

The Insider Movement from the Inside Out

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Matthew 10:32-33

- “So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

Introduction

- Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) in general have great difficulties with the principles and practices promoted by the Insider Movement
- Former “Insiders,” who called themselves followers of “Isa,” still worshiped at a mosque, followed the Qur’an, and prayed Muslim prayers.
- Former “Insiders” who have “come out,” admit to practicing deception, compromising the Bible, and seeking comfort instead of truth.
- This paper will explore the arguments of the Muslim Background Believers and former “Insiders” as they wrestle with the methodology promoted by the Insider Movement.

Muslim Identity vs Identity in Jesus Christ

- Fred Farrokh
- Perceptions of Muslim Identity: A Case Study Among Muslim-Born Persons in Metro New York, 2014
- Research Question:
 - What do Muslims in Metro New York perceive regarding the compatibility of permanently retaining Islamic identity and simultaneously being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- Two Questions:
 - Is Jesus the same?
 - Is MBDLJ still Muslim?

“Retentionism” requires a dramatic re-interpretation of Muslim identity

- Kevin Higgins articulates the Retentionist view:
- “I do, however, believe that authentic Jesus movements within Islam will bring transformation (and indeed reform) in the light of God’s Word and Spirit as applied from the inside. Views concerning Muhammad, the place of the Qur’an, the value of the *salat*, *the meaning of the word “Muslim,”* [emphasis mine] the nature of Jesus, the character of *Allah*, and many other elements of Islamic faith and life will change within and through such movements to Jesus.” (2007, 38)
- There is a re-definition of the word “Muslim” so that MBBs can retain their Muslim identity *permanently*.

1. Is Jesus the Same?

(Does the MBB, or MBDLJ, believe in the same Jesus he had been taught about as a Muslim?)

Table 7.3. MBDLJ responses for the same Jesus question

FBI	No. In Islam Jesus is just a prophet.
FB2	No. She now believes Jesus is Lord, not only a prophet.
FB3	No. As a Muslim, I was taught that Jesus is nothing.
FB4	No. Her mindset about Jesus will be different. It may be a struggle for her at first.
FB5	I don't think so, since ' <i>Isa</i> is only a prophet and Muhammad is more important.
FB6	I don't think so. In Islam, they teach that Jesus didn't die. So it's different.
FB7	No. Because Jesus is God and visited the earth. She believes in His divinity. It's not like Islamic belief.
FB8	Not at all. Because Jesus in Islam is not a Savior; He's just a prophet. It's definitely not the same Jesus. The Jesus they know of is not someone who can save.
FB9	No. The Jesus of Christianity is entirely different than the Jesus Muslims believe in. The first one is God walking on the earth, and who died on the cross.
FB10	No. Because Muslims don't believe Jesus was God who came to earth. He is a prophet—one degree lower than Muhammad—and a human like us.
MB1	No. He was brought up to believe that Jesus was only a prophet. Now he believes that Jesus is God in the flesh who died on the cross.
MB2	No. Because the Islamic Jesus and Biblical Jesus are different Jesuses. In Islam, Jesus is the #2 greatest prophet, but still only a prophet.
MB3	No. The turning point is recognizing the divinity of Jesus. Jesus of the Bible is not recognized as Lord in the Qur'an.
MB4	No. Jesus of the Qur'an was a simple prophet like others, and said Muhammad would come after. I never heard talk about <i>Nabi</i> (Prophet) ' <i>Isa</i> . They were only talking about Muhammad.

Table 6.5. Muslim responses to the same Jesus question

FM1	No. When she mentions Jesus is God, that is wrong. That is the fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity.
FM2	No. The Holy Qur'an gives the details of <i>Hazrat Isa alaihi-assalaam</i> (prophet Jesus, peace be upon him). We believe God created him. That is the difference.
MM1	Yes. We call him <i>Isa</i> .
MM2	Probably not. His foundation is changing.
MM3	No. We don't believe Jesus is God.
MM4	No. We believe Jesus never died.
MM5	No. In Islam Jesus is not crucified.
MM6	I don't think so. <i>Isa</i> did not die. God took him up from earth to heaven.
MM7	No. If he believes Jesus is God; of course not.
MM8	No. Christians believe that Jesus is like God the Father. But we don't believe like this. We believe he came like Muhammad or <i>Musa</i> (Moses).
MM9	No. That's absolutely wrong. Our Qur'an is like a constitution. God does not lie. The Qur'an states what happened and that <i>Isa</i> was never crucified. <i>Isa</i> is only a prophet who went up to heaven.
MM10	It's up to Ahmed to decide. Jesus is our prophet also.
MM11	It's almost the same. We believe Jesus wasn't crucified. Those who thought they crucified Jesus, thought they did it, but it was someone else, and Jesus was taken up.

