

COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

MUSLIM IDIOM TRANSLATION:
ASSESSING SO-CALLED SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION
FOR MUSLIM AUDIENCES WITH A LOOK INTO ITS ORIGINS
IN EUGENE A. NIDA'S THEORIES OF
DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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Thesis Abstract

Muslim Idiom Translation (MIT) refers to an increasingly common "approach" to so-called Scripture translation for Muslim audiences. Its usage among professing evangelicals involved in missions to Muslims continues to increase in spite of the fact that some of its most distinguishing features are at odds with historic, biblical orthodoxy. Although MIT has been around for close to three decades, there is great need for a critical look at this phenomenon.

This thesis consists of six chapters and two appendixes. Chapters 1-2 consist of an introduction of the topic, the impetus for writing the thesis, and a review of literature relevant to MIT. Chapter 3 provides an overview of MIT including its defining criteria, premises, origins, and current status. Chapter 4 looks at seven versions of MIT in three different languages: Arabic, Balochi (or, Baluchi), and Bengali (or Bangla). Comprehensive charts are given showing how each of these versions render the following key, biblical terminology: Father, Son, Son of God, and Son of Man. Background summaries for and selected use of Islamic terminology within these versions are also included.

Chapter 5 is an overview of the life of Dr. Eugene A. Nida. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the major influences within his life and to show how the influence of his theory of Dynamic Equivalence (DE) results in MIT. Original, biographical research is presented about his life, the implications of which extend beyond the scope of this thesis. It is hoped that this will spur a much more comprehensive, critical look at the man most responsible behind the thinking that has come to typify so many professing evangelicals regarding Scripture translation and missions since at least the 1960s.

Chapter 6 presents the author's conclusions, including suggestions to counter the growth of MIT. Appendix A is a list of some of the author's online charts. Appendix B ("Are 'Father' and 'Son' Terminology Metaphors?") argues from the Bible that "Father" and "Son" terminology are NOT metaphorical. There is a fourteen-page bibliography that includes, where known, various pseudonyms for those authors who employed them.

There is a decided emphasis in this thesis to engage with primary sources. The author has relied on both "official back translations" of the seven MIT versions and his own translations of some of the Arabic versions. Numerous writings and lectures of Nida have been consulted. For both of these subjects great use has been made of unpublished materials and personal correspondence.

This critique is primarily beneficial for professing evangelicals involved in missions to Muslims. Through this study, the reader will be able to recognize what constitutes MIT. It will help the reader to determine if MIT faithfully translates the Gospel message and if MIT is consistent with the belief in the divine inspiration of Scripture. The reader will thus be equipped to make informed decisions regarding conscious participation in MIT rather than relegated, as is too often the case, to being an unwitting participant.

Finally, those who stand to be most affected by MIT are Muslims, many of whom have no prior knowledge of Scripture nor have the means or ability to adequately assess a given MIT against the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek of the earliest biblical manuscripts. It is the author's desire that through this thesis, professing evangelicals will commit themselves to providing Muslims with God's Word instead of depriving it to them because of a faulty philosophy (i.e. the cultural relativism of DE) applied to translation and missions.

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Abbreviations

ABC	American Baptist Churches (see ABCUSA, NBC)
ABCUSA	American Baptist Churches USA (see ABC, NBC)
ABS	American Bible Society
A/G	Assemblies of God
C5	Professing believers in Jesus who retain a Muslim identity (see IM and C5/IM)
C5/IM	Insider Movements for Muslims (see C5 and IM)
COD	Church of the Open Door
CT	Christianity Today
EMQ	Evangelical Missions Quarterly
ETEN	Every Tribe Every Nation
FOBAI	Forum of Bible Agencies International
GNB	Good News Bible (see GNT and TEV)
GNT	Good News Translation (see GNB and TEV)
IJFM	International Journal of Frontier Missiology (formerly, International Journal of Frontier Missions)
IM	Insider Movements (see C5 and C5/IM)
LoP	The Lives of the Prophets (see LoP/SoP and SoP)
LoP/SoP	The Lives of the Prophets/The Stories of the Prophets
MIT	Muslim Idiom Translation
MF	Mission Frontiers
NBC	Northern Baptist Convention (see ABC and ABCUSA)
PCA	Presbyterian Church in America
PA	Practical Anthropology
SAM	Sīrat Al-Masīh (or, Sirat Al-Masih)
SIL	SIL International, formerly the Summer Institute of Linguistics (see WBT and WBT-SIL)
SoP	The Stories of the Prophets (see LoP and LoP/SoP)
TAPOT	The Theory and Practice of Translation (by Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber)
TASOT	Toward a Science of Translating: with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating (by Eugene A. Nida)
TAV	Today's Arabic Version
TBT	The Bible Translator
TEV	Today's English Version (see GNB and GNT)
UBS	United Bible Societies
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
USC	University of Southern California
WBT	Wycliffe Bible Translators (see WBT-SIL and SIL)
WBT-SIL	see WBT and SIL
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance
VP	Versión Popular

Chapter 1

Introduction

Muslim Idiom Translation (MIT), though neither a widely-known nor universally recognized term, refers to an increasingly common "approach" to so-called Scripture translation for Muslim audiences. Its usage among professing evangelicals involved in missions to Muslims continues to increase in spite of the fact that some of its most distinguishing features are at odds with historic, biblical orthodoxy. For this reason, MIT has often been shrouded in secrecy by its proponents yet embroiled in controversy when openly addressed.¹

The impetus for this thesis is rooted in a number of personal experiences which have primarily taken place in the context of ministry to Arabic-speaking Muslims in Dearborn, Michigan (USA).² What at first seemed to me to be disparate events was later found to be an interconnected labyrinth of missiologists, missionaries, ministers, and laypeople, involving professing evangelicals advocating by word and deed, beliefs and practices contrary to the biblical teachings of the inspiration of Scripture and missions.³

During the years, 2000-2007, I participated in local distributions of the Arabic "Baghdadi" version of *The Lives of the Prophets/The Stories of the Prophets* (LoP/SoP),⁴ an audio series produced by Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT)⁵ through its "affiliate" organization,

¹ E.g. the online petition, "Lost in Translation: Keep Father and Son in the Bible," and the "Report To World Evangelical Alliance For Conveyance To Wycliffe Global Alliance And SIL International" [or, WEA Report], both of which are addressed in Chapter Two.

² The author is an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God (A/G) and serves as a missionary with the Assemblies of God US Missions (AGUSM).

³ i.e. evangelism, conversion, and discipleship. See Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:4-8.

⁴ سلسلة قصص الأنبياء باللهجة البغدادية (silsilat qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' bī al-lahjah al-baghdādīyah). This series was originally entitled in English, *The Lives of the Prophets*. See Rick Brown, "Selecting and Using Scripture Portions Effectively in Frontier Missions," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 19:2 (Summer 2002): 10-25, in passim.

⁵ "Our History," accessed Apr. 18, 2014. <http://www.wycliffe.org/About/OurHistory.aspx>: "By 1942, 'Camp Wycliffe' had grown into two affiliate organizations, Wycliffe Bible Translators and the [Summer Institute of Linguistics](#) (SIL)."

SIL International (SIL), formerly the Summer Institute of Linguistics.⁶ LoP/SoP consists of audio vignettes of ten major figures from the Old Testament. It climaxes with an account of Jesus' life and teaching, almost entirely based on the Gospel of Luke.⁷ Along with a number of colleagues, I was under the impression that LoP/SoP was just a culturally-sensitive evangelistic tool for Arabic-speaking Muslims that avoided using the phrase, "Son of God," in reference to Jesus. To the best of my knowledge, neither I nor any of my colleagues - with the exception of the local WBT-SIL missionary - were aware that we were distributing what WBT-SIL considers "an audio panoramic Bible"⁸ until late 2006. We were also unaware that *all* divine familial language (i.e. "Father," "Son," and "Son of God") in this particular "translation" is *never* literally rendered from the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.⁹ I would later understand that this audio series was but one example of MIT, an "approach" involving not only WBT-SIL but other reputed evangelical organizations.

In spite of my growing awareness of MIT, it was not until the summer of 2008 that I began to realize that MIT was connected to "C5"¹⁰ or "Insider Movements" (IM) for Muslims.¹¹ Both of these terms refer to the idea that biblical faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can be maintained

⁶ See "Our History," accessed Apr. 18, 2014, <http://www.sil.org/about/history>: "SIL International (then known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics) came into being in 1934 as a summer training program in Arkansas, USA, with two students attending."

⁷ "Story of Jesus Son of Miriam: A translation from Cibag to English (Version #1a)," unpublished document from Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL, received Nov. 30, 2006, p. 1 ("The following story is based on the Jesus Film script and therefore there are some verses taken out of context and some verses link together which shouldn't be linked together exegetically").

⁸ Rick Brown, "The Lives of the Prophets: An Audio Panoramic Bible For the 10/40 Window," unpublished document (PowerPoint, February 11, 2004), slide 1.

⁹ The employment of non-literal renderings for divine familial language are by no means the only alterations made to this "audio panoramic Bible." For instance, the *entire* fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke is omitted, thus depriving its intended Muslim audience the presentation of the Gospel through the three parables that make up this chapter, most notably the well-known parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).

¹⁰ See John Travis, "The C1 TO C6 Spectrum: A Practical Tool for Defining Six Types of 'Christ-centered Communities' ('C') Found in the Muslim Context," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (October 1998): 407-408.

¹¹ For example, see my review of *Pilgrims of Christ on the Muslim Road: Exploring a New Path Between Two Faiths*, by Paul-Gordon Chandler (http://www.answering-islam.org/reviews/chandler_mallouhi.html, accessed May 28, 2014).

along with a Muslim identity.¹² C5/IM teaches that a "believer" in Jesus can hold to *any* of the tenets of Islam and engage in *any* of its practices - including the confession of Muhammad as a prophet.¹³ This has led to such loaded terminology as "Messianic Muslims,"¹⁴ "Muslim follower of Jesus,"¹⁵ and "Muslim follower of Christ"¹⁶ (which some have adopted seemingly unaware of their origin). Such thinking has also birthed the notion of "Kingdom Circles" in which the "Kingdom of God" is redefined from its biblical usage in the attempt to circumvent identifying a "Muslim Background Believer" (MBB)¹⁷ as a "Christian."¹⁸

¹² See Becky Lewis, "Promoting Movements to Christ Within Natural Communities," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 75-76 ("An 'insider movement' is any movement to faith in Christ where a) the gospel flows through pre-existing communities and social networks, and where b) believing families, as valid expressions of faith in Christ, remain inside their socioreligious communities, retaining their identity as members of that community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible... 'insider movements' can take place within any socioreligious context... such as Islamic..."); cf. H.L. Richard, moderator, in commenting on Lewis' definition in "Unpacking the Insider Paradigm: An Open Discussion on Points of Diversity," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 26, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 176 ("You follow Jesus as a Hindu, as a Muslim, as a Buddhist, or as whatever other variety of socio-religious community you might be from."); Joshua Massey, "God's Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17, no. 1 (January-March 2000): 7 ("C5 is much like C4 with the primary difference being self-identity. Whereas C4 believers identify themselves as 'followers of Isa,' C5 believers identify themselves as 'Muslim followers of Jesus'—much like Messianic Jews calling themselves 'Jewish followers of Jesus.'").

¹³ This is not to imply that C5/IM teaches that such a person must follow *all* of the beliefs and practices of Islam. C5/IM advocates differ among themselves as to what aspects of Islam are acceptable for a "believer." What is agreed upon, however, is the retention of a Muslim identity. Regardless of arguments to the contrary, "Muslim," implies an acceptance of the *shahāda*, or Islamic confession of faith: "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his messenger/apostle." According to Islamic teaching, this means that Muhammad is the "Seal of the prophets," that is, the final prophet sent into the world whose message is binding on all of humanity.

¹⁴ See Phil Goble and Salim Munayer, *New Creation Book For Muslims* (Pasadena, Calif.: Mandate Press, 1989); cf. Travis, "The C1 TO C6 Spectrum," 408 ("C5: Christ-centered Communities of 'Messianic Muslims' Who Have Accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior"); John Travis, "Messianic Muslim Followers of Isa: A Closer Look at C5 Believers and Congregations," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 53-59; Charles H. Kraft, *SWM/SIS at Forty: A Participant/Observer's View of Our History* (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 2005), 274 ("The word 'Christian,' for example... is a very negative label in the Muslim world... A real breakthrough has come in winning Muslims to Christ in places where the converts are not required to call themselves by this hated name. They may call themselves 'Muslims who follow Isa,' or 'Messianic Muslims,' or 'Isa followers,' or some other name that has positive rather than negative connotations. And they are saved by following Jesus, not by wearing the name 'Christian.'").

¹⁵ See D.O. "A Jesus Movement Within Islam," *Interconnect* 5 (Jan. 1991): 15 ("When referring to conversion in our mission reports, could we not speak of 'Abdul, who is a Muslim follower of Jesus?'""); cf. 16, 19, 21).

¹⁶ See Paul Gordon Chandler, *Pilgrims of Christ On the Muslim Road: Exploring a New Path between Two Faiths* (Lanham, MD: Cowley Publications, 2007), 4, 69 ("Mazhar Mallouhi, who calls himself a 'Muslim follower of Christ'...; "groups of Muslim followers of Christ, like himself..."). On August 31, 2008, I had a conversation with Mallouhi in which I was speaking in general terms by saying, "As Christians..." Mallouhi quickly interjected to tell me that he was not a Christian but a "Muslim follower of Christ."

¹⁷ MBB is an ambiguous term. It can indicate a former Muslim who has converted to saving faith in Jesus Christ or a "Muslim follower of Christ." In what is perhaps its first appearance in a published article, it is used by a leading IM

Desiring to make sense of these developments spurred me to look into their origins. I discovered that both MIT and C5/IM come from the same source, namely, the influence of Dr. Eugene A. Nida. The application of his philosophy of "dynamic equivalence" (DE), a.k.a. "functional equivalence" (FE),¹⁹ in Scripture translation and missions has had a steady and far-reaching impact upon professing evangelicals. Due to this common source and their interrelatedness, there is much overlap between MIT and C5/IM. For the sake of maintaining the focus on MIT, however, the close relationship between Nida's teaching and C5/IM in this study will only be addressed as needed.

Why This Study?

Although MIT has been around for close to three decades, there is great need for a critical look at this phenomenon that in many instances represents the *only* "version" of Scripture to which Muslims have access. While a number of articles about MIT exist, very little has been done by way of analysis of its distinguishing features or a look into its origins. There are two

advocate, Joshua Massey [pseud.]. See his article, "Planting the Church Underground in Muslim Contexts," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 13, no. 3 (July-Sep. 1996): 150 ["The fact is that such quiet house-fellowships are often the *only* option for many Muslim background believers (MBBs) today."].

¹⁸ See Mack Harling [pseud.], "ISFM NEWS: ISFM 2005 Shakes the Rockies," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 22, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2005): 134 ("K. Gustafson of 'Common Ground' presented the kingdom of God as a more biblical and effective paradigm of mission than 'Christianity.' He offered his 'kingdom circles' as a practical and productive tool for presenting the central message of scripture—especially in light of the obstacles presented by traditional paradigms of conversion."); cf. K. Gustafson and the Common Ground Consultants, Inc. [Untitled Workbook], unpublished workbook, 2009 (see the section entitled, "Kingdom of God," pp. 1-18), a workbook used in the Common Ground conferences (<http://comgro.org/>, accessed September 3, 2015); cf. the workbook from Grace Fellowship Church, *Jesus in the Qur'an* (Snellville, GA: Grace Fellowship Church, 2008). This workbook was used in the "Jesus in the Qur'an" seminars, now called, "Jesus and the Qur'an" (<http://jaq.org/>, accessed September 2, 2015). For a critique for "Kingdom Circles," see John Span, "The Confusion of Kingdom Circles: a Clarification," in *Chrislam: How Missionaries Are Promoting an Islamized Gospel*, ed. Joshua Lingel, et. al. (Garden Grove, Calif.: i2 Ministries, Inc., 2011), 77-86.

¹⁹ Throughout this paper I will retain the earlier terminology as it is the term with which he is still most readily identified. He later abandoned this term for "functional equivalence" (FE) in 1986. Unfortunately, FE as an acronym is ambiguous as it can also refer to "formal equivalence" by which Nida described the exact opposite approach of DE or "functional equivalence."

primary factors contributing to this lack, both of which have resulted in a considerable lack of accountability to the wider evangelical world.

First, too often its proponents are not forthright about the existence of MIT. They often describe MIT in equivocal terms such as translations that are in the "heart language;"²⁰ "meaning-based;"²¹ "culturally appropriate;"²² etc. Because its distinctive features are not usually divulged it is extremely difficult - if not impossible - for those unfamiliar with MIT to know that such a production will employ any one of, or even all of the following: non-literal renderings for Father and Son terminology; words and phrases from the Quran; Islamic theological terms; and the omission of certain sections of Scripture.²³

Second, those who are aware of MIT, but not involved in either its production or distribution, have not adequately communicated this information to the wider evangelical world.

While the reasons for this vary, it is important to note that reporting on a given MIT requires

²⁰ e.g. see Rick Brown, "Like Bright Sunlight: The Benefit of Communicating in Heart Language," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 26, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 86 ("Many ministries in the 10/40 Window use a mixed form of 'local language' that is not the community's heart language at all...rejecting the people's own religious terms and names and using ones from outside their socioreligious community...rejecting their vocabulary still conveys rejection of their identity and worth... Muslims may be no more hostile or resistant than anyone else to the biblical Gospel of Jesus Christ but they are quite sensitive to rejection of their language, culture, and social identity. When presented with the biblical Gospel in their own style and vocabulary, open-minded Muslims often respond with exclamations of joy, saying "This is *our* Book!";) *ibid.*, 88, n.5 ("Unfortunately, many Bible translations are produced by and for cultural Christians, with little thought for the Scripture needs of other major cultures, such as Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc., who generally need a version of their own, in authentic heart language and style.").

²¹ e.g. see Rick Brown, "Translating the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslim Contexts, pt. II," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2005), 140 ("So some of the believers there produced an experimental edition of Mark that uses a synonym approach for the divine sonship terminology...In location B the 'Beloved' synonym was used in a translation of the New Testament... [many] people in country Z,,,objected strongly to the term 'Son of God', even with an explanation...[but] they could accept 'spiritual Son of God', along with an explanation...So far, the results of meaning-based translation have been very positive.").

²² e.g. see SIL Consultative Group for Muslim Idiom Translation, "SIL Internal Discussion Papers on MIT #2: The Relationship between Translation and Theology, version 2," unpublished working document (January 2011), no pagination, page 2 of Word doc. ("The very nature of language and the richness of cultural diversity require Scripture to communicate in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways... The process of exegesis, translation, and culturally-appropriate communication is important so that people can accept the message, and make it their own...Literal translations, that is, those that follow the structure and vocabulary of another language, may lead to serious misunderstandings. So translations should take into account the local language and culture and also address distortions in understanding coming from the local religious worldview.").

²³ These are some of the main distinctive features of MIT. It is not intended to be comprehensive.

knowledge of the language into which it has been rendered (or access to a "back translation"),²⁴ knowledge of Islamic literature and theology, and knowledge of the text in the biblical languages (or their literal translations) in order to recognize when the biblical text has been rendered by quranic or other Islamic terminology. In other words, it is normally missionaries and national believers who are aware of the features of a particular MIT while its financial supporters often remain ignorant of them.²⁵

This critique of MIT is primarily beneficial for professing evangelicals involved in missions to Muslims, whether missionaries, missions leaders, Bible translators,²⁶ missions professors, clergy, prayer and financial supporters, or laypersons who witness to Muslims. Through this study, the reader will be able to recognize what constitutes MIT. It will equip a person to make informed decisions regarding conscious participation in MIT rather than relegated, as is too often the case, to being unwitting participants.

Another reason for this study, which is of great significance for *every* professing evangelical, regardless of involvement in missions to Muslims, is the determination of whether or not MIT faithfully translates the Gospel message. From a historic, evangelical viewpoint, any

²⁴ A "back translation" refers to a fairly literal translation from a translated work into another language, primarily for non-native speakers of the language of the translation. The author utilizes three such "back translations" for this paper: LoP/SoP Baghdadi (Arabic), Bengali Gospel of Mark, and the Balochi NT. The author could have provided his own translation of the Baghdadi but chose to use it as it is from WBT-SIL who produced it.

²⁵ To the best of this author's knowledge, there is not a single version of MIT that does not involve Western personnel and their funds regardless of the participation level of native speakers involved in such a production. An extremely illustrative example of this was the role that David Harriman played in Mazhar Mallouhi's, "The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ," a MIT of the four Gospels and the book of Acts: "As Chief Development Officer for Frontiers, I was responsible for the fundraising effort that raised nearly \$215,000 for the True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, a new Arabic translation of the Gospels and Acts, with companion commentary, led by a Middle Eastern member of Frontiers [i.e. <https://www.frontiersusa.org/>]. Because the salient and distinguishing features of this translation — the removal of all instances of "Father" in relation to God, the selective removal of "Son" in relation to Jesus Christ, and the effective redefinition of "Son of God" by the insertion of qualifying, parenthetical statements within the text — were not disclosed to me, this information was withheld from the nearly 600 donors who funded this translation, and the thousands more who were solicited. This is an explicit violation of ECFA Standard 7:1, which requires "complete" and "accurate" information in donor solicitation (<http://www.ecfa.org/content/comment71>).", David Harriman, email message to author, September 8, 2015.

²⁶ This term is here used synonymously for "Scripture translators." Though "Bible translators" is a common designation, it can be misleading as some such translators only focus on translating certain parts of the Bible such as just the New Testament.

teaching incompatible with the Gospel message, much less the rendering of Scripture, ceases to be evangelical. This study will help the reader determine if MIT is properly evangelical.

Another related determination that needs to be made is whether or not MIT is consistent with belief in the divine inspiration of Scripture. Since it is claimed that MIT is Scripture translation, by necessity one must consider if its distinctive features are in keeping with biblical views of epistemology and language to maintain evangelical integrity. As with the previous determination, this study will help one to make a biblical assessment in this matter.

A final consideration regarding the need for this study is in order. Translations of Scripture effectively lay the foundation for evangelism and discipleship because they provide the terminology used in both endeavors. With regard to MIT, those who stand to be most affected by it are Muslims. Many of them have no prior knowledge of Scripture nor have the means or ability to adequately assess a given MIT against the original languages of the earliest biblical manuscripts. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to state that this study has value, not only for the entire Church but major ramifications for those outside of it!

Research Problem and Related Questions

I propose in this thesis that the origins of MIT are found in the influence of the late Dr. Eugene A. Nida. As the "father" of the "dynamic equivalence" (DE) theory of translation and one of the leading pioneers of the use of cultural anthropology for Christian missions, it is the author's conviction that only through understanding Nida's views of epistemology, language, translation, and missions that one will be able to fully appreciate the principles upon which MIT is predicated and subject it to proper biblical analysis.

In considering the origins of MIT, this study will answer the following questions: What constitutes "Muslim Idiom Translation" (MIT)? What did Nida teach regarding translation and cultural anthropology? How are Nida's teachings related to MIT?

Scope, Limitations, and Definitions

The answers to the three research questions stated above provide the scope for this thesis. The first answer will consist in providing an overview of MIT - its rationale, defining features, and history, followed by an analysis of specific word choices from selected versions. The second answer will provide an overview of Nida's life and influence, highlighting the major influences in his thinking regarding translation and culture; the content of his teaching in these two areas; and an analysis of his premises in both of these areas in light of the Bible's teaching. The third answer will consist in showing the relationship between the first two answers. By looking at various statements that Nida made about "Father" and "Son" terminology and translations for Muslims, the connection between MIT and his teachings regarding translation and cultural anthropology become apparent.

There are some decided limitations to this study. As previously noted, the use of MIT as a descriptor is not universally recognized. Various terms have been used throughout the years to describe so-called Scripture translations for Muslim audiences. Even those who introduced²⁷ the term, "MIT," have not exclusively used this term.²⁸ The decision to use this term, however, is

²⁷ To the best of the author's knowledge it first appeared in Rick Brown, John Penny, and Leith Gray, "Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations: Claims And Facts." *St. Francis Magazine* (5:6 December 2009): 87-105. MIT has also been used by WBT-SIL to describe "translations for Muslim audiences" of whom both Brown and Gray (a pseudonym) are members.

²⁸ See L.D. Waterman, "Insider Movements: Current Issues in Discussion," *Evangelical Review of Theology* [ERT] 37, no. 4 (October 2013): 302 ("The phrase, 'Muslim Idiom Translation' (MIT), was used for a time within Wycliffe and SIL to describe translations done with an Islamic readership in mind."); cf. SIL Consultative Group for Muslim Idiom Translation, "SIL Internal Discussion Papers on MIT #1: A Typology of Bible Translations for Muslim

based on the following considerations: "MIT" comes from leading advocates of this "approach" and is not, as some may think, a mischaracterization or a pejorative description. "MIT" also best expresses the underlying philosophical premises behind this "approach" not readily apparent in synonymous terminology.

Another limitation to this study is that it does not provide a comprehensive treatment of MIT. A greater number of versions exist for MIT than the seven which have been included in this study. Of these versions three different languages are represented, five of which are in some form of written or spoken Arabic.²⁹ While the emphasis on Arabic may be considered a further limitation, there are two important advantages to be gained from this. First, some of the Arabic versions have been used as "source" documents for MIT in other languages of which one of them has arguably given rise to this entire phenomenon.³⁰ Second, comparing key wordings of multiple versions within the same language reveals important features about MIT that may not be readily apparent when comparing these same wordings in different languages. This is especially true when word choices in non-Arabic language versions have been taken directly from or influenced by an Arabic MIT.

A further limitation arising from the scope of this study is its focus on particular aspects of Nida's life and teachings. Nida's influence upon Bible translation, linguistics, and missions is so great that any limited treatment of his life can leave the reader failing to adequately appreciate the extent of his influence as well as him as a person. Notwithstanding the limitation of focusing on the relationship of Nida's teaching to MIT, the author presents some original biographical

Audiences, version 2," Unpublished working document (January 2011), where "MIT" is also described as "Transformational Translation."

²⁹ The primary reason for the preponderance of Arabic is because the author can read and understand Arabic. His initial and continued exposure to MIT has come through ministry to Muslims. In no way has his concern over this issue merely been an "academic" exercise. Even if his concern were purely "academic," the issues raised by MIT are so important in light of the teaching of the Bible that any such concern would be fully justified.

³⁰ i.e. Sirat Al-Masih (SAM).

research and critique that will help contribute to formulating a clearer picture about the "father" of DE that extends beyond the scope of this thesis.

The following is a list of key terms used throughout this thesis:

- C5: "Christ-centered Communities of 'Messianic Muslims' who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior...C5 believers are viewed as Muslims by the Muslim community and refer to themselves as Muslims who follow Isa [i.e. Jesus] the Messiah."³¹
- Dynamic Equivalence (DE): quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the RESPONSE of the RECEPTOR is essentially like that of the original receptors. Frequently, the form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful. The opposite principal is FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE.³²
- Insider Movements (IM): "An 'insider movement' is any movement to faith in Christ where a) the gospel flows through pre-existing communities and social networks, and where b) believing families, as valid expressions of faith in Christ, remain inside their socioreligious communities, retaining their identity as members of that community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible."³³
- Muslim idiom translation (MIT): "Translations contextualised for M[uslim] people groups in a way which communicates best to them but often not to Western Christians or even traditional churches in the area..."³⁴

Research Methodology

There is a decided emphasis in this thesis to engage with primary sources. Use will be made of published documents and writings (including that of the author),³⁵ unpublished documents and writings, and personal correspondence involving a number of individuals. In

³¹ Travis, *The C1 TO C6 Spectrum*: 408.

³² Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill; and New York: United Bible Societies, 1969), 200. This is the most precise definition given by Nida for DE even though he had introduced the term prior to this publication.

³³ Lewis, "Promoting Movements," 75.

³⁴ Andy Clark, "Exploring Muslim Idiom Translation," unpublished document (PowerPoint, IALPC [i.e. International and Area Language Program Consultation] 2011), slide 7.

³⁵ This includes articles and charts posted on the internet.

addition to printed materials, this study will also draw upon both audio and audio-visual productions. Secondary sources will be used in a complementary way.

The seven versions of MIT that will be analyzed in this study rely upon "back translations" into English, some of which are from those involved in their productions and some of which are from the author's own translations. The primary materials for Nida consist of his books, articles, personal correspondence, lectures, and the transcript of an oral interview.

In closing this section, the author would like to notify the reader that some of the bibliographic resources are digitized reproductions which lack the original pagination. This is indicated in the footnotes and bibliography as an "unpublished working document."

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This review of literature on MIT will be categorized in the following three ways: advocacy, analysis, and controversy. These categorizations are treated as guidelines rather than precise classifications. The author recognizes that some of the literature could easily be placed within at least two of these categories, and in some cases, all three. In spite of this deficiency, these categories provide helpful parameters for providing an overview of MIT. Limitations of space will only allow for brief treatments or their mention. Some of this literature will be referenced in subsequent sections of this paper.

Several writings by David Owen, a former American missionary to the Middle East who studied at Fuller Theological Seminary³⁶ in the 1970s,³⁷ begin the category for the advocacy of MIT. From 1986-1988, Owen wrote several articles for *Seedbed*, then a publication of Arab World Ministries (AWM).³⁸ The first of these articles, "Project Sunrise,"³⁹ introduced his seminal work in the Arabic language that would eventually be entitled, *Sīrat Al-Masīh* (SAM). It

³⁶ <http://fuller.edu/>.

³⁷ Anonymous, "Sira to Sabiil History," in folder, "Sirah-Sabeel," in folder, "Arabic translation of scriptures," in folder, "Jesus in the Koran," unpublished working document (January 16, 2006) in unlabeled CD-Rom distributed by Jeff Hayes at the Common Ground Conference, January 21-24th, 2008, at Central Christian Church (Central Mesa Campus), 933 N Lindsay Rd, Mesa, AZ 85213: ("David is from Durham North Carolina, adopted son of an electrical engineering professor at Duke. Blackstone Presbyterian Church supported him and his wife Sara and their three children throughout the project. David was a Fuller student in the late 70's. He heard about contextualization and decided to attend mosque and acquire an insider understanding of Islam."). The time frame for Owen's attendance at Fuller Theological Seminary seems to be mistaken in the source just quoted. Owen wrote that he pursued "theological studies" in "southern California" from 1973-1976 which included one year in Amman, Jordan; was in Durham, North Carolina from 1977-1978, and Abu Dis, a village in the West Bank from 1979-1981. See David Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report* (Larnaca, Cyprus: unknown. September 1987), 11.

³⁸ *Seedbed* now continues as a publication of the missions organization, Pioneers (<http://www.pioneers.org/>).

³⁹ David Owen, "Project Sunrise," *Seedbed* I, no. 4 (1986): unpublished working document (February 18, 2014).

was often abbreviated as "Sira" or "Sirat," and is known in English as "The Life of Messiah" (or, The Life of Christ).⁴⁰

The second of these articles, "Project Sunrise: Principles, Description and Terminology,"⁴¹ was condensed from the longer publication, *Project Sunrise Publication Report*.⁴² In both the condensed article and complete publication, Owen revealed the rationale behind SAM, which he described as a "contextualized Bible translation for the Muslim Arab world...[using] Islamic theological terminology coupled with a high level of literary Arabic...The goal [being] a dynamically equivalent presentation of Scripture...[as opposed to] more literal translations."⁴³ In the complete publication SAM was further described as "a radically new approach to Arabic Bible translation."⁴⁴ Another article in *Interconnect*, published several years later, expanded upon Owen's rationale in, "A Jesus Movement Within Islam," albeit without reference to SAM.⁴⁵

Two important points are to be noted. First, Owen delineated what would come to be known as C5/IM. This includes his belief in the inseparable connection between "Islamic-styled Bible translations"⁴⁶ (i.e. MIT), and "a movement for Jesus inside Islam"⁴⁷ (i.e. C5/IM). Second, SAM is, for all practical considerations, the first MIT which was one of Owen's desires:

One of our hopes is that Project Sunrise [i.e. SAM] will stimulate a new movement of Bible translation making use of Islamic-styled Arabic of literary quality in which each piece of work will build on the efforts of the previous one.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Anonymous, *The Life of the Messiah = (Sirat Al-Masīh): In Classical Arabic with English Translation* (Atlanta, GA: Global Publications, 1992).

⁴¹ David Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles, Description and Terminology," *Seedbed II*, no. 2 (1987): unpublished working document (February 18, 2014).

⁴² Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report*.

⁴³ Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles."

⁴⁴ Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report*, 11.

⁴⁵ O., "A Jesus Movement," 12-27. See next chapter for its role in the origins of MIT.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁷ Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles, Description and Terminology."

⁴⁸ Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles."

While SAM is not the first attempt to employ Islamic terminology in so-called Scripture translation, it was a pioneering effort based on original thinking and research that has since been directly translated into other languages or helped influence other such productions.⁴⁹ In similar fashion, Owen's arguments for "a movement for Jesus inside Islam," have been taken up by proponents of C5/IM. For both MIT and C5/IM, Owen was truly a pioneer.

The most well-known sources for writings advocating for MIT are found in two publications of Frontier Ventures (FV), a new entity created out of the merger of The Frontier Mission Fellowship and U.S. Center for World Mission, both of which were founded by the late Dr. Ralph Winter.⁵⁰ They are the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*⁵¹ (formerly, *International Journal of Frontier Missions*), both of which use the same acronym, IJFM, and *Mission Frontiers* (MF).⁵²

The majority of these articles have been written by Rick Brown,⁵³ a member of WBT-SIL since 1973.⁵⁴ In addition to being a contributing author to IJFM, Brown has also been a consulting editor for it since 2007,⁵⁵ coinciding with its aforementioned name change.⁵⁶

Between 2000-2011, Brown authored and co-authored some very significant articles for IJFM

⁴⁹See next chapter for more information about SAM's reproduction into other languages.

⁵⁰<https://www.frontierventures.org/>. See "Press Release," Frontier Ventures, last modified March 2015, accessed September 12, 2015, https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.frontierventures.org/pdf/Frontier-Ventures-Press-Release-3_2015.pdf.

⁵¹<http://ijfm.org/>.

⁵²<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/>.

⁵³Rick Brown is a variation of the name, Darrell Richard Brown. He has also published under Darrell Richard Brown, D. Richard Brown, Richard Brown, Rich Brown, Rick B., and presumably, R.B.

⁵⁴See Jonathan E. Arensen and D. Richard Brown, "Objectives and Priorities in Bible Translation," *Notes On Translation* 1, no. 113 (1986): 1 ["Richard (Rich) Brown completed a B.S. in Physics and an M.Div. in Exegetical Studies both at Duke University. He has completed course work towards a doctorate in linguistics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He and his wife, Lenore, joined SIL in 1973 and have been working with the Kresh language project in Sudan. Rich serves the Branch as a consultant in translation, linguistics, literacy, and computing."]; cf. <http://www.sil.org/biography/richard-brown>.

⁵⁵Ralph D. Winter, "From the Editor's Desk," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, 24, no. 1 (January-March 2007): 3, accessed September 12, 2015, http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/24_1_PDFs/Editorial.pdf. See under "Consulting Editors," on the side bar on the right-hand side of the page.

