ISFM 2012: Still an Exotic?

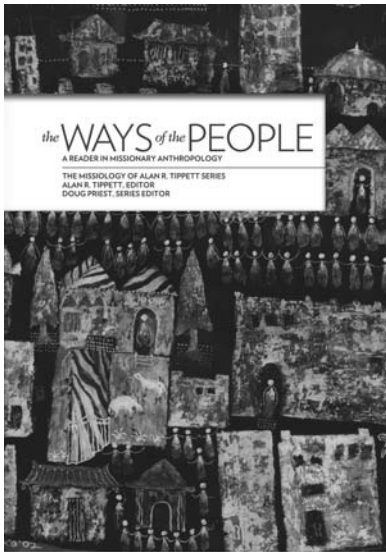October–December 2012

29:4

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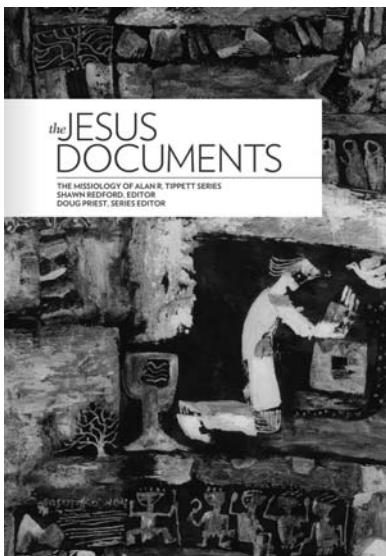
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From the Editor's Desk

The Exotic at Our Doorstep

Few books on mission strategy have carried as much influence over the last 100 years as Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* His argument for Paul's indigenous principles has become almost standard fare in missiology today, but a century ago it was radical, disturbing and anything but celebrated. This past September, the International Society for Frontier Missiology (ISFM) 2012—in addition to its own regular gathering—joined with the Evangelical Missiological Society at the annual Missio Nexus meetings to recognize the centenary of this historic publication. Allen's prescient missiology framed those ISFM sessions, and addresses from both events are published herein.

Buried in his book on missionary method was Allen's assessment of mission efforts to date, an assessment that carries relevance even after a century.[1] After examining the principles of Paul, Allen takes a chapter to survey the churches emerging across the pre-World War I mission fields. He found "three disquieting symptoms."

 "Everywhere Christianity was still an exotic." The churches across those frontier settings seemed foreign in their context. Allen was sensitive to what we now call contextualization, and he considered these alien forms of church a distinct impediment to effective church movements. The ISFM embraced this specific concern of Allen's in its theme for 2012, *"Still an Exotic?: Reassessing Contextualization after a Century."*

Two of the ISFM papers presented at Missio Nexus explore contextualization in the Hindu world. Darren Duerksen's study of nascent Jesus Movements among Hindu and Sikh communities describes how "church" identity is being formed through negotiating another socio-religious context (pp. 161-67). H. L. Richard carefully probes the matter of syncretism in his historical study of the movement that surrounded K. Subba Rao, piercing through the odd deviations from orthodox Christianity (pp. 177-82). Given the polarity of opinion among those present regarding "insider movements," the phenomenological/descriptive approach taken in both papers proved beneficial in encouraging productive interaction.

 "Everywhere our missions are dependent." Allen is known particularly for his stance on the deficits of dependency in these earlier frontier mission situations. He beheld it everywhere, and saw little promise of changing the foreign source of men and money. Paul De Neui, whose SEANET association published on this very issue in 2011 (see ad on p. 188), reexamines Allen's principles in Buddhist South East Asia after a century (pp. 183-88).

The views expressed in **IJFM** are those of the various authors and not necessarily those of the journal's editors, the International Society for Frontier Missiology or the society's executive committee.

"Everywhere we see the same types." The uniformity of a common church template across such diverse cultural and religious fields was disconcerting to Allen. There didn't seem to be any "discovery of new aspects of the gospel" nor any "unfolding of new forms of Christian life." Doesn't the diversity of contexts warrant variety? Richard Jameson offers a comparative study from his three decades of ministry among Muslims in the Middle East and Southeast Asia (pp. 169-76), and he makes a convincing case that many assumptions of "sameness" in Muslim contexts are totally inappropriate.

The missiological maturation from Allen's "indigenous" perceptions to our present grasp of "contextualization" has included a fresh reassessment of the role of the missionary. At ISFM 2012, Scott Moreau summarized the findings in his new book on the different models of contextualization deployed across evangelical missions today (reviewed on pp. 196-98). Participants also heard of the developing role of the "alongsider," a term for those ministering strategically alongside a Jesus movement in another socio-religious world.[2] This prompted us to supplement these ISFM articles with Richard Hibbert's historical piece on the role of missionaries in three movements in China just before Roland Allen's own involvement in that region (pp. 189-95).

But 100 years has changed the global equation and the exotic is closer to home. The crisis of new nation states, religious enmity, economic globalization and war has spawned a global diaspora of peoples transplanted into new settings of kingdom opportunity. Domestic households, university campuses, urban neighborhoods and corporate office parks present new multicultural and interreligious arrangements. The single factor of distance has changed everything, and it affects how the global church sends, goes and receives. The new tag "diaspora missiology" is simply short hand for our attempts to understand this global disruption and to find new ways to reach peoples stretched across the globe.

Do Roland Allen's "disquieting symptoms" still apply given this diaspora at our doorstep? Do we still expect sameness when those in this diaspora turn to Christ? Should they simply assimilate to our alien style of church? Are we free of the old dependencies as new mission emerges from younger churches among the diaspora? These are some of the strategic questions behind the ISFM 2013 theme, "Global Peoples: Gates, Bridges and Connections Across the Frontiers." (Dallas/Plano, TX, September 18-19, www.ijfm.org/isfm/annual.htm or see ad p. 204). We'll take another look at the apostolic challenge, at the new perspectives offered in mission anthropology, and at the emerging approaches to training across this diaspora. We'll also consider how disciple-making movements might skip across a people group that encircles the globe.[3]

I look forward to seeing you in Dallas,

Brad Gill
Editor, *IJFM*

Endnotes

[1] In Chapter 12 of Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* 1962. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. First published 1912, London: R. Scott.

[2] John Jay Travis presented *"Nine 'Alongsider' Roles in Jesus Movements,"* forthcoming.

[3] Len Bartlotti's article in *IJFM* 27:3, Fall 2010 (pp. 135-137) lays out the engagement points across a global ethnoscape.

Must Insiders Be Churchless?
Exploring Insiders' Models of "Church"

by Darren Duerksen

Editor's note: This article is the revised version of a case study presented at a special ISFM-sponsored track held during the 2012 North American Mission Leaders Conference (Missio Nexus) in Chicago, Illinois.

Introduction

Discussions regarding "insider movements" have raised important issues regarding the nature of the Christian faith and its relationship to religious identity. One issue that has hovered in the background involves the question of "church." Is church an optional or secondary concern for those who follow Jesus inside their Muslim, Hindu, or other socio-religious community? What would a biblical theology of church suggest in this regard? In this paper, I explore some of the underlying issues raised by such questions through the lived experience of several groups in North India that are seeking to worship and follow Jesus within their Hindu and Sikh communities. These groups, as I will show, believe that it is possible for them to be a church, in a biblical sense, *and* stay within (or closely related to) their Hindu and Sikh communities. They do this, I argue, by defining the church as a social community and by highlighting people's ability to negotiate multiple identities.

Theological Principles

I begin by considering a fundamental question: What exactly do we mean by "church" in a Hindu (or Sikh) context? Herbert Hoefer has discussed various theological principles—many of which reflect a Reformed or Lutheran perspective—that can guide an understanding of church in a Hindu context (Hoefer 2001, 2007). For example, Hoefer draws on Luther's distinction between the *universal, invisible* church and the *local, seen* church. Luther recognized that churches, as human-led institutions, often have people in them who are not truly Christian. So while the *seen* church is a mix of believers and non-believers, the *unseen* church, which only Christ can see, is the pure church. Luther thus raises the possibility that people may be followers of Jesus and part of the wider, unseen Church, but not part of a local, seen church. On this basis, Hoefer argues that individuals who are outside of a local church (as is the case for those who stay inside their Muslim or Hindu communities)

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are not outside of the Universal Church (2001:164).

To this discussion I would like to add two principles from an Anabaptist or Believers' Church perspective.[1] First, we must be careful to not over-interpret our understanding of church via Western individualism. In the desire to accept and legitimate isolated Christians it is only too easy to make the mistake of bypassing the New Testament emphasis on relationship, gathering, and togetherness (Lofink 1982:99). As can be seen from Acts 2 and 4, from its inception the post-resurrection community of God was characterized by people who worshipped together and worked at relationship with each other and the wider world. Thus, while acknowledging the presence of a wider and unseen Church, the New Testament seems to primarily understand church as *gathered groups of disciples* that are visible to the wider community and who develop relationships with each other. The writer of Ephesians takes this one step further. In Ephesians 4 the writer says that the church is Christ's body-on-earth. Just as Jesus was incarnated as a visible human being, expressing God's love through the language and culture of the people, so he continues to be present and "incarnated" through his present body-on-earth—local churches. This, we can say, is the incarnation principle. To participate in a local group of believers is to participate in Christ. Thus, while it is possible to be a follower of Christ and not a member of a local church, Christ's ideal is for people to be committed to a local group of believers who together represent Christ to their context.[2]

Second (and implied above), a local group need not be large, organizationally complex, or widely networked to be considered a church in the biblical sense. A church, according to the New Testament, is first and foremost a locally identified group of believers who are committed to following Jesus and his commandments, and to doing this together. This is the

community principle, and it addresses some of the confusion often associated with the word "church" in the Indian context. For example, while a church is always expressed through cultural practices, by definition it is never tied to a particular culture. While many churches become quite institutionalized in their polity, they are never tied to or defined by particular institutional structures. A church is, quite fundamentally, a *community* that follows the commands and example of Jesus, including expressions of baptism and communion. In the New Testament this idea of community is often expressed through kinship language and practices.[3] The church is a family whose members care for each other in familial ways.

People continually negotiate and modify social identities, including socio-religious ones; they are never fixed.

Sociological Principles

If the above principles contribute to what we can call a church's theological or ecclesial identity, we also need to recognize that every church has a social identity, or multiple social identities (Ward 2012). Part of this identity will be the church's association with a religion or religious community—its religious identity. I will highlight three particular concepts that are important for understanding the nature of these religious identities as they relate to a local church.

First, religious identities are often—though not always or purely—socio-cultural. Many often overlook this point, preferring to emphasize or solely focus on the beliefs or ideologies of a

religion. However, though the latter is important, religions also often provide a social community with particular patterns of behavior (Netland 2012), and it is often these socio-cultural behaviors and identities that people will most value. For example, some people who identify themselves as Hindu have little personal commitment to a Hindu ideology or deity. For them, Hindu identity denotes their family heritage and a set of roles and practices that they are expected to fulfill when required.

Second, people and groups continually negotiate and modify social identities, including socio-religious identities; they are never fixed. Sociologist Margaret Archer develops this point through a framework of identity emergence. She argues that the identities of people and groups are continually negotiated in relation to their cultural and structural contexts (Archer 2000). An identity role is salient for a time; however, as people continually interact with new information or developments, they consider what in this new input merits greater and lesser levels of concern. When, in the course of their deliberations, people re-rank concerns, those concerns become "transvalued" and new aspects of their personal identity are forged (Archer 2000:236-42). People—and groups of people—can thus adopt and rearrange the relative salience of identities at various times in their lives by rearranging the importance they place on particular concerns and practices (see Peek 2005; Vryan, Adler, and Adler 2003).

Third, social identities are expressed and shaped through practices. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has shown that social practices are central to peoples' identities. In fact, people usually do not reflect deeply on their practices—they are simply "the right thing to do" (Bourdieu 1990:18). Archer agrees with Bourdieu concerning the importance of practices for identification, but argues that people consciously choose from among them to create

sets of practices that express their own concerns and interests. This becomes particularly important when new practices, ideas or concerns are introduced that disrupt current dispositions. While people normally conduct many of their activities, including their socio-religious activities, without much reflection, the disruption of these activities or introduction of new possibilities may initiate a reflexive process that causes them to evaluate—and potentially adopt—new practices and identities (McNay 1999:106–7).

In addition, social identities are not only *expressed* through practices, but also *shaped* through them. In her research on Muslim women's groups in Egypt, Saba Mahmood has demonstrated how Muslim women not only use practices to express a concern or identity, but also to shape or create an identity. This, she argues, is a theory of "exteriority as a means to interiority" (Mahmood 2005:134). For example, the Muslim women of her study did not view practices of modesty, such as wearing the hijab, as social impositions that constrained their desires and identities. Rather, these practices were, in a sense, the "scaffolding" that help them actualize their potential and desired selves (Mahmood 2005:148).

Hindu and Sikh Yeshu Satsangs *(Jesus Truth-Gatherings)*

How do these principles and concepts help guide an analysis of what church might look like among socio-religious insiders? To explore this question I now turn to a study of six groups in the Punjab region of Northwest India. The leaders of these groups conduct what they call *Yeshu satsangs,* or Jesus truth-gatherings. Since both Sikhs and Hindus are prominent in this region, my research included three satsangs among predominately Hindu communities and three among predominately Sikh communities.

To understand the identities and practices of these Yeshu satsangs, one must first understand something about their

historical context. The leaders of these Yeshu satsangs are influenced by—and are often responding to—three particular legacies and characteristics of Christian churches in their area, which are perceived as *foreign, Dalit,* and *Pentecostal* in nature.

First, Hindus and Sikhs often accuse followers of Jesus of embracing and promoting a foreign religion. This perception is, in large part, the legacy of mission efforts to the area that began in 1818 and expanded throughout the nineteenth century (Webster 2007:40-48). Though the churches of the region have been Indian-led for decades, the testimonies of various Yeshu *satsangis* (satsang members) and Indian Christians indicate that this legacy and association remains. A second factor is the perception that Christians offer foreign-originated money and other incentives to lure converts, a belief that is common also in other parts of India.[4]

Second, Hindus and Sikhs often associate Christianity in the Northwest with the Dalit (so-called untouchable) castes. One historical reason for this was a series of mass conversion movements in the late 19th century that saw over 100,000 people from the rural Chuhra Dalit community convert to Christianity (Webster 2007:168). Not surprisingly the church in Northwest India became closely identified with the identity and economic challenges of the Dalits. While people from so-called higher castes have periodically become Christians and joined churches, the majority of Christians continue to be from Dalit castes (Webster 2007:323, 331-32). Indeed, some of the Yeshu satsang leaders themselves are from Dalit castes. Whatever their background, all of the leaders are sensitive to this perception and are trying to address

> *The leaders are sensitive to this perception and are addressing the ways in which it has prevented other castes from becoming followers of Jesus.*

the ways in which it has prevented other castes from becoming followers of Jesus.

Third, many churches in the Northwest are currently being strongly influenced by a new, rapidly growing movement of Pentecostal-style churches.[5] On the positive side, many people are attracted to charismatic leaders with gifts of healing and miracles, and as a result are hearing about Jesus (Webster 2007:298). However, the worship style of these churches is often distinct from that practiced in the historic churches as well as among Hindus and Sikhs. This Pentecostal style is often characterized by loud, simultaneous praying; the singing of short, lively choruses; standing; raising hands; and shouting words such as "hallelujah." Such practices can appear foreign to Hindu and Sikh onlookers.

In summary, Hindus and Sikhs who know about the church's foreign legacy, Dalit character, and Pentecostal style regard the Christian churches as (what sociologists refer to as) an Other, something radically different from themselves (Riggins 1997:3). Christians, of course, dispute these assessments, in particular the churches' foreign reputation or Dalit character. Unfortunately, the churches are caught in a dilemma in that the worship of Jesus and proclamation of the gospel (as they practice it) invoke contradictory messages in the minds of Hindu and Sikh hearers. Although churches do not say that Christianity is Other, their identity and practices communicate this to Hindus and Sikhs, albeit unintentionally.

It is against this backdrop, and the contradiction that many of the Christian churches of the Northwest embody and perpetuate, that we can best understand the actions of the Yeshu satsang leaders.

The Shaping of New Identities

The above background is particularly relevant to the leaders of the Yeshu satsangs, since all came to faith in Jesus through, and were discipled in, churches and/or Christian parachurch organizations. Most led house churches for a time and eventually came into contact with teaching on cultural sensitivity from other Indians and/or missionaries. This teaching resonated with them and confirmed some of their growing discomfort with the contradictions in Christian identity and practices described above, and the barriers these contradictions created when sharing Christ with their Hindu/Sikh families and communities. In response, they started Yeshu satsangs or transitioned existing house churches towards more of a Yeshu satsang style. Using the theological and sociological concepts discussed above, I will describe and analyze the changes and practices that these leaders have sought to implement.

Incarnating Jesus

In what ways do the Yeshu satsangs seem to reflect Christ in their fellowship and to their wider context? First, each Yeshu satsang emphasizes the importance of honoring and studying Jesus' teachings. Through these teachings satsangis can learn how to better follow and reflect the character of Jesus in their lives. The Bible is thus given a high level of authority. Even where Yeshu satsang leaders have a respect for and know Hindu and Sikh scriptures, the Bible is emphasized as a higher and ultimate authority. The Bible pervades many of the Yeshu satsang meetings. In most it is read openly, from common Hindi or Punjabi versions, and satsangis are encouraged to have their own copies that they can read on their own. The teachings of the Bible are applied directly to the lives and situations of the satsangis.

Two key biblical teachings or examples of Jesus followed by Yeshu satsangs are the Lord's Supper and baptism. Most Yeshu satsangs celebrate the

Lord's Supper regularly and explain the practice from biblical passages. Some satsangs retain the Christian church symbols and names of the practice, such as using bread and juice and calling it *Prabhu Bhoj* (Lord's supper). However, because Christian churches sometimes practice the Lord's Supper in ways that seem strange to Hindus and Sikhs, some Yeshu satsangs sometimes modify it slightly. For example, some Hindu Yeshu satsang leaders call the Lord's Supper *Mahaprasad* (the great *prasad*, offering) or use the coconut, a common Hindu symbol. These leaders make subtle changes to aspects of the practice of the Lord's Supper to make it understandable and somewhat open to Hindus and Sikhs.

> *Most Yeshu satsangs celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly.*

The practice of baptism is also important for the Yeshu satsangs. At the same time, the leaders are unhappy with the ways in which they feel baptism has taken on extra-biblical meanings. For example, many Christian churches in India believe that baptism signifies not only a commitment to God and to his people, but also a change of socio-religious community. In contrast, the Yeshu satsang leaders and satsangis tend to place less emphasis on the role of baptism in their lives and satsang. In some instances, the government requires people to register their change of socio-religious community and regard them with different laws and policies. In light of this, the Yeshu satsangs practice baptism as an indication of commitment to

God, but do not ask people to change their socio-religious community. In addition, the Yeshu satsangs sometimes change the names of the practice to "*jal diksha*, water initiation," "*naam daan*, name giving," or "*pavithra ishnaan*, holy immersion." These names reflect Hindu and Sikh practices and refer to types of initiations given to disciples by their guru. Yeshu satsang leaders thus draw on local practices and terminology but seek to reflect or incarnate their devotion to Jesus through them.