1. Is the MBDLJ still a Muslim?

(Does the MBB, or MBDLJ, still retain his identity as a Muslim after becoming a Christian?)

Table 6.6. Muslim responses to still Muslim question

	Still Muslim?	When Left?
MM4	No. If you believe Jesus died, it means you don't believe in the Qur'an. Therefore you are not a Muslim.	When he believed that Jesus died.
MM5	No. He came to believe Jesus is God. Jesus is only a messenger.	When he came to believe that Jesus is God.
MM6	No.	The condition to be a Muslim is to believe in one God.
MM7	No. If he doesn't believe in the Oneness of God and that Jesus, the messenger, is distinct from God, he does not believe in the fundamental creed of Islam. He has associated a partner with God.	When he associated Jesus as a partner with God.
MM8	No.	He changed his religion.
MM9	No.	Because the Qur'an is God's words. When you say that what God says is wrong, you are saying the Qur'an is wrong, so you don't believe in Islam.
MM10	No.	Once he believes by heart and by mouth in another thing, he is no longer a Muslim.

Table 7.4. MBDLJ interview responses to Still Muslim question

	Still Muslim?	When Left?
FBI	No.	When she believed Jesus died on the cross.
FB2	No.	When she accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.
FB3	No.	When she gave her heart to the Lord.
FB4	No.	When she started fellowship with other believers.
FB5	No.	When she came to know that God died on the cross.
FB6	No.	I don't think she's still a Muslim because she believes Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.
FB7	No.	When she believed Jesus is Lord, God and Savior.
FB8	No.	Because she's believing in Jesus as God and Savior and is not believing in Allah.
FB9	No.	I don't believe she's a Muslim anymore. Once you believe Christ is God, you are not a Muslim.
FB10	No.	She believes in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
MB1	No.	When he showed interest he was still a seeker. When he became a believer, he found the truth and left the bondage.
MB2	No.	What does it mean to be a Muslim? It means submitted to Muhammad and Islam.
MB3	No.	When he accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.
MB4	No.	When he received Jesus Christ in his life.

Summary

1. Is Jesus the Same for the MBB?

- Muslim response: NO, because they accepted Jesus as Lord
- MBB response: NO, because they accepted Jesus as Lord

2. Is the MBB still a Muslim?

- Muslim response: NO, because he accepted Jesus as Lord
- MBB response: NO, because he accepted Jesus as Lord

3. Is the retention of a Muslim identity compatible with simultaneously being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ?

- NO. If a former Muslim retains a Muslim identity, then this is not compatible with having his/her identity in Christ

Methodology and Arguments

1. Converts to Christianity remain as Secret Believers
2. Use of the Qur'an as an evangelistic tool
3. Muslim friendly translations

1. Secret Believers

- Converts to Christianity continue going to the mosque and participating in ceremonies
- Continue saying Shahadah
- Continue praying in the mosque
- Continue reading the Qur'an
- Continue holding up Muhammad as a prophet (since he pointed people to one God and he spoke highly of Jesus in the Qur'an)
- Continue living with family with identity as a Muslim (avoid expulsion from family and friends)

Advantages of this method

1. Protect convert from rejection, persecution, and death (provide comfort)
2. Provide time to be disciplined with hope of later “surfacing”
3. Avoid negative label of “Christian”
4. Hope for “transformation” and “reform” to Islam from within (Insider Movements consists of believers remaining in and transforming their own pre-existing family networks, minimally disrupting their families and communities” (*Chrislam*, 36)
5. View Islam as a culture, therefore secret believers can say “Islam is my heritage and Christ is my inheritance” (*Chrislam*, 28)

Arguments Against this Method

1. Identity remains in Muhammad/Islam rather than in Christ/Christianity
2. Continued acceptance of Muslim identity will diminish full acceptance of identity in Christ and could lead to a rejection of Christ as Lord and Savior
3. Dangers of continuing with Muslim identity:
 - Mark Durie's warning against recitation of Shahada

Mark Durie's Warning

- “Reciting the *shahada* [“*there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet*”] is a covenant declaration that Muhammad will be your guide for life” (Durie, *Liberty to the Captive*, 2010, 1)
- He later explains, “If the status of Muhammad as a Messenger is not explicitly renounced, then the curses and threats of the Qur’an, and Muhammad’s opposition to the death of Christ and the Lordship of Christ can be a cause of spiritual instability, causing someone to be easily intimidated, and breed vulnerability and a lack of confidence as a follower of Jesus” (2010, 76)
- In other words, MBBs will have difficulty developing their spiritual identity in Christ if they are simultaneously trying to maintain a Muslim identity through a continued affirmation of Muhammad

