'Son' ('Huios' in Greek, usually translated in Arabic as 'ibn'), and changed them to 'Habib' (beloved), or 'sayyid ul basheer' (master of men).

Does this do justice to the original text, and will this not have implications for how we now explain the relationship between the first two persons of the triune Godhead, to say nothing of how we then apply that to the numerous applications of fatherhood/sonship used by Jesus in the gospels (i.e. "whoever denies the Son, denies the Father" 1 John chapters 2 and 4, and 3 John)? What about those of us who use the relational aspect of the Godhead as a model for our relationships within the family, community, fellowship, and the church? How can we explain them, once we have excised the model for this relationship from the text?

Lastly, how are we going to answer the accusation by so many Muslims today that we 'change' the text of the Bible whenever we find a problem with it, and that is why it remains corrupted in their eyes? And just how far should we go in being compliant? In our haste to make the Bible relevant, should we then remove references condemning homosexuality in Romans 1:26-27 and create a "gay compliant translation", or remove all references to God for an "atheist compliant translation"?

As one long term missionary in a Muslim country recently stated, "[Muslim Compliant Translations - MCT] have caused a huge amount of headaches here...especially when displacing terms such as 'Son of God' with 'Representative of God'". Another missionary friend in a large Muslim country said that things seemed to have started off 'well', but now the advocates of MCT's (mostly Western Missionaries) are now actually 'fighting publicly' with those using traditional translations, and have decided to go ahead with their translation, despite the traditional churches objections, not realizing that the indigenous churches will have to bear the consequences of the missionaries actions!

(6) **Biblical Exegesis:**

a) Gen.16:12 = "Ishmael 'against' everyone", changed to "'with' everyone" to accept Ishmael's line.

Explanation: "Against" is one of 21 possible meanings of the preposition "b-". The most commonly understood translation of 'b-' would be "in".

b) Gen.17:18-21 = "Ishmael's blessing" proved his inclusion with Isaac as the chosen race.

Explanation:

-Isaac received the *blessing* of the covenant

-Ishmael received the *promise* of a blessing

-Isaac and his descendants are destined to be the *agents* of God's work

-Ishmael and his descendants are destined to be unique *recipients* of God's work

c) 1 Cor.7 = "Stay like" means Muslims stay in the condition that Christ met them; i.e. as Muslims.

Explanation: Culturally they remain, transformed by the Holy Spirit into their new nature, yet in their old Muslim culture.

d) 1 Cor.9 = Missionaries "Become like" means to be like Muslims.

Explanation: To 'become like' as culturally as possible, but we are not insiders. We do not teach that Christian background folks should become Muslims. We strongly discourage missionaries from becoming Muslims, or from pretending to be Muslims.

Jay's Assessment: A common criticism I and others have had with the Insider proponents concerns their usage and application of scripture, especially when they use Biblical text in an attempt to find scriptural authority for their paradigm, and inadvertently go beyond what the author of that text intended. This is not proper exegesis, and can lead to a breakdown of scriptural understanding. Here are some examples I have trouble with:

a) Gen. 16:12 = To say Ishmael will be 'with' instead of 'against' his brothers seems highly improbable. Now I am not a Hebrew scholar, but I wonder why no other popular translations agree with the IM's rendering? We probably need the Hebrew scholars to help us here. A good definition, however, of what the writer is referring to as one's 'brother' can possibly be found in Deuteronomy 17:15, where it is clear that a 'brother' must be a 'brother Israelite', which precludes Ishmael.

b) Gen. 17:18-21 = If the Insider proponents believe Ishmael is to be blessed equally with Isaac, and that there was no scripture which kept them out of the promises given to Isaac, then I would suggest they look just a few chapters later, at Genesis 22:2,12,16, where three times God refers to Abraham's "*one and only son Isaac*", knowing full well that Abraham had two sons at that time. This suggests that as far as God was concerned he considered Isaac uniquely to be the son of promise, and not Ishmael. They might also want to consider Galatians 4:23-25; 28-31 where Paul eloquently compares the two covenants, that of Sarai (the free woman) and Hagar (the slave woman from Arabia), stipulating that we are to be a part of the free woman's covenant, and that we are to have nothing to do with the slave woman's son (i.e. Ishmael). So, ironically, borrowing the Insider's paradigm, this would mean that we were to have nothing to do with the Muslims, who, they believe are of his line.

c) 1 Cor.7:17-24 = The problem with "*staying like*", or remaining in Islam is that Islam is both a religion and a culture, and to stay in it then takes on all the religious connotations, as well as its spiritual power (more about that later). Paul in these verses certainly would not suggest that Gentiles should '*stay*' as pagan worshippers in their local temples (or mosques), but speaks specifically of newlyweds staying in their station in which Christ found them, i.e. their job or position in society.

d) 1 Cor. 9:19-23 = I believe the Insiders have interpreted this above portion correctly, and thankfully state that they themselves should not become like or even pretend to be like Muslims. Later, in #9, however, they say some of their missionaries do become like Muslims (i.e. borrowing Muslim forms, which I will speak to later). I trust they don't publicly claim to be Muslims. Nonetheless, the problem may come when they are asked by Muslims, or even new believers who they then are? If they do not claim to be Muslims, yet they ask their 'Muslim believers' to remain and call themselves Muslims, will not someone see this as odd, or confusing, or even possibly disingenuous?

