

Identity, Integrity and Insider Movements: A Brief Paper Inspired by Timothy C. Tennent's Critique of C-5 Thinking

by *Kevin Higgins*

I am privileged to have been invited to comment on the recent article by Timothy C. Tennent in which he offers a careful biblical and theological assessment of the C-5 or “insider” approach to work among Muslims. His article is clear, well written, and addresses a number of the important issues in the ongoing discussion.

There is much in Tennent’s piece with which I agree. And I believe he has identified a number of important issues in the discussion. One such issue is the question of “identity” and it is upon this issue that my own essay will focus.

Specifically, I will examine two sides to the identity question. One side concerns the question of a *new* identity as a follower of Jesus, including the relationship of this new identity to the “church.” The second is the question of maintaining one’s *old* identity as a Muslim.

In his opening paragraph Tennent refers to followers of Jesus who retain “their identity as Muslims”, and he asks the question whether one can “say ‘yes’ to Jesus and ‘no’ to the church.” Tennent’s paper lays out a well ordered biblical and theological rationale for the point of view that would assert, in my words, that a person can not maintain a dual identity. One is either a Christian or a Muslim.

My thesis is that one *can* maintain a dual identity and be a fully biblical disciple of Jesus. It would take a full book to properly defend that thesis so this paper will actually serve as an introduction.

In order to describe my thesis, I intend to do two things. First, I will describe how being a member of the church does not require a denial of one’s other identities, but is actually lived out within them. Then I will also seek to describe several ways in which one’s identity as a Muslim may be maintained with integrity as a follower of Jesus, and provide a brief rationale.

As a part of this paper, I will take some time along the way to focus on the meaning of two key terms: ‘Muslim’ and ‘church.’ These are assumed, but not

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defined by Tennent. In fact, while in this article I cannot document this assertion, I would add that this fact holds true throughout most of the discussions of “C-5” today. People on both “sides” use both terms without clearly defining them.

Identity One: Follower of Jesus and a Member of the Church

Tennent suggests in his article (pg. 106) that the church began after the early Jewish believers realized that Israel (and her religious expressions of Temple and synagogue) was not going to accept their Messiah. They then decided, in Tennent’s view, to form a separate entity called “the church”.¹ This viewpoint seems to underlie his subsequent conclusion that church membership requires a break with one’s old identity in order to embrace a new identity as a Christian in the church.

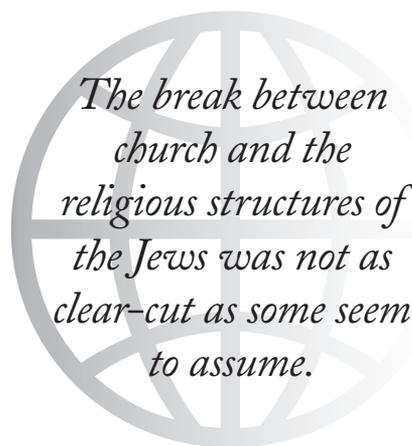
Perhaps Tennent’s language is not clear. However, taking his writing at face value he seems to be suggesting that the church began *after* Jewish followers of the Messiah realized that their fellow Jews were not going to accept the Messiah on a large scale.² In fact I would argue that the early church began to take life and expression much earlier than Tennent seems to suggest and that its development as something separate from Judaism was not solely or even primarily a decision made by the believers.

First, we see in Acts that “the church” emerged very early, and *within* the religious expressions of the people of Israel and the members of “the church” continued to attend Temple and synagogue³ *as well as* meeting in homes and in public places such as the Temple courts for gatherings designed apparently for believers in Jesus.⁴ In fact, many denominational traditions look back to Pentecost as the “birthday” of the church.

Also, the separation of Jewish followers of the Messiah (the Way) from the Temple and synagogue was not simply a decision based on the awareness that the rest of the Jewish population was not accepting the Messiah. The rise of active persecution, excommunica-

tion, and the introduction into the synagogue liturgy of curses apparently aimed at followers of Jesus were the precipitating factors.⁵

Up to that point, it can be argued from the New Testament that the church was a movement within the social and religious life of the Jewish people. This movement took structural or formal expression as it met in separate homes or public gatherings *and* as its members continued in the Temple and synagogue. They did not cease to be the church in the Temple worship, and they did not cease to be



Jewish in the home meeting. There was a dual identity.⁶

I would like to clarify here that I do not intend to suggest that this dual identity was anything like what some people might mean when they accuse another person of living a double life. I do not mean to communicate the idea that these two identities (Jewish and follower of Jesus) were somehow unrelated or did not overlap. As I seek to make clear in the preceding paragraph the two identities are more like two circles that overlap to a great degree (though not fully).

