

THE ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE OF THE C5 / INSIDER MOVEMENT DEBATE

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Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive literature review of the C5/insider movement debate, with particular focus on writings between 1998 and 2010. The review analyses the literature within four chronological periods (1998; 1999-2002, 2003-2007, 2008-2010), examining both proponents and critics of the C-Scale articulated by Travis (1998a). In looking beyond these publications to the ongoing debate and deepening controversies, this article identifies eight areas where the issues need to advance in the future. It concludes with a call for more careful consideration of the C-Scale, both with regard to what built its original claims and in what its reception or non-reception means for missiology and ecclesiology.

Key Words: Contextualization, Insider Movement, Islam, missionary, MBB, C-scale, C5

1 Introduction

The debates surrounding C5 contextualization and “insider movements” within Islamic settings are now well over a decade old. Given Acts 2:11, though, arguably these matters predate Islam and extend back to the Day of Pentecost (Medearis 2008: 62) and, even, into the earlier Jewish Diaspora’s relations with host cultures. More recent discussions within the missiological sphere, however,

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have generated as many questions as answers (Tee 2007), and there remains a lack of an easily-available overarching survey of the literature informing these discussions.²

Covering the period 1998-2010, this article provides such a survey and makes an assessment of these opening years in what is very much an ongoing development within mission practice and theorisation. This, together with its bibliography, will help us to understand and locate these debates, especially for readers unfamiliar with the topic. Indeed, to anticipate one of my conclusions, this contested area of theory and practice will benefit from ongoing and more sophisticated cross-disciplinary interactions, which will require an introductory survey such as this. This is important since, at the time of writing (in 2012), there is no sign of any resolution or consensus among evangelicals in the debates surrounding the reception of C5 and insider movements. Instead, “Evangelicals are increasingly divided over how to conduct ministries among Muslims.” (Johnson 2011: 50) Also, if anything, the geopolitical challenges and restructuring within the 2011 ‘Arab Spring’ heighten the need for ongoing and maturing debate (cf. Herrera and Bayat 2010).

Even if it is not exhaustive, this literature review is intended to be comprehensive, at least regarding the differing sides of the debate.³ I have focused on published written material, deliberately omitting blogs and unpublished conference papers with their surrounding conversations; nor do I examine the policy statements drawn up by particular mission agencies.⁴

² In the final stages of preparing this manuscript for publication, I came across an unpublished PhD thesis which addresses the period here under review and reaches similar conclusions to mine, and advances the debate in a number of significant ways (Wolfe 2011). Although not making a formal literature review, Wolfe engages with the same body of literature addressed here: see, especially, pp.29-97 regarding the development of insider movement methodology and pp.98-169 regarding its biblical and theological foundations.

³ If anyone feels some important literature or perspective has been omitted from the period here under review, please inform me via matthews@oakhill.ac.uk.

⁴ The exception is a statement by Arab World Ministries (2007), since it was published in *St. Francis Magazine* [*SFM*] and discussed by Corwin (2007: 53-54).

Given the previous absence of a published literature review,⁵ there is a useful purpose to be gained from a concise but nevertheless wide-ranging account of the progression of discussions surrounding these issues to date.

I come to these debates as a disciplinary outsider, no pun intended. I have no experience of missionary work in Islamic contexts and, until 2010, I had never read any literature regarding C5 or insider movements. Rather than these disclaimers discounting my contribution, I think that my outsider position, informed by wide and recent reading, provides a fresh perspective on the progress of, and prospects for, such approaches among Islamic peoples and a portal for others coming to these debates from beyond the missiological discipline.

I come to the matters as a New Testament scholar with a particular interest in the book of Acts and a supplementary background in social-scientific research. I hold doctorates in the fields of human geography and biblical studies. My first PhD, examining strategies for engaging with the Australian state adopted by Aboriginal people, considered questions of cross-cultural personal and group identity.⁶ In part, it examined one Christian mission to Aboriginal peoples during the mid-twentieth-century. My second PhD, recently

In this review, I am taking 'published' in a wide sense, to include webzines such as *SFM*. (Note: the early volumes of *SFM*, while numbered, do not cumulatively paginate their constitutive articles. Thus, citations provide only internal numbering within the particular article, hence the disproportionate number of early *SFM* articles listed here with a pagination of 1ff.) While it is invidious to mention only one blog from the many, www.biblicalmissiology.org has been dedicated to this topic since December 2009, albeit adopting an avowedly negative stance towards C5 / insider movement praxis. This survey also largely ignores literature relating to Muslim evangelism within western contexts (cf., e.g., Oksnevad and Welliver 2001).

⁵ In his otherwise excellent historical review, Schlorff (2006) lacks sufficient attention to C5. See for instance, his partial coverage of what he terms 'the EMQ debate' (Schlorff 2006: 86-88). For wider coverage about that period, see the literature gathered together in Parshall (2000).

⁶ Sleeman, Matthew (1996) 'The Geography of Citizenship Strategies in a Rural South Australian Aboriginal Community, 1940-1993'. PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge.

published by Cambridge University Press (Sleeman 2009), explores the productions of space and place undertaken in the Acts narrative generated by Jesus' ascension into heaven. It covers Acts 1:1-11:18 and, in my next work, I am extending this scope into the later chapters of Acts. This new area of study has brought the C5 / insider movement debates to my attention, initially via conversations with students on the *Theology for Crossing Cultures* course at Oak Hill College, London, the college at which I teach.⁷ In due course, I intend to provide a more focused assessment of C5 / insider movements as viewed through an exegetical and hermeneutical lens which consists of the whole of Acts. This present survey prepares the ground for such work, as well as standing in its own right. To that end, as well as narrating the development of these debates, it offers some prospective comments which will inform my own next steps which also, I hope, will assist others engaging in these matters.

Important terms need clarifying, especially in a debate where there are frequent intimations of people talking past each other (see, e.g., Higgins 2006: 120; Brogden 2010).

Given the frequent summaries of the C1-C6 spectrum within the literature (e.g. Travis 1998a; Tennent 2010: 303-305), I will not reiterate it at length here. Travis, who devised the spectrum, outlines well its six constitutive postures, establishing the 'C' as indicating Christ-centred communities – not, as Tennent (2006: 113n2) makes clear, 'Cross-Cultural Church Planting Spectrums'. Position on the spectrum varies according to the language adopted for worship services, the cultural and religious forms employed in both public life and within explicit worship settings, and the believers' self-identity as Muslims or Christians. Tennent (2010: 303) describes Travis' model as having become "the standard reference point for discussing contextualization in the Islamic context." It has also been applied to other religious contexts (e.g. DeNeui 2005).

⁷ In this regard, I am particularly thankful to Nick Jones, Ruth Markham (née Rotter) and Chris Flint, as well as to their tutor, Ray Porter. I am also very grateful to the Oak Hill College librarian, Wendy Bell, for her tireless help in tracing the literature.

To varying degrees and via a variety of strategies, C5 believers in Jesus might continue to attend the mosque, might participate in its *salat*/prayers and the reciting of the *shahada* (albeit with varying strategies towards such involvement), adopt or retain patterns of diet and dress befitting their local Islamic culture, give alms, observe Ramadan, and may even undertake the *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca. In such diverse ways, C5 believers would identify themselves as social and legal members of Muslim family and society, and continue to offer respect to the tenets of Islamic faith. This question of self-identity forms C5's important but contested boundary with C4, which exists as an explicitly 'Christian' 'church', albeit making use of certain Islamic forms (see, e.g. Lewis 2009a). Whereas C6 indicates 'private' or 'secret' believers in Christ, a strategy often adopted out of fear of persecution or martyrdom resulting from a more public confession, C5 is characterised by small groups of gathered believers typically meeting together within the community of Islam. For alleged descriptions of C5 lived experience – with suitable recognition of its diverse expressions – see, e.g., Travis and Travis (2005); Brother Yusuf in Corwin *et al.* (2007); Brown (2007a); Ali and Woodberry (1999); S. Kim (2010).

For definitions of insider movements, Garrison (2009) and McGavran (2009) provide wider introductions to, and overviews of, people-movement approaches to mission. For more focussed discussion with regard to specifically Islamic situations, see (e.g.) Higgins (2004: 156), and Lewis (2006, 2007, 2009b). I am aware that the terms 'C5' and 'insider movement' mean different things to different people, sometimes being treated as synonymous, and sometimes being distinguished from each another (Corwin 2007: 54, 55n2; Brown and Hawthorne 2009). Furthermore, recently at least one former proponent has rejected the 'insider movement' label (Higgins 2010: 132nn9, 13). Here, for ease of clarity but with recognition for these diverse opinions, I will treat the terms as broadly equivalent to each other. For further definitional discussions, see the fourth edition of *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* (Winter and Hawthorne 2009).

Likewise, I will make use of the term ‘Muslim-background believer’ (MBB) in a descriptive sense. Others on varying sides of the debate have suggested or use alternative terms such as ‘Muslim background congregation’ (Miller 2009: 4), or ‘believers from a Muslim background’ (Smith 2009). ‘Muslim believer’ is frequently used (see, e.g., Travis and Travis 2008: 196n127) or – even – simply ‘Muslim’, since this forms a primary, not a background, aspect of their identity. This latter ascription raises important questions of whether ‘Muslim’ is a religious, ethnic, communal or cultural marker (see, variously, e.g., Higgins 2006: 117-118; Brown 2006d: 132; Brown, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 10; Brown 2007b: 65; Hoefler 2008: 28; Lewis 2009a; Dixon 2009: 5; Smith 2009: 36-37; n.n. 2010a: 406). Across my reading, however, MBB has been frequently used and appears to be widely accepted without excessive controversy. See, e.g., Kraft (2010: 956n4) and n.n. (2010a: 404n1) for further discussion.

Finally, I will not explain differences between Christian and Islamic worldviews. For such comparisons, see Caner and Caner (2003), and Brown (2006a, b, c). For a succinct introduction to the complexities within Islam itself, see Ruthven (1997) or, more briefly, Corwin (2004). Regarding contextualisation, see Kraft (2005a) and, for a historic perspective on the development of contextualization, see Miller (2011: 229-239), who draws on the work of Coe (1973, 1974).

2 The Genealogy of the Contextualization Controversy

2.1 1998: The Origins of C5

As is widely acknowledged, the ground zero for the present debates surrounding contextualisation within Muslim settings is John Travis’ 1998 crystallisation of the C1-C6 spectrum (Travis 1998a).⁸

⁸ In varying ways, Eenigenburg (1997) and Chastain (1999) typify the pre-Travis situation: that is, the advances achieved by, and constraints facing, what was to become known as the C4 position. Compare, also, with Miller (2011: 233-240) concerning differing ‘organic’ and ‘directed’ understandings of contextualization, and their impact on the debates surveyed here.

Since then, others have highlighted that this spectrum was already subject to discussion and refinement amongst missiologists and practitioners of mission, suggesting that its ultimate origins lie in West Java, around 1990 (Dixon 2009: 40). Furthermore, “By the late 1970s, all the positions along what may now be described as the C-scale had been articulated in seminal articles,” (Travis and Travis 2008: 194n122; cf. Schlorff 2006: 79-89)⁹ and Schlorff (2006: 9-10, 14-17) identifies precursors to C5 in the 1920s. Likewise, the concept of insider movements was already in circulation in 1985, although nothing was published at that time (Brown, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 7), and it has precedents earlier in mission history (Higgins, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 7). Others have seen precursors to it in new ‘Christian’ villages formed by MBBs in nineteenth-century Java (Tee 2007: 5 cf. Asad 2009b: 142-149). Nevertheless, Travis (1998a) brought the matter to publication and, thus, into visible and formal debate.

