

From the Editor's Desk

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This issue should take your breath away—the very audacity of revisiting the Jerusalem Council in the book of Acts!

If these scholars were merely reinterpreting what happened it would not be so provocative. But you will see seriously discussed the pros and cons of a repetition of the Jerusalem Council. Reinterpretation? Repetition? What's the difference? Monumental in this case.

The transition of the treasure of the Gospel from a Jewish cultural vehicle to a Greek cultural vehicle is portrayed in the Bible itself. But then there was a parallel transition to a Latin cultural vehicle. And the same transition underlying the move from the Latin/Mediterranean “Catholic” culture to the crude, tribal culture of the Germans. None of these was a flawless transition, nor a transition *from* a flawless cultural vehicle, nor a transition *to* a flawless cultural vehicle. All were a transference of a treasure that had always been carried in an “earthen vessel.” Personally, I would be so bold as to ask if there was not, in fact, then, a similar (and even more seriously flawed) transition to Semitic culture? Has the impact of the Bible in the Semitic culture been cast into an entirely different category just because of being labeled “Islamic,” rather than “Islamic Christianity.” Of course, Christianity has been all along identified with the narrowly Greek, Roman, German, English traditions. But is not Islam, along with the various Christianities, a parallel adaptation of the Gospel? Granted, none of these adaptations can ever be vital without themselves gaining access directly to the Bible. All Christianities have been and will be poor until they translate the Bible for themselves.

These pages are eminently worth pondering. Not by any means something you can do in one sitting! Have fun! Enjoy! Ponder! Pray! A great deal depends on whether the Book of Acts is merely a *description* of something that happened once or is a *prediction* of what was to happen again many times.

I hope the new intentionally “dialogic” structure will enhance and not hinder your persusal. And notice our slightly changed name!

Ralph D. Winter



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The New IJFM and ISFM 2006—Atlanta



Prof. Woodberry shares some insights on “insider movements” from his research.

Welcome to the new IJFM: *International Journal of Frontier Missiology!* This first issue under our new name features three thought-provoking papers presented at last September’s meeting of the International Society for Frontier Missiology (ISFM) in Atlanta, GA. That conference, entitled “The Jerusalem Council Applied: Apostolic Insights into Today’s Insider Movements,” drew some 90 participants from around the country, and even from overseas. Over the 14 hours of the conference (not nearly enough, many complained) an impressive slate of six

speakers addressed the issue of “insider movements.” J. Dudley Woodberry and B. Peterson started us off the conference the first evening. The next day we heard from Gary Corwin, John Ridgway, Timothy Tennent and Kevin Higgins. We ended with a two-hour panel discussion—one of the highlights of the meeting. We hope to bring you excerpts from that discussion in a future issue.

In IJFM 23:3, we published Timothy Tennent’s critique of C5, which he also presented in Atlanta. In this issue, we present yet another critique, this time by Gary Corwin (pp. 5–20). Since Gary’s paper was written in the form of ten questions to insider Muslim ministry advocates, we asked a few of them to respond. Five did, including an actual leader of one of these movements (see the *Editor’s Introduction* to Gary’s paper on p. 6 for more information on our respondents).

Actually we received six replies, not five. Because missiology is essentially “comparative mission,” we asked Professor Herbert Hofer (author of *Churchless Christianity*) to share insights from his experience in the Hindu world, which he does briefly on p. 21. We want to thank everyone who responded and

now invite you, our readers, to send us your perspectives. *We especially want to thank Gary Corwin for graciously allowing us to embed the responses to him within his paper.* We trust you’ll find that format easier to read and evaluate than had we printed them separately.

We round out this issue with papers by J. Dudley Woodberry (pp. 23–28) and Kevin Higgins (pp. 29–40), both men with first-hand knowledge of insider movements in the Muslim world. Since Kevin’s paper presupposes familiarity with Woodberry’s, we encourage you to read Woodberry’s paper first. In our next issue, we plan to bring you papers by John Ridgway and B. Peterson, both representing an “insider” approach in the Hindu context. Finally, one of our consulting editors, Rick Brown, brings you the account of the birth of an insider movement in a Muslim setting (pp. 41–42).

Will we see you at next year’s ISFM? Look for more details in our next issue.

And one last thing. Returning to a former IJFM practice, you will now find the names of the ISFM officers and our consulting editors in the masthead on p. 3. More later!

IJFM Editorial Staff

The IJFM is published in the name of the International Student Leaders Coalition for Frontier Missions, a fellowship of younger leaders committed to the purposes of the twin consultations of Edinburgh 1980: *The World Consultation on Frontier Missions* and the *International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions*. As an expression of the ongoing concerns of Edinburgh 1980, the IJFM seeks to:

- ☞ promote intergenerational dialogue between senior and junior mission leaders;
- ☞ cultivate an international fraternity of thought in the development of frontier missiology;
- ☞ highlight the need to maintain, renew, and create mission agencies as vehicles for frontier missions;
- ☞ encourage multidimensional and interdisciplinary studies;
- ☞ foster spiritual devotion as well as intellectual growth; and
- ☞ advocate “A Church for Every People.”

Mission frontiers, like other frontiers, represent boundaries or barriers beyond which we must go yet beyond which we may not be able to see clearly and boundaries which may even be disputed or denied. Their study involves the discovery and evaluation of the unknown or even the reevaluation of the known. But unlike other frontiers, mission frontiers is a subject specifically concerned to explore and exposit areas and ideas and insights related to the glorification of God in all the nations (peoples) of the world, “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.” (Acts 26:18)

Subscribers and other readers of the IJFM (due to ongoing promotion) come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Mission professors, field missionaries, young adult mission mobilizers, college librarians, mission executives, and mission researchers all look to the IJFM for the latest thinking in frontier missiology.