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 - Don McCurry's warning

Don McCurry's Warning

- “I need to state that I believe there is a deep spiritual aspect to our Christian encounter with Islam. Although only a small percentage of Muslims may be Orthodox, the anti-Christian ideas in Islam have become so pervasive that they predispose Muslims everywhere to resist the preaching of the Gospel. Furthermore, I believe that there is a spiritual intelligence and power behind this resistance. Satan’s great desire is to thwart God in reaching and recovering lost human beings through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” (*Healing the Broken Family of Abraham*, 2001, 151)
- McCurry suggests Muslims are spiritually oppressed by Islam, regardless of their affiliation, and these spiritual powers attempt to prevent Muslims from ever learning about the truth of Jesus Christ

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4. Lack of verifiable data to support widespread claims
5. Islam has refused even modest attempts at reform
6. Islam is a total social, political, and religious system, and rejects any contender. The only real way out is to totally reject Islam (extraction)

Arguments Against this Method

7. Suffering for Christ is an inevitable part of the life of a follower of Christ
 - May encourage other believers
 - May lead to an opportunity for your testimony
 - May lead to the conversion of others

“You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Tim. 3:10-12)

MBB#1: Anwar Hossein

- Convert to Christ from Islam
- Afterwards became a part of an Insider Movement
- Left after two years because of “the deceptions and problems inherent to the IM” (*Chrislam*, 228)
- He did not see any positive things about the IM: “They never say they are Christian. They allow you to go to the mosque; they allow you to perform prayer five times. **And your identity is Muslim.** I could not accept it.” (231)

2. Use of the Qur'an as an evangelistic tool

- The Qur'an is used to evangelize and disciple Muslim seekers
- The missionary, or the Christian evangelist, will develop the story of Jesus in the context of the Qur'an

Advantages of this Method

1. Muslims revere Jesus (Isa) as a prophet
2. Muslims are familiar with stories about Isa
3. Qur'anic study of Isa can lead to biblical study of Jesus

Arguments against this Method

1. This method is said to use deception
2. Misinterpretation of the Qur'an: IM is trying to make the Qur'an say more than it actually says
3. Often the bridge is not developed - the basic concept of the identity of Jesus remains in a Muslim context

Anwar Hossein: Using the Qur'an "as an introduction to the Muslim seeker is okay, but definitely not evangelism and discipling a Muslim seeker. We can use it as an introduction, but not for evangelism. We should use the Bible, the Holy Bible." (*Chrislam*, 234)

MBB#2: Sasan Tavassoli

- Born as an Iranian Shi'a Muslim
- Came to Christ as a teenager in Europe
- Has a Ph.D. from a university in the UK
- As a pastor of an Iranian church in the States, he now reaches out to Iranians through radio and satellite
- “I simply do not believe IM is an honest and truthful way to deal with the text of the Qur'an.” (*Chrislam*, 275)

MBB#2: Sasan Tavassoli

- “If we allow the Qur’an to interpret itself and give Muslims the courtesy to tell us what their Scripture means, we realize that the Qur’an does not support the kind of Christian interpretations that IM proponents want to get out of it. After talking to some prominent IM leaders, it seems that there is a strange mixture of evangelical zeal, with American pragmatism and postmodern hermeneutics. There is little regard for 1400 years of Islamic scholarship concerning the Qur’an and almost no regard for the objectivity of meaning in the Qur’anic text.” (*Chrislam*, 275)

3. Muslim friendly translations

1. “Messiah” substituted for “Son of God”
2. “Christ sent from God” for “Son of God”
3. “Father” substituted with “God” or “Guardian”

Advantages of this Method

1. Muslims will not be offended
2. It will prevent a “stumbling block”
3. Provides time for evangelism and explanation of Christian doctrines relating to the deity of Christ and the Trinity

Arguments against this Method

1. Deceptive and misleading

2. Christ is the “stumbling block”

- “Ultimately the Gospel must offend us if we are to be changed by it” (*Chrislam*, 157)

3. Biblically inaccurate

- substitutes may not reflect eternal sonship

Thought: The Importance of Distinctions

- If there is an emphasis on the **similarities** between Islam and Christianity, the Qur'an and the Bible, Muhammad and Jesus, then there is more of an acceptance of Insider views.
- If there is an emphasis on the **differences** between Islam and Christianity, the Qur'an and the Bible, Muhammad and Jesus, then there is more movement toward an exclusive view of Christianity.

A Radical Difference?

- The key is to note the radical differences between Islam and Christianity. Those who focus on the similarities in order to try to win Muslims to the Lord may not really be teaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Isa of the Qur'an that some are following may not be the true Jesus of the Bible.

Any Questions?

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