⁵⁶IJFM Editorial Staff, "The New IJFM and ISFM 2006—Atlanta," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, 24, no. 1 (January-March 2007): 4, accessed September 12, 2015, http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/24_1_PDFs/Editorial.pdf.

that promote and defend MIT (as well as C5/IM).⁵⁷ Beginning with his article, "The 'Son of God': Understanding the Messianic Titles of Jesus,"⁵⁸ Brown soon gained a reputation as one of the greatest advocates for non-literal renderings for "Son" and "Son of God" in so-called Scripture translations for Muslims.⁵⁹ In none of these articles are Brown's roles within WBT-SIL, nor his participation in their production and distribution of LoP/SoP, their "audio panoramic Bible," which employ non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology disclosed.

Another major advocate for MIT is the pseudonymous, "Leith Gray,"⁶⁰ a WBT-SIL colleague of Rick Brown. As a frequent contributor to joint-authored articles with Brown and others, he has been a strong proponent and defender of MIT. Two articles involving Gray are particularly important to our topic: "The Missing Father: Living and Explaining a Trinitarian Concept of God to Muslims,"⁶¹ and "A Muslim Encounters the Gospel of Mark: Theological Implications of Contextual Mismatch."⁶² As with Brown, Gray's roles within WBT-SIL, especially his participation in various versions of LoP/SoP, and *The True Meaning of the Gospel and Acts in Arabic*,⁶³ an Arabic MIT in which "Father" in reference to God is *never* literally rendered, are not disclosed. Such disclosure is vitally important for the reader to more readily recognize that these articles by Brown and Gray are arguments in favor of the distinctive features for already-existing audio and printed versions of MIT in which they themselves had a part.

⁵⁷ A search of the IJFM archives page will reveal numerous articles by Brown regarding MIT and C5/IM issues. See <http://ijfm.org/archives.htm>.

⁵⁸ Rick Brown, "The 'Son of God': Understanding the Messianic Titles of Jesus," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 41-52.

⁵⁹ See bibliography for a number of his articles.

⁶⁰ He has also signed his name by the following pen names: "Larry Chico," "Larry C.," "L.C.," and "Mansour Ciccarelli." According to Michael Marlowe, "Leith Gray" is a pseudonym for "Larry Ciccarelli." See Michael Marlowe, "Notes to Against the Theory of 'Dynamic Equivalence'," notes 4 and 13, last modified January 2012, accessed September 12, 2015, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/dynamic.equivalence.notes.html>.

⁶¹ Leith Gray, "The Missing Father: Living and Explaining a Trinitarian Concept of God to Muslims," *Mission Frontiers* 30, no. 6 (November-December 2008): 19-22.

⁶² Leith Gray and Andrea Gray, "A Muslim Encounters the Gospel of Mark: Theological Implications of Contextual Mismatch," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 25, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 127-134.

⁶³ Hadi Jatlaoui, et.al., *The True Meaning of the Gospel and Acts in Arabic* (Beirut: Dar Al Farabi, 2008). See <http://www.al-kalima.com/content/the-portfolio/scripture>.

Other articles appearing in IJFM deserving mention for the advocacy of MIT are, "Producing and Using Meaningful Translations of the Taurat, Zabur, and Injil," by the pseudonymous, "John Travis;"⁶⁴ and, "Working With Colleagues from Other Faith Traditions: Some Observations from Scripture Translation Projects," under the pen name, "Tim James."⁶⁵ Both of these articles describe the reflections and thinking of men who were respectively involved in "Bible translations for Muslim readers"⁶⁶ and "translation projects in South Asia."⁶⁷ While the specific versions of MIT in which they were involved remain undisclosed, it is important to note that the version highlighted in the article by James is referring to the "Greek-Balochi"⁶⁸ New Testament of which more will be written later.

The final body of literature for MIT advocacy to be mentioned are articles by Simon Crisp, Director of Translation Standards for UBS [i.e. the United Bible Societies];⁶⁹ David Gray, a member of WBT-SIL (UK),⁷⁰ and the six "SIL Internal Discussion Papers on MIT."⁷¹ Regarding these six papers, David Gray wrote that they were created because the MIT "debate could, potentially, cause us a whole host of problems in a couple of year's time."⁷² All of these articles and papers reflect the thinking of those who have been actively involved in the MIT

⁶⁴ John Travis, "Producing and Using Meaningful Translations of the Taurat, Zabur, and Injil," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 73-77. "Travis" is a member of the missions organization, Frontiers, as well as a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary.

⁶⁵ Tim James, "Working With Colleagues from Other Faith Traditions: Some Observations from Scripture Translation Projects," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 61-66.

⁶⁶ Travis, "Producing," 73 (see the information about the author in small print on the bottom left of the page).

⁶⁷ James, "Working," (see the information about the author in small print on the bottom left of the page).

⁶⁸ Anonymous, *The New Testament: Greek - Balochi*, 2nd ed. (Anarkali, Lahore: Pakistan Bible Society, 2001). Note that "Balochi" has often been transliterated as "Baluchi."

⁶⁹ "Machine Assisted Translation for the Bible Translation Community," 7000++, accessed September 13, 2015, <https://vimeo.com/81872905>. See description under the video.

⁷⁰ "David Gray, Translation Consultant at SIL," LinkedIn, accessed September 13, 2015, <http://uk.linkedin.com/pub/david-gray/11/653/177>.

⁷¹ See bibliography under, "SIL Consultative Group for Muslim Idiom Translation."

⁷² David Gray, "Translating for Contextualised Faith Communities," (June 2010): 7, accessed May 11, 2014, http://www.samarkand.webspaces.virginmedia.com/papers/context_transl_dkg1.pdf. Except for the title of the first paper, which was evidently changed from "Different levels of contextualisation in mission to Muslims" to "A Typology of Bible Translations for Muslim Audiences," the rest of the papers listed in the bibliography retained the same titles as those in his article.

process. Common to all of them is the premise that mission must be "inclusive"⁷³ or "contextualized."⁷⁴ Based on this understanding, the articles by David Gray and the SIL papers consider MIT as an acceptable approach to Scripture translation, though subject to variation dependent on factors such as the intended audience and the format (i.e. whether printed, audio, or audio-visual).

The literature under consideration for the analysis of MIT fittingly begins with critiques of SAM in *Seedbed*. The editor, Sam Schlorff, then a missionary with AWM,⁷⁵ published solicited responses for SAM in: "Arabic Bible Translations For Muslim Evangelization: A Summary Of Responses,"⁷⁶ and "Feedback On Project Sunrise (Sira); A Look At 'Dynamic Equivalence*' In An Islamic Context."⁷⁷ Both articles consist of the respondents' "remarks and suggestions"⁷⁸ that Schlorff collated along with his own comments. The reaction to SAM was well summarized by Schlorff: "As could be expected, attitudes toward the project were mixed."⁷⁹

One of the greatest criticisms and controversial aspects of SAM was its reliance on "dynamic equivalents" for "Father-Son language."⁸⁰ On the positive side, a general sentiment

⁷³ Simon Crisp, "Why Translate the Bible for Muslims?." in *"The people understood the reading" (Nehemiah 8:8, RSV): A Collection of Articles in Honour of Dr. Marianne Beerle-Moor in Recognition of Her Long and Distinguished Service with the Institute for Bible Translation*, eds. David J. Clark and Andrei S. Desnitsky, (Moscow: Institute for Bible Translation, 2009), 32.

⁷⁴ David Gray, "Translating for Contextualised Faith Communities – A Follow-up Article," (July 2011), accessed May 11, 2014, http://www.samarkand.webspaces.virginmedia.com/papers/context_transl_dkg2.pdf; SIL Consultative Group for Muslim Idiom Translation, "SIL Internal Discussion Papers on MIT #1" (see section, "The C-Scale Typology of Churches in Muslim Contexts).

⁷⁵ Samuel P. Schlorff, *Missiological Models in Ministry to Muslims* (Upper Darby, PA: Middle East Resources, 2006), [203] (Schlorff was a missionary with "Arab World Ministries (formerly North Africa Mission)...from 1959 to 1995.").

⁷⁶ Sam Schlorff, ed., "Arabic Bible Translations for Muslim Evangelization: a Summary of Responses," *Seedbed* II, no. 2 (1987): unpublished working document (18 February 2014).

⁷⁷ Sam Schlorff, ed., "Feedback On Project Sunrise (Sira); A Look At 'Dynamic Equivalence*' In An Islamic Context ," *Seedbed* III, no. 2 (1988): unpublished working document (18 February 2014).

⁷⁸ Schlorff, ed., "Arabic Bible Translations."

⁷⁹ Schlorff, ed., "Feedback On Project Sunrise."

⁸⁰ Ibid.

expressed by many was the need for an Arabic translation of the Bible that could be understood by Muslims. This feeling was also shared by Schlorff, who concluded:

I wish to commend David Owen for this pioneering work in the use of Qur'anic language in Bible translation for Muslims...While problems exist, he introduces a number of promising Islamic forms which may well help us interpret the Christian message to the Muslim mind. It deserves our serious consideration and study, and there is much we can learn from it.⁸¹

Mark Beaumont,⁸² a former missionary with and current council member of AWM (UK),⁸³ evaluated SAM in two articles⁸⁴ that appeared in *Seedbed*. By analysis of some of its key word choices, Beaumont found fault with a number of them, including in places, its handling of "Father" and "Son" terminology. He was, therefore, critical of SAM as a translation but commended it on the grounds of being an "Islamic dramatization of Jesus."⁸⁵ In his doctoral thesis,⁸⁶ however, Beaumont was much more laudatory of SAM. Instead of judging SAM as a translation he evaluated it from the standpoint of seeking "genuine dialogue" between Christians and Muslims.⁸⁷ This is perhaps best illustrated by his praise for its treatment of "Father" and "Son" terminology in contradistinction to his articles in *Seedbed*:

[SAM's Christology is] the most penetrating attempt so far by Christians to retell the story of Jesus in a way that might commend itself to Muslims. This is most obvious in the rewriting of the Father-Son language...virtually removing the metaphor...[SAM] has succeeded in removing a psychological obstacle in the mind of the Muslim reader...This is a considerable gain.⁸⁸

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² I.e. Ivor Mark Beaumont. He has also published articles under the initials, "M.B."

⁸³ Beaumont is currently a Senior Lecturer in Islam and Mission at the London School of Theology. His faculty profile states: "He became a member of Arab World Ministries and taught ESOL in Casablanca, Morocco through the 80's...and is a council member of Arab World Ministries UK" (<http://www.lst.ac.uk/faculty/faculty-member/50>, accessed September 15, 2015).

⁸⁴ M. B., "Jesus In 'Sirat Ul-Masih': A Study of David Owen's Approach - to Dynamic Equivalence Translation," *Seedbed* IV, no. 3 (1989): unpublished working document (February 18, 2014); M. B., "Qur'anic Style In Sirat Ul Masih," *Seedbed* V, no. 4 (1990): unpublished working document (February 18, 2014).

⁸⁵ Beaumont, "Jesus In 'Sirat Ul-Masih';" Beaumont, "Qur'anic Style In Sirat Ul Masih."

⁸⁶ Ivor Mark Beaumont, "Christology in Dialogue with Muslims: A Critical Analysis of Christian Presentations of Christ for Muslim from the Ninth and Twentieth Centuries" (PhD thesis, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2002). This thesis was published under the same title in 2005.

⁸⁷ Beaumont, "Christology in Dialogue with Muslims," 262.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 249-50.

Beaumont's change of opinion regarding the treatment of "Father" and "Son" terminology in SAM are instructive. As a "translation" he regards its non-literal renderings for them as deficient but as a means for "genuine dialogue" he sees them as something positive. One will also note his characterization of this terminology as "metaphor" which will be addressed below.⁸⁹

Dr. Vern Poythress, Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS),⁹⁰ a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and a former student and former teacher at SIL,⁹¹ addressed the feature of a Bengali "New Testament" MIT that uses "'Messiah' whenever the original Greek has 'Son of God' as a title for Jesus Christ."⁹² Although he rejected "Messiah" as an "adequate substitute" for "Son of God," arguing for the preservation of the "familial associations" of "Son" terminology, he nevertheless argues otherwise for "Muslim contexts:"

in dealing with Muslim contexts, one must reckon with connotative meanings that may already be attached to an expression like "Son of God." If readers already have it firmly engrained in their minds that this expression indicates biological descent, one must try to search for an alternative.⁹³

Poythress gratefully acknowledges "Rick Brown for his interaction with my thinking in this article."⁹⁴

Brown, the previously-mentioned advocate of MIT and C5/IM, published several articles primarily concerning the phrase "Son of God," and to a lesser extent, related terminology. His

⁸⁹ E.g. Chapter Five and Appendix B.

⁹⁰ "About," Frame-Poythress.org, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.frame-poythress.org/about/>.

⁹¹ "Vern Sheridan Poythress: Biographical Sketch," Frame-Poythress.org, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.frame-poythress.org/about/vern-poythress-full-bio/>.

⁹² Vern Sheridan Poythress, "Bible Translation and Contextualization: Theory and Practice in Bangladesh., Revised Oct. 10, 2005," Frame-Poythress.org, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.frame-poythress.org/bible-translation-and-contextualization-theory-and-practice-in-bangladesh/>.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Poythress followed up this article with a "clarification." In his clarification he does not retract his statement that alternatives for "Son of God" must be sought in Muslim contexts. See Vern Sheridan Poythress, "A Clarification on Translation of 'Son' and 'Father,'" Frame-Poythress.org, accessed October 30, 2015, <http://www.frame-poythress.org/a-clarification-on-translation-of-son-and-father/>.

first IJFM article on this topic, "The 'Son of God': Understanding the Messianic Titles of Jesus,"⁹⁵ consist of two main arguments. First, the literal translation of this phrase will be misunderstood by Muslims to mean that Jesus is the biological offspring of God and Mary:

"So when Muslims encounter the phrase 'God's son' in literal translations of the Bible, they not only misunderstand it, they are filled with abhorrence and conclude the Bible is blasphemous and must be avoided."⁹⁶

Second, "Son of God" in reference to Jesus is just one of several "Messianic titles" with the strong implication that it does not refer to His deity but rather that He is King.⁹⁷ He strongly asserts that "Son of God" is identical in meaning to "Messiah" describing them as "equivalent," "synonymous titles," and "two titles for the same messianic position."⁹⁸

This latter assertion is significant for at least the following two reasons: first, it serves as a defense for the substitution of "Son of God" with "Messiah" in every occurrence of the previously-mentioned Arabic "Baghdadi" version of LoP/SoP⁹⁹ with which Brown is associated. Second, it is a position that Brown and two of his WBT-SIL colleagues would later abandon as valid for MIT.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Brown, "The 'Son of God'," 41-52.

⁹⁶ Brown, "The 'Son of God'," 41.

⁹⁷ Brown, "The 'Son of God'," 49 ("After [the first church council convened in Nicea in 325 AD], people began to use 'Son of God' the way they had used 'Word of God' before, to refer to the divine nature of Christ. So it is natural for Christians today, when they read 'Son of God' in the Bible, to think of Christ's origin in God rather than his role as Savior and Lord of all. Although they were theologically correct, exegetically they were wrong. The Scriptures ascribe divinity to Jesus in a variety of ways, but not by merely calling him 'the Son of God'."); 51 ("There is a great deal of confusion about the Messianic titles, even among Christians. They often misinterpret the titles to be statements of genealogy and of being rather than titles defining particular roles. 'Son of God' becomes a statement of deity, and 'Son of Man' becomes a statement of humanity, whereas the original intent was that 'Son of Man' and 'Lord' should describe Jesus' authority over all mankind, while 'Son of God' and 'Messiah' meant he was the eternal king over the people of God's kingdom.").

⁹⁸ Brown, "The 'Son of God'," 47.

⁹⁹ See my chart at: <http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/lives-of-prophets.pdf> (accessed May 28, 2014).

¹⁰⁰ This will be addressed below.

Another noteworthy aspect of this article is Brown's explanations for "Son of Man," including his statement that "Son of Man" is a "higher title" than "Son of God,"¹⁰¹ and that "Son" is an abbreviation for "Son of Man":

...the inclusivist heavenly savior title, 'the Son of Man' or the shortened form 'the Son' ...¹⁰²

The fact that Jesus is never quoted as calling himself 'the Son of God' in the Synoptic Gospels indicates that 'the Son' is his shortened form of 'the Son of Man' title...¹⁰³

Where one finds Jesus calling himself 'God's Son' in John, it is generally in association with being the 'Son of Man' (Jn. 5:25-27; 3:13-17)...So one can explain 'the Son' as an abbreviation of 'Son of Man', meaning the one sent from heaven as king and savior for all mankind.¹⁰⁴

In 2005, Brown wrote a two-part series for IJFM, "Explaining the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslim Contexts, pt. I,"¹⁰⁵ and, "Translating the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslim Contexts, pt. II."¹⁰⁶ In the first article, he presented the same two arguments as in his earlier, seminal IJFM article from 2000 treated above, along with various meanings for "Son of God" and "sons of God."¹⁰⁷ The thrust of this article is that "Son(s) of God" has different meanings within the Bible and it is essential to use non-literal renderings for this terminology when translating Scripture for Muslims.

¹⁰¹ Brown, "The 'Son of God,'" 47.

¹⁰² Ibid., 48.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 50.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁵ Rick Brown, "Explaining the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslim Contexts, pt. I," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 22, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 91-96.

¹⁰⁶ Rick Brown, "Translating the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslim Contexts, pt. II," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 135-145.

¹⁰⁷ To speak of the singular and plural as one phrase is misleading. Based on its use throughout the Bible, "sons of God" is not identical to "Son of God." The plural is never used in reference to Jesus whereas the singular, in its full form, is only explicitly used of Jesus in the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (its use of Adam in Luke 3:38 is implied). See the author's compilation of the 45 occurrences for "Son of God" from the Greek text, NA27 (<http://biblicalmissiology.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Bible-Occurrences-of-FatherSonSonofGodintheNT.pdf>) as well as his article, "Son of God in the Old Testament," (<http://biblicalmissiology.org/2013/02/11/son-of-god-in-the-old-testament/>).

Brown offered a changed explanation for "the Son" from his IJFM article from 2000 for at least one verse and strongly implied as much for possibly the entire Gospel of John. "The Son" in Matthew 11:27 no longer "indicates that [it] is [the] shortened form of 'the Son of Man' title."¹⁰⁸ It is now said to mean "*God's eternal Word incarnate as God's vice-regent, who alone reveals God to mankind.*"¹⁰⁹ In the Gospel of John, "the Son," is no longer "an abbreviation of 'Son of Man', meaning the one sent from heaven as king and savior for all mankind."¹¹⁰ The reader is now told that "John uses it [i.e. the title 'Son'] in place of the title 'Lord'."¹¹¹

Among Brown's other claims in this later article are some very strong assertions:

- "sonship terms" in Hebrew and Aramaic is wider than in "Classical Arabic"¹¹²
- "Son of God," even if adequately explained, still "retains its negative affective meaning" for both Muslims and "Muslim Background Believers" (MBB)¹¹³
- "A literal translation of the term[, "Son of God,"] simply cuts [Muslims] off from the message of salvation before they have had a chance to hear it"¹¹⁴
- if "we insist on using a phrase that evokes the wrong meaning and is deemed insulting to God, then it might be better if a millstone were hung around our necks and we were thrown into the depths of the sea (Luke 17:2)!"¹¹⁵

The second article of this series consists of Brown's views about how best to render "Son(s) of God" for Muslim audiences. The entire article is based on the premise that these phrases are idioms.¹¹⁶ Brown wrote that to translate "idiomatic phrases...word-for-word into

¹⁰⁸ Brown, "The 'Son of God'," 50.

¹⁰⁹ Brown, "Explaining the Biblical Term." 93.

¹¹⁰ Brown, "The 'Son of God'," 51.

¹¹¹ Brown, "Explaining the Biblical Term." 94.

¹¹² Ibid., 91.

¹¹³ Ibid., 92.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 92.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 93; cf. Brown, "What Must One Believe" (IJFM).

¹¹⁶ Brown, "Translating the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God'," 137-138. While the phrase, "son of" is often used idiomatically in Scripture, it is misleading to state that this is true of every occurrence. The implications of this assertion with regard to Jesus and those who believe in Him hold serious ramifications for properly understanding the Bible. Scripture does not treat "Son of God" in reference to Jesus as an "idiom" but rather as his eternal nature and identity (e.g. Prov 30:4; John 17:24; Heb 7:3.) This helps explain why Adam is called "the son of God" in Luke 3:38. Since he was created in God's image (Gen 1:26-27) *as the son of God*, there had to be an already existing "Son of God" in order for Adam to reflect this image! This agrees with the New Testament (or New Covenant) where believers, who are repeatedly called "sons of God" and "children of God," are done so on the basis that God "predestined [them] to become conformed to *the image of His Son* [emphasis mine]" (Rom 8:29). If Brown's

another language...may produce erroneous meanings. A translation that gives the wrong meaning is inaccurate and cannot be trusted."¹¹⁷ The following chart contains twenty-one of the different renderings given throughout the article that are evidently "accurate" and "can be trusted" as opposed to literally translating "Son" and "Son of God":

1-spiritual Son of God	8-disciple of God	15-the Christ
2-Son from God	9-God's chosen ruler	16-the Christ of God
3-Beloved Son who comes from God	10-God's vice-regent (Arabic, <i>khalīfatullāh</i> , i.e. Caliph of God)	17-God's Beloved Christ
4-the Royal Son	11-God's Word/revealer	18-the Word of God
5-You are dear to me as a son to the father	12-God's Heir over all things (Arabic, <i>khalīfatullāh</i> , i.e. Caliph of God)	19-the Beloved
6-You are my Messiah, whom I love as a father loves his son. In you I am well pleased.	13-the King sent from God	20-Beloved of God
7-You are my Messiah, who is closer to me than a son. In you I am well pleased. ¹¹⁸	14-the One sent from God to govern the world	21-Christ sent from God ¹¹⁹

In his conclusion Brown explicitly states what the above examples imply: "Translating 'son of God' in a way that is understood as 'offspring of God' conveys an inaccurate and unbiblical meaning which fails to convey the intended meanings of the term."¹²⁰

Not all of the analyses of MIT, however, are as positive as the ones just considered. Bill Nikides, current director of Reformational Churches Together with the Presbyterian Evangelistic

assertion is true (and he is not alone in his belief), "Son of God" in reference to Jesus and "sons of God" in reference to believers are at best imprecise linguistic conventions or approximations, the truth of which is something other than the literal sense of these inexact and ultimately, inadequate designations. It would logically follow, then, that non-literal renderings for these phrases are justified. See Appendix B for further treatment on this topic. For a biblically-sound treatment of the phrase, "Son of God," see S. Herbert Bess, "The Term 'Son Of God' In The Light Of Old Testament Idiom" *Grace Journal* 6 (2): 18, 23.

http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/OTeSources/23a-Prophets/Text/Articles/Bess-SonOfGod-GTJ.pdf.

¹¹⁷ Brown, "Translating the Biblical Term," 136.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 138 (i.e. numbers 1-7).

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 139 (numbers 7-21).

¹²⁰ Brown, "Translating the Biblical Term 'Son(s) of God'," 143.

Fellowship (PEF),¹²¹ addressed MIT in his article, "Special Translations of the Bible for Muslims? Contemporary Trends in Evangelical Missions."¹²² Tracing MIT to IM, Nikides asserted, "Insider translations" [i.e. MIT]...[lead] to serious doctrinal error...and [create] the serious potential for developing, not biblical faith, but a new religion."¹²³ He traces the origins of this approach in "meaning-based translation [a.k.a. DE]...pioneered by Eugene Nida."¹²⁴

In 2007, Roger Dixon wrote the article, "Identity Theft: Retheologizing the Son of God," which was published in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (EMQ).¹²⁵ Dixon, who served mainly as a missionary in Indonesia,¹²⁶ wrote against an Indonesian MIT, Kitab Suci Injil (Holy Gospel), published by the Indonesian Bible Society in 2000 which was "similar to Sirat Al Masih" [i.e. SAM].¹²⁷ Dixon's conclusion is very strong:

...it does not take many examples to show that the identity of Jesus is severely altered by the change in just two phrases, "Son of God" and "Lord."...All of these books are nothing short of identity theft and many who are taught with these false "bibles" will be the poorer for it spiritually because they will not have the opportunity to meet the true God and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the inspired word. They are being given part of the truth and it is not certain they will ever understand the entire truth.¹²⁸

¹²¹ "Bill and Cheryl Nikides," LinkedIn, accessed November 16, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/bill-nikides-56101a30>.

¹²² Bill Nikides, "Special Translations of the Bible for Muslims? Contemporary Trends in Evangelical Missions," *St. Francis Magazine* 4 (March 2006): 1, accessed September 16, 2015, http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/pdf/2006/2006-3_6.pdf.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹²⁵ Roger Dixon, "Identity Theft: Retheologizing the Son of God," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (April 2007): 220-226.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 225-226. This article prompted a strong response from Brown. See Rick Brown, "Why Muslims are Repelled by the Term 'Son of God'," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (October 2007): 428; 429, n.3 ["A few missionaries, however, made the mistaken assumption that any change in wording of the term must be intended as a theological compromise of some sort, and they jumped to the false (and rather slanderous) conclusion that the translators of the Asian translation used this phrase because they wanted to substitute an Islamic concept of Jesus in place of the biblical concept...An example of such criticism is Roger Dixon's article, 'Identity Theft: Retheologizing the Son of God,' which appeared in the April 2007 issue of *EMQ*, p. 220-226."]. It is uncharacteristic of Brown to mention people by name with whom he disagrees in his published writings on MIT.

The final group of writings for the analysis of MIT consist of the following: various articles from the book, *Chrislam: How Missionaries Are Promoting an Islamized Gospel*,¹²⁹ and online charts of selected words, phrases, or passages from various MIT versions created by the author.¹³⁰ Because some of these will be referenced later in varying detail, suffice it to say here that these works conclude that MIT is unbiblical.

The last category of this literature review regards controversy about MIT. Beginning in late 2009, a series of articles on both sides of MIT appeared in the online journal, *St. Francis Magazine* (SFM).¹³¹ The first was a jointly-authored article "Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations: Claims And Facts,"¹³² by WBT-SIL colleagues, Rick Brown and Leith Gray, along with a John Penny.¹³³ It was written as a defense of MIT in light of "growing controversy about Bible translations for Muslim audiences."¹³⁴ David Abernathy, who "serves with SIL,"¹³⁵ challenged, among other things, their assertions that "Son of God" presents the "scholarly consensus" in "conservative scholarly circles."¹³⁶ Abernathy followed up this critique with his article, "Jesus Is the Eternal Son of God."¹³⁷ Because of this historic, biblically orthodox understanding of "Son of God," - based upon the witness of Scripture - Abernathy argued that the literal translation of

¹²⁹ Joshua Lingel, Jeff Morton, and Bill Nikides, eds., *Chrislam: How Missionaries Are Promoting an Islamized Gospel* (Garden Grove, CA: i2 Ministries Publication, 2011). See especially the four articles in "Section 4: IM and Translation Problems," by Joshua Lingel, David B. Garner, David Abernathy, and Adam Simnowitz.

¹³⁰ See "Appendix A: Back Translations of MIT Online."

¹³¹ <http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/>.

¹³² Rick Brown, John Penny, and Leith Gray, "Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations: Claims And Facts," *St. Francis Magazine* 5, no. 6 (December 2009): 87-105.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 87 ("John Penny is a translation consultant who has worked in Bible translation in Africa and Asia for 25 years. He is supported by Reformed churches and has worked with several organizations.").

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹³⁵ "An Exegetical Summary of Matthew 1-16," SIL Publications, accessed September 16, 2015, <http://www.sil.org/resources/publications/entry/61526>. See "About the Author" ("David Abernathy is the author of three of the Exegetical Summary series—Romans 1-8, 2 Corinthians, 1 Peter, and coauthored Sermon on the Mount. He has earned a Master of Theology from Reformed Theological Seminary in 2003. He serves with SIL. He teaches Greek, Hebrew, and Biblical Exegesis at the Pan Africa Christian College in Kenya.").

¹³⁶ David Abernathy, "Translating 'Son Of God' In Missionary Bible Translation: A Critique Of 'Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations: Claims And Facts', By Rick Brown, John Penny And Leith Gray," *St. Francis Magazine* 6:1 (February 2010): 199, accessed May 30, 2014, <http://www.bible-researcher.com/abernathy1.pdf>.

¹³⁷ David Abernathy, "Jesus Is the Eternal Son of God," *St. Francis Magazine* 6:2 (April 2010): 327-394, accessed May 30, 2014, <http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/pdf/2010/2-DavidSFMApril2010.pdf>.

"Son of God" in Scripture translations must be maintained, regardless of Muslim misunderstandings. This latter article was subsequently challenged by "Bradford Greer" in his, "'Son Of God' in Biblical Perspective: a Contrast to David Abernathy's Articles."¹³⁸

Several significant magazine articles appeared which shone a spotlight on MIT for the evangelical world that extended beyond those involved in missions to Muslims. In February 2011, *Christianity Today* published the article, "The Son and the Crescent," by Collin Hansen.¹³⁹ It featured Rick Brown's arguments for MIT along with criticisms from Georges Housney,¹⁴⁰ J. Scott Horrell,¹⁴¹ Darrell Bock,¹⁴² Jack Collins,¹⁴³ Vern Poythress,¹⁴⁴ and Robert Yarbrough.¹⁴⁵ *World Magazine* published three articles by Emily Belz concerning various MIT versions (e.g. in Arabic, Bangla/Bengali, and Turkish), organizations involved (e.g. Global Partners for Development,¹⁴⁶ WBT-SIL, and Frontiers), and concerned church fellowships [e.g. PCA and Assemblies of God (A/G)].¹⁴⁷

¹³⁸ Bradford Greer, "'Son Of God' in Biblical Perspective: a Contrast to David Abernathy's Articles," *St. Francis Magazine* 6:3 (June 2010): 464-470, accessed May 30, 2014.
[http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/images/stories/9_%20complete%20SFM%20June%202010%20small\(1\).pdf](http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/images/stories/9_%20complete%20SFM%20June%202010%20small(1).pdf).

¹³⁹ Collin Hansen, "The Son and the Crescent," *Christianity Today* 55, no. 2 (February 2011): 19-23.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 21 ["...Housney is the founder-director of Horizons International, a missionary agency involved in preaching, teaching, and discipling Muslims...He also edited the Arabic Bible translation *Kitab al-Hayat* ("Book of Life"), published by Biblica (formerly the International Bible Society, the organization behind the NIV)]." See <http://www.horizonsinternational.org/>.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 22 ("J. Scott Horrell [is] professor of theological studies at Dallas Theological Seminary and adjunct professor at Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary, in Amman.").

¹⁴² Ibid. 23. (of "Dallas Theological Seminary").

¹⁴³ Ibid., 23 (of "Covenant Theological Seminary").

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 23 (of "Westminster Theological Seminary").

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 23.(of "Covenant Theological Seminary").

¹⁴⁶ This is the organization led by Milton Coke that is involved in MIT in Bangladesh. See PCA, "Like Father, Like Son: Divine Familial Language In Bible Translation" (paper presented at The Fortieth General Assembly Of The Presbyterian Church In America, Louisville, Kentucky, June 19-21, 2012), May 14, 2012: 36-38, accessed October 10, 2015, http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/scim01_2012.pdf.

¹⁴⁷ Emily Belz, "Inside Out," *World Magazine* 26, no. 9 (May 7, 2011), accessed September 17, 2015, http://www.worldmag.com/2011/04/inside_out; Emily Belz, "Holding Translators Accountable," *World Magazine* 26, no. 20 (October 08, 2011), accessed September 17, 2015, http://www.worldmag.com/2011/09/holding_translators_accountable; Emily Belz, "The Battle for Accurate Bible translation in Asia," *World Magazine* 27, no. 4 (February 25, 2012), accessed September 17, 2015, http://www.worldmag.com/2011/09/holding_translators_accountable.

SIL presented a paper to the A/G in August 2011, "SIL International Statement of Best Practices for Bible Translation of Divine Familial Terms," ("Best Practices") which provides the guidelines and policies for how their translators are to render "Father" and "Son" terminology for intended Muslim audiences.¹⁴⁸ The response from the A/G resulted in a reevaluation of its partnership with WBT-SIL as stated in the *Pentecostal Evangel* article, "Essential Scriptural Integrity."¹⁴⁹ It also helped spur the creation of the A/G position paper, "The Necessity for Retaining Father and Son Terminology in Scripture Translations for Muslims,"¹⁵⁰ for which the author was a contributor.¹⁵¹ The title is self-explanatory and is in sharp contrast to the SIL "Best Practices" paper.

During this time three articles were published by WBT-SIL colleagues, Rick Brown, Leith Gray, and "Andrea Gray"¹⁵² presenting further arguments for non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology. Two of the articles appeared in the Fall 2011 issue of *IJFM*: "A New Look at Translating Familial Biblical Terms,"¹⁵³ and "A Brief Analysis of Filial and Paternal Terms in the Bible."¹⁵⁴ The third article, "Translating Familial Biblical Terms: an

¹⁴⁸ SIL International, "SIL International Statement of Best Practices for Bible Translation of Divine Familial Terms," unpublished working document (August 2011). This refers to the version that WBT-SIL presented to the Assemblies of God (A/G) on August 17, 2011. The text of this version can be found in "Appendix C" in, "The Necessity For Retaining Father And Son Terminology In Scripture Translations For Muslims," accessed September 17, 2015, <http://www.fatherson.ag.org/download/paper.pdf>.

¹⁴⁹ Randy Hurst, "Essential Scriptural Integrity," *Pentecostal Evangel* (March 4, 2012): 28-29.

¹⁵⁰ Ben Aker, Jim Bennett, Mark Hausfeld, Jim Hernando, Tommy Hodum, Wave Nunnally, and Adam Simnowitz, "The Necessity for Retaining Father and Son Terminology in Scripture Translations for Muslims," last modified April 2012, accessed September 18, 2015, <http://www.fatherson.ag.org/download/paper.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ The author contributed to the writing of the main text (pp. 4-17) and created the chart compiled from various MIT versions in "Appendix D" (pp. 51-59). The chart can also be found here: <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2013/03/04/translation-chart-for-muslim-idiom-translations-of-the-bible/>.

¹⁵² I.e. the wife of "Leith Gray."

¹⁵³ Rick Brown, Leith Gray, and Andrea Gray, "A New Look at Translating Familial Biblical Terms," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 105-120.

¹⁵⁴ Rick Brown, Leith Gray, and Andrea Gray, "A Brief Analysis of Filial and Paternal Terms in the Bible," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 121-125.

Overview of the Issue,"¹⁵⁵ was published in early 2012 in MF. It was an abridgment of "A New Look at Translating Familial Biblical Terms."

The main purpose of these articles is to convince the reader that non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology have justification. The authors' assertion is based their claim that there is a need to distinguish between "biological" fathers and sons and "social" fathers and sons: "In most cultures and languages there is a distinction between biological kinship and social kinship."¹⁵⁶ It is not insignificant that Nida made these same distinctions in conjunction with "father" on more than one occasion.¹⁵⁷

According to the authors, certain languages spoken by Muslims,

like Arabic and various Turkic languages lack a set of social familial terms...and it would be inaccurate to translate the Hebrew or Greek word for a social father or son using a word for a biological father or son...This is especially the case with regard to the Father-Son relation, which was generated non-biologically, without procreation.¹⁵⁸

A final point which was previously alluded to, concerns an abandonment of one of Brown's original assertions upon which a number of MIT versions were justified, namely, that "Son of God" and "Messiah" are synonyms.¹⁵⁹ Now Brown, Gray and Gray admit to "a change":

At that time we regarded the divine and mediatorial components of meaning to be more important than the familial-relational component. Since then, however, things have changed. We (the authors) now believe that the familial-relational component underlies the other components of Christ's sonship and is the most important one to express in the text, as also for God's fatherhood and the adopted sonship of believers. In addition, storiers and translators working in biological kinship languages have found ways to

¹⁵⁵ Rick Brown, Leith Gray, and Andrea Gray, "Translating Familial Biblical Terms: an Overview of the Issue," *Mission Frontiers* 34, no. 1 (January-February 2012): 26-30.