So, to summarize my thinking up to this point, the break between church and the religious structures of the Jews was not as clear-cut as some seem to assume. And when that break did occur, it seems to have been primarily due to issues of persecution.⁷

This is not to say that theology did not play a part. However, the theological differences that certainly emerged

and intensified between Jewish followers of Jesus and Jews who did not accept Jesus as Messiah were present from the very first day. These differences were present within Jesus’ own ministry and indeed resulted in His death on the Cross. We see these differences clearly articulated in the earliest sermons of Acts. And yet, for perhaps 50 years or more a total separation did not occur.⁸

One simple example may be helpful. Shortly after Pentecost, Peter himself is said to be going to the Temple at the hour of prayer (Acts 3). The Temple leadership was part of the machinery that had crucified Peter’s Messiah and Lord. There were severe theological differences between Peter and the Temple leadership. However, the early Jesus movement maintained a dual identity even in the face of those theological differences.⁹

I am suggesting here that the biblical definition of “church” does not necessarily refer to a “bounded” or “closed” set social grouping which prevents a member of His Body, the church, from also being a “member” of another social or even religious structure or expression. However, a clarification is needed lest I be misunderstood. On one side, I do see church as a closed set, for only those who are born from above and incorporated by the Spirit in His Body are members of the church! But as such, they are not thereby excluded from living in and among other social and religious structures as yeast in the dough.

The Church

At this point let me offer a brief outline of my understanding of church. The summary below is derived from the following texts: Acts, Ephesians, 1 Corinthians, and the letters to Timothy and Titus. None of what I will write is presumed to be new. I will highlight points I see as pertinent to the question of C-5 movements.

1. *The Church is the Body of Christ, and the assembly of believers who have been saved by grace through faith.* The Church is therefore a creation of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is

not a human organization or institution, although clearly forms and structures do factor in as tangible ways in which this community expresses itself visibly. No human being can “make” a church or join the Church except by being born again by the Spirit. Every believer is a member of the Church and as such, is called to live out their membership in the Body of Christ, the Church, as a full time lifestyle in every venue of life.

Key Point: *Being a member of the church is not simply a question of leaving one social structure and joining another. Because one is not attending mosque and is attending a gathering of believers does not equate with being a disciple. And on the other side, one’s identity as a born again member of the Body can and does overlap with one’s identity in other spheres of life, including one’s religious life. (Note: the question of if and how this can be done with integrity will be dealt with below).*

2. Every local “church” body is an expression of the Church body. And every time believers meet together, they are an expression of the Body. Of course, not every gathering of believers contains all of the elements of all that the scriptures teach regarding “church”. The primary marks of a mature expression of the Church include these functions from Acts 2:42-47: The church exists where there is apostolic teaching, fellowship, breaking bread (both as real meals, and the Lord’s Supper), prayer/worship, the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, radical generosity in community life, intentional gathering together (publicly in the “Temple,” and as believers house to house), and the ongoing addition of new believers.¹⁰

Key Point: *Saying ‘yes’ to C-5 does not require a ‘no’ to church¹¹, although some C-5 proponents seem to think so. Some form of community of believers will need to take shape in an insider movement. However, the forms and degrees of maturity of such a “church” will vary. Acts 2 portrays the early members of the church being church in separate gatherings for believers, and in the religious life of the Temple (where the official leadership was*

Acts 2 portrays the early members of the church being church in separate gatherings for believers, and in the religious life of the Temple.

opposed to the Gospel). I would call this a dual identity, and I suggest in the next section of this article ways in which such a dual identity can be held with integrity.

3. We can see in Acts 14:21-28 that a mature church is also marked by having elders in each local congregation, duly selected and appointed by recognized apostolic leadership. Further, in 1 Corinthians 11 to 14 we see that a mature church is marked by regular celebration of the Lord’s Supper and the use of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, exercised under the leadership of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Body. Some specific churches are farther along or less far along in the process of fully expressing the nature of the Church.

