

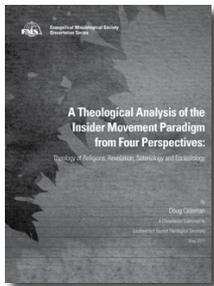
Book Reviews

Doug Coleman Responds to Bradford Greer's Critique

of his *A Theological Analysis of the Insider Movement Paradigm from Four Perspectives* (Pasadena: EMS Dissertation Series, William Carey International University Press, 2011), reviewed in *IJFM* 28:4.

Editor's Note: In the previous issue Bradford Greer offered a review of Doug Coleman's dissertation. We wanted to offer Coleman a chance to respond to Greer. Coleman is a graduate of Columbia International University and has received his M.Div. and Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. Since 1998, he has served under the International Mission Board in Muslim contexts in Central Asia.

by Doug Coleman, Ph.D.



I would like to thank Dr. Bradford Greer for his substantive review of my dissertation on the Insider Movement paradigm (IMP) in the previous issue of *IJFM*.¹ I also appreciate the opportunity given by this journal to offer a response. The nature of a response carries several risks, one being the possibility of creating the

impression that any critique is unwelcome or unappreciated. Therefore, before addressing some of Greer's remarks specifically, I would like to comment on the discussion itself.

As I noted in the introduction to my dissertation,² much of the published literature on IMP has taken the form of relatively short journal articles, which often limits the depth and breadth of argumentation and documentation. In other words, journal articles are by nature simply a less substantive form of literature. This is not to suggest that IMP proponents are less substantive people, of course, but simply recognition of how the published conversation has proceeded. My own motivations for writing a dissertation on the IMP were manifold. Besides a desire to make a significant contribution to an important conversation, I also wanted to work through the biblical and theological issues for myself, since I have spent more than a decade ministering in Muslim contexts. I fully expected that my dissertation³ would not be the final word, and hoped that it would spark more extensive and helpful discussion. In this rejoinder, I intend to challenge some of Greer's claims, but I do appreciate and welcome his effort to interact with my dissertation. I hope this type of discussion, and even brotherly debate, will serve to broaden and deepen the conversation, help clarify issues—and assumptions—and ultimately benefit the missiological community and the church.

I have two main aims in this article. First, I will discuss both the three assumptions that Greer suggests drive my conclusions, as well as objections Greer raises to specific aspects of my dissertation. Second, towards the end of the article I will consider Greer's comments on the title and focus of my dissertation, not because I wish to engage in petty quibbling over a title, but because Greer's remarks raise another important issue that deserves a bit of elaboration.

Greer first claims my dissertation reflects an essentialist approach to religion that leads to a monolithic interpretation of Islam, thus forcing the conclusion that it is biblically impermissible to remain in "Islam."⁴ In suggesting I hold to an essentialist approach, Greer only footnotes one specific example from the dissertation.⁵ Interestingly, I intended this example, at least in part, to demonstrate the very diversity of which Greer suggests I am ignorant. Numerous responses could be offered, but space will allow only a few important points. More than ten years of personal experience working as a church planter in Muslim contexts has afforded me the opportunity to become personally acquainted with diversity within Islam. I have known both "traditional" and highly secularized "Muslims," and personally observed traditional prayers followed shortly by wildly ecstatic folk practices involving self-infliction of pain. On the other end of the spectrum, I developed a friendship with a young man who adamantly described himself as both "atheist" and "Muslim."⁶ And I'm confident there are many other forms of "Islam" which I have yet to encounter. However, the critical question seems to be this: Does the Bible teach, suggest, or indicate that the existence of diversity within a non-Christian religion affects whether or not a follower of Jesus can remain within a given non-Christian socio-religious community? Diversity in religious beliefs and practices surely existed in

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biblical times. However, I find no indication in Scripture that diversity is a criterion for determining whether a follower of Jesus can participate in non-Christian religious activities, or remain a religious insider.