The debate got off to an immediate and lively start. In the same issue of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* [EMQ] that published Travis’ initial article, Phil Parshall – an earlier pioneer and advocate for C4 ministries – issued several warnings concerning C5 as a missionary strategy, thus demarcating some of the ensuing discussions (Parshall 1998b). First, while allowing for C5 as a transitional stage towards C4, Parshall feared C5 also risked forming a slippery slope towards syncretism and, also, that it was open to charges of deception. In many ways Parshall’s comments were moderate, but they sparked further questioning and reiteration of C5 as a missionary methodology, which was not Travis’ intention. Travis (1998b: 412-413) subsequently distanced himself from Parshall’s suggestion that C5 ministries included conversion (or reconversion) to official Islam, something which Parshall saw as “high syncretism... regardless of motivation” (Parshall 1998b: 405; ellipsis original), thus largely sharing Parshall’s rejection of Christians becoming Muslims to

⁹ Cf. Travis and Travis (2008: 203n136): “The earliest articles alluding to the need for a C5 orientation came from Anderson (1976), Wilder (1977), Kraft (1979), and Conn (1979).”

reach Muslims. For another, later, response to Parshall (1998b), see also Winter (2009).

Still in this same issue of *EMQ*, Gilliland (1998: 415) took issue with “a tone of defensiveness” he sensed in Parshall’s comments, even while conceding some of Parshall’s concerns as being justified. In particular, Gilliland questioned Parshall’s conclusions drawn from the results of the unpublished ‘Islampur’ research, which had examined the theological beliefs and priorities held by some MBBs.¹⁰ Gilliland stressed “the critical issue of context” and called for more time in interpreting C5 ministries, since they were still in progressive development (Gilliland 1998: 416; similarly Travis 1998b: 412).¹¹ Travis also took issue with Parshall’s interpretation, most notably Parshall’s claim that “45 per cent [of MBBs in the study] do not affirm God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit” forms part of “the down side” of C5 (Parshall 1998b: 406). For Travis (1999: 660) it was “actually astounding” that “over half” affirm the Trinity.¹²

This particular statistic, drawn from the ‘Islampur’ study, subsequently became a football for both sides of the debate. Woods (2003: 194–195) interpreted the 55% figure in a negative light, whereas Massey (2004c: 297–298) and Brown (2006d: 131) drew

¹⁰ Details of the ‘Islampur’ study need to be pieced together from the glimpses available in different commentaries upon it. Parshall (2003: 69–70) provides perhaps the most comprehensive description of it.

¹¹ Schlorff (2006: 87) identifies Gilliland as the “research director” of the Islampur study.

¹² Travis (1999) states that it is Travis (1998b), ‘used by permission’ from the original publisher (p.660). However, a close reading of the two texts indicates a differing introduction to the section entitled ‘The Islampur case study’, with the variation running for over a paragraph in length (compare Travis 1998b: 411 with Travis 1999: 660). It is impossible to tell in which order the two versions were written, or the rationale for the changes, but it is interesting to note the varying versions, especially at this crucial juncture where – in both instances – the writing is in response to Parshall’s criticisms and is concerned with the assessment of the Islampur study. I have not made wider parallel readings of the two versions of Travis’ article, nor of other documents claiming to be reproduced from elsewhere in the 1999 volume. Thus, I cannot assess the extent to which such revisions occur elsewhere.

positive encouragement from it, albeit while Brown noted that the question itself had been poorly construed. Brown also commended the figure of 66% of MBBs in 'Islampur' reading the Gospels every day as being "far higher than most traditional Christians, and so their ways of talking about God are shaped more by scripture than by ecclesiastical tradition" (Brown 2006d: 132). Furthermore although not cited by name, the 'Islampur' study is probably that referred to by Higgins (2007: 34) as having been quoted in a negative and typically "modern western" fashion as "cognition-centred measurement" of salvation.

Thus, even at this initial stage, certain characteristics of the debate were already apparent. For those seeking to assess these ministries, discernment was made harder by writers' frequent use of pseudonyms¹³ and assertions of the need for anonymity mixing uneasily with interpretation of unpublished research and anecdotal reportage while simultaneously appealing to the importance of local context. Brown (2006d: 131), for example, asserted that the design and interpretation of the 'Islampur' study was lacking but, to my knowledge, the study has never been available for public scrutiny. Second, biblical precedents for C5 phenomena were quickly asserted, including the earliest Jerusalem church in Acts (Travis 1998b: 482). Third, and related, proponents claimed that C5 groups should expect to be led by the Holy Spirit in their contextualization (Travis 1998b: 412). Fourth, and recognising that this was possibly "the most challenging task of C5," Travis saw that the longer term viability of C5 *as* C5 (as opposed to moving towards C4 or C6) required a reinterpretation of "certain aspects of the role of Muhammad and the Qur'an," citing Accad (1997: 34-46, 138-141) as a starting position for this process (Travis 1998b: 413-414). Finally, Travis

¹³ Apart from the obvious 'n.n.', the following also declare themselves to be writing under pseudonyms or partial names: Travis; Massey; McNeal; Dutch; Herald; 'Phil'; Waterman; Abdul Asad; Smythe; and Smythe, PhD. In the latter instance, it is unclear whether the doctorate forms part of the pseudonym; elsewhere, doctorates are claimed without specifying the area of research in which the doctorate was awarded. The existence of other pseudonyms cannot be excluded; also, at least one author changes name, Caldwell becoming Higgins (see Higgins 2004: 158n5).

(1998b: 414) proposed ‘guidelines for avoiding syncretism in a C5 movement.’ Thus across Travis’ two 1998 articles there was a notable shift from an apparently descriptive typology to a more direct advocacy of C5 ministries.

2.2 1999-2002: Refining and Defining C5

Advocates for C5 approaches within Muslim ministries rapidly appeared in print. These early presentations are illuminating since, in print at least, there was little if any criticism of C5 at that time. Proponents, therefore, were relatively free to publish the movement on their own terms, albeit in a manner that was, like the ministries themselves, still developing. To this extent, while agreeing with Tennent’s assessment that C5 literature “is decidedly ad hoc,” at least at this early stage I question his accompanying suggestion that it has “developed as a reaction against criticism which has been posed, rather than [as] an independent case which biblically, theologically, historically and contextually sets forth the necessary arguments.” (Tennent 2006: 104) Instead, the *ad hoc* quality of argumentation at this stage in the debate, I would suggest, also reflects a significant degree of field experience and experimentation with C5 prior to any theorisation or responding to significant criticisms of it.

In an article entitled ‘His Ways are not Our Ways’ Massey (1999) claimed a theological space for C5, announcing in his opening sentence, “Scripture shows that God has never been entirely predictable.” With an eye to Parshall’s earlier criticisms and seeking to position the emergence of C5 as paralleling the earlier origin of C4 approaches, Massey (1999: 189-191) sought to position C5 as an authentic progression from C4, just as – a generation earlier – C4 had itself been required to establish itself as a valid step on from C3: “C5 does not claim to go any further [than C4], except in the area of self-definition.” Multiple and wide-ranging appeals to biblical texts followed, both by assertion and analogy, in a manner which often verged on proof-texting. Used in various ways, Massey’s key texts were Acts 10:13; 15:8, 11, 19; Romans 12:15; 14:4, 19, 22; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Galatians 5:12; 2 Peter 3:9 (cf. 2 Peter 2:1). Several of these verses and passages have, in various ways, been

picked up by others within the debate; certainly, as later writers would demonstrate, there remained much exegetical work to be done beyond simple collection and assertion of texts.

Two important theoretical distinctions underpinned Massey's argument. First, he distinguished conversion from discipleship, seeing the call of Jesus as requiring the latter but not the former (Massey 1999: 191), arguing for a parallel with Paul's opposition to 'Judaisers' demanding gentile conversion to Judaism in order to follow Jesus. Second, since identity is not based solely on one's theological position, there remains room for followers of Jesus to continue identifying as 'Muslim' in name, in sharp contrast to the strategic stance adopted by C1-C2 believers.¹⁴ Recognising the controversial nature of this proposal, Massey sought a moratorium on "missiological gossip," whereby believers further up the spectrum are accused of diluting the gospel via "compromise, syncretism and heresy" to render it more palatable, even while believers further down the spectrum are charged with "obstructing the flow of the gospel with a culturally insensitive, extractionist approach" (Massey 1999: 193).¹⁵ In a similar vein, 'early adopters' of C5 should resist pride, and avoid considering their approach is for everyone.

Instead, Massey submitted, the Acts 15 Council (specifically, 15:19) provides a better, third response which would accommodate C5 ministry, one which models an acceptance of God's diversity in mission infused with praying for God's blessing upon those with a different approach to ministry (Massey 1999: 194). Continuing this emphasis on diversity, Massey also stressed the variegated nature of the Muslim world and the commensurate need for diversity in bringing the gospel to it (Massey 1999: 194-196), as had Travis in

¹⁴ A C1 church operates in an outsider language and cultural setting, with no concession to the local situation. By way of illustration, the Armenian churches in Iran would be classed as C1 (Richard 2009), whereas a C2 ministry would consist of "traditional church using insider language" (Tennent 2010: 303). C1-C3 would identify themselves as 'Christians' (Travis 1998a).

¹⁵ 'Extraction' here indicates converts withdrawing from their familial and society setting, and becoming inserted into new and alien church cultures, either at their own instigation or under the direction of a missionary.

his original presentation of the spectrum. In a subsequent article Massey developed this further, proposing a M1-M9 spectrum, addressing diverse Muslim attitudes about Islam (Massey 2000b: 11-12), but this has not been adopted by later writers.

Picking up on Parshall's earlier call for dialogue on these matters (and, possibly, on Parshall's letter to the *EMQ* editor, reproduced in Parshall 2000: 112-113), a themed edition of the *International Journal of Frontier Missions* [*IJFM*] in 2000, edited by Massey, announced some clarification had been reached, and that 'Parshall's conclusion about C5 was unfortunately based on erroneous descriptions from alleged "C5 advocates" (Massey 2000a).' Certainly this *IJFM* issue clarified the C5 agenda, even if it demonstrated that Parshall's criticisms were not fully resolved (cf. Parshall 2003: 59-75).

For example, Massey asserted that C5 does not lead to C6 (Massey 2000b: 9), a claim later contradicted by subsequent C5 advocates seeing very fluid distinctions among C4-C6 (Brown, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 13-14). Also, Massey reiterated his call for a recognition of God's not entirely predictable diversity, and argued that C5 adherents identifying themselves as 'Muslim followers of Jesus,' was analogous to the identity asserted by Messianic Jews (Massey 2000b: 7; cf. Brother Yusuf, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 8-9). Identity involves "both theology and culture," (Massey 2000b: 9) but the relationship and the balance of power between these two aspects remained unclear.