Key Point: *The functions in number 3 clearly require some form of “gathering” and a process of developing leadership. While Scripture gives examples of how and when churches gathered it also reveals a variety of forms, times, places, and models (polities) of leadership. None of this precludes an ongoing identity as a Muslim. There are movements in Islam today which function outside of the official structures, develop their own leadership and membership “forms” and whose members have a dual identity. Again, how this might hold true for a movement in Islam which seeks to follow Jesus is something I will seek to describe below.*

4. The Church’s ultimate purpose is to participate in, and be the first fruits of, the transformation of the universe under the headship of Jesus Christ. The Church’s primary “strategy” to fulfill its purpose is to multiply itself through functions such as those listed in Acts 14:21-28: evangelizing the lost; discipling those who believe; strengthening/encouraging the disciples; selecting and training and appointing elders in every church; and connecting with and participating with other churches in the ongoing expansion of the Gospel. I have intentionally left traditional language in place, but those same

biblical functions can take place as an insider movement albeit with altered forms and vocabulary.

I have said several times that I would add to this argument below. Before moving on to that let me address one possible question. Since I am suggesting that C-5 does not necessarily equate with ‘no church’, some might ask how my view differs from C-4. That is, in my thinking, how does C-5, or an insider movement among Muslims, differ from a highly Muslim-“friendly” movement of church planting?

My reply is that what I advocate here is a movement to Jesus in which disciples are added to the church by the Holy Spirit as they are born again, live out that membership in forms of life that are fully biblical but culturally shaped, and do so without denying their identity as Muslims within their society. C-4, as I understand it and as most people employ the term, implies a greater degree of separation from one’s Muslim identity in terms of religious, and to varying degrees, social forms and structures.¹²

Summary

I have argued for the possibility that “dual identity” is not only possible but indeed is modeled within the New Testament. How can this dual identity be maintained? That leads us to a discussion of the second “identity” in my essay.

Identity Two: Follower of Jesus and a Muslim

One gaping hole in the C-5 discussion is that, in my view, both “sides” rarely define what they mean by the words Islam and Muslim. Thus, beginning from our respective assumptions or in some cases settled conclusions about Islam, we proceed to argue from the Scripture, our experiences, or perhaps from history to bolster our positions.

Certainly the discussion about C-5 needs to be a biblical, theological, and historical discussion. And it needs to include conversations about “church” as I have sought to summarize briefly above.

However, this conversation needs to be equally a discussion about our varying paradigms and assumptions of Islam. Let me cite two radical extremes as a way to make my point.

If I am convinced, for example, that Islam is a demonic and deceptive lie conceived by Satan, this will certainly affect the biblical, theological, and historical material I draw from and how I apply it. On the other hand if I conclude that Islam is the final truth from God, or an equally valid expression of “truth”, this too would affect how I look at the Bible, the early development of Christian theology, and the history of the church.

Again, these are purposely given as two extreme poles. I am certainly not suggesting that either Tennent or myself hold one of these positions. The point is that part of the C-5 discussion needs to be a discussion about Islam itself and not just the (very valid) biblical debate about contextualization and how far it can go. That biblical discussion needs to happen, and the fruit of it needs to be applied, but applied to a real and defined understanding of Islam. Without a discussion as to what Islam *is* and *was*, we cannot do actual contextualization.

In fact, I believe that many of the differences among missiologists and practitioners concerning the validity of “C-5” among Muslims is in fact not primarily a difference about how we read the Bible. I believe the differences are primarily due to examined or unexamined differences about how we understand Islam itself.

I do not have the space to develop my position in detail here. I cannot go in depth into all of the Quranic and historical reasons behind the position I hold concerning Islam.

Since this is an essay about identity, and since I have already tried to outline biblically how one might be a member

of the church and also maintain other “identities”, let me here simply try to describe three ways that this dual identity might happen with integrity in a C-5 movement among Muslims. In each of the four sections below, I will include a brief description of a position or conclusion about Islam. I will not be able to offer evaluation of those positions, but they represent three positions on Islam that I have heard proponents of C-5 express (both insiders and workers among Muslims).

I believe all three of these positions can be held with integrity *depend-*



ing upon the conclusions one makes about Islam’s origins, early history, and subsequent development. Again, the three positions below are only seeking to describe potential C-5 points of view about Islam and Muslim identity vis-à-vis one’s identity as a follower of Jesus.

