
Revisiting the C1-C6 Spectrum in Muslim Contextualization

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For more than a decade, evangelicals have framed contextualization strategies for ministry to Muslims in terms of the so-called "C1-C6 Spectrum." The devising of this Spectrum has helped to steer all subsequent discussion and discourse, even being utilized now by North American analysts who are wrestling with issues related to the "emerging church" phenomenon. The higher-end aspects of the Spectrum have created a stir with some evangelicals; they have also contributed to polarizing different Muslim-ministry practitioners. Perhaps these effects have less to do with direct strategy and methodology than they do with the assumptions and mechanics of the Spectrum itself. This article revisits those assumptions and suggests a change in the mechanics of C1-C6, especially regarding the tension between contextualization and traditionalism.¹

The discussion of contextualization² in ministry to Muslims (M2M) has definitely been energetic over the past several years. Sometimes, that discussion leaves observers and by-standers wondering if that energy is producing more heat than light. As Darrell Whiteman explained several years ago:

Contextualization captures in method and perspective the challenge of relating the Gospel to culture. In this sense the concern of contextualization is ancient — going back to the early church as it struggled to break loose from its Jewish cultural trappings and enter the Greco-Roman world of the Gentiles. At the same time it is something new. (1999:42–43)

One of the main concerns about contextualization by evangelicals — a concern emanating from biblical hermeneutics — has been that of holding to a high view of the Bible and staying within scriptural bounds. When experimentation leads some

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FIGURE 1
THE C1-C6 SPECTRUM

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
Christ-centered community description	A church foreign to the community in both culture and language	C1 in form but speaking the language used by Muslims, though their religious terminology is distinctively non-Muslim	C2 using non-Islamic cultural elements (e.g., dress, music, diet, arts)	C3 with some Biblically acceptable Islamic practices	C4 with a "Muslim follower of Jesus" self-identity	Secret believers, may or may not be active members in the religious life of the Muslim community
Self-Identity:	"Christian"	"Christian"	"Christian"	"Follower of Isa [Jesus]"	"Muslim follower of Jesus"	Privately: "Christian," or "Follower of Isa," or "Muslim follower of Jesus"
Muslim Perception	Christian	Christian	Christian	A kind of Christian	A strange kind of Muslim	Muslim

(chart from Massey 2000:7)

practitioners to meddle with some of the presuppositions of those parameters, others begin to question their motives and, sometimes, their stand on biblical faith.³

This questioning and polarization are not new, having been unfortunate by-products of, for example, the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation in Europe. As the Reformation progressed, communities-of-faith tended to separate along ethnic and doctrinal lines. Just as all divisions throughout Christian history have brought sorrow, ever since the Reformation, those working for *koinonia* in the greater body of Christ have lamented the multi-denominational character of Protestant churches.

The C1-C6 Spectrum

In the last dozen years or so, more has probably been written on the C1-C6 Spectrum than any other single topic in M2M. Nearly twenty years before the appearance of this Spectrum, discussion and implementation of contextual experiments in various Muslim contexts warranted the devising of such a continuum. Insofar as the Spectrum was designed for that purpose, it has truly filled a need. Expressed originally by Travis as a textual matrix (1998:407–408), Joshua Massey reworked it (1999:190 and 2000:7) and categorized it to resemble a linear spectrum, as shown in Figure 1.

In M2M today, John Travis indicates — no doubt with a similar touch of lament — that his “... C1-C6 Spectrum compares and contrasts types of ‘Christ-centered communities’ (groups of believers in Christ) found in the Muslim world” (1998:407). In a real sense, then, the Spectrum delineates veritable “denominations” of Muslim-background believers (MBB), separated along ecclesial and doctrinal lines (Williams

2007). Hence through the C1-C6 Spectrum we see not only divisions between groups of MBBs, but also between those who analyze MBBs using the Spectrum.

Those divisive, delineating aspects of the Spectrum are themselves thought-provoking. However, the focus of this article is on what the C1-C6 Spectrum does not delineate, at least in its present form.

A General (non-Muslim) Example of How the Spectrum Works

While there has been a great deal of literature generated to explain the above continuum, not everyone (particularly North American Christians without Muslim ministry experience) who views the Spectrum understands the mechanics of how it works in describing different communities-of-faith. To help introduce those mechanics, I offer the following illustration. The following matrix places Christian music styles in juxtaposition to the sociological descriptions of North American post-World War II generations: baby-boomer; baby-buster; generation-X; and, generation-Y. The result is a would-be Christian-Music C1-C6 Spectrum:

