Understanding Insider Movements:
How people are following Jesus outside of Christianity

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Jesus: “Who said anything about being a Christian. I’m not a Christian…Those who love me have come from every system that exists. They are Buddhists or Mormons, Baptists or Muslims…. I have no desire to make them Christian, but I do want to join them in their transformation into sons and daughters of my Papa…

Mack: Does that mean that all roads will lead to you?
Jesus: Not at all. Most roads don’t lead anywhere. What is does mean is that I will travel any road to find you.
- Wm. Paul Young, The Shack

A New Phenomenon
Growth of discipleship to Jesus movements within non-Christian religious traditions.
Bursting of boundaries similar to early church

- In mid-2014 approximately 6.5 million non-Christians were following Christ from within the context of their own religious and cultural traditions.
- These include insider movements as well as hidden and secret believers.
- 85% of these individuals are either Hindus or Muslims.
- These types of believers are growing twice as fast as Christianity as a whole.

Source: Todd M. Johnson
Editor of the World Christian Database
Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Seminary

What is Behind This?
Attraction: Many from non-Christian religions want to follow Christ.
Message: They must become Christians to do so
Obstacle: Misunderstanding, dislocation
Questions: Is this really what the Bible teaches?
Can this barrier be avoided?
What might it look like?

A Case Study: Humanitarian Crisis

Humanitarian Aid
International team seeking: To share God’s love through quality humanitarian work & to facilitate Jesus movements among Muslim peoples of the affected region

These people have a strong Islamic identity
They resist the idea of changing to another religion.
How might you address such fear and resistance?
Interest in Spiritual Health or Holy Books?
“Incarnational Communication”

- Seek common ground
- Use Islamic terms & language
- Use Qur’an as bridge
- Chronological Bible storying
- Address felt needs
- A “simple” message
- The message of Kingdom

Our Approach: The Story of the Kingdom of God
* View “The Kingdom Tree” at the following web site: https://vimeo.com/64266830

The Kingdom Circles (adapted from Common Ground Consultants)

The Response

- Transformation & Expansion
- Dozens of sheikhs together embraced Christ (vs. the Christian religion)
- Doors opened for the gospel in their villages
- Communities (ekklesiae) of the kingdom result
- Transformation of lives & war-affected communities begun
- Gospel moves with believers remaining inside and part of their socioreligious communities

Insight into Insider Movements

**Bryan Bishop. Boundless: What Global Expressions of Faith Teach Us about Following Jesus.**
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015

4 Boundary Breaking Principles characterize these movements:
1. Put Bible and discussion of it at the center of group meetings
2. Focus on Jesus, not labels, organizations, or institutions
3. “Turn pagan into holy”: Daring, uncomfortable & persistent transformation of elements of their religious tradition into conveyers of biblical meaning
4. Seek God’s truth in their religions & connect it to gospel truth
Bryan Bishop
- describes his own experiences of concern, anxiety, and doubt that most readers will identify with,
- shares contrasting perspectives of supporters and critics of these insider believers, and
- despite struggles what leads him to affirm and rejoice in what he sees happening in these movements.
- Appendix: 10 has discovery Bible studies for exploring the issues this book introduces.


Overview of UIM
- 64 chapters, approximately 700 pages
- Looks at insider movements biblical, theological, missiological, religious, historical and cultural lenses across five different religious communities
- Each section of UIM includes study questions making it useful as a text book

UIM - Seven parts
- Part 1: Setting the Stage
- Part 2: Examples, Testimonies, and Analysis
- Part 3: Biblical and Theological Perspectives
- Part 4: Contextualization, Religion, and Syncretism
- Part 5: Approaches in Witness
- Part 6: Concerns and Misunderstandings
- Part 7: Identity
- A Look to the Future

Part 1: Setting the Stage
- Chapter 1: Insider Movements: Coming to Terms with Terms - John Jay Travis

5 Essential characteristics of IMs
1. Jesus and the Bible: following Jesus as their risen Lord and Savior and the Bible as the word of God
2. Fellowships with indigenous leadership: gatherings occurring in culturally appropriate ways for prayer, Bible study, and fellowship (i.e., biblical ekklesia) within families and social networks, led by fellow insiders whom God has raised up for leadership.
3. Spiritual transformation: occurs through the leading of the Spirit and the study of Scripture, resulting in certain cultural and religious beliefs and practices being retained, others reinterpreted or marginalized, and still others rejected.
4. Remaining as witnesses: disciples remaining integral members of their families and socioreligious communities, as witnesses for Jesus.
5. Multiplication: ongoing witnessing and prayer leading to the multiplication of new followers of Jesus, new insider leaders, and reproducing insider fellowships.