In addition to their emphasis on the Bible and attempts to contextually reflect the character and teachings of Jesus, the Yeshu satsangs also seek to be incarnational in their witness. Yeshu satsangs have incorporated various Hindu and Sikh practices and language, and have shaped them around Christocentric themes. Gaurav, one of the Hindu Yeshu satsang leaders, sometimes blows and makes a trumpet-like sound with a shell called a *shankh*, similar to the way Hindu priests use the *shankh* in the midst of a Hindu worship ceremony. In addition to being symbols and aids in their own worship and understanding of Jesus, these also help Gaurav's satsangis feel that the satsang is a setting to which they can invite their friends and relatives. One of Gaurav's satsangis shares,

> Whenever we take our relatives or somebody else with us (to the *satsang*) they should not feel that this is a separate religion. (Some people say) that we have become Muslims, or another religion. But whenever my relatives came to the *satsang* they say, "No, they are as Hindus because they have a *shankh* and light *diyas*." … So I like to take them with me.

The Yeshu satsang thus gives the opportunity for the individual satsangis to worship and reflect Jesus to their Hindu or Sikh communities, but in ways they feel the community will understand and accept.

Community

Another principal I suggested that has guided church identities is the

importance of a community committed to each other and to Christ. The Yeshu satsangs, though formed recently (most in the last 7-8 years) and small in membership, nonetheless have begun to function as small communities. In addition to the primary focus on regular gatherings to worship Jesus, the leaders actively seek to foster a sense of community and commitment to each other. For two of the Sikh and one of the Hindu Yeshu satsangs, this sense of community comes quite naturally since they are primarily comprised of family groups who see the satsang as extensions of their family and its worship. It is natural for these groups to gather together at various times for prayer or meals. For one of the larger Hindu Yeshu satsangs, the leader actively finds ways for the satsang to share meals together, to go on outings, and to help give food or aid to the poor in their community. The Yeshu satsangs thus show signs of functioning theologically as a church-as-community.

Some may ask, however, "To what degree do the Yeshu satsangs identify and fellowship with the wider Christ-following community inside and outside of India?" It is true that many of the Yeshu satsangs do not actively seek to fellowship with other Christ-followers, stemming in large part from criticism from—and disagreement with—these groups. Such a stance towards other Christians could be seen as problematic, and some might object that the satsangs are not truly or fully church if they shun other groups of Christ-followers and remain somewhat isolated. Indeed, Timothy Tennent has emphasized that such Hindu followers of Jesus should be challenged to be baptized and identify themselves with the wider church (Tennent 2005:174). This is an important point. However, in this critique we need to be careful not to hold the Yeshu satsangs, or any other nascent insider groups, to a standard higher than we hold our own churches and denominations. The history of Western Christianity, after all, is replete

*I*n this critique we need to be careful not to hold the Yeshu satsangs, or any other nascent insider groups, to a standard higher than we hold our own churches.

with examples of churches breaking fellowship with other churches. And many of our denominations have painful schisms and differences in their backgrounds. While we should always work for greater levels of trust and cooperation, those of us from a Western background would be wise to not cast stones at others who are currently experiencing similar differences and pain. Perhaps we should be slow to judge the conflict and quick to pray for its reconciliation.

As the preceding examples show, the Yeshu satsangs do help shape, in many ways, identities that conform to what we may call biblical expressions of church—even while resisting some of the expressions modeled by the Christian churches of their area. But how are the Yeshu satsangs seeking to shape their *social* identities?

The first of the sociological concepts I outlined above suggests that religious identities are often social in nature, and that this social identity is often what is most important to members of the community. Among the Yeshu satsangs, many identify with their Hindu and Sikh socio-religious communities while remaining committed to Jesus. In this, they seek to make a distinction between Hindu/Sikh ideologies, on the one hand, and Hindu/Sikh social identity, on the other. Hindus and Sikhs sometimes accuse the Yeshu satsangis—on the basis of their devotion to Jesus—of changing religious identities and becoming Christians. In response, the Yeshu satsangis commonly respond, "I have not changed my religion, I have changed my heart." Religion, in this case, is understood to be not so much a matter of doctrines, philosophies or spiritual beliefs, but of being part of a community and its culture. The satsangis thus argue that they can stay within

the Hindu/Sikh religious community while changing the focus of their personal devotion to Jesus.

One example of this can be seen in their self-ascription, or how they identify themselves in terms of their religious community. Some Yeshu satsangis and leaders from Hindu families refer to themselves as "Hindu *Yeshu bhakt*" (Hindu Jesus devotees). Ravi, a Yeshu satsang leader, reflects on this question of identity:

> I always say it like this, "I am not a Christian; I am a Hindu *Yeshu Bhakt*." Then I am ready for their questions, like, "You believe in Jesus, then how are you a Hindu?" Then I said, "On my (birth) form and my father's it is written 'Hindu.' And I live in Hindustan (India) and I speak Hindi. That is why I am a Hindu. And also Hindu is not a religion, it's a community."

As can be seen from the above, once the satsangis pray to or mention the name *Yeshu*, many Hindus and Sikhs associate them with the Christian community. In response, Ravi clearly distances himself from the Christian community and embraces a Hindu identity based on his community.

The second social concept discussed above regards how people and groups are able to negotiate and modify social identities—including socio-religious identities—in light of new ideas and concerns. As they do so, they "transvalue," or rearrange the relative salience of those concerns in order to express new identities and achieve new goals. The Yeshu satsangis display this process of negotiation and transvaluing, particularly vis-à-vis their devotion to Christ.

This is most clearly seen in the practices of some of the Yeshu satsang leaders themselves. First, the leaders have transvalued the relevance of a Hindu or Sikh identity, and some of the

related practices, in relation to certain Christ practices. For example, leaders sometimes quote stories, poems and concepts from Sikh and Hindu scriptures, interpreting them in the light of their understandings of biblical texts and teachings. The focus on the Bible, Christ, and Christ bhakti, has thus become a primary framework through which they understand and transvalue other Hindu/Sikh texts and practices.

While the leaders have rearranged their interpretive framework in this way, they have also reacted against Christian leaders in the area who, in their opinion, have sought to strip Hindu/Sikh texts and practices of any value, thereby eliminating the capacity of these things to impact socio-religious identity. As mentioned earlier, the Yeshu satsang leaders all received their initial teaching on following Christ from Christian pastors. Many of these pastors placed no value on Hindu and Sikh scriptures and practices. Sikhs, for example, venerate the original founders and gurus of the community. Navdeep, a Sikh Yeshu satsang leader, recounts a conversation between his first pastor and his father-in-law, a prominent Sikh leader. Navdeep says,

> (My father-in-law told my pastor), "Yes, for you Christians Jesus Christ came just as Guru Gobind Singh came for Sikhs." The name "Guru Gobind Singh" was still in his mouth when (my pastor) banged on the table and said, "No, no, no!" And he objected, saying this and that. But because of that outburst my father-in-law became filled with bitterness.

The encounter continued but, in Navdeep's eyes, only degenerated. Navdeep's pastor had devalued the Sikh gurus to such a degree that Navdeep's father-in-law was highly offended. It also reinforced the father-in-law's perception that Navdeep's identity was now highly disassociated from that of his family.

In response, Navdeep and the other Sikh Yeshu satsang leaders have reconsidered

and have raised their estimation of the Sikh gurus. This is particularly true regarding Guru Nanak, the first and most highly esteemed guru. Naveen, one of Navdeep's colleagues, says,

> We talk about Guru Nanak and say that he was a good man because he had a fear of God. (And he taught that) God is in every place. Everywhere. So, because of this, we should search for that God who gave children to Guru Nanak (the Sikhs).

In this, Naveen has renegotiated his theology of God, positing that Guru Nanak actually received revelation from the true God, leading to the development of the Sikh community. Though Naveen is clear that true salvation is only found in Jesus—and that the Guru Nanak and his

The encounter only degenerated.
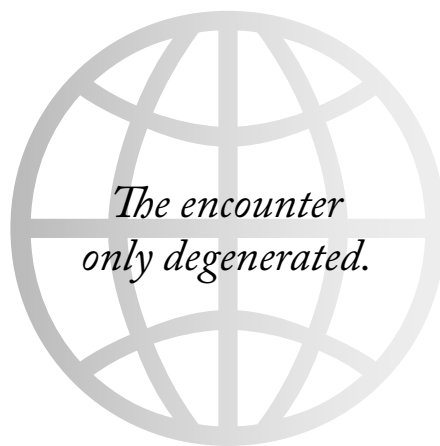
scriptures should be interpreted through Jesus and the Bible—he also places value on Guru Nanak as a recipient of revelation, a claim that shapes his identity more closely to that of the Sikh community.

The third social concept explores the ways in which practices are central for both expressing and shaping identities. Yeshu satsangs have incorporated various Hindu and Sikh practices and language, and have shaped them around Christocentric themes. Many of these practices reflect the Hindu (and Sikh) emphasis on bhakti, which emphasizes the role of devotion and self-surrender—as opposed to knowledge or action—in obtaining salvation. One way in which the Yeshu satsang leaders express and promote the ideals

of bhakti devotion is through the use of *bhajans* (devotional songs, also called *kirtans* in Sikh satsangs). Bhajans are a particular genre of devotional music intimately tied to the Hindu and Sikh bhakti traditions (Dicran 2000). Because of this Hindus and Sikhs associate the sound and style of the bhajans with the Hindu/Sikh communities. For example, when deciding which types of songs and which songbook to use for his satsang, Ravi (mentioned above) rejected the common songbooks used by Christian churches and chose instead a book of bhajans compiled by Yeshu satsangs in another part of India. These, he explained, sound more like bhakti bhajans that the Hindu people in his area like. Not only would the songs help promote a Hindu identity to their neighbors, but such bhajans help some satsangis feel close to God in ways that others song styles cannot. For the satsangis, bhajans create a sense of peace and the "right" atmosphere through which to approach and relate to the divine. One satsangi, who enjoyed bhajans growing up, reflects on those she now sings in the Yeshu satsang,

> When we sing *bhajans,* when we pray with the *bhajans,* then I feel very good at that time. Because we feel that we are not on the earth. It seems that we are flying in the heaven. I like this part (of the *satsang*) very much.

In addition to music, Yeshu satsang leaders use various symbols to create a sense of bhakti. Gaurav, a Hindu Yeshu satsang leader, sometimes uses a Hindu lamp called a *diya*. He explains to his satsangis that the lamp is a light, and represents Jesus as the light of the world. The lamp also helps his people feel that they are in a setting in which they can approach and worship the divine (in this case, Jesus).

Thus, such practices carry a dual role. On the one hand, they express valued identities. Through their practices the Yeshu satsangs seek to affirm their Hindu and Sikh identities and their relationships with the Hindu and Sikh communities. On the other hand, these

same practices are adapted and used to express their devotion to Jesus. Satsangis desire to be close to God and to have him heal, bless and instill his love into their lives; the practices of bhakti help them to eventually realize those desires.

Conclusion

The theological principles of incarnation and community can provide a grid for analyzing the ecclesial or church identity of groups such as the Yeshu satsangs, while the concepts of socio-religious identity, identity negotiation, and practices give a framework for understanding how such groups may seek to shape their socio-religious identities. The use of these frameworks demonstrates that, from a theological standpoint, groups of Jesus followers such as the Yeshu satsangs are developing the theological qualities and practices of local churches within and in relation to the wider Hindu or Sikh community identity. The Yeshu satsangs are, or strive to be, sub-groups within the Hindu and Sikh communities while being churches in the theological sense. In short, they seek to be a community-within-a-community. In this it is clear that these Yeshu satsangs are pioneering something generally quite unique for their context, and are attracting people who may not otherwise follow Jesus within the context of a Christian church and community. It is too early to say whether or not their model of being church will result in wide movements of Christ-followers. At the very least, there is reason to encourage the development of Christ-communities that adhere to the biblical contours of church while socially reflecting India's rich identities. **IJFM**

Endnotes

[1] Anabaptists have often held that a "church" is any local gathering of believers who share a commitment to Christ and each other and express this through common practices (Snyder 1999).

[2] Timothy Tennant seems to agree with this understanding of church when he discusses the public dimension of the word *ekklesia* (Tennent 2005:174).

[3] See, for example, Mark 3:33-35 and Ephesians 2:19.

[4] Though it has not been studied carefully, several other factors may reinforce the perception of Christianity as a foreign-based religion, including the regular presence of foreign speakers and evangelists, and cable television channels such as the "God channel" that feature North American speakers.

[5] I have adopted the nomenclature of what some Pentecostal scholars call "small-*p*" pentecostalism to refer to churches that do not necessarily identify with the institutional Pentecostal denominations but that display a commitment to a "Spirit-centered, miracle-affirming, praise-oriented version of Christian faith" (Jacobsen 2003:12; Smith 2010:xvii).

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ISFM 2012: Still an Exotic?

Respecting Context:
A Comparison of Indonesia and the Middle East

by Richard Jameson

Richard Jameson has worked over the past 30 years in South East Asia and the Middle East where he has developed Bible translators, taught Bible and Theology at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and nurtured missionaries and church leadership from those contexts. Richard holds a ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Editor's note: This is the revised version of a paper presented at the 2012 gathering of the International Society for Frontier Missiology in Chicago, Illinois.

Introduction

I've finally figured out Indonesian Islam," a Muslim background Arab Christian said to me after several months in Indonesia. "Those first Muslim evangelists came on ships. I think they spent too much time on the deck out in the sun and heat stroke made them a little bit crazy. So when they got to Indonesia they taught a crazy kind of Islam."

By the time my friend arrived, there was already in Indonesia a growing community of believers who continued to identify as Muslims. He would argue constantly with his fellow Christ followers; their on-going identification with their Indonesian Muslim community never made any sense to him. Yet one day this Christian Arab brother said to me, "I love you like a father, but you will never understand me and the struggles I face as a Muslim background believer like Ahmed (a Muslim Christ follower)." The common struggles felt by believers from a Muslim background seemed to trump their differences over identity and mission strategy.

I spent many years in Indonesia as a theological lecturer. More recently I have had increasing involvement with Muslim background believers from the Arab world. The move from the Southeast fringe of the Muslim world to Islam's heartland is helping me understand some distinct differences as well as some commonalities between forms of Islam and the emerging communities of faith in these two regions.

Indonesia: Hindu/Buddhist Foundations

Much of Indonesia was under the control of large Hindu and Buddhist empires for over a thousand years. The last and greatest of these Hindu empires (the Majapahit) reached its peak of influence in the fourteenth century. Many Hindus recognize a supreme deity but continue to honor a myriad of lesser deities. As Islam became the predominant religion from the

fourteenth century onward, this Hindu thinking seems to have been absorbed into local Islam.

Indonesian Muslims believe in one God (and readily affirm *la ilaha ilallah* "there is no God but God"). And yet, particularly in the rural areas, many still see the need to honor local deities as well—with little sense of inconsistency. For example, Muslim farmers will seek the favor of Dewi Sri (goddess of agriculture) to insure a good harvest, and Muslim fishermen will make offerings to Nyi Roro Kidul, goddess of the south sea. Syncretism of this sort, if it exists in Middle Eastern Islam at all, is certainly much better hidden. In many ways, Arab Muslim culture developed in response to Muhammad's teaching (to tribes who had taken polytheism to an extreme) concerning the importance of worshiping only one God. So for Arabs, especially Muslims, anything that in any way hints of polytheism is avoided with disgust.

Worldview

It has been said that all worldviews are built around three couplets: power/fear, honor/shame, and innocence/guilt. Every person and every culture is some blend of all three, but generally one dominates. To illustrate the difference between these worldviews, imagine three people having fun at a crowded beach. They're out in the water, splashing around in the waves, when suddenly the lifeguard starts blowing his whistle. One person immediately stands up and begins to scan the waves for a shark, backing out of the water as he does. A second person stands up and looks to see why the lifeguard is blowing the whistle. The third person simply pretends not to hear the whistle at all.

The first person represents the power/fear couplet. Upon hearing the whistle his first instinct is to assume danger, and so right away he begins looking for the shark while making his way out of the water. The second person

represents the guilt/innocence couplet. Upon hearing the whistle he immediately looks at the lifeguard to make sure he hadn't done anything wrong. The third person represents the honor/shame couplet. He ignores the whistle and keeps on swimming, reasoning that if he's not caught, it's not wrong.

Although the power/fear and honor/shame couplets are both active in Southeast Asia and the Arab world, it seems to me that power/fear tends to predominate in Southeast Asia, whereas honor/shame is much stronger in the Arab world.

Harmony

Harmony is one of the highest values in many Southeast Asian cultures.[1] For

In Indonesia, the Muslim and Christian communities draw their religious vocabulary almost entirely from Arabic.

some Southeast Asian peoples, emotion is something to be controlled and kept hidden. Much can bubble under the surface as long as outward harmony is maintained. As a result, Islam in Indonesia seems to be able to tolerate a tremendous amount of theological heterodoxy as long as everything appears harmonious.

By contrast, Arabs love to argue. The well-known proverb, "Me against my brothers, me and my brothers against my cousins, me and my cousins against the world" rings true for most of my Arab friends. However, in the Arab world, emotions seem to flare up and die down quickly. My wife and I were walking through the market in Damascus

and had to move around a crowd watching two men yell at and push each other. A few minutes later, we walked back through the market and saw the same two men sitting drinking coffee together like the best of friends.

Language

The Indonesian language tends to reserve one set of terms for the realm of God and another for the created world, often with only very slight differences between them. For example, the Indonesian word *tuan* could be translated 'sir' or 'mister,' whereas *Tuhan* is used for God alone. *Bapak* is term for a respected senior male while *Bapa* refers more exclusively to God (it is used to translate the Greek *pater* in the New Testament in reference to our Creator). In light of the recent furor over Muslim Idiom Translations (MIT), it is interesting that Indonesian Christians have never used the unique term for one's biological father *'ayah'* to refer to God as Father.[2]

In Indonesia, the Muslim and Christian communities both draw their religious vocabulary almost entirely from Arabic. For many Muslims, Arabic is almost a magic language. Healers use Arabic quotes from the Qur'an rinsed off into water to make healing potions. Religious phrases in Arabic can be found in all places where spirits are known to inhabit. Understanding the meaning of the Arabic is much less important than pronouncing it correctly. Many Indonesians tend toward mystical and allegorical interpretations, so when Christ-followers from a Muslim background propose interpretations of Qur'anic texts that differ from orthodox Islamic interpretations, other Indonesian Muslims are often quite open and interested.[3]

In the Arab world, people seem to be proud that they speak the language of God. And Orthodox Islamic interpretations tend to be much more important. Most of my Arab Muslim Background friends will not even entertain an

interpretation of the Qur'an that differs from what might be found in the standard Islamic commentaries.