- Most mainline denominations use hymns for worship singing on any given Sunday. Most of these hymns have been around from 50 to 500 years, and they are anchored in church tradition: C1.⁴
- Along comes a community of faith that chooses to appeal to the musical-instrumentation styles of the baby-boomer generation by using guitars and keyboards instead of an organ and hand-bell choir, yet the music itself is still rooted in traditional hymnology and liturgy: C2.⁵
- For boomers of the late-1960s, Chuck Smith arrives in southern California (founding Calvary Chapel in the wake of the Jesus Movement), allowing for new worship songs and other songs with a rock-and-roll edge to be incorporated into this novel Christ-centered community (thus begins Maranatha Music): C3.
- For nearly 40 years now, the trend of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) has given rise to Christians who identify with the more contemporary rock styles in music. This music is not only usable for worship in such a Christ-centered community (e.g., Maranatha Music, Vineyard Music, or Integrity Hosanna), but also for alternative entertainment to secular music (e.g., Christian album-labels and Christian-music radio), and for witnessing to non-Christian friends: C4.
- Not normally for worship is the music of some musicians who would indicate they are Bible-believers but may not actually call themselves “Christian” due to the stigma of that label (Allison 2006:17).⁶ Their music might not even be considered Christian by any of the above four “C” types — groups such as Kansas (boomer generation), P.O.D. (buster and generation-X), and Evanescence (generation-Y): C5.⁷
- Finally, there are those musicians who would be reticent to admit they are Christians publicly, but it seems that their music points to awareness and subscription to biblical spirituality — e.g., U2 (boomer and buster) and Lenny Kravitz (buster and generation-X): C6.

From the Low to the Higher End on the Spectrum (C1 to C4)

With the above Christian-music example in mind, perhaps it will now be easier to visualize the outworking of such different communities-of-faith in Muslim contexts. Therefore, we look first at a C1 M2M example, which comes from Central Asia:

Permission to build a Christian church is withheld in some lands (such as Saudi Arabia) and very difficult to obtain in others (such as Afghanistan and Egypt at the present time). However, a church was . . . built in Kabul, Afghanistan. It was a 49-foot-high A-frame contemporary structure built to attract the international community of that city. It had been dedicated in the spring of 1970. . . . Then after three years, government forces came in and completely demolished the building. . . . Would a different architectural style have made a difference? That is a question that may never be answered. But the question certainly must be raised whenever church building is undertaken in a country with large segments of its people or government hostile to a non-Islamic presence in their land. (Antablin 1989 [2000])

The implications of this case-study are obvious: with no apparent regard for the host Afghan culture, any Muslim seen entering this church would be considered converted and extracted⁸ — two characteristics of this traditional approach to church expression in a Muslim context. The Afghan government's reaction, therefore, should not come as a big surprise.

The next three "C" type examples are composite examples of my experience with C2, C3 and C4 Christ-centered communities (geographic and ethnic anonymities are maintained). Please note that these composites are context-specific and not meant to be universal in the Muslim world at-large:

- C2: More than a few times, certain Muslims have been attracted to some elements that existing churches possess, and these Muslims have chosen to renounce their Islamic heritage by becoming baptized Christian believers in such churches. While this certainly happens in a C1 format, it also happens in C2 situations since these less-traditional fellowships are willing to claim an outsider as their own (as their "trophy"?) more readily than a C1 traditional church might consider.
- C3: This Christ-centered community has the name "Jesus the Messiah Church" (in mixed Arabic and English), and it has its service on Sundays (maintaining Christian observance). The congregation leaves their footwear at the door before entering a large room *cum* sanctuary. All sit on the floor on mats (the men tend to be up front, separate from the women, but there is no hard-and-fast rule on that). Along with an electric keyboard, electric bass-guitar and drum-set, there is a set of brass gongs, played xylophone-style, with some other Muslim-style percussion instruments. After lively worship, where the congregants can move and/or dance around, as well as lifting hands in the air in worship, the preacher gives a message from the Bible. He preaches either in the local Muslim language, the predominant non-Muslim trade language, or English, while standing at a lectern stand. Because of the mixture of traditional-church and indigenous elements, including the use of translated praise songs, this fellowship is considered to be C3.
- C4: MBBs that comprise this Christ-centered community meet on Fridays (as per Islamic observance). Footwear is left outside, and some men wear the *kopia* (skull-cap) while some women wear the appropriate female head-covering (in this part of the Muslim world, I have never seen a female C4 MBB dressed in full *burkha*). The service will commence with the singing of Western-church praise songs translated into the Muslim language. Also, there is reading from translated Bible portions which is situated on a Quranic stand placed on a small, waist-high endtable. The Bible reader and the preacher (always men) will start with the *Basmalah* greeting in Arabic⁹ before continuing to read or to preach in the indigenous language of the local Muslim people or in the predominant non-Muslim trade language.

After preaching, there is community prayer done in similar fashion to *salat* (Muslim ritual-prayer), ending with the Muslim method of greeting at the end of *salat*. The more pronounced incorporation of Islamic elements into these worship gatherings accounts for the C4 status.

C5 — “High Spectrum” Contextualization

For C5, I admit that I have little experience by which to make a composite illustration. (I do have anecdotal and print evidence of certain C5 beliefs and attitudes, which I share later in this article.) Popularized as “high spectrum” by Timothy Tennent (2006),¹⁰ C5 practice historically has been two-pronged:

- Missionaries who take on the *persona* of being Muslim in order to reach out to Muslims in their midst, as per a dynamic-equivalent rendering of 1 Corinthians 9:22 (within the full context of verses 19–23) indicating: “to the Muslim I became a Muslim . . . ;”¹¹ and,
- MBBs who choose to stay within their community as “Muslims who follow *Isa al Masih*” (Jesus the Messiah), with all the ramifications of that scenario.