It is important to note a significant biographical, self-reflective dimension among those writing about C5 ministries. Thus, Bernard Dutch picking up this identity question, reflected on his own experiences as an American in the Middle East, not least during the first Gulf War in 1991 and – from this position – judged self-identity among MBBs to be "multi-faceted," defying simple explanations and thus frequently frustrating external expectations, such that cultural outsiders "often see the issue in false clarity." (Dutch 2000: 15) Conversely, Dutch saw the term 'Christian' as not "a God-ordained

label for followers of Jesus” required by any biblical mandate.¹⁶ Instead, he proposed that more effective communication is possible within Muslim settings by referring to ‘followers of the way’ or, simply, to ‘believers’. In this pragmatic approach, Dutch appealed to Acts 15:19 (albeit cited as 15:19ff) as indicating that unnecessary cultural requirements should not be imposed on MBBs (Dutch 2000: 18). Occasional (but not habitual) mosque or *eid* prayers are acceptable “as a sign of belonging to Muslim society”, but experience suggests that proper discipleship and a good understanding of Scriptures provide the best prevention against syncretism (Dutch 2000: 20).¹⁷ Low-profile ministry, relevant and “sensitive to local culture and sentiment” was judged to reflect a NT model, providing “time for maturity to develop, and for quiet growth to gradually spread through their community.” (Dutch 2000: 21, 20) For Dutch, questions concerning outcomes remain unanswered at this stage, but outsiders cannot and should not simply impose solutions or constraints.

Such questioning regarding identity ran more widely through this *IJFM* themed edition and formed a *leitmotif* across its articles. As well as Dutch, Travis (2000) also raised the contested meaning of ‘Christian’ as reason for not using this term in his own ministry. It nevertheless remained important that C5 ministries should be connected with practices found within the Christian scriptures and practices. Thus, responding to Parshall’s concerns about the dangers involved in longer-term mosque attendance (“the mosque is pregnant with Islamic theology” Parshall 1998b: 409), Travis likened those parts of C5 who still attend the mosque to the earliest believers in Acts who met in both temple and home, a mindset

¹⁶ Indeed, the word ‘Christian(s)’ occurs only in Acts 11:26; 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16, and the term ‘Christianity’ does not occur anywhere in scripture. Nevertheless, the criteria required to constitute a ‘God-ordained’ mandate for terminology remained an unaddressed question.

¹⁷ With this in mind, Brown (2006d: 130) suggested a category C5.5 designation for those whose “culture and worldview have not changed very much.” Given the confusion this introduces into Travis’ scale, it is unsurprising that others have not adopted this suggestion.

which he also saw in Naaman in 2 Kings 5:18, and among evangelical Roman Catholics who still attend the mass. Accordingly, MBBs “must... never stray from the core components of the Gospel,” but through Bible study and with the Spirit’s guidance they will determine “[h]ow much of orthodox Islam they can affirm.” (Travis 2000: 55, 56) In this way, Travis asserted, MBBs remain members of the Muslim community and, thus, are able to reach out effectively with the gospel within it. Next, Travis discussed various strategies some MBBs adopt regarding recital of the *shahada*,¹⁸ giving four case studies of individual MBBs. In his conclusion Travis allowed for C5 to be a temporary option, given the few cases which have been documented and the lack of available and critically considered longitudinal, through-time observations.

Judging the word ‘church’ to frequently reflect Western habitual assumptions, Caldwell also proposed a notion of ‘kingdom’ needed to be recovered, such that the church can be understood as “not so much a congregation as it is a movement, a life, an organism, a seed,” as “yeast” and, to avoid institutional and organisational overtones, Caldwell suggested a corrective metaphor of ‘kingdom sowing’, ‘to refill the time-honored term “church planting” with the fresh biblical content.’ (Caldwell 2000: 30) This will be, he concluded, “incarnational” regarding cultural forms (Caldwell 2000: 31).

In the ongoing search for biblical precedents for C5 ministry already evident in this issue of *IJFM*, Caldwell (2000: 26) cited Jesus’ words in John 4:21-23 and the apostles’ Temple attendance in Acts 3:1 as indicating that ‘place’ is secondary to the issue of ‘heart’, a distinction which he unpacked at greater length with regard to Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman and her fellow villagers in John 4. This in turn underpinned the aversion to extractionism

¹⁸ Discussion of this particular performative encounter with Islam has remained a primary arena for debate regarding C5. See, e.g., Travis and Travis (2005: 407); Corwin *et al.* (2007: 11-12, 15); Woodberry (2007: 27); Smith (2009: 33-35); n.n. (2010a: 406). Brown (2007b: 71-73) provides a helpful layered analysis of what recital or non-recital might communicate.

which characterises C5 ministries.¹⁹ Later Caldwell, writing under the name Higgins, supplemented these analogies by appealing to what he suggested was a Pharisee-based movement evident in Acts 15:5; 21:17ff (Higgins 2004: 158-159; 2007: 37). This paralleled Massey's earlier alignment of C5 alongside Paul's ministry in contrast to that of the Galatian Judaizers, seeing a parallel between the Judaizers and any requirement that MBBs need to convert to 'Christianity'; this, Massey claimed, many in the Islamic world viewed as a "godless Western institution" (Massey 1999: 191).

Simultaneously seeking biblical precedents for C5 back across on the other side of the NT ethnic divide – that is, from within majority Judaism – Jameson and Scalevich (2000) suggested that the first-century negotiation by Jewish believers of their self-identity within wider Judaism holds out a model for C5 ministries. He cites Acts 2:46; 3:1; 10:9; 21:20 and 24:14 in support of their claim. Seeing Peter's appeals to the Old Testament in Acts 2 and 3 as paralleling MBBs making use of the Qur'an, they extrapolated from Acts 21:20 that "[s]imilarly, many twentieth-century Muslim believers are finding it necessary to maintain their distance from the traditional Christian community in order to stay within their Muslim context... to freely worship with them... would destroy their credibility in their own community, as it would have for first-century Jewish believers." (Jameson and Scalevich 2000: 36)

This issue of *IJFM* closed²⁰ with Culver projecting 'the Ishmael promise' through the OT as far as the *magoi* in Matthew 2 (Culver

¹⁹ Lewis (2007: 75) judged extractionism to typify Western paradigms of church formation, in contrast to more communal approaches characterising insider movements.

²⁰ Also in this *IJFM* themed edition, Brown (2000a) raised important and long-standing questions surrounding Bible translation and interpretation, highlighting the phrase normally rendered in English as 'son of God'. This, and other such matters are not specific to C5 or insider movements, and so are not pursued further within this review. Parshall (2004: 64) described the translational issues surrounding 'Son' and 'Messiah' as simply "the newest contextual controversy to come down the pike." Cf., elsewhere and variously on related translational questions, e.g., Massey (1998a; 2004b); Madany (2006); Nikides (2006a); Greer (2010), responding to Abernathy 2010).

2000). Clearly there were great hopes, and prospects, for discipling Muslim peoples in the new century (Love 2000), even if methods for such evangelism were not clear (Brown 2000b; Steinhaus 2000) and the results of the search for biblical precedents was mixed, even contrary.

This state of missiological flux - combined with the sustained sea changes in mission practice and sensibilities perceived as arising after 9/11 (Richard 2001; Woodberry 2002; Love 2008a) and debates surrounding field-governed mission structures in subsequent issues of *IFJM* (issues 18(2) and 18(3)) - created further conditions to sustain ferment concerning C5 as a strategy. On the one hand, there was the claim that “more Muslims have come to Christ in the last 25 years than in the entire history of Muslim missions combined” (Love 2000: 5) but, nevertheless, many felt that, in the face of ongoing pressing need for a gospel impact amongst Muslim peoples, “[i]t would be naive to expect these churches [C1 and C2] to make any significant breakthrough among Muslims.” (Tennent 2006: 103)

These early articulations of C5 ministries amongst Muslims were further fed by parallel developments in other, non-Muslim mission fields. In particular, Hoefler’s book-length discussion of ‘Churchless Christianity’ claimed that, in Madras, 200,000 nonbaptised *Jesu bhakta*, Hindu devotees of Jesus, continued to live within, and identify themselves with, Hindu society (Hoefler 2001; cf. Hoefler 2002). In a parallel development, Richard (2004: 316-320) proposed a seven-point ‘H-Scale for Hindu Contextualization.’ Clearly, the debate was set to continue.

2.3 2003-2007: Development and Dispute

As C5 praxis developed, so too did its literature and, with it, reactions against its proposals and underlying rationale.

At this juncture, it is helpful to introduce the parallel concept of ‘insider movements’ into this discussion of C5 developments. Garrison (2004) was among the first to make use of this terminology in print, although the categories of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ underpinned Travis’ C1-C6 spectrum and the concept was broached in 1970s lit-

erature concerning contextualization theory (see, e.g. Wilder 1977, regarding self-supporting groups of insiders in two or three Turkish cities which had existed for 45 years, cited by Travis and Travis 2005: 398, 405) and claims still earlier roots (cf. McGavran 2005). Yet the phenomena itself, and the terminology used for it, was not unambiguous. Preferring an indigenous church-planting model, Garrison (2004: 153) characterised Insider Movements (the capitalisation is his) as: “difficult to define, confirm or characterize” and noted that “[t]hey range from the real to the ambiguous to the illusory. Where one has been well documented, it raises questions of whether it is unusual or typical.”

In contrast, other claims regarding insider movements were far less reserved. Higgins (2004: 155, 156, 163) paralleled their “earth-shaking” potential with the C16th Reformation, and considered that, as “an emerging reformation,” insider movements would “be fuelled by the rediscovery of culture and religion.” Higgins was not alone: Kim (2006) drew similar comparisons with the Reformation. Seeing any movement to Jesus as an insider movement in the sense that it is culturally located, Higgins located their rationale within the church of Acts, and supplemented the case for MBBs staying in mosques via appeal to 2 Kings 5 and the Samaritan mission in John 4, Luke 10 and Acts 1:8. Judging the gospel to fulfil cultures, Higgins implicitly drew on the critical contextualisation advanced by Hiebert (1985: 195-196) when anticipating that such movements would become self-theologizing such that their local critical contextualization would include, but not be limited to, ‘a new “Jesus” reading of the Quran.’ (Higgins 2004: 163) Later Higgins went further, suggesting the possibility of a no longer extant ‘original Islam’ within the Qur’an’s origins, which “may well be in closer (if not complete) harmony with biblical truth.” (Higgins 2007: 38, 40n27)

Massey, another advocate of C5, continued his earlier strident defence, arguing “His ways are not our orthodoxy.” (Massey 2004c) Several dichotomies followed, including that between “Greco-Roman categories of orthodoxy” and “a Jewish understanding of Christ’s mandate;” (p.296) viewing C5 from a distance as opposed to experiencing it from within personal relationships (p.296); and mis-

siology which is “church-centered rather than Christ-centered.” (p.300) Again, Acts 15 was presented as opening up freedom of forms, with C5 presented as a work of the Holy Spirit rather than a human strategy, and – citing John 16:13 – as best undertaken without the confusing influence of “centuries of Gentile interpretations of Scripture through a Greco-Roman filter,(p.301) Additionally, Massey judged the existing Muslim culture of most C5 believers to be more ‘Jewish’ than the ‘Christian culture’ evident in most contemporary gentile churches. Concerning the often-quoted findings of the Islampur study, Massey considered that “more than half” (p.297) affirmed the Trinity – after only 15 years of discipleship – pitching Islampur “to be well ahead of our Greco-Roman church fathers, given the length of time it took them to draw such conclusions.” (p.303) Simultaneously, Massey anticipated that C5 theology might become as different from western theology as he judged fourth-century orthodoxy to have varied from its Jewish Palestinian roots. Although Massey concluded with an appeal “against the kind of dogmatic judgmentalism that fuelled the agendas of Judaizers,” (p.303) there remained a strident dogmatism in his own presentation. Nikides (2006b) criticised Massey for leading people away from biblical orthodoxy, not least in his differentiating of ‘Christ-centred’ from ‘church-centred’.