A Definition of IMs
Multiplying networks of Jesus followers in insider-led fellowships where the Bible is obeyed as the word of God, spiritual transformation occurs, and insiders remain part of the families and socioreligious communities of their birth, bearing witness to Jesus, their risen Lord and Savior.
To see a complete listing of chapters in UIM, visit the publisher, [www.missionbooks.org](http://www.missionbooks.org). Click on Understanding Insider Movements and then click on “Table of Contents”

Part 1: Setting the Stage

Chapter 2. Historical Development of the Insider Paradigm
   - Harley Talman
3. Muslim Followers of Jesus?
   - Joseph Cumming
4. When God’s Kingdom Grows Like Yeast: Frequently Asked Questions about Jesus Movements within Muslim Communities
   - John Jay Travis and J. Dudley Woodberry
5. Myths and Misunderstandings about Insider Movements
   - Kevin Higgins, Richard Jameson & Harley Talman
   - Leonard N. Bartlotti

Part 2: Examples, Testimonies & Analysis
   o Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist & Sikh contexts
   o Examples & Testimonies - largely by insiders
   o Case study analysis - written by alongsiders and outside researchers

Part 3: Biblical & Theological Perspectives
20. The Kingdom of God: A Biblical Paradigm for Mission
   - Anthony Taylor
21. The Old Testament and Insider Movements
   - Harley Talman
   - Michael Roberts and Richard Jameson
23. Jesus Living and Discipling among the Lost
   - John Ridgway
24. Jesus in Samaria: A Paradigm for Church Planting among Muslims
   - Kevin Higgins
26. The Incarnational Model of Jesus, Paul & the Jerusalem Council
   - J. Dudley Woodberry
27. Acts 15: An Inside Look
   - Harley Talman
28. The Integrity of the Gospel and Insider Movement
   - Rebecca Lewis
29. The Supremacy of Scripture
   - Harley Talman
30. Church in Context
   - Herbert Hoefer
31. All Things Are Yours
   - H. L. Richard
Part 4: Contextualization, Religion, and Syncretism
   32. Liberating Christ from Christians, Christianity, and the Church
       - Archbishop Gregoire Haddad
   35. A Third Reformation? Movements of the Holy Spirit beyond Christendom
       - Ralph D. Winter
   37. Reflections on Religion
       - Harley Talman

Part 5: Approaches in Witness
   43. Shall We Try Unbeaten Paths in Working for Moslems?
       - Henry Riggs
   44. Keys for Christian Witness
       - Virginia Cobb
   45. Contextualization among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars
       - J. Dudley Woodberry

Part 5: Approaches in Witness
   46. Christian Attitudes toward Islam and Muslims
       - Martin Accad
   47. Roles of “Alongsiders” in Insider Movements
       - John and Anna Travis
   48. Become Like…Remain Like (Take Two)
       - Harley Talman
   50. Planting Churches: Learning the Hard Way
       - Tim and Rebecca Lewis

Part 6: Concerns and Misunderstandings
   51. The C1–C6 Spectrum after Fifteen Years: Original Purpose, Misunderstandings, and Limitations
       - John Jay Travis
   53. Muslim Followers of Jesus & the Muslim Confession of Faith
       - Harley Talman
   54. “Is Allah God?” Five Reasons I Am Convinced
       - Jesse S. Wheeler
   55. Spiritual Power, World Religions, and the Demonic
       - Anna Travis

Part 7: Identity
   61. Heart Allegiance and Negotiated Identity
       - Eric Adams
   62. Searching for Models of Individual Identity
       - Jens Barnett
   64. God’s Creativity in Drawing Muslims to Jesus
       - Richard Jameson
Summary

1. Insider movements are real.
2. Insider expressions of faith vary greatly.
3. IMs challenge the typical view of religion.
4. IMs call us back to the Kingdom of God.
5. IMs expand our view of the body of Christ.
6. Discipleship and spiritual transformation occur outside of Christian institutions and denominations.
7. Alongsiders have roles in IMs.
8. Open discussion has increased understanding and addressed concerns and misconceptions about IMs.

Action Steps

1. Pursue greater understanding
   - Read article on “Insider Movements” in Wikipedia & discuss it with friends
   - Read Boundless or do the 10 Discovery Bible Studies
   - Read Understanding Insider Movements or some articles in it;
     Chapters 1-5 to soon be posted at www.missionbooks.org
2. Promote clarification
   - Definitions, misunderstandings, stereotypes.
3. Prepare the body of Christ
   - Introduce basic concepts to mission personnel, churches, & those with friends from other religious communities.
   - Discuss how to respond if we encounter insiders