Formal Islamic Observances

There is sufficient literature on the former example of C5 practice just listed, as it is (1) more controversial; and, (2) more quantifiable;¹² however, even to give a summary of resulting issues is beyond our scope here. The latter example is much less documented, as it is risky for C5 believers to be so forthcoming in print where anyone could read their accounts. After all, in many settings apostates from Islam can be killed, even by their own family members. Given these limitations, Travis provides a composite description of C5 MBBs:

What various C5 communities affirm in Islam will vary in different contexts. Irrespective of mosque attendance, however, most C5 believers remain acceptable members of the Muslim community by continuing to give alms, keep the fast, pray daily, wear local dress, and use their customary religious vocabulary and worship style. (2000:56)

Both Travis and Scott Woods write from their respective M2M experiences in Southeast Asia. Woods, for his part, qualifies Travis’ statement on mosque attendance: “Most C5ers come into the mosque and line up in the *shalat* [ritual-prayer] line. They are perceived as Muslims. They have no distinguishing mark that says they are followers of Isa. Even if they pray to Isa, the perception is that they are Muslims” (2003:193–194; italics in original).

The main point to note in Woods’ description is the retention of Islamic religious customs and practices — the upholding of traditions.

Folk Islamic Observances

Not underscored in the previous descriptions of the “C” categories is “the role of pagan practices in folk Islam around the world which further complicates the C-5 case” (Tennent 2006:114n25). While an inventory of folk Islamic beliefs and practices is also beyond the scope of this article,¹³ Roger Dixon, from his Indonesian M2M experience, elaborates on the complications:

The only religious characteristics dealt with [in the Spectrum] are [formal] Christian and Islamic and Travis ignores the influence of other belief systems that pervade the Islamic

and Christian contexts. This is a profound weakness because there are many kinds of practitioners of multiple belief systems who are influencing the formal religions of Christianity and Islam. Their forms and meanings are interwoven into the fabric of these religions and there is no way to develop a contextual approach without understanding these influences. For example, in West Java we have an elaborate shaman system that is completely integrated with the formal Islamic religious practices. (2009:9–10)¹⁴

For determining “a contextual approach . . . [for] understanding these influences,” the process of “critical contextualization” was developed, involving critical evaluation of former beliefs and practices in light of becoming believers in Jesus. Innovated by the late Paul Hiebert, it appears in chart form as shown in Figure 2.

Since the consideration of folk beliefs would add a different dimension and various ramifications to Travis’ original linear matrix, this leads us now to the first part of revisiting the Spectrum.¹⁵

Revisiting the Spectrum — Part 1

If you were to integrate Massey’s chart (Figure 1) into Hiebert’s diagram (Figure 2), some very interesting aspects would present themselves, as diagrammed in Figure 3.

Concentrating on the flanks (C1 and C5), “rejecting everything” (Love 2000:66) and “denying the old,” so that the “gospel becomes foreign and is rejected” (Hiebert 1985:188), leads to the same result as that of “a church foreign to the Muslim community in both language and culture” (Massey 2000:7), which is C1 and engenders extractionism.¹⁶ Interestingly enough, by “accepting everything” (Love 2000:66), such that “C5 believers remain acceptable members of the Muslim community” (Travis 2000:56), this opposite flank becomes tantamount to “uncritical acceptance” (Hiebert 1985:188) of all things ‘Muslim.’¹⁷ This revelation of the nature of the flanks is hard to dismiss and leads us to the next part.