Nevertheless, Massey was not alone in continuing to problematise the term ‘Christian’ (see also, e.g., Tennent 2006: 103-104; Winter 2009: 671). Lewis (2007: 76) also differentiated ‘Christian’ (Acts 11:26) from ‘Christianity’, paralleling the latter with the need to convert to Judaism which was abrogated in Acts 15. He claimed ‘we should likewise free people groups from the counter-productive burden of socioreligious conversion and the constraints of affiliation with the term “Christianity” and with various religious institutions and traditions of Christendom.’ The unresolved problem is, of course, whether one can parse out ‘religious’ and ‘cultural’ life – or, even the ‘at least three “insides”’ of an insider movement: that is, “social structure, religious life (including terminology and practices), and the wider cultural milieu,” according to Higgins (2007: 37). Ridgway (2007: 78) considered this impossible, and instead saw the

gospel as bringing a *spiritual identity* which in time affects and transforms society as a whole. In some parts of the world, however, 'religious' and 'cultural' are excessively differentiated, as Petersen (2007a) highlighted within the Indian constitution.

Others continued to commend 'kingdom (of God)' as the fundamental paradigm governing earthly believers. This concept, it was claimed, could even facilitate a "kingdom lifestyle... independent of any religious structure" (Ridgway 2007: 79). This, too, was open to criticism as being too dichotomous to function in this manner (e.g. Grafas 2007a). This did not deter, however, later claims that a Muslim can enter into the kingdom of God without any need to change his or her 'shape and identity' by entering "directly into *the wide gate of the kingdom, rather than through our narrow gate of twenty centuries of Christian identity and tradition,*" (Jabbur 2008: 240-241, emphasis original), the irony of Matthew 7:13-14 notwithstanding. Lewis likewise differentiated 'kingdom' from 'Christianity', the former claimed as allowing the nations to enjoy "direct access to God through Jesus Christ." (Lewis 2009b: 19) In Lewis' view, to think otherwise is "not in line with the truth of the Gospel," citing, among other texts, Acts 10 and Acts 15 in support of this assertion.

Such claims invite a review of the literature to shade over into an assessment of it. Apart from the risk of exegetical over-extension (what, for example, of Paul's appeals to his Pharisee identity in Acts 23:6; 26:5?) the danger here is one of reifying 'religion' as an undifferentiated 'thing' which never actually occurs in pure form within empirical reality. Both "Gentileism" (the term is from Massey 1999) and 'monotheism' (cf. Higgins 2007: 39n16) run this risk. In the latter instance, Temple attendance in early Acts comes to be seen too easily as "very much parallel to ongoing attendance at mosques for Muslim followers of Jesus." (Higgins 2007: 37)

What this reifying tendency lacks is any sense of particularistic historic fulfilment of prior OT promises from God regarding a renewed Israel (as demonstrated in Acts 1-7; cf. also Schlorff 2006: 118-119), as qualitatively different from the subversive fulfilment of

other, non-scripturated religious desires elsewhere among the nations.²¹ Care is required lest any “fallacy” arising from “a deduction from the assumption that Jesus could have become incarnate in *any* culture” leads to the suggestion that ‘we should seek to “incarnate” the gospel in Islamic culture.’ (Waterman 2007: 61) Clearly the gospel can grow in different and alien cultural settings (see, e.g., Gefen (2007) regarding the origins of the Easter festival and Massey (2004b) concerning the etymology of ‘God’), but terms such as ‘incarnational’ provide a slippery basis for argumentation if they are loosed from salvation-historical moorings (Grafas 2007b).

Increasingly in this period, C5 proposals were also being criticised for lacking a robust biblical basis. Part of the problem was the level of biblical exegesis being employed at this stage in the debate. Often it was isolated and shallow, and still open to the charge of proof-texting.

A survey of the various appeals made to texts in 1 Corinthians demonstrates the diversity of appeals to sections of the letter, and the relative isolation of resultant argumentation from other appeals to elsewhere in the epistle. Perhaps most appeal has been made to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Massey cited it as evidence of God’s unpredictability (1999) and as supporting converts staying in their community for as long as possible (2000b: 8-9). Caldwell (2000: 28) saw it as justifying a clear differentiation of culture from religion as analytic categories, and as implying a flexibility regarding matters of purity. DeNeui (2005: 416) made similar use of this passage in his defence of C5. Woods (2003) demurred from such conclusions, noting that Paul did not adopt anti-Christian practices from Judaism, nor did he cease to be ethnically a Jew.²² For Woods, Paul’s stance contrasts with that of C5 in that his beliefs were not concealed, whereas C5 has the potential to lead towards C6. Woods also raised

²¹ Schlorff does not refer to ‘subversive fulfilment’, but this term chimes with Schlorff’s overall thesis (2006: 103-136).

²² Both these points raise further questions concerning the essential nature of Judaism, and the degree of fixity and flex within categories of ethnicity, questions beyond the span of this review.

2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 as clearly supporting a more extractionist stance towards the believers' setting, and Parshall (2004: 288) noted that both C4 and C5 arguments appealed to 1 Corinthians 9:19–22, suggesting that it was not a decisive text for a C5 stance. Such appeals in defence of C5 were opposed by Waterman (2007: 61) on the grounds that being 'under Christ's law' (v.23) negates the C5 claim and that there is "a major difference between becoming *like* a group and becoming fully part of that group."

1 Corinthians 7:20 is the other major text in 1 Corinthians to which C5 advocates make appeal, such that Parshall (2004: 288) called it "the new hermeneutic on the block." Thus Talman (2004: 8) cited vv.20 and 24 as supporting continuing identification with wider culture. Taking this further, Lewis (2004b:146-147) proposed that "women win people to Christ by marrying non-Christians," citing 1 Corinthians 7:13-14 and 1 Peter 3:1-2 in defence of her claim. Lewis (2007: 76) further appealed to 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 as indicating the gospel's appeal to whole networks, even whole towns, within an alternative and avowedly non-extractionist *oikos* model for church (for a summary and critical assessment of which, see Wolfe 2011: 40-49).

With regard to such appeals to 1 Corinthians 7, Woods (2003) saw instances of C5 eisegesis, and Tennent (2006: 107) understood the passage as opposing the use of the old proselyte model of conversion and, as such, is opposed to the C5 project. Smith (2009: 25) claimed that 1 Corinthians 6:14-18 supported extraction for the sake of Christ, and saw C5 appeals to 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 as problematic because "Islam is both a religion and a culture." Such a conclusion sits entirely counter to the differentiation of religion and culture made by Lewis in Brogden (2010: 34). For Dixon (2009: 18) 1 Corinthians 7:24 had achieved the status of being a C5 proof text, and for Span (2009a: 46) 1 Corinthians 4:13 taught the believer's position was, instead, that of becoming the scum of the earth. Clearly the 'new hermeneutic' is far from consensual.

Other texts in 1 Corinthians have also been claimed in support of C5. 1 Corinthians 8:10 has been suggested as possibly allowing 'insider' eating (Higgins 2007: 37). Likewise, 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

has been read as indicating “adaptability even to a pagan culture like Corinth as long as one is guided by conscience and by the desire to glorify God and see people be saved,” (Woodberry 2007: 25) and 1 Corinthians 11:1 has been read as supporting an embrace of Muslims and Islam (Woodberry 2007: 24, also appealing to Acts 16:3; 21:26). Such claims need to engage with the wider context of 1 Corinthians 8-10 and its assertions of an anti-idolatry reading which Witherington (1998: 466) succinctly summarises as being concerned with “venue rather than menu.” Such a reading would problematise claims for C5 in a manner not yet recognised within the debate. It will also provide important contextual considerations for performative utterances such as the *shahada*.²³

The same need for more integrated appeals to scripture is also evident in relation to the use of Acts in defending C5. For example, too many appeals to Acts 15:19 have not taken v.20 into account, with its four elements which qualify the preceding verse. Remarkably, among the literature reviewed here, Tennent (2006: 105-107) was the first, and a rare, exception in considering *both* these verses. Further, he did seek to address the practical difficulties of parsing ‘culture’ from ‘religion’ within actual lived experience via his hypothetical musing about a ‘Cairo Council’ mirroring his reading of Acts 15 (Tennent 2006: 107). Yet Tennent’s exegesis remained narrow and detached from the wider context of Acts 15. Corniche (2010a) has provided the most detailed and persuasive exegesis of Acts 15 within the literature reviewed here, but he is no advocate

²³ Waterman (2007: 58-59) called for attention to the theologically ‘untrue’ dimensions of such confessions, especially when made regularly rather than *in extremis* as a last resort. He questioned whether the *shahada* confession can be made simply as a cultural marker, akin to an unbeliever in England participating in a toast declaring ‘God save the Queen.’ (Brown, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 15) Waterman demurred on two grounds: first, that it risks taking God’s name in vain (Exodus 20:7) and, second, that early believers did not follow such an approach to the confession ‘Caesar is Lord.’ Waterman judged this latter confession to be more analogous to the *shadada* than ‘God save the Queen.’ Brown (2007b: 71-73) has responded to Waterman and Corwin: while not always convincing, his response does demonstrate the spatial and performative complexities of the question.

for C5. Where Acts 15:20, 29 have been considered by C5 advocates, these verses have been understood narrowly and simply as communicating a non-enduring legacy of Levitical regulations which does not outlast even the New Testament period (see, e.g., Higgins 2007: 37; Lewis 2010: 44). Alternative and more compelling readings of Acts 15, such as the Council declaring against idolatry influencing the churches (see, e.g., Witherington 1998: 461-464), have not been considered for their impact on C5 strategies.

Instead, it has been more typical to find ‘principles’ being abstracted from the Acts 15 narrative in a vague and uncontrolled manner (e.g. Hoefler 2005; Tiéno and Hiebert 2005; Woodberry 2007: 25-27). Thus Brown (2006d: 128) saw Acts 15 as allowing cultural freedom, but then added in parentheses “although they would need to shun some bad practices.” On this latter point, however, Brown failed to specify what was intended in Acts as constituting ‘bad practice’, or how elsewhere the Acts narrative might help to apply such intentions. Also, since he assumed that cultural diversity equates to maintaining a church’s native culture, he drew dichotomous conclusions from Acts 15 by assuming cultural homogeneity *within* its congregations, an assertion which ignores the Antioch church and the congregations it planted. At the same time, however, Brown helpfully identified philosophical and psychological foundations such as ethnocentricity which underpin refusals to contextualise, and obstacles such as denominationalism and the expectations of financial supporters which can frustrate contextualisation (Brown 2006d: 129).

Alongside the abstraction of principles from Acts 15, there is also an abstraction of process. Thus Lewis, in Corwin *et al.* (2007: 10) commented, “I believe one of the most instructive aspects of Acts 15 is not their conclusions, but the process they followed.” Lewis (2009b: 18) judged Acts 15 to pivot on two criteria, the giving of the Spirit and the guidance of Scripture, such that these criteria can be applied to insider movements. Such a separation of process from result is problematic, and masks deeper questions and divisions. Even Waterman (2007: 60), a strident critic of C5, saw Acts 15 as supplying a “pattern” for us to “seek to emulate.” Not all would

agree, however, without **reminder**, that “[t]he decision of that council was to leave Gentiles in their culture.” (Hoefler 2007b: 131) Also, just as within Acts the question of what the apostles were doing in the Temple can raise multiple possible answers (Sleeman 2009: 105), a lot of interpretive scope lies within the relative degree of freedom and connection between ‘movements’ (cf. Higgins 2009: 79-80).