¹⁵⁶ Brown, Gray, and Gray, "A New Look," 106.

¹⁵⁷ Eugene A. Nida, *Bible Translating: An Analysis of Principles and Procedures, with Special Reference to Aboriginal Languages* (New York: American Bible Society, 1947), 137 ("both the biological and social aspects of the word 'father' are significant"); cf. Eugene A. Nida, *Fascinated by Languages* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003), 116 ("Would it not be more helpful to distinguish between biological relations (real and figurative) and sociological roles [i.e. regarding the word, 'father' in Hebrew]").

¹⁵⁸ Brown, Gray, and Gray, "Translating Familial," 27.

¹⁵⁹ Brown, "The 'Son of God,'" 47 ("...the titles 'Messiah' and 'Son of God'...were still equivalent..."; "the Son of God' and 'the Christ' were still synonymous titles"; "[they are] two titles for the same messianic position").

express divine familial relationships within the body of the story or text without ascribing procreative activity.¹⁶⁰

What they mean is stated much more clearly and concisely in the abridged article:

In particular, we believe mediatorial terms like Christ or Messiah should be used only to translate Greek Christos and should not be used to translate words like Son.¹⁶¹

Scott Seaton, under the auspices of Biblical Missiology,¹⁶² led the online petition, "Lost in Translation: Keep Father and Son in the Bible."¹⁶³ Launched in January 2012, the petition seeks "a written commitment from Wycliffe, Frontiers and SIL not to remove Father, Son or Son of God from the text of Scripture."¹⁶⁴ WBT-SIL and Frontiers responded to the petition with various rebuttals.¹⁶⁵ SIL maintains that non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" language are not a "removal of the divine familial terms,"¹⁶⁶ when "the literal translation conveys wrong meaning."¹⁶⁷

The PCA report, "A Call To Faithful Witness: - Part One - Like Father, Like Son: Divine Familial Language In Bible Translation," was presented to The Fortieth General Assembly Of The PCA, respectively in June 2012.¹⁶⁸ The report strongly asserts that "Divine Familial Language" (i.e. "Father" and "Son" terminology) must be translated literally by reason of its

¹⁶⁰ Brown, Gray, and Gray, "A New Look," 117.

¹⁶¹ Brown, Gray, and Gary, "Translating Familial," 29.

¹⁶² <http://biblicalmissiology.org/>.

¹⁶³ "Lost in Translation: Keep Father and Son in the Bible," Change.org, accessed September 18, 2015, <https://www.change.org/p/lost-in-translation-keep-father-son-in-the-bible>.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ These responses include statements posted online, letters to supporters, and through interviews. The online statements have been subject to change and sometimes only posted temporarily. For two representative examples see "SIL Responds To False Accusations," SIL.org, accessed September 18, 2015, <http://www-01.sil.org/sil/news/2012/SIL-Son-of-God-translation.htm>; and, Belz, "Battle," ("[Bob] Blincoe, the Frontiers director...said the petition against the Turkish Matthew amounts to 'slander' and is 'like yelling, 'Fire!' in a theater.' The petition 'has been a great disservice to the peace and unity of the church...").

¹⁶⁶ "SIL Responds To False Accusations."

¹⁶⁷ Russ Hersman, as quoted in Belz, "Holding." Hersman has served in various roles with WBT-SIL and is currently the Chief Operations Officer of WBT. See <https://www.wycliffe.org/about/leader-details/russ-hersman>.

¹⁶⁸ Office of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, *Minutes of the Fortieth General Assembly Published by the Presbyterian Church in America* (PCA: Lawrenceville, Georgia, 2012): 590-681 ("Appendix V" consists of the entire report). It is also available as a stand-alone document: http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/scim01_2012.pdf.

theological importance, regardless of Muslim misunderstandings. According to the minutes of the General Assembly, the first four recommendations of the report were adopted.¹⁶⁹

Dr. D.A. Carson, the well-known professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS),¹⁷⁰ author, and current president of The Gospel Coalition,¹⁷¹ weighed in on the MIT issue with his book, *Jesus the Son of God: a Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed*.¹⁷² Although advocating for the literal rendering of "Father" and "Son" terminology, Carson asserts that there are distinct meanings for "Son of God" that are only "*held together by nothing more than the expression itself*" [emphasis in original].¹⁷³ This belief in the "*analytically differentiable uses of 'Son' terminology*" [emphasis in original],¹⁷⁴ undermine the belief that "Son of God" (or, "Son") is the eternal, ontological identity of Jesus.¹⁷⁵ In 1999, Carson wrote a letter expressing this same sentiment which was seized upon by Rick Brown and other WBT-SIL members to justify their use of "Messiah" and other non-literal renderings in place of "Son of God."¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 29, item 40-42.

¹⁷⁰ See his faculty profile, accessed September 18, 2015, <http://divinity.tiu.edu/academics/faculty/d-a-carson-phd/>.

¹⁷¹ "Overview," The Gospel Coalition, last modified 2015, accessed September 18, 2015, <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/overview>.

¹⁷² D.A. Carson, *Jesus the Son of God: a Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

¹⁷³ Ibid., 105.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 106.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 105 [e.g. Carson writes, "...the declaration of the voice from heaven at Jesus's baptism, "This is my Son, whom I love" (3:17)—almost certainly picking up on the Davidic/kingly use of sonship..."]. This interpretation is suspect. Jesus' baptism (Matt 3:16-17) is one of the clearest witnesses in all of Scripture to God's triune nature as seen in the physical manifestations of the Father (speaking), the Son (standing in a human body), and the Holy Spirit (descending like a dove). It also has a direct connection to Jesus' transfiguration when God the Father spoke the same words with the addition of "Listen to him!" (Matt 17:5). John 17:24 is very instructive in this matter. The Father loved His Son prior to the foundation of the world. This means that Father, Son, and this loving relationship are eternal. For this reason the Father declared, "My beloved Son." The proper term used in the Gospels to refer to the Messiah being a Davidic king is "Son of David."

¹⁷⁶ Carson wrote a letter to Wayne Brink of the Jesus Film Project (<http://www.jfministrypartners.org/>), dated September 7, 1999, in which he wrote: "an expression like 'son of God,'...operates at several levels...In practical terms, what this means is that Rick Brown's argument has some weight where one is trying to produce a translation that overcomes some of the initial hurdles (especially hurdles advanced by Muslims)...my own inclination is not entirely in favor of Rick Brown's proposal [i.e. use "Messiah" in place of "Son of God," referring at that time to the Arabic "Baghdadi" LoP/SoP]." In spite of Carson's cautions, Brown and other WBT-SIL personnel have

The final piece of literature to be considered is the "Report To World Evangelical Alliance For Conveyance To Wycliffe Global Alliance And SIL International" [from herein referred to as the WEA Report].¹⁷⁷ This report was for the stated purpose to "review their [i.e. WBT-SIL] best practice in the translation of 'God the Father' and the 'Son of God'...with recommendations for Wycliffe and SIL."¹⁷⁸ It has been hailed as a satisfactory correction to the past policies and practices of WBT-SIL regarding the translation of "Father" and "Son" terminology. A significant example of this is the decision by the A/G missions leadership and its Executive Committee to retain its partnership with WBT-SIL¹⁷⁹ (this is not to say that this report is a corrective to past policies and practices, only that it has been received as such.)¹⁸⁰

In summary, several things stand out from this review. First, there is an obvious distinction between key religious terminology found in Scripture and that found in Islam. Many have felt that the best way to communicate the truths of God's Word, therefore, is to use Islamic terminology. Second, the "Father" and "Son" terminology of Scripture comes to the forefront of

quoted from this letter as support for the non-literal renderings in their MIT products. They have claimed that their understanding of "Son of God" is in keeping with biblical scholarship since these renderings convey the "meaning." That Carson's letter predates Brown's seminal article in IJFM, "The 'Son of God': Understanding the Messianic Titles of Jesus," hardly seems coincidental but rather instrumental in emboldening Brown. This is not to imply that Carson did this intentionally; however, it needs to be stated that infusing extra-biblical meanings to "Son" terminology will always obscure the truth that the Scriptures themselves - not Councils and Creeds - are the basis for understanding that "Son" terminology refers to Jesus' eternal, ontological identity.

¹⁷⁷ WEA Global Review Panel, "Report To World Evangelical Alliance For Conveyance To Wycliffe Global Alliance And SIL International," World Evangelical Alliance, last modified April, 26, 2013, accessed September 19, 2015, http://www.worldea.org/images/wimg/files/2013_0429-Final%20Report%20of%20the%20WEA%20Independent%20Bible%20Translation%20Review%20Panel.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ "Independent Bible Translation Review," World Evangelical Alliance, accessed September 19, 2015, <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/translation-review/>.

¹⁷⁹ "AGWM to Continue Partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators," Assemblies of God World Missions, accessed September 19, 2015, http://worldmissions.ag.org/regions/_cfm?targetBay=c1b1e6aa-ccf8-4e8b-8eac-25e34cbab5d9&Process=DisplayArticle&RSS_RSSContentID=25957&RSS_OriginatingChannelID=1164&RSS_OriginatingRSSFeedID=3966&RSS_Source=

¹⁸⁰ The author differs with the assessment that this report is a "corrective." See the next chapter for a treatment of this report.

this linguistic divide. This is due to the fact that the Sonship of Jesus Christ is denied in Islam on the immediate basis of misunderstanding it to be biological.¹⁸¹

Third, professing Christians are divided on this issue. A number of them feel that non-literal renderings of "Father" and "Son" terminology are the best way to communicate to Muslims the truths for which these terms represent looking to the theory of DE which originated with Nida. Some go so far as to say that non-literal renderings of "Father" and "Son" terminology is the *only* way to communicate these truths with the expectation that it will result in a "Jesus movement" (i.e. C5/IM). On the other hand, many others understand "Father" and "Son" terminology to be inextricably tied to the truths they convey. Any non-literal renderings, therefore, result in a loss of these truths. Fourth, there is fluidity to the beliefs and practices of MIT (and C5/IM) proponents. Their approach is very much a pragmatic one.

¹⁸¹ Sura 4:171 (Arberry). This is quoted in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

"Muslim Idiom Translation": an overview

Definition & Features

The definition for MIT was provided in the introduction.¹⁸² It was taken from Andy Clark of WBT-SIL, of which the full quote is now given:

Muslim idiom translation (MIT): Translations contextualised for M[uslim] people groups in a way which communicates best to them but often not to Western Christians or even traditional churches in the area, using e.g.

- Arabic style names: Isa al-Masih vs Jesus Christ
- Honorifics
- Allah as name for God
- Non-literal rendering of 'Son of God'
- Non-literal rendering of other father-son language in OT and NT
- Natural syntax (not anglicised, translationese)¹⁸³

This list helps to clarify what Clark meant by "contextualised for Muslim people groups," which understanding also represents that of WBT-SIL. This understanding of MIT is not, however, exclusive to them.

The introduction also contains a second definition for MIT. Though specifically written of David Owen's SAM, it is very similar to Clark's definition: a "contextualized Bible translation for the Muslim Arab world."¹⁸⁴ The following are various descriptions regarding SAM:

- will use idiomatic, literary Arabic of the highest quality¹⁸⁵
- a clear and dynamic presentation of God's word¹⁸⁶
- a special presentation of Scripture in a non-traditional format , such as a Gospel harmony
- The Greek New Testament with Semitic Interpretation...we may at times have to "go behind" the language of the Greek New Testament to its Aramaic-Hebrew origins in exegeting certain passages for our readers. This was done in translating a number of important verses.
- the use of Islamic theological terminology

¹⁸² See Chapter 1.

¹⁸³ Andy Clark, "Exploring Muslim Idiom Translation," slide 7.

¹⁸⁴ See p. 13; cf. Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles."

¹⁸⁵ Owen, "Project Sunrise."

¹⁸⁶ Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles." The twelve subsequent descriptions are also taken from this article.

- a dynamically equivalent presentation of Scripture for the Muslim Arab readers of today [vs.] more literal translations
- To avoid [a] key Islamic term because it is exclusively Islamic or has supplementary or emotive components that are non-biblical, is indeed to compromise the Good News and rob it of impact.
- Making use of Islamic-styled Arabic of literary quality
- its use of *saja*^o[,] or unmetred, rhymed prose, the distinctive style of the Qur'an
- the use of the *sira* literary type ("sira" is the Arabic technical term for biography)
- The religious terminology used is as Islamic in form as we know how to make it at the present time
- we have on occasion used entire Qur'anic phrases where the meanings in the Qur'an and the Bible were essentially the same
- we have at times employed anachronistic language to provide a more meaningful context for Muslim readers. In some cases this is absolutely essential for the text to have impact
- a list of principal religious terms used [including a number of non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology which was specified as "The Trinity and Filial Expressions"]

These descriptions make very clear what Owen meant by "contextualized" and are in agreement with Clark's much shorter list. As will be seen in Chapter 4, Owen's descriptions are not just true of SAM but provide a blueprint for other MIT versions.¹⁸⁷ This is not surprising in light of the pioneering role that SAM has played in the creation of MIT.

Although it is not necessary for all of these features in the above two lists to be present within a production to consider it MIT, there is, however, a discernible "minimum." This "minimum" is based on the premise that translations need to be tailored not merely to an audience's educational or linguistic ability but the audience's real or perceived religious worldview(s). In the case of MIT, that worldview is Islam. MIT, therefore, is any Scripture "translation" that uses language which upholds an Islamic worldview.

Premises

¹⁸⁷ In light of these descriptions, George King's definition for MIT as "*a translation of the Bible into the vernacular of Muslims in a given culture*" [emphasis original], is deficient. See George King and Tom McCormick, "Muslim Idiom Translations in Bangladesh," *Evangelical Review of Theology* [ERT] 37, no. 4 (October 2013): 337.

Eugene A. Nida helped to greatly popularize the idea that there should be different translations for different audiences. In his book, "*Toward a Science of Translating: with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*" (TASOT),¹⁸⁸ Nida wrote,

From what has been said directly and indirectly about F-E [i.e. "formal-equivalence"]¹⁸⁹ translations in preceding sections, it might be supposed that such translations are categorically ruled out. To the contrary, *they are often perfectly valid translations of certain types of messages for certain types of audiences* [emphasis added].¹⁹⁰

Although Nida advocated against "literal" translations, which he designated above as "formal-equivalence,"¹⁹¹ he could accept them, nonetheless, on the basis that they contained "certain types of messages" intended, not for *all* audiences, but "certain types of audiences." In other words, different types of translations contain different messages based on the audience for which it is intended. MIT is based on this very premise which is why Clark wrote that MIT "communicates best to [Muslims] but often not to Western Christians or even traditional churches in the area."

In a PowerPoint presentation, "Translation Approaches for Insider Movements," by "Wayne Lo.,"¹⁹² presumably with WBT-SIL,¹⁹³ he uses the phrase, "Religious Idiom."¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating: with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

¹⁸⁹ At this point (1964), the use of F-E (or, FE) for "formal equivalence" was easily distinguished from D-E (or DE) for "dynamic equivalence." In 1986, Nida exchanged DE for "functional equivalence" which is the opposite of "formal equivalence." Unfortunately, FE can be - and has been - used to refer to both. Nida's changing of terminology may not be the result of evolving views as many assume. He admitted more than once that his views on translation had not changed from the time of his undergraduate work at UCLA. The possibility exists that the ensuing confusion from changed terminology was intentional, especially the use of "FE," to refer to opposing ideas.

¹⁹⁰ Nida, TASOT, 166.

¹⁹¹ Also, "formal equivalence" (i.e. without the hyphen).

¹⁹² "Wayne Lo.," "Translation Approaches for Insider Movements," unpublished document (PowerPoint, March 2009).

¹⁹³ This is based on several different factors. Within the PowerPoint slides there are acronyms and abbreviations that are identical to other WBT-SIL literature and digital files. For example, reference is made in slide 17 to "T4 area" and "T5 area." In the document, "Silk Road Ascent Country Profiles," from the "Western Eurasia Group" (WEG) of SIL, it states that "WEG's Team Four (T4)" refers to the people of Afghanistan's while "WEG's Team Five South (T5S)" refers to "the provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and the southern part of the Punjab," and "Team Five North (T5N)" refers to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the Tribal Areas, the Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir regions, and northern Punjab." According to a profile page for "Emily Losey, her parents, Wayne and Amy Losey are missionaries in Pakistan (<http://www.ciuathletics.com/profile.asp?playerID=208>, accessed September 21, 2015)

Although he makes reference to "translating" for Muslims, this generic phrasing well describes the overarching idea that all religions have their own "idioms." Following this train of thought, "translations" of Scripture must accommodate their intended audiences by employing "religious idiom" specific to each audience. This accommodation can be appropriately termed, "Religious Idiom Translation" (RIT),¹⁹⁵ of which MIT is a subset.¹⁹⁶ It should be noted that both RIT and MIT are *religious adherent-specific* as opposed to *language-specific*.

MIT, as a specific example of RIT, is based upon the premise that Scripture cannot be properly "translated" for Muslim audiences apart from the use of "Muslim idiom." This assumes that even if Scripture is intelligibly translated into a language understandable to a Muslim, it is nevertheless insufficient for such a person without the use of "Muslim idiom." Another assumption is that Muslims have a super-cultural message (i.e. the religion of Islam) that *can* and *must* be "translated" by means of its presumed "idioms" across the numerous languages spoken by them. MIT thus grants to Islam a super-cultural message while denying it for Scripture.

To better understand where the idea that Scripture must be accommodated to Islam comes from can best be seen by looking at how several of its greatest advocates view missions, or evangelism. Owen, the creator of SAM, wrote about "beginning with a new perspective" of

which would correspond to the "T5 area." A Wayne E. Losey, presumably the same person just mentioned, wrote a thesis, "Writing Gojri: Linguistic And Sociolinguistic Constraints On A Standardized Orthography For The Gujars Of South Asia" (https://arts-sciences.und.edu/summer-institute-of-linguistics/theses/_files/docs/2002-losey-wayne-e.pdf) which language and people also correspond to the "T5 area." Finally, First Congregational Church of Eaton, CO, among the "International Ministries" they support has the following entry: "Wycliffe Bible Translators (Losey Family)" (<http://www.eatoncc.org/ministries/missions>, accessed September 21, 2015).

¹⁹⁴ Lo., "Translation Approaches," slide 28.

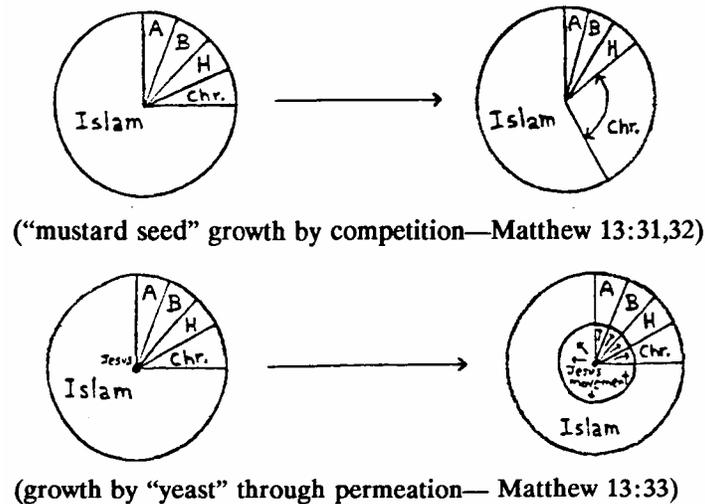
¹⁹⁵ The author is indebted to David Irvine for bringing this terminology to his attention. Irvine and his wife resigned from WBT-SIL primarily because of what they felt were unbliblical and heretical ideas with which they were told that they would have to comply. An account of their story can be read at: <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2011/12/13/jumping-from-the-sinking-wycliffe-ship-why-theology-matters/>.

¹⁹⁶ An illustration of this is found in the document, "Silk Road Ascent Expanded RBM Plan," also known as "Expanded Outcomes SRA Mar10," an unpublished Word document from SIL's Western Eurasia Group (WEG), dated March 2010. In the "Activities" column in the "Outcome 1" chart it reads: "Hindu key terms identified & agreed upon by key MTT's and consultants"); cf. the column, "Outputs 2011-2014" which mentions "Bible translations **in Hindu background** languages [emphasis in original]."

"mission" which included "a change in our language of conversion."¹⁹⁷ He contrasted the implied, "old perspective," with his "new perspective" by asserting that "true conversion to Christ" cannot be a part of "Christianity":

Is conversion to faith in Jesus the Messiah a change of religion or is it a transformed life and society? Is Christianity just another religion alongside of all the other religions of the world to be converted to or apostatized from? The answer to these two questions from *our new perspective* is obvious. Changing religions itself has never brought about true inward conversions...true conversion to Christ is a door into a new personal relationship.¹⁹⁸ [emphasis added]

Owen also illustrated this contrast by means of pie charts. Reading horizontally, the top chart was taken from the presentation of "a young couple raising support to work as missionaries in a certain Muslim country."¹⁹⁹ By implication this is presented as the "old perspective" of "mission." In the bottom chart underneath, he illustrated his "new perspective":²⁰⁰



He explained the bottom chart as follows:

The goal of mission would then be to expand the center into greater concentric circles that would permeate all the religious factions, including the religion of institutional Christianity, where nominalism without true faith is constantly in need of fulfillment as

¹⁹⁷ O., "A Jesus Movement," 14.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 16.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 16.

well. We would initially call this expansion of the center as a "movement"—a "Jesus movement"—or, in Arabic, a "Haraka Isawiyya."²⁰¹

Owen envisioned this "Jesus movement" as encompassing Islam, "Christianity," and other religions.²⁰² Ironically, while "believers" were not to adopt a Christian identity, they were to retain their Muslim identity:

These new believers would be known as Muslimun Isawiyun (singular-Muslim Isawi)²⁰³ and would maintain nominal allegiance to the Muslim community, including formal repetition of the Islamic witness, "There is no god except Allah and Muhammad is his messenger. (See below concerning an Isawi interpretation of the Arabian prophet.) Their witness will also include, "Jesus (Isa) is the Eternal Word of Allah" in a way similar to the additional Shiite confession of Ali."²⁰⁴

Owen went on to explain what he meant by "an Isawi interpretation of the Arabian prophet":

In a Jesus movement in Islam, Muhammad would be understood as an Old Testament-style messenger...The confession of the Muslim Isawi could not be an orthodox Sunni or Shi'a confession of Muhammad where superimposed traditionalism about Muhammad has made the issue all out of focus. Instead, it would be closer to a Qur'anic witness.²⁰⁵

Owen clearly accommodated his "Jesus movement" theology to Islamic belief and practice. This is most evident in his adoption of Islamic terminology, especially its confession of faith. He attempted to avoid charges of compromise and syncretism regarding the use of this confession by asserting:

I believe that a Muslim follower of Jesus could repeat the witness, "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger," with conviction and integrity, without compromising or syncretizing his faith in Jesus.²⁰⁶

In spite of his claim to the contrary, Owen's reinterpretation of Muhammad's role as "messenger" and "prophet" makes it difficult to avoid the charges of compromise and syncretism. This

²⁰¹ Ibid., 16.

²⁰² This same teaching has been labeled "Kingdom Circles." Although "Kingdom Circles" is presented as a Venn diagram, it relies upon the same visual illustration of "circles" while retaining identical teaching. It is taught in IM conferences and seminars such as Common Ground, Jesus in the Qur'an (a.k.a. Jesus and the Qur'an), etc.

²⁰³ Isa is the common English transliteration of Jesus' name as it appears in the Qur'an. Most Arabic translations of Scripture contain a different name for "Jesus" (yasū'a).

²⁰⁴ O., "A Jesus Movement," 19.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 22.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 21.

reinterpretation is an implicit witness to the tension in trying to reconcile the teaching of the Bible with Owen's "new perspective" of "mission" regarding Muslims.²⁰⁷

Rick Brown wrote an article for *Seedbed*, "What One Must Believe About Jesus In Order To Be Saved By Faith In Him."²⁰⁸ It was updated and then published in IJFM by the title (which was changed from a declaration to a question), "What Must One Believe about Jesus for Salvation?."²⁰⁹ He posed the question, "But what must one minimally believe about the role (name) of Jesus in order to put faith in him adequate to enter the Kingdom and be saved from condemnation?"²¹⁰ Brown asserted: "It is clear from the Scriptures that a person is saved, not by doctrine *per se*, but by personal faith in Jesus as Christ his Lord."²¹¹ He then presented a list of selected Scripture passages that he felt upheld his assertion, interspersed with his commentary on them.

The following quotes show a number of specific doctrines that Brown considered unnecessary for salvation:

The Scriptures...do not make an understanding of [Christ's] deity a requirement for salvation, and it is not mentioned in the earliest creed, that of the Apostles.²¹²

²⁰⁷ Regarding Owen, the author has class notes from 2011 in which the professor, who knows Owen said, "David was one of the first persons that went this far at that time. He went off track. I tried to stop him but he denied the faith, divorced his wife...He has forbidden the use of his Sirat as he no longer believes this." This same professor forwarded an email on September 8, 2001, from another person in contact with Owen who wrote: "David Owen has become agnostic, but he at least believes that the Qu'ran was inspired by the God of Abraham to correct the wrong teaching that God became Man, that Jesus is God. He offered to write a statement that I could share with inquirers. Many know that I have deliberately befriended David and his family, in spite of his headlong rush into what seems to me to be spiritual darkness and unbelief. David offered to sit with me to DEMONSTRATE from the Qu'ran, which is a PLAIN KITAB, that Jesus is not God, the resurrection did not occur, etc. My view is that [Muhammad] correctly understood the Gospel, and the Qu'ran is an introduction of the Torat, Zabbur, and Injil for Arabs. Taken together, the four books fully present the Gospel."

²⁰⁸ Rick B., "What One Must Believe About Jesus In Order To Be Saved By Faith In Him," *Seedbed* XIV, no. 2 (1999), unpublished working document (18 February 2014).

²⁰⁹ Rick Brown, "What Must One Believe about Jesus for Salvation?," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17, no 4. (Winter 2000), pagination removed, accessed May 4, 2014, http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/17_4_PDFs/02_Brown_Beliefs_hw.pdf.

²¹⁰ Brown, "What One Must Believe" (*Seedbed*).

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., footnote 1.

...it is not stated that one must understand the atoning value of Christ's death in order to be saved...The closest thing to mentioning the atonement in evangelism is found in Acts 8...Elsewhere in Acts, the death and resurrection of Christ is presented as an act of power that demonstrates that Jesus is the Messiah: it is the sign of Jonah that Jesus foretold. but it is not generally proclaimed as a sacrifice for sins. Its redemptive value is explained to believers...(e.g.. John 11:50-51; I John 1:7; 2:2; 4:10; Rev 1:5).²¹³

There is no statement saying that people must believe that Jesus is God before they can be saved, and...most of the early Christians had little understanding of the Trinity.²¹⁴

[*The Gospel According to Jesus* by John McArthur] also mentions facts which are Biblical but not basic to the Gospel; they are true and beneficial to know but belief in them is not a prerequisite to saving faith. These include the divinity of Christ and the penal substitutionary sacrifice accomplished by the death of Christ.²¹⁵

Although Paul's partial summary of the Gospel in 1 Cor. 15:1-4 includes the fact that "Christ died for our sins," there is no Scripture passage saying that belief in this fact is a requirement for salvation.²¹⁶

Brown does not explicitly deny these doctrines but repeatedly states that they are for *believers*:

"Although Jesus [sic] disciples marveled at His godlikeness, they did not understand His divinity until they had received the Holy Spirit. We cannot demand more of pre-believers today."²¹⁷ In the IJFM version of this article he adds to this idea:

These doctrines about the deity of Jesus and his substitutionary punishment are...important for the disciple to understand, [but] an understanding of them is not required for salvation. If we tell people that they cannot be saved until they know and have been convinced of these additional doctrines, then we are creating obstacles for them. (Jesus warned us about that.) How can they understand these things before they are born again? God's prevenient grace is sufficient to convict people that they should accept Christ, but they really need the Holy Spirit to go further, and that is not received in full until one actually receives Christ as *Lord and Savior*.²¹⁸

I am not suggesting that we should not present the whole work and person of Christ, only that we should not tell people that they cannot be saved until they understand and accept it all. Why not? Because this is not the way the Bible does it. If we do say it then it puts up obstacles which will discourage many people from accepting

²¹³ Ibid., footnote 5.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Brown, "What Must One Believe" (IJFM).

Christ by telling them they don't qualify. Seekers struggle with these issues, especially Muslims, and they get sidetracked by them from the central issue—their relationship with Christ.²¹⁹

Leaving aside the issue of the validity of Brown's views,²²⁰ he fails to note that the Qur'an, the book that Muslims consider to be God's inspired Word, contains a virulent polemic against the deity of Jesus. It also contains a number of passages that contradict the idea of an atoning death or "substitutionary" sacrifice. The following quotes are a few representative passages from the Qur'an regarding its denials of these two key biblical teachings:

People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to God but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers, and say not, 'Three.' Refrain; better is it for you. God is only One God. Glory be to Him -- That He should have a son! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; God suffices for a guardian.²²¹

And when God said, 'O Jesus son of Mary, didst thou say unto men, "Take me and my mother as gods, apart from God"?' He said, 'To Thee be glory! It is not mine to say what I have no right to. If I indeed said it, Thou knowest it, knowing what is within my soul, and I know not what is within Thy soul; Thou knowest the things unseen I only said to them what Thou didst command me: "Serve God, my Lord and your Lord." And I was a witness over them, while I remained among them; but when Thou didst take me to Thyself, Thou wast Thyself the watcher over them; Thou Thyself art witness of everything.'²²²

...No bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another:..²²³

In commenting on this last passage, "Yusuf Ali" gave an interpretation that is representative of the common Muslim objection to the biblical teaching that Jesus' death atones for sin:²²⁴

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ His selective presentation of Scripture passages, dubious explanation of "Lord and Savior," and reducing key terminology to being mere "Messianic titles" - including "Son of God" - are hardly in keeping with historic, biblical orthodoxy. With regard to this last point, Muslims hold that Jesus is the "Messiah," without the biblical understanding of its meaning. Brown's substituting reference for meaning by subsuming so much of the key terminology about Jesus as "Messianic" is a major accommodation to Islamic beliefs.

²²¹ Sura 4:171 (Arberry).

²²² Sura 5:116-117 (Arberry).

²²³ Sura 17:15 (Yusuf Ali); cf. 6:164; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38.

²²⁴ Orthodox Islamic teaching also rejects the historical fact of Jesus' crucifixion. Both Sunni and Shia, the two main branches of Islam that make up almost 100% of all Muslims base this belief on Sura 4:157-158 ("and for their

The doctrine of vicarious atonement is condemned. Salvation for the wicked cannot be attained by the punishment of the innocent. One man cannot bear the burden of another: that would be unjust. Every man must bear his own personal responsibility...²²⁵

In light of these passages from the Qur'an and Ali's commentary, it is difficult to accept Brown's assertion that presenting the deity of Jesus and His atoning or "substitutionary" sacrifice to Muslims are "obstacles" that "Jesus warned us about,"²²⁶ and not rather, an accommodation to Muslim thinking and Islamic theology.²²⁷

Brown revealed more of his thinking regarding his views about Muslims, the Qur'an, and Islam in a later IJFM article, "Biblical Muslims,"²²⁸ which bears striking similarities to Owen's, "A Jesus Movement Within Islam."²²⁹ The following list highlights a number of Brown's views:

- "Muslim" is redefined in a "'sociological sense'...regardless of what they actually believe about God."²³⁰
- "Reading the Gospel [i.e. the New Testament] helps [Muslims] interpret the Qur'an...the Bible [is] their guide to the interpretation of the Qur'an..."²³¹

saying, 'We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of God' -- yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them. Those who are at variance concerning him surely are in doubt regarding him; they have no knowledge of him, except the following of surmise; and they slew him not of a certainty -- no indeed; God raised him up to Him; God is All-mighty, All-wise.").

²²⁵ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1995, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān*, new rev. ed. (Beltsville, Md., U.S.A.: Amana Publications), 678, footnote 2191.

²²⁶ This is an evident (and strained) allusion to Matt 18:6-9; Mark 9:42-50; and Luke 17:1-2.

²²⁷ Advocating silence on such essential teachings which are consciously rejected by unbelievers is not taught in the New Testament. The Jews and Gentiles of the First Century A.D. did not have as part of their core beliefs the specific, polemic Islamic denials of Jesus' divinity and atoning death, both of which are essential to the Gospel being good news. In those matters where unbelievers' beliefs and practices were in direct conflict with the Gospel, the witness of Scripture is direct confrontation: Peter openly rebukes the Jews for putting Jesus to death (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15; 4:10; 5:30); Peter openly addresses the Jews' rejection of Jesus (Acts 2:36-40; 3:17-26; 4:10-12; 5:29-32); Stephen openly rebuked the Sanhedrin's unbelief in Jesus (Acts 7:51-56); Paul openly confronted the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles (Acts 14:15; 17:23-25). It is the Christian's responsibility to faithfully witness to the truth. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince unbelievers of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7-11).

²²⁸ Rick Brown, "Biblical Muslims," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 65-74.

²²⁹ This is based on the identical use of key terms, concepts, and arguments.

²³⁰ Ibid., 65.

²³¹ Ibid., 66. This implies that the Qur'an is inspired scripture since it is to be treated as the New Testament treats the Old Testament. Brown implies here that the Qur'an is *not* in error but rather misinterpreted by Muslims.

- "As Muslims...follow Jesus the Messiah as their Lord and Savior...they become what we could call 'Messianic Muslims.' In their own opinion, however, they are simply being better Muslims by submitting to the Messiah whom God sent to guide and save them."²³²
- "So although the Qur'an guides people to the Bible, Muslims typically identify the Bible as belonging to the Christian socioreligious group rather than to themselves."²³³
- conversion of Muslims to "Christianity" is unnecessary because "Christianity" is only a "socioreligious identity;" a "contest" resulting from "exclusivist attitudes;" and "threatening to Muslims' social identity..."²³⁴
- positively references Paul Hiebert's "centered set" since "centered-set Christians define themselves in terms of discipleship to Jesus Christ, which is...socially invisible."²³⁵
- provides various reasons why "Messianic Muslims" can say the *shahāda*, i.e. the Islamic confession of faith ("There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God").²³⁶
- regarding the *shahāda* he writes, "There is nothing at all exclusive about *rasul allah* (i.e. messenger of God)."²³⁷
- "If I had the choice (as only God does) between seeing a growing movement to Christ in which biblical Muslims were willing to say the *shahāda* under duress with a biblical

²³² Ibid., 67.

²³³ Ibid., 68. This implies that Muslims are God's people.

²³⁴ Ibid., 68.

²³⁵ Ibid., 69. The parallels between Hiebert's illustration of the "Centered Set" and Owen's "concentric circles" are striking.

²³⁶ Ibid., 70. By definition, a Muslim is one who confesses the Islamic creed or confession of faith. The retention of a Muslim identity is a de facto witness to other Muslims of one's belief in Islam regardless of how IM proponents seek to redefine "Islam" and "Muslim." Supposedly good intentions notwithstanding, this tactic cannot avoid the charge of being deceptive.