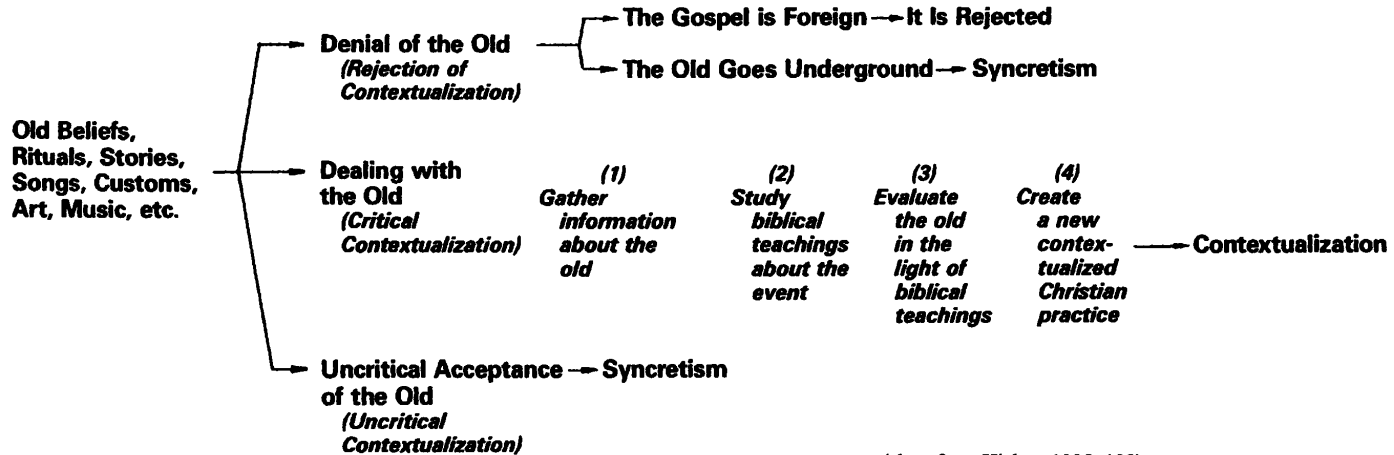
Revisiting the Spectrum — Part 2

Primary assumptions of the Spectrum are based upon a look at the formal structure of Islamic beliefs and practices only; in other words, there has been a lack of holistic depth that would include folk beliefs and practices, for example — it has been rather “one-dimensional” (Dixon 2009:9).

This one-dimensional analysis should not surprise us, however, since it is natural in Western missiology for illustrations to suggest simple, linear frameworks.¹⁸ One of the first examples of such a framework in general contextualization is the linear “Map of Models of Contextual Theology” (Bevans 1992:27). Then, of course, there is the C1-C6 Spectrum itself. Corollary to that is another linear continuum called “The Great Divide” (Parshall 1998:405), which has undergone revision and expansion recently by Tennent (2006:103).

Related to this series of one-dimensional analyses has been the transformation of Eugene Nida’s Source-Message-Receptor (S-M-R) diagram (1990:38ff) — what Father Bevans calls the “translation model” of contextualization (1992:27).¹⁹ Enter Gailyn Van Rheenen from his African experience. In his textbook on missions, Van Rheenen proposes a modification to Nida’s S-M-R model by depicting the encoding,

FIGURE 2
CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION



(chart from Hiebert 1985: 188)

FIGURE 3
C1-C5 /CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION HYBRID

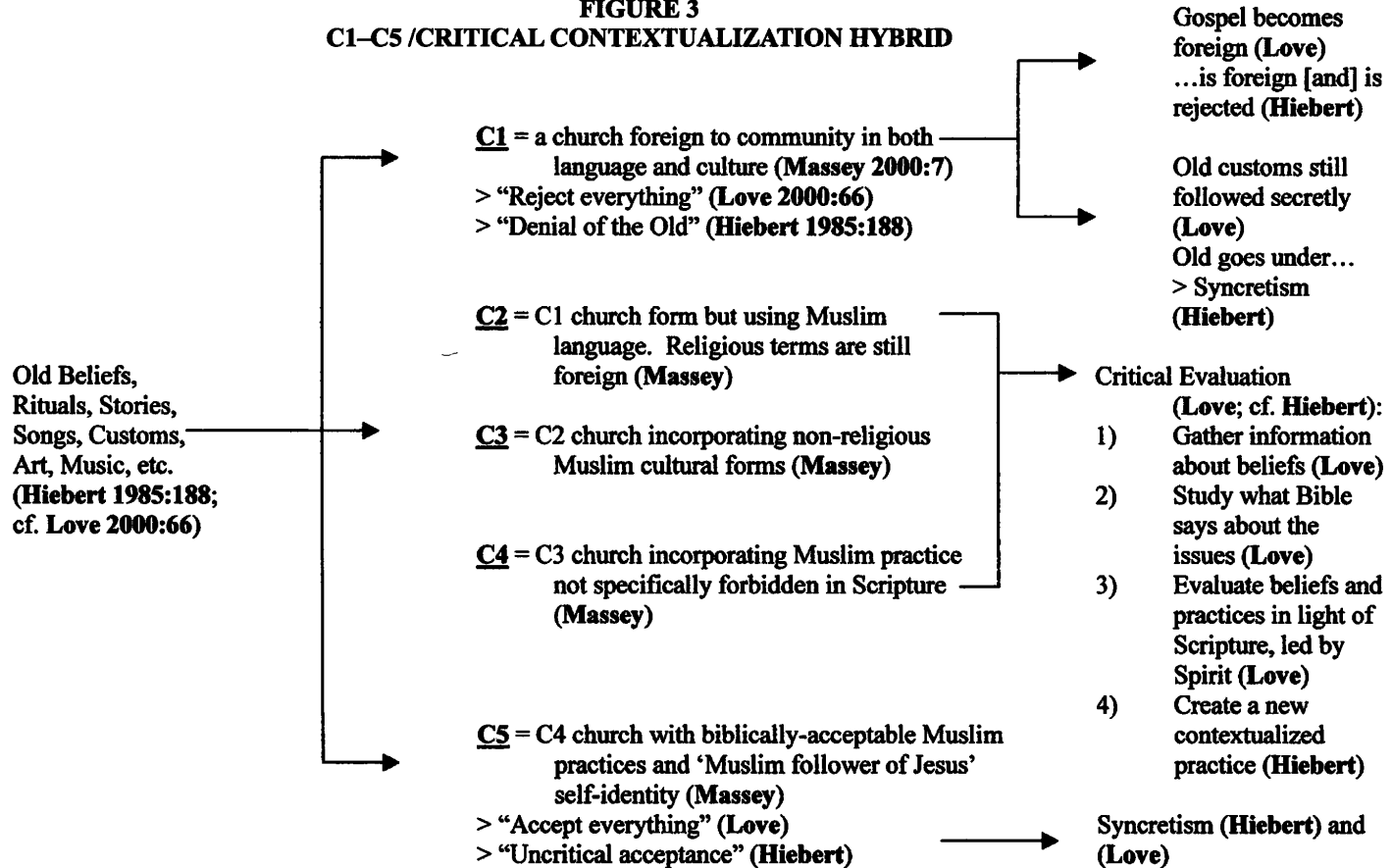
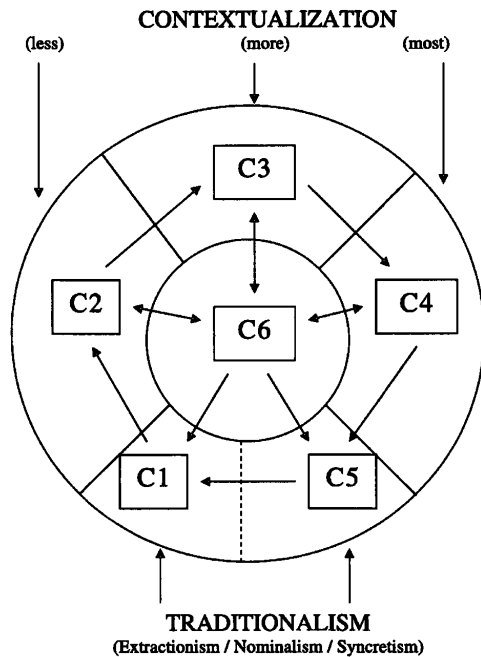