Walled Cities or Open Villages: Sharp Divisions vs. Blurred Edges

The ancient walled cities of the Arab world stand in stark contrast to the open agricultural villages of Indonesia, providing a fitting metaphor for another distinction between the regions. Like a walled city, my Arab Christian friends tend to accentuate the difference between Christianity and Islam, religious forms and vocabulary forming a defensive barrier by which the religion is protected. In Indonesia the boundaries are sometimes less clear, much like a rural village that just fades into the surrounding rice fields.

A prominent Muslim intellectual in Indonesia married a woman from a Christian ethnic group and was willing to have his wife raise their children as Christians. This man continued to be a highly respected Muslim professor throughout his entire career. It is hard to imagine this happening in most of the Arab world.

The Indonesian national director of a major Christian ministry considered it quite a joke that the government had issued him an identity card that identified his religion as Islam but his profession as an evangelist. In a similar situation, I would expect an Arab Christian to be outraged and demand a new identity card.

A prominent Muslim background Christian runs a theological school in a large city. He has developed a partnership with major Islamic institutions whereby he teaches Christianity in their schools and local Islamic scholars teach Islam in his school.

There are Bible clubs at some of the major Islamic Training Schools in Indonesia in which students gather to study the Bible together. A lecturer at an Indonesian Christian seminary, after being invited to speak to one

*T*his man continued to be a highly respected Muslim professor throughout his career. It is hard to imagine this in most of the Arab world.

of these clubs, reported to me with amazement how much of the gospel these students had fully understood through their study of the Scriptures.

In reaction to what have been described as "insider movements," a friend of mine who has spent his entire missionary career in the Arab world wrote a list of nine crucial questions and his answers to each one. As you will see, the answers to these questions are designed to present a sharp contrast between those who would identify themselves as Christians and the surrounding Muslim community.[4]

1. *Is Allah, as identified by Muslims, the same God as YHWH, identified by Jews and Christians from their Scriptures?*

    No! The ascribed attributes of Allah and YHWH depart at the level of His covenantal nature and are illuminated in the "names of God" that further manifest His character.

2. *Is Mohammad a Prophet?*

    No! My response to any other person claiming to be such since the time frame of the Apostolic era, with the Canon of Scripture established soon thereafter, would be the same. "Prophets," are those who received revelation from God, and their message remains transcultural and is not time limited.

3. *Is the Qur'an a book to be considered as part of "Holy Scripture," which includes both the Old and New Testaments?*

    No! It cannot be considered as delivered from heaven directly from God. The progress of divine written revelation as defined by Scripture is fully complete with the Old and New Testament canons established.

4. *Is the Isa of the Qur'an the same as the Jesus of the Injil (Gospel) acknowledged by Muslims as a "Holy Book"?*

No! Some, but certainly not all, references to Jesus in the Qur'an are accurate. The final—book closed—identification of Jesus' in Islam falls far short of identifying both who He is or what He accomplished.

5. *Is Ishmael equally a recipient of "the divine promise" so clearly given to Isaac from Abraham?*

    No! Scripture remains clear concerning the unique role of Isaac as related to the Messiah and the future Kingdom of God. Ishmael is honored as an elder son of Abraham by a cultural promise of great significance.

6. *Is the Kingdom of God, as spoken of in Scripture, able to expand its boundaries to include Muslims seeking God and acknowledging Jesus as a Prophet?*

    No. Kingdom citizenship comes by "spiritual birth." Spiritual birth comes by arriving at the conclusion that the Jesus of the Bible is the one to be received as both Lord and Savior.

7. *Do "mosques" (jamaat) qualify as "church" in New Testament terms?*

    No! As a place of worship both the forms of worship and their meaning are not adequate. As a place of "fellowship" they only satisfy the generic meaning of the word and do not rise to "body life" concepts associated with biblical community definition. They certainly do not fit the universal concept of "Church" as the "body of Christ."

8. *Can baptism be relegated to non-essential for true Muslim followers of Jesus?*

    No! Baptism is a clear cultural marker not to be ignored. It identifies the follower of Jesus with His death, burial and resurrection

and it identifies the follower with the universal "Body of Christ." It is a declaration of one's cultural allegiance to Jesus as Lord and Savior and the Kingdom of God as our primary citizenship.

9. *Can Messianic Fellowships of Jewish believers be equated with Jesus Muslim fellowships?*

    No, the experience of the Jew who accepts the Old Testament as we have is entirely different than the Muslim seeker who considers the Old and New Testaments as corrupted.

Many from Southeast Asia would ask a different set of questions, all based on the same themes, but that blur the differences.

1. *Is there enough truth about Allah as identified by Muslims to use this truth as a starting point in leading a Muslim to a full knowledge of the God of the Bible?*

    Yes! All of the 99 beautiful names of Allah, at least conceptually, are found in the Old and New Testaments. Although the understanding of these names may differ, there is enough similarity to engage in rich and fruitful dialogue with our Muslim friends and neighbors about the nature and character of God.

2. *Can a growing disciple of Christ have a positive and respectful attitude towards Mohammad?*

    Yes! We have seen many Muslims come into the kingdom who have lowered Mohammad from his exalted position within their religion of birth while keeping a positive respectful attitude towards him.

3. *Can a growing disciple of Christ maintain a positive and respectful attitude towards the Qur'an?*

    Yes! Many have come to Christ by following the road signs found within the Qur'an. These signs have pointed people to the Bible and to the Jesus revealed therein.

Muslims who come to Christ through this route tend to maintain a high respect for the truth found in the Qur'an.

4. *Is there enough truth about Isa in the Qur'an for it to serve as a point of departure in leading Muslims to the fuller knowledge of Jesus as revealed in the Bible?*

    Yes! The Qur'an contains an amazing amount of true information about Jesus. This information has proven to be a wonderful starting point in reaching Muslims with the gospel.

5. *Are the descendants of Ishmael recipients of some unique promises from God?*

    Yes! Apart from the promise of covenantal blessing for all peoples,

> *Many from Southeast Asia would ask a different set of questions.*

which is only through Jesus, all of the promises to Isaac are echoed with similar promises to Ishmael. Isaiah 60 and other passages make it clear that these promises are still in effect as far as Ishmael's descendants are concerned.

6. *Is the Kingdom of God, as spoken of in Scripture, able to expand it boundaries to include Muslims who through repentance put their faith in Jesus as their crucified and resurrected Lord?*

    Yes! Our heavenly Father accepts people from every tribe, nation, people, language, and religion who put their faith in Jesus who died for their sins.

7. *Can a true follower of Christ worship God anywhere as long as his heart is right?*

    Yes! As Jesus told the Samaritan woman, it's not the *place* of worship that matters; God is seeking worshipers who will worship him in Spirit and truth...Worship and fellowship are not dependent upon the building in which they occur; they are dependent solely upon the hearts of those gathering in the name of Jesus as members of his body.

8. *Should followers of Christ from a Muslim background be free to baptize in such a way that baptism does not communicate betrayal of one's people?*

    Yes! If given the opportunity, those from a Muslim background are very creative in developing baptismal forms that communicate the biblical meaning of baptism without unnecessarily insulting their families or their cultures.

9. *Are there striking parallels between the Muslim and Jewish communities that have given rise to similar expressions of faith from within both communities?*

    Yes! Uncompromising monotheism, holistic integration of religion into every aspect of life,[5] salvation by works, rejection of atonement through Christ, rejection of Christian interpretation of their "book," are just a few of the parallels.

Perceptions concerning Christianity

Southeast Asia and the Middle East have had very different histories vis-à-vis Christianity. In the Arab world, Christianity pre-dated Islam. In the Middle East and Egypt, the descendants of historic Christianity are still considered "people of the book." They are looked down on as those who have not, yet, realized that Islam has replaced Christianity, yet they are respected in their dhimmi status as people of the book.

Western Christianity continues to be associated with the Crusades. Western colonialism, Western uncritical support for Israel, and the more recent US intervention in Arab politics and nations are considered contemporary examples of the crusader spirit.

Southeast Asia, on the other hand, lacks the perspective of an historic Christianity that predates Islam. Much of western Indonesia had embraced Islam before Christianity was introduced through Dutch colonialism. Historically, Christian missionary effort in Indonesia focused on tribals and, apart from the Batak people of Sumatera, on the eastern portion of the archipelago. The Dutch, in order to protect their economic interests, severely limited Christian mission to Muslim peoples.

At the same time, Islamic identity became fused with ethnic identity as a hedge against Dutch influence. As a result, all aspects of religious life—even those practices rooted in ancient animism or Hinduism—were redefined as being part of the local Islamic expression of faith.

The history of Dutch colonialism is seen in much the same way Arabs view the Crusades. The Dutch brought large numbers of Chinese to Indonesia to manage their economic interests. Even today, Chinese control much of the Indonesian economy. The rapidly growing Indonesian Chinese church—considered foreign and Western by most Indonesian Muslims—has deepened the resentment towards Western Christianity. Globalization, the Internet, and Hollywood have created an additional negative stereotype of western Christianity as essentially violent and immoral in the minds of many Muslims. Thus in the Arab world and Indonesia alike, a deep resentment towards Western Christianity continues.

For the most part, Indonesia lacks the kind of indigenous expression of Christian faith present in the Arab

Virtually every contextual expression found in the literature exists somewhere in Indonesia, and many of these approaches are bearing fruit.

world. As a result, the contextual expressions of faith found among Muslim background believers in Indonesia exhibit remarkable diversity. Several years ago an Indonesian Muslim background believer encountered Syrian Orthodoxy during a visit to the Middle East. He resonated so deeply with this particular tradition that he began planting Syrian Orthodox churches as a contextual expression of Christian faith for believers from a Muslim background; indeed, virtually every contextual expression found anywhere in the literature exists somewhere in Indonesia, and many of these approaches are bearing fruit.

Divergent Paths to Christ

Islam portrays itself as the perfect, logical religion. Over a billion people are locked into this religious system. As many missiologists have observed, the following four factors are eroding the monolithic hegemony of the Islamic religion; I will touch on each one briefly.

Muslim-on-Muslim Violence

Wherever Muslims have been killing Muslims, a segment of the Muslim population has grown unhappy with Islam. Muslims have bombed mosques in Iraq. Muslims have attacked Muslim funeral services in Pakistan. Muslims are currently engaged in a tragic civil war in Syria. As a result, a portion of the population begins to think, "If this is Islam, I don't want to have anything to do with it."

Arab Oppression of Ethnic Minorities

A specialized form of Muslim-on-Muslim violence has been seen in ethnic oppression by Muslim majority governments. On March 16, 1988 Saddam Hussein ordered his military

to attack the Kurdish town of Halabja with poison gas. Perhaps as many as 5000 people died immediately and thousands more later died of their injuries. The Kurdish people have been oppressed by Muslim governments in surrounding countries as well. Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria have all oppressed their Kurdish minority populations. Among a segment of the population, this has resulted in hatred towards Islam and openness to the gospel. Oppression of ethnic minorities in North Africa has resulted in similar openness to the gospel.

Fundamentalist Resurgence in a Secularized Muslim Society

When Islamic fundamentalism was imposed on people who had grown accustomed to the liberal secular policies of the Shah of Iran, a significant segment of the population became disenchanted with Islam. This provided an opportunity for the gospel that has resulted in tens of thousands of Iranians coming to Christ.

Personal Issues

Rashid was raised in a very conservative Islamic home. As a boy he would often ask his imam questions about aspects of Islamic theology that troubled him and consistently the answer would be the same—one should not ask such questions. Eventually Rashid became so frustrated with Islam that he became a secular Muslim.

Rahmat was naturally left-handed. As a small child, his parents would tie his left hand behind his back so that he would not use his "unclean" hand in inappropriate ways. This left Rahmat feeling that his religion made him a second-class citizen.

Relationships are a major factor for both men and women, but especially women. The intolerance of the Muslim community when one of its members

converts or falls in love with a Christian can lead to a growing dissatisfaction with one's religion of birth.

Discontentment with Islam often leaves people with a spiritual void. Many are longing for something to fill the hole left behind when they found Islam inadequate to meet their needs. At such times some encounter Jesus. Sometimes it is through dreams, visions, or some miraculous event; other times it is through the Scriptures and friendship with true followers of Christ. Tens of thousands of these marginalized and discontented Muslims, in both the Arab world and Southeast Asia, have converted to Christianity in the last thirty years.

Christ-centered Interpretation of the Qur'an (a Fifth Path)

In Southeast Asia,[6] however, we are seeing a growing number of people come to Christ *through* elements of Islam rather than in reaction *against* Islam. This fifth path to Christ primarily occurs among those open to non-traditional interpretations of the Qur'an. Sometimes through their own reading of the Qur'an or sometimes through the testimonies of other followers of Christ, these Muslims have discovered the testimony about Jesus within the Qur'an. The message they have received through Mohammed has directed them to read and study the New Testament (*Injil*). This in turn has led these Muslims to a personal encounter with the living Jesus.

Some from this community of faith in Christ have retained their Muslim identity. Rather than converting to Christianity, these believers consider themselves to be Muslim followers of Christ. They recognize themselves to be a different kind of Muslim. While their core identity is now found in Christ, their collective identity is still found within the broader Muslim community. Because of the way they dress and talk, and their continued respect for the pillars of Islam and for the school of Islamic jurisprudence common in their part of the world, they have retained their Muslim identity within their communities.

These divergent paths to Jesus have led to very different kinds of Christ followers from a Muslim background. In the Arab world, nearly all such believers have converted to Christianity. The same would be true for many in Southeast Asia. However, in parts of Indonesia especially, there is a growing phenomenon of "In Christ" Muslims (or Muslim Christ Followers).[7] Some striking similarities exist between these two groups, which I will briefly note below.

Commonalities between the Two Muslim-background Believing Communities

As men and women have come to Jesus along these two divergent paths, I have observed similarities among them. For

> *Tens of thousands of these marginalized and discontented Muslims have converted to Christianity in the last thirty years.*

example, believers from both groups are whole-heartedly committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives. Both groups are committed to the Scriptures and use the New Testament as their primary book for discipleship. Both evidence the fruit of the Spirit in their daily lives. In both groups, the Holy Spirit is confirming their radical message about Jesus through signs and wonders. Both show evidence of being full of the Spirit and wisdom, and are committed to seeing their people freed from the spiritual bondage experienced in Satan's kingdom. Many from both groups would identify themselves as being culturally Muslim. And both have a primary identification with all true followers of Christ from all nations and languages.

Differences between the Two Muslim-background Believing Communities

Despite these similarities, there are some marked differences between the two communities. For the most part, Muslim background converts to Christianity have come to Christ in spite of, or in reaction against, Islam. "In Christ" Muslims have come to Christ through what they perceive to be the testimony of the Qur'an. Some of the differences these two disparate routes to Christ have produced are as follows.[8]

Religious Identification—Muslim background converts tend to identify with the broader community of people who call themselves "Christian" and would readily think of themselves by this name. On the other hand, "In Christ" Muslims retain the worldwide Islamic community as their broader religious community, not Christendom. They would identify themselves as Muslims. Many don't like the term "Muslim background" since to them it seems to imply that they quit being Muslims when they became followers of Christ. Within their communities they seem to be viewed as a new sect of Islam.

Interpretation of the Qur'an—Converts to Christianity believe that the traditional Islamic interpretation of Qur'anic verses concerning the person and work of Christ is the only appropriate interpretation. This interpretation consistently contradicts the message of the New Testament. Thus converts tend to see minimal common ground between the Qur'an and the New Testament. On the other hand, "In Christ" Muslims believe that Yunus 10:94 teaches that the books that came before the Qur'an should provide the primary lens through which to interpret the Qur'an.[9] And when the Bible becomes the lens through which the Qur'an is evaluated and interpreted, a radically different understanding of its teaching emerges. Thus "In Christ" Muslims find considerable common ground between the New Testament and the Qur'an.

Deception or Signposts—Converts to Christianity feel deceived by Islam. The entire religion is thought to be deceptive and controlled by the father of lies[10] (Surah 3:54). They want to rescue their people from this deception. For them, Islam is like a burning building—people need to be rescued from the fire before they perish. By contrast, Muslim followers of Christ are grieved that their people can't see in the Qur'an the signposts that point to Jesus and the Gospels. They recognize that Islamic traditions have masked these signposts and are committed to helping other Muslims discover and follow these signposts to Jesus.

Humor or Honor—While converts to Christianity may be offended when non-Muslims criticize Islam, among themselves they feel free to joke about Muhammad, the Qur'an, and other aspects of their former faith. For them, the Islamic confession of faith is blasphemous and could never be said by a true follower of Christ. By contrast, Muslim followers of Christ maintain a respect for Mohammed and the Qur'an, having come to Christ through what they understood to be its testimony. Some may even confess that there is no God but God and that Mohammed is a messenger from God because, from their perspective, God sent Mohammed to them as a messenger to direct them to Jesus. In actual practice, however, Mohammed fades into insignificance as Jesus assumes his rightful place in their lives as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Method of Evangelism—Both converts to Christianity and Muslim followers of Christ are committed to evangelizing their own people. For both, the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers and signs and wonders play a significant role leading others into a personal relationship with Jesus. However, converts tend to prefer a polemic approach to evangelism. Before they came to Christ, they grew indifferent to or sometimes

*W*hen the Bible becomes the lens through which the Qur'an is evaluated and interpreted, a radically different understanding emerges.

opposed to Islam. Thus for converts, initial evangelism is often geared toward revealing all that is bad within their former religion. Once a person agrees that Islam is bad or inadequate, they will be open to the Gospel. By contrast, Muslim Christ followers use the Qur'an in conjunction with prayer, meeting social needs, and personal testimony when engaging in evangelism. For them the Bible has become the standard for interpreting the Qur'an and the filter through which they determine what is from God and what is not. As a result they have come to a new understanding of what the Qur'an and Islamic traditions teach about Jesus. The common ground that they find between the Bible and the Qur'an provides the bridge for their outreach to their communities.

Religious Vocabulary—Converts to Christianity tend to prefer Christian vocabulary. They have embraced the standard translations of the Scriptures used by the Christian communities in their regions. Often they oppose the idea of having more than one translation in their language. This community is often the most vocal in speaking against Muslim Idiom Translations. When speaking of Jesus, some do not want to use Isa, the name found in the Qur'an. In a few cases converts will take a "Christian" name at baptism to replace their "Muslim" name. By contrast, Muslim followers of Christ continue to use exclusively Islamic religious vocabulary and names. They are strong advocates for some of the newer translations of the Scripture that preserve the vocabulary from their Islamic background and attempt to interpret for the reader difficult theological concepts such as "Son of God."[11]

Pillars of Islam—Converts to Christianity consider the forms of Islam to be

a source of bondage, one from which they have been set free. One friend of mine related that after twenty years as a Christian he was invited to join some Muslim followers of Christ in their prayers at the mosque. Immediately he felt the oppressive heaviness of legalism on his shoulders. By contrast, some Muslim followers of Christ find the prayers and fasting within Islam to be a joyous response to the love of God poured out for their sakes through Christ. For some, these religious forms allow them to continue to identify with their communities and a platform from which to share the good news about Jesus. For others who rarely practiced the pillars of Islam before coming to Christ—or come from communities where they are rarely practiced—their ethnicity and on-going engagement with the community is enough for them to retain a "Muslim" social identity and maintain the natural relationships along which the gospel flows.