I would once again ask my reader to please keep in mind that I have not provided any of the background on Islam or Quran that would support the different positions described below. The same is true for biblical rationale to support them. The place for that is in another paper.

A Few Caveats

I am assuming my reader is familiar with Islamic terminology so I use it here without definitions. For the same reason I refer without explanation to the C-scale. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and do it solely for the sake of brevity.

I have presented much of the following in the first person. Each variety of possible “identity” is intended to describe a broad possibility, not exact detail. I am not writing to advocate any particular position as “the way” for every person or context. None of the descriptions below are intended to be “definitions” or “boxes” into which I think positions need to fit neatly. Every individual and every context will vary greatly, and as stated above, people might well find themselves in any, all, or none of these exact descriptions!

For convenience, I will use three “I’s” to refer to each of the three identities. The parallel to the C-scale will be obvious, though my numbering in no way seeks to correspond to that instrument whose purpose was to describe something very different than what I am doing here.

One more caveat before I begin to describe these identities. I am only going to focus on one aspect of identity here and that is the issue of religious identity. I am not touching on important and related issues of social identity and the overlap of cultural issues with the religious issues in Islam. Those are important.

However, the focus of Tennent’s article was largely addressing the religious and theological appropriateness of C-5. Thus I have focused upon that question here as well.

Having said that, it may be helpful to acknowledge that even limiting this to the “religious” question is a gross oversimplification. Doing so begs the question, “*Which* Islam is in view here?” Are we addressing Shiite or Sunni, and/or Sufi Muslims? Within those are we addressing those who might also be described as folk or liberal/secular or orthodox or fundamentalist or radical Muslims? The list could go on. The following “I’s” therefore should be seen as being written with an orthodox Sunni mindset. In the particular list below not much would change if we replaced Sunni with Shiite (though if we went deeper in this direction, significant differences would certainly emerge).

I do not believe that God is only blessing C-5 approaches, or that we should advocate them as an exclusive strategy for the mission movement today.

The Three I's: Three Identities

I-i

I can say I am a Muslim because the word Islam means submission and a Muslim is one who submits. So, I can tell others in the Muslim community that I have submitted to God ultimately in His Word, Isa, and the Word of God in the Taurat, Zabur, and Injil which the Quran confirms.¹³

Within an I-i movement of followers of Jesus, there might be no in depth engagement of the Quran, or Islam, or Muhammad. In fact, opinions towards the Quran and Muhammad can be quite negative. Occasional, pragmatic visiting of mosques for the purpose of relationship or sharing is perhaps a part of I-i practice, especially if spending time with Muslim friends when the prayer time occurs. Saying the shahadah, without any additions or changes, is probably not even entertained as a possibility, though I know examples where it has been recited for pragmatic reasons without agreeing with it.¹⁴

I-ii

I can say I am a Muslim because the word Islam means submission and a Muslim is one who submits. So, I have submitted to God ultimately in His Word, Isa, and the Word of God in the Taurat, Zabur, and Injil which the Quran confirms. *In addition* I can accept and affirm the earliest teaching of Muhammad, especially during the early Meccan period, and can say honestly that in that early period he had a prophetic role in calling Arab, Christian, and Jewish people of his time to repent. In this sense, I can call him a prophet. I believe that as time went by, however, Muhammad developed ideas and teachings with which I do not agree. Some of these are found in the Quran itself.¹⁵

For an I-ii believer, mosque attendance might be not only pragmatic, but could go deeper, becoming a meaningful worship form. Saying the shahadah is possible for some, though probably with a qualified meaning

such as understanding it to mean that Muhammad had a prophetic role in his earlier, Meccan years. It is possible for I-ii's to see themselves as part of a reformation in Islam, a "back to the early Muhammad" or "back to the Mecca period" movement.¹⁶

I-iii

I can say I am a Muslim because the word Islam means submission and a Muslim is one who submits. So, I have submitted to God ultimately in His Word, Isa, and the Word of God in the Taurat, Zabur, and Injil which the Quran confirms. *In addition* I can accept and affirm all of the teaching of Muhammad as I find it in the Quran, and can say honestly that he had a prophetic role in calling Arab, Christian, and Jewish people of his time to repent. I can call him a prophet. I can say the shahadah with integrity because I believe Muhammad was called by God to a prophetic role. I read the Quran through the interpretive key of the Gospel and the previous books. When I read the Quran through that lens and filter I find that it agrees with the Bible and that perceived contradictions are due to misunderstandings of the Quran (and in some cases there has been misunderstanding of the Bible as well by Christians).¹⁷