Figure 4
THE C1-C6 CIRCULAR PROGRESSION DIAGRAM



decoding, and feedback of communication in rounded, baseball-diamond figures (1996:115,118,120). Why did this seem to be necessary? Because “rather than diagramming communication as a dialogical (and therefore cyclical) encounter, Nida depicts it as a linear process” (Van Rhee 1996:115n2).

Similarly, Dixon impeaches the C1-C6 Spectrum on the same basis (endnote #18), then questions the interpretation of the “C” categories as well:

In his [Travis’] description, the word “contextualize” only appears under the description of C3 and C4 communities. But the impression is that the other examples in his model (C1, C2, C5, and C6) should also be considered as “contextualized” models. This impression is reinforced by noted missiologists . . . who systematically refer to it as a model of contextualization. (2009:4)

Now, with all of this background information concerning Western linear missiology, I accept Dixon’s challenge to “ . . . move on from the C1-C6 Spectrum” (2009:19), proposing a circular progression in its place (Figure 4):

Notice that both C1 and C5 are at the bottom of this circular diagram, closest to the “traditionalism” group of “extractionism,” “nominalism,” and “syncretism.” An initial question might therefore be, “We understand how C1 can lead to extractionism and nominalism (and syncretism), but why do you indict C5 in a similar manner?” The most

significant reason for that indictment is due to the characteristics of traditionalism in both C1 and C5. The issue is not why C1 is traditional (that is obvious); rather, the fact that “some [C5 missionaries] urge and teach the performance of /sholat/ prayers and other Muslim religious ceremonies/practices” (Dixon 2006:1) is a strong indication of the traditionalist nature of C5 as well.

Therefore, if we concur with Dixon that C1 and C5 (as well as C6, described in endnote #15) do not really belong to “contextualized” categories,²⁰ then the following is tenable: “... ‘extraction’ only happens when non-contextualized forms are used...” (Lewis 2006:126). Rebecca Lewis uses the term “non-contextualized” here to mean that certain Christian symbols and practices are borrowed in and imposed upon the target people without consideration of how that might alienate them (without a doubt, this interpretation is subject to certain debate). In other words, if we reverse Whiteman’s definition at the beginning of this article, there would be no “struggle to break loose from the missionary’s cultural trappings” — instead, traditions would be retained. Since both C1 and C5 indicate the retention of traditions (whether C1-Christian or C5-Muslim), they are actually overlapping in the same quadrant; whereas, C2, C3, and C4 are in their own quadrants of degrees in contextualization.²¹

An immediate follow-up question might be, “But how are C1 and C5 similar enough to overlap?” The answer is that, in both situations, the adherents are stuck in traditionalism. Members of C5 communities (similar to members of C1 communities) will engage in worship the same way they always have; they will wear the same clothing they always have; they will interact in society in the same manner they always have. If they do not, they will be perceived to be different and non-traditional — somewhere between “a kind of Christian... [and] a strange kind of Muslim” (Massey 2000:7).