Within and beyond such exegetical considerations, the debate’s predominantly and increasingly dichotomous nature risked denying that C1 and C5 are not the only options for ministry in Muslim settings. Tennent (2006: 110-113) took exception to various false dichotomies inherent within Massey (2004c) and Hoefler (2005), and objected to the individualistic stance he identified in Brown (2000b). Tennent also observed that many defences offered for C5 were equally applicable to C4 ministries, and thus achieved insufficient traction regarding the pivotal C5 issue of identity, especially self-identity. At the close of his consideration of Acts 15:19-20, for example, he concluded: “while I find Acts 15 a compelling defence for C-4, I am less convinced that it provides a sufficient basis for justifying C-5.” (Tennent 2006: 107) He drew similar conclusions regarding two other passages frequently used to underpin C5 arguments, namely 1 Corinthians 7:20 and 9:19-22, and saw 2 Kings 5:18-19 as too ambiguous to contribute substantially to the contextualisation discussion. Conversely, he judged Hebrews 10:25 to argue *against* a C5 stance among first-century Jewish believers. Others shared these concerns (e.g. Waterman 2007: 61).

Dichotomies thrive on loosely defined terms. Higgins (2006: 117-119) judged that Tennent had assumed, but not clearly defined, the categories ‘Muslim’ and ‘church’ in both their historical and contemporary expressions, but he also noted that this was also characteristic of both sides of the wider C5 debate. Within C5 itself, Higgins (2006: 121-123) went on to outline three possible stances depending on one’s prior conclusions regarding Islam’s origins, early history and subsequent development. Beyond this, even the term ‘Muslim’ can have very different connotations between localities and among different ethnic groups (Tee 2007: 1-2). Simultaneously,

however, globalisation – manifested, for instance, in a ‘google-ized’ world which reconfigures notions of both public and private spheres (categories alien to a Qur’anic worldview, but integral to C5 lived experience²⁴) – was meaning that “we can no longer present a different message or persona for each different audience.” (Love 2008a: 33) Tensions, both internal and external to the debate, clearly abound.

Other responses to Tennent confirm this observation. Both Parrshall and Hoefler agreed with the likelihood of C5 serving a transitional function (Travis et al. 2006: 125-126). Travis, however, saw four weaknesses within Tennent’s writing (Travis et al. 2006: 124-125), but none of them addressed the substance of Tennent’s disagreement with C5. First, Travis saw it as largely theoretical and without any first-hand fieldwork and, second, that Tennent’s “theological considerations” led him to generalise from only short sections of the literature. Also, he dismissed Tennent’s claim that deceitfulness within C5 renders it unethical as “an extremely biased statement, spoken by an outsider.” Finally, Tennent, in Travis’ view “does not take account of the changing world we are living in.” Regarding Tennent’s exegesis, Travis simply appealed to a generalised empirical observation that C5 ministries have happened, and are happening around the world.

Criticisms almost naturally followed, fearing a minimising of the Bible akin to North American seeker-driven ministries (Corwin 2006, Piper 2006; cf. Corwin and Winter 2006, and the response from Travis and Travis 2006). While the search continued for ‘appropriate hermeneutics’ for coping with cultural diversity (Redford 2005), others countered what they saw as an excessive appropriation of similarities without a commensurate assessment of dissimilarities (Waterman 2007, esp. 60), or an absence of wider theological reflection informing C5’s developments of local theologies (Corwin 2007:54-55). For many, the question that was expressed in the Sep-

²⁴ Regarding Islam’s legal construals of public and private, see Ruthven (1997: 83-90). These constructions of identity within space and place are very different from those envisaged within the USA and other western democratic systems of law.

tember–October 2005 edition of *Mission Frontiers* remained: ‘Can we trust insider movements?’

Some observers raised wider concerns regarding the balance between theological principle and functional pragmatism within C5 writings. Questions arose, for example, concerning the homogeneous unit principle and extractionism, generating calls for further missiological study on these matters (Williams 2003). Furthermore, if extractionism stood as one pole within contextualisation, then the risk of syncretism still lay in the other direction (Tennent 2006: 103) as Parshall’s initial concerns regarding C5 continued to circulate. Asking ‘how far is too far in contextualization?’ Woods (2003) questioned C5 appeals to 1 Corinthians 7:20, 9:19–22; 2 Kings 5:18–19, and 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1, and the strength of parallels claimed between Islam and first-century Judaism more generally. Tennent’s examination of the arguments mounted for C5 saw them as more a defence of C4, and thus as failing to address the central and more contentious issue of identity (Tennent 2006: 105–109). He also feared an Arian Christology within Massey’s argumentation (Tennent 2006: 115n39), and asserted the importance of keeping soteriology related with ecclesiology (Tennent 2006: 111). Like Tennent, Woods (2003) also sought a clearer line between culture and religion.

By contrast, this period also saw further advances (or, at least, clarifications) regarding C5 practices. These included stronger advocacies for “stylistically Islamic” Bible translation into Arabic, and shifts away from Western patterns of worship. These were matched with a theology for Muslims which is more theocentric than Christocentric, centred around biblical theology rather than systematic theology, a ‘de-Hellenizing theology’ less concerned with “abstract intellectual issues.” (Talman 2004: 10) Under this schema, scripture would function as a prism through which Muslim followers of Jesus, reflecting upon their life experience, could promote social and ethical transformation, even “an alternative political/economic ideology to the Islamic mode of *shar’ia*.” (Talman 2004: 11)

Other writers issued parallel calls for visionary cultural transformation. Massey (2004a, 2004b), appealed in part to a perceived

freedom of lifestyle which he saw Acts 15 as confirming. He proposed that missionaries and MBBs could adopt elements of Muslim lifestyle in an 'incarnational' manner which he viewed as analogous to Jesus and the apostles remaining Torah-observant Jews. This proposal also built upon claims that most Islamic forms, including those involved within the Five Pillars, were originally acquired from seventh-century Middle Eastern Jews and Christians (Woodberry 1989, cited by Travis and Travis 2005: 398).

This sense of a comparative cultural continuity which characterises C5 has been apparent in other proposals for it. Lewis (2004a), drew on Rodney Stark's sociological analysis of early church growth (Stark 1996). He stressed cultural continuity, community involvement and open networks as factors facilitating rapid spread of the gospel before later Constantinian regulation allegedly slowed such growth. The perceived danger with C4, despite its apparent avowal of cultural conformity, was that it would – over time – lead to distancing from the surrounding mosque-based culture. C5, however, utilising the gaps between personal commitment and official theology, would allow some Muslims to remain within this culture (Travis and Travis 2005: 400–401, 405). Furthermore, C4 was assessed to have its own potential problems. These ranged from apostasy within congregations to negative responses from the society surrounding the congregation which might preclude C4 contextualisation from serving as a feasible way to plant new congregations (Brown 2006d: 132). Several made use of Hiebert's (1994) distinction between 'bounded' and 'centred' sets and, judging salvation to involve a process, saw 'directional' faith within a process towards Christ as more significant than a static or binary 'positional' religion (Travis and Travis 2005: 407–408; cf. also DeNeui 2005; Kraft 2005b; Brown 2007b: 69). However, it would be inadequate to characterise C5 as only emphasising cultural continuity: simultaneously, it can also incorporate an understanding that growth in Christ might well include, and even require, decisive release and separation from spiritual bondage (Travis and Travis 2005: 408–409).

In sum, then, the underlying and intensifying question in this period was whether C5 was legitimate and sufficient *in itself* as a

form of ministry. Regarding C5, Parshall (2004) questioned whether new believers could survive without teaching, and suggested an adjectival rather than nominative use of 'Muslim' when applied to MBBs. Still questioning whether C5 ministries could be more than a transitional stage towards C4, particularly given his longstanding reservations about MBBs joining in with the *shahada* in the mosque (Parshall 1985: 180-184), Parshall queried what constituted the distinguishing mark of believers in such a setting. On balance, however, Parshall declared he would rather err towards love and affirmation of those practicing C5 ministries. Nevertheless, in the light of these reservations, and those expressed earlier (Parshall 2003: 59-75), Travis and Travis (2005: 397) were somewhat premature to see Parshall's concerns about the risk of syncretism as having been addressed by subsequent writings. Instead, as has been noted earlier, C5 writings remained *ad hoc*, frequently arising as fragmented output from people who were primarily field-based activists. Typically, in such circumstances, "missiological reflection concerning an issue arises about ten to twenty years after the field missionaries first start encountering the problem." (Tennent 2006: 104) Additionally, however, both sides of the C5 debate were becoming increasingly reactionary.

2.4 2008-2010: Polarisation and Polemic?

As is evident above, the underlying rationale presented by C5 proponents remained contested during the middle years of the decade. The subsequent years have seen an intensifying of differences between advocates and critics of C5, and the usage of the term 'C5' decreased as the term 'Insider Movement' became more prevalent.

A particularly significant impetus in this direction came with *A Common Word Between Us and You* [ACW], an initiative made first by 138 leading Muslim scholars and intellectuals in October 2007, inviting 'Leaders of Christian Churches everywhere' to engage with them in further dialogue.²⁵ Among the many Christian responses to

²⁵ See the official website, www.acommonword.com for the statement, and the various developments and responses surrounding it.

ACW, the ‘Yale Response’²⁶ stands out in that its list of signatories and the subsequent responses to it – both informally within the blogosphere and more formally in individual and institutional statements – demonstrate the manner in which evangelical Christians have been split in their assessments of *ACW* and thus in their responses to it (see, e.g., Lewis 2008; Love 2008b; Reitsma 2008; Poston 2010).²⁷ These differences have articulated and exposed existing differences concerning ministry to Muslims in a more intense interaction than was previously the case.²⁸

With regard to C5 and insider movement practices, some responses to *ACW* reasserted existing arguments to fit the new situation. Thus, Lewis (2008) presented the Samaritans in John 4 and Luke 10 as the ‘Muslims’ of Jesus’ day, and saw Peter in Acts 10 as reaching out, in a Jesus-like manner, which commends itself for believers today. In this regard, Lewis continued earlier assertions regarding a non-extractionist *oikos* model for ministry (Lewis 2004a; cf. Caldwell 2000). As well as appeals to 1 Corinthians 7 outlined earlier in this review, Lewis (2007) had also appealed to John 4:39–41 as supporting such a model. Lewis (2009b: 17) later added Acts 8:14–17 as evidence of Samaritan believers remaining in their own communities and retaining their Samaritan identity. Ridgway (2007: 79) saw such a Samaritan insider movement as paralleling a Judean Jewish insider movement earlier in John, and also proposed a Galilean Jewish insider movement in Mark 1–4 and subsequent gentile insider movements starting around Legion and then the Syro-Phoenician woman later in Mark.

²⁶ The ‘Yale Response’, written by four scholars from the Yale Divinity School, has been published in various settings, and has attracted a diverse list of signatories. For its text, see Attridge *et al.* (2007).

²⁷ In comparison, *Grace and Truth*, a consensus statement by a global network of Christians concerning Christlike relations with Muslims (Love 2009; Various 2009) was not nearly as divisive.

²⁸ See, for example, the comments made by Colin Chapman, one signatory to the Yale Response, published in April 2008 as a ‘Featured Article’ entitled *Christian Responses to “A Common Word”: Why I Signed the Yale Response at www.globalmissiology.org 3(5)*.

Increasingly, such claims came under closer scrutiny and sustained criticism. Smith (2009: 23-26; 43-44) saw them as lacking any consideration of the Christocentric reworking of believers' identity in passages such as Matthew 12:46-50 and as making an *a priori* rejection of extraction despite biblical evidence to the contrary (cf. Mark 8:34-38 and 1 Corinthians 6:14-18).²⁹ This was just one part of Smith's wide-ranging and strident critique of C5 ministries, reflective of his own long-held views on how Christians should engage with Islam (cf. Smith 1998). Conversely, the pragmatic assertion of *oikos* strategies was continued by Gray *et al.* (2010: 94). They commended seeking to reach "whole networks intact" via people of local influence and, following Patterson and Scoggins (2002: 102) 'men and women of peace', a term drawn from Luke 10:3-7 (cf. also Lewis and Lewis 2009a, 2009b; Lewis 2010).