It is possible for I-iii's to see themselves as part of a reformation in Islam, a "back to the Quran and the Books" movement.¹⁸ Some I-iii's might not include the Hadith in their understanding of the doctrines of Islam, but follow it in *practice*. Others might accept more of it. Some who come to this position might still use words like "full Muslim" or another qualifier, but some might prefer to simply say they are Muslim. Some, indeed most, I-iii proponents will not be accepted as Muslims by "normal" Muslims due to their views on the Hadith.¹⁹

Concluding Thoughts

To summarize, I have sought to show how a biblical understanding of "church" does not preclude also maintaining one's identity as a Muslim.

I have sought to show several ways in which one might, with integrity, understand what it means to be a Muslim who also follows Jesus as Lord.

I have sought to articulate the fact that in addition to careful biblical and theological discussion there also needs to be a more focused attempt to clarify among ourselves what we each mean by Islam when we write.

I want to conclude with a caveat. I am in full support of C-5 movements, insider movements, among Muslims. This approach is, in my view, one of the things God is doing among Muslims. I believe He is blessing this approach and will continue to do so.

However, I do not believe that this paradigm is the only way. I do not believe that God is only blessing C-5 approaches, or that we should advocate them as an exclusive strategy for the mission movement today.

May God grant us grace to continue to further this discussion and discover more of God's truth in His Word. And, may God grant us grace to honor one another in the process. **IJFM**

Endnotes

¹ In Tennent's own words, "it became clear that they had to form a *new* religious identity; namely the church, which would properly celebrate their identity in Jesus Christ." Italics are in the original.

² Again, see his opening paragraph under Scenario #1 on p. 106.

³ Tennent acknowledges that they did so for a time (p. 106 also). Where he and I disagree is primarily over the question of what or who initiated the eventual separation, why it took place, and whether the church only came into being as a result of the separation (Tennent) or had been birthed prior to that (my view) while still also remaining within Judaism. The question of whether C-5 could or should be a permanent "position" is in some ways a separate issue, or at least sub-category within the issue addressed in this paper. My own position would be that the answer will depend on the specific context of a given C-5 movement and that no blanket answer can be given here.

⁴ See Acts 3:1 and also 9:2 where Paul clearly expects that in Damascus he will find followers of "The Way" in the synagogues. This is why he seeks letters

to recommend him to the synagogue leaders. Later, in Acts 21:17ff., Jewish leaders (who follow Jesus as Messiah) express their concerns about the large numbers of Jewish believers who have heard that Paul no longer keeps the Law. So they urge Paul to make a public expression of his Jewishness.

⁵ See the discussion of this development in Whitacre's commentary on John's Gospel (*John, IVP New Testament Commentary Series*). On p. 244 Whitacre concludes that the separation from the synagogues took place in the second half of the 1st century. That is, about one generation following many of the events of Acts.

⁶ Returning for a moment to Acts 21, it is worth noting that James clearly is aware of and affirms that there are two Jesus movements. One was a Jewish identity Jesus movement, and one was a Gentile identity Jesus movement. Using my terminology, both movements maintained a dual identity.

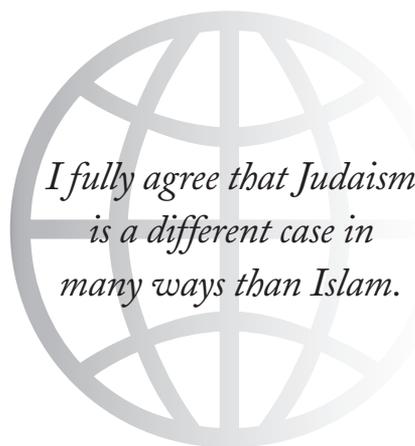
⁷ Also, it is worth noting that the break was likely not instantaneous. Whitacre, in his doctoral thesis indicates that a number of scholars feel John's Gospel was addressed to a mixed community including some who had been excommunicated or had left the synagogues, as well as some who still remained within. Both groups were followers of Jesus. *Johannine Polemic*, SBL Dissertation Series 67, 1982, p. 19. Raymond Brown's discussions in his introduction to the commentary on John are also worth consulting, as is his book on John's community (*The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, Paulist Press, 1979).