More Point and Counterpoint

The implication that this diagram reflects real characteristics of C5 might generate more questions:

- First of all — Why would there be extractionism? In C5 instances, from what is the MBB being extracted?
- Answer: He or she is being “extracted” from the greater body of Christ, as manifested in and through the other “C” expressions, C1-C4. Just as Halim had been extracted from his birth community (endnote #8), so the C5 MBB is now extracted from his “second-birth” community — a community intended to be “one in Spirit yet separate in almost all aspects of everyday life” (Jameson and Scalevich 2000:35). Other print evidence shows that this type of extraction is not just an unfortunate happenstance. Some years ago, I documented some separatist reactions by C5 believers and missionaries (Williams 2003:83–84, 85–86). Dixon also expresses his concern when he warns other missionaries in M2M “not [to] be associated with this cult-like [C5] movement” (2006:2; cf. Span and Span 2009:62). Years ago, Mike Brislen attempted to downplay that assessment with a more hopeful pronouncement: “[C5] is not an Islamic sect, and the teaching of the universality of the church must be stressed. A mature [C5] Muslim-culture church may be encouraged to participate occasionally with other churches...” (1996:365). In the final analysis, however, that last statement is less than compelling.
- Second — How could a C5 MBB be in danger of nominalism?

- Answer: I am personally aware of one MBB family that has adopted the C5 “Insider Movement” tactic (cf. Corwin 2007) over the past few years. One of the last times he was questioned by a mutual missionary friend, this MBB admitted he had stopped reading the translated Scripture portions because they had not been translated by C5-sensitive translators.²² Even if this MBB continues in the façade of observing Islamic beliefs and practices, the fact that he no longer reads the Bible edges him closer to nominalism and jeopardizes his very status as a Muslim-background “believer.” Unfortunately, his is not an isolated case.
- Finally — What is a recent example (more recent than the well-known case-study in Parshall 1998) in which C5 MBBs are in danger of syncretism?²³
- Answer: The following is my re-telling of a true story that happened at a recent M2M conference (name and place anonymities are maintained):

At one point in the conference, my wife had a chance to talk with ‘M2M Colleague A.’ During a session on “MBB Identity,” Colleague A was part of a roundtable discussion that included ‘M2M Colleague B’ and one female MBB that had been invited by Colleague B. During the roundtable discussion, Colleague A became dismayed at some of the indiscriminate comments made by the MBB.

During a break after the discussion, Colleague A was able to ask a more direct question to this MBB: “On Judgment Day, what will be the basis for God to allow you into Paradise (Heaven)?” The MBB replied that, based on her good life and learning more about Jesus (Isa), God would graciously allow her into Paradise. Colleague A then offered her own qualification: “I know that I will be allowed into Heaven because of the fact that Jesus shed His blood on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for my sins.” At that, the MBB just gave a giggly smile, not sure of what to say — an unfortunate response to a crucial question.

Later, Colleague A was able to direct a question to Colleague B as well: “Are you sure that this MBB is truly an MBB — that is, a ‘believer?’” Colleague B replied, “You know how slowly we have to approach sharing the gospel message to those of Muslim-background, so that they do not reject it outright.”

If the use of anecdotal evidence here seems too circumstantial, the content of the following published quotes from C5 practitioners reinstates the concerns of this third query — first, from a C5 missionary; then, from a C5 believer:

1. “[M]ost of us [in this C5 ministry] do not want anything to do with [traditional] Christian religion. We want *Isa Almasih* [Jesus Christ] . . . but not Christianity . . .” (Williams 2007:66; italics in original)
2. “[As a C5 MBB] I have reconverted to being a Muslim. I even like the Jesus more of the Qur’an than of the New Testament.” (Span and Span 2009:60)

Whether by anecdotal or print evidence, therefore, the point is made: the strong potential for the entrance of nominalism and syncretism is established.²⁴

Conclusion

A great deal of energy has been generated from that original *EMQ* October 1998 issue which introduced mission practitioners to the C1-C6 matrix in M2M contextualization. It has been good energy, for the most part: while there has been much spirited and even divisive discussion about the Spectrum, analysts have had to respect each

other's positions and "agree to disagree" over the years. Colleagues more learned and knowledgeable than I have taken the time to examine and explicate the myriad facets of the "C" categories and, more recently, the "Insider Movement" thrust. While this article cites many pertinent references at the end, very recent contributions — such as those from the December 2009 issue of *Christianity Today* (Cumming 2009, with responses by Accad 2009; Azumah 2009; Mallouhi 2009; Parshall 2009; and, Travis 2009) — continue to propel these issues to the forefront of Christian theological and missiological discourse.

This article, therefore, does not seek to detract from any of those learned contributions. Rather, in taking the time to explore the mechanics of C1-C6, and by considering the reworking of the linear Spectrum into a circular progression, the question we have proposed here is not the heretofore prevailing "*Where* do we draw the line?" but rather, "*How* do we draw the line?" This question reflects a change in understanding the assumptions and mechanics of the Spectrum, namely with respect to the type and extent of contextualization manifest in the various "C" categories.