Another area of debate which intensified concerned the use or non-use of traditional 'Christian' language and terminology. Hoefler (2008: 29), for example, seeing 'Christian', 'Christianity', 'church', 'baptism' and 'conversion' as conveying the taxing legacy of past baggage from which people should be released, urged a rethinking of "the burdensome and confusing terminology with which the Good news has been wrapped. Once we take off these distracting and confusing wrappings, the beauty of the pure Gospel can be seen and enjoyed and considered by all." Yet this risks reifying an abstract, even Gnostic, 'pure Gospel'. For critics such as Smith (2009: 41), this is to be rejected as bypassing Christianity and leading towards a false hybrid, 'Chrislam,' which is neither authentic Islam nor real Christianity (cf., similarly, Span 2009c: 132-133). At the same time, however, Winter (2008: 671) is correct to warn against being more tolerant of deficient theological understanding among

²⁹ Smith (2009) does not list the passages paralleling these Gospel texts. For example, Matthew 12:46-50 has synoptic parallels in Mark 3:19b-21, 31-35 and Luke 8:19-21 (cf. also John 15:14) and Mark 8:34-35 finds Lukan parallels in Luke 9:23-24 (with the intensifying Lukan insertion of 'daily' in v.23); 14:25-27; and 17:33. Such parallels suggest a widespread influence of such teaching within early Christian discipleship.

those whom we habitually call Christians, simply because of such terminology.

Winter (2008) also challenged both Hoefler and Love (2008a) on other grounds, namely that the meanings of words in cultural contexts cannot be controlled, legislated or mandated. Changes in such markers occur slowly and that realignment cannot be achieved by simple or idiosyncratic fiat (Smith 2009: 36-37); nor can the social linguistic dimensions within particular contexts be always or completely controlled. The etymology of 'Christian' matters (e.g. Flint 2010a), but it is not everything. Greer (2009) made the same point concerning terminology for 'sin' in Islamic contexts, asserting the need for flexible communication. Nor can words be treated as neutral markers: referring to Jesus by his Islamic name '*Isa*', for example, misses "the significant allusion in the name *Yasu*' to the one who saves us" and this in turn connects with Father-Son language deeply and inextricably embedded in the gospel (Bourne 2009: 64). Likewise, there is the risk of losing biblical eschatological specificity in the course of such communication (Span 2010c: 627). Thus words are unavoidable, and unavoidably positioning. What is needed, therefore, is a more sophisticated consideration of the variable connections between form and meaning, something begun by n.n (2010a: 412).

More frequently, however, exchanges of views have become acrimonious with different sides talking across one another. Examples of this kind of limited exchange can be seen in the response of Higgins (2009b) to Nikides (2009) and Phil (2009), both responding to Higgins (2009), and the exchange between Lewis (2009b) and Brogden (2010). If earlier years had engaged in some wishful thinking that criticisms could be answered, later interchanges such as these would not be from hardened existing positions.

Within and beyond such disputes, C5 has continued to develop in various ways. Directions of thought have been raised and sharpened, such as whether the *Shar'ia* of God can function as a contextual bridge within Islamic contexts (Greer 2008; 2009: 20, 22n10). Previous theorisation has been enhanced e.g. Lewis (2004a), Gray and Gray (2009b: 65) have drawn from the work of Stark (1996) in

continuing to stress the importance of maintaining existing social networks, on the grounds that cultural continuity enhances gospel growth. They also looked to Hiebert's (1994) categories, and shared a critique of Constantinian Christendom, projecting a 'transformational' model for church growth, rather than the more traditional 'attractational' model (Gray and Gray 2009b: 69-70).

Others have demonstrated new directions for further debate. Thus, whereas Travis (2000) appealed to the precedent of Roman Catholic evangelicals still participating in the Roman mass, Nikides (2008) looked back to Calvin's interactions with the 'Nicodemites' of his own day. Rotter (2010) has extended this further, also examining the arguments on similar matters made by the sixteenth-century Protestant English bishop John Bradford concerning 'the hurt of hearing mass.' Such voices from church history add a rich dimension to contemporary debate, especially where such debate is becoming entrenched. Additionally, Span has suggested, Jesus models a stance for his followers to imitate which transcends insider and outside dualisms (Span 2009a). Ultimately such a third position is to be established via Jesus' bodily ascension and session (Span 2009a; cf. Sleeman 2009), something which has not been considered previously in relation to insider movement developments.

These and other recent contributions to C5 questions and directions provide a platform from which to consider the future of these debates.

3 Prospects: Looking towards the Future of C5 / Insider Movement Debates

Looking towards the future, this survey suggests that there are eight areas where debates concerning C5 and insider movements need to advance.

First, there is *a need for the publication of better field studies*. Anonymity, pseudonyms and undisclosed bases for claims and counter-claims are unhelpful for assessing claim and counter-claim (Dixon 2009: 7). Utterly untraceable assertions (e.g. Higgins 2009b) also generate a lack of accountability within the wider church (Smith 2009: 46; Ayub 2009: 25-26, 29-30). It is insufficient to claim that

criticism of an individualistic slant within insider movements reflects a misunderstanding of the “proponents of the so-called insider movement,” then to appeal only to (undocumented) personal experience to repudiate the claim (Higgins 2010a: 132n13). Brown (2006d: 133n19) suggests the use of control groups and more exploratory questions, but control groups might well be nearly impossible to implement. Instead, carefully designed longitudinal (through-time) studies, which will become easier with the passing of time, will help address concerns regarding the effectiveness of inter-generational discipleship and transmission of faith within insider movements (questioned by Nikides 2009), and the extent to which they foster an individualised and privatised faith (a matter raised by Phil 2009). Some initial steps in this direction are very interesting (e.g. J. Kim 2010), but will benefit from more rigorous method and/or disclosure of method. In all likelihood, the time-scale needed for this kind of assessment might well be decades (Asad 2009b: 140). In the meantime, there is certainly a need for maximal disclosure regarding methods and claims, by both proponents and critics of insider movements.³⁰ In turn, this will help develop better practices within local lived experience (for which see, helpfully, Hofer 2009; Gray and Gray 2009; cf. the insightful comments made by Schlorff 2006: 87-89). It will, doubtlessly, require humble ethics and Christ-like power relations within research (Travis, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 14-15; cf. Korkmuz 2009). Helpful, too, are historical studies, where these are possible (see, e.g., Wolfe 2011: 238-306 regarding Sadrach Surapranata’s community of faith in Central Java).

For some recent moves towards better field studies, see Brown *et al.* (2009); Gray and Gray (2009); Gray *et al.* (2010). In some instances, insider strategies might be rejected as “a western, hegemonistic construct,” (Madany 2009: 56) but the reasons *why* this happens need to be uncovered. Likewise, better fieldwork will

³⁰ The frequently cited and debated percentage figures drawn from the ‘Islampur’ study, for instance, are somewhat limited in usefulness if the research was based on interviews with only 72 people, which appears to be the case according to Parshall (2003: 69).

expose more helpfully the multi-scaled and simultaneous complexities within the lived experiences of MBBs. Kraft (2010: 970-978), for example, is very informative regarding the search by MBBs for a marriage partner, and their strategies for negotiating relationships within wider society. I do not think it is coincidental that Kraft's work arises out of the rigours of having conducted advanced-level research within the confines of a mainstream secular university. Such contexts will sharpen the need for rigorous and critically-sustained investigations and, responsibly used in the service of missiology, should negate dualistic dismissals of 'academia' expressed by (e.g.) Grafas (2010: 937). While valuing the accounts of the origins of individual insider movements cited earlier, and while agreeing with Gill's candid observation that "[i]t's hard to argue with a testimony," (Gill 2008: 9) biographical reportage benefits from the best public analyses of both it and "the treacherous landscape of... religious rituals, notions and allegiances" (Gill 2008: 7) in which it is forged. Theory and lived experience should not be set in opposition against each other. Carefully designed and implemented studies can even probe the veracity of claims such as that C5 accommodates a deep-seated fear of persecution (cf. Smith 2009: 45), and assess the impact of satellite television on the facilitation of C5 ministries (cf. Stringer 2005).

Second, and related to the above observations, there is a *need for more open exchanges and visits* (Corwin in Corwin *et al.* (2007: 8). This does not negate a recognition that security issues might well make it difficult or inappropriate to define 'unity' according to visible mixed gatherings (Higgins 2007:36). There still remains scope, alongside better field research and diffusion of findings, for responsible and traceable interactions which will help address accusations made by some (e.g. Phil 2009: 118n8; Grafas 2010: 935) of MBBs being coerced by certain C5 practitioners to maintain a C5 form of discipleship. Addressing the minimal information flows and fellowship between C4 and C5 proponents within some local mission circles (Tee 2007: 2) will help this process. Where this can find its way into print, it will help negate what might only be the appearance of a North American predominance among those advancing C5

(Smith 2009: 21). As Tee (2007: 5) comments, “[i]t is unusual for anyone to condemn the Christian founding fathers of the USA for not staying in Europe as insiders, but instead beginning a new community with religious freedom in the New [sic] World.”

Although the interchange is limited, Brogden (2010) allowing Lewis to interact directly with his argument is a helpful example of more open exchanges in print. It is to be hoped that this kind of communication can help heal the past regarding the abuse of confidential field studies (cf. Massey 2004c: 303), and enable new engagement and disclosure. Perhaps third-party-governed and cross-disciplinary exchanges will be even more useful. It might well be that such exchanges are already happening at conferences: seeing more of them appearing in published form would be more widely beneficial, especially for cross-disciplinary interactions.

Third, and again following on from previous observations there is a *need for better theorisation*: Some already wish to set aside the C-spectrum as being frequently misunderstood and misapplied (e.g. Stringer 2007). Dixon (2009: 8-18) raises serious concerns about ‘the illusion of the spectrum,’ asking whether the C-spectrum is over-worked and not appropriate for the tasks and claims asked of it. Its “purpose”, according to Travis (1998a: 407) was “to assist church planters and Muslim background believers to ascertain which type of Christ-centered communities [sic] may draw the most people from the target group to Christ and best fit in a given context.” As such, however, it claims to offer a comparative and even critical function but, in and of itself, does not move beyond the descriptive. This is evident both internally and externally.

Internally, the spectrum has long struggled with C6. C6 has been the soft underbelly for C5 proponents: does it, or does it not, constitute a range of strategies / motivations in and of itself? Tennent considered that C6 should be understood as an exceptional and tragic circumstance which – one day, with the decline of persecution – should become a thing of the past and, as such, should not be viewed as an extension to the contextualisation scale (Tennent 2006: 102, 114n10). This cannot be assumed, however; C6 is a strategy which might be adopted by any individual within any cul-

ture or situation for a variety of reasons. Therefore, it cannot be excluded except on an *a priori* basis, unless there is some unstated but underlying presupposition as to what constitutes a 'legitimate' stance within the spectrum. There is fluidity surrounding C5, between C4 and C6 (Brown, in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 13), which remains unexamined. By its nature, C6 will be very hard to research, but this will be important in order to try and assess its connections, if any, with C5.