⁸ It is important here to address the question of whether the "Jewish Religion/Follower of Jesus" link we have been discussing is actually a parallel to the "Islamic Religion/Follower of Jesus" connection that C-5 argues for. There is not room in this paper to treat this in detail. I refer the reader to an earlier article I wrote (under a pseudonym). In that article I argue for a parallel between Samaritan religion and Islam, and thus for a parallel between Jesus' ministry in John 4 and our ministry to Muslims. The Samaritans were viewed as heretical and indeed, demonic by most Jews of that period. And yet Jesus' ministry results in what I would say is certainly a C-5 movement. See Caldwell, Stuart, "Jesus in Samaria: A Paradigm for Church Planting Among Muslims", *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 17:1, 2000.

⁹ The point of this line of argument is, I hope, clear. I fully agree that Judaism is a different case in many ways than Islam. However, the fact is that at a very practical level, the early, Jewish followers of Jesus faced much the same situation as do Muslim

followers of Jesus today. Some who object to C-5 do so, in part, on the basis of the fact that new believers will not receive true teaching if they attend the mosque and in fact, new believers who attend the mosque will hear things in direct opposition to the Gospel. This is certainly true, but it was also true in the Temple and the synagogues of the 1st century AD, and yet, the early movement did not stop attending solely for that reason.

¹⁰ It may be worth noting here that the "church growth movement" has helped to contribute to a particular misunderstanding of the references to meeting in the Temple courts, especially in Acts 2. This may cause us to miss some of the importance of this passage for our discussion here. The tendency



in church growth related works has been to see Acts 2:42-47 as a model of the cell and celebration (small group and large worship gathering) gatherings in a church. A case can be made for that position, but it misses the fact the Temple was more than a public gathering place for the believers. It was that. It was also significant that they met as believers in the courts of this specifically religious place, even though the "religion" as practiced and believed then was not in agreement with or even friendly to the Gospel as taught and believed by the apostles.

¹¹ Tennent asks this question at the outset of his article. He suggests that C-5 (or "insider movement") thinking would lead one to assume that it is possible to say "yes" to Jesus but "no" to the church. As I will argue in this essay, the answer to this depends entirely on one's definition of "church." It is important to note however, that even in his seminal piece describing C-5 (actually C1 through C6), John Travis himself clearly stated that C1 through 6 described varying expressions of *ekklesia*, church, or in his preferred term, "Christ centered communities". See his restatement of this in "Contextualization among Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists: A Focus

on 'Insider Movements'", *Mission Frontiers*, Vol. 27:5, p. 12. Thus while some proponents of C-5 or insider movements seem to suggest that these movements are "churchless", this does not represent the entire picture. I also argued for a definition of insider movements that clearly included intentional community among believers (see *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 21:4, "The Key to Insider Movements", pp. 155 and following). Again, the crux of this discussion concerns one's understanding and usage of the word "church."

¹² Tennent's article contains a chart that illustrates his understanding of the differences between C-4 and C-5 graphically. C-4 is pictured as a circle that is mostly inside a bigger circle called "Christianity" but also touches a circle called "Islam." The C-5 circle is completely inside the circle called "Islam." The difference between Tennent's position and mine could be illustrated by the fact that:

a. I would change the title of the Christian circle from "Christianity" to Jesus Movement.

b. I would then have the C-5 circle overlap both the "Islam" circle and the Jesus Movement circle to express that in C-5, one can be "inside" both movements.

¹³ On the meaning of the words Islam and Muslim as "submission" and "one who submits" (i.e., to God) any number of books could be cited. One example: *Islam: The Straight Path*, by John Esposito, p. 23. On Jesus as the "word" see Surah 3:45. On the role of the Quran in confirming the previous Books there are numerous references. One example is Surah 2:41. The word translated as "confirm" is *musaddiq*. This word speaks of verifying and establishing the truth of what another has said (I am using the *Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, compiled by John Penrice, published in Delhi by Low Price Publications, p. 83). Thus, the Quran's own self-understanding is that it verifies the truth of the previous books. Later Muslims would argue that this only applied to the original (and lost or perverted) versions of the previous Books, and they cite verses in the Quran which they say prove the Books were twisted or corrupted. However, the passages they cite are more likely to refer to the misuse of the existing Books rather than their corruption. So, for example, Surah 3:78 clearly refers to misquoting or twisting the meaning of the texts while orally citing them, rather than changing the texts themselves. Taken at face value, Muhammad's view as expressed in the Quran would seem to be that he is merely restating and in fact verifying whatever the previous Books taught. Applying this assumption as a con-

sistent hermeneutic when reading the Quran results in some very significant changes in the meaning of the texts, especially the more controversial ones.