I found that at the conference in Atlanta, very few attendees questioned these interpretations of scripture, possibly because there was no platform for them to do so, or because they themselves did not know scripture that well. If the Insider proponents want to be held credible, they are going to have to take these interpretations and hold them up to public scrutiny, outside of the comfort of their conferences. I would suggest that they write up their interpretations of these verses in journals where bona fide Biblical scholars can assess whether they are indeed interpreting these scripture correctly. My impression is that they come to the scriptures with an agenda, and then look for those verses which they believe will back up or substantiate this agenda. This is unhelpful and perhaps even dishonest. Many cults have worked on that principle, to disastrous effect. I hope this is not the case here.

(7) **Muhammad: New believers, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, are given the freedom to come to their own conclusions concerning the role that Muhammad played in their lives.**

Jay's Assessment: By giving tacit approval in the above statement, they are saying that they do believe Muhammad is capable of prophet-hood. In the CG notebook they go even further, stating, "*My own judgement is that I see Muhammad as an authentic prophet of God, even though like other prophets after the time of our Lord, neither morally perfect nor doctrinally infallible.*"

Like #4 above, here is another case of saying one thing at the conference and in their hand-out, then pulling back to a more neutral stance once they are held accountable publicly. Once a person admits to Muhammad's prophethood publicly they are agreeing with the 'Shahada', which is often used as a 'litmus' test concerning a person's allegiance to Islam, and thus is a clear 'identity marker' for all Muslims. Many Christians can repeat the first part of the Shahada: "*la ilaha illallah*" ('*There is only one God but God [Allah]*'); it is the second part which becomes problematic, '*and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah*'. It is this statement which any convert to Islam must say, and all Muslims before entering Mecca during the Hajj must repeat.

I certainly would not say the Shahada in its entirety, not only because I don't believe it, but because of its significance to Muslims. One must not trifle with such identity markers, nor impose our interpretations on

them, as they are foundational for one's faith, and to do so will not only foster confusion, but be seen as disingenuous, and lead to anger.

To even suggest that Muhammad is a legitimate prophet opens the Insider movement up to a host of questions. To assert the shahada is to embrace Muhammad's life and example as 'of God'. Yet Muhammad opposed (even hated) the cross, denied the deity of Christ, and advocated many acts which Biblical morality would reject, as they were evil. To 'sign' one's assent to his prophethood is to submit spiritually to his example, and to endorse his rejection of Christ. It is not up to individuals from outside this tradition to redefine what this example and teaching mean.

What true prophet, following the time of Jesus would be permitted doctrinal fallibility concerning the nature of Jesus? Take for instance Muhammad's supposed revelation, the Qur'an, where in Sura 4:171 Jesus is considered only a messenger, not one of three, and not the son of God; or Sura 5:116 where one finds a confused notion that he and Mary should not be worshipped alongside God.

More worrisome, what true prophet would ever suggest that Jesus did not die on the cross, and state that another man was given his image, implying he took his place (Sura 4:157); denying in one sentence what is perhaps the greatest act in the history of mankind, to say nothing of the fact that if this were true, then we and all of humanity are still damned for eternity?! If Muhammad doubted Jesus' divinity (as every Muslim exegete for the last 1400 years has attested), and denied both the crucifixion, and the Atonement (likewise attested), then how can the Insider Movement proponents even suggest he is a prophet by simply stating he '*pointed to Jesus*', and then, as we'll see later, impose their own interpretation on Qur'anic text to support such dubious conclusions?

We also have to be honest about the negative aspects of Muhammad's life (i.e. his convenient revelations, aggressive wars, the treatment of the Jews in Medina, and the numerous caravan attacks in Surah 9:1-5; 9:29; 8:39, as well as the 'Maghazi' documents [battle campaigns] within the Sira tradition). What should we do with Muhammad's multiple wives (Sura 33:50) in contrast to the Qur'anic allowance of only four (Sura 4:3), or suggesting Zayd, his adopted son, divorce his beautiful wife Zainab so that he could then marry her himself (Surah 33:36-37)...and the list could go on.

What is more problematic, from a Biblical perspective Muhammad does not qualify in any of the four Biblical criteria required to attain the office of prophet; namely 1) he was not in the prophetic race (i.e. via Isaac's line); 2) he did nothing to prove he was a prophet (i.e. neither a miracle nor a prophecy); 3) his revelations contradicted previous and later Biblical revelations (especially concerning Jesus Christ); and 4) he never knew the personal name of the God he was supposedly representing (Yahweh), though this is clearly shown in scripture as God's personal and eternal name (Exodus 3:14-15), a name every true prophet knew, and the name even Jesus appropriated for himself in John 8:58. As far as I'm concerned, we must not acquiesce on this point, but follow the dictum clearly stated by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:20 "*...a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death*".