This leads to the second assumption Greer mentions, that is, a mono-dimensional conceptualization of culture, one which believes a culture “can be divided into independent categories rather than viewing it as a multi-dimensional mosaic of interconnected parts.”⁷ In other words, Greer seems to claim that I believe “religion” and “culture” can be neatly separated in Islamic contexts. On the contrary, I believe the pages Greer footnotes as an example of my “essentialism” demonstrate the fact that I recognize this distinction can be difficult in some situations. It may be helpful to reproduce here a brief part of the relevant section from my dissertation, which includes a helpful quote from Christopher Wright:

IMP advocates have noted that it is not always easy to distinguish between religion and culture, especially in predominantly Muslim societies. Evidence suggests this was likely true in first-century Corinth as well. However, Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 8–10 indicate it is a necessary effort. As Wright describes it:

In contexts where other named gods are explicitly worshiped, Christians may have to distinguish between the byproducts of rituals associated with those gods and actual participation in the worship of them. Some Christians in India, for example, feel free to accept *prasad*—the gifts of sweets or fruits from those who have celebrated a birthday or other event by offering something first to the gods in their home or place of work, but they are not willing to join in actual rituals or to participate in multifaith worship, or anything that explicitly affirmed the reality of other gods. Other Indian Christians would exclude both for fear of misleading “the weaker brother.”

This type of distinction is what Paul addresses and affirms in Corinthians. In short, his instructions prohibit a truly *religious* insider approach, while allowing for continued social interaction (1 Cor. 5:10).⁸

Granted, in certain situations it may be difficult to determine when an event itself, or an aspect of an event, constitutes a religious practice, or when one’s participation in the event, or aspects of the event, constitutes implicit worship or affirmation of other gods. However, I suggest that some events are certainly more clearly (perhaps even solely?) religious, such as Friday noon prayers at the mosque, and it is in regard to these types of events that

Paul draws a clear line in 1 Corinthians 8–10. Therefore, when an event constitutes religious worship or affirmation of another god, the believer’s union with Christ prohibits him or her from participating.⁹

In order to be clear, let me state directly that I am challenging the notion that religion and culture are “inextricably interrelated”¹⁰ in every sense, in every event, and in every way. Accepting such a claim would necessarily affirm the Insider paradigm, and I currently believe a truly religious Insider paradigm is at odds with a number of biblical passages, concepts, and emphases. At the same time, I suggest that to challenge this notion does not mean I hold to a simple “aggregate parts” view of culture. Again, in some contexts, religion and culture are often very tightly integrated, and it can be very difficult to determine to what degree an event, or even an aspect of an event, may constitute worship or affirmation of another god. Fully working out this distinction is well beyond the scope of this article. In short, however, I suggest that where events, or aspects of events, clearly involve worship and affirmation of another “god,” followers of Jesus are prohibited from participating, regardless of how much they reinterpret or redefine that worship.¹¹

This leads to another question, and a strong objection raised by Greer. Is current worship in the mosque analogous to first-century Corinthian pagan worship? Greer objects, claiming that equating the two is to commit the error of “direct transferability.”¹² Greer writes, “What Coleman fails to recognize is that so many differences exist between first century Mediterranean world idol worship (along with dining at temples in Corinth) and Muslim religious ceremonies in the twenty-first century that these should not be equated.”¹³ This is an important issue that involves a number of related questions. Do the differences—and they certainly exist—mean that 1 Corinthians 8–10 does not apply to the Insider discussion, or to contemporary Muslim religious ceremonies? Which differences would render the analogy invalid, or which similarities would render it valid? Does contemporary mosque worship by non-Jesus-following-Muslims constitute idolatry? If so, why? If not, why not? If it does, does this alone warrant an analogy with 1 Corinthians 10, or must a contemporary religious service necessarily require animal sacrifices in order for this passage to apply?

Unfortunately, once again this short article will not allow extensive discussion of these questions. However, I did note their importance, and discuss them at some length,

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either directly or indirectly, in the dissertation.¹⁴ While Greer and I may disagree whether 1 Corinthians 10 applies, I believe my conclusion that it does apply was reached with adequate recognition of and reflection on related questions.

Related to this discussion of direct transferability, Greer also makes a charge of “theolonialism.”¹⁵ Greer perceives my comments about biblical implications for the IMP in Muslim contexts as authorizing myself “to construct the authoritative image of Islam (as if there is only one) and the appropriate response to that image.”¹⁶ I have already addressed the issue of diversity within Islam, and my recognition of its existence, but several other implicit questions are raised by the accusation of theolonialism. I will only address one here. It seems from Greer’s comments that virtually any “outside” voice attempting to evaluate “Islam” constitutes an imposition of external authority. If so, when, and on what issues, is it permissible for any “outside” voice to participate in discussion on any local matter, practice, or belief? If any such participation is impermissible, then perhaps all foreign missionaries should depart as soon as a handful of individuals has professed faith in Jesus and has access to the Scriptures.