¹⁴ I personally would not advocate such a position. I am merely reporting here.

¹⁵ That there seems to be a major shift in Muhammad's thinking reflected in the so-called Meccan and Medinan Surahs is a common theme in Islamic scholarship. Pickthall's introduction in his interpretation of the Quran is a good, concise example. *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* by Montgomery Watt is a more extended but very readable description as well. Indeed the title itself indicates a good summary of Watt's view that Muhammad's "hijrah" or migration from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. resulted in a shift from functioning as a "prophet" to functioning instead, or in addition, as a statesman. If one peruses the briefer (and primarily earlier, Meccan) Surahs, one does come away with a very different "feel" than in the later, Medinan and generally longer Surahs. The former exhibit something much more akin to the biblical prophetic imagery and tone and emphasize the call to repent. The latter are more concerned with establishing a community and with clarifying the emerging "Islamic" ummah or "people" in distinction from the Jews and Christians who are referenced more frequently in the latter Surahs.

¹⁶ For example, it was after the move to Medina that Muhammad shifted the *Qibla* (or direction for prayer) from Jerusalem to Mecca. Some would see this as one example of a shift that demonstrates Muhammad was no longer functioning in a prophetic role. Others might cite verses such as those in the fourth Surah which apparently deny the death of Jesus (though that is a debatable passage and other interpretations are possible).

¹⁷ I know this paragraph begs for far more discussion than space allows. Again, I am not necessarily advocating any of the "I's" as *the* right path. The positions described in each of the "I's" all assume two key points:

a. The Bible is the lense through which the Quran is read and interpreted. Each position assumes Biblical authority and Biblical truth.

b. The "I's" differ on how much of the Quran can be accepted or agreed with by a believer. The Quran, in varying degrees depending on which "I" is referred to, is re-interpreted in light of the Bible. Each "I" position accepts or rejects or re-interprets different amounts of the Quran. An I-iii believer, then, would

accept more of the Quran than an I-i believer, but would also re-interpret more of it. Thus, an I-iii believer would also find themselves in major disagreement with the majority of the Muslim world. This is similar to the situation in Acts in which the early Jesus movement, and indeed Jesus Himself, developed a very different hermeneutical key for the Old Testament and subsequently read the Old Testament very differently from the majority Jewish community and leadership. I am suggesting that in an insider movement in Islam, it is possible to re-read the Quran with the hermeneutical key of the Old and New Testaments and develop an entirely new interpretative result. I have argued for this in more detail in *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 21:4, "The Key To Insider Movements", see especially pp. 160 through 163.

¹⁸ In distinction from the believers who would see a shift in Muhammad as he moved from Mecca to Medina, those who are closer to what I am calling I-iii would see Muhammad's prophetic calling continuing into the Medina period. I cannot go into many examples here. One possible instance that gives some believers grounds for seeing Muhammad as continuing his role as one who called people back to the Books—and indeed, even back to Jesus Himself—is an incident related by Ishaq in his *Sirat Rasul Allah (Life of the Messenger)*. In Guillame's translation we find the story of Muhammad's return to Mecca following the Medinan period. He went to the Ka'aba and cleaned out all the pictures and idols except a picture portraying Jesus and Mary. That picture was allowed to remain inside the Ka'aba itself. For some this indicates Muhammad's intention that Jesus be the center of Islamic devotion. See Guillame, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 552. See also his introduction to Islam in which he mentions that eye witnesses saw this picture inside the Ka'aba as late as 683 A.D., though it was destroyed by fire later. Guillame, *Islam*, Penguin Books, 1954, p. 14.

¹⁹ As most practitioners have discovered, while the vast majority of Muslims would say they follow Hadith, there is a wide variation among Muslims in terms of their knowledge of the Hadith and their application of what they do know. An I-iii believer need not be a "Hadith Fundamentalist" in order to maintain an Islamic identity with integrity.

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