(8) Christian Forms: Christian traditions and creeds ARE later accretions by definition. Yet, the Western expression of the Church with, "creeds & structures, baptism and the word trinity" is just as valid as any other form that God is using to reconcile people to Himself through Christ. However, where extra-biblical forms create a barrier which is keeping people away from reconciliation with God, they should be considered optional. The point is not that X-tian traditions/creeds can or should be simply replaced with Muslim ones. The point is that the Bible is our standard and not the traditions. Let the Bible be the creed and source of theology, rather than extra-Biblical terms like 'trinity', which are part of Christian denominations. Muslims don't have to go thru Christianity, but Christ alone.

Jay's Assessment: There is a growing desire in Western Christianity to move away from the traditions of the church, and return to a purer Biblical paradigm. The Emergent church is reflective of this move, and I recognize the attraction. The Insider paradigm seems to borrow from this new tradition, and certainly owes much to it.

I wonder, however, if in our desire to get back to the fundamentals we too easily jettison 2,000 years of practice and tradition, most, I firmly believe, founded in scripture, modelled on Christ's example, and motivated by the Holy Spirit. To then, in one generation, move away from the creeds of the church, belittle the need for baptism, or suggest the word 'trinity' is unhelpful, and then be replaced by seeming 'dynamic equivalents' from a faith which from its very inception has been in competition with, and I believe a rejection of Christianity, is not only naive, but sparks of arrogance, and Western intellectual imperialism.

(9) **Muslim Forms:** (mosque, the Salat prayers, the Rammadan fast, the Qur'an) Muslim forms with transformed meaning can become ways of practically living out Jesus' commands to wholeheartedly love God and selflessly love one another. As the "perfect insider" Jesus used some of his culture and religion, he transformed the meaning of aspects of his culture and religion, and he threw some out. We should not quickly condemn nor absolve a particular form but we need to test it in its context to see its true nature. The CG team has always been very involved in spiritual warfare, deliverance, and freedom in Christ issues. When the meaning of forms are transformed by the Spirit of God they can become helpful and empowering. Some Insider Missionaries have become like Muslims (i.e. dress, vocabulary, lifestyle, even going to the mosque). They can continue using forms meaningful to them.

Jay's Assessment: Following on from the discussion above, in an attempt to divorce themselves from an accretion of 2,000 years of 'Christian' forms, the CG and IM (Insider Movement) people have decided it perfectly acceptable to adopt and adapt an accretion of 1400 years of 'Muslim' forms, which even they accept are neither Qur'anic, nor reflective of the prophet Muhammad's example. Why reject one set of forms, which I would suggest are modelled on a Biblical understanding of Christ's example, yet, deemed insufficient by CG proponents, and then turn around and adopt another set of even more inadequate forms? At least the Christian forms are an attempt at being Biblical. The Islamic ones from the outset have intended to be anti-biblical, anti-Jewish, and anti-Christian. Jesus, the 'perfect Insider' could be so because the culture and religion from which he borrowed was deeply ingrained in Biblical forms, over which he applied Biblical meanings. The same cannot be said of Islamic forms.

What's more, many of these Islamic forms the Insiders are borrowing cannot so easily be publicly imbued with Christian meaning, at least not by Muslims who are knowledgeable and aware. One simply cannot call oneself a 'Muslim', and then go to the mosque as one, hoping that the true Muslim will accept their (the Insider's) imposed meaning on them, anymore than if a Muslim did the same in reverse, forcing his view of Christianity on us. Not only would the true Muslim have something to say about it, but once they understood what was intended, will see this as nothing more than deceit, and what's more a threat to their whole identity. We cannot ourselves, as outsiders, create the meaning for the term 'Muslim', anymore than we would let them delineate who is a 'Christian'. To do so, once again, suggests arrogance, coupled with Western intellectual imperialism.

Finally, the Insider proponents make the point that "*some Insider Missionaries have become like Muslims*". Are they then endorsing this practice; because earlier in section #6 they seemed to repudiate such a notion. They need to be clearer on this point. Nonetheless, if "extraction" is not biblical and therefore wrong as they argue, how then can it be right for the missionaries to be "extracted" from their own "oikos" and become like Muslims? In practice, if everyone were to remain an "insider" there would be no mission. In fact, if the early Church had remained an insider movement, a Jewish Sect, there would have been no World Christianity today for there would have been no way to fulfil the Great Commission.

(10) **Spiritual Power:** There is no intrinsic spiritual power imbued in Islamic Forms (the Mosque, ritual prayers, fast, etc...). We would underline intrinsic. Similar to meat sacrificed to idols, the spiritual power which is present in Islamic Forms is dependent upon the faith / belief / conscience of the practitioner. This can be glorifying to God or maintain a bondage to demons. As in any forms in any religion (including Christianity), there can be demonic bondage.