On the other hand, it seems that “outside” voices can make a legitimate contribution to such conversations. David Clark argues for a dialogical model of contextualization in which outside voices are intentionally consulted while addressing contextual questions.¹⁷ By the way, we Western Christians should eagerly receive this kind of input as well, allowing outside voices to offer insights, point out blind spots, and suggest critiques of our belief and practice in light of Western cultural issues. Ultimately, local believers will have to determine how they should be faithful to the Bible in their own context, but particularly in pioneer contexts, it seems that missionaries have a biblical responsibility to participate in these discussions with new believers and faithfully teach Scripture, as best they can, all the while recognizing that the Holy Spirit can and does give insight to new believers as well. The point here, of course, is that teaching the Scriptures is a biblical responsibility of foreign missionaries, and teaching will inevitably involve some evaluation of cultural beliefs and practices. Local believers should play a very significant role in this process. My dissertation is my effort to add my own voice to the conversation. Others will certainly offer their own reflections on it, and I hope at some point that

this involves Insider believers themselves. In my opinion, such a process does not constitute “theolonialism.”

This leads me to the third significant assumption Greer mentions: a naïve-realist epistemology which fails to recognize one’s own hermeneutical lens, resulting in both an inability to perceive conflicting data and an over-confidence in one’s conclusions.¹⁸ Again, space will only allow a few brief responses. First, I was introduced to various epistemological models during missiology studies in the mid-90s.¹⁹ This helped me understand the benefits of a critical-realist approach even before I began the bulk of my missionary career. Second, living overseas for almost fifteen years in two different countries has taught me that my initial conclusions can often be based on unquestioned assumptions, inaccurate perceptions or insufficient data. In other words, I later experienced the benefits of understanding a critical-realist epistemology. Finally, Clark, whose dialogical model I affirm above, holds to a critical-realist epistemology.²⁰

While I affirm a critical-realist epistemology, I would also like to note that certain potential dangers lurk there as well. Norm Geisler describes some of these in his critique of Hiebert’s “The Gospel in Human Contexts.”²¹ In short, a critical-realist approach that overly emphasizes subjectivity and relativity can possibly slip into an instrumentalist or pragmatistic epistemology which does not recognize ontological contradictions between competing truth claims and “allows for apparently contradictory models in different situations so long as they work.”²² As Geisler notes, this applies to hermeneutics and theology as well. A hermeneutical approach that overly emphasizes relativity can lead to contradictory interpretations of the gospel itself.²³

Another significant objection Greer raises is my treatment of the doctrine of revelation and the issue of the Qur’an. First, Greer suggests my view of revelation is “static” and “something that God has done previously in space and time.”²⁴ According to Greer, this static conception of revelation, and my supposed naïve-realist epistemology, causes me to miss the dynamic process by which God relates to individuals, such as using visions, dreams or healings to draw Muslims to faith in Christ.²⁵ On the contrary, I specifically mention dreams and visions—both biblical and contemporary—in my discussion of revelation.²⁶

My consideration of the doctrine of revelation focused on several main issues: 1) Are there biblical reasons to believe the Qur’an might contain general and/or special revela-

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tion and, if so, does this necessarily imply that God was speaking directly to Muhammad or that God was active in placing “altars” and “poets” within “Islam” or the Qur’an as a means of eventually drawing Muslims to Christ through them? 2) In light of the biblical teaching on the doctrine of revelation, how should we evaluate some IMP proponents’ use of the Qur’an? In his critique, Greer turns the discussion toward Insider believers’ use of the Qur’an. This is an important topic, but not the primary focus of my dissertation. 3) Finally, within the framework of the doctrine of revelation, I interact with Kevin Higgins’ perspective on Islam and his “Jesus Key” hermeneutic of the Qur’an.

I’ll offer only a couple of brief responses to specific points raised by Greer. First of all, he again objects to “outsiders” exerting “authority” over insiders in regard to how they understand and use the Qur’an and how much authority they ascribe to it. Again, I simply note that I am not attempting to exert any “authority” (I’m not even sure where I would obtain such “authority,” especially as a Baptist!). However, insofar as Scripture speaks to issues of authority for faith and practice, I suggest this is a conversation in which all believers can rightly participate, both insiders and outsiders.