A final question might be, "*Why* should we draw the line?" One C5 practitioner frames the question in this manner: "The early church was viewed as a strange new sect within Judaism at its inception, and eventually took on a completely new identity. . . . Why not embrace the idea of being seen as a strange new sect within Islam itself, as we have seen from the Sufis that it can be done?" (Asad 2009:151). One response is that if such separatism is allowed, if such an extractionist strand of Muslim-ness within a Christ-centered community exists, then what happens to Jesus' prayer for unity, as found in John 17:21? Whither *koinonia*? Because "if all believers champion the desire of Jesus in John 17 and the Holy Spirit through Paul in Ephesians 4, then there should be cross-pollination of C5 with [others] . . . for the good of the 'Body'" (Williams 2007:69).

In closing, then, the gospel will have difficulty moving out from traditional forms, whether C1-Christian or C5-Muslim. This article has sought to alert the reader on the indirect and subtle tendencies toward extractionism and nominalism (with syncretism crouching at the door) as ever-present conditions of the traditionalism fostered by C5. The late Bishop Lesslie Newbigin drives this point home:

Where there is a believing community whose life is centered in the biblical story . . . this community will not be finally betrayed. . . . But where something else is put at the center, a moral code, a set of principles, or the alleged need to meet some criterion imposed from outside the story, one is adrift in the ever changing tides of history, and the community which commits itself to these things becomes one more piece of driftwood on the current. (1989:148)

Notes

1. I would like to thank the consummate C5 apologist, Joshua Massey, for critiquing an earlier draft of this article. I also appreciate the insightful comments of several in the mission organization under which I serve: Serving In Mission (www.sim.org). All of their contributions were helpful; the faults that remain are mine.

2. "Contextualization" was the original term coined by Shoki Coe and the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the 1970s. Being a term that finds usage mainly among Protestant evangelicals today, "inculturation" is the alternative preferred by Roman Catholic and other conciliar practitioners. Two definitive works on inculturation are

Shorter 1988 and Arbuckle 1990. Fr. Stephen Bevans, SVD, makes a valuable insight regarding similarities and differences of the two terms:

Shorter prefers the term *inculturation*, but it seems to me that his usage implies a *model* rather than a general term. Inculturation for him is the *insertion* of faith *into* culture. As he himself admits, *contextualization* is a wider term. Arbuckle speaks of *contextualization* as more superficial than *inculturation*, and as allied to the idea of adaptation. He does not seem to be familiar with the standard definition given by the Theological Education Fund in 1972, although he cites it from a secondary source. . . . (1992:120n44; italics in original)

3. Certain controversial questions asked by contextualists, such as, "What is the 'Church' Biblically?" (Kraft 1979 [2000]), continue to raise eyebrows even as they did when first published 30 years ago. This is because these queries challenge certain facets of evangelical tradition. Some detractors have denounced contextualization on this basis since it seems to appeal more to the social sciences than to the Bible for substantiation (Heldenbrand 1982).

4. Travis' textual matrix (1998:407–408) has been summarized recently as follows:

- C1 Traditional Church using Outsider Language
- C2 Traditional Church using Insider Language
- C3 Contextualized Christ-centered Communities using Insider Language and Religiously Neutral Insider Cultural Forms
- C4 Contextualized Christ-centered Communities using Insider Language and Biblically Permissible Cultural and Islamic Forms
- C5 Christ-centered Communities of 'Messianic Muslims' who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior
- C6 Small Christ-centered communities of Secret/Underground believers. (Dixon 2009:8)

5. Case-in-point: in 1989, the baby-boomer Christian group called "The Second Chapter of Acts" released a double-CD set called "Hymns" which updated many old hymns with the rock-and-roll sound of electric guitars, keyboard instruments, and drums.

6. For example, quotes from the ReImagine website (noted in Allison 2006:17) make reference to establishing Christ-centered communities through "hospitality," "conversation and friendship," and "intentional communities [in] service to others." While there is copious mention of "Jesus" and the "Kingdom of God," the more traditional terminology of "Christian" and "church" is noticeably avoided.

7. Mark Joseph (1999) chronicles many musical artists who would consider themselves as Christians (but may not always admit it publicly). From Johnny Cash of the pre-boomer and baby-boomer generations to Gary Cherone of generation-X ('Extreme' and 'Van Halen'), rock musicians who are Christians have always wrestled over the seeming inconsistency between their art-form and their faith. In light of this, Joseph remarks:

[R]ock and roll, whatever the lyrical content, was the devil's music and was to be avoided at all costs. As [attitudes] like these began to take hold in a Christian subculture . . . , it is hardly surprising that young Christian men and women didn't make much of an impact on popular music. . . . A more serious challenge to the legitimacy of rock was waged by more learned men and women who sought to persuade young and old alike that it was inherently evil. (1999:2)

8. Here is Phil Parshall's classic (and poignant) example of extracting an MBB into a C1 traditional Christian community:

Halim Ali is a young [Muslim] man of nineteen, dissatisfied with life on the farm. . . .

One evening a tall, white-faced man briefly stops by Halim's home and leaves a packet of Christian tracts. . . .

Halim shares his desire to become a Christian with local believers. Food and shelter are provided while he undertakes a thorough catechism, which leads him to accept Christ as his Saviour. Soon thereafter he returns to his home and family where he proudly announces to all that he has become a Christian. Reaction is immediate and severe. Halim is regarded as a traitor to family, friends, country, and religion. The options are recant — or flee.