Attitudes towards One another—Finally, converts to Christianity have often paid a high price to follow Christ. Their decision to convert to Christianity has often meant interrogations, torture, social ostracism, imprisonment, loss of family, and sometimes loss of country. For many converts, only fear would motivate one to maintain one's identity within Islam. These converts feel that Muslim followers of Christ are compromising their faith and "pretending" to be Muslims in order to avoid persecution. On the other hand, Muslim followers of Christ find converts to Christianity very difficult to understand. They ask, "Why would one turn one's back on one's culture, people and religion to become a Christian?" For them, converts to Christianity have burned their bridges and lost their most natural means for reaching their own people with the gospel.

Conclusion

The Arab world and Southeast Asia provide dramatically different contexts for ministry. The former might be characterized by expansive deserts dotted with small oases of vegetation, the latter by lush jungles and lavish agriculture—brown versus green. Patrick Johnstone lists Indonesia as having more Muslim background believers than any other country in the world.[12] On the island of Java in particular, tens of thousands of Muslims have come to Christ through a myriad of different evangelistic approaches. The fertility of the spiritual soil in Indonesia has produced a bountiful and varied crop. While the vast majority of Muslim background followers in Christ can be found scattered throughout Indonesian churches, the phenomenon of "In Christ" Muslims is growing particularly among the traditionally resistant Muslim peoples of the country. Indeed, divergent contexts have given birth to very different types of followers of Christ from a Muslim background.

How should we respond in the West? Should we choose sides? Should we line up behind one community or the other? Should we defend those with whom we most agree and attack those with whom we tend to disagree? Or can we come together as the body of Christ, rejoicing in all that the Lord is doing to draw Muslims to Himself? Can we recognize that our God is amazingly creative in the ways that he calls Muslims to saving faith in Christ? Can we walk along side these Muslim background brothers and sisters from across the contextual spectrum, encouraging them in their faith and calling them to greater faithfulness and obedience as we ourselves work towards the same in our own lives? I pray that we can. **IJFM**

Endnotes

[1] Southeast Asia includes hundreds of different cultures, many of which share similar traits. Harmony is a particularly strong value for those native to the island of Java (about one-half of Indonesia's population). Ethnic groups in parts of Sumatera and the Malay Peninsula would not value it as highly.

[2] To be fair, it appears that the term *bapa* has evolved over time to become a term primarily used for God in contemporary Indonesian. Older translations of the Bible use the three terms, *bapa, bapak,* and *ayah* interchangeably to refer to one's biological father. Only *Bapa,* however, is used for God.

[3] Irrespective of the recent Pew research that showed that only 24% of Southeast Asian Muslims regard Sufis as Muslims, Indonesian colleagues often mention Sufi mysticism as a key influence, especially with regard to interpretations. Muslims study medieval Sufi-influenced commentaries in their religious schools. Sufi teachings have led some religious scholars to positively consider the deity of Christ. Some ethnographers have also used the influence of Sufi mysticism to explain how traditional religious beliefs could be integrated into "normative" Islam in Indonesia.

[4] *The Role of the Academy in Missiological Formation,* Dr. J. Raymond Tallman, March 11, 2010, Academic Convocation, Golden Gate Theological Seminary

[5] This is particularly true for practicing Jews and Muslims.

[6] This phenomenon is not unique to Southeast Asia. It is being observed throughout the Muslim world, predominantly but not exclusively in areas where Arabic is not the first language of the local population.

[7] It is hard to know how to refer to these brothers. Do we emphasize their core identity or their collective identity? In this paper I sometimes refer to them as "In Christ" Muslims, emphasizing their core identity. In other places I emphasize their collective identity and refer to them as Muslim Christ Followers. The two terms are somewhat interchangeable in that they emphasize different aspects on the same group of growing disciples.

[8] In order to illustrate the differences between these two groups I run the risk of stereotyping individuals. I am presenting general profiles for the two groups. However, any given individual may not fit the profile for his group on one or more of these items.

[9] "If thou wert in doubt as to what We have revealed unto thee, then ask those who have been reading the Book from before thee: the Truth hath indeed come to thee from thy Lord: so be in nowise of those in doubt." (Yusuf Ali Translation)

[10] The following Qur'anic verse is often quoted: "But they (the Jews) were deceptive, and Allah was deceptive, for Allah is the best of deceivers" *(Wamakaroo wamakara Allahu waAllahu khayru al-makireena)!* S. 3:54. This does not seem to be orthodox Islamic interpretation of this verse, however. I've never seen a Muslim translate this verse in this way. Yusuf Ali translates the same verse "And (the unbelievers) plotted and planned, and Allah too planned, and the best of planners is Allah."

[11] This is currently one of the most controversial aspects of these movements. Muslim background followers of Christ are coming to their theological consultants and saying, "The way this is currently literally translated it means to us in our language that the Father God engaged in sex with a mother god and produced a child god. Is that what is intended?" When the theological consultant says, "No," the local believers are asking, "So then what does it mean?" They are then pleading for a meaning-based paraphrase instead of a literal translation this phrase.

[12] Johnstone, Patrick, *The Future of the Global Church: History, Trends and Possibilities* (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica, 2011), p. 78.

Syncretism in a Hindu Insider Movement:
K. Subba Rao's Legacy

by H. L. Richard

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Current discussions and controversies related to insider movements are overwhelmingly related to issues in the Muslim world. But the discussion of insider movements has been deeply impacted from Hindu contexts, where insider phenomena have deep roots. India has produced more notable insider *individuals* than insider *movements*, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907) and Kandaswami Chetti (1867-1943) being two early examples.[1]

By far the most striking insider movement story in church history is the account of the Secret Sannyasi Mission told by Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929); however there is no historiographical reason to believe that such a mission ever existed.[2] A peculiar variety of insider movement developed in the city of Sivakasi in the far south of India starting in the second decade of the twentieth century and continues to the present time, the main peculiarities being that the movement has been predominantly among women and relates in intriguing ways with existing churches.[3] The movement that developed around K. Subba Rao in Andhra Pradesh, south India, beginning in the 1940s is the best documented and most viable insider movement to have appeared in the Hindu world. Subba Rao was syncretistic in his teaching and practice, and that will be the focus of this analysis of the Hindu insider movement that developed around his life and work.[4]

The Life and Work of Kalagara Subba Rao (1912-1981)

Subba Rao's movement is a specimen of folk religion, and as such there has been little concern within the movement for its history or for the documents it produced. Yet the events surrounding the Subba Rao movement are recent enough that the central incidents can be quite reliably dated. Subba Rao was born in 1912 and married in 1937. In 1942 he experienced a vision of Christ that transformed his life and led to the Jesus movement that continues to this day.[5]

Both the account of Subba Rao's vision of Christ and the ministry of healing in Christ's name that eventually developed have been preserved with hagiographical rather than historiographical concerns in mind. Subba Rao wrote a song about his conversion experience and that song appears first in the current collection of his compositions.[6] Stories of the development of his healing ministry lack time frames and dates but are believable. My research, however, did uncover a blatant contradiction in accounts of Subba Rao's pre-conversion experience. The received story is that Subba Rao had no contact with Christians that might have influenced his vision in 1942. But in fact he had met the noted Pentecostal evangelist Lam Jeevaratnam due to his wife seeking (and finding) relief under Jeevaratnam's ministry (Richard 2005:45f.).

Fundamental to any understanding of Subba Rao is his reactionary rejection of Christianity and its institutions, and this attitude likely explains why influence from Pentecostal Christianity was ignored. Within the Subba Rao movement there is no traditional account for why Subba Rao first rejected Christianity, perhaps because it is considered an obviously right path. Dr. B. V. Subbamma, who became acquainted with Subba Rao after commending his work in her study of *New Patterns for Discipling Hindus* (1970:94-97), recounted to me that Subba Rao attended the Lutheran church in the village of Munipalle for a time, with others of his caste status following along due to his influence in that society. But he and his friends were not well received by the Christians of Dalit background; there was a fight about who got to sit on chairs and who sat on the floor and the Christians claimed the church had been built for them and not for these newcomers.[7]

By the 1950s Subba Rao had become known for his healing ministry. He was also uncompromisingly focused on Jesus Christ, whom he proclaimed

in the midst of a vibrant critique of all religious traditions. In practice—and surely this was related to the association of Christianity with Jesus—Subba Rao's critique of religious traditions centered on a critique, almost always a mocking, of Christianity. It is thus no surprise that his early years were marked by rather severe conflict with the established churches. His first English publication in 1958 was a deeply critical tirade against the church and its ministry, fittingly entitled *Retreat, Padri!* A second edition released in 1972 suggested that church relations had improved.

> The first edition was couched in language commensurate with the unrelenting attitude of the Christian

Syncretism is not as simple a matter as it seems.
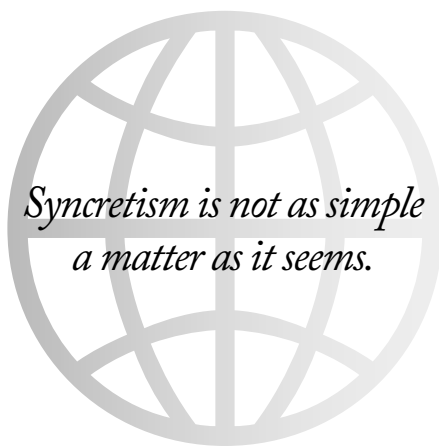
> religionists and padres towards me, and my own antipathy for them and their ill-conceived religious routine and belief of years long past. Strong words were needed then, to express my uncompromising feelings in the early days of my ministry for my Gurudev, Jesus Christ. The feelings are still inherent in me, but my voice has been mellowed by the open mind of my listeners. (Richard 2005:49, from Rao 1972:5)[8]

Nothing like actual cooperation ever developed between the Subba Rao movement and the established churches. The movement continued its central focus on physical healing, but was also certainly a devotional (*bhakti*) movement centered on faith and love

towards Jesus Christ. Along with these emphases the idiosyncratic teaching or philosophy of Subba Rao marked the movement. It is very difficult to estimate the numbers of adherents to Subba Rao's teaching. There was no formal organizational structure, and as will be noted there was opposition to baptism and sacramental practice. The movement developed a slogan of "no caste, no creed, no religion," but in fact was and is solidly rooted in the Kamma ("clean Shudra" in the caste hierarchy) community.

The Question of Syncretism

This paper rather boldly proclaims that Subba Rao and his movement are syncretistic, but it must be admitted that syncretism is not as simple a matter as it seems. Hopefully some razor-sharp critique of aspects of Subba Rao's work will be presented here, and in the process syncretism will be shown to be a dull knife. There is room for a great deal of difference of opinion regarding exactly what is syncretistic, and even when it is agreed that a practice or idea is syncretistic there is room for difference regarding what exactly constitutes the syncretism.

For a simple example, consider the ritualistic opening of Subba Rao meetings. A large crucifix (where dripping blood plays a significant part) is central to the manifest devotion. Is the crucifix itself syncretistic? The participants all remove their shoes. Is that syncretistic? Or is the Western wearing of shoes syncretistic? Are both neutral? Does motive (as much as act) indicate syncretism? Dozens of candles are lit at the foot of the cross/crucifix, and handfuls of incense are then burned on live coals held in a censor. All stand with hands folded (palms together against the chest) and sing the thoroughly orthodox Trinitarian "Holy, Holy, Holy" song that is sung by all Protestant Christians in Andhra Pradesh. Are these acts syncretistic? Why? Why not?

No sacramental practice exists in the Subba Rao movement; is that syncretism, or just aberrant teaching/practice? The Bible is honored in theory, but hardly in practice. During meetings there is a reading from the New Testament, randomly chosen without advanced preparation, with some comments from the leader following the reading. At the close of meetings there is a time of "blessing" where leaders place their right hand on the foreheads of attendees. At times something very like intercessory prayer is offered, but some leaders merely pronounce the name of Jesus over people (following Subba Rao's procedure for healing). The hand-on-forehead routine seems clearly borrowed from Pentecostal practice. Is the mere pronouncing of the name of Jesus syncretism or acceptable biblical practice? If the theology behind the practice is semi (if not completely) monistic, is that error, or syncretism, or both? Often oil or water is blessed and sprinkled or carried away by devotees, another practice that challenges simplistic assumptions about syncretism.

Subba Rao's Syncretism

This paper is not a challenge to the concept of syncretism, so I will now move to some clearly erroneous teachings of Subba Rao, at least some of which are without doubt worthy to be labeled as syncretistic. A cautionary note is necessary, however. Subba Rao was not a systematic thinker; hyperbole and paradox (perhaps contradiction) are abundantly present in his teaching. There are also remarkable tensions between his teaching and his practice in some areas, as will be pointed out as part of this analysis.

Subba Rao's neglect of the Bible and sacraments has already been noted. The casual use of the New Testament in meetings is consistent with clear teaching that decentralizes Scripture. The third stanza of the sixth song is a good example.

Hindu devotional movements are not book centered; the Christian method of cross-referencing various biblical statements seems odd to Hindus.

> The Book is a dense jungle;
> What do you seek in there?
> It is nothing but a fence to guard the earth-stained sinner.
> The heavenly guru himself told that the letter kills;
> Why don't you leave that deadening load and go forward? (Richard 2005:87-88)

Before also offering a critique let me first suggest an appreciative reading of this stanza. There is a sense in which the Bible is a dense jungle, and there is a focus on Bible study that leads to neglect of obedience. In such situations it is entirely appropriate to call people to leave "that deadening load" and go forward. But how does one find the way forward? Surely the way forward is found in a proper reading of the Bible, or at least of the teaching of Jesus? Yet this stanza suggests that Jesus (the heavenly guru) teaches that the letter kills. Those words are in fact a statement by Paul in 2 Corinthians 3:6, and are a reference to the Old Testament law. Jesus said the exact opposite about his own words, which are "spirit and life" (Jn 6:63). Despite sympathy for Subba Rao's point, the denigrating of the Bible, which is at least implied here, can only be considered harmful to true spiritual life.

Is this approach to the Bible syncretistic? A strong case could be made for defining matters in this way. Hindu devotional movements are not book centered, and the traditional Christian method of cross-referencing various biblical statements seems odd to Hindus. On the other hand, Subba Rao's life and work are marked by a reactionary spirit (Richard 2005:154f.). The example of Bible-toting Christians who did not sufficiently manifest the reality of Christ in their lives was more likely the stronger factor in Subba Rao's problematic decentralizing of Scripture.

Certainly that was the case regarding the practice of baptism.

Baptism was the central point of conflict between Subba Rao and traditional Christians. Subba Rao's opposition to baptism was neither subtle nor sophisticated.

> Forgetting the spirit they held onto the body and got caught in lustful ways;
> They clip the sacred tuft of hair, wipe off our forehead marks, and change our clothes;
> They immerse us in water, wipe away our old names and compose new names.
> That, they say, is the way to salvation.
> O God, if a pig is immersed in the holy river
> Does it become an elephant king? (Song 9, stanza 2; Richard 2005:92)

This mocking of baptism was in accord with Subba Rao's wider teaching against all ritualism. Song 2 stanzas three to seven provide a good example of this, while also illustrating Subba Rao's Christo-centrism and other themes that will be considered shortly.

> Outward cleansing is useless;
> Only inner purity will give me heaven, he said.
>
> Only the divine sacrifice made on the cross
> Is the way and the truth leading to eternal life.
>
> There is no use for shadows on the curtain,
> But he called me to seek the truth that is hidden behind the curtain.
>
> Destroying ignorance is true knowledge;
> And that cannot be done by rituals, he said.
>
> Leave the illusion of looking for heaven elsewhere;
> Leaving that illusion, see heaven within yourself. (Richard 2005:82f.)

In one of his few published prose works, Subba Rao stated that "Ceremonies are

useless. They are harmful. They mislead. Prayer and worship are the worst forms of ceremonial" (Rao 1965:9). Subba Rao was certainly reactionary against popular religion and its ritualism. To Christian friends he affirmed that baptism was not a problem if accompanied by a change of life (Richard 2005:75, nt. 25). Yet despite the anti-ritualism of the teaching, a distinct ritual developed under Subba Rao's own leadership. The ritualistic singing of the Protestant "Holy, Holy, Holy" hymn is especially striking in light of the dubious teachings to be noted below. Upon questioning, I was informed that Subba Rao himself introduced that song and its regular, ritualistic use.

The denigrating of ritual and baptism are related to the rather overwhelming dualism in Subba Rao's teaching, where the body is repeatedly considered bad while the spirit is good. This perspective is present in the last two songs quoted above, and often is much more explicit, as in song 20 stanza four and song 27 stanza seven which refer to the body as "a leather puppet of pus and blood" (Richard 2005:110, 124). Subba Rao's denigration of the physical body is particularly remarkable in light of the central focus of his ministry, which was physical healing. "Syncretism" does not seem to be an adequately comprehensive rubric for analyzing and discussing Subba Rao's issues related to dualism, denigration of the body, reactionary stances and radical inconsistency between teaching and practice, matters that nonetheless need to be critiqued.

The central area for identifying syncretism in Subba Rao's thought lies in a number of concepts that overlap traditional categories of anthropology (the doctrine of man, not the modern discipline), soteriology, Christology and pneumatology—indeed, every realm of traditional Christian thought. To begin let me quote some truly jarring statements, to be followed

by analysis and critique. Song 23 stanzas 13–17:

> I am no more in the futility of differentiating "I" and "mine."
> Without me where are you, my Jesus?
> Now I understand the secret mystery, my beloved;
> Then why the foolishness of worshipping you?
>
> I forgot myself and I created you (in my place);
> The forgetfulness has gone and knowledge has dawned, my Jesus,
> I have seen myself in you, my beloved;
> I know now that I am the supreme spirit.
>
> I have begotten and I am begotten;
> I have to worship myself, my Jesus;
> That is the total sum of your teaching, my beloved;

Why should such a strange person even be studied by orthodox disciples of Jesus?
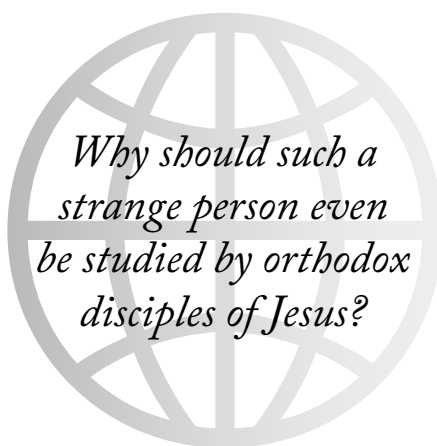
> That is the essence of the meaning of your life.
>
> I saw you and forgot myself;
> In me I saw you, and I become both earth and heaven, my Jesus;
> There is no more the bondage of sin and virtue, my beloved;
> There is no more slavery to the law.
>
> You became me and I became you;
> How can I worship you any more, my Jesus?
> How can you worship me, my beloved?
> How can separation be between you and me any more? (Richard 2005:117–118)

This is by no means a singular statement, as demonstrated by stanza three of song 34; the refrain of this song is "My brother Jesus kindly taught me that I am all."