Jay's Assessment: After more than a quarter century working with Muslims, I am convinced that there is a spiritual control which pervades this religion, imbuing its forms with a spiritual power, manifested routinely by their absolute conviction to its seeming truths. What other religion creates such utter fanaticism to its causes, and can send so many to their deaths. At the centre of this growing religion sits the mosque, the ritualistic prayers, the fast, even the public reading of Qur'anic verses, all of which have never changed in 1400 years, and which, I believe, must not be adopted but resisted, and yes even abolished, because of the spiritual control they have over those from 'inside'.

When I talk to believers from a Muslim background (BMBs) here in London, and ask whether they can or should adopt or retain their former Muslim forms in their religious practices, they cringe in response. They understand something I believe many of us in the West are simply incapable of understanding, that many of these forms are imbued with spiritual power and have an evil and controlling influence which stretches back for generations, and often take much prayer to be released from.

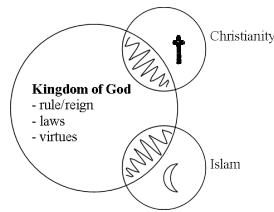
As I travel and talk to missionaries in the Muslim world this area of concern, the immense spiritual control Islam has over its practices and its adherents is being voiced with increasing frequency, with growing numbers now spending the majority of their ministry in praying for release from the demonic and spiritual domination of Islam. We should therefore be careful before pronouncing judgement, suggesting they are simply benign, unwittingly trivializing something few of us outside of Islam have ever experienced, and even more cautious in naively adopting them either for ourselves or for the new believers.

(11) **Contextualization: (1 Cor 15:3,4) This is the way in which the Gospel is presented. We allow meaning of forms to be transformed to bring them into accord with the rule and reign of Christ (under the law of Christ - 1 Cor. 9:21). We are not afraid of participation in some Muslim religious forms. Our principle is to follow Christ's example (1 Thess. 2:3). In practice, some Insider missionaries do this...some do not.**

Jay's Assessment: I commend the CG people for contextualizing the gospel within every culture, including that of South East Asia, and now the Middle East. Most missionaries from a C-3 and C-4 paradigm do the same all over the world. What I caution is the prevailing CG view that all South Eastern and Middle Eastern cultures are necessarily and uniquely Islamic, assuming that the culture cannot be separated from the religion (i.e. to be an Arab or a South East Asian is to be a Muslim). While Islam has dominated these cultures for, in some cases, up to 1400 years, there was and still is a secular, or previous religious (even in some cases Christian) culture which existed long before Islam arrived, and which still exists today. In our haste to contextualize we may be jumping too quickly into adopting Muslim forms, without first asking whether there are existing secular or even Christian cultural equivalents which can be used, or are already being used by the existing indigenous secular, and/or Christian minorities in those cultures. Have not indigenous Christians also been adapting what they believe is Christ's example within their own culture, for over 2,000 years, and should they not be first consulted before adopting forms deemed by them synonymous with a faith which has persecuted them for 1400 of those years?

Furthermore, the CG proponents claim they are following Christ's example. But they themselves argue that Jesus was an Insider and that he stayed within Judaism and Jewish culture. If they were true in following His example, then there should be no contextualization. If it is unbiblical for non-Western believers to take on Western traditions, how can it be right for Westerners like the Insider Movement leaders to then take on Islamic traditions? You can't have it both ways and be intellectually honest.

(12) **Kingdom of God: This is the central theme and message of Jesus Christ in the New Testament; the good news of the kingdom of God. Our commitment is to bring an unencumbered, pure gospel to Muslims. All men seek it first and enter it without any reference to a religious form or denominational creed. The rule and reign of God is broader than religious labels. Salvation is through Christ and entering his kingdom, and not through the joining of a particular "religion."**



Jay's Assessment: I like the idea of coming directly to the Kingdom, unfettered with any cultural or religious overlay. I have difficulty, however, believing that Christianity and Islam (as symbolized by the two small circles above) are equally inadequate interpretations of that Kingdom. How can anyone take Islam's track record (i.e. the violence towards other faiths, towards women, and towards minorities), all of which can be sourced in their primary revelations (the Qur'an and the traditions), and best modelled by the prophet Muhammad; and compare it with the track record of Christianity (i.e. our paradigm of peace towards our enemies, the care we show for the widows and the orphans, and our charity to the poor, the oppressed, and the strangers in our midst), all of which likewise can be sourced in our primary revelation, the Gospel, found in the New Testament, and modelled by Jesus Christ himself? Have we become so cynical and so apologetic that we believe the witness and testimony of the Christian Church around the world is no better than that of Islam?

While recognizing that there may be unbelievers within the visible Church who do not witness the gospel correctly, what ground is there for condemning the entire visible church as being as ungodly, as unbiblical, and equally distant from the Kingdom of God as Islam is, or the followers of any other major religion, which seems to be implicit in this diagram.

