



In response to "Compass, Telescope & Tour Guide: Lessons Learned in Student Mobilization," by Claude Hickman (May-June 2006):

While Mr. Hickman's intent may have been good, his comments regarding InterVarsity's Urbana Student Mission Convention (May-June 2006 issue) were both misinformed and circular.

Mr. Hickman overstates the number of exhibiting agencies at Urbana (200-300, as opposed to the 800 he claims); he furthermore conflates Urbana and the Urbana exhibits area. Correctly observing that true mobilization occurs in a context of teaching, community and follow-up, he closes his eyes to the bulk of Urbana's program – the teaching, the small-groups, and the in-depth follow-up programs. If Urbana were no more than a missions bazaar, he would be fair in his critique, and fair in describing his ministry's alternative approach. As it is, however, his argument seems less than charitable.

Furthermore, Mr. Hickman's critique hinges on a rhetorical distinction between "maps" and "compasses," which he defines as "plastic bags of options," and principles for discernment, respectively. Never mind that Urbana's program assumes the same pedagogy as Mr. Hickman – that spiritual transformation drives mobilization.

After a few more negative comments in general about hype, agendas, and "cool" advertising, along with an implied claim to special insider knowledge about this generation, Mr. Hickman returns to advocating choices, advising principled students to explore several options among mission agencies before heading overseas.

Praise God that he continues to call students into missions. Let us watch and be amazed at what

he will do through this generation of students, and through this year's Urbana 06 convention.

Jim Tebbe
Vice President for Missions and
Director, Urbana 06
InterVarsity Christian
Fellowship/USA

In response to "The Uncertain Future of Missions?" (March-April 2006):

Dear Dr. Winter,

After recognizing the plight of the "saved" Waodani, in the editorial comment article of your March-April issue of *Missions Frontiers* you asked, "To what extent can mission agencies be of help at this stage? To what extent is mission strategy supposed to deal with questions like this?"

The answer is simply part of the Great Commission, "training them to do all that I commanded you." One of the things Jesus commanded His apostles to do was to bring *shalom* to every house that received them. In the Older Testament, *shalom* means welfare and prosperity more often than it does tranquility and contentment. The Abrahamic covenant, which includes material blessings, now belongs to all who believe in Jesus (Gal 3:14), including the Waodani. Any believer of the Proverbs knows that putting into practice the wisdom and fear of the Lord brings health, wealth, and strong extended families, *shalom*, in other words....

In other words, the gospel we are charged to carry includes more than the message of eternal salvation. It includes how to be more than conquerors in this life. It is what wise old Gikita asked Steve Saint to do on page 22 of *The End of The Spear*, "...come and teach the young people how to live well."

Dr. Steve Kobernik, Founder
Schools of Ministry International
Association

Reply from Ralph Winter:

Perhaps my point will be clearer in my editorial in this issue, namely, that it is not enough for individuals to be saved, or "to come into material blessings," "to be more than conquerors," "to live well," etc.. The Great Commission means a lot more: "to be taught to obey what Jesus commanded." This is what is meant in the Lord's prayer for "His Kingdom to come and His will be done *on earth*." Individual salvation in the fullest sense is basic but merely basic to conducting His war to "destroy the works of the Devil (1 Jn 3:8)." For example, did Satan push the Waodani into a virtually uninhabitable wilderness?

In response to September-October 2005 and January-February 2006 emphases on insider movements, including John and Anna Travis' "Maximizing the Bible: Glimpses From Our Context"

Greg Parsons,

I wanted to thank you and Dr. Winter for your accurate analysis of the intent of the discussions on "insider movements" and "churchless Christianity" in the January-February issue of *MF*. These are not movements that we invented or promoted. They sprung up from among the people themselves. We of the "Jerusalem church," then, must do all we can to prevent the "Judaizers" from our midst to go out and – in mistaken sincerity – "[quench] the Spirit" among these new believers. We need to serve as "Pauls" who adamantly defend and affirm what God is doing among them,

thereby having the credibility among the new believers also when we seek to guide and correct them in the Lord.