> I am the creator and also I am the creation;
> I am the male form and I am the female form;
> I am omnipresent and I am being, consciousness and bliss;
> I am eternal life without birth or death. (Richard 2005:137)

I suspect, perhaps even hope, that some of you are wondering at this stage why such a strange person should even be studied by orthodox disciples of Jesus. The answer lies in the last (sixth) stanza of this strange song 34.

> To break down the guard and to ruin the castle of religion,
> To release Jesus who is imprisoned in it,
> I brought him out by hand and showed him to all;
> So come, brothers, following (him) is salvation. (Richard 2005:138)

These thoughts certainly represent syncretism with a pantheistic or advaitic or monistic worldview, yet as the closing line above shows it is a completely Christocentric syncretism focused on a life of discipleship to Jesus. It is also a syncretism that in many ways is in theory rather than in practice. The comments against worshipping Christ in the stanzas above are affirmed in prose in a strangely absolute polarity: "There are only two alternatives: (1) Living like Jesus so as to become Christ; or (2) worshipping, praying, and do all the rest of things except living like Him" (Rao 1965:13).[9] Yet nothing is more fundamental to the Subba Rao movement than the deep heartfelt devotion and worship towards Jesus Christ that is evident in their singing, particularly the "Holy, Holy, Holy" song already mentioned, which includes the stanza "Holy Son, incarnate ocean of love, saving men" and closes with "Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God, three in one, to Thee forever belongs the great glory" (Richard 2005:139). And there is neither anything whatsoever in their practice that suggests a worship of one's self, nor anything resembling a worshipful attachment to Subba Rao.

While exhortations to "become Christ" and "worship yourself" certainly transgress Christian orthodoxy, there are further problems regarding some massive oversights in the teaching of Subba Rao. One such is a total neglect of the teaching of God's forgiveness of our sins, related with neglect of any concept of atonement. Another is complete neglect of the New Testament emphasis on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the supreme blessing of the new covenant. The latter point (and arguably the former as well) is closely related to Subba Rao's strange anthropology (doctrine of man), which might be called an advaitic (or monistic) anthropology. At times the exhortation to worship yourself seems tied to one's *becoming* Christ, but there is a constant stress throughout Subba Rao's writings that Christ indwells all things, and it seems to me that this focus on an immanent and omnipresent Christ accounts for the neglect of Christ's indwelling of his people by the Holy Spirit as a special new covenant blessing.

This is just a sampling of erratic statements that could be quoted and analyzed, but the point is surely sufficiently clear that Subba Rao was a follower of Christ who was syncretistic in various ways.[10]

Properly Responding to Syncretistic Insider Movements

When I began (and titled) this paper I did not imagine that I would conclude that "syncretism" is an inadequate paradigm for analysis of difficult issues in Subba Rao's life and thought, and even now I desire that to be a secondary conclusion, with a focus on problems in insider movements and appropriate responses to such matters. The easiest response to Subba Rao's syncretism is simply to dismiss him and his movement as aberrant and not worthy of any further engagement. But, in line with evidence from other insider movements, Subba Rao was a sincere lover of Jesus Christ and pointed many others to like sincere

This type of response to other insider movements will almost certainly drive them into deeper isolation. A pastoral response is vitally important.

devotion; is there a biblical basis to ignore fellow disciples of Christ due to syncretism and error?

Subba Rao was ardent in his advocacy for Jesus, however much we may question and oppose some of his interpretations. This ardent advocacy is standard in insider movements, yet somehow it is often suggested that insider movements are marked by covert or private faith that fails in public profession of Christ. It is obvious that if there is a "movement" of any kind, there is vibrant sharing of faith. Subba Rao was not a Christian and avoided any formal association with institutional Christianity; yet he was bolder in proclaiming Christ among Hindus than most Christians can ever be.[11]

The reactionary element in Subba Rao's life must be taken into account when considering a proper response to him and his movement. It is important to reflect on how deeply the entire development of insider movements is related to similar reactions against established Christianity, though in my understanding few insider movements are remotely as reactionary as Subba Rao was. Yet avoidance of association with Christianity is pretty much the defining mark of insider movements. A purely theological assessment of Subba Rao's syncretism accompanied by a simple dismissal (or, worse still, rebuke) of this man due to his errors would only feed the separatist reactionary spirit that marked his thought and his movement. Similarly, this type of response to other insider movements will almost certainly drive them into deeper isolation and (potentially) error. A *pastoral* response to insider movements is thus vitally important.

Eighty years have passed since Subba Rao's life-changing vision of Christ. His legacy to his own movement (and to the Hindu world) is his Christo-centrism.

Despite his anti-sacramental, anti-organizational and anti-church teaching, a movement developed that has the marks of a New Testament *ekklesia* (church). For all their reaction against Christianity, the Subba Rao movement is warmly welcoming towards disciples of Jesus who approach them as humble disciples of Jesus. What is Subba Rao's legacy to the wider Christian world? Even during his lifetime, friction with Christian teachings and institutions had moderated. Lesslie Newbigin, certainly not unaware of aberrant teachings, opined that he would welcome the Subba Rao movement into the World Council of Churches, although he recognized that they themselves would not desire this (Thomas 1977:124).

What is the legacy of Subba Rao to a Christian world in light of the stunning growth of insider movements all across the world in the early 21st century? Part of it is certainly the recognition that insider movements are a conundrum.[12] No simple formulaic response is possible. An insistence that insider individuals and movements must associate with institutional Christianity will almost certainly compound the polarization between traditional Christian Jesus movements and these new Jesus movements.[13] The Subba Rao movement had and has much to learn from traditional Christianity, but is that a one-way street? Subba Rao lamented that

> Christians think that they have nothing to learn from me, but everything to teach me. They are too blind to see how Christ is glorified through a religionless man like me. Religion is their only concern. Baptism is their only concern. Not Christ. (Quoted in Airan 1965:89-90)

It seems that a consensus has formed that "indigenous churches" need to be self-theologizing as well as self-governing, self-propagating and

self-supporting; does this not surely also apply to Jesus movements beyond Christendom? There also seems to be a consensus that the Western church needs to learn from the developing churches of the non-Western world; surely this also applies to Subba Rao and insider movements.[14]

This consideration of Subba Rao and his remarkable movement is certainly not definitive for analysis of the phenomena of insider movements. It might in fact further muddy the waters rather than clarify. But theoretical clarity that is out of touch with ground realities is quite the opposite of biblical wisdom. In wrestling with the theory and practice of insider-ism, may we seek and find the wisdom that comes from above; "pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (James 3:17). IJFM

Endnotes

[1] Upadhyay's remarkable story is told by Julius Lipner (1999). See Chetti's own account from 1915 of why he stayed out of Christianity while following Christ (Chetti 1969[1915]). Herbert E. Hoefer's study of *Churchless Christianity* (2001) drew attention to the variety and vast dimensions of "insider individual" phenomena in south India.

[2] See Sharp (2004:63-65) and Dobe (2010). A *reductio ad absurdum* case against the existence of the movement is on the surface of the fantastic stories told in Zahir 1919.

[3] On the Sivakasi movement see Hoefer 2001:21-26, Wingate 1997:139-147 and Kent 2011.

[4] See my fuller study of Subba Rao (Richard 2005) for biographical details and analysis and particularly for a translation of the 34 songs written by Subba Rao that are both the primary source for understanding his thought and the center of the devotional appeal of the movement.

[5] Leadership in the Subba Rao movement is still with immediate disciples of the founder. His immediate successor, Sri Kesava Rao Chowdary, passed away on Jan. 24, 2006, but leadership has not passed on to a new generation.

[6] A detailed study of this song is presented in my study of Subba Rao (Richard 2005:57-77).

[7] Interview of April 30, 2002; Subbamma was a convert from Subba Rao's Kamma community to Lutheran Christianity.

[8] "Gurudev" was Subba Rao's preferred title for Jesus Christ, meaning "Divine Guru."

[9] This idea is expressed in verse song 28 stanza three:

> In my madness of devotion I worshiped you and thought the worship of your feet
> Was real love; I vexed you, I wept, and I made you weep.
> I worship you no longer, but live like you and follow you. (Richard 2005:126)

[10] It is perhaps necessary to note that I do not consider Subba Rao's refusal to identify with Christianity or his ongoing identification as a Hindu as aspects of his syncretism.

[11] B. V. Subbamma recounted to me how Subba Rao would berate Hindus for following Krishna as an excuse for their immorality, something Christians dare not do but which Subba Rao could do as he spoke as a Hindu to his fellow Hindus (interview of Oct. 7, 2003.)

[12] An aspect of the conundrum is related to people who appreciate and desire to support such movements, yet themselves are not and cannot be insiders. Thus these well-intending people (among whom I include myself), like all cross-cultural workers, necessarily taint as well as hopefully assist sincere movements to Christ.

[13] Many opponents of insider movements stress New Testament teaching on the unity of all followers of Christ, yet their insistence on such unity *on their own terms* in fact compounds the disunity.

[14] I personally have benefited from Subba Rao's anti-religion apologetic, and although I do not think he arrived at a proper enunciation of this teaching, he pointed me to the neglected reality of the indwelling of Christ in every human personality (cf. Charles Hodge, God is "present also in every human soul" (1885:385)).

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Money and Mission in the Buddhist World:
A Review of 100 Years Since Roland Allen

by Paul H. De Neui

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Editor's note: This is the revised version of a paper presented at the 2012 gathering of the International Society for Frontier Missiology in Chicago, Illinois.

We are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the publication of Roland Allen's famous book *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* In chapter 6 Allen lists three rules about finance, which he draws from the missional writing and practice of the Apostle Paul: 1) Paul did not seek financial help for himself; 2) he took no financial help to those to whom he preached; and 3) he did not administer church funds. I appreciate the opportunity to reflect upon these rules from my own experience of mission within Buddhist contexts. It is time to ask the hard questions: How far have we come? What have we learned? What has God done in us and, sometimes, in spite of us? Where will we go next, particularly in regard to the use of one of our most treasured resources—our money?

Before we review Allen's work, I want to mention three factors not present in his day that impact the way mission is done in ours. First, we no longer live in a world where Western Christianity (formerly known as "Christendom") rules the world. Other new groups, Christian and otherwise, now actively proselytize globally. The days of Western hegemony of the Christian faith are over. The growth of the church in the global south or the majority world is well documented[1] and indeed praiseworthy. Secondly, Allen ignores the global presence of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox work in mission. This may perhaps be attributed to the agreement at the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh to leave blank on the global map of mission outposts at the time all of Latin America in deference to the Anglican (and Roman Catholic) understanding that these areas were, in fact, "reached." Finally, there is a significant change in the directional flow of funding for missions today, particularly to Buddhist contexts. More money now comes from within Asia itself, as indigenous groups promote philanthropic giving based upon Eastern values (such as following the dharma or building up good karma). These values existed in Allen's day but he did not mention them in his book. With

these important differences in mind, let's evaluate our contemporary mission practice according to Allen's three rules.

Rule 1: Paul Did Not Seek Financial Help for Himself

Allen spends two full pages reviewing the practices of Paul concerning this first rule. He concludes with this summary from his own time as a missionary (1895-1903):

> In this our modern practice is precisely the same. Our missionaries all receive their supplies from home, and cannot possibly be thought to seek financial support from their converts. If they ever seem to be preaching for the sake of their living, that can only be because their attitude towards the preaching give some cause or occasion for the charge. (p. 51)

Where do we stand today? Can such things still be said of today's missionaries throughout the Buddhist world? While the vast majority of missionaries do not come to Buddhist cultures in search of financial gain, several constructs of mission (and even secular work) have clouded the issue for local people. Such practices include:

- Accepting paid positions to teach English.
- Setting up a business to cover personal salary and calling it mission.
- Entrepreneurial work that brings in funds that help oneself and others.
- Administering community development work where the foreigner handles the funds instead of a local person.
- Competition for funding with other groups and at times by individuals working within the same group.

Well-intentioned Christians, who want to break away from negative missionary stereotypes of the past such as living in lavish compounds, use strategies such as those listed above (and

others) in the Buddhist world and elsewhere without recognizing the local impact. Allen's words below remain a good warning for us today:

> It is of comparatively small importance how the missionary is maintained: it is of comparatively small importance how the finances of the Church are organized: what is of supreme importance is how these arrangements, whatever they may be [missionary lifestyle, church buildings, accounting systems, etc.], affect the minds of the people, and so promote, or hinder, the spread of the gospel. (p. 49)

What do those whom God has called us to serve think about what we're doing? I am not suggesting that we

We look in many respects like every other tourist, a fact that does not lend credibility to the task.

live by the judgments of others; this is more of a communication issue. Jayakumar Christian said, "Our lives are always giving witness to something. The question becomes, what is our life giving witness to?" (1999) What is being stated nonverbally by our presence in the places where God calls us to serve? Because evangelical missionaries do not wear the clerical collar or habit of Roman Catholicism (or the white shirt and tie of the Mormon tradition), we are not easily identifiable. Indeed, we look in many respects like every other tourist, a fact that does not lend credibility to the task. Others groups are clear; perhaps we can learn something from them.

Rule 2: Paul Did Not Take Financial Support to His Converts

Let me move on to the second rule that Roland Allen suggested: Paul did not receive financial aid *from* his converts, neither did he take financial support to them. The one instance of assistance to the suffering church of Jerusalem does not count as on-going financial support. Regarding this practice, Allen lamented that in his day, "we are now as far removed in action as we are in time." (p. 52) He complained that the construction of physical buildings and mission compounds assumes that "the work is firmly planted, that it cannot be easily driven away… We must have the material establishment before we build the spiritual house." (p. 52) Other issues related to Allen's second rule include, in his own (italicized) words:

1. *Securing properties raises difficulties in the way of preaching.* Restricting the sharing of the gospel to one location or type of edifice seriously hinders communication. However, the attitude "if we build it, they will come," has not proven true as the numerous empty church buildings of Asia can attest.

2. *Properties burden missionaries with concerns of maintenance.* How many ministries are bogged down because of their buildings? We have all seen it. When any this happens, central mission vision is lost.

3. *Large establishments misrepresent our primary purpose in coming.* Allen spends an entire three pages on this topic, which still challenges us today.

4. *By supplying everything we pauperize converts.* No opportunity is provided for growth through giving. In the most recent book in our SEANET[2] series, entitled *Complexities of Money and Missions in Asia[3]*, Mary Lederleitner wrote a chapter encouraging the use of

appreciative inquiry to address this particular issue.

5. *There is a false assumption that financial bonds will create unity and allegiance.* This may only last until a better patron comes along. In my own chapter on patron/client relationships, I try to help Western missionaries understand that the patron/client system exists in Asia and can be useful. We as Western missionaries talk about "raising our own support," when in reality we rely on a network of patrons ourselves. Let us be clear and not two-faced.

6. *Establishing compounds ties our missionaries to one place.* This needs little comment.

7. *Extensive compounds make it difficult for national leaders to attain equal status.*

8. *Sooner or later these holdings will become a source of fresh difficulties.*

What can we learn from others in regard to these critiques? There are other groups involved in mission from their own religious traditions that in some ways outstrip what the small group of evangelicals is attempting. Look, for example, at the strategy of Mormon missiology. They arrive on their mission field fluent in the local language. They live exemplary lives. They target only the interested and do not waste time with the uninterested. They keep membership requirements high. They establish local outposts quickly and purchase property in the name of local leaders. Finally, they only stay for short periods of time and then move on, creating a sense of ownership and indigenous leadership from the beginning.

What can we learn from Roman Catholic missionaries? Central to Catholic (and Orthodox) missiology is the need to establish a Eucharistic community, for it is from the table of the Lord that we gather in order to be sent to the world. Protestants (especially evangelicals) need to regain an understanding of the missional significance of the

*T*hey only stay for short periods of time and then move on, creating a sense of ownership and indigenous leadership from the beginning.

communion service as it connects with mission. Establishing a visible central place that is known by all allows neighbors to understand the spiritual function of the community. As an integral part of establishing a worshipping community, Roman Catholic missiology was once strategic in its intentional accommodation of local rituals. Further, the use of the liturgical calendar quickly established a cyclical tradition that draws in predictable seasonal events and unifies the global community of believers. Finally, Catholic missionaries are committed to a local place for as long as that community will have them.

How have we done as Protestants? Early on, money for construction projects flowed into Asia, and to some extent this continues. This focus on major building projects had died down until fairly recently when new money began pouring in, this time from the well-financed Protestant Korean missionary movement. Evangelicals need to be known as caring people and must continue to be present with aid and relief when disaster strikes. But investment in church facilities is much less than it was in the past. House church movements are growing in many parts of Asia—particularly China, Japan, Bangladesh and Burma. There is even a movement known as "Vulnerable Mission" that does not engage in aid work at all, but only gospel sharing.

Christians in the Buddhist world are confused about the decline in interest in building new structures for mission in Asia. "Why are you no longer building schools and hospitals?" we are asked. Those structures are still needed, but a new model of partnership is developing that will require more of national people and true synergy of resources together. We will return to this concept of partnership.

Rule 3: Paul Did Not Administer Local Church Funds

Rule number three from Allen's study is that "he did not administer local church funds." (p. 49) Unlike the situation in Paul's time, Allen admits that this was rarely the case in his own day. Foreigners administered funds collected by local people, something Allen was strongly against:

> They [locals] may not administer it at all to our satisfaction, but I fail to see what our satisfaction has to do with the matter. It is not our business. By making it our business we merely deprive our converts of one of the very best educational experiences, and break down one of the most powerful agencies for creating a sense of mutual responsibility. We also load ourselves with a vast burden which we are ill able, and often ill fitted, to bear. (p. 60)

How far have we come concerning this third rule? We recognize the need for locals to administer funds, particularly since Western evangelical churches are sending fewer missionaries long term to learn new languages and cultures. We agree with the theory of self-support and self-governance—but are we willing to do it? Can we actually release our money into the care of national leaders? Perhaps we need to step back and examine our motivations here. What do we, as partners in this mission, actually need? Certainly some of our funding sources require regular expense reports and annual audits. But we need to recognize how such requests can be interpreted in the minds of our non-Western brothers and sisters. In relationship-oriented cultures, the demand for receipts, reports and audits suggests a lack of trust. It is time to redefine accountability in light of mutually beneficial global partnerships.