In regard to Dean Gilliland’s research among Fulbe believers, Greer does not quite sufficiently represent my reflections on the matter.²⁷ My purpose in including Gilliland’s research was to raise and respond to a common claim either stated or implied by some IMP proponents, and by Gilliland himself. After noting that thirty percent of Fulbe believers indicated Qur’anic references led them to seek more information about Jesus, Gilliland concludes that the Holy Spirit is using the Qur’an in redemptive ways, or to corroborate biblical truth, or that it should be considered a source of truth.²⁸ In response, I noted in my dissertation:

If by “redemptive ways” Gilliland simply means curiosity sparked by the Qur’an led a Muslim to seek more information about Jesus in the Bible, contemporary anecdotal evidence indicates this is happening. However, this could also be potentially true of a popular rock song mentioning Jesus in some ambiguous or relatively positive manner. If by “corroborate” Gilliland indeed means “to make more certain” or “to support with evidence or authority,” this seems to imply a much greater significance for the Qur’an, perhaps close to or equal to the Bible. On the other hand, in his account of the Fulbe believers, Gilliland states that their curiosity about Jesus was first aroused by the Qur’an, and they came to faith after obtaining fuller information elsewhere, usually from other believers.²⁹

The key question here, of course, is whether curiosity about Jesus resulting from Qur’anic statements supports the conclusion that the Spirit is using it, or that it is a source of truth. Behind these claims seems to be an implication either that God intentionally and actively placed this truth there or that He pragmatically uses this truth for redemptive purposes wherever it happens to be found. A further possible implication is that because God supposedly uses this truth in the Qur’an, the Qur’an should therefore be seen as a legitimate source of truth in its own right and that it can and should be used as such by followers of Jesus. One particularly concerning version of this is a study promoted by Common Ground entitled “The Straight Path of the Prophets.”³⁰ This study refers to the Qur’an as a “Holy Book,” uses its “signs” to affirm Jesus as the Messiah, and places Muhammad in the category of “prophet” along with eight biblical prophets: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jonah, John (the Baptist), and “Isa.” Some of these statements could be understood as implying something of an existentialist approach, which carries significant implications for one’s understanding of revelation and possibly even the canon of Scripture.³¹

These are issues that intersect with the doctrine of revelation, and they must be evaluated in light of Scripture. As a follower of Jesus and a cross-cultural missionary in a Muslim context, I cannot avoid evaluating and forming conclusions on these issues. Of course, local believers should be active participants in this conversation, but these are biblical and theological concerns, not simply culturally neutral questions that should be reserved only for cultural insiders.

Finally, I would like to offer a few clarifications in regard to Greer’s comments on my discussion of ecclesiology. First, Greer describes my approach to church as “separatist.”³² Greer nowhere defines exactly what he means by the term, but it doesn’t appear to be a compliment, and the term potentially brings to mind the idea of extraction, which has been a negative buzz word in missiological circles for quite some time. Perhaps Greer does not intend the implication, but at times IMP proponents seem to imply that only two options exist: either a full-blown Insider approach or some form of undesirable extraction, or separation.

IMP proponents argue for remaining in a non-Christian socio-religious context (that is, they argue against extraction or separation) in several ways. One of those is the analogy between modern insiders and the early Jewish-

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background believers who continued in the Temple and synagogue for some time. Here the book of Hebrews is particularly important, thus my reason for spending significant time examining a key passage from the book. Contra Greer's suggestion, my reason for discussing Hebrews is not my Baptist ecclesiology but the book's relevance for claims made by IMP proponents.³³