²³⁷ Ibid., 72. In the context of the *shahāda*, Brown's argument is simply shocking. The singling out of Muhammad as the messenger of God makes it clear that this statement about Muhammad is indeed exclusive. While it is true that Muslims confess that there were other "messengers" and "prophets," Muhammad is considered to be the "Seal of the Prophets" (Sura 33:40).

interpretation or seeing no movement at all, I would prefer to see the movement to Christ.

I would not withhold the Gospel just because those proclaiming it did not refuse to say the *shahāda*."²³⁸

- "Saying that Muhammad is a prophet does not mean that Jesus is not the Messiah and the Lord...So someone can say the *shahāda* and at the same time can believe in Jesus as his Savior and Lord."²³⁹

Brown wrote an unpublished paper, "The God that I Believe In."²⁴⁰ Comments by two reviewers are especially relevant that help shed more light on Brown's willingness to accommodate "Father" and "Son" terminology to Islamic beliefs:

...it is possible to read between the lines and see how this document leaves the door open for modalism. There is one place, for example, where he seems to give himself away. In discussing Kevin Giles and Thomas Torrance he implies that he does not believe that there existed eternal love relations between the members of the Trinity in eternity past, prior to the incarnation. This would pretty clearly be the case only on the modalist view of God. I would say that it is a pretty serious departure from orthodoxy and reject his characterization of this as some type of recently invented social Trinity doctrine. But in any case, it seems to me that the main problem is not so much what he says in this essay, but rather what he fails to say. He needs to come out clearly and articulate the orthodox doctrine that the Father and Son have eternally existed as two distinct, self-conscious persons in an I-Thou relationship for all eternity past, before there was an incarnation. If one cannot affirm that, then I fail to see how he could be considered orthodox.²⁴¹

In particular, I find it rather astounding that someone could characterize an essentially impersonal Trinity, lacking relationship of reciprocity between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as corresponding to the "historic Trinity" taught by the Fathers of the Church and by orthodox Christianity continuously until the present day. In reading "The God that I Believe In", I kept asking myself if this were *really* what was being proposed, and my conclusion in the affirmative seems confirmed...I cannot imagine how a non-relational understanding of the Trinity can possibly be consistent, first of all, with some affirmations in the Scriptures that can only be understood in reference to the immanent Trinity.²⁴²

²³⁸ Ibid., 73.

²³⁹ Ibid., 73.

²⁴⁰ The author did not have access to this paper but has copies of both reviews.

²⁴¹ Reviewer 1, unpublished working document (March 2010).

²⁴² Reviewer 2, unpublished working document (February 2010)..

One of Brown's WBT-SIL colleagues, Henk Prenger, wrote the paper, "Missiological Reflections for SIL."²⁴³ Prenger served as Director of Operations and Change Manager for SIL in from "December 1999-March 2014."²⁴⁴ He "directed the SIL operations in Eurasia (N-Africa, Middle East, Central & West Asia, Russia, and Europe),"²⁴⁵ and was specifically mentioned as the WEG Director.²⁴⁶ As WEG director, he had oversight for at least 8 current or future "non-literal 'Son of God'" productions and seven such productions "related to IM" projected to 2025 (it is unknown if there is any overlap between them).²⁴⁷

In his paper, "Missiological Reflections for SIL,"²⁴⁸ Prenger expressed the need for SIL to adapt to postmodernism which is well summarized by the following quote:

In our limited understanding we need to point people to salvation through Jesus Christ, but we do not want to presume to limit the saving power of God.

There is a tension in that previous sentence, and that tension is welcome. We regard our involvement in mission as an adventure and we are prepared to take risks. We are anticipating surprises as the Holy Spirit guides us into fuller understanding. Our ultimate goal is to become participants in the mighty works of God (Missio Dei).²⁴⁹

Prenger abandons the exclusive claims of the Gospel for an inclusive view of salvation. He attributes this view to the work of the Holy Spirit by alluding to John 16:13.²⁵⁰ This understanding of "mission" is not only held by SIL leadership but taught with a view to its acceptance among SIL personnel, a number of whom are MIT practitioners.

²⁴³ Henk Prenger, "Missiological Reflections for SIL," unpublished working document (February 2010).

²⁴⁴ "Henk Prenger," LinkedIn, accessed September 22, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/henk-prenger/7b/475/922>.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ SIL, "EAA committee meetings 2011: Report shared with WEG membership," unpublished working document (March 2011).

²⁴⁷ Clark, "Exploring Muslim Idiom Translation," slide 8.

²⁴⁸ Henk Prenger, "Missiological Reflections for SIL," unpublished document (February 2010).

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 9.

²⁵⁰ "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." Prenger's allusion to this verse is shown to be incorrect by the very next verse (John 16:14): "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you." The Holy Spirit points people to Jesus who points to Himself (John 10:1-18; 14:6). To argue that there is salvation in something or someone other than Jesus is not in keeping with "He will glorify Me" nor in being faithful to the words of Jesus that include repeated exclusive statements about Himself.

This consideration of the thinking of Owen, Brown, and Prenger, all of whom have been MIT practitioners, is very instructive in helping to understand the above advocacy²⁵¹ regarding the adopting of Islamic terminology in Scripture "translations." Unorthodox interpretations of Scripture, inclusive views of salvation, and redefinitions of Islamic terminology, beliefs, and practices help create a highly conducive environment for MIT.

Origins

MIT did not arise in a vacuum. To appreciate its beginnings we must first consider Islam itself. Of all the major religions of the world, Islam is the only one that arose after Christianity. It is also the only major religion that incorporates polemical attacks against essential Christian beliefs as part of its own belief system. In this regard, Islam is very much like a cult such as Mormonism or the teachings of the Watchtower Society (i.e. Jehovah's Witnesses). Samuel Zwemer and W.H.T. (Temple) Gairdner well summarized this aspect of Islam:

Islam thrives only by its denial of the authority of the Scriptures, the Deity of our Lord, the blessedness of the Holy Trinity, the cruciality and significance of the Cross, (nay, its very historicity) and the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ as King and Saviour.²⁵²

Islam is a *unique* problem to the Christian Church...which denies the whole essential and particular content of His message [i.e. the Gospel]...Point by point, *that which is particular* in the content of Christianity...is negated with abhorrence by Islam: the Fatherhood of God; the Sonship and Incarnation of Jesus Christ; the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; the death of Christ and all that it means...the Resurrection of Christ...His glorification with the Father...each several truth of these truths is a blasphemy in the eyes of every Moslem, a lie which Islam came expressly to blast, taught by a Book which the Koran came expressly to replace.²⁵³

²⁵¹ See the beginning of this section.

²⁵² Samuel Zwemer, "The Chasm" *The Moslem World*, vol. IX, no. 2 (April 1919): 112-113.

²⁵³ W.H.T. Gairdner, *The Rebuke of Islam* (London: UCFMA, 1920), 224-225.

These Islamic denials of essential biblical teachings are reflected in a number of the Qur'an's technical terms.²⁵⁴ To employ such technical terms in Scripture "translations," coupled with non-literal renderings of distinctive biblical terminology that clashes with Islamic doctrine, inevitably gives them an Islamic coloring. Such "translations" obscure the message of the Bible to the point of making them Islamic primers. Notwithstanding these pitfalls, there are examples of both Muslims and Christians who have employed distinctive Islamic terminology in their renderings of Scripture. While not all of them may be properly categorized as MIT, they do have direct bearing on our topic.

The earliest known examples of translations using distinctive Islamic terminology appear in Arabic, some of which date from the ninth and tenth centuries AD. Sidney Griffith, quoting Richard M. Frank, refers to this phenomenon as giving a "Muslim cast" to the language.²⁵⁵ Griffith gives a representative example of this from the "quotation" of John 15:23-16:1 in Ibn Hisham's,²⁵⁶ *Biography of the Prophet* [i.e. Muhammad] (Arabic, *Sīrat al-nabī*), in which:

the translator (or his later editor?) has changed words in the passage that might offend Muslim sensibilities, e.g., using 'the Lord' in place of the original 'Father.' This, along with other adjustments, are revealing of early suspicions that the biblical text was corrupt, and of a tendency on the part of Muslim scholars already to 'Islamicize' their cited versions of earlier scriptural narratives."²⁵⁷

Another example of "Islamicizing" Scripture is from the Zaydi Muslim theologian, al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rassī. In his polemical work, *Radd 'alā al-naṣārā* (i.e. Response to the Christians),²⁵⁸ from AD 9th Century, al-Qāsim translated "parts of Matthew's Gospel into Arabic...altering words and phrases and omitting sections in order to make the original conform

²⁵⁴ See Chapter 4 for specific examples.

²⁵⁵ Sidney Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: the Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 136.

²⁵⁶ This is to whom it is attributed in Arabic (rather than Ibn Ishaq as is now common in English).

²⁵⁷ Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, 179.

²⁵⁸ Or, *Refutation of the Christians*.

to Islamic beliefs."²⁵⁹ In Matthew 4:3, "Son of God," is changed to "the less particular 'beloved of God'"²⁶⁰ while in Matthew 6:9, "Our Father," is changed to, "Our Lord."²⁶¹ David Thomas commented about the thinking behind such changes: "This Islamicization of the Gospel is symptomatic of the confident early third/ninth-century belief that Islam provided the criteria for true teachings."²⁶²

Hikmat Kashouh writes about an Arabic codex of the Gospels, translated from the Peshitta,²⁶³ dated A.D. 993. It "was copied by a Muslim Arab...The language of this version closely approaches the language of the Qur'an."²⁶⁴ Jeff Hayes, one of the most influential men involved in MIT,²⁶⁵ is a highly-acclaimed Arabic translator,²⁶⁶ who has been (and is?) "on staff" with The Navigators ("Navigators"),²⁶⁷ is part of the staff of the Trac5 Leadership Summit,²⁶⁸ and is a "consultant" with "Common Ground Consultants"²⁶⁹ (the group responsible for the

²⁵⁹ David Thomas, "The Bible in Early Muslim Anti-Christian Polemic," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 7, no.1 (1996): 29.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 35.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 36.

²⁶² Ibid., 29

²⁶³ I.e. the standard Syriac version of the Scriptures.

²⁶⁴ Hikmat Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: the Manuscripts and Their Families* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2102), 128. This is the same version mentioned above in the document distributed by Jeff Hayes.

²⁶⁵ Hayes is an accomplished Arabic speaker and has his own translation company. See his LinkedIn profile (<https://www.linkedin.com/pub/jeff-hayes/43/b46/969>; cf. http://www.hayestranslation.com/about_hayes.html).

²⁶⁶ "Trac5 Leadership Summit - Speakers: Speaker & Facilitator Bios," Trac5, last modified September 27, 2015, accessed September 27, 2015, http://www.trac5.org/leadershipsummit_speakers.php ("He specializes in Arabic, and is one of the 26 certified Arabic-English translators in the United States; he is one of the top few in charge of determining certification of other translators. He was just recently named chairman of the Arabic-English certification committee of the *American Translators Association*.").

²⁶⁷ <https://www.navigators.org/Home>. In a phone call to the Navigators' headquarters on November 26, 2013, the author was told by "Heidi," that Jeff Hayes "is on staff" which she said is how they describe their missionaries.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. Trac5 claims to promote conflict resolution by finding "commonality among the monotheistic faiths [i.e. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam]... Trac5 core leadership...each follow Jesus in their own way while respecting other's faith traditions" (http://www.trac5.org/why_trac5.php, accessed September 27, 2015). This is identical to the C5/IM message presented in the Common Ground conferences.

²⁶⁹ "Jeff Hayes," LinkedIn, accessed September 27, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/jeff-hayes/43/b46/969> ("consultant, Common Ground Consultants, 2003 – Present (12 years) Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul Area").

"Common Ground" conferences, one of the most influential C5/IM mediums among professing evangelicals),²⁷⁰ wrote of this codex:

"The Beautiful translation of the gospels (Abdullah, Syrian doctor, 993 A.D.) Imitates Koranic style, but language has changed so much in the last 1011 years that it is not comprehensible. Digital. Originally brilliant and appropriate, but now inappropriate for an insider movement because of language."²⁷¹

In spite of Hayes' misgivings about this codex being appropriate for IM, Rick Brown, calling it, *The Elegant Gospels*, stated that its wording has influenced several versions of MIT:

In *The Elegant Gospels* of the 9th-century, the name of God is translated as *Allah* or *ar rabb* or *rabb* or *rabbuna*, and the Messianic title "Lord" is translated as *sayyid* or *sayyiduna* or *mawlânâ* 'our Lord' and sometimes as *'îsa* 'Jesus'. This policy has also been followed in some recent versions of the JESUS film and in *alkitâbu sh-sharîf*.²⁷²

Almost eight-hundred years later, Henry Martyn (1781–1812), the "first modern missionary to Muslims,"²⁷³ felt the need to employ distinctive Islamic terminology in an Arabic Scripture "translation." He supervised a "translation" of the Arabic New Testament made by Nathaniel Sabat,²⁷⁴ which was eventually published in 1816.²⁷⁵ E.F.F. Bishop described it by quoting the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), "The style adopted was intended to attract Eastern Moslems...but its resemblance to the phraseology of the Koran rendered it unacceptable

²⁷⁰ <http://comgro.org/>.

²⁷¹ [Jeff Hayes], "Current Status of Arabic Bibles for Muslims," unpublished working document from unlabeled CD-Rom distributed by Jeff Hayes at the Common Ground Conference, January 21-24th, 2008, at Central Christian Church (Central Mesa Campus), 933 N Lindsay Rd, Mesa, AZ 85213 (February 15, 2007).

²⁷² Brown, "The 'Son of God'," 51.

²⁷³ Samuel Zwemer, "Henry Martyn," *The Moslem World* II, no. 3 (July 1912): 227.

²⁷⁴ Sabat was born into a Muslim family and named Jawad. He professed conversion to Christianity and was baptized, only to publicly revert to Islam. In 1814 he published a book in Arabic refuting Christianity, "The Sabatian proofs which support the pillars of Muhammadan religion, and subvert the columns of the abrogated Christian faith" (البراهين الساباطية فيما تستقيم به دعائم الملة المحمدية و تهدم به اساطين الشريعة المنسوخة العيسوية). See Maulavi Abdul Wali, *Life and Work of Jawad Sabat, An Arab Traveller, Writer, and Apologist; Together with a review of his Romantic Career, as a Christian and Muslim* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1925).

²⁷⁵ R.H. Kilgour, "Arabic Versions of the Bible," *The Moslem World* VI, no. 4 (October 1916): 387-388.

to Arabic-speaking Christians.”²⁷⁶ In the same article, Bishop asked, “Does this mean that we need...one translation [that] will suit the Christians, and the Moslems must have another?”²⁷⁷

Bishop's question arises because for all practical purposes, the Arabic language itself has been subjected to the authority of the Qur'an by Muslims. It serves as the source for Arabic dictionaries and grammars (in spite of the fact that the Qur'an contains grammatical errors).²⁷⁸ Much of its terminology reflects the various Islamic denials previously mentioned. The Qur'an contains biblical terms that are redefined, often with differing opinions as to their meanings.²⁷⁹ It is not surprising, therefore, that Arabic-speaking Muslims have boasted, "Verily, the Arabic language will never be Christianised."²⁸⁰ For these reasons, employing quranic and other Islamic theological terminology in Scripture translation²⁸¹ is fraught with serious difficulties if the goal is to be faithful to the message of the Bible.²⁸² Of course, if one views Islam - whether in part or in whole - as complementary to biblical teaching such as is taught in C5/IM, employing such

²⁷⁶ E.F.F. Bishop, “Do We Want a New Version of the Arabic New Testament?,” *The Moslem World* XXVI, no. 2 (April 1936): 158. For an example of such quranic wording see E.F.F. Bishop, “The Eye of the Needle,” *The Moslem World* XXXI, no. 4 (October 1941): 356.

²⁷⁷ Bishop, “Do We Want a New Version of the Arabic New Testament?,” 157.

²⁷⁸ 'Abdallah 'Abd al-Fadi, *Is the Qur'an Infallible?* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, 1995), 171-185.

²⁷⁹ E.g. "Messiah." Seven definitions are given for this word in, "Why Was Jesus Named Masih?," Inter-Islam, last updated 2001, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.inter-islam.org/Biographies/Hazisa53.html>; cf. "Ruh Allah (i.e. Holy Spirit)" in Samuel M. Zwemer, *The Moslem Christ* (New York: American Tract Society, 1912), 29-30. William Goldsack, a Baptist missionary to Bengali-speaking Muslims (1899-1923), who translated the Qur'an into Bengali wrote: "What an awful book this Quran is!! Without the help of the commentaries I defy any man to understand large portions of it, and even they not seldom hopelessly differ. Take the opening passage of this very chapter As Saffat [i.e. Sura 37] for instance. Even the commentators can make nothing of it. I shall not be sorry when this translation is done with. It gets worse as we get nearer the end (sic). I do not wonder that the Arabs called it the ravings of a madman." See William Goldsack to Samuel Zwemer, December 6, 1915, Samuel M. Zwemer Papers, folder, "Important Private Correspondence + Reports - SMZ 1906-1932," Reformed Church in America archives, New Brunswick Theological Seminary Library, New Brunswick, NJ.

²⁸⁰ Samuel M. Zwemer, *Mohammed or Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1915), 198.

²⁸¹ This includes languages other than Arabic. Because Islam teaches that Arabic is sacred, many Islamic technical terms are taken from the Arabic and adopted as "loan" words into other languages spoken by Muslims.

²⁸² This is not to imply that every word in the Qur'an should be automatically barred from Arabic Scripture translations. Not all of its terminology are Islamic technical terms. There are also multiple words used in the Qur'an that have been regularly employed in Arabic Scripture translations that need not be abandoned. Such terms, however, ought to be employed with the utmost care. The issue is much less complicated for non-Arabic Scripture translations. Unless an Arabic loan word has become "indigenized" in a given language, native words ought to be preferred.

terminology is a natural outcome of the alleged "common ground" between the two belief systems.²⁸³

Dr. Nida helped to start the journal, *The Bible Translator* (TBT) which began in January 1950.²⁸⁴ He admitted, much later, "I did do a lot of ghost writing of articles for a while and in order to keep it [i.e. TBT] running for several years."²⁸⁵ Upon receiving permission from translators, he wrote articles in their names.²⁸⁶ Nida also served as one of several editors of TBT. In 1953 a partially reprinted (and modified) article, "Should We Use the Terms 'Isa' and 'Beta'?", by D.A. Chowdhury, appeared in TBT. The author defended (and advocated for) not using the Muslim title for "Jesus" in Bengali as well as for not using the literal rendering of "Son of God," in the translation of an evangelistic publication that he was then preparing for Bengali-speaking Muslims. In the TBT reprint some significant alterations were made to the introductory comments:

(A question for translators in Muslim areas.)

The problem of approximation between Christian and Islamic religious and theological terminology is a perennial one. This is the first of three articles dealing with the words "Jesus" (Isa) and "Son" (Beta). It is reprinted here from "News and Notes", Rev. L. Bevan Jones will comment on this article in the next number.²⁸⁷

Here are the introductory comments from the original article:

(A question for workers in India)

Mr. D.A. Chowdhury, whose note on this question we reproduce below, has recently been engaged on the task of preparing a translation in Bengali of *The Best Friend* the [sic] Life of Jesus for Muslim readers. Like some of the rest of us he has been exercised

²⁸³ This attempt to find "common ground" between the Bible and Islam is one-sided towards Islamic teaching. The author is unaware of any C5/IM proponent who is re-writing the Qur'an by using biblical language and terminology.

²⁸⁴ Philip C. Stine, *Biblical Scholarship in North America, vol. 21, Let the Words Be Written: the Lasting Influence of Eugene A. Nida* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 94.

²⁸⁵ Eugene A. Nida, interview by Peter Wosh, July 28, 1989, interview id unknown, transcript, Oral History Program, American Bible Society, New York, NY, 21-22.

²⁸⁶ Eugene A. Nida, *Fascinated by Languages*, 7.

²⁸⁷ D.A. Chowdhury, "Should We Use the Terms 'Isa' and 'Beta'?", *The Bible Translator* [TBT] 4, no. 1 (January 1953): 26.

about the use of the word *beta* ('son,' a word of Sanskritic origin which, when applied to Christ, stirs up the worst spirit in Indian Muslims), and the Muslim title for Jesus *Hazrat Isa*. Recognizing that both of these terms convey entirely false notions of Christ to the Muslim mind, he has decided to employ neither in his translation.²⁸⁸

There are several things to point out about the reprint. First, the alterations to the introductory comments were not indicated. Second, full citation of the original article was not given making verification with the original extremely difficult.²⁸⁹ Third, Chowdhury was a convert from Islam which would have been known to many of the original readership.²⁹⁰ Fourth, this article was not presented to *translators [of Scripture]*, but to evangelistic *workers* among Bengali-speaking Muslims.²⁹¹ Fifth, omitting the original paragraph following the parenthetical comment, in conjunction with the fourth point mentioned above, gave the extremely misleading appearance that Chowdhury was arguing for a non-literal rendering of "Son" terminology in Scripture "translation for Muslim audiences." Chowdhury was referring to his translation of *The Best Friend: the life of Jesus the Messiah*, an evangelistic publication in English.²⁹²

As part of the editorial board for this TBT issue,²⁹³ Nida must be held at least partially responsible for these undisclosed alterations which agree with later statements of his about

²⁸⁸ D.A. Chowdhury, "Should We Use the Terms 'Isa' and 'Beta'?", *News and Notes* XV, no. 6 (June 1927): 43-44.

²⁸⁹ The reprint omitted the publisher, volume and number, year and pagination. The original publication, *News and Notes*, was published by the Missionaries to Muslims League (of India). Its readership primarily consisted of missionaries to Muslims and was 26 years old by the time of the reprint.

²⁹⁰ "Notes on Contributors," *The Moslem World* XVIII, no. 2 (April 1928): ii, reads: "Daniel A. Chowdhury, B.A., B.D., Superintendent of the Scottish Church Mission at Budge Budge, Bengal, is a convert from Islam and engaged for part time in literary work."

²⁹¹ This is not to imply that the author agrees with Chowdhury's point that "Son of God" should not be literally rendered in "evangelistic" literature.

²⁹² Christian Literature Society for India, *The Best friend : the story of the life of Jesus the Messiah*, (Madras: Christian Literature Society for India, 1925). The preface reads: "This little book attempts to set forth, in plain language, the main features of the life of Jesus of Nazaret [sic], the Messiah. ¶For the sake of brevity it is composed of selections taken from the fuller Gospel record, to which the reader can easily refer." It is clear that this publication was not intended to be a new translation of Scripture but refers the reader to existing translation(s), which in the case of Bengali, would have included literal translations for "Son" and "Son of God."

²⁹³ TBT, Jan. 1953, 1.

rendering "Son of God" for Muslim audiences.²⁹⁴ At the very least, the initial, altered comment, "A question for translators in Muslim areas," was highly suggestive, if not meant to be a mandate, that non-literal renderings of "Son of God" in Scripture "translations for Muslim audiences" was necessary. Over a half-century later, based on this alteration, Rick Brown was able to appeal to it in support of his advocacy for using non-literal renderings for "Son of God."²⁹⁵

Over two decades later, in 1977, TBT published another significant article on how to render "Son" terminology for Muslims, "Jesus, Son of God – A Translation Problem," by Arie de Kuiper and Barclay Newman.²⁹⁶ The authors argue that "Son of God" in an Islamic context is a "translation problem."²⁹⁷ This is followed by the assertion that "Son of God" has different meanings throughout the Bible implying that the literal translation of this phrase is unnecessary. According to the authors, faith in Jesus as the Son of God is not essential to become a Christian since "Jesus himself certainly did not call upon the people of his day to believe in him as the Son of God,"²⁹⁸ which is a similar argument made by Brown²⁹⁹ who was certainly familiar with this article as he elsewhere references it.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁴ One wonders if perhaps Nida himself "ghost wrote" the alterations. Nida's view about rendering "Son of God" will be addressed in Chapter 5.

²⁹⁵ Brown, "Why Muslims are Repelled," 423, 426, 429.

²⁹⁶ Arie de Kuiper and Barclay M. Newman, Jr., "Jesus, Son of God – A Translation Problem," *TBT* 28, no. 4 (October 1977): 432-438. The article lists Newman as "a UBS Translations Consultant based in Malaysia." This is the same Newman that edited the Contemporary English Version (CEV) with whom Nida worked behind the scenes. Nida said of Newman: "Another person who is outstanding is Barclay Newman.... I contacted Barclay with regard to the possibility of working out an adequate dictionary to go along with the Greek New Testament text...I was very much impressed with him... I think he's done the most creative work of anybody...his work in Indonesia and in Malaysia has been absolutely remarkable... His style in English is far superior to anybody else. His sensitivity to communication is excellent, so I am just delighted to work with him on this new translation for youth [i.e. CEV]...and I think, by all odds, the most creative translation consultant that we have." See Nida, interview by Peter Wosh, 41. One wonders if Nida's praise of Newman's "creativity" included Newman's suggestions for non-literal renderings for "Son" terminology in Scripture "translations for Muslim audiences."

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 432.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 434.

²⁹⁹ The entire paragraph from which this quote is taken seems to provide much of the basis for Brown's articles, "What One Must Believe" (Seedbed), and "What Must One Believe" (IJFM): "How much does a person have to know or believe in order to become a Christian? Must one believe in the virgin birth, or in the "bodily" resurrection?"

De Kuiper and Newman state that the literal translation of “Son of God” into Indonesian is ill-advised and suggest “using a *functional* translation” [emphasis in original]³⁰¹ such as “God’s servant,”³⁰² “the One whom God has sent,”³⁰³ and “the One who is like God,”³⁰⁴ while placing the literal translation and an explanation of the non-literal rendering in a footnote.³⁰⁵ In 1979, TBT published a response to this article consisting of comments by two different people.

The first comments were made by Matt Finlay, described as one “who has spent some 25 years working as a missionary in the Singapore-Malaysia-Indonesia region.”³⁰⁶ He voiced several objections to de Kuiper and Newman who had quoted him at length. Finlay wrote, “I do not think we can dismiss the basic issue simply as a ‘translation problem.’ It is really a matter of theology.”³⁰⁷ He “suggest[ed] that both terms [i.e. Son of Man and Son of God], should be kept as literally as translation permits, as part of the biblical revelation, leaving it to the Holy Spirit to give enlightenment to the reader.”³⁰⁸ Lamin Sanneh, a former Muslim, commented on both Finlay’s response and the original article.³⁰⁹ While he disagreed with Finlay’s assessment that “Son of God” is a theological problem for the Muslim and not a linguistic one, he asserted, contrary to the implications of de Kuiper and Newman’s article, that “it would be wrong to produce one Bible for the Muslims and another for the Christian” for “[t]he greatness of the

Must one affirm that Jesus is the Son of God in the full sense of the later Christian confessions and creeds? Jesus himself certainly did not call upon the people of his day to believe in him as the Son of God - his message was the proclamation of God's Rule, not of himself as the Son of God."

³⁰⁰ Brown, “Why Muslims are Repelled,” 424, 426, 429.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 437.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 437.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 438.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 438.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 438.

³⁰⁶ Matt Finlay, “Jesus, Son of God – A Translation Problem: Some Further Comments,” *TBT* 30, no. 2 (April 1979): 241.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

³⁰⁹ Lamin O. Sanneh, “Jesus, Son of God – A Translation Problem: Some Further Comments,” *The Bible Translator* 30, no. 2 (April 1979): 244.

Bible is proved by both its evangelizing power and by its strengthening power, as is shown in the tradition of study and worship it has sustained throughout Christian history.”³¹⁰

Perhaps the single most important article regarding the origins of MIT (and C5/IM) is Owen's, "A Jesus Movement Within Islam," which was published in 1991 and has been previously mentioned in passing.³¹¹ Although this article serves as a virtual blueprint for promoting C5/IM, special attention will focus on section III, "A New Approach to Bible Translation,"³¹² as it is the most relevant to our topic.

The author charges [Bible] translators with "avoid[ing] the use of Islamic theological vocabulary as a safeguard to ensure the dislocation of the new convert from the Islamic community."³¹³ Islamic terminology in Scripture is not only "a necessary requirement" to start a "Jesus movement" but to continue the "arduous task of discipleship."³¹⁴ By using Islamic terminology, Bible translators will help towards "re-theologizing the Christian message within their particular context" since the "culturally bound confessions of Nicea and Chalcedon will not prove to be an adequate theological support for the Body of Christ in a Muslim context."³¹⁵ This is very similar to what Owen claimed above for the terminology in SAM.

Current Status

The selective overview of the origins of MIT just presented leads us to what may be considered its present status. As of 2006, SAM is claimed to have provided the basis for "27

³¹⁰ Ibid., 244.

³¹¹ O., "A Jesus Movement."

³¹² Ibid., 17-18.

³¹³ Ibid., 17.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 17.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 18.

language translation projects underway and in various stages of completion."³¹⁶ Unfortunately, the languages are not listed; nor does this figure include its influence on other MIT versions. In an unpublished paper, "The 'Mother of the Books': Tracing the spread of Muslim Idiom Translations," John Span has identified at least three of these 27 languages into which SAM has been translated: Bengali, Oromo, and Urdu.³¹⁷

David Gray, in his 2010 article mentioned the presence of multiple versions of MIT: "The Central Asian Russian Scriptures use the phrase 'spiritual Son of God' (original italics)."³¹⁸ He also wrote of his WBT-SIL colleagues:

Most [translation] consultants working in Eurasia Area [EAA] approve of idiomatic translations for Muslim audiences (MIT for short). Many translations in EAA are avoiding the inflammatory 'son of God' expression, where possible.³¹⁹

Regarding the EAA, Clark's PowerPoint file lists a projected total of 26 "non-literal "Son of God" MIT projects and 10 "Related to Insider M [i.e. IM]" by 2025.³²⁰ In 2011, Russ Hersman, the Chief Operations Officer of WBT,³²¹ "estimated that of 200 translation projects Wycliffe/SIL linguists have undertaken in Muslim contexts, about 30 or 40 'employ some alternate renderings' for the divine familial terms."³²² The Orlando Sentinel, in a 2012 article, reported about the MIT controversy surrounding WBT-SIL: "In dispute are about 200 of the 1,500 Bible translations

³¹⁶ See Anonymous, "Sira to Sabiil History." The figure of 27 translations was, however, corroborated by personal communication received from John Span, email message to author, March 25, 2015.

³¹⁷ John Span, "The 'Mother of the Books': Tracing the spread of Muslim Idiom Translations, draft I " unpublished working document, (September 9, 2015). The cover to the Bengali can be seen at: <http://www.jibonerkotha.com/en/catalog/sirat-al-masih/>.

³¹⁸ Gray, "Translating for Contextualised," 6.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

³²⁰ Andy Clark, "Exploring Muslim Idiom Translation," slide 8.

³²¹ <https://www.wycliffe.org/about/leader-details/russ-hersman>.

³²² Belz, "Holding."

completed by Wycliffe" to which Bob Creson, the President and CEO of WBT,³²³ is quoted as saying, "This is a big issue, but in terms of the number of languages, it is small."³²⁴

The WEA Report was mentioned in the previous chapter. It is considered in some detail here because its positive reception by many have given rise to the idea that the MIT feature of employing non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology is now a moot point.³²⁵ It contains ten recommendations for WBT-SIL.³²⁶ The first recommendation uses qualifiers such as "the most directly *equivalent* familial words within the given linguistic and *cultural context* of the recipients [emphasis added]."³²⁷ In the second and third recommendations, it allows for "the addition of qualifying words and/or phrases"³²⁸ and provides the following examples:³²⁹

- "heavenly Father" [that is, when the Greek text simply has "Father"]
- "divine Son,"
- "eternal Son,"
- "heavenly Son"
- "anointed Son of God"
- "royal Son of God"

In light of these qualifiers, the WEA Report can hardly be considered a "corrective" to the four-step guided process of SIL's, "Best Practices":

1. Consider the literal rendering for the text and add necessary paratext, then test (text+paratext) in the local community, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses.

³²³ <https://www.wycliffe.org/about/leader-details/bob-creson>.

³²⁴ Jeff Kunerth, "Wycliffe criticized over Bible translations for Muslims," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 29, 2012, accessed September 30, 2015, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-04-29/features/os-wycliffe-bible-translators-20120427_1_wycliffe-bible-translators-accurate-translations-father-and-son.

³²⁵ In addition to the A/G's acceptance of this report, this point was made very clear to the author when he made a presentation about MIT at a conference in March 2015. A person who has authored articles in favor of C5/IM commented to him in a question-and-answer session that we have moved "beyond" the Father-Son issue.

³²⁶ WEA Global Review Panel, "Report," 6-10.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 6. First, it is upon the premises of "equivalence" and "culture" that Brown, "Leith Gray," et. al. base their arguments for non-literal renderings of "Father" and "Son" terminology. These premises are the direct result of Nida's influence of which more will be written in Chapter 5.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

³²⁹ *Ibid.* 6 (this refers to all 6 examples).

2. Consider clearly familial, but non-literal options for the text (e.g. "God's one-and-only" [Son implied] and find several options. For each of these add the necessary paratext, test with community, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses.

3. Review all options from steps 1&2 and then choose the one which is most effective in communicating meaning, is most economical, and respects the preference of the intended audience of the translation project.

4. If no possible option has been identified through this process, *non-literal options for the text may be considered which conserve as much of the familial meaning as possible, provided that the paratext includes the literal form.*³³⁰

Upon careful consideration of these four steps with the WEA Report, there is no difference in principle. Both give assent to "the literal rendering for the text," or, "the most directly familial words." They then proceed to qualify this by recommending terminology that "is most effective in communicating meaning...and respects the preference of the intended audience," or, "within the given linguistic and cultural context of the recipients." Both also allow for "non-literal options," or "the addition of qualifying words and/or phrases. In no place does the WEA report state that "Father" and "Son" terminology should always be translated literally.

Freddy Boswell, Executive Director of SIL,³³¹ in a news release, agreed to "correct practices that are found to be out of compliance with the recommendations in the report."³³² Given the qualifiers to literal translations within the WEA Report that are in keeping with Best Practices, WBT-SIL has nothing to correct in their past MIT projects. Boswell also never explicitly admitted that WBT-SIL's non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology were inaccurate and unfaithful to the Greek text of the New Testament manuscripts. He instead

³³⁰ SIL, "SIL [Summer Institute of Linguistics] International Statement of Best Practices for Bible Translation of Divine Familial Terms, August 2011," in "The Necessity For Retaining Father And Son Terminology In Scripture Translations For Muslims," Appendix C, 48, AGWM, (Springfield, MO: General Council of the A/G, 2012), accessed October 1, 2015, <http://www.fatherson.ag.org/download/paper.pdf>.

³³¹ "Fredrick A. Boswell (a.k.a. Freddy Boswell)," SIL, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.sil.org/biography/fredrick-boswell>.

³³² Freddy Boswell, "SIL Executive Director describes changes in response to WEA Panel Report," SIL, May 1, 2013, accessed October 1, 2015, <http://www.sil.org/about/news/sil-executive-director-describes-changes-response-wea-panel-report>.

wrote of the recommendations as "more restrictive" and "defining more narrowly the choices of terms for 'father' and 'son' when these refer to God the Father and to the Son of God."³³³ This is not the same thing as WBT-SIL committing to the literal translations of "Father" and "Son" terminology.