Furthermore, what then would the CG and IM proponents suggest makes up this 'kingdom of God', which is so much greater than that which we already have within the church body worldwide? Is it not rather audacious that they somehow know better what that kingdom is, than the more than 2 billion body of believers worldwide, or that they in the last 15-20 years have found what 2,000 years of Church theologians, pastors, priests and practitioners have not? Too often I find this 'knee-jerk' cynical attitude towards the 21st century church disturbing, as it suggests gross political correctness, based on a strong post-modern critique which is increasingly infecting the American church.

It is not difficult to see that once this cynicism invites mistrust to the very foundations of our faith and practice, it's a simple step to then stride willingly into adopting the 'romanticized' structures of Islam, not realizing that the very cynicism which brought about this mistrust is hopelessly incapable of guarding us from its dangers. The result; soon Islam, and not Christianity becomes the 'new' Kingdom of God; and those who are its purveyors become almost evangelistically nativistic in their fervour, so that traditional Christians and Muslims alike are confused as to who they are talking to; resulting in the creation of a new 'sect', what one might call 'Chrislam'. Is this then what the IM proponents hope is their new 'Kingdom of God'?

Finally, what about intergenerational transmission, that which will be passed on to the next generation? It has been documented that after the Islamic conquests in the 7th-8th centuries, some Christian communities gained permission to convert to Islam as 'insiders' - i.e. Christian followers, by simply repeating the 'shahada'. This was to avoid paying the jizya tax, and all that this represented. In time these communities all disappeared, as their children were trained by the Imams, and inevitably lost contact with their former communities and co-religionists. What have the IM proponents put in place as their intergenerational strategy to keep this from happening with their new believers?

(13) **Water Baptism: Confession of our relationship to Christ is central to the faith of the new believer. Water baptism and circumcision were both rituals in the Jewish community. Circumcision proved to be a tremendous barrier to the natural expansion of the gospel, and was internalized to be "circumcision of the heart". "What decision would the early church have reached had the Gentile revulsion been against water immersion instead of circumcision?"**

Jay's Assessment: The analogy with Circumcision in this instance is incorrect. Circumcision was a public Jewish 'identity marker' which no longer was needed in the first century Church, due to a fulfilment of all it signified in Christ Jesus, whereas water Baptism was introduced by Christ (Matthew 28:19) specifically as the new public identity marker. Baptism is a clear public statement that the believer is now dying to their old life and arising with Christ. There are some missionaries who are toying with 'dynamic equivalents' which would be more adaptable for their environments, and I support their efforts.

What disturbs me here, however, is that the CG and IM people imply a complete renunciation of a primary Christian institution, and for many a sacrament of the church, jettisoning it out of a revulsion for, and a natural barrier to, the gospel. If public baptism brings about persecution; and it will (since for most Muslims it is the act of baptism which publicly acknowledges that one is leaving Islam), then, I can only assume that for the insiders, the solution is to discard it along with the other Christian forms, to accommodate the sensibilities of our Muslim friends. Should that ever be the motivation for renouncing a Biblically mandated sacrament? What, then, are they suggesting as a replacement?

How far will this accommodation go, and what will be retained (in this new Kingdom of theirs) which will be recognizable as a Biblically inspired 'kingdom of God'?

(14) **Christ's Divinity: The focus of the new *ecclesia*'s is to 'congregate' together for fellowship, and obey Jesus Christ, trusting Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Jamaats may simply be the people of God living and interacting together in community for prayer and reading the word, and not just once a week meetings.**

Jay's Assessment: While I have little difficulty with dropping the name 'church' and replacing it with 'Jamaat', or any other name deemed appropriate (providing Muslims understand who we are and what we mean by this name), I do question the criteria needed to qualify as a new believer in the Jamaat. What do the Insiders mean by 'Lord and Saviour'? Most Muslims I know consider a Lord as anyone in authority, and a Saviour the function of all prophets, though they would not include salvation from sin (a criteria hardly mentioned in any of the writings or speeches by the CG group). I would prefer a clear pronouncement that Jesus is indeed God incarnate, co-existent with God the Father, and God the Spirit. The Romans 10:9-10 passage demands that we must recognize Jesus as Lord; yet in the context that lordship definitely includes divinity. Somewhere there has to be a clear public recognition that Jesus is God, pure and simple. For me, that is the 'Shibboleth' which proves the believer indeed knows the true Jesus of the Bible, and not simply the 'Isa' of the Qur'an.