To allow local leadership to administer funds means letting go so others can take charge in the way they best see fit. Naturally, the greater the responsibility (and higher the budget), the more difficult this task becomes. Allen identified two major fears preventing this "letting go" from happening in his own day, namely independence and congregationalism. He said, "we think it quite impossible that a native church should be able to exist without the paternal care of an English overseer." (p. 60) Certainly in that pre-World War I worldview, much of Christendom truly believed that Western Christianity would be the civilizing—and thereby saving—force of future societies. I believe that WWI (when Christian societies began killing one another) marked the beginning of the end of Christendom, and the start of the cracks in modernity that we now recognize so clearly. As a result, post-colonial and postmodern worldviews continue to divide us. Rather than reminisce, let us look forward to learning together as a global community that is committed to one another relationally.

Money and Mission Today

So where are we in relation to mission today, and, in particular, the way in which we use our finances in mission? What are we afraid of?

For the most part, Christ followers of all Western branches and their churches operate out of a sanctified version of the "Prime Directive," a theme out of *Star Trek*, the popular American science-fiction television series created in the 1960s. Reacting to the manner in which the United States was imposing its political agendas on other places in the world, particularly during the Vietnam era, the American screenwriters of this series inserted into the script a way to silently protest invasive US practices abroad and at the same time provide interesting new twists to their episodes. As the starship Enterprise encountered new worlds out in the galaxies, there arose

the ethical and intercultural dilemma of its crew simply appearing out of nowhere in societies that had no previous awareness that other worlds even existed. Behind the Prime Directive was the view that, because encounters of any kind would result in negative outcomes, social evolution should be allowed to continue without threat to natural processes. In its shortest form, the Prime Directive demands,

> No identification of self or mission. No interference with social development of said planet. No references to space or the fact that there are other worlds or civilizations.[4]

Although the rumor is unsubstantiated, some claim that the idea for the Prime Directive came from *Star Trek*

Like the dedicated crew of the starship Enterprise, we live our lives vowing never to say anything about our mission in space.

creator Gene Roddenberry's (supposed?) belief that Christian missionaries were interfering with other cultures.[5] Whatever the case, many Christians do believe such things about missionaries, and this affects the way they think, live and support—or don't support—global missions. We are afraid that the presence of a Christian witness in a society where the gospel has not been previously understood will interfere with the social (or some other) development of that particular culture. Like the dedicated crew of the starship Enterprise, we as Christians live our lives vowing never to say anything about space, our mission in space, the Creator of space, or the fact that there are other greater and more

eternal worlds beyond the temporal here and now.

The cultural tendency currently prevalent in our churches represents a 180-degree shift from the situation Roland Allen faced a century ago. Instead of the hopeful future of yesterday's Christian missions (albeit at times achieved through conquest), today's Western Christians are generally remorseful. I see this as mostly white guilt about mission and all of the negative things we think Christian missions have imposed upon non-Western cultures throughout history— things we never want to repeat. In fact, many (perhaps most?) Christians believe we need to make amends for these past wrongs. And certainly doing nothing is better than continuing to make problematic inroads abroad. U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq has contributed to the negative feelings that many Americans have about interventions overseas. Even well-known emerging church leader Brian McLaren (who claims to be missional[6]) states, "Wouldn't it be ironic if, in the name of Christ, we try to conserve and preserve the very same native cultures in the twenty-first century that we tried to wipe out in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?" (2001:77)

So how does this impact our use of money in mission? Believing that local leaders know their context best, we have withdrawn our relational commitment to understanding the complexities of distant cultures and have relied upon a few "partners" who may have started out as mere acquaintances or friends. Instead of sending people, we rely upon gifted national believers who are usually trained in our Western contexts, speak our language, and have "sacrificed" to return home and serve the Lord in what we considered a "less privileged" context. We can send our financial gifts and donations to these individuals and feel good about it. After all, we are "partnering" (or at least

doing something) in global missions; we are not the ones doing it overseas (which would be messy at best and paternalistic at worst); and, although we would never actually say this, we're happy that it doesn't impact or inconvenience our lifestyle where we live.

Is this the best we can do? Is "paying someone else to do the work" how we now define the contextualization of the gospel in the twenty-first century? I would like to offer a few final suggestions.

The newest edition of Jonathan Bonk's *Missions and Money*[7] includes a chapter by Christopher Wright entitled, "The Role of the Righteous Rich." In it Wright describes the role of certain Christ-centered individuals found in the Bible whom God blessed in tangible ways *for mission*. He argues that the fulfillment of that individual's blessing came through their partnership in God's wider mission. Americans especially are among the wealthiest people on earth. What then is our role as the righteous rich? We certainly have the opportunity to partner, but it takes much more than money for partnership to work well.

Take, for example, expectations surrounding the giving of gifts. Such expectations are culturally defined. In general Americans have a need to be thanked whereas other cultures in the world do not have this issue. In some Buddhist contexts it is embarrassing to try to thank someone for a gift, and rarely is the gift ever opened in front of the giver. Gratitude is a godly value but perhaps it can be redefined in ways that are better understood interculturally.

What about the resources that come from within the Buddhist world itself (or your context)? Recently, I received a document from an Indian brother now living in the UK who is encouraging philanthropic giving among Asians of many faiths.[8] Modeling giving enables others to experience the blessings of God in ways that build the church and, in the process, change all who partner in that mission.

One divine corrective that we in the Western church ignore to our peril is the two-way transformational nature of God's mission. Mission certainly changes the missionary, but it also must impact the sending church. How many of our churches are ready for that kind of investment? How many of us are willing to hear from our sisters and brothers in other parts of the world, and to let them teach us about obedience and faithfulness? Is it surprising that the church in Africa and China—where Jesus is literally life for people—is growing faster than elsewhere in the world? We righteous rich are blessed to give, pray, partner and go. But in God's economy it is not by might, nor by power (or well-funded projects), but by God's Spirit that mission moves. When we invest in our partnerships, let us follow Paul's models, which can inform and correct us. How about introducing a book study of Roland Allen, along with the writings of Paul, in our churches this next year? There is much we have yet to learn. We need to be touched at the deepest level of our deepest cultural values, namely our money. And it is here that our global partnerships can help us view ourselves, and our resources, differently.

Let me conclude with the words of a Buddhist abbot of a large temple in one of the largest slum communities in Bangkok. This is another lesson that we can learn from our Roman Catholic partners in mission. When the abbot heard that a particular evangelical mission agency was planning to send American missionaries, he was pleased. "Send us Protestants," he pleaded. "But don't send us Catholics. They stay!" **IJFM**

Americans especially are among the wealthiest people on earth. What then is our role as the righteous rich?

Endnotes

[1] See, for example, Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[2] SEANET (South, East, Southeast, and North Asia Network) is a network dedicated to facilitating mission in the Buddhist world, beginning in South East Asia and beyond. As far as we know this is the only network focused on mission in the often-neglected Buddhist cultures of the world. SEANET has been meeting annually for the last fourteen years and for the last eleven we have had a missiology forum. Thanks to assistance from students at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago where I now serve, we have been able to publish the edited papers from these conferences into topical volumes. The theme of the 2011 SEANET conference was "Money and Missions in the Buddhist World." In 2012 the edited papers were published by William Carey Library Publishers in a volume entitled *Complexities of Money and Missions in the Asia.*

[3] This volume, along with all the SEANET volumes, is available online through William Carey Library (www.missionbooks.org; also see ad p. 188, this issue).

[4] Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Directive).

[5] Ibid., stated without substantiation.

[6] *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished CHRISTIAN* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2004.

[7] Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Missionary Problem…Revisited* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 2007.

[8] UBS-INSEAD Study on Family Philanthropy in Asia. No date.

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Missionary Facilitation of New Movements to Christ:
A Study of 19th Century and Early 20th Century China

by Richard Hibbert

Missionaries among unreached peoples pray and work to see new movements to Christ among their host peoples. How missionaries respond to and interact with potential movements is the subject of increased attention in our day. It is generally understood that missionary response can impact the early phase of any potential movement in crucial ways, and I believe mission history bears this out. Thus in this article I want to compare the ways in which missionaries came alongside three movements to Christ in Southern China between 1845 and 1910. All three movements took place among the Miao and Hakka minorities, and together provide a vivid comparison of missionary response. I hope that this historical analysis will help missionaries as they consider how best to get alongside potential movements today.

Mission and church historians have used the terms "mass movements," "people movements," and "church planting movements" to refer to the phenomenon of large numbers of people becoming Christians in a relatively short time. Many church planters have found Donald McGavran's (1955, 1970) analyses of people movements in India, and, more recently, David Garrison's (2004) analysis of church planting movements helpful in guiding their approach. Several recent books encourage church planters to follow the principles derived from analysis of these movements (e.g., Ott and Wilson 2011, 65-87; Stetzer 2010, 325-333).

People Movements as an Interpretive Framework

The dream of winning people groups to Christ rather than a few isolated individuals was memorably articulated by Kenneth Latourette:

> More and more we must dream in terms of winning groups, not merely individuals. Too often, with our Protestant, nineteenth century individualism, we have torn men and women, one by one, out of the family, village, or clan, with the result that they have been permanently de-racinated and maladjusted. . . . Experience, however, shows that it is much better if an entire natural group–a family, village, caste, or tribe–can come rapidly over into the faith. (Latourette 1936, 159)

Richard Hibbert serves as Director of the School of Cross-Cultural Mission at Sydney Missionary and Bible College, Sydney, Australia. For twelve years he and his wife Evelyn were missionaries among Turks and Turkish-speaking Roma in Turkey and Bulgaria. He spent five years providing on-the-job training for cross-cultural church planters working among unreached peoples.

Roland Allen was perhaps the first mission theorist to describe this dream in detail, and to explain the approach that missionaries would need to take in order to facilitate its realization. His experience in China had led him to theorize that "spontaneous expansion" of the church was possible, desirable, and even essential for the church to spread over the six provinces of China in which his Anglican mission agency worked. By spontaneous expansion he meant

> the expansion which follows the un-exhorted and unorganized activity of individual members of the Church explaining to others the Gospel which they have found for themselves. (1927, 6)

He pointed out key attitudes in missionaries and new believers that would support this aim:

> That object could only be attained if the first Christians who were converted by our labours, understood clearly that they could by themselves, without any further assistance from us, not only convert their neighbours, but establish Churches. That meant that the first group of converts must be so fully equipped with all spiritual authority that they could multiply themselves without any *necessary* reference to us . . .

J. Waskom Pickett's (1933) study of "mass movements" in India seemed to confirm Allen's theory. By the term "mass movement" he meant "a group decision favorable to Christianity" that includes "the consequent preservation of the converts' social integration" (1933, 22). He contended that these movements of lower and outcaste (untouchable) Indians to Christ were the most natural way for them to become Christians, that they protected them from social dislocation, reduced the danger of westernization, and were the best way to help the greatest number of other people become Christians (1933, 331-4). He also recommended that mission agencies minister to both physical and spiritual needs, that more missionaries be assigned to areas in

which people movements were taking place, and that better ways of nurturing the new Christians be developed. Commenting later on the criticisms against the idea of rapid accession of new members to the church, he responded that, in his view, "natural, rapid community or group movements to Christian discipleship are more likely to produce a strong, healthy church than are cautiously controlled processes of slow growth" (1963, 11).

Donald McGavran took Pickett's ideas a step further, developing a theory of what he called "people movements." He identified the sociological factors involved, and urged missionaries to provide concentrated "post-baptismal care" of Christians, and to use "indigenous church principles"

Donald McGavran took Pickett's ideas a step further.

similar to those outlined by Pickett. These principles include encouraging believers to meet in their homes, training and trusting unpaid leaders, encouraging all believers to share their faith, encouraging churches to plant new churches, and encouraging indigenous patterns of worship (McGavran 1970, 325-7; 336-45). Despite theological, ethical, missiological, and procedural criticisms of some of McGavran's conclusions (e.g., Rainer 1993, 35-6), the dream of stimulating and nurturing people movements is still held by many missionaries and missiologists. Missionaries are currently being influenced, for example, by David Garrison's (2004) analysis of "church planting movements," in which there is a rapid increase in the number of churches

in a given area or population segment. Garrison identifies the following factors as being involved in the growth of each of the movements he analyzed:

- abundant evangelism;
- intentional planting and rapid reproduction of multiplying churches;
- the authority of God's Word;
- local, lay leaders;
- churches meeting as small groups in homes.

Garrison argues that church planting movements are much more likely to come into being when missionaries work to support each of these factors, and, in particular, do not try to control or even take the lead in new churches, but encourage believers from the very beginning of their Christian lives to share their faith and lead new churches.

Each of these missiologists argue that the way missionaries interact with the first converts in a potential people movement to Christianity has a defining impact on the progress of the movement. Other things being equal, they explain that a movement is more likely to grow faster and lead to multiplying churches when missionaries employ indigenous church principles and when they empower the first converts to do the work of evangelism, discipleship, and leading churches (cf. Ott and Wilson 2011, 65-87).

Facilitating Movements in China's History

The history of nineteenth century mission work in China provides a vivid microcosm of different approaches to facilitating incipient movements to Christ. Three significant movements involving the Hakka and Miao minorities in South China emerged between 1845 and 1910. The first, the Taiping movement, was initially a quasi-Christian movement that grew to include millions of Hakka, but ended with the tragic failure of the Taiping Rebellion. A much smaller movement that occurred simultaneously was the conversion of

several thousand Hakka in Guangdong province. The third movement involved a sub-group of the Miao people that grew within fifteen years to include more than 50,000 believers and hundreds of new churches. I believe a comparison of the way in which missionaries interacted with the early adherents of these Chinese movements can guide our encounter with potential movements in the 21st century.

First, I will argue that the Taiping movement and the rapid accession of Miao to Christianity were people movements, and that the church growth among the Miao and the Hakka is linked with the Taiping movement by similar ethnic, social, and political contexts. I believe the Taiping rebellion was an early indicator of openness on the part of Hakka and Miao to religious change. Secondly, I will isolate three elements in the people movement among the Miao that are vital to missionary facilitation of people movements: (1) swift response to signs of receptivity, (2) discernment of and adjustment to the socio-political context, and (3) empowering transfer of responsibility for church development and evangelization to new Christians. I will argue that failure in either of the first two elements above makes heterodoxy likely, as illustrated in the case of the Taiping movement, and that deficiencies in the third element can lead to a stifling of growth, as seen in the case of the Hakka.

The Taiping Movement, 1844—1862

The Taiping movement was arguably the most significant Chinese response to Christianity that China had seen up until the twentieth century. Although the degree to which this movement was Christian has been extensively debated—historian Yu-chung Shih (1967, 393) comments that there is "a voluminous literature, offering all shades of opinion"—widespread agreement exists that the early phase was an innovative

*T*he Taiping movement was arguably the most significant Chinese response to Christianity that China had seen up until the twentieth century.

Chinese Christian movement (e.g., Reilly 2004). The movement focused initially on worshipping the God of the Bible based primarily on biblical teaching, even if these teachings were at times misinterpreted. It was a contextualized movement towards Christianity, even though it conspicuously failed to reflect some biblical values (Reilly 2004; Michael 1971, 30). Key elements of the spirit of Christianity were missing, such as love for others and a deep understanding of sin and forgiveness (Boardman 1952). Latourette summarizes the movement in these terms:

> Outwardly, then, the T'ai P'ings showed markedly the influence of Christianity, although they had obviously modified what had come from the outside and had made it conform in large part to Chinese practice. Of the inner spirit of Christianity, the insurgents knew little or nothing. (Latourette 1929, 297)

The Taiping movement began when its founder-leader Hong Xuiqang, from the marginalized Hakka minority, was given a set of tracts by a missionary and his translator in 1836. He became ill and had certain visions, but then recovered. It was later in 1843 that he began reading these tracts and then "was greatly astonished to find in these books the key to his own visions" (Hamberg 1854, 19). Hong began to preach, and converted several friends who then baptized each other. Hong continued preaching to many of his Hakka relatives in Guangdong and Guangxi based on both the tracts and his visions. Several hundred people were subsequently baptized and began gathering for worship using a simple service developed by Hong. They called themselves the "Bai Shangsi Hui," or "God-worshiping society," and by 1847, just four years later, they numbered in the thousands (Hamberg 1854, 34).

The movement was marked by its indigeneity: it had unpaid local leaders, congregations were starting new congregations, and these often met outside or in homes (Medhurst 1853).

Hong's first extended contact with a missionary came four years after his exposure to the tracts and eleven years after his visions. He spent three months being taught by Issachar Jacox Roberts, a Baptist missionary from Tennessee. This discipleship process ended prematurely with Roberts refusing Hong's request to be baptized, apparently because Roberts' Chinese assistants envied Hong and negatively influenced Roberts' view of him (Roberts 1862, 67; Hamberg 1854, 31-2). The much-needed nurturing, teaching, and equipping of Hong as the emerging leader of the movement (as well as the essential correction to his understanding of basic Christian truth) was cut short, and this lack of formative discipleship allowed Hong and the movement to drift away from orthodox biblical teaching.

Later attempts to influence the movement were hindered by Hong, who by then was leading a movement of a million Taipings, who had fulfilled their political ambition to capture Nanking and rename it "New Jerusalem." Hong "would only accept foreign missionaries at Nanking if they acknowledged his claims to special revelation and semi-divine authority" (Gregory 1963, 11, cf. Cox 1862, 62). Several missionaries made brief visits to Nanking, but there was no sustained effort to influence the course of the movement apart from Roberts' unfruitful fifteen-month stay from late 1860 to early 1862. Upon his departure he wrote, "[I] am now as much opposed to them, for good reasons I think, as I ever was in favour of them" (1862, 142).

Any intervention had to contend with a very mature ideology. Taiping theology,

based on a selective blend of Scripture and visions, was by then very well formed. As late as 1861 Griffith John still believed in the potential reform of this movement, but his plea to Protestant missionaries to not abandon the Taipings came too late to change its tragic course. He emphasized that the movement was the "offspring" of missionary efforts, and that it had grown deformed through lack of "parental care." Rudolph Lechler (1878) similarly highlighted the movement's openness to new ideas, and lamented the lack of Christian "direction" given to it.

Factors in the Taiping Movement's Early Growth

The Taiping movement—like the Nian rebellion and popular resistance of the same period —grew out of specific socio-economic and political circumstances. The Hakka, dubbed "strangers" or "guests," were despised by the majority (Punti) people (Liao 1972, 25). The region's population had recently tripled and this had led to land and food shortages, price inflation, increased unemployment, and competition for resources between the original Punti settlers, and the Hakka "visitors" (Fairbank 1992, 167-72; Bohr 2003, 5). Many Hakka saw in the Taiping movement a hope for deliverance from the oppression and violence of Punti neighbours.