Were WBT-SIL to fully commit themselves to always literally translating "Father" and "Son" terminology, it would not change the fact that many MIT versions are in digital formats. The ease of copying and distributing these products practically guarantees that MIT will have ongoing influence regardless of any change(s) in the current or future policies and practices of WBT-SIL.³³⁴ The WEA Report does nothing to address or correct this.

WBT-SIL are not the only organizations involved with MIT. The A/G, Biblica (formerly, International Bible Society, i.e. IBS), Frontiers, Global Partners for Development, "Navigators," and UBS are just some, but by no means, all of the organizations that are either directly involved in MIT or have personnel involved in MIT, some examples of which will be treated in the following chapter.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ On more than one occasion the author has experienced this ongoing influence of past MIT products produced and distributed by WBT-SIL from the local WBT-SIL missionary, Stephen Coats (a.k.a. Steve Coats), who is also Director of Sabeel Media (http://sabeelmedia.org/English/About_Us.html). His response to one of the incidents was that he could not be held responsible for previously-distributed materials.

Chapter 4

Selected Key Terminology from Seven "Muslim Idiom Translations"

Having reviewed representative literature about MIT (Chapter 2), along with some of its distinctive features, rationale, and origins to its current status (Chapter 3), we now turn to examples of terminology employed by the following seven versions:

	MIT Title & Year (if known)	Language	Format	Known Responsible Party/Parties
1	Sirat Al Masih (SAM), 1992	Arabic-English	Book	David Owen
2	The Life of Jesus from the Lives of the Prophets/Stories of the Prophets (LoP/SoP), Baghdadi	Arabic	Audio	WBT-SIL
3	The Life of Jesus from the Lives of the Prophets/Stories of the Prophets (LoP/SoP), Urbed ³³⁵	Arabic	Audio	WBT-SIL
4	The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (True Meaning)	Arabic	Book	Mazhar Mallouhi of Frontiers & Al Kalima
5	Sharif Bible, 2013 ³³⁶	Arabic	Book	Sobhi Malek of the A/G & the International Sharif Bible Society
6	The Gospel of Mark, c. 2002-2006 ³³⁷	Bengali/Bangla	Book	Milton Coke & Global Partners for Development
7	The New Testament: Greek - Balochi, 2nd ed. (Balochi NT), 2001	Balochi	Book	Tim Farrell ³³⁸ of WBT-SIL & the Pakistan Bible Society

In order to better understand these versions, a background summary for each one will be given.

This will be followed by specific examples from them in the following four categories: I. Father;

³³⁵ Anonymous, *Lives of the Prophets: In the Bedouin (or, Urbed) Accent* = (Qışaş Al-Anbiyā' bi al-lahjah li ahl al-bādīyah): "The Life of Christ" = (Sīrat Al-Maṣīḥ) (MP3 in 23 files), accessed February 28, 2012, <http://alanbiya.net/messiah.htm>.

³³⁶ International Sharif Bible Society, *Arabic Bible, Sharif Translation*, 2013 ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: International Sharif Bible Society, 2013). See <http://www.sharifbible.com/English.html>.

³³⁷ Janice [Peters], "back tran Bengali," in folder, "Arabic translation of scriptures," in folder, "Jesus in the Koran," in Hayes, unmarked CD-Rom.

³³⁸ See below under "Background Summaries, #7 for more information.

II. Son and Son of God; III. Son of Man; and IV. Distinctive Islamic terminology.³³⁹ The first three categories consist of a series of charts along with a list of the MIT renderings and the frequencies of those renderings. The fourth category highlights one or two specific aspects of its wording that reflect explicit Islamic terminology, that is, so-called "Muslim idiom."

Background Summaries

1. Sirat Al Masih (SAM), (Arabic)

SAM is a printed harmony of the Gospels (and a few verses from Acts 1) in Arabic.³⁴⁰ Its chapter and verse division differ from the actual biblical references. It was created by David Owen, who was supported by Blackstone Presbyterian Church in Durham, NC.³⁴¹ In connection with its preparation, Owen, while living in Jerusalem, worked with "the local Bible Society as a 'Researcher for Muslim Audiences'."³⁴² He served as the translator while Adnan Baidun, a Palestinian poet,³⁴³ was the stylist.³⁴⁴ In 1987 the first edition was published.³⁴⁵

A later bilingual, Arabic-English edition, with various changes to the text was published in 1992.³⁴⁶ The copyright for the latter is owned by Global Partners for Development (Global Partners)³⁴⁷ whose President is Milton Coke.³⁴⁸ It was "produced primarily as a translations helps"³⁴⁹ in order "to translate Sira [i.e. SAM] into non-Arab Muslim Languages."³⁵⁰

³³⁹ Though the information in each of these categories represents original work, the author acknowledges his indebtedness to several of his previously-created charts - see Appendix A.

³⁴⁰ An accompanying audio of the text was subsequently produced.

³⁴¹ Anonymous, "Sira to Sabiil History."

³⁴² Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report*, 11.

³⁴³ Anonymous, "Sira to Sabiil History."

³⁴⁴ Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report*, 11.

³⁴⁵ Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles." It is available at: http://www.jesus-for-all.net/islamic_books/pdf_0051.pdf.

³⁴⁶ Anonymous, *The Life of the Messiah* (see bibliography for complete information).

³⁴⁷ Email message to the author, March 25, 2015.

³⁴⁸ "Milton Coke," LinkedIn, accessed October 9, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/milton-coke/31/789/42b>; cf. Belz, "Inside Out" ("Global Partners for Development Form 990 for 2004, though, lists him as the only paid employee of the organization").

³⁴⁹ Anonymous, "Sira to Sabiil History."

Eventually, Owen withdrew permission at which time there were "27 language translation projects underway and in various stages of completion."³⁵¹

Owen wrote that SAM is an "Islamic-styled Arabic of literary quality"³⁵² that employs "saja° [sic] [,] or unmetred, rhymed prose, the distinctive style of the Qur'an."³⁵³ He also stated:

we may at times have to "go behind" the language of the Greek New Testament to its Aramaic-Hebrew origins in exegeting certain passages for our readers. This was done in translating a number of important verses.³⁵⁴

The goal is a dynamically equivalent presentation of Scripture for the Muslim Arab readers of today. It must be emphasized that contextualization does not mean that the message is watered down to make it more palatable. If done well, it can make the Gospel come into focus and challenge the reader in a way more literal translations cannot do.³⁵⁵

The aspect of non-literal renderings of Scripture as a means of "contextualization" reflect, in part, his time as a student at Fuller Theological Seminary (Fuller)³⁵⁶ between the years 1973-1976.³⁵⁷ A former ministry colleague of Owen, himself a graduate of Fuller wrote, "[SAM] is and was a faithful example of the "contextualization" taught by Fuller Seminary in the 1970's."³⁵⁸

2-3. LoP/SoP, Baghdadi³⁵⁹ (Arabic) and Urbed (Arabic)

Since an overview for LoP/SoP was given in the introduction the following will provide some supplemental information. This "audio panoramic Bible" produced by WBT-SIL was already in existence as of 1994.³⁶⁰ LoP/SoP has been produced in a number of differing Arabic

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Owen, "Project Sunrise: Principles" Principle 12.

³⁵³ Ibid., General Description.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., Principle 8.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., Principle 9.

³⁵⁶ Anonymous, "Sira to Sabiil History."

³⁵⁷ Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report*, 11.

³⁵⁸ Forwarded email message to the author dated, September 8, 2001.

³⁵⁹ Anonymous, *Lives of the Prophets: In the Baghdadi Accent* = (Qīṣaṣ Al-Anbiyā' bi al-lahjah al-baghdādīya), audiocassette. n.d.

³⁶⁰ R.B., "Current Issues In The Employment Of Spoken Arabic Dialects - Part I, " *Seedbed* IX, no. 1 (1994): unpublished working document (February 18, 2014). See the description given under the sub-heading, "

"dialects" and other languages.³⁶¹ There is an additional, complementary series, *The Lives of the Apostles* (a.k.a. *The Stories of the Apostles*) (LoA/SoA)³⁶² which covers selections from Acts to Revelation.³⁶³ The online chart, "Selections from Galatians & Romans in 'The Stories of the Apostles,'" created by the author, shows how the Islamic terminology in the LoP/SoP Urbed (or Bedouin) is also employed in LoA/SoA.³⁶⁴

4. True Meaning (Arabic)

True Meaning is an Arabic rendering of the Gospels and Acts in book form. It includes 160 pages of introductory material. Many of its explanations and interpretations are in keeping with the ideas of C5/IM.³⁶⁵ True Meaning does not individually number each verse but has "blocked" passages listed along with its subtitles. According to the Al Kalima website, True Meaning "was started by Mazhar Mallouhi," its "translation team" consisted of "Muslim followers of Christ and Christians who love the culture and language of their Muslim neighbors," and "Several Muslim scholars were invited to work on the contents of the volume alongside the committee."³⁶⁶

Implications for Media Strategies": "One is the *Prophets* series, which includes carefully selected passages on ten prophets. The selections on each prophet highlight an important theme that is summarized in a New Testament passage at the end. This series could be followed by the *Life of Christ* cassette or the *Jesus* film."

³⁶¹ E.g. <http://sabeelmedia.org/English/Resources.html>; <http://nivisaredpiroz.net/en/lives-of-the-prophets>.

³⁶² *قصاص الحواريين* (qīṣaṣ al-ḥawārīn). See Rick Brown, "Selecting and Using Scripture Portions Effectively in Frontier Missions," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 19, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 14 ("a series of 'biographical portions' such as *The Lives of the Prophets* and *The Lives of the Apostles*").

³⁶³ Anonymous, *Lives of the Apostles: In the Bedouin (or, Urbed) Accent* = (Qīṣaṣ al-Ḥawārīn bi al-laḥjah lī ahl al-bādīyah) (MP3), accessed February 28, 2012. <http://alanbiya.net/alhawariin.htm>.

³⁶⁴ Adam Simnowitz, "Selections from Galatians & Romans in 'The Stories of the Apostles,'" Answering Islam, accessed October 9, 2015, <http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/lives-of-apostles.pdf>.

³⁶⁵ This aspect of True Meaning deserves special treatment which lies beyond the scope of this paper. The author, however, has translated some of these explanations into English in conjunction with several of his online "back translation" charts. See Appendix A.

³⁶⁶ "Questions and Answers about 'The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ,'" Al Kalima, accessed October 9, 2015, <http://www.al-kalima.com/content/in-translation/questions-and-answers-about-brthe-true-meaning-of-the-gospel-of-christ>.

Mallouhi is a self-professed, "Muslim follower of Christ"³⁶⁷ which is how "believers" in C5/IM are usually described. He too, like David Owen, studied at Fuller, specifically in their School of World Mission (now, School of Intercultural Studies).³⁶⁸ As mentioned in a footnote in the introduction, the missions organization Frontiers, of which Mallouhi is a part, "raised nearly \$215,000" for True Meaning.³⁶⁹ Jeff Hayes and Larry Ciccarelli have also played significant roles in its production.³⁷⁰

5. Sharif Bible (Arabic), 2013

The Sharif Bible is the work of Sobhi Malek. According to his LinkedIn profile, Malek is President and Chairman of the Board of the International Sharif Bible Society (ISBS), a missionary with the A/G, and earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Fuller.³⁷¹ The following is an informative description of this work:

[Malek] was raised reading a traditional Arabic Bible, and later began to make partial translations to help a Muslim friend that had trouble understanding the Arabic Bible. He started with the Gospel of Mark, ("The Story of our Master Isa") using Greek and Hebrew texts. It took him 25 years to finish the Sharif Bible, published in 2000. While studying at Fuller Seminary he consulted with 40 people from churches and ministries, including Wycliffe Bible Translators, who were experts in Arabic grammar. This translation marked the first time in history a Bible was produced in Modern Standard Arabic, the language used in every day communication. Approximately 1 ½ million Sharif Bibles have been distributed to Muslims.³⁷²

6. Gospel of Mark (Bengali)

³⁶⁷ Chandler, *Pilgrims of Christ*, 104.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁶⁹ See footnote 25.

³⁷⁰ Hayes, unmarked CD-Rom. This disc contains a number of Word documents in which Hayes or Ciccarelli appear under the "Properties" tab, sometimes by their first name, first and last names, initials, and known pseudonyms.

³⁷¹ "Sobhi Malek," LinkedIn, accessed October 9, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/sobhi-malek/43/68b/3>.

³⁷² Coalition of Ministries to Muslims in North America (COMMA), "COMMA Report for September 2014," email message to author, November 25, 2014.

Milton Coke, President of Global Partners, was mentioned above in connection with the Arabic-English production of SAM. Coke is a graduate of Fuller³⁷³ and a known C5/IM practitioner. Global Partners has been responsible for several MIT versions and editions. One production from Global Partners was the Gospel of Mark in Bengali, which also involved Janice Peters of the PCA.³⁷⁴ Its features are similar to another MIT that Global Partners released:

In 2005 Global Partners published a new *Injil Sharif*, which is the translation that caused all the uproar in recent days. Of all the Bengali New Testaments that bear the name *Injil Sharif*, it is the only one to remove 'Father' and 'Son' and replace them with substitute titles having different meanings.³⁷⁵

In the PCA report, "Like Father, Like Son," this 2005 production was shown to have been influenced by Rick Brown's earlier argument that "Messiah" was an adequate non-literal rendering for "Son of God."³⁷⁶ This is the identical wording in Global Partner's Gospel of Mark.

7. Balochi NT

Tim Farrell joined WBT-SIL (UK)³⁷⁷ in 1983.³⁷⁸ In his doctoral thesis, he described this production as:

the Balochi translation of the New Testament published by the Pakistan Bible Society in 1999.³⁷⁹ The published Balochi New Testament consists of a Greek-Balochi interlinear translation which has a word by word gloss of the Greek into Balochi on the right hand page, and a communicative (explanatory) translation on the left hand page.

In general the communicative translation is quite interpretive...However, since the communicative translation is accompanied by the interlinear translation, which is strictly

³⁷³ Hugh Milton Coke, Jr., "An Ethnohistory of Bible Translation Among the Maya," (PhD diss., The School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1978).

³⁷⁴ Private correspondence, email to author, June 7, 2014.

³⁷⁵ King, "Muslim Idiom Translations in Bangladesh," 336.

³⁷⁶ PCA, "Like Father, Like Son," 37.

³⁷⁷ Tim Farrell, "Mother Tongue Education and the Health and Survival of the Balochi Language," *Balochi Lingist*, February 24, 2011, accessed October 10, 2015, <https://balochilinguist.wordpress.com/2011/02/24/mother-tongue-education-and-the-health-and-survival-of-the-balochi-language/> (Underneath the title is: "Tim Farrell: Summer Institute of Linguistics, High Wycombe, UK"); cf. "Timothy Farrell," SIL, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.sil.org/resources/search/contributor/farrell-timothy>.

³⁷⁸ Tim Farrell, "Christos—Mr. Christ or the anointed one of God," *Notes on Translation* 12, no. 4 (1998), 46.

³⁷⁹ A second edition was published in 2001 which is the one that is used for this paper. There is no indication that it was revised or updated.

literal, the reader has access to a translation that presents a closer correspondence to the form of the original.³⁸⁰

He also wrote, "I was involved in the translation of the Balochi New Testament."³⁸¹ This involvement included "working with Muslim colleagues in Scripture translation since 1986...relating to a mainly Muslim team of translators and literacy workers."³⁸² Seeking to allay any possible fears of the reader regarding Muslims involved in Scripture translation, Farrell wrote, "I have not met Muslims in my own work, who have wanted to change the translation deliberately to something they knew was exegetically inaccurate."³⁸³ He did, however, direct strong criticism towards Christian translators:

In addition, as much as there may be unconscious skewing of a translation towards Islamic thought by Muslim translators, there appears to be even greater risk of skewing by Christian translators who import Christian traditional understanding into the translation.³⁸⁴

By "Christian traditional understanding" he meant "the use of inappropriate language" which he further defined as "many traditional and ecclesiastical turns of phrase."³⁸⁵

I. Father

1. Sirat Al Masih (SAM), (Arabic)

Total Occurrences of "Father" in the Gospels in NA27³⁸⁶	Total Occurrences of "Father" literally translated in SAM	Scripture References	SAM References
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³⁸⁰ Tim Farrell, "Metaphor in Matthew's Gospel: Its Cognitive Structure, Background, Culture Dependence and Translatability," (PhD thesis, Roehampton University, 2004), 478.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² James, "Working With Colleagues," 61. Farrell wrote this article under a pen name.

³⁸³ Ibid., 63.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ The total occurrences for "Father," "Son," "Son of God," and "Son of Man" are taken from the information in the following chart: Adam Simnowitz, "Occurrences of Father, Son, and Son of God, or Familial Language Terminology in the New Testament," Biblical Missiology, last modified April 6, 2015, accessed October 1, 2015,

184	10*	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Luke 2:49 2. John 5:18 3. John 8:41 4. Matt 23:9 5. Matt 26:42 6. Luke 22:42 7. Luke 23:46 8. John 5:17 9. Matt 12:50 10. John 8:38 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manger, 46 2. Plot, 11 3. Stoner, 68 4. Gnats, 18 5. Decision, 5 6. Decision, 6 7. Skull, 31 8. Plot, 10** 9. Perfume, 49** 10. Stoner, 62**
<p>* SAM as a harmony of the Gospels omits various passages. The number of its literal translations combined with the non-literal renderings will not equal the total amount of occurrences for "Father" in the Greek text of NA 27.</p> <p>** The occurrences with two asterisks indicate that "My Father" was changed to "Allah, my Father."</p>			

Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" in SAM	Scripture References	SAM References
1. Allah is fatherly	Matt 7:11	Lily 28
2. a God who is Fatherly	Matt 10:29	Yahya 21
3. Allah as a Father	Luke 11:13	Seventy 42
4. "Father" (as an additional insertion but not present in the Greek text)	John 18:9	Decision 12
5. higher	Matt 26:29/Mark 14:25	Supper 12
6. We	John 14:26; 15:26	Sakina 15, 36
7. the Living One	John 6:57	Bread 46
8. the invisible world which we	Matt 16:17	Destiny 33
9. Allahuma, Lord of all the world	Matt 6:9	Lily 7
10. god	John 8:19 (first occurrence)	Stoner 47
11. Allah	<p>John 1:18; 2:16; 3:35; 4:23; 5:19, 20-21, 22-23; 5:26, 36, 37, 43, 45</p> <p>Matt 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 14-15, 18, 26, 32; 7:21; 11:25, 27; 10:20, 32-33</p> <p>John 6:32, 37, 44-45, 57, 65</p> <p>Matt 15:13</p> <p>Luke 9:26</p>	<p>Word 3; Renewed 2, 28, 41; Plot 12, 13, 14, 17, 22, 23, 26, 27</p> <p>Promised Land 25, 43, 47; Lily 1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 22, 25, 36; Perfume 21, 22; Yahya 13, 22</p> <p>Bread 27, 31, 35, 46, 54, Bread 69</p> <p>Destiny 43</p>

	<p>Matt 18:10, 14, 19, 35 John 8:16, 18, 19 (last two occurrences), 49, 54; 10:15, 17-18, 25, 29-30, 32, 36, 37-38; 11:41 Matt 20:23 Mark 11:25 John 12:26, 27, 28, 49-50 Matt 24:36 Luke 22:29 John 13:1 & 3; 14:2, 6, 7, 8-9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 21, 24, 28, 31; 15:1, 8, 9, 15, 16, 23; 16:10, 15, 23, 25, 32; 17:1, 5, 24, 25 Matt 26:39, 53/John 18:11 Luke 23:34 John 20:17, 21 Matt 28:19 Acts 1:7</p>	<p>Transfiguration 47, 49, 54, 65 Stoner 45, 46, 47, 76, 82; Seeing One 35, 38; Joy 2, 4, 5, 7, 8; Beloved 28 Sycamore Tree 42 Shouts 25 Gnats 42, 43, 44, 56 The Throne (or, Thief) 23 Supper 15 Supper 18; Sakina 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 26, 27, 30, 31, 35, 37, 42, 46, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, 69, 70 Decision 3, 16 Skull 13 Kerchief 10, 45 Kerchief 68 Kerchief 74</p>
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2-3. The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic) and Urbed (Arabic)

Total Occurrences of "Father" in Luke and Matthew 28:19 in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Father" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	Total Occurrences of "Father" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)
18	0	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)	Scripture References
1. God	1. this house which is kind to me and cares for me	Luke 2:49
2. God	2. your Lord	Luke 6:36
3. God	3. God	Luke 9:26
4. omitted	4. Lord; my Lord	Luke 10:21
5. omitted	5. Lord (first occurrence) 6. he/him (second occurrence) 7. God (third occurrence)	Luke 10:22
6. loving, heavenly Lord	8. Oh Lord, Oh Close One, Oh Answering One [i.e. to prayer]	Luke 11:2

7. Lord of the world	9. God	Luke 11:13
8. omitted	10. your Lord	Luke 12:30
9. God (literally, "God's will")	11. your Lord	Luke 12:32
10. God the praised and most high	12. God	Luke 22:29
11. Lord	13. Lord	Luke 22:42
12. Lord	14. Lord	Luke 23:34
13. Oh Lord ... oh Lord	15. Lord	Luke 23:46
14. God (literally, "God's promise")	16. He (referring to God)	Luke 24:49
15. God	17. not included	Matt 28:19

4. The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (True Meaning)

Total Occurrences of "Father" in the Gospels and Acts in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Father" literally translated in True Meaning
187	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" in True Meaning	Scripture References
God	Matt 5:45; 6:15, 26; 7:21; 10:29; 11:27; 13:43; 16:27; 28:19 Mark 8:38; 11:25 Luke 10:22; 11:13; 22:29 John 1:14; 3:35; 4:21, 23; 5:20, 23 (2x), 26, 36, 45; 6:27, 37, 39, 44, 45, 46 (2x), 65; 8:54; 10:36, 38; 12:50; 14:8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 21, 23, 24, 26, 31; 15:1, 8, 9, 15, 16, 23, 24; 16:3, 10, 15, 23, 26, 28 Acts 1:7
my God	Matt 11:26
God, your Lord	Luke 6:36
my God, the beloved	John 5:17
God the Exalted	Matt 5:48; 24:36 Mark 13:32 John 5:18, 36; 8:27;
the living God	John 6:57
God's family	John 8:42
God, the mighty	John 10:15, 17, 29
God, mighty and majestic	Acts 2:33
God, the mighty, the Almighty	John 10:29
my God, the mighty, the wise	John 17:1
the manifestation of God in flesh	John 14:9
the essence of God	John 14:10, 11, 20
God my guardian	John 14:28
God, your supreme guardian	Matt 5:16; 6:14; 10:20

our guardian	Matt 6:9 Luke 11:2
his guardian	John 5:18; 13:1
my guardian	John 5:19; 8:16, 18, 19 (3x), 28, 38, 49; 10:32; 12:49; 14:6, 7; 20:17
my holy guardian	John 17:11
your guardian	John 20:17
a guardian to you	Matt 23:9
a guardian	John 8:41
O Lord	Matt 26:39, 42 Mark 14:36 Luke 23:34, 46
my Lord	Matt 10:32, 33; 11:25, 27; 12:50; 15:13; 18:10, 19; 20:23; 25:34; 26:53 Luke 10:21 (2x), 22; 22:42 John 5:21, 22, 30; 6:32; 10:18, 37; 11:41; 12:26, 28; 16:32; 17:5, 21, 24; 18:11; 20:17, 21
your Lord	Matt 6:1, 4, 6 (2x), 8, 18, 32
your merciful Lord	Matt 7:11
his Lord	John 13:3; 16:17
my Lord the just	John 17:25
my Lord which is in heaven	Matt 18:35
Lord of the worlds	Matt 16:17
my Lord...the exalted	John 16:23
him, the exalted	John 1:18 (second occurrence)
his promise, the exalted	Luke 24:49
his promise	Acts 1:4
your sovereign	Matt 18:14
the mighty	John 10:30
him	Matt 11:27 John 14:6, 31; 15:26; 16:28
he	Luke 10:22 John 5:37; 10:15; 14:10, 11, 28; 16:27
as a compassionate father	Luke 12:30
omitted	Matt 6:18 Mark 11:26 John 4:23; 6:57; 8:29; 15:26; 16:16;

5. Sharif Bible (Arabic), 2013

Total Occurrences of "Father" in the New Testament in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Father" literally translated in the New Testament of the Sharif Bible (Arabic)
260	257

Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" in the Sharif Bible (Arabic)	Scripture References
him	John 6:57 (second occurrence)
he	John 14:31 (second occurrence)
maker	James 1:17

6. Gospel of Mark (Bengali)

Total Occurrences of "Father" in Mark in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Father" literally translated in Mark (Bengali)
4	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" in Mark (Bengali)	Scripture References	Mark (Bengali) Verse References
Lord	Mark 8:38	180
your protector, who live[s] in the heaven	Mark 11:25	250
Allah (Arabic for [the one] God)	Mark 13:32	294
Rabbul Alamin (Arabic for Lord of the worlds)	Mark 14:36	319

7. Balochi NT

Total Occurrences of "Father" in the New Testament in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Father" literally translated in the Balochi NT
260	2*
* John 5:17 contains "father" but is interpretively rendered: "God who is like a father for me." John 5:18 literally translates "Father."	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" in the Balochi NT	Scripture References
Sustainer	ALL OCCURRENCES (except for John 5:17, 18 - see above; and the ones listed below)
he	Matt 6:6 (second occurrence) John 14:28 (second occurrence); 16:27 (first occurrence)
	Matt 11:26 John 4:21*; 15:26 (first occurrence)

omitted	2 Cor 1:3 (first occurrence) Gal 1:4 Eph 1:3 1 Thess 1:3
the Sustainer (as an additional insertion but not present in the Greek)	Matt 11:27 (fourth insertion) Luke 10:22 (fourth insertion) John 14:23 (second insertion); 16:24; 18:9 Romans 6:4 (second insertion) Heb 12:7
master	Matt 23:9
your	Luke 10:21 (second occurrence)
God	John 1:18; 10:36; 14:26; 15:26 (second occurrence) Gal 1:1 1 John 3:1; 4:14
him	John 6:46, 57; 10:15*** (second occurrences for each)
sender	John 8:18, 19
servants of God/God's servants	John 8:41, 42
his	John 10:29; 14:11 (second occurrences for each) 2 John 3 (second occurrence)
his side	John 16:27 (second occurrence), 28
*John 4:21 is not individually numbered in the Balochi but part of a "blocked" passage, John 4:21-24. "Father" is omitted in v. 21 but both occurrences are retained in v. 23. **John 10:14 is combined with John 10:15.	

II. Son and Son of God

1.1 Sirat Al Masih (SAM), (Arabic) (“Son” in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son" in the Gospels in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son" literally translated in SAM	Scripture References	SAM References
39*	3**	1. Luke 1:32 2. Matthew 1:21 3. John 8:36	1. Family of Dawud 16 2. Manger 2 3. Manger 45
*Excepting passages where "son" refers to Jesus' presumed earthly relationship to Joseph and his earthly relationship to Mary (e.g. Luke 2:48) ** SAM as a harmony of the Gospels omits various passages. The number of its literal translations combined with the non-literal renderings will not equal the total amount of occurrences for "Son" in the Greek text of NA 27.			

Non-Literal Renderings for	Scripture	SAM
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"Son" in SAM	References	References
1. first-born child	Matt 1:26	Manger 4
2. the Beloved	Matt 3:17; 17:5	Dove 26; Transfiguration 6
3. the Masih (Messiah)	John 3:16, 17	Renewed 19, 20
4. his Word	John 3:35 Matthew 28:19	Renewed 28 Kerchief 68
5. him	John 3:36	Renewed 28
6. I	John 5:19, 21; 17:1	Plot 12, 13; Sakina 57 (second occurrence)
7. me	John 5:20, 22, 23, 26; 17:1 Matthew 11:27	Plot 13, 14, 14, 17; Sakina 57 (first occurrence) Perfume 22
8. my name	John 14:13	Sakina 8

1.2 Sirat Al Masih (SAM), (Arabic) ("Son of God" in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son of God" in the Gospels in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of God" literally translated in SAM
28*	0**
<p>* This does not include the sole exceptional use for Adam in Luke 3:38. ** SAM as a harmony of the Gospels omits various passages. The number of its non-literal renderings will not equal the total amount of occurrences for "Son of God" in the Greek text of NA 27.</p>	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of God" in SAM	Scripture References	SAM References
1. Word of Allah	Mark 5:7 Matthew 14:33; 16:16 John 20:31	Pillow 9 Bread 19; Destiny 32 Kerchief 81
2. pure	Luke 1:35	Family of Dawud 18
3. have come from the Spirit of Allah	Matt 4:3, 5	Dove 29, 30
4. from the Spirit of Allah and are his greatest salvation	Luke 4:41	Kafr Nahum 37
5. from the Spirit of Allah	Mark 3:11	Promised Land 3
6. have come down from Allah	John 10:36; 19:7	Joy 7; Decision 51
7. have truly descended from the Exalted and Great One	Matt 27:40	Skull 15
8. man did come down from Allah	Matt 27:54	Skull 34
9. the Messiah of God	John 1:34, 49; John 11:4	Dove 38, 47; Beloved 2
10. is among the truthful	Matt 27:43	Skull 17

11. my	John 5:25	Plot 16
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2-3.1 The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic) and Urbed (Arabic)

Total Occurrences of "Son" in Luke and Matthew 28:19 in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	Total Occurrences of "Son" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)
7	0	0

Non-Literal Renderings For "Son" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	Non-Literal Renderings for "Son" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)	Scripture References
1. omitted	1. the king	Luke 1:32
2. beloved Messiah (Christ)	2. the beloved king, my caliph	Luke 3:22
3. beloved Messiah (Christ)	3. my caliph	Luke 9:35
4. omitted	4. me (first occurrence)	Luke 10:22
5. omitted	5. I (second occurrence)	Luke 10:22
6. omitted	6. I (third occurrence)	Luke 10:22
7. his Messiah	7. not included	Matt 28:19

2-3.2 The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic) and Urbed (Arabic)

Total Occurrences of "Son of God " in Luke in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of God" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	Total Occurrences of "Son of God" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)
6	0	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of God" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of God" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)	Scripture References
1. Messiah (Christ)	1. the deputy who became the caliph of God over all the people	Lk. 1:35
2. Messiah of the Most High God	2. caliph of God	Lk. 4:3
3. Messiah of God	3. caliph of God	Lk. 4:9
4. omitted	4. caliph of God	Lk. 4:41
5. Messiah of the most high God	5. caliph of God	Lk. 8:28
6. Messiah of God	6. the king, the caliph of God	Lk. 22:70

4.1 True Meaning ("Son" in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son" in the Gospels and Acts in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son" literally translated in True Meaning <u>without</u> in-text non-literal explanation (often in parentheses)
40	0

Literal Renderings for "Son" in True Meaning followed by in-text non-literal explanation (often in parentheses)	Scripture References
my son (my beloved)	Matt 2:15
my beloved son (the beloved Messiah)	Matt 3:17; Mark 9:7; Luke 3:22
my beloved son (my beloved chosen one)	Matt 17:5
my beloved son (the beloved chosen one)	Mark 1:11
son of God* (the beloved of God)	Mark 14:61
son of God Exalted (beloved of God Most High) [i.e. Son of the Exalted God]**	Luke 1:32
my selected son (my beloved selected one)	Luke 9:35
his only son (his only beloved)***	John 3:16
* the Greek does not have "Son of God" but rather "Son of the Blessed." ** the Greek does not have "Son of God" but rather "Son of the Most High." *** "only" can also be understood as "unique."	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son" in True Meaning	Scripture References
male	Matt 1:21
male child	Matt 1:23
newborn boy	Matt 1:25
my truth	Matt 11:27 (first two occurrences); Luke 10:22 (first occurrence)
I	Matt 11:27 (third occurrence); Luke 10:22 (third occurrence); John 5:19 (second occurrence)
master of humanity	Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32
his Messiah	Matt 28:19
the truth of God	Luke 10:22 (second occurrence)
his only beloved*	John 3:17
his beloved	John 3:35; 5:20 (includes, second extra occurrence), 21, 22; 6:40
the beloved of God	John 5:19 (first occurrence), 23
his beloved, the master of humanity	John 5:26 (combined with 5:27)
I by my authority	John 8:36
my intercession	John 14:13
your beloved, the chosen one	John 17:1 (first occurrence)
his rank	John 17:1 (second occurrence)
the Messiah the beloved of God	John 3:36 (first occurrence)
my son, today I have begotten you (you are	Acts 13:33

my beloved, today I have crowned you king over my nation)	
omitted	John 3:36 (second occurrence)
* "only" can also be understood as "unique."	

4.2 True Meaning (“Son of God” in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son of God" in the Gospels and Acts in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of God" literally translated in True Meaning <u>without</u> in-text non-literal explanation (often in parentheses)
29	0

Literal Renderings for "Son of God" in True Meaning followed by in-text non-literal explanation (often in parentheses)	Scripture References
the son of God (the beloved of God)	Matt 4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:40, 43; 27:54; Mark 15:39; Luke 1:35; 4:3, 9, 41; 22:70; John 5:25; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 20:31; Acts 9:20
the son of the living God (the beloved of the living God)	Matt 16:16
the only son of God (the only beloved of God)*	Mark 1:1; 3:11; John 1:34
Oh, son of God Exalted (oh, beloved of God Exalted) [i.e. Son of the Exalted God and beloved of the Exalted God]	Mark 5:7
Oh, son of God Exalted (beloved of God Exalted) [i.e. Son of the Exalted God and beloved of the Exalted God]	Luke 8:28
the son of God the chosen one (the beloved of God the chosen one)	John 1:49
the son of God the one [God] (the beloved of God the one [God])	John 3:18
the Messiah, the son of God the awaited one (the beloved of God the awaited one)	John 19:7
* "only" can also be understood as "unique."	

5.1 Sharif Bible (Arabic), 2013 (“Son” in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son" in the New Testament in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son" literally translated in the New Testament of the Sharif Bible (Arabic)
79	77*
* Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5 contain literal translations for "my son," but insert within the text an extra occurrence of "son" in an interpretive rendering of Psalm 2:7: "Today I have crowned you a son to me." This rendering reveals how "Son [of God]" terminology is understood by the	

"translators" and forces the reader to assume this understanding.

Heb 7:28 renders "Son" as "Son of God." (this is not to imply that "Son" does not mean "Son of God;" it illustrates that liberty has been taken with the text by inserting additional wording).

