

In Others' Words

Editor's Note: In this department, we point you to resources outside of the IJFM that we hope you'll find helpful: other journals, print resources, DVDs, web sites, blogs, YouTube videos, etc. We welcome suggestions, but cannot promise that we will publish each one we receive. Standard disclaimers on content apply. Due to the length of many web addresses, we sometimes just give the title of the article and the main web address or a suggested Google search.

Muslim Matters

Disagreements and controversy over insider movements are continuing to gain recognition in very prominent publications (see *World* magazine's recent blurb at www.worldmag.com/articles/17944). But, actually, more deliberate sessions and interaction between representatives of different sides on the issue are beginning to take place. Spokesmen of once strident positions are sitting down together for more responsible communication, and this is none too soon, since the growth and reality of authentic insider movements is increasing (see the current issue of *Mission Frontiers* on "Jesus Movements" at missionfrontiers.org/issue/current).

But any heat in these exchanges may increase dramatically with continuing discussions on the translation of the phrase "Son of God" in Muslim contexts (see IJFM 27:4, pg. 211). This issue surrounds the Muslim tendency to automatically misunderstand the original biblical meaning of this phrase in the Muslim languages ("Ibn Allah" in Arabic). How do we clarify the biblical meaning when 14 centuries of Muslim-Christian interaction have twisted this phrase towards unorthodox meanings? Again, no one is messing with the English translation "Son of God," but rather the highly charged meanings inherent in Muslim languages.

David Watson has waded into the discussion on his blog (www.ethne.net/cpm/opinion---insider-movements). His concern is that the "Son of God" language is being "removed" to appease Muslims, that in sensitivity to Muslim cultures certain translation efforts are "redacting" the Word of God. The key hinge point is his assumption that these efforts are "changing the thrust and meaning of the Bible to appease culture," that these translation efforts are seeking to "comply" with a "misguided Muslim worldview."

As part of The Wycliffe Global Alliance, Susan Wynen offers an opposite interpretation, seeing these efforts as actually trying to guard the Word of God from misguided Muslim worldviews (www.wycliffe.net/Missiology/BibleTranslationandMission/tabid/94/Default.aspx?id=2213). She suggests this same "Son of God" controversy is part and parcel of the goal to translate the scriptures accurately and without changing the meaning of the original text. She speaks to the issue as follows:

In many Muslim contexts, the term used for "Son of God" communicates none of the richness, depth of relationship and identity of Christ that we, because of our background and contexts, may perceive in the English term. In fact, the translated term often used in Muslim contexts indicates something blasphemous to Muslims and Christians alike. It communicates that God had sexual relations with Mary. And, without an understanding of the Trinity, it also communicates that there is more than one God. "Son of God" is a term of vital importance and needs to be communicated clearly and with care so that it is understood in its true meaning.

Mission-Minded "Millennials"?

Assessments continue regarding the 20-something "Millennials" (www.christianitytoday.com/le/2011/spring/meetmillennials.html?) and indications are that these 20-somethings have a social, religious and mission orientation distinct from the previous Gen X. Mission associations are trying to rectify the paucity of younger leaders' representation in their rank and file as they try to "reset" their mission organizations for the technology and values of this new generation (themissionexchange.org/reset/).

One wonders how 20-something Millennials might respond to the new documentary on Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, the now-almost-forgotten Protestant missionary who preceded William Carey to India by almost a century (www.lamppostmedia.net/ziegenbalg). The 300th anniversary of his social, literary and communication contribution to the region was commemorated in the Tamil region in 2006. He not only established the first Protestant church under national leadership, but freed hundreds from caste-based illiteracy, defying colonial administration as he did so. The recognition of his holistic contribution is adding momentum to the social reform movements and Dalit liberation. **IJFM**