(15) **Conversion: "proselytos" only refers to Gentiles becoming Jews. "epistrophe" (Acts 15:3) literally means to turn towards and "aparche" literally means first fruit. Neither necessarily implies changing one's religion. Our point is that the English translation falsely gives the impression that faith in Christ is connected with conversion (changing religion or denomination) and has an inflammatory implication for those of a Muslim background who are considering becoming followers of Christ.**

Jay's Assessment: Whether you are changing from a gentile to a Jew, or from Islam to Christianity, or from Christianity to the 'Kingdom of God', or even from traditional missionary methodologies to the Insider model, you are nonetheless changing one's allegiance from one set of beliefs/practices to another. Call it conversion, reversion, or whatever you like; it still requires a mind and heart change. To deny it because it is inflammatory to Muslims misses the point. Conversion to any belief or faith always has inflammatory implications, especially when the act implies that the faith one is leaving has proven inadequate, and inferior to that which they are accepting. To separate Christian conversion from visible Christian community is to separate two things which "God has joined together".

Furthermore, if conversion does not mean changing one's religion, then why bother with missions? Why not simply leave everyone in their respective religious traditions? Witness is about calling people (Romans 10:14-15). When you call someone the response includes going to answer the call, and the going means leaving one spot for another. To become a Christian does not necessarily mean being extracted from one's

family, but it is a call to become part of a bigger, extended spiritual family. Paul ends vs 15 by saying, “*how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news*”. May we all walk proudly with ‘beautiful feet’.

(16) **Quarantine:** New Muslim believers are ‘guarded’ from those western traditions that have nothing to do with the message of Jesus. We guard the new Muslim believer from those who “trouble those turning to God” and who “make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the new disciples” (Acts 15). If the new believer is “branded” Christian by the unbelieving community, the label, not the message becomes the primary obstacle for spreading of the gospel. It is therefore important to keep people separated for a period of time.

Jay’s Assessment: There is wisdom in initially keeping the new convert or believer hidden, as a secret believer, a practice common to many missionaries in Muslim lands, due to the persecution which will befall them if they announce their belief in Christ too publicly or too quickly.

This idea of ‘guarding’ them from any unhealthy Western traditions, however, sparks of political correctness, and drives a wedge between the western churches and believers (which I’m sure also includes all non-Muslim background churches). It will lead to isolation, and eventually, if not controlled adequately, to syncretism, and possible heresy. Will those of us in the worldwide church, due to such ‘guarding’ and resultant isolation, even recognize them as fellow believers, or enjoy fellowship with them? If this quarantine continues, will the Insiders have not merely created a sect within Islam of those who love Christ, yet remain within and under the authority of established Islam, as I mentioned before, a sort of “Chrislam”?

Furthermore, I wonder what they mean when they say they are “guarding” new believers from western traditions that have nothing to do with the message of Jesus? Do they mean that these traditions have nothing to do with the message of Jesus, or that they are merely Western? If it is that they have nothing to do with the message of Jesus, then what do Islamic traditions (in which they are seeking shelter for the new believer) have to do with the message of Jesus? Islam is not a context that promotes long-term spiritual health and growth⁴. Once again the Insider proponents on the one hand pretend to be champions of local culture and therefore champions of contextualization, while simultaneously demonizing their own local culture.

(17) **Persecution:** We believe persecution is Biblical, necessary and helpful. One’s commitment to Christ and the cross should be the source of persecution. Jesus said we must love him more than any family member (Lk. 14:26). This applies in all cultures, including America. But loving Christ more does not always imply becoming a traitor to them or offending them. On the contrary, we are taught to honor all men 1 Pet 2:17, including our parents. If persecution is because we desire to live a godly life in Christ (2 Tim. 3:12) then so be it. If persecution is because of our rudeness, dishonoring of parents, etc., then it is not persecution for Christ.

Jay’s Assessment: This is a hard one to tackle, for two reasons. To begin with, every Insider proponent I meet bristles at the suggestion that this movement is designed to stave off persecution, and so they emphasize emphatically that their entire paradigm is based not on preventing persecution, but on preventing extraction from the Oikos, or Muslim family structure. I’ve already dealt with the problems of defining a true family earlier, and the biblical injunction that we should expect, and even welcome extraction. What I ask here is whether deep down there is not really a fear of persecution, which is a common fear, evidenced by the entire church worldwide when dealing with Islam. Let’s admit it and move on, since I believe this might just possibly be a subtle motivating factor for the whole Insider paradigm, though I’m sure I will be publicly castigated for even suggesting such a motivation.

Secondly, and more problematic...what will the reaction be of true Orthodox Muslims worldwide to the Insider movement, once they find out what they are doing to their religion, to their scriptures, to their God, and to their prophet (i.e. taking these sacrosanct religious identity codes and imposing their own meanings on to them, without their permission)? I don’t mean the kind of ‘benign’ Muslims the Insiders have met thus far; but the kind of Muslims I work with here in the UK, those who passionately and publicly define

⁴ Adeney, Miriam, “Rajah Sulayman,” 76-82

themselves by the very ‘identity codes’ now being adopted by the Insiders (i.e. calling themselves Muslims, though they impose their own meaning to it; attending the mosque without applying the category of worship to Allah assumed by most Muslims; practicing the ritualistic 5 daily prayers, yet not praying to the Qur’anic Allah, but to Isa, which is an aberration to true Muslims)? Will the traditional Muslims not feel deceived, possibly threatened, and certainly angered?