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son" in the Sharif Bible (Arabic)	Scripture References
me	John 6:40
the Messiah	1 Cor 15:28

5.2 Sharif Bible (Arabic), ("Son of God" in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son of God" in the New Testament in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of God" literally translated in the New Testament of the Sharif Bible (Arabic)
45	45

6.1 Gospel of Mark (Bengali), ("Son" in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son" in Mark in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son" literally translated in Mark (Bengali)
4	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son" in Mark (Bengali)	Scripture References	Mark (Bengali) Verse References
Messiah	Mk. 1:11; 9:7; 13:32; 14:61	7, 184, 294, 334

6.2 Gospel of Mark (Bengali), ("Son of God" in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son of God" in Mark in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of God" literally translated in Mark (Bengali)
4	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of God" in Mark (Bengali)	Scripture References	Mark (Bengali) Verse References
omitted	Mk. 1:1	N/A

Messiah	Mk. 3:11; 15:39	49, 364
the glorious Messiah of Allah	Mk. 5:7	84

7.1 Balochi NT ("Son" in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son" in the New Testament in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son" literally translated in the Balochi NT
79	1

Literal Rendering for "Son" in the Balochi NT	Scripture Reference
so fulfilled God's will, just as the son fulfils his father's will	Heb 3:6*
* the Greek text simply has "a son."	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son" in the Balochi NT	Scripture References
boy child	Matt 1:21, 23
child	Matt 1:25
his beloved	Matt 11:17; Luke 10:22 (first occurrence for both); 3:17, 35, 36; Rom 1:9; 8:32; Gal 4:6; 1 John 1:3, 7; 2:22, 23, 24; 3:23, 4:10 (along with an extra occurrence); 1 John 5:9, 10; 5:20; 2 John 3, 9
the beloved	Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22 (second occurrence for both)
I	Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22 (third occurrence for both); John 5:19 (second occurrence); 8:36; 17:1 (second occurrence)
I who am God's beloved	Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32; 5:19 (first occurrence)
my name that I am his beloved	Matt 28:19
the Blessed God's beloved and vicegerent	Mark 14:61
his title will be the beloved of the most high God	Luke 1:32
my beloved that I have chosen	Luke 9:35
his one beloved	John 3:16
me	John 5:20, 23
I who am his beloved	John 5:21, 26
my	John 5:22
I am his beloved	John 6:40; 14:13
I that am your beloved	John 17:1 (first occurrence)
beloved	Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5 (first occurrence),

	5:5*; 1 John 4:9
his vicegerent and beloved Isa our master	Rom 1:3**
his beloved Isa	Rom 5:10; 8:3, 29; Gal 4:4; Col 1:13; Heb 1:2; 1 John 5:11
his beloved and vicegerent	1 Cor 1:9
himself	1 Cor 15:28
the being of his beloved Isa	Gal 1:16
Isa his beloved	1 Thess 1:10
God's beloved	Heb 1:8; 5:8; 1 John 4:14; 5:12
my beloved	Heb 1:5 (second occurrence)
his perfect beloved	Heb 7:28
omitted (the Balochi only has "my beloved")	Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 2 Pet 1:17
<p>* Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5, 5:5 include an interpretive rendering of Psalm 2:7: "You are my beloved. Today I have appointed you as my vicegerent." This rendering reveals how "Son [of God]" terminology is understood by the "translators" and forces the reader to assume this understanding as correct.</p> <p>** Rom 1:3 is not individually numbered in the Balochi but part of a "blocked" passage, Rom 1:1-7.</p>	

7.2 Balochi NT (“Son of God” in reference to Jesus)

Total Occurrences of "Son of God" in the New Testament in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of God" literally translated in the Balochi NT
45	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of God" in the Balochi NT	Scripture References
God's beloved	Matt 4:3; 14:33; 26:63; 27:40, 43 (along with an extra occurrence), 54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 4:3, 9, 41; 22:70; John 1:34, 49; 10:36; 11:27; 19:7; 20:31; Acts 9:20; 2 Cor 1:19; Eph 4:13; Heb 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20
the beloved of God	Matt 4:6; Luke 1:35
beloved of God	Matt 8:29
the beloved and vicegerent of the eternally existing God	Matt 16:16*
beloved of the Most High God	Mark 5:7
beloved of God Most High	Luke 8:28**

God's only beloved	John 3:18
my	John 5:25
I am God's beloved	John 11:4
God's holy beloved	Rom 1:4***
God's beloved Isa	Gal 2:20
I who am God's beloved	Rev 2:18
* Matt 16:16 "viceregent" is the rendering for "Messiah" (i.e. Christ).	
** Luke 8:28 is not individually numbered in the Balochi but part of a "blocked" passage, Luke 8:27-29.	
*** Rom 1:4 is not individually numbered in the Balochi but part of a "blocked" passage, Rom 1:1-7.	

"son of God" in reference to Adam

MIT Title	Renderings for "Adam, son of God" in Luke 3:38
1. Sirat Al Masih (SAM) (Arabic)	omitted
2. The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	omitted
3. The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)	Adam whom God created
4. True Meaning (Arabic)	Adam whom God created
5. Sharif Bible (Arabic)	Adam, son of God
6. Gospel of Mark (Bengali)	N/A
7. Balochi NT	God created Adam

III. Son of Man

1. Sirat Al Masih (SAM), (Arabic)

Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" in the Gospels in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" literally translated in SAM*
83	0
* SAM as a harmony of the Gospels omits various passages. The number of its literal translations combined with the non-literal renderings will not equal the total amount of occurrences for "Son of Man" in the Greek text of NA 27.	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of Man" in SAM	Scripture References	SAM References
1. in my service attending	John 1:51	Dove 48
2. the one who...became human for your sake	John 3:13	Renewed 17
3. me	John 3:14; 5:27;	Renewed 18; Plot 17;

	Matt 16:30; 17:12; John 8:28; Luke 21:36; Luke 22:48; Mark 14:62	Destiny 31; Transfiguration 10; Stoner 54; The Throne (listed as Thief in Contents) 30; Decision 14, 26
4. I	Luke 5:24; Matt 13:37; 10:23; John 6:62; Luke 9:26; Matt 18:11; Luke 9:56, 58; Mark 10:45; Luke 19:10; Matt 26:2	Kafr Nahum 49; Sower 31; Yahya 16; Bread 51; Destiny 43; Transfiguration 47; Sycamore Tree 5, 34, 45, 55; Supper 1
5. I am the Lord of the Age	Mark 2:28	Plot 33
6. Isa comes from Allah as salvation	Matt 11:19	Perfume 19
7. Isa	Matt 12:40	Perfume 43
8. We	Matt 13:41	Sower 35
9. I, the Messiah	John 6:27	Bread 24
10. my	John 6:53; Luke 22:22; Matt 26:24 (first occurrence)	Bread 42; Supper 13, 30
11. he	Matt 17:9; Luke 24:7	Transfiguration 8; Kerchief 17
12. him	Mark 9:31; Matt 24:30 (second occurrence); Matt 26:45	Transfiguration 27; The Throne (listed as Thief in Contents) 20; Decision 8
13. the Mahdi	John 9:35; Luke 18:8; Mark 10:33; John 12:34; Matt 24:27, 30 (first occurrence), 37, 39; 25:31	Seeing One 23; Beloved 60; Sycamore Tree 12; Gnats 48; The Throne (listed as Thief in Contents) 18, 20, 23, 25, 48
14. your Lord	Luke 12:40	Banquet 5
15. the name of your Lord	John 12:23	Gnats 39
16. your Lord of glory	John 13:31	Supper 35
17. omitted*	Matt 12:32; John 12:34 (second occurrence); Matt 26:24 (second occurrence)	N/A
* These refer to verses that are present in SAM, in part or in whole, in which "Son of Man" is present in the Greek.		

2-3. The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic) and Urbed (Arabic)

Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" in Luke and Matthew 28:19 in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)
25	7	0

All Renderings for "Son of Man" in LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic)	All Renderings for "Son of Man" in LoP/SoP, Urbed (Arabic)**	Scripture References
1. omitted	1. the chief* of all the people	Luke 5:24; 6:5, 7:34; 9:44, 58; 11:30; 12:8, 10, 40; 17:26, 30; 18:8; 21:27, 36
2. me	2. the chief of all the people	Luke 6:22
3. I	3. the chief of all the people	Luke 9:22; 19:10
4. Son of Man	4. the chief of all the people	Luke 9:26; 17:22; 18:31; 22:22, 48, 69; 24:7
5. my coming	5. the chief of all the people	Luke 17:24
* Literally, "sheikh." The idea is that of a tribal chieftain. The complete phrase in Arabic is: (شيخ الناس كلهم)		
** An additional occurrence of this phrase is included corresponding to Luke 17:23. The Greek text of the NA27 does not contain "Son of Man."		

4. The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (True Meaning)

Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" in the Gospels and Acts in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" literally translated in True Meaning
83	2*
* Luke 12:8; 22:69 is rendered, "I, the Son of Man."	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of Man" in True Meaning	Scripture References
1. master of humanity	ALL REFERENCES with the exception of those below:
2. him	Matt 26:24 (second occurrence)
3. my	Matt 26:45
4. he	Mark 8:31
5. omitted	Matt 24:30 (first occurrence)

5. Sharif Bible (Arabic), 2013

Total Occurrences of "Son of Man"	Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" literally
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in the New Testament in NA27	translated in the New Testament of the Sharif Bible (Arabic)
86*	0
* Matt 18:11 is included in the Sharif Arabic which would increase the total occurrences to 87.	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son" in the Sharif Bible (Arabic)	Scripture References
	ALL REFERENCES with the exception of those below:
1. he who become human	
2. I	Matt 16:13; 17:9; 26:45
3. him	Matt 26:24 (second occurrence)
4. he	Mark 9:9
5. humanity	Heb 2:6

6. Gospel of Mark (Bengali)

Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" in Mark in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" literally translated in Mark (Bengali)
14	0

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of Man" in Mark (Bengali)	Scripture References	Mark (Bengali) Verse References
Ibnul Insan (This is a transliteration from Arabic. In Arabic it is a literal translation of "the Son of Man." In addition to the typical difficulties that transliterated terms pose to a reader, it also reinforces the Islamic idea that Arabic is the most important language in religion. The earliest manuscripts that exist for the NT are in Greek not Arabic.)	Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21 (2x), 41, 62	28, 41, 175, 180, 185, 186, 198, 227, 234, 290, 309 (first occurrence), 322, 335
I	Mark 14:21 (second occurrence)	309

7. Balochi NT

Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" in the New Testament in NA27	Total Occurrences of "Son of Man" literally translated in the Balochi NT
86	1

Literal Rendering for "Son of Man" in the Balochi NT	Scripture Reference
son of Adam*	1 (Heb 2:6)
* "Adam" in Hebrew means "man."	

Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of Man" in the Balochi NT	Scripture References
I who am the leader of mankind	Matt 8:20
me who am the leader of mankind	Matt 12:32; 13:37; 16:28; 17:22; 26:2; Luke 9:44; 12:10; 17:26, 30; 18:31; 21:27, 36
me	Matt 24:30 (second occurrence); 26:24 (second occurrence); Mark 14:21 (second occurrence)
my coming back to this world who am the leader of mankind	Matt 24:37
my sake who am the leader of humanity	Luke 6:22
me to be arrested who am the leader of humanity	Luke 22:48
I am the leader of humans	John 5:27; 8:28
the leader of mankind	John 9:35; 12:34; Acts 7:56; Rev 14:14
Isa the leader of mankind	Rev 1:13

IV. Distinctive Islamic Terminology

Each of the seven MIT versions employ distinctive Islamic terminology in varying degrees. For the sake of brevity, only one or two representative examples will be given for each version. The first distinctive feature to be considered is one that is true of each version. All of them use the quranic spelling for "Jesus," i.e. "Isa" (īṣā / عيسى). This form often differs from the spelling for "Jesus" in existing Bible translations. The same holds true for other biblical persons mentioned within the Qur'an, though not all of them.³⁸⁷ The inclusion of such spellings signals to the reader, whether Christian or Muslim, that the intended audience is Muslim.

1. Sirat Al Masih (SAM), (Arabic)

³⁸⁷ E.g. In Arabic, the spellings for John the Baptist and Jonah differ between the Qur'an and the Bible. Other people like Noah, Abraham, Moses, have identical spellings.

Two examples from SAM are the use of "sira" for its title and the use of "Mahdi" for Jesus. "Sira" is "a genre of early Islamic literature...[of which] 'The *sīra*', *sīrat rasūlallāh* or *sīra al-nabawiyya*, have been the most widely used names for the traditional account of Muḥammad's life and background."³⁸⁸ Its contents are not considered to be divinely inspired, although it contains some quotes and "paraphrases" from the Qur'an. "The sira," among its varied functions, gives background information as to why certain quranic verses and passages were "revealed" (technically known as "occasions of revelation") and "elaborate on a Qur'ānic passage, in the manner of a Jewish midrash."³⁸⁹ By the use of "sira" in its title, SAM is understood to be part of an Islamic literary genre that is not equal to the Qur'an as "God's Word." At best it only contains parts of "God's Word" helping to explain the Qur'an itself.

The second example from SAM is the use of "Mahdi" for Jesus. The "Mahdi" is considered to be someone other than Jesus notwithstanding a disputed "hadith" to the contrary.³⁹⁰ According to Islamic teaching, this term "is the name of the restorer of religion and justice who, according to a widely held Muslim belief, will rule before the end of the world."³⁹¹ This "term came first to be used for an expected ruler who would restore Islam to its original perfection."³⁹² It reinforces the Islamic idea that Jesus, upon his return, will uphold Islam:

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle [i.e. Muhammad] said, "By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, son of Mary (Jesus) will shortly descend amongst you people (Muslims) as a just ruler and will break the Cross and kill the pig and abolish the Jizya (a tax taken from

³⁸⁸ W. Raven, "Sīra," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds., P. Bearman, et. al. (Brill, 2011, Brill Online. Univ. of Michigan-Ann Arbor), accessed March 16 2011, http://0-www.brillonline.nl.wizard.umd.umich.edu/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-1089.

³⁸⁹ Ibid. See section, " Characteristics of *sīra* texts, no. 3.

³⁹⁰ Ibid. ("There will be no Mahdī but 'Īsā b. Maryam". The *ḥadīth* was given added prestige by the fact that al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820) transmitted it from al-Djānādī. Included by Ibn Mādja in his *Sunan*, it was later interpreted by supporters of the belief in the Mahdī as meaning that no-one spoke in the cradle (*mahd*) except Jesus or that the Mahdī would rule only in accordance with the instructions of Jesus since only the latter, as a prophet, was infallible (*ma'ṣūm*). Many *ḥadīth* experts, among them al-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Qayyim al-Djāwziyya, rejected it as inauthentic.")

³⁹¹ W. Madelung, "al-Mahdī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds., P. Bearman, et. al. (Brill Online, 2015. Reference, University Of Michigan-Ann Arbor), accessed March 21, 2015, http://0-referenceworks.brillonline.com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mahdi-COM_0618.

³⁹² Ibid.

the non-Muslims, who are in the protection, of the Muslim government). Then there will be abundance of money and no-body will accept charitable gifts.³⁹³

To use "Mahdi" for Jesus, therefore, presents ambiguity and confusion for the reader.

2-3. The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP, Baghdadi (Arabic) and Urbed (Arabic)

Both of these versions use "honorifics," whether in the text, paratext, or conversational additions to the audio of the Scripture "translation." This refers to the Islamic practice of saying the word, "prophet," or some other term of respect prior to the mentioning of a prophet's name or title, such as "sayyid" (i.e. "master" or "sir") in "sayyid al-masīh" (i.e. the master, Messiah). It also includes the quoting of a "blessing," after prophet's name is mentioned such as "Jesus, 'alayhi al-salām" (i.e. Jesus, upon him be peace). There are several theological ramifications to consider from the use of these honorifics:

1. It affirms the Islamic viewpoint of what constitutes a prophet and how "respect" is to be shown to them.³⁹⁴
2. It affirms the system of legalism, or "good works" as taught within Islam (i.e. that there is "merit" attached to its use).³⁹⁵
3. It is a prayer for the dead.³⁹⁶

³⁹³ Bukhari: Book 3: Volume 34: Hadith 425, *Quran Explorer*, accessed October 6, 2015, <http://www.quranexplorer.com/Hadith/English/Index.html>.

³⁹⁴ It is important to note that honorifics are not found in the Qur'an. This is one of many indications that Islam is not only based on the Qur'an but draws upon additional sources for its teaching.

³⁹⁵ Ibn Kathir's commentary on Sura 33:56 includes the following hadith, or saying, of Muhammad: "Whoever among your Ummah sends Salah [literally, "prayer," referred to as "blessing"] upon you, Allah will record for him ten good deeds and will erase for him ten evil deeds, and will raise his status by ten degrees, and will return his greeting with something similar to it." See "Tafsir Ibn Kathir: Surah 33: Al-Ahzab: Ayah 56," Alim, accessed October 6, 2015, <http://www.alim.org/library/quran/AlQuran-tafsir/TIK/33/56>. Although this specifically refers to the "blessing" after Muhammad's name, the same principle of obtaining merit or favor with God lies behind the "honoring" of any of those considered to be prophets in Islam.

³⁹⁶ Muslims (and others) try to skirt this issue, especially with regard to the "blessing" said after Muhammad's name, whether in printed or verbal form, "*ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam*." It literally means, "God prayed for him and greeted him." N.A. Newman points out that the redefining of "*ṣallā 'alā*" from "pray for" to "bless" in this phrase began c. 800 AD after the appearance of a Christian objection to its literal meaning as found in Sura 33:56. See N.A. Newman, ed., *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue* (Hatfield, PA: IBRI, 1993), 322. Both this "blessing" and the one used for other "prophets" like Jesus (*'alayhi al-salām*) are listed under "Eulogies and Prayers" - see Adam

4. It places Jesus below Muhammad. Muhammad receives a unique, more exalted "blessing" while the rest of those who are considered prophets within Islam, including Jesus, have an identical, lesser "blessing."

3. The Life of Jesus from LoP/SoP Baghdadi Urbed (Arabic)

The use of "Caliph of God" in place of "Son of God" introduces at least two major difficulties. First, the phrase itself is an anachronism: "In the archaeological record 'Abd al-Malik is the first to claim the title "deputy of God" (*khalifat Allah*) [i.e. Caliph of God], the earliest dated testimony being a coin of AH 75/694 [AD]."³⁹⁷ Second, the function of the Caliph of God was to serve as the theocratic ruler for all Muslims. This is well described in a statement about 'Abd al-Malik assuming this title, applicable not only to him but to the then newly-created office: "a leader whom God has chosen as His viceroy upon earth and appointed *imām* [i.e. leader] for His creatures."³⁹⁸ It forces a highly-interpretive understanding of the meaning of "Son of God," that is both historically and theologically impossible. As with the use of "Mahdi" in SAM, the use of "Caliph of God," presents major confusion for the reader.

4. True Meaning

As noted in the last chapter, there is a Muslim tendency to "Islamicize" Scripture as typified by changing "Father" to "Lord." Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), the renowned Sunni Islamic theologian explained the reasoning behind it:

Gacek, *Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1, Volume 98 : The Near and Middle East : Arabic Manuscripts : A Vademecum for Readers* (Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers, 2009), 6. accessed October 6, 2015, ProQuest ebrary; cf. where *'alayhi al-salām*, though said to be a "formula of benediction," is nevertheless listed under "*Du'ā'*," which is a prayer of supplication - see Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition : A Glossary of Technical Terms and Bibliography*, (Leiden, NLD: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001), 47, accessed October 6, 2015, ProQuest ebrary.

³⁹⁷ Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: a Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings On Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1998), 553, n. 9.

³⁹⁸ D. Sourdel, et. al., "Khalīfa," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds. P. Bearman, et. al. (Brill, 2011, Univ. of Michigan-Ann Arbor), accessed May 12, 2011, http://0-www.brillonline.nl.wizard.umd.umich.edu/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0486.

[Christ] calls God a father to them [i.e. Christ's followers] just as he calls them sons of God. If this is correct, then what he meant is that God is the merciful sustainer. God is more merciful to His servants than a mother to her child. The son is the one reared, the subject of mercy, for God's rearing His servant is more perfect than a mother's rearing of her child. Thus what is meant by "father" is the Lord, and what is meant by "son" in Christ's teaching is Christ whom God rears.³⁹⁹

The evident meaning of this speech is that by the word "father" the prophets intended in their language "Lord"; by "son" in their language is meant "him who is governed, reared," that is, Christ...⁴⁰⁰

Never literally translating, "Father" (in reference to God), as is the case with True Meaning is at best a tacit acquiescence to this Muslim viewpoint.⁴⁰¹ Additionally, there are explicit features of True Meaning that exactly correspond to the Muslim tendency to "Islamicize" Scripture. One of them is found in the introductory article, "The Relationship of the Master, Messiah, with God":

God is referred to as the father of the children of Jacob. The idea here is that God cares for his people [with] the care that the head of a household (i.e. a father) cares for his sons (or dependents). Just as children are expected to comply with the authority of their father and obey him, in the same way the children of Jacob (i.e. the children of Israel) are expected to acknowledge the supervision of God over their lives and submit to his will.⁴⁰²

A second explicit feature is found in two of True Meaning's most frequent non-literal renderings for "Father": "Lord"⁴⁰³ and "Guardian."⁴⁰⁴ Taken along with the previously-mentioned features, these two non-literal renderings completely agree with the viewpoint of Muslim theologians and apologists for Islam, including the celebrated Ibn Taymiyya.⁴⁰⁵

³⁹⁹ Thomas F. Michel, ed. and translator, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's Al-Jawab Al-Sahih* (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1985), 261.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁴⁰¹ Five of the other versions also contain this distinctive with the exception of John 5:18 in the Balochi NT. True Meaning, however, also provides the fullest explanation for its reasoning which is why this feature is here treated.

⁴⁰² Jatlaoui, "True Meaning," 57.

⁴⁰³ "Lord" is used in place of "Father" over 50 times.

⁴⁰⁴ "Guardian" is used in place of "Father" over 25 times.

⁴⁰⁵ "Ibn Taymiyya (1268-1328)...is considered by common consent to be the greatest theologian of his century." See Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, enl. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 94. Taymiyya did not just write polemical works against Christianity. The influence of his teaching has continuously encouraged militancy among Sunni Muslims in keeping with their authoritative writings: the Qur'an, Hadith, Sira, Tafsir, and Fiqh.

5. Sharif Bible (Arabic), 2013

In the previous chapter we learned of a 10th Century Arabic codex of the Gospels, copied by a Muslim Arab, which "closely approaches the language of the Qur'an." This particular codex differentiated between "Lord" when referencing God and "lord" when referencing Jesus by using various, but differing terminology for each. Rick Brown wrote that the Sharif Bible followed this policy. His colleagues, "Leith Gray and Andrea Gray," expanded upon the reasoning behind this policy for one of the terms used for "lord" in reference to Jesus:

As for the messianic title "Lord," one of the most common of the titles for the promised Messiah, its traditionally translated form has created significant offense and confusion among Muslim audiences. Many translations do not distinguish between the Greek word *kurios* as referring to YHWH and "the *kurios*" as referring to the Messiah, even though the Greek itself very consistently makes distinctions in usage (as do ancient translations such as Syriac). As a result, some Muslims understand the title to mean "the deity Jesus," and that the Bible is declaring the existence of Jesus as another God besides God the Father. Others take it to mean that Jesus is the same being as the Father. This has been corrected in a recent Muslim-sensitive translation of the Bible, The Noble Book (*Al-Kitaab al-Shareef*), which uses the term *as-sayyid* (the master) when "the *kurios*" is found as a title for the Messiah, and *Allah* when the the [sic] Greek *kurios* is referring to God.⁴⁰⁶

The almost complete abandonment of the Arabic word, *al-rabb* (i.e. the Lord), in reference to Jesus (in spite of the verbal word consistency of the text of the Greek New Testament in its use of *kurios* (i.e. "Lord") for both God and Jesus)⁴⁰⁷ is in keeping with the Qur'an's denunciation of Jesus being referred to as *al-rabb* (i.e. the Lord; plural, *arbāb*):

The Jews say, 'Ezra is the Son of God'; the Christians say, 'The Messiah is the Son of God.' That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the unbelievers before them. God assail them! How they are perverted! They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords [Arabic, *arbāb*] apart from God, *and the Messiah, Mary's son* [emphasis added]-- and they were commanded to serve but One God; there is no god but He; glory be to Him, above that they associate⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶ "Gray and Gray," "Muslim Encounters," 128.

⁴⁰⁷ The Sharif Arabic uses several words in Arabic for the Greek *kurios*, including on occasion, *al-rabb*, such as the rendering Thomas' great confession of faith in Jesus in John 20:28.

⁴⁰⁸ Sura 9:30-31; cf. 3:6, 80. See also Sura 43:64, attributed to Jesus, which implies that only God is Lord: "Assuredly God is my Lord and your Lord; therefore serve Him; this is a straight path."

Another Islamic feature of the Sharif Bible is its use of the first part of the *shahāda*, or Islamic confession of faith, "There is no god but God," and its almost identical counterpart, "There is no god but He," both of which are found in the Qur'an.⁴⁰⁹ An entire page at the beginning of the book brings attention to this.⁴¹⁰ The following is an English translation, including the items in the chart:

There is no god but God - God is one and He has no partner⁴¹¹

The expression, "There is no god but God" and the like appear in the Book of God [i.e. the Sharif, referring to itself] a number of times. These examples show that:

The Expression	Where it appears in the Sharif Bible
There is no god but God	2 Sam 7:22; 22:32; 1 Chron 17:20; Ps. 18:31; Isa 45:14; Mark 12:32;* 1 Cor 8:4; 1 Tim 2:5; James 2:19**
O God, there is no partner with You	1 Sam 2:2
God is one	Mark 12:32; Rom 3:30; Eph 4:6
The only God	Mark 12:29; 1 Tim 1:17; Jude 25
God, there is no god but He	Deut 4:35***
God, there is no god other than Him	Deut 4:39; 1 Kings 8:60; Isa 45:22
God, the merciful, the compassionate****	Ex 34:6; Ps 86:15; 103:8; Luke 1:78; James 5:11
Other expressions	The Lord (mawlā)...He is God alone, the one alone to be worshipped (Zech 14:9) You alone are God (Neh 9:6)
[These notes are the author's comments and are not part of the original]	
* This is incorrectly listed. It should be listed with, "there is not god but He." ** The Qur'an contains 2 occurrences while the Sharif Bible has 8 occurrences. ***The same expression can be found in the marginal note for Rom 2:22 **** This wording is in the phrase that appears at the beginning of all the suras of the Quran except Sura 9 (i.e. the <i>basmala</i>). ⁴¹²	

⁴⁰⁹ "There is no god but God" occurs twice (Sura 37:35; 47:19). "There is no god but He" occurs 30 times (Sura 2:163, 255; 3:2, 6, 18 (2x); 4:87; 6:102, 106; 7:158; 9:31, 129; 11:14; 13:30; 20:8, 98; 23:116; 27:26; 28:70, 88; 35:3; 39:6; 40:3, 62, 65; 44:8; 59:22, 23; 64:13; 73:9).

⁴¹⁰ Sharif Bible, no pagination (the page preceding page 1).

⁴¹¹ The wording in Arabic are the same phrases used by Muslims (لا اله الا الله - الله واحد، ولا شريك له)

⁴¹² "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate."

The inclusion of the first part of the *shahāda* is extremely problematic. Leaving aside the fact that there is no exact verbal correspondence in the Hebrew or Greek to this Arabic phrase, on a popular level, saying the first part of the *shahāda* is understood as affirmation of the *shahāda* in its entirety. For a Muslim unfamiliar with the Bible, the existence of the phrase, "There is no god but God," along with the other quranic phrase, "there is no god but He," makes it very difficult to not think that the Sharif Bible is also affirming the second part of the *shahāda*, namely, "and Muhammad is his messenger."⁴¹³

6-7. Gospel of Mark (Bengali) and Balochi NT

Both of these non-Arabic versions employ a number of Arabic "loan words" for key terminology such as for "Son of Man" and "Holy Spirit" in the Bengali, and "beloved" in the Baluchi. This reinforces the Islamic idea that the Arabic language itself is sacred and that "God's Word" must be in Arabic,⁴¹⁴ especially when existing terms, native to both languages can be used. This belief in the "sacredness" of Arabic also encourages nominalism in belief and practices. If what is most important to God is the correct pronunciation of words in a particular language, proper understanding of the text is ultimately irrelevant for the believer.

7. Balochi NT

This particular version, like True Meaning, contains introductory material, though on a much smaller scale. It includes a glossary of selected terms which include explanations for the non-literal renderings, "Sustainer," and "Beloved of God," used respectively for "Father" and

⁴¹³ How much more is this true of a Muslim who reads or hears one of these occurrences with either little or no context.

⁴¹⁴ For this reason, non-Arabic speakers must recite the Qur'an in Arabic.

"Son of God." In the entry for "Sustainer," "Father" in the Bible is explained as meaning that God loves people and cares for them.⁴¹⁵

For the entry, "Beloved of God," "Son of God" is explained as a phrase from the Psalms referring to a king over the Israelites and that during Jesus' time, the Israelites were looking for such a king, "the Son of God," which meant, "beloved of God."⁴¹⁶ There are two things to note about this. First, the word substitution, as seen in the previous chapter, is identical to that of al-Qāsim's rendering of Matthew 4:3. Second, the entry mentions nothing in regard to Jesus' deity. This agrees with Ibn Taymiyya's assessment of "Son" in reference to Jesus:

There is never found in the books of the prophets or their message the application of the term "father" with the meaning of the father of the divine nature, nor [is it found that] by their application of the term son is meant anything divine, either the Word or the Life. Rather the expression "son" is only found to signify a creature, and the term "son" is only applied to a created son. ¶Consequently it follows from this that calling Christ "son" refers to his humanity.⁴¹⁷

For "Father" and "Son" terminology, in both its explanations of them and non-literal renderings for them, the Balochi is identical to Islamic views and practices.

⁴¹⁵ Balochi NT 2001, 17. This summarization is based on several unofficial translations received by the author and by comparison to an early, pre-publication draft for the glossary.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 19-20. This summarization is based on several unofficial translations received by the author and by comparison to an early, pre-publication draft for the glossary.

⁴¹⁷ Michel, Muslim Theologian's Response, 275.

Chapter 5

Eugene A. Nida: his life and theory of Dynamic Equivalence considered

It is no coincidence that three of the MIT versions that were looked at in the last chapter were all led by personnel from WBT-SIL. It is also no coincidence that the other four versions were headed up by men who attended Fuller. As will be shown, both groups came under the direct and indirect influence of the person who is the subject of this chapter, Dr. Eugene A. Nida.

Nida was a genius. Within forty years of his first teaching assignment in 1936 with the fledgling organization that would become SIL, he exerted his influence on the evangelical world in the areas of Bible translation and missions in ways that were tantamount to a philosophical coup. It is inconceivable that a man with no formal theological training, imbued with the secularism of the pioneers of American Structural Linguistics (American Structuralism) and the ideas of neo-orthodox theologians, would wield his authority over professing evangelicals by subjecting them to the Bible translation empire that he created based upon premises that reject the verbal inspiration of Scripture.⁴¹⁸

It is even more unthinkable that he would, at the same time, systematically introduce cultural anthropology with its evolutionary basis and ensuing moral relativism into the teaching and practice of missions among many professing evangelicals. One's amazement is further increased to think that Nida did all of these things while maintaining a reputation, more or less intact, as an evangelical.

⁴¹⁸ This is not to imply that all those who have been or are involved with any of the organizations associated with Nida or who use any of his translation apparatus hold to this view.

Overview of his life and accomplishments

Born on November 11, 1914, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,⁴¹⁹ Eugene Albert Nida, made a profession of faith in Jesus at a Methodist church when he was 4 years old⁴²⁰ and "planned to be a missionary."⁴²¹ In 1922 the family moved to Long Beach, California.⁴²² During his high school years Nida was "prominent in young people's work at Grace Methodist Church" in Long Beach, California.⁴²³ When the family moved to Garden Grove, California, around 1933, "they joined a Quaker community and attended church services."⁴²⁴ Nida attended this church "for a number of years."⁴²⁵ Notwithstanding his attendance at this church and that his "parents became Quakers,"⁴²⁶ Nida evidently continued speaking in other churches such as the Belmont Heights Methodist Church in Long Beach.⁴²⁷

According to his membership card from the theologically conservative, non-denominational, evangelical Church of the Open Door (COD) in Los Angeles,⁴²⁸ Nida was listed as "converted" in 1932 and that he became a member of COD on May 27, 1936.⁴²⁹ He would

⁴¹⁹ Eric M. North, "Eugene A. Nida: An Appreciation," in *Approaches to Semiotics*, vol. 56, *On Language, Culture and Religion: in Honor of Eugene A. Nida*, eds. Matthew Black and William A. Smalley, (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), vii.

⁴²⁰ Eugene A. Nida, Interview by Peter Wosh, July 28, 1989, transcript, American Bible Society [ABS] Oral History Program, ABS, New York, NY, 8.

⁴²¹ Eugene A. Nida, "My Pilgrimage in Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 12, no. 2 (April 1988): 62.

⁴²² Stanley D. Woods, "Eugene Albert Nida's Contribution to Missiology" (MA thesis, Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1990), 9.

⁴²³ Anonymous, "Former Long Beach Man, Noted Linguist, to Speak," *Long Beach Press-Telegram* October 21, 1961, A-6.

⁴²⁴ Woods, "Nida's Contribution," 9. Woods lists the date as 1933 but another source lists it as 1934 - see Aubrey Haines, "Spreading the Word of the Bible," *Independent Press-Telegram* [Long Beach, CA], April 14, 1968, 7.

⁴²⁵ Nida, ABS Oral Interview, 8.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴²⁷ Mrs. Geneva B. Herolz to Nida, letter, May 13, 1973 ("You have the same quick way of speaking as when you preached at Belmont Heights Methodist Church in Long Beach 7-15-34. I marked the text and date in my Bible. This is it: Philippians 3:20."), in ABS, *Dr. Eugene A. Nida Correspondence/Papers*, New York: ABS Microforms Department, 1997, Microfilm (Roll 631, image 1766).

⁴²⁸ COD was started by R.A. Torrey on the campus of the Bible Institute Of Los Angeles (BIOLA). Among its pastors were Louis Talbot and J. Vernon McGee. See <http://www.churchoftheopendoor.com/about-us/index.html>.

⁴²⁹ Eugene A. Nida, "Membership Card," Church of the Open Door, scan sent by email to author, June 27, 2013.

maintain this membership until December 11, 1951 when it was transferred to North Baptist Church in Port Chester, New York,⁴³⁰ of the American Baptist Convention (ABC).⁴³¹

While a member of COD, Nida served as a missionary with SIL in Mexico.⁴³² His "field work in the Tarahumara language"⁴³³ was "to create a written language"⁴³⁴ in order to translate the New Testament into it.⁴³⁵ His time among the Tarahumara only lasted from sometime in the Fall of 1936⁴³⁶ until December of 1936 when Nida's failing health led him to return to his parents' home in Garden Grove.⁴³⁷ He would however, continue to serve as a linguistic teacher for SIL until 1953.⁴³⁸ After his return to California, Nida taught "Greek and Phonetics" at BIOLA for two academic years, 1937-1939.⁴³⁹ Between April and June of 1939,⁴⁴⁰ Nida "served as Interim Pastor"⁴⁴¹ at the independent, biblically conservative Calvary Church in Santa Ana,

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ ABC was formerly the Northern Baptist Convention (NBC). It is currently the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), <http://www.abc-usa.org/>.

⁴³² Nida, COD membership card; cf. Hugh Steven, *Doorway to the World: The Mexico Years* (Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1999), 77-78.

⁴³³ Eugene A. Nida, "My Linguistic Odyssey," in *History of Linguistic Science. Series III, Studies in the History of the Language Sciences*, vol. 61, *First Person Singular II: Autobiographies*, ed. E F K. Koerner (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1991), 229, accessed October 11, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/23217353.html>.

⁴³⁴ Anonymous, "Former Long Beach Man, A-6.

⁴³⁵ Steven, *Doorway*, 69-71

⁴³⁶ James C. Hefley and Marti Hefley, *Uncle Cam: The Story of William Cameron Townsend, Founder of the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics* (Huntington Beach, Calif.: Wycliffe Bible Translators, 1984), 96 ("the fall of 1936"); 100 ("The scholarly Gene Nida rode a bus to the cold Sierra Madre Mountains of the north where fleet-footed Tarahumaras lived in shanties and caves.").