Another line of argument against religious separation is the reality of overlap between spheres and identities in various areas of life.³⁴ In response to this claim, I argue that 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 does call for the church to be a morally and religiously separate, or “set apart,” body.³⁵ (By “religion” here I do not mean to indicate a Western cultural Christianity, but worship of the God of the Bible.) This does not mean that believers are never to associate in any way with immoral people (1 Cor. 5:10), or that they must always avoid the premises of any non-Christian holy site. However, my review of the scholarship on this passage indicates a high level of agreement that Paul, in calling the church to be set apart as the people and Temple of God, summons the Corinthian church to a religious separation disentangled from pagan idolatrous worship. In other words, in the religious sphere, or the sphere of its worship, the church is to be a “bounded set.” I am not suggesting here that only believers should be allowed to participate in a worship gathering of a local church, but that the church is not to actively participate in worship gatherings of non-Christian religious communities. Practically speaking, this means that Paul prohibited the Corinthians from participating in idolatrous worship at pagan temples, and he also possibly had in mind such practices as “maintaining membership at a local pagan cult, attending ceremonies performed in pagan temples (related to birth, death, or marriage), employment by the temples, pagan worship in the home, and others.”³⁶

Again, this raises the question of whether Corinthian idolatry and contemporary Muslim worship are analogous. In spite of some significant differences, I have argued in the dissertation that a fundamental similarity holds. Therefore, Christopher Wright's comments seem particularly relevant:

God's goal of blessing the nations requires not only that the nations eventually come to abandon their gods and bring their worship before the living God alone (as envisioned, e.g., in Ps 96 and many other prophetic visions). God's mission also requires that God's own people in the meantime *should preserve the purity and exclusiveness of their worship of the living God*, and resist the adulterating syncretisms that surround them (emphasis added).³⁷

Perhaps only if Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc., are indeed worshipping the true God—maybe without realizing it, or not understanding Him fully—would a truly religious Insider approach be valid.

One final comment on the issue of ecclesiology is in order. Greer suggests my lack of field research or lack of engagement with church planters prohibits me from comprehending Rebecca Lewis's definition and description of Insider Movements. Lewis rejects the “aggregate model” of forming “neo-communities of ‘believers-only’” and argues for an “oikos” model “where families and their pre-existing relational networks become the church as the gospel spreads in their midst” (emphasis in original).³⁸ On the contrary, I believe my personal experience as a church planter in a Muslim context for more than a decade has enabled me to understand quite well what Lewis is suggesting. I have personally experienced some of the challenges with an aggregate model in which believers previously unfamiliar with one another are grouped together as a church. Additionally, I recognize that the oikos model may be highly preferable in some contexts, especially where levels of trust with those outside the longstanding oikos tend to be extremely low.

My objection to Lewis's comments was not directed toward a strategy of planting churches within natural networks, but in response to a lack of clarity on the question of who constitutes the church, and why this clarity is necessary in relation to essential church ordinances and functions such as baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church discipline. Lewis is unclear at best whether the church constitutes only believers, regardless of whether these believers might come from within natural networks. Furthermore, Lewis's only stated criteria for affirming these networks as “valid local expressions of the Body of Christ” is the fact that they are “fulfilling all the ‘one another’ care seen in the book of Acts.”³⁹ I am not suggesting that the ordinances and functions of a church can only be fulfilled within an aggregate model. However, even within an oikos model, biblical teaching on the church implies a greater degree of clarity than Lewis seems to prefer.

Having discussed the assumptions and objections Greer mentions, I'd like to return to his comments on the title and focus of the dissertation itself. According to Greer, the title of my dissertation led him to expect a theological analysis of insider movements themselves. However, he expressed disappointment that, in his words, the dissertation analyzes “articles written by what appears to be

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primarily Western authors who have written in favor of insider movements.”⁴⁰ This touches on several important factors: 1) usage and meaning of the term “insider movements”; 2) the nature of the extant literature on Insider Movements; and 3) the question of whether it is valid to evaluate Insider Movement theory, or the “paradigm,” without including extensive field research at the same time. I’ll address each of these briefly.

First, Insider Movement proponents, and the existing literature on the topic, use the term “insider movements” in different ways. At times IM refers to particular movements in specific geographic locations, such as in cities, towns, or villages in a country like Bangladesh, for example. On other occasions, IM refers to a ministry approach that encourages or allows for “followers of Jesus” to remain in the existing socio-religious context. In this usage, “Insider Movements” could be understood as a “paradigm” for ministry. While variations of the paradigm may exist, these variations appear to fall within a general category and exhibit the same basic lines of thought and supporting arguments. It is the “paradigm” which is the focus of my dissertation, thus the inclusion of the word “paradigm” in the title.⁴¹