The Taiping movement's indigeneity was another key element aiding its rapid growth. The movement's leaders were unpaid (Medhurst 1853), and congregations that were starting new congregations often met in homes. But, sadly, this "indigenizing principle" was not combined with a second principle, one that Andrew Walls (1996, 7-9) has termed the "pilgrim principle." The gospel not only allows us to be "at home" in our own culture (an indigenizing principle), but also transforms us beyond any particular cultural inheritance, granting us a new universal identity that has sufficient

continuity with other biblically-based churches (a pilgrim principle). The key reason for a deficient self-determination among the Taipings was the lack of "post-baptismal care" which McGavran (1970) insists is so essential to the quality of people movement churches. Hong's first significant direct contact with any missionary (and also with the Bible) came four years after his exposure to the tracts he received and eleven years after his visions. His unfortunate interaction with Rev. I. J. Roberts in Canton, which could have led to the intensive discipling, equipping, and further empowering of Hong as the key leader of the movement, ended instead with Roberts' refusal to baptize him and

His plea came too late.

Hong's abrupt departure. Apparently there was a plot to discredit Hong by Roberts' envious assistants (Roberts 1852, 67; Hamberg 1854, 31-2), but whatever the contributing factors, the loss of an early opportunity to correct Hong's orientation is clear.

Church Growth among the Hakka in Guangdong, 1840—1910

At the same time as Hong was preaching in the province of Guangxi, the church among the Hakka was beginning in neighboring Guangdong, initially as a result of the efforts of Karl Gutzlaff and his Chinese co-workers, and later as a result of the work of

missionaries from the Basel mission, of which both Theodor Hamberg and Rudolph Lechler were a part. By 1876 there were close to one thousand Hakka church members in Guangdong province, and by 1907 there were more than six thousand. This later growth came at a time of rapid increase in missionary numbers and resources, however, and was less a case of church multiplication than of addition through the establishment of new mission stations. A network of mission stations—with schools and hospitals, and a large number of paid workers (72 Europeans and 271 Chinese in 1913)—was developed (Constable 1996, 161-2).

Early Hakka church growth was connected with the Taiping movement in several ways. It shared some of the same social factors that stimulated and fuelled the Taiping movement. It was built on Hakka exposure to aspects of Christian teaching during the growth of the Taiping movement (cf. Lutz and Lutz 1996, 289). At least one former Taiping rebel became a key evangelist, and Rudolph Lechler and Li Zhenggao, a Chinese evangelist, preached to many former Taipings in the late 1860s (Lutz & Lutz 1997, 191).

The indigeneity that was a key to the rapid growth of the Taiping movement also characterized the early work among the Hakka in inland Guangdong. Gutzlaff emphasized indigeneity and the rapid transfer of responsibility to Chinese Christians. Convinced that the cultural gap between Western missionaries and Chinese people prevented effective communication of the gospel by all but a few exceptional missionaries, he developed a corps of Chinese evangelists in the early 1840s, and sent at least half of them out to the towns and villages of inland Guangdong. The churches they planted were marked by indigenous forms (Lutz and Lutz 1997, 6).

Abundant evangelism (to use Garrison's phrase) and training of local

evangelists were keys to Gutzlaff's approach. This approach was later followed by the Basel missionaries Theodor Hamberg and Rudolph Lechler, who arrived in China in 1847 in response to Gutzlaff's request for missionaries, and they began work among the Hakka in the area of Guangdong adjoining Hong Kong (Lutz & Lutz 1998, 6). They focused on supervising, training, supporting, and funding Chinese evangelists who did most of the work of evangelism and itineration from village to village.

Hindrances to Hakka Church Growth

In contrast to the strongly Chinese flavor of the early Hakka churches, missionary input into the Hakka church that commenced in the 1860s emphasized orthodoxy at the expense of growth through empowering local Christians to do the work. According to Jessie and Ray Lutz's analysis (1997, 214), the arrival of the missionaries in inland Guangdong meant that, albeit unwittingly, an imposition of Western forms brought "a reduction in the autonomy of the Chinese evangelists and in the movement towards indigenization." When Basel missionaries heard converts rhythmically chanting the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed, they reacted negatively. The missionaries' arrival also served to identify Christianity with westerners, and their presence precipitated a large increase in persecution of converts (Lutz and Lutz 1997, 215-6).

The direct input of missionaries into the inland Hakka churches, with its emphasis on intensive teaching of converts by the missionaries themselves and their imposition of Western forms, seemed to hinder church multiplication. Had missionaries equipped and empowered local leaders in such a way that they could continue to carry the responsibility and the initiative for evangelism, discipleship, and the planting of new churches, using indigenous

When Basel missionaries heard converts rhythmically chanting the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, they reacted negatively.

church principles later articulated by Roland Allen, greater growth might have been achieved. The Taiping rebellion had demonstrated the possibility of mobilizing a large number of Hakka very quickly, but it had also led to an overriding concern for orthodoxy at the expense of transferring responsibility for the church and evangelization to local Christians.

The Hua Miao People Movement, 1904–1910

Like the Hakka, the Hua Miao—a subgroup of the Western Miao who live in Yunnan and Guizhou—were looked down on by the majority people. They were perceived as newly pacified, rootless barbarians on the bottom of the social heap (Diamond 1996, 143). In response to their experience of oppression and major food shortages, the Miao initiated a series of uprisings from 1854 to 1873 known collectively as the "Miao Rebellion" (Jenks 1994, 172). They also became significantly connected with the Taiping movement. Hong, the founder of the Taiping movement, had traveled extensively in Miao territory and, in one episode, left tracts with a responsive Chinese schoolmaster who ran a school for Miao (Hamberg 1854, 27). Tens of thousands of Miao also joined the Taiping movement when one of the Taiping generals, Shi Dakai, led his troops into Guizhou in 1859 (Shih 1967). The Miao resonated with the Taipings' desire for improvement in their social conditions.

James Adam, a missionary with the China Inland Mission, began to evangelize in Hua Miao villages in 1896. They proved responsive, and hundreds were baptized and organized into churches over the next eight years (Clarke 1911, 172-8). Noticing that

many had traveled for several days to get to him from northeast Yunnan, he urged them to visit Samuel Pollard, a Methodist missionary who was living much closer to their villages. On July 12, 1904, four Miao men arrived at Pollard's door. He welcomed them, housed them and began to teach them to read, and also preached and taught some simple songs to them. In the following months over a hundred Miao came to Pollard's house eager to learn. Pollard (cited by Grist 1921, 181) wrote: "They trooped in with their books, begging to be taught. They began at five o'clock in the morning, and at one o'clock the next morning some of them were still reading."

Pollard began traveling to Miao villages with the Chinese ministers Stephan and James Li to teach, baptize and start churches. Within three years more than a thousand Hua Miao had been baptized. Another CIM missionary Arthur Nicholls, working together with the Li brothers, saw whole villages become Christian (Covell 1995, 91). One early observer commented that the movement spread much more as a result of the Miao believers' eagerness to witness to their people than by the traveling and preaching of the missionaries (Clarke 1911, 179). By 1920, there were a total of about 70,000 Miao Christians, with 15,000 baptized (Hudspeth 1922, 702-5).

Missionary Responses that Facilitated Growth of the Miao Movement

The nature of the missionaries' response to the Miao was critical to the healthy development of the movement. First, and most obviously, they responded swiftly to the receptivity of the Miao. They shifted their focus from the majority people, who were then

relatively unresponsive, to concentrate on the responsive Miao. Their mission leaders demonstrated corresponding flexibility. Hudson Taylor, then the director of CIM, allowed Adam to concentrate on the Miao, deviating from the CIM policy of working only with the Han (Adam 1907, 10-15, cited in Covell 1995, 89).

Secondly, the missionaries empowered the Miao in several ways. They baptized them with little or no delay, discipled them intensively, and transferred to them the sense of responsibility to evangelize their own people (Covell 1995, 98). Pollard's overriding desire was that responsibility for evangelism, teaching, and the church itself be transferred to the Miao as soon as possible. He was always concerned that the Miao might see the church as "an institution belonging to the foreigners and not to them" (Grist 1921, 271). Early on, he devised a simple pattern for training in the form of a quarterly meeting for Miao preachers. They would gather to work out relationship issues, deal with cultural matters, and discuss sensitive issues (Covell 1995, 100). He also refused offers to have other missionaries join him, wanting Chinese co-workers and money instead to train and support more Miao teachers. As a result, within a few years most of the teaching was being done by the Hua Miao themselves (Diamond 1996, 146).

Thirdly, missionaries demonstrated a respect for Miao culture; identified with them by living among them, learning their language and wearing Miao clothing; and adapted their ways of doing things according to Miao culture. Leaving the relative safety of their fortified cities they made extensive trips through the mountains with Miao companions (Lewis 2000, 81), and Pollard moved from the city to a small tract of land near a Miao hamlet in order to be closer to the people (Diamond 1996, 145). The missionaries also identified with the Miao by helping to address social and

physical needs. Along with evangelization they taught literacy, established schools, and gave health care. They also advocated for the Miao with Yi landlords and Han officials, something that impressed the Miao deeply (cf. Cheung 1997). In response to the Miao's desire to read, they quickly began the task of translating of the Bible, and developed a special script for the Miao language. They evidenced concern for contextualization by their careful development of functional substitutes for key Miao festivals (Diamond 1996, 147; Covell 1995, 97), and by their determination to make their teaching as understandable as possible to the Miao (Pollard 1908, 34-36). All this was undergirded by Pollard's adage: "No Europeanizing of the people

> *The Miao movement illustrates three missionary responses that helped it continue to grow rapidly.*

but Christianising of them in their own environment" (Lewis 2000, 90).

Conclusion and Missiological Implications

The growth of the Taiping movement, of the Hakka churches in Guangdong, and of the movement to Christianity among the Hua Miao occurred in the context of economic pressure and oppression by the government bureaucracy (cf. Fairbank 1992, 167-216). The two main minority peoples involved in these movements, the Hakka and the Miao, were considered outsiders by the culturally dominant Han, and were consequently open to change that promised a better future.

The people movement among the Miao, in contrast to the devastation caused by the Taiping rebellion, resulted in thousands of Miao coming to faith in Christ and the planting of many churches. The movement illustrates three missionary responses which helped the movement continue to grow rapidly: (1) swift and discerning response to the receptivity of the people to the gospel; (2) an empowering transfer of responsibility to Miao Christians from very early in the process of evangelization; and (3) a sensitive appreciation for adapting to the culture and social context of the Miao. Each of these responses was significant for the healthy development of the movement. Missionaries who want to be effective in their nurture and facilitation of people movements would do well to follow these principles.

Residential missionary work among the Hakka in Guangdong was, in contrast, marked by a disempowering of Hakka Christian workers *and* by a suspension of responsibilities they had already been fulfilling, such as baptizing and teaching. As part of the mission mobilization unwisely named "Christian occupation of China" in the late 19th century, there was a large influx of missionaries to the Hakka that led to several thousand Hakka conversions. This relatively modest growth in proportion to missionary numbers, when compared to the Miao movement, was perhaps partly due to the disempowering of local Christians. Excessive control by missionaries might have ensured a doctrinally orthodox church, but it did so at the cost of "spontaneous expansion," to use Allen's (1927) phrase.

Taiping "Christianity" failed not because of over-control but the almost complete lack of interaction by missionaries with the movement. The intensive discipling that McGavran (1970) called "post-baptismal care," and which he deemed essential for the healthy growth of a movement, was consequently absent. The swift mission-

ary response to receptivity among the Miao was lacking among the Taiping early on, primarily because close contact with the missionaries was prevented due to their confinement to the treaty ports until 1860. In the later phases of the Taiping rebellion, the movement and its leader were too entrenched in their heterodoxy for missionary input to be able to influence it.

The Taiping movement and the work among the inland Hakka serve as warnings of two dangers for missionaries seeking to facilitate and nurture people movements to Christ: the failure to disciple new Christians and the failure to hand over responsibility and authority to these new Christians. Instead, missionaries should follow the approach of Samuel Pollard who responded to signs of receptivity swiftly, empowered local believers to evangelize, baptize and plant churches, and discerningly adapted his ministry to the culture and needs of the local people. **IJFM**

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Book
Reviews

Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models, by A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012, 432 pp.)

—Reviewed by Brad Gill
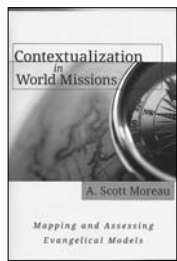
If evangelical mission were considered a sport, it would need a referee. Indeed, as the contest over certain concepts and practices has sharply intensified over the last few years, certain bodies have been asked to fill an umpire role (witness, for example, the recent controversy over translation practice[1]). Most of the tension surrounds the practice of contextualization, a concept that represents such an array of meanings, models and methods that it defies simple explanation. Admittedly, such complexity often makes it difficult for us to find our missiological bearings—there's just too much to consider, too much going on, too much being said on the matter. In the confusion, our tendency is to shut down and harden our positions.

Into this fray has stepped Wheaton College professor of intercultural studies Scott Moreau with his new book, *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models.* In it Moreau offers a way for evangelicals to situate themselves along the vast spectrum of contextualization. Yet he's more than an umpire. Moreau steps back and helps us see the game we've been playing in a more complete fashion. He wants us to understand the diversity of practice in contextualization by identifying the various models we're using. In so doing he may also help reduce the misunderstandings and misrepresentations that seem to fuel dysfunctional debate. By providing a map (what he calls a "travel guide"), he provides a constructive perspective that might allow us to move forward together as evangelicals in mission. And perhaps we won't need an umpire as much in the future.

Contextualization is a relatively young term in evangelical mission, having only been coined in 1972. Its continued evolution as a concept in subsequent years has shown patterns typical of adolescence (involving lots of individuation and venturing). The term actually emerged within ecumenical discussions, so Moreau quickly sorts out what he means by evangelical contextualization. He must begin with the work of two Catholic mission scholars, Bevans and Schreiter, who provided the earliest mapping of different models of contextualization (pp. 36-44). But the term quickly took on force in evangelical mission circles, where it generated yet other map-making (pp. 325-59), and it's this evangelical mission stream that Moreau wants to chart for his readers. His encyclopedic skill is apparent throughout the book, and it's tested in the first chapter where he tries to capture the essence of contextualization. For Moreau, contextualization is

> the process whereby Christians adapt the forms, content and praxis of the Christian faith so as to communicate it to the minds and hearts of people with other cultural backgrounds. The goal is to make the Christian faith as a whole—not only the message but also the means of living out of our faith in the local setting—understandable. (p. 36)

With this definition in hand, Moreau probes the evangelical mission literature to determine the models we use in contextualization. He's studied over 5000 sources, identified 249 examples, and distilled it all into six contextualization models. Following the mapping analogy, he compares the whole subject of contextualization to the earth's surface, with his models representing the different landmasses (p. 31). Models are writ large, as ways to identify broad theoretical categories of contextualization. His models, therefore, are more comprehensive than any one method or proposition. Quoting Bevans,

> A model is a case that is useful in simplifying a complex reality, and although such a simplification does not fully capture that reality, it does reveal true knowledge of it. (p. 31)

In the second part of the book Moreau describes his six models or complex realities. A quick scan of the six titles he' has chosen immediately indicates how evangelicals in mission might "lean into" contextualization: facilitator, guide, herald, pathfinder, prophet, and restorer. This typology can certainly help us both appreciate and negotiate diversity, but it also gives us a way to identify our place within a broad spectrum of possibilities. As Moreau has admitted, this mapping is kind of like a Myers-Briggs personality profile for contextual roles,[2] which can help each of us more easily assess where we are in the debate.

Moreau fits his 249 examples under six models, which initially seems nice and tidy. But the resulting density within each model required further sub-categories, and such variety can confound any reader who skips the first part of the book. Resist that temptation, for it's actually in his early chapters that Moreau explains the conceptual history that has shaped these models of contextualization. And it's there that he illumines the deep structure of contextualization, those assumptions and presuppositions which underlie "the process whereby Christians adapt the forms, content and praxis of the Christian faith."

The author apparently needed to do some digging and interpreting to discover these presuppositions, for many of his sources failed to indicate their philosophical or methodological

orientation. We as evangelicals tend to push methods without giving much thought to our underlying assumptions, so Moreau examines the different understandings hiding beneath terminology and method. He spends a whole chapter on the development of "concepts that shape and constrain contextualization," and his historical material, while brief, is crucial. Moreau is careful to specify that hinge period in the 1950s when mission anthropologists punctured the settled notion of "indigeneity" (pp. 123-26) and a new vitality in evangelical missiology emerged from a fresh engagement with the social sciences. Missiology discovered that there was more to the indigenous church than the popular "Three-Self" formula had projected, and further aspects of indigeneity began to be identified and promoted (e.g., self-actualization, self-theologizing, self-missiologizing). Moreau shows how these reconsiderations led into the fertile 1970s when other concepts fundamental to contextualization—such as holism, transformation, syncretism, incarnation and praxis—began to be emphasized. Different schools of thought would emerge, each giving greater focus to one or two of these concepts, and you would seldom hear all these concepts in one conversation. Moreau skillfully shows how these seemingly disparate concepts actually represent different sides of a prism we now call contextualization. Indeed, his masterstroke is to weave them together into one broad conversation.

Throughout the book Moreau draws attention to the activism that characterizes evangelical mission. Evangelicals stand ready for any new tool that can help them get on with the mission and in chapter 6 Moreau presents some of the "tools of analysis" that have caught the imagination of evangelical mission. Conceptual tools like worldview, orality, redemptive analogy and set theory we use and publish widely. Other tools of analysis have been more controversial, and Moreau doesn't shy away from taking on two of them in this chapter: dynamic equivalence and insider movements. He presents some of his finest skill in unpacking the conceptual underpinnings of these two orientations, and he is characteristically Moreau in his fair and balanced representation of the different sides of each debate.

Once again, to capture all that Moreau suggests about these conceptual tools, the reader must reach back to an earlier part of the book. Naturally, the use of any tool requires discernment, an ability to sort the good from the bad, and so he outlines how our predecessors have discerned "the marks of good contextualization." (Chapter 4) Yet all such sorting is rooted in two presuppositional concerns: revelation (Chapter 2) and interpretation (Chapter 3). Moreau knows that any map of evangelical contextualization will ultimately boil down to one's assumptions about the Bible

(or what he calls "biblical congruence"), thus he begins his book with the deep structure of revelation and interpretation. It's my conviction that the entire debate on contextualization can advance decisively if we simply absorb Moreau's analysis (and his manner) in these initial chapters.