At the same time, too, the problematic of culture remains within the spectrum and is indeed inscribed within it, not least with regard to how one separates culture from religion, or theorises their interactions. Lewis (2009a) demonstrates this issue, and its tensions. This requires further consideration, unless the spectrum is to fragment and provide no analytic purchase whatsoever: "[n]o template can be applied to every situation in the same way" (Higgins 2009: 88, cf. 81-88). What fullness of expression of church should we expect "when C5 is practiced properly," (Asad 2009b: 141) and at what stage and by what criteria within a processual development of ecclesial identity and practice? Terms such as 'extractionism' can mask a combination of dimensions which need careful analytical separation (Flint 2010b), as well as consideration of their interactions. Historical analyses provide another form of cross-cultural comparative criticism, whether it be via consideration of the Reformation insider movements such as the Nicodemites (Rotter 2010) or in relation to nineteenth-century Java (Asad 2009b: 142-49).

Also insider movement theorisation will benefit from more careful use of sociological theory, e.g. Kraft (2010) making use of the sociology of deviant behaviour and of new religious movements. This will help prevent shorthand description becoming straitjacketed prescription. Given the breadth of both biblical reflection and contemporary lived experiences, it is unlikely that one form of ministry alone will suit every situation (cf. Smith 1998, and the measured responses by Anonymous 1998 and Parshall 1998a, with Winter 2008). Externally, however, the spectrum's "most serious" and "fatal" weakness is, according to Dixon (2009: 10), its lack of a theo-

logical base, compounded by a continuing use of proof texting (Dixon 2009: 18; Span and Span 2009: 59).

There remains, therefore *a need for better exegesis* within C5 and insider movement debates. Too often superficial appeals to scripture are made to buttress claims which are greater than can be defended from the text under consideration. Greater exegetical care will benefit defences of C5, as well as exposing its arguments to wider scrutiny, as called for by Smith (2009: 31-33). In part, this will involve deeper and broader engagement with biblical scholarship: Teague (2008), for example engages positively with Richard Bauckham, in a manner which guards against reifying monotheism away from a biblical metanarrative. It will also require engagement with the context of individual Bible verses and sections within their wider literary setting. Thus Acts read as a whole provides a relatively unexplored frame for controlling appeals to particular elements within its span, both for and against C5. Likewise, John's Gospel, with its broader dualisms of light and darkness, is a necessary horizon for discussions of (for example) John 4, just as the broader span of John's 'father-son' language will inform helpfully questions concerning use and non-use of such terminology. Similarly, 1 Corinthians as an epistolary whole informs any appeal to one verse or one section of its argument: for example, appeals to 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 (e.g. Lewis 2007: 76) need also consider 1 Corinthians 6:10-11.

Both literary and wider canonical contexts are especially important for positioning any appeal to Old Testament texts. In this light, Waterman (2007: 60, 62n27) provides some informative initial consideration of Deuteronomy 12:4, and Nikides (2009:102-107) makes several telling observations regarding biblical exclusivism. Such a wider frame of reference, together with 2 Kings 17:15 (cf. Flint 2010b: 901), is important for positioning Naaman in 2 Kings 5, another biblical text frequently discussed within C5 debates (see, variously, Parshall 1998b: 404; Travis 2000: 55; Higgins 2004: 157; Woods 2003: 192; DeNeui 2005: 416; Travis and Travis 2005: 407; Tennent 2006: 108; Hoefler 2007a; Dixon 2009: 11; Higgins 2009: 90-91; and, especially, Baeq 2010). The same can be said for appeals

to figures such as Melchizedek and Jethro as justifying insider movements (Higgins 2007:33; 2009a: 85-86; cf. Nikides 2009: 102-111; Phil 2009: 118)

If the October 2010 Insider Movement Conference II recognised “much more work needs to be done in understanding the commonalities of the social contexts of I Peter, the book of Hebrews and the Apocalypse,” as Corniche (2010b) claims, then there is much existing scholarship on such matters within biblical studies. Such exchanges can and should be mutual, transcending disciplinary divisions: as Higgins (2007: 33) highlights regarding the Acts 15 council, “[m]ore missiologists need to be engaged in thorough exegetical work, and more exegetes need to grow in the disciplines of missiology.” Likewise Tee (2007: 3), commenting about tendencies towards pragmatic means and assessments of outcomes, helpfully observes “we should not be afraid to have more biblical scholars among those giving input to our work. Too quickly theologians are waved off by saying they don’t know the reality of the work.” It is unhelpful when critics of C5 make blanket statements about ‘academia’ (e.g. Grafas 2010: 937; cf. Madany 2007, who rehearses an unhelpful dichotomy between theorising and dialogue), as it is also when advocates of contextualisation downplay the critical contributions of biblical scholars. Regarding the latter point, see Stetzer (2010a), responding to Köstenberger (2010).

Fifth, the literature reviewed here exhibits *a characteristic need for a more developed biblical theology*. To state the obvious, Jesus’ earthly ministry predates the rise of Islam: can, then, something be meaningfully fulfilled before it itself is manifest? This question overshadows claims to see Islamic law as open to an interpretation as having been “fulfilled in Christ” (Woodberry 2007: 24), or that the Qur’an can come to hold a place akin to that of the Apocrypha (Winter 2008: 671). Instead, the whole Christ-event needs to be considered, including inaugurated eschatology. Greer (2009: 20) begins such an exploration, but lacks consideration of Jesus’ continuing incarnation, his heavenly session and restoring return. Having addressed this matter elsewhere (Sleeman 2009), it is possible to identify in C5 debates an attenuated sense of Jesus’ incarnation, one

which fails to take into account his continuing heavenly incarnation: this weakens appeals to the incarnation as a basis for such ministries and dilutes critical consideration of Islamic claims regarding Mohammed's 'heavenly' ministry. Span (2010d) has advanced this need for more attention to be given to the heavenly Christ, advocating the need for 'outsider movements' which, on the basis of Hebrews 13:12-14, are comprised of "Heaven Foreground Believers (HFB)". His rhetoric has a clear polemical edge, but the context and content of Span's argument is important for the ongoing debate regarding C5, especially in relation to possible strategies of subversive fulfilment, discussed below.

Also, within such a biblical theology, there is a need to recognise that the church in Acts and elsewhere in the NT constitutes the fulfilment and renewal of Israel as a particular salvation historical event (cf. Chris 2009: 160). This has, at times, caused significant contention within C5 discussions (Corwin 2007: 54). In this sense, apologists for C5 are accused of lacking a sufficient covenantal understanding of the church (Nikides 2009: 97-101; cf., similarly, Waterman 2007: 57-58). Responses are weakened, however, where Biblical "narrative" is set against "clear didactic" sections of Scripture (Nikides 2009: 102) in a manner which a cohesive biblical theology would preclude.

In various other ways a more robust sense of biblical theology will both strengthen and challenge the basis for C5 ministries. As Reitsma (2005) demonstrates in a nuanced discussion of the Jewishness of Jesus, considerations of C5 need to maintain a clearer analytical distinction between first-century and twenty-first-century Judaism. A more developed biblical theology will also highlight the question of differences in biblical and Qur'anic metanarratives, given their divergences at the fall of Adam (see Miller 2010a; n.n. 2010b: 487-491). At a more micro level, a developed biblical theology combined with the exegetical contextualisation outlined earlier will also temper appeals to biblical metaphors abstracted from the overall wider symbolic matrix of scripture. Thus 'yeast' as frequently appealed to as a positive metaphor for insider movements (e.g. Caldwell 2000: 30; Kraft 2005b: 92; Lewis 2009b: 19) presently

lacks any recognition or consideration of the symbol's negative metaphorical aspect within scripture, particularly in relation to kings and kingdoms (cf., e.g., Mark 8:15). Likewise, the category of 'kingdom' is not simple "fresh biblical content" (cf. Caldwell 2000: 30) which will resolve all terminological difficulties. In turn, cohesive biblical theology will also critique the subsequent overplayed claims for a kingdom paradigm made by Higgins (2009a: 85-88),³¹ as Schlorff (2006: 146-147) anticipates. As such, a nuanced understanding of the specificities and limitations of 'kingdom' for C5 ministries forms part of a wider, parallel but connected missiological debate (cf., e.g., Buenting 2009).

These considerations of biblical theology blur into a sixth observation. Debates surrounding C5 and insider movements will be enhanced by *more culturally sensitive but nevertheless rigorous attention to systematic theology*. It is not that systematic considerations are completely lacking within the construction of arguments concerning C5, but some of the reifying and dichotomous tendencies within C5 will benefit from closer attention to such matters. Arguments for C5 are not advanced by *a priori* rejection of systematic theology as 'western' or 'propositional' and therefore illegitimate or irrelevant (cf. variously, addressed from different sides of the debate, Massey 2004c; Talman 2004: 10-11; Tennent 2006: 110-115; Brother Yusuf in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 12; Higgins 2007: 40n21; Hiebert 2010; Miller 2010b; Stetzer 2010b: 159; Tennent 2010: 498-505). The alternative to 'western' theologising is *not* a rejection of systematic inquiry *per se*, since some form of such thinking is inevitable in any cultural setting. Indeed, one of the biggest outstanding questions regarding C5 ministry concerns their relationships with the wider earthly church(es) within the 'current, messy form' of the Body of Christ on earth (Higgins 2007: 35). While it is true that we should "not let our theological formulations outrank the Word of God" (Winter 2009: 671, reflecting on Acts 15:8) the latter must generate and control the former, and actively delimit common theological founda-

³¹ As noted earlier, Caldwell and Higgins are names for the same writer.

tions. For instance, it is hard to conceive of Christian mission which is not Trinitarian in its essence (cf., e.g., Taylor 2000: 179-256).

Instead, too often, systematic questions concerning C5 praxis are mounting. Thus Span and Span (2009: 59) rightly attend to the doctrinal assumptions within language surrounding the notions of 'sin' and 'sins' within the conference of Common Ground Consultants. They also engage in wider systematic assessment of the conference and seek to position it in relation to other developments such as the emergent church and seeker-sensitive movements (Span and Span 2009: 55, 60). Like Smith (2009), they raise many important and telling questions concerning C5. Elsewhere, Nikides (2009:111-112) is alert to the Gnostic overtones to ecclesiology and other religions and to perceived related oppositional separation of the church and the Holy Spirit. Tennent (2010: 501) also comments how "the two doctrines [of soteriology and ecclesiology] often seem to stand in conflict with one another" within C5 (cf. Hoefer 2007c). Systematic analyses are also inevitable in comparing Christian and Muslim Christologies (e.g. Bridger 2009; Kaltner 2009) and will, in turn, inform analyses of Christian Christotelic and ecclesiotelic trajectories for space and time which will – eventually – diverge from that of the Qur'an (cf., e.g., Stringer 2009, who sees history as an integral aspect of the Muslim mind). Furthermore, terms like 'incarnational', when applied to Christian ministries, require increasingly careful deliberation and delineation (cf., e.g., Corniche 2010b; Madany 2010).

A seventh observation focuses on a particular need arising out of what has gone before. There is a startling need for more work regarding *God's nature, and the consequent nature of idolatry* (Span 2009b: 120; Flint 2010b: 900-907; cf. Corwin *et al.* 2007: 16-17) *and syncretism*. This will become particularly important if texts such as 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Acts 15: 19-20 introduce idolatry as an analytical category for assessing insider culture and religion.

So far, C5 debates have made only limited use of idolatry as an analytic category. Opponents of C5 have been charged, somewhat emotively, with "following the idol of ecclesiastical tradition" (Lewis in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 14), whereas the suggestion of idolatry within

C5 has been immediately rebuffed (Travis and Travis 2005: 413; Higgins in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 17). Elsewhere, without explaining his reasoning, Higgins (2007: 28) equates idolatry with syncretism, and differentiates insider movements from the situation in Acts 15, precisely *because* the latter instance calls for repentance from idolatry (2007: 37).