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 77-78

⁴³⁸ North, "Eugene A. Nida," viii.

⁴³⁹ BIOLA, *The Biolan* (Los Angeles, CA: BIOLA, 1938), 21 ("Faculty: Mr. E.A. Nida, N.T. Greek, Phonetics"); BIOLA, *The Biolan* (Los Angeles, CA: BIOLA, 1939), 19 ("Faculty: Eugene A. Nida, M.A., Biblical Languages"); cf. Nida, COD membership card; Nida, ABS oral interview, 2.

⁴⁴⁰ Dennis A. Swick, *The History of Calvary Church of Santa Ana: Including Other Orange County Churches*, unpublished, June 1997, 70 ("On April 19, 1939, in the Deacons' Minutes it says, "It was decided to continue Mr. E. Nida as pulpit supply from Sunday to Sunday." This was during the interim period between Pastor Lindgren and Pastor Wendt."), 73 ("June 28, 1939: Rev. Lyman A. Wendt became the second pastor of Calvary Church.").

⁴⁴¹ Calvary Church of Santa Ana, *Calvary Church 75 Years: Faithful and Fruitful Since 1931*, unpublished, 2006, 13 ("Following the resignation of Pastor Lindgren, Eugene Nida served as Interim Pastor.").

CA,⁴⁴² which had deep ties to WBT-SIL, including the family of its founder, W. Cameron Townsend, the Grisets family, and Kenneth Pike.⁴⁴³

In 1943, four significant events took place: Nida was ordained, awarded his doctoral degree, married, and joined the American Bible Society (ABS). On May 23, Nida was ordained as a minister with the non-confessional Northern Baptist Convention (NBC; later, ABC; now, ABCUSA) at First Baptist Church in Covina, California, of which he had become a member⁴⁴⁴ (while maintaining membership at COD). NBC (later, ABC; now, ABCUSA) was the denomination through which his first wife, Althea, received her education and for which she was an active member, both before and after their marriage.⁴⁴⁵ In the same week, on May 29, Nida was granted his Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Michigan.⁴⁴⁶ Exactly three weeks to the day after receiving his doctorate, Nida married Althea Sprague, on June 19, in Campbell, NY.⁴⁴⁷ "In November 1943, Dr. Nida became associate secretary for versions of the American

⁴⁴² Calvary Church, *Calvary Church 75 Years*, 1 ("By 1930 many of the main denominational churches in Orange County had embraced the modernist teachings that included evolution...The deity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth and the divine inspiration of the Scriptures were also now being questioned among other truths that had been held without question for generations before. A group of Christians concerned about modernism in their churches began to gather in Santa Ana homes for Bible study and prayer meetings."); cf. Swick, *The History of Calvary Church*, 38 ("Calvary Church came into being because many of the mainline Protestant denominations in Santa Ana and Orange County were accepting the new teaching of modernism which questioned the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Many pastors were not relying on the Bible as their sole source of authority...It is clear that there were many who were leaving their churches because of modernism. Some, in fact, drove many miles to find a fundamentalist church...One such group was that of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Gall. The number of people grew to 100 and could no longer meet in homes. They began to meet regularly in the basement of a building in downtown Santa Ana.").

⁴⁴³ Calvary Church, *Calvary Church 75 Years*, 10 ("the connections of the Townsends, Grisets, Kenneth Pike, and Calvary Church"); cf. http://calvarylife.org/75/1930/missions_ministry.html.

⁴⁴⁴ Anonymous, "Ordinations," *The Watchman-Examiner* 31, no. 25 (June 24, 1943): 607.

⁴⁴⁵ Nida, ABS Oral Interview, 3 ("[Althea] had her seminary training at Eastern Baptist Seminary...then she went with the American Baptist Home Mission Society and set up a department in commercial education at Bacon College"), 9 ("my wife [Althea]...was a "died in the wool" Baptist and working with American Baptist Board and for a number of years she was on the Foreign Mission Board of the American Baptist Society."); cf. Woods, "Nida's Contribution," 19 ("Althea Nida continued her work with the American Baptist Home Missions Society, serving from 1958 as a member of the board of Managers. In 1966 and 1977 she was vice-president for the group, and subsequently was elected president for the next two years.").

⁴⁴⁶ University of Michigan, email message to author, March 4, 2015.

⁴⁴⁷ Campbell Town Clerk, phone call from author, July 16, 2013; cf. Woods, "Nida's Contribution," 13.

Bible Society."⁴⁴⁸ He would eventually become the Secretary for Versions, which would be later changed to Secretary for Translations.⁴⁴⁹ It is Nida's association with ABS for which he is best known.

Dr. Nida passed away on August 25, 2011, at the age of 96, leaving behind an astounding output of books and articles, of which the following publications have enjoyed great success throughout the evangelical world and beyond:⁴⁵⁰

- Bible Translating (1947)
- Customs and Cultures (1954)
- Message and Mission (1960; rev. 1990)
- Toward A Science of Translation (TASOT) (1964)
- The Theory and Practice of Translation (TAPOT) (1969)
- From One Language to Another (1986)
- Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains (1988; 2nd ed. 1989)
- United Bible Societies (UBS) Helps for Translators series (various)⁴⁵¹

His continuing impact is also felt through the following organizations and literature projects which he helped to establish:

- The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)⁴⁵²
- Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT)⁴⁵³
- Position of "Translation(s) Consultant" for Scripture translations⁴⁵⁴
- Triennial Translators Conferences⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁴⁸ Anonymous, "Eugene A. Nida, Ph.D.," *The Watchman-Examiner* 34, no. 33 (August 15, 1946), 856.

⁴⁴⁹ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 31 ["Nida later earned a promotion to Secretary for Versions, but he suggested a change in title, citing the misunderstanding he met when introduced to various groups. In 1949, the title was changed to Secretary for Translations (6 May 1949 minutes ABS Committee on Versions)."].

⁴⁵⁰ See bibliography for full citation information for all but the last item.

⁴⁵¹ This series now covers almost all of the books of the Bible and "deuterocanonicals." For a list of all available titles, see: http://www.ubs-translations.org/publications/ubs_handbook_series. For the 13 titles co-authored by Nida see "Selected Bibliography: Key Works in English by Eugene A. Nida," Nida Institute, accessed October 12, 2015, http://www.nidainstitute.org/sites/default/files/selected_bibliography.pdf.

⁴⁵² Hefley and Hefley, *Uncle Sam*, 96 (Nida was part of the "constitutional committee" that first created SIL in Mexico in "the fall of 1936"); cf. SIL, "Articles of Incorporation of Summer Institute of Linguistics," filed with the Secretary of State of California, August 12, 1942, Article V, p. 2, line 28 (Nida is listed as one of the four original directors).

⁴⁵³ WBT, "Articles of Incorporation of Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.," filed with the Secretary of State of California, August 12, 1942, Article V, p. 3, line 19 (Nida is listed as one of the four original directors).

⁴⁵⁴ Edwin H. Robertson, *Taking the Word to the World: 50 Years of the United Bible Societies* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 60 ("6. The development of translation consultants to assist in translation projects throughout the world.").

- United Bible Societies (UBS)⁴⁵⁶
- The Bible Translator (TBT)⁴⁵⁷
- The UBS Greek New Testament⁴⁵⁸

Another major vehicle for Nida's influence among evangelicals was his role in the continuation of the journal, *Practical Anthropology* (now, *Missiology*) for which he provided organizational and financial backing, as well as authoring numerous articles and serving in various editorial capacities throughout its run.⁴⁵⁹

In addition to his publications and organizational genius, Nida was also known for his personal touch. For over seven decades from the time he first began teaching classes at Camp Wycliffe (later, SIL) in 1936, he endeared himself to hundreds of people through his personal relations and interactions with them.⁴⁶⁰ To better understand this extensive legacy, we now turn to some of the major influences in Nida's life.

Influences

⁴⁵⁵ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 92 ["9 January 1961...is considered the first official Triennial Translator's Workshop (TTW), although two previous gatherings had taken place in the Nidas' living room."].

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 100 ("a meeting of thirteen Bible Societies from 6 to 9 May 1946 at the Elfinward Conference House in Haywards Heath, England. The American Bible Society delegation included Eugene Nida...The conference decided to form the United Bible Societies"); cf. Robertson, *Taking the Word*, 23 ("The Rev. William J. Platt of the BFBS and Dr. Eugene Nida of the ABS were appointed secretaries to the conference.").

⁴⁵⁷ Robertson, *Taking the Word*, 59 ("[Nida and Rutgers] proposed the publication of *The Bible Translator*...Despite BFBS reluctance, the ABS (Nida) and the NBS (Rutgers) won the day, and the UBS Council resolved to publish *The Bible Translator* which first appeared in January 1950.").

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 59 ("3. The development of the Greek New Testament text published by the Bible Societies particularly for translators.").

⁴⁵⁹ Kraft, *SWM/SIS at Forty*, 96 ("*Practical Anthropology* had been quite influential in the lives and ministries of many of us...the American Bible Society Translations Department under Eugene Nida had supported *PA* for most of its years..."), 100 ("*PA* had been started in 1953...and in 1955 was taken over by Nida and the Bible Society"); cf. Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 97 ("*Practical Anthropology (PA)* first appeared in 1953 and was published for nineteen years. Almost all the articles came from Nida, his ABS colleagues, and others who worked with him from time to time: Smalley, Reyburn, Wonderly, Taber, and Loewen.").

⁴⁶⁰ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 32 ("Nida proposed to the Board of the ABS that he travel to translators in the field where the languages being translated were spoken...The Board accepted the proposal, and...Nida began to spend several months each year visiting translators."), 10 ("Nida's theory and approach, valuable as they were, would not have won so many advocates if Nida had not dedicated himself to disseminating them through years of travel and teaching. Further, his amazing ability to inspire others promoted the approach around the world. Doubters and skeptics turned into believers when Nida worked with them."); Robertson, *Taking the Word*, 59 ("Nida changed the whole relationship with the translators in the field by his visits.").

Nida credited his mother for what reads as a blueprint of his own accomplishments:

“My mother, Alma Ruth McCullough...was completely different from my father: active, dynamic, a great communicator, and really brilliant when she was speaking in church, where we went very often. She always told me, ‘Remember, when you speak, you say much more than when you write, because besides the expressions, there is the tone of your voice, your inflections, and your rhythm.’ From the time that I was born, she had the obsession for me to get a PhD, and this was the reason why she taught me how to read from the time that I was very young; she also taught me how to speak in public. She always kept an eye on my lessons, and she was inflexible, because she wanted to make me a brilliant intellectual.”⁴⁶¹

The assertion that speech is a greater means of communication than writing would only seem to have been confirmed to Nida during his time at high school. As a student at Polytechnic High School of Long Beach, California (1928-1931),⁴⁶² the fourteen year-old, "Constitutional bookworm,"⁴⁶³ would rise to considerable prominence as one of the foremost public speakers and debaters in his school as well as in southern California.⁴⁶⁴ This high level of speaking would continue until he graduated, winning several individual and group awards.⁴⁶⁵

In addition to his oratory skills, Nida was recognized for his intellect: "In academics Eugene Nida, president of the Scholarship Society and honor student for the school year, 1929-

⁴⁶¹ Elena Nida, *Gene Nida: My Husband and my inspiration* (n.p.: Xulon Press, 2014), 96-97.

⁴⁶² Long Beach Polytechnic High School yearbook, *Caerulea*, vols. 26-28 (1929-1931). Nida also appears in vol. 29 (1932) for awards received the previous year.

⁴⁶³ Anonymous, "Many Orators At Polytechnic," *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, 1929, A-9.

⁴⁶⁴ Anonymous, "Long Beach Wins Debate," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1929, D-8 ("the Long Beach Polytechnic High School debate team took the Southern California debate championship...The winning team, composed of Eugene Nida and Howard Patrick upheld the negative against the Hollywood losing team...Scintillating delivery and unusual mastery of material characterized...both sides, but the Hollywood speakers lacked the rapid-fire treatment which was displayed by the Long Beach lads and gripped the attention of the audience with the genuineness of its enthusiasm. ¶Patrick was voted first-place speaker...Nida, received the second-place award. They will be presented gold and silver medals, respectively, by the Southern California Debating and Oratorical League.").

⁴⁶⁵ Anonymous, "More Schools Pick Orators," *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1930, A22 ("at the [L.A.] Times finals...district contest...Eugene Nida...was second"); cf. *Caerulea*, vol. 28 (1931), 159 ("World Problems Contest...Eugene Nida...tied for third"); *Caerulea*, vol. 29 (1932), 119 ("World Problems Contest...Eugene Nida won first place for his brilliant speech [at Poly High]...Eugene's speech was entitled 'The American Empire'. This address also won for him second place in the finals of the Southern California World Problems Contest.").

1930, was awarded the distinction of being the foremost scholar at Poly."⁴⁶⁶ This is not surprising considering his academic accomplishments:

Eugene Nida received the honor student award for 1930 with a record of "A's" in five solids carried throughout the year. Among his outside activities were those of chairman of the projects committee for Scholarship and representative of the school in three debates, in which Poly won over Jefferson High School of Los Angeles, Huntington Park High, and Bakersfield High. As an orator he won second place in the Constitutional Contest and tied for third place in the World Problems Contest of last year.⁴⁶⁷

Regarding Nida's training and successes as a high school orator, it is helpful to note that making a positive impression upon the audience (or receptors) is perhaps the foremost aim of the student in competitive high school public speaking. In a similar fashion, competitive high school public debate requires the speaker to learn how to successfully argue both sides of an issue. In this context, success is determined by which presentation is deemed more convincing. The validity of a position is secondary to its presentation. Content ultimately becomes relative if not irrelevant as one seeks to elicit a positive response from the audience. A debater also has to learn to suppress one's feelings when asked to argue in favor of a position that differs from one's own point of view or personal convictions. It was in this environment where Nida honed his public speaking and debating skills from which he would continually draw as evidenced in both his teachings and interaction with others.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁶ *Caerulea*, vol. 28 (1931), 185.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴⁶⁸ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 10 ["This inspiration came...in part from the energy and dynamism of his presentations and discussions. His oratorical skills already showed in his high school days when he led his debate team to the southern California championship and was named the outstanding debater (North 1974: vii). Anyone who has attended one of Nida's lectures will vouch for the excitement he engenders in his audience. ¶All these factors were required to bring about the revolutionary developments in the field of Bible translation."]; Interview with the wife of a colleague of Nida, April 8, 2013 ("Nida was very careful with what he said...[he] didn't 'just talk.' Gene was very enigmatic. I think he said what people would approve of. He could argue both sides of an argument when he needed to. In an intense conversation, he could go along with the person he wanted to press, control. He was slippery some times. Nida was not truthful in the way that I understand truthful. Nida told [my husband] to never admit a mistake, never put anything in writing. If you change something, do not admit it. He was wily.").

After high school Nida attended the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Greek in 1936.⁴⁶⁹ It was during his time at UCLA that he was introduced to Linguistics. In Nida's own words:

...what introduced me to linguistics was Carl Darling Buck's *Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin* (1933). I practically memorized the entire book..."⁴⁷⁰

As an undergraduate I was fascinated by developments in linguistics and practically memorized Bloomfield's volume on *Language*. I was similarly impressed by Sapir's...fascinating book *Language*, which underlined the importance of cultural anthropology in all translating.⁴⁷¹

I had discovered Sapir's book *Language* and had begun to see how limited my historical orientation really was. Bloomfield's *Language* became my linguistics textbook, with generous additions from Jespersen, Saussure, and Boas. Then I realized how language is only a part of the much bigger domain of cultural anthropology and that the functions of language cannot be explained apart from the total context of culture.⁴⁷²

Nida's introduction to the writings of Leonard Bloomfield and Edward Sapir served as his initiation into American Structural Linguistics (American Structuralism). The roots of American Structuralism can be traced to Franz Boas, "the principal founder of modern American anthropology...who made linguistics one of the 'four fields' of anthropological study, along with archaeology, cultural anthropology, and physical anthropology."⁴⁷³ He also served as a mentor to both Bloomfield and Sapir.⁴⁷⁴

In American Structuralism Nida found further support emphasizing speech over writing (as well as the rejection of language as an objective medium for communication):

Bloomfield...following on basic Boasian lines, which were becoming characteristic of Linguistics in the U.S.: a focus on spoken language as primary, written language as

⁴⁶⁹ UCLA [yearbook], *Southern Campus*, vol. XVII (1936), 104 ("Eugene Albert Nida, A.B. Greek [major] — Garden Grove [residence], Alpha Gamma Omega; Phi Sigma; Phi Beta Kappa").

⁴⁷⁰ Nida, *My Linguistic Odyssey*, 229.

⁴⁷¹ Eugene A. Nida, interview by JFL Correspondent, "An Interview with Dr .Eugene Nida Interview," *Wai guo yu* 2, no. 114 (1998): 2.

⁴⁷² Nida, *My Linguistic Odyssey*, 229.

⁴⁷³ John G. Fought, "American Structuralism," in *Concise Encyclopedia of Syntactic Theories*, eds. E K. Brown and J E. Miller (Oxford: Pergamon, 1996), 1.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 1.

secondary; observation of language as a present-day reality to speakers, rather than from an external, historical point of view...⁴⁷⁵

Another important feature of American Structuralism is its view of relativism between cultures and languages.⁴⁷⁶ The idea that each culture and language is inherently autonomous would form a major presupposition for both Nida and one of his foremost disciples, Dr. Charles H. Kraft.⁴⁷⁷ Such a view precludes the possibility of any super-cultural (or, supra-cultural)⁴⁷⁸ standard.

One of the most important influences on Nida, as mentioned above, was Bloomfield. He rejected "mentalism," that is, the idea that language was reflective of "mental acts." As D. Terence Langendoen wrote, "In repudiating the existence of all mentalist constructs, Bloomfield also repudiated the classical view that the structure of language reflects the structure of thought."⁴⁷⁹ This de-emphasis on the meaning of words is evident in his giving "primacy of the sentence over the word as the basic analytical element"⁴⁸⁰ and his sharp distinction between "form and meaning."⁴⁸¹ Bloomfield also rejected the belief in any divine origin for language: "The Greek generalizations about language were not improved upon until the eighteenth century, when scholars ceased to view language as a direct gift of God..."⁴⁸²

While at UCLA, Nida was not only influenced by Linguistics but also by his teachers' requirements to avoid literal translations:

⁴⁷⁵ Suzanne Kemmer, "Biographical sketch of Leonard Bloomfield," Rice, Dept. of Linguistics, Ling 403: Foundations of Linguistics, last updated August 25, 2009, accessed October 13, 2015, <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Found/bloomfieldbio.html>.

⁴⁷⁶ Fought, "American Structuralism," 1-2 ("One especially salient feature of American structuralism traceable to his [i.e. Boas] influence is relativism, the view that cultural and linguistic categorization is imposed on experience in ways that differ, sometimes radically, from culture to culture and from language to language and that these different categorizations have equal claims on the attention of science.").

⁴⁷⁷ This will be addressed below.

⁴⁷⁸ Also, supercultural; supracultural..

⁴⁷⁹ D. Terence Langendoen, "Leonard Bloomfield," MIT CogNet, accessed March 8, 2015, <http://0-cognet.mit.edu.wizard.umd.umich.edu/library/erefs/mitecs/langendoen.html>.

⁴⁸⁰ Fought, "American Structuralism," 4.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. 6.

⁴⁸² Leonard Bloomfield, [1933] 1961, *Language* (New York: Holt, Rinehart And Winston), 5-6.

On the basis of my studies in the Classics at UCLA I was amazed to find that for the most part the Greek and Latin authors had been much more intelligibly translated than the Bible. Furthermore, my professors refused to have us produce literal translations since in their judgment such translations would inevitably result in students' failing to appreciate the style of the Greek and Latin texts. In addition, literal translations also result in bad habits in writing one's own language.⁴⁸³

When I was at the University of California, Los Angeles, our professors would never let us translate literally. They said, "We want to know the meaning. We don't want to know just the words." I found that a number of the Greek classics had been translated very meaningfully, much better than the Bible had been translated. I thought it a tragedy to have the Scriptures in a form that most people misinterpret. Why should the Bible be so much more poorly translated than secular texts?⁴⁸⁴

This insistence on non-literal translations, especially in contrast to then-extant Bible translations would be reinforced in Nida's graduate and doctoral studies:

My graduate work in Patristics at the University of Southern California and later doctoral studies at the University of Michigan in linguistics and cultural anthropology further convinced me that for the most part Bible translating falls far behind other translating in intelligibility of content and acceptability of style.⁴⁸⁵

An important clarification regarding Nida's degree from the University of Southern California (USC) is necessary. Nida was elsewhere quoted, "at USC I took a master's degree in the New Testament and Early Christian Fathers."⁴⁸⁶ Wendy Porter provides further details as to Nida's time of study at USC:

Nida told us that when he went there, he was told that there was no one to supervise a degree in his area of interest. His response was that it didn't matter—he was interested in doing his degree there because they had all the texts and he could just read them on his own. Which he did. [sic] He read through the Church Fathers while he was there. In 1939, he received the Master's degree in Greek New Testament from the University of Southern California.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸³ Nida, interview by JFL Correspondent, 1.

⁴⁸⁴ Eugene A. Nida, interview by David Neff, "Meaning-Full Translations," *Christianity Today* 46, no. 11 (October 7, 2002), 46.

⁴⁸⁵ Nida, interview by JFL Correspondent, 1.

⁴⁸⁶ Haines, "Spreading the Word," 7.

⁴⁸⁷ Wendy Porter, "A Brief Look At The Life And Works Of Eugene Albert Nida," *TBT* 56, no. 1 (January 2005): 2; cf. Nida, ABS Oral Interview, 2 ("I took a master's degree at USC because they had a magnificent library. They had bought up a number of libraries from Jews who were escaping from Germany because of the Nazis, at that time and they had the best library on classical materiai and papyri and various things west of the Mississippi River, so I was able to work out an arrangement to get my master's at that time").

Although his apparently unsupervised, self-guided degree included reading through the "Church Fathers" (or, "Patristics") and presumably manuscripts of at least parts of the Greek New Testament, his degree was in neither one. According to official USC records, in 1939 Nida simply earned a Master of Arts degree in Greek.⁴⁸⁸ His thesis was entitled, "Ambiguities of the Greek Gospels."⁴⁸⁹

Perhaps Nida's thesis was an indication of seeking some way to move away from more literal translations of the Bible which he felt was, as quoted above, "in a form that most people misinterpret" and "much more poorly translated than secular texts." If this were the case, he certainly did not find much flexibility within the texts themselves for divergent meanings::

no ambiguity which has been noted has proved to be of very great theological or historical importance. In fact, though there are several hundred ambiguities⁴⁹⁰ in all, these difficult references could be deleted from the Scripture and not materially change the gospel account.⁴⁹¹

Textual stability, however, is of little significance if one's view of language divorces meaning from the words themselves such as Bloomfield taught. This is the very view of language that Nida adopted which served as the foundational premise for his teaching on translation.⁴⁹² It is

⁴⁸⁸ USC Archives, email to author, March 6, 2015 ("Mr. Nida graduated USC in 1939 with a Master of Arts in Greek. The title of his thesis is "Ambiguities of the Greek Gospels." The date of commencement was June 10, 1939. He received his A.B. from UCLA.").

⁴⁸⁹ Eugene A. Nida, "Ambiguities of the Greek Gospels" (MA thesis, USC, 1939).

⁴⁹⁰ He would later quantify this number in Nida, *Bible Translating*, 57 ("The Gospels alone contain more than seven hundred ambiguous readings in which the Greek may be translated one of two different ways. One of the most famous of these ambiguities occurs in John 1: 9, where the phrase 'coming into the world' may be construed as going with 'every man' or with 'the true light.'"). cf. Nida, "Ambiguities," 29, where Nida mentions John 1:9 ("A very famous ambiguity involving gender and antecedent is that in Jn. 1:9... Whether ['coming'] is to be taken with ['the true light'] or with ['man'] makes a considerable difference in the theological conception of revelation."). As the interpretation of John 1:9 is foundational to Quaker beliefs, it would seem that this was, at least in part, an effect of Nida's attending a Quaker church and his parents' becoming Quakers (after having been Methodists).

⁴⁹¹ Nida, "Ambiguities," 12.

⁴⁹² For an outstanding treatment of Nida's view of the relationship of words to meaning (i.e. "form and meaning"), see Anthony Howard Nichols, "Translating the Bible: A Critical Analysis of E.A. Nida's Theory of Dynamic Equivalence and Its Impact upon Recent Bible Translations" (PhD thesis, University of Sheffield, 1996).

not surprising, therefore, that Nida completed his formal studies at the University of Michigan (U-M) from which he "was awarded a Ph.D. in Linguistics on May 29, 1943."⁴⁹³

The final influence upon Nida's thinking that we will consider is that of "neo-orthodoxy," the theology primarily typified by the German theologian, Karl Barth. During the 1947 SIL session, Nida's "chapel homilies...set off alarms when some of the students became convinced that they could detect strains of 'Barthianism' in his irenic messages."⁴⁹⁴ In *Message and Mission*, Nida wrote approvingly of Barth⁴⁹⁵ and other neo-orthodox authors such as Emil Brunner, Rudolph Bultmann, Paul Tillich, and Martin Buber.⁴⁹⁶

Nida also showed his appreciation for neo-orthodoxy in TASOT:

For the most part, [neo-orthodox theology] conceives of [divine] inspiration primarily in terms of the response of the receptor...Those who espouse the traditional, orthodox view of inspiration...often tend to favor quite close, literal renderings...On the other hand, those who hold the neo-orthodox view, or who have been influenced by it, tend to be freer in their translating...It would be quite wrong, however, to assume that all those who emphasize fully meaningful translations necessarily hold to a neo-orthodox view of inspiration...⁴⁹⁷

In light of Nida's disappointment with more literal translations of the Bible, neo-orthodoxy, by "mov[ing] the idea of revelation away from the medium of words to the broader medium of personal encounter,"⁴⁹⁸ provided him with a theological framework that would allow for greater freedom in its translation.

⁴⁹³ Office of Public Affairs & Internal Communications for the University of Michigan, email message to author, March 4, 2015.

⁴⁹⁴ Fredrick A. Aldridge Jr., "The Development of the Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1934-1982" (PhD thesis, University of Stirling, 2012), 99.

⁴⁹⁵ Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), xv ("Karl Barth, in his customarily incisive manner"), 239 ("Barth, Karl. *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936.").

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 27.

⁴⁹⁸ John Macquarrie, "The Figure Of Jesus Christ In Contemporary Christianity," in *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, eds., Leslie Houlden and Peter Byrne (London, GBR: Routledge, 1995), 920, accessed October 14, 2015, ProQuest Ebrary.

Dynamic Equivalence (DE)

Nida, along with Charles Taber, provided the fullest definition for DE in *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (TAPOT):

dynamic equivalence: quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the RESPONSE of the RECEPTOR is essentially like that of the original receptors. Frequently, the form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful. The opposite principal is FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE.⁴⁹⁹

The decided emphasis on receptor response as opposed to the "message of the original text" is in keeping with Nida's training as a high school debater and orator, his undergraduate studies at UCLA, his education in Linguistics, and the teaching of neo-orthodoxy.

While it is understandable how focus on receptor response would encourage others to fulfill Nida's desire for "meaningful" Bible translations hearkening back to his days at UCLA, DE is a radical means to this end since it jettisons the authorial intent of the original texts. Y.C. Whang, a professional translator of Christian literature from English to Korean,⁵⁰⁰ addressed this deficiency and more:

how can a translator confirm whether the response of the former induced by the translation is identical to that of the latter?...In a sense, functional equivalence [i.e. DE] appears smart in theory, but it seems impracticable in reality...if the burden of translation is moved from the author's meaning to the receptor's response, where does the translator search for the meaning of the text?...in terms of my own experience...I have presupposed that translators are responsible to authors, not readers...In this respect Nida's suggestion is opposed to my practice. According to him, translators should put themselves not in the position of the author but in that of readers then and now...However, Nida does not state this plainly, but presupposes it. Thus, because the concrete way of achieving the suggested goal is not provided, I cannot find the applicability of his suggestions. As

⁴⁹⁹ Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* [TAPOT] (Leiden: Brill; and New York: United Bible Societies, 1969), 200.

⁵⁰⁰ Y.C. Whang, "To Whom Is A Translator Responsible—Reader Or Author?," in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series*, vol. 173, *Translating the Bible: Problems and Prospects*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Richard S. Hess (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 14 ("Y.C. Whang, a professional translator"), 46, fn. 1 ("I have translated more than 30 English books into Korean, all of which were Christian books.").

pointed out earlier, although his books are useful for improving one's translating skill, his suggestions of the new criteria for translation are, it seems to me, untenable...⁵⁰¹

Nida himself admitted, "one is not always sure how the original audience responded or were [sic] supposed to respond."⁵⁰²

Presenting a translation theory with an unattainable ideal was no deterrent to Nida. What mattered most was to provide some means of removing the focus from the texts of the biblical manuscripts themselves. A foolproof theory of translation was less important to Nida than a way to tap into a translator's "creativity"⁵⁰³ and so produce "meaningful translations." DE is effective in this regard.

The release in 1966 of two DE renderings of the New Testament resulted in such great popularity and sales that their success validated, in the eyes of many, Nida's theory of translation. The Spanish, *Versión Popular* (VP), the first DE version of the New Testament, "appeared in 1966, several months before the TEV (i.e. Today's English Version)⁵⁰⁴ New Testament."⁵⁰⁵ Although the reasons for the Spanish to appear first were based on pure expediency⁵⁰⁶ it certainly served its purpose for "In two years it sold more than two million copies."⁵⁰⁷ When the TEV was released, "the initial run and a subsequent reprint sold out."⁵⁰⁸ As of 2004, the TEV

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 52-55.

⁵⁰² Nida, *TASOT*, 170.

⁵⁰³ Throughout his published and unpublished writings, Nida, echoing Immanuel Kant, continually praised "creativity" as the gold standard for good translators. For instance, see Nida, *ABS Oral Interview*, 41 ("And I think he's [i.e. Barclay Newman] done the most creative work of anybody...I think, by all odds, the most creative translation consultant that we have.").

⁵⁰⁴ The TEV had the concurrent title, "Good News for Modern Man." Upon the completion of the entire Bible in 1976, TEV became the Good News Bible (GNB). The GNB is now known as the Good News Translation (GNT).

⁵⁰⁵ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, " 84.

⁵⁰⁶ Nida, *ABS Oral Interview*, 47-48 ("Now, we had already been doing this type of thing [i.e. "meaningful translations" or DE], of course, in Spanish. It was very interesting. We could do all kinds of good things in all languages except English, because the [ABS] Board was completely unaware of what was going on in these other languages."); Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, " 81 ("Nida had initiated the *Versión Popular* in Spanish before the English because he thought that a "radical" new translation in a language other than English would meet less opposition from the ABS Board.").

⁵⁰⁷ Robertson, *Taking the Word*, 145.

⁵⁰⁸ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, " 82.

and its later namesakes, the Good News Bible (GNB) and the Good News Translation (GNT), "have now totaled almost 130 million copies." As Philip Stine, one of Nida's Translation Consultants wrote, "Its [i.e. the TEV] success greatly boosted their [i.e. Nida and the translations consultants] influence and helped to firmly establish the validity of the dynamic equivalence approach."⁵⁰⁹

The influence of the VP and TEV extends well beyond their respective languages. They have become "models for popular language translations."⁵¹⁰ According to Anthony Nichols' analysis of the GNB (or, TEV), it has become much more than a "model":

What emerged was the immense influence of the GNB on three important non-Western versions, the Indonesian and (to the extent they were consulted) the Malay and Chinese versions. GNB renderings were found to be regularly reproduced to such an extent that it seems to have been not just a model, but the actual base for translation, rather than the ST [i.e. Source Text]⁵¹¹. This is despite the claim in the Prefaces that the translators worked from the original languages. The result is that the receptors must approach Scripture through a Western grid.⁵¹²

In other words, the GNB has effectively replaced the biblical manuscripts as the source text for DE renderings in at least three other languages.

For all of the advocacy of his theory, when Nida was asked if DE "achiev[es] harmony in language and culture"⁵¹³ he replied, "I sincerely wish that 'dynamic equivalence' could resolve such differences, but it is only a step in the right direction."⁵¹⁴ In 1986, Nida officially abandoned the term DE for "functional equivalence" (FE) for alleged misunderstandings and violation of its principle even though the "substitution of 'functional equivalence' is not designed to suggest anything essentially different from what was earlier designated by the phrase 'dynamic

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 83. It is unclear whether this is Stine's own comment or his summarization of something mentioned in an interview by Heber Peacock, another Translation Consultant directly picked by Nida.

⁵¹⁰ Robertson, *Taking the Word*, 60.

⁵¹¹ The ST is here referring to the biblical manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

⁵¹² Nichols, "Translating the Bible," 302.

⁵¹³ Nida's understanding of the relation of language to culture will be discussed below.

⁵¹⁴ Nida, interview by JFL Correspondent, 5.

equivalence."⁵¹⁵ This explanation, however, seems suspect when three years later Nida gave an "in-house" interview to ABS, offering a very different reason for this change:

Now we call it "functional equivalence" instead of "dynamic equivalence", [sic] but probably it was necessary to use things like "dynamic equivalence" because it caught peoples' attention. And if we'd used "functional equivalence" from the beginning, it probably wouldn't have had much impact on people. But that was, frankly, the reason.⁵¹⁶

Whatever may be the real reason for this change in terminology, in practice it serves to shield Nida's theory from potentially greater critique by obscuring the fact that DE and FE refer to the same theory and that valid criticisms for the one are also applicable to the other (and vice-versa).

Language and Communication

Nida wrote several things about language and communication that need to be considered if one is to understand both his thinking and the implications of his teaching. In his highly influential, *Message and Mission*, he wrote:

Verbal symbols are only "labels" and are of human origin [emphasis original].⁵¹⁷ The meaning of the account of Adam giving names to all the cattle, to the fowls of the air, and to every beast of the field (Gen. 2: 20) is primarily that language is a human convention and that the words used are essentially labels, not divine epithets.⁵¹⁸

There are three assertions that Nida made about language that were foundational for him. First, humans are the source of language which is why "language is a human convention." Second, words cannot serve as an exact description of anything, since they are only "labels." Third,

⁵¹⁵ Eugene A. Nida and Jan De Waard, *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translation* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1986), vii.

⁵¹⁶ Nida, ABS Oral Interview, 82.

⁵¹⁷ For an excellent comment on Nida's view of language see Gordon R. Lewis, "What Does Biblical Infallibility Mean?" *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 6, no. 1 (Winter 1963): 26 ("But must a Bible believer accept the naturalistic theories of the origin of language? Eugene Nida assumes that we must...May not the Bible-believer also hold that God created man's capacity for linguistic communication? Of course this is impossible on a positivistic world view! But on a theistic world view, Gordon Clark argues, God created man and revealed Himself to him in words. Language is adequate for theology.").

⁵¹⁸ Nida, *Message and Mission*, 224. The influence of this book cannot be overemphasized. Charles Kraft used it as a textbook throughout his tenure at Fuller Theological Seminary of which more will be stated below.

words cannot provide us with divine descriptions of reality because they are "not divine epithets."

A second consideration of the above quote is that Nida revealed the influence of Bloomfield's, *Language*, on his thinking. When Nida wrote that language is of "human origin" he restated, in a circuitous way, Bloomfield's implied claim that language is not "a direct gift of God." Nida's use of "epithets" and "labels" were also respective restatements for "expression, etc." and "popular terms" regarding Bloomfield's "mechanistic" point of view:

For the mentalist, language is *the expression of ideas, feelings, or volitions*. ¶The mechanist does not accept this solution. He believes that *mental images, feelings*, and the like are merely popular terms for various bodily movements [emphasis original]⁵¹⁹

In each of these restatements, Nida aligned himself with Bloomfield's view of language.