Second, as noted already, at the time my dissertation was completed, the IMP literature consisted almost exclusively of relatively short journal articles, although the number of articles was fairly high. Most of these articles were written by Western authors to describe, explain, advocate, and sometimes defend or critique the paradigm. Rightly, IMP advocates appeal to biblical texts and theological concepts to argue for the paradigm’s biblical viability. A key assumption noted in the introductory chapter of my dissertation is “that publications by IMP advocates have sufficiently communicated their understanding of the biblical and theological support for IMP based on their reflection in light of their experience.”⁴² This is not to suggest that non-Westerners should have no part in this discussion. It would surely be quite interesting, and make a significant contribution to the field, for someone to pursue a project of interviewing an extensive range of insiders themselves on the question of their understanding of key biblical and theological support for the IMP. Among other things, it would be fascinating to see whether any significant differences exist on this question between insiders themselves and Western IMP advocates. However, given the necessary limitations of writing a dissertation, along with the fact that no substantive and extensive analysis of the literature had been

produced, I purposed to address the published literature in depth rather than broaden the dissertation to include extensive field research also. In other words, the purpose of my dissertation was not to determine whether Western authors and insider believers themselves agree on the biblical and theological support for the IMP, but to determine whether I believe these Western authors have made a valid biblical and theological case for the paradigm.

Of course, this raises the question of whether such an undertaking is valid at all. Is it justifiable to evaluate the IMP at a theoretical level without discussing the specifics of individual contexts, beliefs, or practices? I suggest that insofar as claims supporting the IMP rest on interpretations of biblical passages in their original historical context, it is certainly valid to evaluate these claims without reference to specific contemporary religious contexts. In other words, at the most general level, the particular beliefs and practices of Muslims in a given city in Pakistan have no bearing on whether the Bible teaches that Naaman actively participated in pagan worship in the house of Rimmon after meeting the God of Israel (2 Kings 5). Similarly, the beliefs and practices of non-Christians are irrelevant to the question of whether the Bible suggests that God, in biblical times, specifically and intentionally used the non-Christian religions as a means of relating to individuals and whether, therefore, the religions can be rightly placed within the Kingdom of God, which is a key claim of one major IMP proponent. A significant portion of my dissertation considers these types of questions.

On the other hand, some questions will be better informed by field experience or field research. For example, the question of whether it is ever appropriate for a follower of Jesus to retain the term “Muslim” as a personal identification would need to consider what the term means in a given context. (On a side note, I suggest this is not the main or most significant issue involved in IMP, and in some ways or cases is a separate question altogether.) In other words, if the term “Muslim” has no religious connotations at all in a given community, the question itself would take on a very different meaning because followers of Jesus in that context would not be remaining in a socio-religious context, but only a social one. Therefore, it is helpful to know whether this is actually the case in any given context, a determination that requires some familiarity with actual beliefs and practices. Those familiar with “Muslim” contexts are aware of a wide range of beliefs and practices among those who identify themselves as “Muslim.” As mentioned previously,

I am aware of this diversity not only from my readings, but from serving as a church planter in Muslims contexts for more than a decade. While it is not expressly mentioned throughout the dissertation, this personal experience was noted in my introductory chapter.⁴³ In other words, absence of field research in the dissertation should not be equated with a lack of field experience or ignorance of the existing diversity among Muslims on the ground.

In conclusion, I again want to express my appreciation to Dr. Greer and *IJFM* for the opportunity to engage in dialogue. These are important issues, and our assumptions can certainly affect our methodology and conclusions. Furthermore, at times our assumptions can even be inconsistently held. Therefore, I appreciate the opportunity to further clarify my assumptions, to consider again my own thinking, and to be challenged to reexamine my own conclusions. Having addressed these issues, I hope that future conversations can focus more on substantive discussion of relevant biblical passages and concepts and their implications for ministry in high-religious contexts. **IJFM**

Endnotes

¹ *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 28:4 (Winter 2011): 204–09.

² Doug Coleman, *A Theological Analysis of the Insider Movement Paradigm from Four Perspectives: Theology of Religions, Revelation, Soteriology, and Ecclesiology* (Pasadena: EMS Dissertation Series, William Carey International University Press, 2011), 20–21.

³ Coleman, 249.

⁴ If the recent edition (28:4) of *IJFM* is an indication, IMP proponents seem to be increasingly appealing to a cultural approach to religion in support of the IMP while labeling critics as essentialists.