Soon thereafter Halim reappears at the doorstep of the missionary with his tale of persecution and rejection. Within six months he is baptized and given a new name. One year later Halim marries a Christian girl and completes his mission-sponsored teacher's training course.

Consider perspectives: The *missionary* rejoices that a brand has been plucked from the flaming fire; the *home church* in the U.S.A. enthusiastically adopts the support of this courageous young man who has "forsaken all" for his faith; the *villagers* symbolically bury an old pair of Halim's sandals in retribution against a despicable outcaste who dared to reject all societal norms and accepted a foreigner's religion where adherents eat filthy pig meat and worship three gods. Alienation is total. (2003:195,196; italics in original)

9. The standard Arabic greeting, which is universal in the Muslim world, is *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* (which means, "In the name of God [Allah], the Merciful and the Compassionate").

10. Coined initially in Williams 2003, one of the latest writings to use the term "high spectrum" for C5 practices is Asad 2009.

11. J. Dudley Woodberry has written an insightful article on this with the title, "To the Muslim I Became a Muslim?" in the *International Journal of Frontier Mission* (2007).

12. For current literature, examine the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (1996–2007) for pertinent articles. Also, consult select articles in the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, especially Volume 17 (2000), Volume 21 (2004), Volume 23 (2006), and Volume 24 (2007).

13. The best treatment on folk Islam continues to be Musk 2003. Love 2000 is also noteworthy.

14. Roger Dixon's comments here are based on observations made in an 'open letter' three years earlier: "Some C5 people are encouraging Muslim converts to remain in their former religious practices. Their teaching is not just about indigenous cultural practices. They promote having followers of Isa Al Masih continue to call themselves Muslims and some urge and teach the performance of /sholat/ prayers and other Muslim religious ceremonies/practices" (Dixon 2006:1).

15. At this point, one question emerges: "What about 'C6 — Secret Believers'?" In revisiting the mechanics of the Spectrum, it will become clear that C6 is actually only considered a transitional phase. In earlier drafts of this Spectrum (before the published format in Parshall 1998), Travis did not even have a C6 category — just C1 to C5. In this regard, Travis himself did not truly see "C6" as the embodiment of a Christ-centered community.

16. Timothy Tennent clarifies this point: "... what is called 'low' [C1] contextualization may, in fact, not be contextualization at all, but an expression of ethnocentric extractionism" (2006:103).

17. Tennent continues, "... what is called 'high' [C5] contextualization may not be contextualization at all, but an expression of syncretism" (2006:103).

18. Quite recently, Dixon gave this corroboration: "At a glance, we see that the C1-C6 Spectrum is divided in a linear manner and compartmentalized. The original model was set up in a horizontal mode whereas this later version is vertical. The last publication of this model

in *Appropriate Christianity* [Kraft 2005] returns to the linear model. However, the principle is the same. This trait gives away the fact that this is a western philosophical model laid over non-western phenomena" (2009:9; italics in original).

19. Father Bevans' conclusion on this is based from his understanding of how Nida's original diagram was reworked to become the "three-culture model of contextualization" (Hesselgrave and Rommen 1989:200).

20. While I disagree with Dixon regarding C2, Tennent corroborates his overall analysis: "This particular use of the word 'contextualization' is rather broad, referring to various ways groups have rejected or accommodated or embraced the particularities of a local context. In this general usage one could have 'good' contextualization and 'bad' contextualization..." (2006:103).

21. In juxtaposition, C6 (secret) believers do not truly belong anywhere on the linear Spectrum (only, as the 'hub' of the circular diagram) because they do not truly constitute a Christ-centered community (since they are individually secretive). At any given point in their faith-walk, however, they can choose to join any of the other "C" types according to the degree in which they want to come out of their secrecy and express their faith. Likewise, it is also possible that MBBs within C2-C4 expressions can retreat into (or float in and out of) C6 for various reasons; hence, the double-ended arrows in Figure 4 between those "C" choices.

22. Dixon relates the story: "In 1987, a new alleged harmony of the gospels was produced for Muslim readers. This book is a diglot with opposing pages printed in Arabic and English. It is a very important example of the C5 group's effort to *retheologize* the Son of God for the Muslim reader. Some C5 Bible translators have felt the need to shade the meaning of certain Greek terms such as Lord and Son of God so that those of other faiths will be more open to considering the claims of Christ" (2009:15; italics in original).

23. "The Old Testament speaks forcefully to the subject of syncretism. The people of Israel seemed so fickle in their obedience to Jehovah. Even while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law, the children of Israel were in the process of 'adding to' their God-given revelations. The idea of a golden calf seemed so attractive. It was something tangible to which people could attach their devotion. Repeatedly in the Old Testament the Jews were engaged in 'running after other gods.' As a result, the children of Israel frequently received rebuke and judgment from God" (Parshall 2003:55).

24. Abdul Asad, a practitioner who sees C5 as an "appropriate" means for transition to C4 or C3, concurs: "The end goal of 'Syncretistic C5' is unclear, and thus leaves open dangerous possibilities such as syncretism or Churchless Christianity" (2009:157).

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