The author's gift for fair and balanced critique is no more apparent than in his comparison of the contributions of Charles Kraft and Paul Hiebert, two mission anthropologists who have dramatically impacted how we understand the roles of knowledge, communication and culture in more recent efforts at contextualization. The comparison of these two missiologists actually carries over several chapters, popping up where Moreau cites the different perspectives on contested concepts. Kraft and Hiebert intersect in their treatment of analytical tools like "worldview" and "dynamic equivalence" (Chapter 6), as well as in epistemological discussions of "truth and knowledge" or the communication of "form and meaning" (Chapter 3). Both men have together helped evangelicals appreciate a "critical-realist" orientation to truth (vs. the "naïve-realist"), but Moreau's precision allows readers to recognize a finer theoretical distinction between their two positions, one which makes a big difference in contextualization practice. Any attempt at contextualization seems to boil down to our understanding of message and meaning: is the meaning in the message itself or is it in the mind of the receptor? Can form and meaning be clearly separated? Kraft and Hiebert handle these questions differently, and how one answers such questions will determine where one lands along the spectrum of contextualization. Moreau's years of experience teaching younger minds shines through in the way he carefully distills the mission anthropology of Kraft and Hiebert.

The clutch that allows Moreau to move from a missiological gear (Part 1) to an actual map of evangelical contextual models (Part 2) is his "rubric," which is his selection of "the criteria and rules for categorizing each model." (p. 174) In Chapter 7 Moreau describes how he shaped this instrument for mapping his models. He wants this rubric to include all approaches, clearly distinguish each model, and accommodate new categories in the future. While his models identify different "initiator roles," he is quick to offer disclaimers: he doesn't wish to "imply that the individual never takes on other roles or that the method is constrained by that role [but each model should simply] indicate the role of the initiator(s) that the particular example portrays." (p 175) Moreau is careful to avoid any inflation of his results. His is an inductive approach drawn from living examples, and those examples are limited to his broad experience and his impressive search

*M*oreau doesn't shy away from taking on dynamic equivalence and insider movements. He presents some of his finest skill in unpacking the conceptual underpinnings of these two orientations.

of publications. As he himself admits, the examples available to him are not a complete picture, for quite often enterprising missionaries just don't choose to write for one reason or another. Moreau may seem technical and scientific in describing this rubric, but he is so characteristically transparent and collegial in manner, that he seems to invite participation. His spirit of open communication is in itself a model for all future discussions of contextualization.

So consider *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* the next textbook on contextualization. The author has tried to map it all out for us by introducing different models, but in so doing he has introduced a comprehensive manual on the subject. He is consistently readable and clear even in such murky waters, and you can expect to see it in many classrooms. More importantly, however, it must be used in our fields of ministry. This book can greatly enhance our ability to partner together as evangelicals on the frontiers of mission—the place where most of these innovative controversies initially emerge. The need for umpires or referees could become obsolete.

Endnotes

[1] The World Evangelical Alliance was asked by SIL/Wycliffe to mediate the controversy surrounding the translation of familial terminology into Muslim contexts. See http://www.worldevangelicals.org/translation-review for more details.

[2] Moreau made this comparison in his address at ISFM 2012.

Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, by Timothy J. Keller (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012, 400 pp.)

—Reviewed by Brad Gill

A new urban frontier confronts the church in late modern society. A culture shift has widened the gap between church and culture, and it has forced the church to consider new forms of contextualization. Terms such as *missional*, *emergent*, and *post-evangelical* attest to the church's attempt to fill this cultural breach. Fresh streams from the global South offer simpler and effective alternatives to the over-institutionalized Western church models. And accompanying all this innovation is a not-so-subtle reaction to the shifting theological emphasis behind some of these new philosophies of ministry. Orthodox theology can seem marginalized or warped by any new model, and one can feel the pressure to choose between sound theology and cultural relevance. But especially when we consider the cultural and religious mix of Western cities, it has become increasingly apparent that the challenge of contextualization typically encountered on foreign fields has boomeranged back on the urban church in post-Christian societies.

With the publication of his new book, *Center Church: Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City,* the prolific Timothy Keller has waded into these missiological waters. *Center Church* is essentially the "theological vision" that propels his Redeemer Church in New York City, but this comprehensive philosophy of ministry requires a manual of nearly 400 pages to unpack. Keller's fusion of orthodox theology and cultural contextualization provides clear evidence that missiological principles born in more foreign contexts have now come home to roost. If, indeed, the American city represents a new cultural frontier for gospel and church (Western, late modern, multicultural, post-Christendom), then Keller provides a thorough primer on the process we call contextualization for this particular frontier.

Keller believes that the urban cities of the world are underserved by the church, and he is "seeking to use all . . . biblical, sociological, missiological, ecclesial and rhetorical resources . . . to address this deficit." (p. 166) His interdisciplinary breadth is impressive, as you can see from the thorough footnotes. He has integrated many missiological contributions into how we should expect "fruitfulness" in the urban context, but one particular voice rises above all the others. Keller was a colleague of Dr. Harvie Conn at Westminster Theological Seminary in the 1980s before he stepped into his ministry in New York City, and their weekly interface seems to enrich much of the book.[1] Conn was a unique mission theologian within the Reformed perspective, and a ground-breaker in urban missiology—and it appears that insights from their discussions have been forged on the anvil of Keller's urban pastorate. Keller is no mere reformed pastor, but a reformed *missiological* pastor. Oh, that our pulpits were filled with them.

Theological Vision

From the outset Keller wants to frame his entire approach as a "theological vision," and his choice of terms make the reader step back and reconsider the scope of this task.

> A theological vision is a faithful restatement of the gospel with rich implications for life, ministry, and mission in a type of culture at a moment in history. (p. 20)

The late modern city is Keller's own "type of culture at a moment in history," and he spends over 160 pages unpacking this contextual challenge. One of the things I love about the book is how Keller models the necessity of thinking long and hard about context. He's a contextualizer *par excellence* who engages in the heavy lifting required to sort out his urban culture; yet, at the same time, he prioritizes a study of the gospel. For Keller contextualization seems too narrow a term for the broad challenge of fusing gospel and culture, so he chooses to deploy Richard Lints' term "theological vision."[2] This is his way of bridging the typical divide between theology and the practical methods of ministry, creating more of a middle zone that he believes is critical to fruitfulness. His entire book explores this zone by examining each of the three

*T*his section is a fine introduction to contextualization for the young American Christian who isn't particularly interested in strange and distant frontiers.

dimensions (axes) of gospel, city and movement, integrating them *theologically* as one philosophy of ministry and one broad process of biblical contextualization.

Keller takes six chapters to introduce his understanding of the gospel and how it applies to the issues surrounding spiritual renewal. He pulls from the perspectives of Francis Schaeffer, D. A. Carson, J. I. Packer, C.S. Lewis, John Piper and Martin Lloyd-Jones in his attempt to balance the gospel on an axis between two poles: "The gospel is neither religion nor irreligion, but something else entirely—a third way of relating to God through grace." (p. 27) His perception is that the gospel is found between legalism (religion) and relativism (irreligion). Keller is masterful at showing how the gospel gets bent out of shape in our familiar American turf, and his initial chapters help us navigate the dangerous waters of our own Christian religious world. His first section, "Gospel Theology," explains the essence, themes and narratives of the gospel. He then offers a refreshing review of how the gospel of grace, redemption and atonement allow us to negotiate the straits of religion and irreligion, which he understands to be fundamental to any "Gospel Renewal." (chapters 4–6) This third way of grace requires a gospel that can break through the idolatries particular to this post-Christian world.

Keller's framing of the gospel is informative, but one suspects that the American urban context has shaped his axis of religion/irreligion. Throughout the book Keller will attempt to find balance between different polarities, but this first axis (religion/irreligion) seems descriptive of how religion manifests in a Western postmodern context. The gospel will always confront religion in any context, but on other socio-religious frontiers and across other geographical locations it primarily confronts other religious worlds, introducing more of a comparative religious challenge. In his own review of *Center Church,* Mark Pickett rightly points out that Keller's use of the word "religion" is pejorative, ambiguous and therefore difficult for those who minister in other religious contexts.[3] Keller's axis of moralism (religion) and relativism (irreligion) may be relevant where we're seeing the challenge of late modernity, but it may fail to describe the gospel axis where religion and culture are fundamentally different. His axis is therefore more particular than universal. But one still can appreciate how this American pastor illustrates the process of gospel contextualization in a late modern, post-Christian, urban, American religious context.

Engaging Culture
Keller's view of contextualization becomes more explicit in parts two and three of his book. Part two, called "City," is divided into three sections: Gospel Contextualization, City Vision and Cultural Engagement. Keller hasn't left theology behind with his initial study of the gospel, but rather continues his "theological vision" throughout the whole book. In part two on contextualization he begins to synthesize and apply the seminal work of numerous missiologists. Balance is big with Keller, and here, in his view of contextualization, he tries to balance the tension between Scripture and context, which I believe he achieves to a great degree. This section, which demonstrates his entire reasoning process, is a fine introduction to contextualization for the young American Christian who isn't particularly interested in strange and distant frontiers. It also provides the basis for the next section, "City Vision," where Keller takes four chapters to introduce what together forms a set of corrective lenses through which to view the city. His biblical, historical and contemporary perspectives are a positive affirmation of the urban context, a belief that "the city is an intrinsically positive social form with a checkered past and a beautiful future." (p. 151) Keller, who began his ministerial career in a more rural context, cuts through agrarian and suburban sympathies and appeals for an urban sensibility that will guide the church in a culture of late modernity.

From his perspective on contextualization and the urban context Keller then poses a critical question: how are we as Christians to *engage* culture? More particularly, how should we engage urban culture? In this third section, "Cultural Engagement" (and in particular, chapter 15, "The Cultural Crisis of the Church") Keller explores the contemporary culture shift that has left the church struggling to respond. He recognizes that since the 1960s, when the vernacular of church and culture held more in common, the church's jargon has increasingly become alien—morally, socially and intellectually distinct from the cultural vernacular. The "stained glass barrier" of church and culture is getting more daunting, and Keller takes a section to map out how the church is responding to it.

Stepping back a few decades, Keller uses Richard Neibuhr's "Christ and Culture" typology to introduce how the church has actually responded to culture, and then adapts his own models for what he sees happening today. In some of his best analytical work, Keller maps an array of four orientations that represent the church's engagement with culture: transformationist, relevance, countercultural and two-kingdoms. Together these orientations represent a matrix of different responses built around two questions: (1) Should one be pessimistic or optimistic about the possibility for culture change? (2) Is the current culture redeemable and good, or fundamentally fallen? The matrix frames such diverse orientations as the Seeker church, the Religious Right, the Amish and Liberation Theology, all of them around this issue of cultural engagement.

*E*xposing the anatomy of this modern worldview will require more than the new postmodern emphasis of narrative—it demands a robust apologetic of the cross.

Keller's biblical lens is constantly looking for balance, so he's able to affirm aspects of each model of cultural engagement (chapter 17, "Why All the Models are Right…and Wrong"). He feels that "each model tends to overlook the implications of the points in the biblical story line other than the one around which it finds its center for gravity [but] all of these points on the biblical story line are covered well by the sum of the four models." (p. 226) He points out that missiologists and theologians like Newbigin, Kuyper, and Neibuhr all seem to emphasize more than one side of any typology. Being a pastor, Keller notes that one's gifts and calling play a large role in determining which model one feels most comfortable with.

Movement and Institution

In his third and final section, "Movement," Keller jumps into the missional debate of the last fifteen years, and here he tries to find balance for the church as "structured organization" and "fluid organism."

> Because the church is both a stable institution with inherited traditions and a dynamic movement of the Holy Spirit, we minister with balance, rooted in our ecclesial tradition yet working cooperatively with the body of Christ to reach our city with the gospel. (249)

Keller wants to "center the missional church" (chapter 20) by integrating "a balance of ministry fronts" (chapter 22). He reaches back before Darrell Gruder's ground-breaking *Missional Church* (1998) to the foundational missiology of Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch, two missiologists who refocused us on the "missionary encounter with Western culture." (p. 254) During the 1990s the work of these two men helped us recapture *missio dei* from the disastrous secularization of the Enlightenment project evident in liberal churches, setting the stage for a fresh explosion of missional approaches. But Keller notes that each of the "dizzying variety of sometimes contradictory definitions of missional" fail in being comprehensive. (p. 256) He insists on a much-needed integration of evangelistic, incarnational, contextual and communal dimensions in any sound missiology.

Keller is clear that any biblically sound contextualization must confront "the baseline narratives of a culture," and he incorporates Newbigin's unmasking of the idolatry of human reason in late modernity. He insists that exposing the anatomy of this modern worldview will require more than the new postmodern emphasis of narrative—it demands a robust apologetic of the cross. It's here that Keller cycles back to his initial emphasis on "Gospel Theology," examining the potential for drift in the doctrine of salvation. The "Kingdom Gospel" corrective of missional proponents can often fail to

present the destructiveness of sin at the heart of the gospel. He insists that "a church can robustly preach and teach the classic evangelical doctrines and still be missional." (p. 271)

One of Keller's most helpful analyses is his examination of the relationship between movements and institutions. (chapter 27) He wants to see a movement to Christ across the "gospel ecosystem" of the city (chapter 30), but this requires churches to embrace partnership. He asserts that "no single form of church is intrinsically better at growing spiritual fruit, reaching nonbelievers, caring for people, and producing Christ shaped lives." (p. 267) He wants to cultivate a movement, but recognizes the inevitability of institutionalization. His comparisons and explanations of the interface between movement and institution will speak effectively to the anti-institutional bias of a younger generation struggling to find its place in the church today.

Tim Keller's *Center Church* is an attempt to center us missiologically rather than to convince us of any one model of church. It's really more like a model of the comprehensive reasoning required in frontier missiology. While his particular observations might not be applicable or reproducible in other global cities, he unpacks that common middle zone where a theological vision must be fashioned in every urban context. By focusing on the particular challenge of the American city, Keller might help a 20–30-something generation that struggles to fit into existing churches. His applied missiology might help them turn and embrace the creative process of contextualization. The increasingly specialized world of missiology should welcome such a fine primer for pulpit and pew. **IJFM**

Endnotes

[1] Keller makes reference to these meetings with Conn in *Generous Justice* (New York: Dutton, 2010) pp. xviii-xix

[2] Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993)

[3] Mark Pickett, Lecturer in missiology at Wales Evangelical School of Theology, offers a review at http://www.affinity.org.uk/cms.php?page=115

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In Others' Words

Editor's Note: In this department, we point to resources outside of the IJFM: other journals, print resources, DVDs, web sites, blogs, videos, etc. We welcome suggestions, but cannot promise to publish each one. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes give just the title of the resource, the main web address, or a suggested search phrase.

Please note that, due to production delays, we are reporting in this Winter 2012 issue on events that took place in 2013. We again apologize in advance for such anachronisms and any inconvenience.

World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Panel Issues Translation Report

In April 2013, the independent WEA Global Review Panel issued its highly anticipated recommendations concerning the translation of divine familial terms. The announcement was made on the WEA's website (worldevangelicals.org/ translation-review, which contains links to the full report and other related news):

> In the light of various controversies about Bible translation Wycliffe Global Alliance and SIL International approached the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in March 2012 to independently review their best practice in the translation of "God the Father" and the "Son of God." The WEA formed an independent Panel that has now concluded its work and issued its report with recommendations for Wycliffe and SIL. The independent Panel's mandate was to "review SIL's translation practices, setting boundaries for theologically acceptable translation methodology particularly in Muslim contexts, and suggesting how to practically implement these recommendations."

The panel's decision has had an immediate impact. On June 7, after the unanimous decision of its executive committee, Assemblies of God World Missions officially went public and said that they are now able to continue their longstanding working relationship with SIL/Wycliffe. (For more, search for "AGWM to Continue Partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators").

Specifically, it was recommendation #1 in the final report that seemed to allay the concerns of different mission and church organizations. The recommendation of the panel was to use "the directly equivalent" familial term for "father" and "son," and where there are multiple words used in a language, the "most suitable" term should be selected. In recommendation #2 and #3 the panel recognized the "significant potential for misunderstanding of the word for "father" and "son" when

applied to God… in languages shaped by Islamic cultures." So, in recommendation #2, the panel suggested "the addition of qualifying words or phrases to the directly-translatable terms." And in recommendation #3 they suggest that any nuance in the familial terms be handled in paratextual material.

All parties seem gratified and impressed with SIL's willingness to comply with the WEA panel's decision, but also recognize the complexity of implementing these guidelines across their global organization.

New Report on the Changing Demographics of Christianity in Its Global Context

While we here at *IJFM* are working hard to catch up to 2013, Todd Johnson and the other researchers at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) have produced a 92-page "overview of the changing demographics of Christianity and Christians' activities over the past 40 years," reaching back to 1970 while seeking to look ahead to 2020. As the report, entitled *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970–2020: Society, Religion and Missions,* states,

> Since 1970, many societies have experienced dramatic social upheavals and severe environmental catastrophes, yet the period from 1970 to 2010 was also a time of great technological advancement and increased connections between people around the world. Such changes challenge Christians to think differently about the people among whom they live and work, the ways in which they interact with them, and the potential for future cooperation.

To obtain this impressive report, see ☞ gordonconwell.edu/ resources//Global-Context-of-Christianity.cfm.

Speed Listening (and Watching) Made Easier

Ever wish you could speed watch a YouTube video? Now you can. Simply go to ☞ youtube.com/html5 and scroll down until you see the "Join the HTML5 Trial" button. As long as your browser is supported, clicking on this button will force YouTube to play videos in HTML5 (instead of Flash), causing some useful new options to appear on the control bar. Not only can you now speed up your favorite video by 1.5/2.0 times, you can slow it down by 0.5/0.25 times as well. Thanks to apologetics315.com (which has an amazing amount of fascinating material, by the way) for this suggestion. **IJFM**

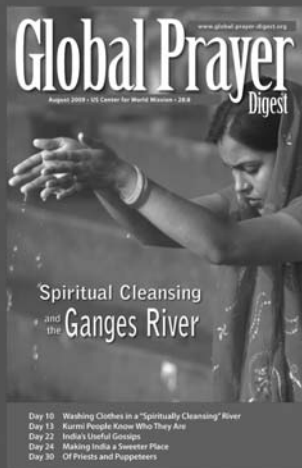# IJFM & Perspectives™ On the World Christian Movement

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

Articles in IJFM 29:4

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Must Insiders be Churchless? Exploring Insiders' Models of "Church" Darren Duerksen (pp. 161–67)			X	X	X
Respecting Context: A Comparison of Indonesia and the Middle East Richard Jameson (pp. 169–76)		X		X	X
Syncretism in a Hindu Insider Movement: K. Subba Rao's Legacy H. L. Richard (pp. 177–82)	X	X			X
Money and Mission in the Buddhist World: A Review of 100 Years Since Roland Allen Paul H. De Neui (pp. 183–88)	X		X	X	
Missionary Facilitation of New Movements to Christ: A Study of 19th Century and Early 20th Century China Richard Hibbert (pp. 189–95)	X		X	X	X

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Speakers include: Chong Kim, Justin Long, Cody Lorance, Kent Parks, Michael Rynkiewich & Bill Wayne