⁵ Greer cites pp. 176–77 of my dissertation in which I mention the existence of different types of “Muslims”: conservative, ultra-orthodox, nominal, liberal, and even “atheistic.” The point of this discussion in my dissertation was to make readers aware that what I am addressing is not whether the name “Muslim” may be used by followers of Jesus as an identifying term, but whether it is biblically permissible for followers of Jesus to join with non-Jesus-follower “Muslims” in events that clearly constitute religious worship, for example, the prayers in the mosque. Granted, it may not be possible to clearly categorize some events as “religious” or “cultural,” but I cannot see how group prayers at the mosque would fall simply, or even predominantly, into the “cultural” category.

⁶ Albeit it not prominently, I mentioned my “Muslim atheist” friend in my dissertation in order to acknowledge the existence of many types of “Muslims.” See Coleman, 176, fn 196.

⁷ Greer, 204.

⁸ Coleman, 177. The Wright quote is from Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006), 184.

⁹ For more extensive treatment of this question in light of key passages (1 Corinthians 8–10, 1 Corinthians 7:17–24) and the concept of union with Christ, see Coleman, 159–177, 182–190.

¹⁰ Greer, 205.

¹¹ At least some of the Corinthian believers seem to have been justifying their participation in pagan rituals by claiming that the

pagan gods were in fact nothing at all (1 Cor 8:4–6; 10:19). Paul, however, rejects this argument and prohibits such participation (1 Cor 10:14–21). This passage is treated at length in my dissertation on pages 159–77.

¹² Greer, 207.

¹³ Greer, 207.

¹⁴ For example, for my reflections on implications of 1 Corinthians 8–10 for the IMP, see Coleman, 170–77. Also for my discussion of whether Muslims worship a different god than the God of the Bible, see Coleman, 59–62.

¹⁵ Greer, 207.

¹⁶ Greer, 207.

¹⁷ David K. Clark, *To Know and Love God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003), 114.

¹⁸ Greer, 204–05.

¹⁹ For example, these included the epistemological issues addressed by Paul Hiebert, which explicitly dealt with naïve and critical realism. See Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994), 19–51.

²⁰ Among other places he discusses this issue, Clark explicitly refers to and affirms critical realism on pages 326, 382–83.

²¹ Normal L. Geisler, “A Response to Paul G. Hiebert,” in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium* (ed. David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer; Nashville: B&H, 2010) 129–43. This is not necessarily to affirm everything that Geisler says, but he does offer some reasonable cautions.

²² Hiebert, 23. The use of “instrumentalist” and “pragmatism” are Hiebert’s. I am not accusing all IMP proponents of pragmatism, but simply noting that an overemphasis on subjectivity and relativity can lead in this direction. I do, however, sense some pragmatism in some ways some IMP proponents advocate using the Qur’an.

²³ Geisler, 137–39.

²⁴ Greer, 205.

²⁵ Greer, 206.

²⁶ Coleman, 85, fn 32; 87–88; 94; 95, fn 69.

²⁷ Greer, 206.

²⁸ Gilliland, “Modeling the Incarnation,” 122.

²⁹ Coleman, 108.

³⁰ For my discussion of this see, Coleman 80–81, 254–55.

³¹ For discussion of existentialism in regard to revelation and the canon of Scripture, see the recently published work by Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 59–67.

³² Greer, 208.

³³ For this discussion, see Coleman 210–23.

³⁴ Kevin Higgins, “Inside What? Church, Culture, Religion and Insider Movements in Biblical Perspective,” *SFM* 5 (August 2009): 77.

³⁵ Coleman, 237–43.

³⁶ Coleman, 240.

³⁷ Wright, *Mission of God*, 186.

³⁸ Rebecca Lewis, “Promoting Movements to Christ within Natural Communities,” *IJFM* 24 (Summer 2007): 75–76.

³⁹ Lewis, 76. For my interaction with Lewis’s discussion, see Coleman, 223–32.

⁴⁰ Greer, 204.

⁴¹ I am grateful to Dr. John Travis, the official external reader of my dissertation, for recommending I include the word “paradigm” in the title. It is precisely this type of potential misunderstanding that Dr. Travis anticipated.

⁴² Coleman, 22.

⁴³ Coleman, 23.