And should we blame them; for would we not feel likewise if the same were done to us, in our churches, by Muslims posing as Christians, reading from our Bible, yet imposing their own interpretations on it; suggesting that Jesus never claimed to be God, or that he really didn’t die on the cross, and that certain Biblical verses pointed to a final prophet yet to come, the ‘paracletos’, better translated as ‘Ahmad’, or Muhammad?

The traditional Muslim, once they understood our agenda, wouldn’t be as benevolent as those of us who are proud to be called a ‘Christian’ in public yet find fault with this movement on so many levels. They wouldn’t simply write an assessment of it, as I have done here; no, their response would indeed be much stronger, more physical, and include public persecution, possibly greater than that reserved for apostates.

I posed this question to a missionary going to the Middle East as an Insider, and his response was to point his finger at me and say ‘I rebuke that thought’...not much of a defence, nor much of a consideration of where this Insider game could possibly lead; all of which is rather worrying indeed.

In conclusion, let me say two things. First, may I remind the proponents of the Insider paradigm of an oft repeated accusation we level at many Muslim apologists today, the practice of dissimulation, or ‘Taqiya’, defined as “*Concealing or disguising one’s beliefs*”. Is this not what IMers are practicing, or asking new believers in Christ to practice? Is this really how we want the world to know us as, and does it fit the example and practice of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Secondly, and finally, there is a deep ethical issue for Insider proponents concerning accountability and reporting back to the Christian churches which fund their ministries. These movements, and their proponents, under the guise of security are often NOT forthcoming and accurate in reporting what they do to their financial supporters back in their home countries. I am surprised just how little churches and even families in the West know about this movement, and yet, despite this ignorance continue to fund it.

Conclusions:

In summary, I leave below a set of concluding queries which I would like the Insider proponents to answer:

- Let’s be clear, should not the true family of Christ take precedence over our biological family?
- Are we not challenged by Matt.5:15 to confront the darkness within our biological Muslim family, rather than to acquiesce to its model?
- If, when we do challenge, should we not expect and even welcome the resulting persecution, which has emboldened the church for the last 2000 years?
- Should we expect new believers to be the best agents for reaching out to their families, especially while they are such ‘babes in Christ’, and therefore the most vulnerable to Islam’s pernicious spiritual power and control?
- In giving undue credit to the Qur’an, will we not then find it difficult to move away from that which we have inadvertently given authority to?
- When faced with the fraudulent borrowings within the Qur’an, should we then put it alongside our own scriptures as a possible ‘holy book’?
- Can CG and IM proponents not see that Muslim Compliant translations of the Bible not only do an injustice to that which the author originally intended, but justify the accusation by Muslims that we change our Bible whenever we find it advantageous to do so?
- If we extricate the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of Jesus Christ from the Bible, how then will we explain the unique modelling of fatherhood and sonship which we now enjoy within the Christian family?

- In their attempt to include the ‘sons of Ishmael’ within the covenant, uniquely reserved for the ‘sons of Isaac’, do not Insiders ‘eisegete’ certain scriptures, which tortures the text, and can lead to greater problems later on?
- Won’t imposing our own agenda on scripture (i.e. ‘staying like’, or ‘remaining in’ Islam, taken from 1 Cor. 7:17-24) not only do injustice to that scripture, but stand it against so many other verses which refute it?
- What’s more, if we ask the believers to remain in Islam, but then chose not to do so ourselves, will that not create confusion to not only the new believers, but the larger Muslim community?
- How can we suggest that Muhammad is a legitimate prophet, when so much of what he did and said goes diametrically against the example of earlier prophets, or the example of Jesus himself?
- Since Muhammad does not fulfil the four criteria of prophet-hood stipulated in the Old Testament, how then can we accept his him as one?
- How, for the sake of our Muslim brother’s sensibilities, can we so easily jettison 2,000 years of questioning, debating, and coming to conclusions on how best to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then quickly and simplistically replace them with Muslim forms which not only contradict these traditions, but in some cases stand in direct opposition to the gospel message?
- If we believe that Christian forms are examples of later Western cultural accretions, then is it wise to simply adopt equally later cultural Muslim accretions as adequate substitutes?
- Is it right for those of us in the West to so easily dismiss the intrinsic spiritual power of Muslim forms, when in doing so we dismiss the very real fear our BMB brothers have for them?
- In our haste to adapt and adopt Muslim forms, may we not be neglecting other better and more dynamically acceptable secular or Christian cultural forms which exist in those cultures?
- Should we be so cynical to suggest that traditional Islam and traditional Christianity are equally inadequate representations of the ‘kingdom of God’? Certainly after 2000 years of trying to ‘get it right’ we should have something viable to show for all our efforts? I certainly am proud of where we are, and how far we have come, and say so regularly and publicly.
- Where then are the models of this ‘kingdom of God’ the CG and IM proponents speak so highly of; in Minneapolis, or Atlanta; or are their South East Asian jamaats the best examples?
- When jettisoning Water Baptism and other ‘Christian institutions’, for the sake of stymieing a possible hostile Muslim response, do the CG and IM proponents have any Biblically acceptable alternatives to replace them with?
- How is the reference to Jesus as simply Lord and Saviour sufficient, since both are easily applied to many Muslim prophets? Should we not clearly state that Jesus is uniquely God incarnate, a member of the triune Godhead? If that is too difficult to say, then where is there a clear Insider equivalent?
- Why should we fear the public rejection of one set of beliefs for that of another (i.e. conversion), if, indeed the other belief turns out to be the better, and more Biblically truthful?
- Should we be spending so much of our energies and ‘Christian’ finances in simply creating yet another sect within Islam, which remains under its auspices and control (i.e. a possible ‘Chrislam’), or should we be bringing home our Muslim friends to the worldwide family of Christian believers?
- Since fear of Islam is so widespread within the church today, could this not also be a contributing motivating factor for the IM proponents keeping the new believer within their Muslim environment?
- If we fear persecution now, how much more should we fear the future persecution by Muslim leaders, once they find out how we have adapted and even adopted what they consider to be sacrosanct Muslim identity codes (i.e. Muslim forms) for our own purposes?
- Is not this whole Insider paradigm nothing more than an act of ‘Taqiyya’, or dissimulation, a deceit which we will all be held publicly accountable for, both traditional missionary and IM proponents alike, once the Muslim world finds out?