Existing work examining idolatry from perspectives beyond missiology (e.g. Halbertal and Margalit 1992; Barton 2007) would inform a more helpful engagement with idolatry categories for both proponents and critics of insider movements. Higgins remains too vulnerable to charges of anthropological reductionism, even Gnosticism (Nikides 2009: 94-96, cf. Higgins 2009a: 81-83), and his assertion of the extension of the kingdom of God beyond the church is weak (Higgins 2009a: 85-88; cf. Nikides 2009: 102-111).

Like idolatry, syncretism offers a multi-level analytical category (cf. Leopald and Jensen 2004) which is under-employed or used as an emotive term within the insider movement debate. Used well, these terms will better inform issues such as whether Christians should use the Qur'an for clarification of an existing argument or for finding within it the gospel (Smith 2009: 29). Such employment of idolatry and syncretism will also open up new exegetical issues: would Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14 have instituted an insider movement within the Zeus cult in Lystra, and how does the answer to such a question inform our assessments of insider movements in our contemporary settings?

Whereas idolatry and syncretism might initially appear to be unexpected categories to introduce into an increasingly polarised and emotionally-charged debate such as that surrounding C5 and insider movements, they do offer surprising potential for moving beyond dichotomous and polarising options. In particular, they enable engagement with the dual notion of subversive fulfilment (cf. Schlorff 2006: 17-19, 108-136), whereby Islam is both subverted and fulfilled – in its deepest longings – by the gospel. Under this schema, both similarities and differences can be held in the productive tension sought by Waterman (2007: 58), as can the uneasy distinction between the believer's 'primary' and 'secondary' allegiances presented

by Travis and Travis (2005: 407). Higgins (in Corwin *et al.* 2007: 10) hints at such an approach when noting how the Psalms utilise non-Jewish forms and concepts and ‘Yahweh-ise’ them, but sees it as a work external to the canon and the church.

What, though, if subversive fulfilment is kept *within* the church – indeed, what if it is seen as an inherent and unavoidable aspect of being church, at least as church is understood in any localised, earthly sense? The result will ‘provincialise’ churches, to adopt Chakrabarty’s postcolonial reading of ‘Europe’ (here meaning the categories and concepts of political modernity), such that “[n]o concrete example of an abstract can claim to be an embodiment of the abstract alone.” (Chakrabarty 2007: xii) Two qualifiers are required. First, the church of Jesus Christ is an embodied heavenly and earthly reality, not an abstract concept, albeit with its locus at this present time around its heavenly Lord. Second, the word ‘alone’ in the above quotation has to do a dual work, referring both to the mixed nature of any church as it continually struggles with its own local idolatrous syncretism prior to the eschaton *and* to the need for every group of believers to relate in a real manner with other believers – *all* other believers – and not to see themselves as self-contained. Both Corwin (2007: 54–55) and Waterman (2007: 59) question rightly the sufficiency of expecting new believers simply to figure out Christian discipleship and maturity for themselves. This challenges churches across the C-spectrum and in any setting, Muslim or otherwise, to seek subversive fulfilment in and of its own locality. Such strategies would fit better with the NT primary emphasis on believers’ identity in Christ, with ‘insider’ language reserved for this status, and notions (plural) of extraction seen primarily in that light (Flint 2010b: 904–906). Churches – plural – together as well as alone are called to exhibit a catholicity, albeit a heavenly catholicity. There are encouraging signs of plural and reflexive perspectives entering C5 debates, developments from the wider churches which will enhance and advance insight beyond stagnant binary oppositions (e.g. Hofer 2009; Diaz 2010). Other binary-breaking advances from realms such as glocalisation (Andrews

2009) and early church history (Smither 2009) are also informing these debates.

Eighth and, again, related to what has gone before, there is a *need for more thinking about mosques per se and other settings within Muslim lived experience*. Parshall's claim that "the mosque is pregnant with Islamic theology" (Parshall 1998b: 409) remains remarkably unexamined in any detail within the literature reviewed here (cf., similarly, the charge made by Smith 2009: 37). Brother Yusuf (in Corwin et al. 2007: 8-9) and n.n. (2010a: 407) provide examples of some initial considerations of what functions the mosque serves, and the pragmatics and ambiguities that it both enables and constrains. These considerations will in turn variously inform and position notions of sincere and insincere questioning (cf. n.n. 2010b, who does not consider location as a factor within such considerations?). Ridgway's comments regarding Buddhist temples in Gill (2009: 185) point to the richness of such lived experience, although with reservations about the degree of distinction of the physical and spiritual planes of existence.

In each particular setting, a mosque performs a variety of roles and provides a number of constructed (and, possibly, contested and/or conflicting) significances. It functions as a relational hub in different ways, influenced by factors such as age, proximity and gender. Taking up the influence of gender, sustained consideration of the lived experience of MBB women has only recently started to appear in the literature (McNeal 2007, 2008, 2010a, 2010b; Smythe 2010; S. Kim 2010; Lee 2010), and needs stronger connection with issues surrounding C5 and insider movements. As such, there is need for variegated strategies of subversive fulfilment, and for a much richer consideration of the poetics and politics of such places than those that are evident in the existing literature both for and against C5.³² Where, when and why (and how) should gendered

³² This will, in turn, feed from and into subversive exegesis of scripture. See, e.g., the suggestive readings of Acts 17 by Godawa (2007) noting, however, the limited explicit and developed connection with a missiological base for such subversive strategies.

cultural norms be accommodated (Lewis 2004b) or broken (McNeal 2007)?

Such consideration also needs to extend to lived experience around and beyond the local mosque. The recent literature concerning women's lived experience, cited above, has enriched consideration of other sites such as Sufi shrines (S. Kim 2010) and, of course, within the domestic sphere (cf., also, Asad 2009a). Simultaneously, Islam needs to be considered as a religion, and as a political-spatial ideology (cf., e.g., Schlorff 2006: 97-98, 143-146).

Taken together, these observations will help expose some of the debate's dichotomies as false, and others will be found to be valid under more rigorous examination. Is it true, for example, as Asad (2009b: 139) proposes, that '[o]nly when we rid ourselves of the notions of "Church" and "Christian" as "bounded" sets can we begin to appreciate God's sovereign, albeit confusing work among Muslims today?' Clearly a spectrum of strategies is better analytically and critically than a polarity of extractionism or remaining a Muslim (cf. Schlorff 2006: 141-143, 149-188; n.n. 2010a: 405). Any communication of the faith requires explanation of, and contention for, the meaning of the content of the faith (Stringer 2010: 592).

But not everything is falsely dichotomous. Western Christians need also to practice self-reflective repentance and maturation. For instance, each of us needs to consider whether 'the "measurement" of salvation' via "cognition-centered measurement... articulated primarily in specific belief statements" is, at least in part of, even possibly "typical" of our "modern western Christianity." (Higgins 2007: 34) If we can see something of ourselves in this description, or if some of the other related critiques C5 issues regarding western Christianity reveal something lacking or idolatrous within our own appreciation of salvation, then do we need to be gently critiqued? Do we also need to be corrected, even rebuked, by others so that we might be more biblically complete and pure – in a word, *holy*? Also, in the spirit of Acts 15, Higgins (2007: 35) raises the issue of 'christian'-background believers making concessions in lifestyle for the sake of unity among believers. Nikides (2009: 113) also proposes

interdependence as facilitating local enculturation: the question, of course, in any localised instance, remains ‘How?’

4 Closing Comments

The C5 debate continues to run, and extends beyond the confines of missiological specialists and missional practitioners, impacting the wider Christian media (e.g. Cumming 2009). As well as its inherent connections with the lived experience of many people, this is another reason justifying the need for a clear and reasoned review and debate.

One major benefit arising from this debate is a renewed desire not to fear engagement with Islam, nor simply to engage with it but, rather, to engage with it well (cf. Hegeman 2007; also, Various 2009). In differing ways, both sides of the debate share this commitment, despite periodic accusations that their opponents do not.

There is some truth in the observation and interpretation by Lewis in Corwin *et al.* (2007: 8): “[a]s usual, theory is following observation. As in the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts, God is moving this way and we are trying to catch up by analysing the phenomenon.” Yet this increases the need for serious and sensitive missiological research, rather than diminishing its importance. While Travis, also in Corwin *et al.* (2007: 14–15), alerts us to the danger and difficulty of a ‘researcher’ trying to uncover numbers, and that counting could appear to be patronising, “giving the impression that we somehow have the right to examine, count them, and pass judgment on them,” this problematises a need; it does not remove it. Nor do large numbers of conversions automatically indicate that a strategy is biblically warranted, or sustainable (cf. Flint 2010b: 890; n.n. 2010a: 404–405), despite Travis’ original claim that the C-spectrum would “assist church planters and Muslim background believers to ascertain which type of Christ-centered community may draw the most people from the target group to Christ and best fit in a given context.” (Travis 1998a: 407) Furthermore, no ministry – C5 included – will be problem-free (Shaw 2009: 216–217). Thus, as Span and Span (2009) recognise, discernment will be harder than many people, in print at least, have appreciated. Like-

wise, the future remains unknown (Stetzer 2010c: 252). Different forms of contextualisation might well be appropriated more by second-generation believers (JdO 2010). At the same time, indigenous Christians need to be able to (and enabled to) critique past and present ways in which Christian mission has engaged their culture, as Priest observes in Gill (2009: 184).

In closing, therefore, the reception or non-reception of C5 and insider movements will tell us important things about not just others, but also ourselves. We also need to reflect critically on our situated point of view: from a distance, contextualisation or syncretism in others might appear very clear, dualistically so, whereas from within a locale, the same issues might be more blurred, sophisticated, ambiguous, complex, or messy (Ridgway, in Gill 2009: 181; cf. also Gill 2008: 6; and, differently, Ajaj 2010). And so, proximity does not in and of itself confer clarity. Ridgway suggests that scriptures in an indigenous language are an essential precursor to contextualisation; so, too, is a willingness on the part of Western Christians to not expect unfairly or xenophobically more of MBBs than is expected culturally of converts in their own secular, materialist cultural settings (Mallouhi 2009: 7-10; Richard 2009: 179-180). Nor should any church anywhere remain unchanged by its contact with Muslim peoples (Hoefler 2009). We begin an analysis of insider movements from a different position if we assume that any denomination or congregation is syncretistic in its worldview to some degree, such that syncretism is the norm to be confronted also in ourselves, not the simply aberrant exception, the Other (cf. Kim 2006: 24). Even this assumption, however, is never neutrally held (cf. Winter 2008). Likewise, some degree of extraction – and of insertion – is similarly unavoidable in following Jesus. These issues need to be faced among different Muslim ministries, especially between higher- and lower-spectrum individuals, ministries and congregations living in close proximity to each other (cf. Ayub 2009: 31-32).

Given vast diversities of local lived experience within insider movements, the C-scale helps describe and compare, but does not in itself legitimate or critique. Nor does it adjudicate on how high a tolerance for apparent contradiction is appropriate within frontier

missiology (cf. Gill 2008: 7). But, then, it was intended initially as a “simple chart.” (Travis 2000: 53) As such, it can help describe gatherings and fellowships, but is less equipped in itself to determine ministry goals or the parameters and meanings of *ekklesia* (Waterman 2007: 60; 63n29). This observation alone has important implications for the development and reception of its fruit.

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