Herbert Hoefler, Mission Director for India and Sri Lanka, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

John Travis comments further:

After the recent publishing of the article “Maximizing the Bible”, I met with a group of colleagues on [my field of service] to discuss recent and forthcoming articles on contextualized ministry. One outcome of our meeting was the suggestion that I write a letter to [*Mission Frontiers*] adding and clarifying several points related to the “Maximizing the Bible” article which was written by my wife and me. The aim of this letter is to address three issues: the growing non-C5 ministry happening in the people group where I work, the use of the term “insider”, and my article’s closing comment in which I referred to “the largest movement to Christ among Muslims in the world today.”

In the people group mentioned in the article, there is a steady number of people coming to faith who are joining or forming congregations which would be C1-C4 on the continuum. (Note: this C1-C6 nomenclature is simply a heuristic device used to describe types of “Christ-centered communities” in terms of language, culture and religious identity). One of my colleagues is a consultant for C3 work, and he reported that while none of us has yet seen a people movement among this people group, the C3 and C4 groups are seeing a remarkable 8-12% numerical growth rate per year, something which is truly wonderful!

These C3-type congregations emphasize the non-Islamic cultural and social elements found in the context. Even though an attempt is generally made in Islam to fuse religion and culture, in this context (and many others), there are cultural and social forms which can continue to be used by followers of Jesus who want to identify with the local culture (C3), and use even Islamic terminology (C4), but not identify with Islam itself. These cultural forms include

certain types of local ethnic music, dance, art, fashion, folklore, and social customs, as well as certain modes of leadership, inheritance, kinship structure and economic activity.

The C3 groups in question have done a very excellent job of trying to build congregations using as many of these cultural and social patterns as possible. They have taken seriously the goal of contextualizing the Gospel to as many arenas of life as possible (e.g. leadership patterns, art and music, language). This type of work is happening both among Protestant and Catholic groups. Some of the music forms they have developed have even been presented on national television. They also enjoy the support of many local churches.

The contextualized nature of these C3 groups raises the second point I wish to address, that being the use of the term “insider.” For several years, as far as I know, this term has been used interchangeably with C5. This has been due to the perception that to really be seen as “one of us” in cultures that are close to 100% Muslim, one would need to be a Muslim.

For the past two years, however, I have begun to see people use the term “insider” in a broader sense. In this broader sense, one may change religions, but through a concerted effort to remain culturally and socially a part of the predominant Islamic culture, one can still remain a part of the community from which one heralds. This is usually not easy for a convert from Islam, and would involve the maintaining of close ties with family networks, efforts to live (as much as possible) a non-offensive lifestyle (e.g., dressing modestly, not eating pork, not keeping a dog, etc.) as well as participating in community work and play. I have known Christians of Muslim background who have done this.

By definition, C3 and C4 Christ-centered communities are attempts to stay and witness within one’s community of birth: in other words, to remain an “insider.” Therefore,

perhaps we need to find a better term like “cultural insider” (for C3 and C4) and “religious” or “socio-religious” insider to describe C5. Whatever the case, since “outsider” sounds negative and dismissing and may not in many cases reflect the reality of a Christian of Muslim background still living in his community, perhaps it is time we look for a new set of terms.

The final point concerns my statement that the largest movement to Christ today among Muslims is C5 in nature, occurring in a particular Asian country. I was referring to a movement of God that I have tried to follow over the past ten years. However, for two reasons I wish to withdraw my statements concerning its size. The first reason is that counting new followers of Christ (especially if findings are published!), could endanger lives by bringing undue attention from people who would oppose it.

Secondly, a C5 movement by its very nature is very difficult to count. When many come to faith in numerous locations at the same time, only the Lord knows the real size of the movement. In addition, in a C5 situation, new believers dress, speak, and appear culturally similar to the surrounding pre-Jesus Muslims, further making any form of “counting” quite difficult. (Note: in contrast to this, in our context, C3, and even C4 congregations, can often be more easily counted, especially if they have contact with supporting local churches who could reasonably ask their church planters to keep records.)

Therefore, please let me revise my statement and say that at least there is a significant turning to Christ in a C5 way in one part of Asia, and there are a number of other movements happening as well (that are more C3 and C4 in character) in other parts of the world. 🌐

Letters to the editor should be addressed to mission.frontiers@uscwm.org