As you can see from what I have stated above, I am deeply troubled by the beliefs and practices of many of the Insider proponents, due to their desire to incarnate themselves and their message too deeply within an Islamic context, which then unwittingly and unnecessarily elevates Islam’s foundational identity markers (i.e. the Qur’an, the mosque, the ritual prayers, and the prophet Muhammad) way beyond what I would deem safe or prudent. It seems to me that they fail to understand the dangers of such elevation, not only due to the spiritual powers these identity markers hold over Muslims, but the resultant reaction of more orthodox Muslims once they find out what they have done to such cherished Muslim forms. I feel somewhat relieved,

however, that there are a few who know of the danger of such a practice, and have forwarded, I feel, a more healthy model in quickly bringing the searcher home to the safety and sanctity of Jesus and His gospel. Can we count our fellow missionaries within their number? Let's hope so.

In closing, let me end with an anecdote to what I believe was possibly happening at the Atlanta CG conference in January 2009, and could be a reason the Insider Paradigm is catching on so fast, primarily in the US. As I listened to the well developed and eloquent speeches of the leaders at the conference, I looked around at the hundreds of young faces, many of whom were students in Bible Schools and seminaries, and most of whom I was told were heading to the Muslim world. I saw them begin to revel in the possibilities of this new Insider paradigm, a model which allowed the new Muslim believer to remain where he or she felt comfortable, at home, with their Muslim family, and their Muslim traditions, and in peace. I began to want the same as they, and when the IM proponents began to name the large increase of new Insider believers around the world, and the large number of Jamaats being created, I, like those around me began to get caught up in the euphoria of the possibilities of such a movement. I wanted to belong to such a success story...who wouldn't?

Eventually, I started doubting what I had been taught all my life concerning what the gospel was, or what the church represented, and even the call to missions. I began to believe that maybe my parents, and my grandparents before them, all who were missionaries, maybe they were all wrong; maybe conversion to Christ within the Church was not the answer, and possibly, just possibly these bright and eloquent men and women knew something that no-one up to this time had known; that Islam really wasn't so bad, that Muhammad possibly was used by God, and that his revelation could be adopted and yes even adapted in bringing people to know not the 'Western Jesus', but the 'Muslim Isa', in a new and invigorating way. I remember leaving the sanctuary one evening towards the end of the conference wondering how I was going to break the news to my wife and to my colleagues back in England, to say nothing of my mission board.

It wasn't until I got back to the hotel room that I realized what had just happened. I had been seduced by the 'numbers game', and seeming success of this movement, much like George Bailey in that most delightful movie, 'It's a Wonderful Life' was so easily seduced by the banker, Henry F. Potter. George, down on his luck is offered a new job in Potter's bank, with a wonderful salary, and a wonderful life to look forward to; truly seductive. All he had to do was stop offering the poor people in the town affordable housing, housing which was in competition to Potter's dilapidated and expensive alternative. And just as the penny dropped with George when he realized how he was being seduced, so it dropped with me. Of course I would love to tell Muslims that they didn't have to extract from their family in order to follow Christ, that they could go on doing as they had always done, remain in their religion, follow their creeds, observe the Rammadan fast, and fulfil the five daily prayers. What's more, it seemed so successful. For someone who has seen only a handful of people coming to Christ, I could now point to over 100,000 who now believed. No-one quotes numbers like that, and at first, just as it was for George Bailey, I began to see the possibilities, the acclaim, and with it the downfall of Islam in my lifetime. It all seemed too good.

Which, in fact, it was.

Jay Smith
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