The major implication of Nida's view of language is that God is not its source. For this reason language cannot be a means by which God communicates. All "God-talk" therefore, is a "human convention" that represents mere "labels," not exact descriptions of truth or reality. Such a framework precludes any possibility of divine, verbal inspiration. A second, closely-related implication is that language is always used subjectively and never objectively. In light of Nida's view of language, the ramifications for how one views and understands the text of the Bible are enormous not least of which concerns its translation.

Since "equivalence" is integral to DE, it is necessary to see how Nida defined it. In *Bible Translating* (1947), his first major work on the topic as indicated by the title, Nida wrote:

In all situations involving what we term 'equivalence' there is actually no exact equivalence. No corresponding two words in two different languages ever have identically the same meaning. The problem is not one of finding absolute equivalents, but of finding relatively close equivalents. There can be no absolute standard of conformance. It must always be a matter of degree...we must work in varying shades of gray, not pure black and white. We attempt to approach an absolute standard, but we

⁵¹⁹ Bloomfield, *Language*, 142.

know from the start that it cannot be reached, for the language medium which we must use is not a set of exact mathematical formulas.⁵²⁰

Nida held that this lack of correspondence between words was also true within any given language. This is why he wrote, "there are no true synonyms,"⁵²¹ and, "No two words in any one language ever have exactly the same meaning"⁵²²

Nida further stated, "No two people ever mean exactly the same by the same word."⁵²³

He even went beyond this by implying that no individual ever means exactly the same thing when repeating the same word:

no word ever has precisely the same meaning twice, for each speech event is in a sense unique, involving participants who are constantly changing and referents which are never fixed. Bloomfield (1933, p. 407) describes this problem by saying that "Every utterance of a speech form involves a minute semantic innovation." If this is so and from both a theoretical and a practical point of view we must admit this to be a fact—it means that, in some measure at least, the boundaries of a term are being altered constantly.⁵²⁴

As Nida wrote to "pioneer evangelical feminist,"⁵²⁵ Nancy Hardesty: "Language is essentially a reflection of social and conceptual realities and is really not an instrument for changing such."⁵²⁶

It is no wonder that Nida repeatedly asserted "absolute communication is impossible"⁵²⁷

explaining this as emphatically as he felt possible: "There is no doubt about the fact that absolute

⁵²⁰ Nida, *Bible Translating*, 130-131. Nida would repeat a part of this definition for "interlingual communication" in his last major work on Bible translation. Nida and de Waard, *From One Language*, 63 ("but if one is to deal with the issues of interlingual communication in a realistic way, one has to recognize that answers are not always in black and white but in varying shades of gray. In other words, they are based upon probabilities and not upon verbal certainties...").

⁵²¹ Nida, *Bible Translating*, 25.

⁵²² Nida, *Message and Mission*, 89.

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Nida, TASOT, 48.

⁵²⁵ "Nancy Hardesty, pioneer evangelical feminist, dies," *The Christian Century*, May 2, 2011, accessed October 26, 2015, <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2011-04/nancy-hardesty-pioneer-evangelical-feminist-dies>.

⁵²⁶ See Eugene A. Nida to Nancy A. Hardesty, September [3 or 8, the date is unclear], 1979, in *Nida Correspondence/Papers* (Roll 631, image 1542).

⁵²⁷ Nida, *Message and Mission*, 90, 189; cf. Nida, TASOT, 54 ("absolute communication between persons is impossible"); Eugene A. Nida and William D. Reyrburn, *Meaning Across Cultures: a Study On Bible Translating* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981), 7 ("absolute communication is never possible").

communication in translating is impossible, but this is true of any and all kinds of communication, whether intralingual or interlingual."⁵²⁸

Related to this idea of the impossibility of absolute communication, Nida wrote what seems to be a truism: "Language is a part of culture."⁵²⁹ What he meant by this, however, becomes apparent when we consider the following illustration that he was fond of using:

a literal translation may be radically misunderstood because of a very different world-view in a receptor culture. The Sadducees' argument with Jesus about the resurrection...makes very good sense in the biblical culture practicing levirate marriage. But in most African societies the question about "Whose wife will she be?" is simply absurd. In the African world-view any woman who had apparently caused the death of seven husbands would surely be a witch and no one would want her under any circumstances. Footnotes to explain the differences in cultural presuppositions are essential.⁵³⁰

The issue for Nida is not a question of *if* the Sadducees' question can be literally translated. His concern centers on differing "cultural presuppositions" that result in misunderstanding, or a lack of communication, based on literal translation. This is indicative of a view that holds that each language is a culturally-closed system. In other words, since cultures are relative, language as a subset of culture can never be the means for expressing transcendent concepts in other languages by means of literal translation.

⁵²⁸ Nida and de Waard, *From One Language*, 42. There is great irony that Nida resorted to absolute language in averring that there is no absolute communication. Towards the latter part of his life, however, he admitted, "Words do count, even if some philosophers are skeptical about the possibilities of verbal communication." See Nida, *Gene Nida*, 40. It is a travesty that it took Nida, at around 81 years old and the start of an immoral relationship that he would be willing to recognize what all people take for granted whether they admit it or not, namely that words have meaning. Nida lived with María Elena Fernández-Miranda for about 15 months prior to their marriage. See Elena Fernández-Miranda Nida, *Interlingua*, vol. 112, *Mi Vida Con Eugene Nida* (Granada: Comares, 2012), 92 ("El 3 de febrero [1996] iniciamos realmente nuestra vida en común." [On February 3 [1996] we began living together for real.]); Nida, *Gene Nida*, 132 ("on the fifth of May [1997], we were able to get married in the Methodist church.").

⁵²⁹ Nida, *Bible Translating*, 241.

⁵³⁰ Eugene A. Nida, "The Paradoxes Of Translation," *TBT* 42, no. 2A (Apr. 1991): 22; cf. Nida and Reyburn, *Meaning Across Cultures*, 73-74; Nida, *Fascinated By Languages*, 17.

Nida's view of culture, however, did not just encompass language but "truth" itself. In a 1994 question and answer session at Asbury Theological Seminary for Darrell Whiteman,⁵³¹ he told a group of students, "I don't believe in super-cultural (or, supercultural) truth because truth only is in terms of a cultural context."⁵³² Nida well expressed this conviction in a lecture at Fuller in 2001 which was described by Charles Van Engen, Whiteman, and J. Dudley Woodberry as "vintage Nida":⁵³³

...there's a statement in the Gospels about a person should not be looking on a woman with sexual interest. That's the implication of the passage. But if you don't do that in some societies, or seem to be doing that, they consider you homosexual. Is it better to be considered looking for a woman to have sex with her or be a homosexual?⁵³⁴

By applying DE theory to Matthew 5:27-30, the command to not lust, which is relevant to every human being, is neutralized by appeal to the receptor culture. Ultimately, "equivalence," for Nida was not the use of language to express "super-cultural truth" but rather to find "comparable" cultural features that made sense within that culture's worldview(s).⁵³⁵

Another essential consideration of Nida's view of language has to do with his understanding of words. We have already seen that Nida viewed words as mere "labels," unable to carry meaning within themselves as if they were "epithets." In *Bible Translating*, he gave a

⁵³¹ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 70 ["Darrell Whiteman tells of inviting Nida to lecture to some of his seminary classes a week after Nida's eightieth birthday. 'I had him speak in seven different kinds of class opportunities... (Darrell Whiteman, interview with author, 21 Sept. 2000)."].

⁵³² Eugene A. Nida, "Missions: question and answer session" (classroom lecture, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY, November 16, 1994), accessed October 18, 2015, <http://place.asburyseminary.edu/ecommonslectureships/169/>. This statement occurs around 39:50. The background to this statement begins around 38:53. A student mentioned how Charles Kraft talked about super-cultural truth but that others did not believe in it. He then asked Nida for his opinion as this was the key to contextualization. Nida first responded by saying, "I don't think that there's such a thing as *supernatural* truth, because truth is always in terms of context." The student corrected him by interjecting, "super-cultural truth." Nida then adjusted his statement.

⁵³³ Charles E. Van Engen, ed., et. al., *Paradigm Shifts in Christian Witness: Insights from Anthropology, Communication, and Spiritual Power* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 47.

⁵³⁴ Eugene A. Nida, "Religion As Culture," (second lecture of 2001 Missiology Lectures for the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, November 14, 2001, ~ 27:52-28:27).

⁵³⁵ For two critiques on Nida's role in the introduction of anthropology or "cultural adaptation" into missions see Frederick L. Plastow, "New Wine In Old Wineskins: Trends in Missiological Foundations for Muslim Evangelism," unpublished manuscript, December 1992; and Frederick W. Evans, Jr., "A Statement Of Missionary Concern," Middle East Resources, accessed October 26, 2015, <http://www.levant.info/MER026.html>.

fuller statement about them: "Words are merely vehicles for ideas. They are symbols, and as such they usually have no special significance over and above the actual objects which they symbolize."⁵³⁶ Armed with this American Structuralist perspective towards words, Nida consistently disparaged their literal translation as evidenced by his pejorative references to them by such terms as "misleading,"⁵³⁷ "translationese,"⁵³⁸ "idols,"⁵³⁹ and "word worship."⁵⁴⁰

Religious Language

Nida categorized Scripture as "religious language" with the following definition:

The content of the Scriptures is best described as "primary religious language." Since it deals with supernatural events for which there are no finite models and since it reflects transcendental experiences for which ordinary language seems to be so inadequate, it is not at all strange that this primary religious language is in certain respects rather different from ordinary discourse.⁵⁴¹

He explained that "primary religious language" is "often figurative...[and] generally recognizes the failure of words to communicate the truth."⁵⁴² Nida confidently asserted in the conclusion of a later article that this was true of almost the *entire* "key vocabulary of Scripture:"

Sociosemiotics has in turn focused attention on the indeterminacy of language; as Edward Sapir used to say, "All languages leak." It is in this area of the unpredictability of creativity in figurative meaning that language exhibits its greatest impact. Such matters

⁵³⁶ Nida, *Bible Translating*, 12.

⁵³⁷ Nida, *Message and Mission*, 83; Nida, *TASOT*, 35 (footnote), 170, 213; Nida and Taber, *TAPOT*, 16; Eugene A. Nida, *Good News for Everyone: How to Use the Good News Bible (Today's English Version)* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1977), 13, 63; Nida and Reyburn, *Meaning Across Cultures*, 38, 61; Eugene A. Nida, *Signs, Sense, Translation* (Roggebaai, Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1984), 97; Nida, *Christianity Today* Interview, 46; Nida, *Fascinated By Languages*, 54-55, 137-138.

⁵³⁸ Nida and Taber, *TAPOT*, 13, 28, 100, 124-125, 208 (glossary); Eugene A. Nida, *Style and Discourse: With Special Reference to the Text of the Greek New Testament* (Cape Town South Africa: Bible Society, 1983), 165.

⁵³⁹ Eugene A. Nida, "Are We Really Monotheists?," *Practical Anthropology [PA]* 6, no. 2 (Mar.-Apr. 1959): 54; Nida, *Message and Mission*, 69; Eugene A. Nida, *Religion Across Cultures: a Study in the Communication of Christian Faith* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 79.

⁵⁴⁰ Nida, *Christianity Today* Interview, 46, 47 (subtitle); Nida, *Fascinated By Languages*, 76; Nida, "The Paradoxes Of Translation," 6.

⁵⁴¹ Nida and de Waard, *From One Language*, 21.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 21-22.

become especially crucial for Bible translators since fully 90% of the key vocabulary of the Scripture is figurative.⁵⁴³

By ending on such a provocative note and not providing *any* examples of this "key vocabulary," Nida forced the reader to look in his other writings for them.

The following are some of the specific examples that Nida provided for what he deemed to be figurative language in Scripture:

The *Scientific American* (my favorite magazine) and the accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 made sense only as two quite different ways of understanding texts: literally and figuratively.⁵⁴⁴

Primary religious language employs a number of rather highly technical expressions, usually of a figurative nature, for example, in the New Testament such phrases as 'saved by his blood', 'in the heavenlies', 'emptied himself', 'the Word became flesh', 'baptism of the Spirit', and 'believe and obey'.⁵⁴⁵

figurative language is often subject to literalist interpretation, as in the case of such phrases as "Son of God", "gehenna of fire", and "this is my blood". Because some figurative language is not understood clearly, it acquires a kind of mystic aura, and this tends to lead to what may be regarded as "word idolatry", so that there is a tendency to read into words meaning and values which are really foreign to the primary religious usage.⁵⁴⁶

A further 18 examples from Colossians 1:9-23 are given in the article, "Stretching Language," which Nida claimed "are typical of the primary religious language in much of the Greek New Testament."⁵⁴⁷ These "highly technical expressions, usually of a figurative nature" included: "image of God...all the fullness...making peace...the blood of his cross...[and] enemies."⁵⁴⁸

"Father" and "Son" Terminology

⁵⁴³ Eugene A. Nida, "Trends In Bible Translating Within The United Bible Societies: An Historical Perspective," *TBT* 42, no. 2A (Apr. 1991): 5.

⁵⁴⁴ Nida, *Fascinated By Languages*, 1.

⁵⁴⁵ Eugene A. Nida, *Style and Discourse: With special reference to the text of the Greek New Testament* (Cape Town, S.A.: ABS, 1983), p. 155.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁵⁴⁷ Eugene A. Nida, "Stretching Language," *Meta: journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal* 32, no. 1 (1987): 43.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

In his first major publication on translating the Bible, Nida mentioned that "Among the people of the Ponape Islands near Truk"⁵⁴⁹ their language contained no words for "father" or "son" due to its family structure:

in the system of communal marriage practiced by the people of the Ponape Islands before the coming of missionaries, there was no parallel for the word "father" (see page 136).⁵⁵⁰ Similarly, there was no word for "son."⁵⁵¹

Nida stated how these words were "translated" by missionaries:

The only word which could be used by the translators for 'father' was this word for 'guardian.' If a foreign word for 'father' had been used, it could only have been explained in terms of this word 'guardian,' for both the biological and social aspects of the word 'father' are significant.⁵⁵²

It was impossible to translate "Son of God" by any word-for-word parallel. The only possible way to translate such an expression was by 'one belonging to God.' In translating the word "son" when it was used alone, the translators had to employ the words for 'male' or 'man.' This was the closest parallel in the language.⁵⁵³

Although the people to whom Nida referred would not have been Muslims, the parallels between these non-literal renderings and those within MIT are striking (of which those for "Father" have already been partially referenced).⁵⁵⁴ Nida, nevertheless, advocated for the principle that non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology are *necessary* should the culture (and the language) demand it.

Unfortunately, Nida did not name the language nor provide any details for the Scripture translation in question.⁵⁵⁵ Upon investigation, the author found Nida's claims that the "people of the Ponape [or, Pohnpei] islands" did not have words for "father" and "son" prior to the coming

⁵⁴⁹ Nida, *Bible Translating*, 136.

⁵⁵⁰ The reference to page 136 is part of the quote and refers to the book from which this quote is taken.

⁵⁵¹ Nida, *Bible Translating*, 180.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 137.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁵⁵⁴ See footnote 151.

⁵⁵⁵ In response to several requests by the author, ABS was unable to verify among their Scripture depository which "translation" Nida referenced. They also could not provide any supporting documentation for Nida's claims even though they published *Bible Translating*.

of missionaries to be doubtful. Dr. David Hanlon, author of the prize-winning book, *Upon A Stone Altar: A History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890*,⁵⁵⁶ and Professor and Department Chair of Pacific Islands, Micronesia, and Ethnographic History at the University of Hawaii at Manoa,⁵⁵⁷ wrote in response to the author's inquiry regarding Nida's claims:

I have never heard marriage in pre-contact Pohnpei characterized as "communal." ...the acknowledged and public union between men and women is referenced by such words as *werek*, *pwopwoud* and *pwoudiki*, all meaning to marry or be married...Pohnpeians did and do have a strong concept of fatherhood. The word for son in common Pohnpeian is *nei pwutak*, literally "my boy." Jesus Christ as the son of God is identified in high language as *sapwellimen Koht pwutak*...I find Nada's [sic; i.e. Nida's] characterizations of Pohnpeian social organization and its language a bit suspect.⁵⁵⁸

A similar response was received by Rev. Francis X. Hezel, "a Jesuit priest who has lived and worked in Micronesia since 1963."⁵⁵⁹

I don't know where Eugene Nida, whom I respect for his work on linguistics, got this information, but it is entirely baseless. I lived on Pohnpei for 18 years and I can assure you that the people there have and have always had a word in their language for father and son. *Sahm* is the word for father, and *nau* is the word for son or daughter. There was no communal marriage on Pohnpei at any time in the past, as far as I know...Because the word *nau* means offspring, it is usually followed by another noun to designate the gender--*pwutak* for boy, and *serepein* for girl.⁵⁶⁰

Evidently the missionaries Nida mentioned seriously misunderstood the Pohnpeian practice of marriage as well as their kinship terms (if so, it would not be the first time that westerners misunderstood a Pacific Island culture as did Margaret Mead the Samoans).⁵⁶¹ Nida's principle,

⁵⁵⁶ David Hanlon, *Upon a Stone Altar: a History of the Island of Pohnpei to 1890* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988).

⁵⁵⁷ "David Hanlon," University of Hawaii, accessed October 19, 2015, <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/history/people/david-hanlon>.

⁵⁵⁸ David Hanlon, email to author, September 26, 2012.

⁵⁵⁹ "About Francis X. Hezel, SJ," *Rev. Francis X. Hezel, SJ Blog*, 2015, accessed October 19, 2015, <http://www.wheresfran.org/>.

⁵⁶⁰ Francis X. Hezel, email to author, October 6, 2012.

⁵⁶¹ See Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: the Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

therefore, in addition to its disregard of the biblical texts, is faulty because neither the receptor's culture nor language necessitated non-literal renderings but rather literal translations.⁵⁶²

"Are We Really Monotheists?" is an article Nida wrote in 1959 for the stated purpose of explaining the Trinity to Muslims. He asserted that "Father" and "Son" are "anthropomorphic figures,"⁵⁶³ "symbols,"⁵⁶⁴ and "metaphors."⁵⁶⁵ Because of this,

If...we are to keep people from substituting a Christian "threesome" for a pagan trio, we must interpret the Biblical figures in terms of functions and not form. Since the Scriptures do not explicitly indicate the real nature of God, in terms of substance or form (evidently a fact not communicable in human language), we should be thoroughly Biblical by not presuming to know more than God has chosen to reveal. This means that we must emphasize the essentially functional character of Biblical metaphors and symbols.⁵⁶⁶

Nida's understood "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" as figurative terminology. Betraying his background in American Structuralism, Nida appealed to his belief in the separation between the function and form of language as support for his understanding of these terms. Their "forms" (i.e. the words themselves) do not have inherent meaning as if they were "epithets."⁵⁶⁷ "Father," "Son," and "Spirit" are merely "labels"⁵⁶⁸ for Nida, only functioning as "metaphors and symbols." Consistent with this explanation is Nida's statement, "the Scriptures do not explicitly indicate the real nature of God" because it uses "human language" not "divine epithets"⁵⁶⁹ (i.e. verbally-inspired terms in which the words themselves are indicative of their real nature).

With respect to translating, Nida preferred that "Father" be literally rendered:

Though the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Father is biologically different from what exists in purely human relations, this is a figurative expression which occurs

⁵⁶² It strains credulity to think that any language is void of terminology for "father" and "son" (or "mother" and "daughter") which are present in every reproducing society.

⁵⁶³ Nida, *Are We Really Monotheists?*, 51.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 50-54 (in passim).

⁵⁶⁵ Nida, *Are We Really Monotheists?*, 52.

⁵⁶⁶ Nida, *Are We Really Monotheists?*, 51-52

⁵⁶⁷ See Nida's quote above, the citation for which occurs in footnote 518.

⁵⁶⁸ See Nida's quote above, the citation for which occurs in footnote 518.

⁵⁶⁹ See Nida's quote above, the citation for which occurs in footnote 518.

so frequently in the Scriptures and is so important in the entire structure of Christian thought that it needs to be preserved in a more or less literal form.⁵⁷⁰

Notwithstanding his preference for the literal translation of "Father," Nida made allowances for it to be changed into a simile:

In initial translations in a language, it is sometimes important to indicate that "our Father" is to be understood in a figurative sense, for example, "God who is like our father" or "God who is like a father to us."⁵⁷¹

Some translators feel that it is necessary to identify the figurative meaning in our Father and mark it as a simile, for example, "God, who is like a Father to us." However, this is usually not necessary.⁵⁷²

As noted in Chapter 4, changing "Father" and "Son" terminology into similes is one of the various ways in which non-literal renderings for them are employed in MIT.

In keeping with his figurative belief about "Father," Nida said the following to a group of A/G missionaries:

The Kakos...in the Cameroon...say [emphasis added], "God is Njambie (spider)." Now they don't mean that God is a particular spider but they mean God is spider in terms of his personality and characteristics, even as we would say [emphasis added], "God is Spirit," or God is "our Father."⁵⁷³

Nida did not explicitly state that "our Father" in reference to God is not divinely inspired but presupposed it. He subtly indicated this by equating "the Kakos in the Cameroon say, 'God is Spider,'" with "even as we [Christians] would say...God is 'our Father'." This implies that these differing "labels" are valid cultural equivalents.

As with "Father," Nida preferred that "Son" terminology be literally translated, yet allowed for non-literal renderings:

⁵⁷⁰ Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene A. Nida, *Helps for Translators*, v. XX, *A Translators Handbook On Paul's Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Stuttgart: UBS, 1977), 8.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵⁷² Paul Ellingworth and Eugene A. Nida, *Helps for Translators*, [v. 17], *A Translator's Handbook On Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians* (London: UBS, 1976), 132.

⁵⁷³ Eugene A. Nida, "Dynamics of Communication" (lecture, Session 1 of Fourth Annual School of Missions for the Department of Foreign Missions of the Assemblies of God, Central Bible Institute, Springfield, MO, Wednesday, June 13, 1962, 8 AM - 8:50 AM).

Son is one of the most important titles of Jesus in the New Testament. It expresses his uniquely close but dependent relationship with God, whom he was probably the first to address in prayer as "Abba." Like most, if not all, human language about God and most titles of Christ, it involves a figurative extension of the central meaning of the word "son." Because of its theological importance, the metaphor should, if possible, be maintained in translation. And since the concept of sonship is common to all cultures, it usually can be retained. However, connotations of youth and physical generation should be avoided.⁵⁷⁴

Consistent with his other writings, Nida described "Son" as "human language," "figurative," and "metaphor," while adding that it is a "title."⁵⁷⁵ He also added, "the concept of sonship is common to all cultures"⁵⁷⁶ which underlies why literal translations of "Son" terminology can be understood by all. Nida, nevertheless, made an exception for non-literal renderings, especially if the literal translation included "connotations of...physical generation." This is the identical argument presented by many MIT proponents, most notably the previously-mentioned Brown.⁵⁷⁷

When it came to "Muslim audiences," Nida did not veer from the above exception. We already noted in Chapter 3 his involvement in the reprint of Chowdhury's article in TBT that was misleadingly presented to encourage "translators in Muslim areas" to not literally translate "Son" terminology. Another example comes from Nida's last major work on his theory for Scripture translation, *From One Language to Another*. In Appendix B, entitled, "Procedures in Publishing Bible Translations," Nida advised Scripture publishers to not include "Son of God" in Mark 1:1 for an "Islamic constituency" (i.e. Muslim audience or receptor):

for certain constituencies some texts of the Scriptures may be more acceptable than others. For example, in the Muslim world the Gospel of Matthew is generally more acceptable than the other Gospels...But for the Gospel of Mark, Muslim anathema is

⁵⁷⁴ Ellingworth and Nida, Thessalonians, 16.

⁵⁷⁵ It is quite common to speak of "Son" or "Son of God" as "titles" such as evidenced in the name of D.A. Carson's book, *Jesus the Son of God: a Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed*. Unfortunately, "title" is ambiguous. It can either be understood as a synonym for "name" referring to one's actual identity or an honorific or official designation that has been conferred, achieved, or obtained. It is clear from Nida's writings that he did not understand the "title" of "Son" (or, "Son of God") to be Jesus' actual identity.

⁵⁷⁶ This admission runs counter to his example given above from *Bible Translating* about the unspecified language which supposedly lacked the word for "son" (as well as "father").

⁵⁷⁷ E.g. see footnote 120.

waiting at the first verse when the variant reading "Jesus, the Son of God" is put into the text. Since many scholars believe that there are strong reasons for not considering this text as original, such a stumbling block should not be introduced in the very first verse (Slomp, 1977, 143-50), especially if the translation is being prepared primarily for an Islamic constituency.⁵⁷⁸

Nida, in keeping with his belief about receptor response, argued to exclude "Son of God" from Mark 1:1 since it was "Muslim anathema" and "such a stumbling block" for "an Islamic constituency." His reference to Jan Slomp, however, is problematic because it seriously misrepresents Slomp's position. Slomp wrote that the inclusion or exclusion of "Son of God" in Mark 1:1 should *not* be based on "apologetic concern for the Muslim reader...[but] has to be decided...on the basis of textual criticism."⁵⁷⁹ The misrepresentation of Slomp aside, Nida's belief about accommodating Scripture translations to Muslim sensibilities is clear.

In 2002, Nida was interviewed by Christianity Today. Towards the end of the interview he was asked, "What are the biggest challenges that the whole field of Bible translation faces? Is it just the sheer number of languages?"⁵⁸⁰ After mentioning the need for Scriptures among "a string of Mongolian languages...from Mongolia to Turkey...[whose] cultures are mostly Muslim,"⁵⁸¹ Nida gave what seemed to be an odd response with enormous implications:

It would be very important also in some of the more well-known Muslim areas to produce translations that are more relevant and on a better level of Arabic. So many of the translations reflect a very traditional form of the language.⁵⁸²

The main reason for the oddity of Nida's response is that his goal to produce a DE "translation" in Arabic had already been fulfilled. In 1993, "Today's Arabic Version" (TAV),⁵⁸³ a DE

⁵⁷⁸ Nida and de Waard, *From One Language*, 205.

⁵⁷⁹ Jan Slomp, "Are The Words 'Son Of God' In Mark 1.1 Original?," TBT 28, no. 1 (Jan. 1977): 143. Nida also leaves out the following significant information in Slomp's conclusion: "From the point of view of textual criticism it is not possible to establish the text of Mk 1.1 with absolute certainty" (p. 146).

⁵⁸⁰ Nida, CT Interview, 49.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ *Al-Kitāb Al-Muqaddas* [Today's Arabic Version (TAV)] ([Beirut,] Lebanon: the Bible Society in Lebanon, 1993).

"translation" of the entire Bible was completed, overseen by Dr. William ("Bill") Reyburn,⁵⁸⁴ one of Nida's earliest, directly-recruited Translation Consultants and trusted colleague.⁵⁸⁵

Nida, true to his beliefs about language and focus on receptor response, with his typical subtlety, implied that the TAV was not "relevant" for Arabic-speaking Muslims. This is because it is among the many Arabic translations that "reflect a very traditional form of the language," such as the literal translations for "Father" and "Son" terminology and the inclusion of "Son of God" in Mark 1:1. Abandoning his advice regarding non-literal translations for "Son" in order to avoid "connotations of...physical generation," the TAV was evidently completely inadequate as a DE "translation" for an "Islamic constituency" or Muslim audience. Just as Nida implied that "Spider" or "Guardian" are "cultural equivalents" for "Father" and "one belonging to God" is a "cultural equivalent" for "Son of God" in previously-mentioned examples, so must Muslims be given their own "cultural equivalents" for this terminology.

It seems that Nida would have preferred an Arabic "translation" along the lines of a 1983 version of the Gospel of John in the Tamacheck⁵⁸⁶ language for Tuareg Muslims mainly in Niger. This production was overseen by another of his directly-recruited Translation Consultants, Dr. Jacob A. Loewen,⁵⁸⁷ and part of Nida's "invisible college" prior to serving in that role.⁵⁸⁸ In a UBS memorandum regarding "Muslim influence in Translation," Loewen

⁵⁸⁴ Kenneth E. Bailey and Harvey Staal, "The Arabic Versions of the Bible, Reflections on Their History and Significance," *Reformed Review* 36, no. 1 (Autumn 1982): 9 ("This new version is the work of an interconfessional team working with Dr. William Reyburn as the United Bible Society translations consultant for the Middle East."). In the article it was referred to as "The New Bible Society Translation," the TAV name being subsequently adopted.

⁵⁸⁵ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 87 ("The Reyburns...were again approached by Nida...Bill Reyburn joined the ABS in 1959").

⁵⁸⁶ This language has a number of alternate names and transliterations. See "Tamajaq, Tawallammat," *Ethnologue*, accessed October 27, 2015, <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/ttq> ("Amazigh, Tahoua, Tahoua Tamajeq, Tamachek, Tamashekin, Tamasheq, Tewellemet, Tomacheck, Touareg, Tourage, Tuareg)."

⁵⁸⁷ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, 88 ("Jacob A. Loewen also did contract work for Nida prior to officially joining ABS. Loewen's first contact with Nida goes back to 1945... in 1964 Nida asked him to join the UBS as a translation consultant for South America.").

⁵⁸⁸ Robert J. Priest, "Anthropology and Missiology: Reflections on the Relationship," in *Paradigm Shifts*, 26.

defended two non-literal renderings for "Son" in Tamacheck - "sent one" and "whom God loves like a son":

you dismiss the idea of Son as sent one right out of hand. Frankly, if you had been in the local setting and had been participating in the evolvement of this expression you wouldn't be able to do that...Furthermore it adds the comparison "whom God loves like a son" so that it does not avoid the father-and-son metaphor, it only makes them similes...My feeling is that precisely since it is a figurative expression and not a literal meaning, for that same reason we have the responsibility to define an equivalent in the target language.⁵⁸⁹

When faced with further opposition to these non-literal renderings, Loewen responded to another UBS colleague, "I am not interested in corrupting the message to make it palatable. I am interested in a dynamic equivalent emotional response."⁵⁹⁰ In view of Nida's misgivings about Arabic translations of Scripture with their "traditional form of the language," his training of Loewen as a Translation Consultant to teach DE to others, and Loewen's agreement with Nida that "Son" is a "metaphor" and a "figurative expression," it is safe to conclude that Loewen's defense of non-literal renderings for "Son" faithfully represented Nida's theory of DE when intended for a Muslim audience (or, receptor).

Charles Kraft

Dr. Charles H. Kraft, "is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and Intercultural Communication at Fuller School of Intercultural Studies (formerly School of World Mission)."⁵⁹¹ His tenure at this campus of Fuller Theological Seminary spanned from 1969-

⁵⁸⁹ Jacob A. Loewen to Dr. Kenneth Thomas, June 11, 1983, Jacob A. Loewen Papers, Mennonite Library & Archives at Fresno Pacific University, Box 5: Translations for Muslims, 1982-1984.

⁵⁹⁰ Loewen to Philip Stine, November 14, 1983, Loewen Papers, Box 5: Translations for Muslims, 1982-1984, handwritten response to be "Xerox"ed and sent to Stine.

⁵⁹¹ "About Dr. Charles H. Kraft," Hearts Set Free, accessed October 22, 2015, <http://www.heartssetfree.org/about-2/dr-kraft/>.

2009.⁵⁹² Kraft is perhaps the most well-known professor among evangelicals in the area of contextualization (or cross-cultural, a.k.a. intercultural, missions) and missiology. As Edward N. Gross wrote, "Charles Kraft stands as one of the most influential professors in the most influential school of missionary training in the world."⁵⁹³ He is recognized for having taken Nida's DE theory and "applied the concept to a theory of cross-cultural communication, contextualization of theology, conversion, and ecclesial forms."⁵⁹⁴

Kraft's first exposure to Nida came through reading *Customs and Cultures*.⁵⁹⁵ Before long the two met and Nida included Kraft as part of "a team of linguist-anthropologists...who communicated closely with each other, read each other's works, and formed an 'invisible college' of missiological anthropologists."⁵⁹⁶ Kraft recalled:

During that year at Hartford [i.e. the academic year of 1955-1956], I came strongly under the influence of Eugene Nida, Bill Reyburn and Bill Smalley of the American Bible Society, especially through their writings in the journal *Practical Anthropology* and the Bible Society *Confidential Papers* that were made available to a few of us...If McGavran was Wagner's "guru," Nida was mine.⁵⁹⁷

As a self-professed disciple of Nida, Kraft did not disappoint. Throughout his entire tenure at Fuller, Kraft used Nida's, *Message and Mission*, as a text book. It would seem that Kraft's

⁵⁹² "Chuck Kraft: Professor at Fuller Seminary," LinkedIn, accessed October 22, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/chuck-kraft/b/682/935>.

⁵⁹³ Edward N. Gross, *Is Charles Kraft an Evangelical?: A Critique of Christianity in Culture* (n.p.: Christian Beacon Press, 1985), 2.

⁵⁹⁴ Wilbert R. Shenk, "Dynamic Equivalence," *Religion Past and Present*, eds. by Hans Dieter Betz, et. al., (Brill, 2012, Brill Online. Univ. of Michigan-Ann Arbor), accessed August 23, 2012, http://0-referenceworks.brillonline.com.wizard.umd.umich.edu/entries/religion-past-and-present/dynamic-equivalence-SIM_03982.

⁵⁹⁵ R. Daniel Shaw, introduction to *Paradigm Shifts in Christian Witness: Insights from Anthropology, Communication, and Spiritual Power, Essays in Honor of Charles H. Kraft*, eds. Charles Edward van Engen, et. al. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2008), xxxiii ("His formative anthropology began with the reading of Eugene Nida's book *Customs and Cultures*").

⁵⁹⁶ Priest, "Anthropology and Missiology:," in *Paradigm Shifts*, 26-27. The seven people whom Nida chose for this "team" were: William Wonderly, William Smalley, William Reyburn, Marie Fetzner Reyburn, Jacob Loewen, Charles Taber, and Charles Kraft.

⁵⁹⁷ Kraft, SWM/SIS at Forty, 100.

continual use of *Message and Mission* contributed to its reprinting in 1972, 1975, 1979 as well as its revision in 1990 which includes a glowing foreword by Kraft about Nida.⁵⁹⁸

It would be difficult to overstate the significance of this exposure to Nida's thinking among professing evangelicals. For a period of forty years, many professing evangelicals who sat in Kraft's classes had direct exposure to Nida's teaching via *Message and Mission*. Although this book was not written exclusively for the "translation" of Scripture, it is in *Message and Mission* (1960) where Nida set forth both the terminology and theory of DE prior to its more well-known appearance in TASOT (1964):

On the other hand, most people seem to prefer, not a gloss [i.e. literal] translation, but one which is more nearly an equivalence, in terms of the linguistic and cultural circumstances in which they live. They are not so much concerned with the formal resemblance as with the dynamic equivalence.⁵⁹⁹

[regarding the then-current Scripture revisions:] This emphasis upon dynamic, rather than formal, equivalence has meant that revisers no longer view their task as limited to the finding of some set of linguistic labels by which the reader may study out the meaning in terms of the original cultural setting; rather, they see their task as directed toward the discovery of symbols which will permit an equivalent type of response within the new cultural context.⁶⁰⁰

Message and Mission primed the evangelical world for the acceptance of DE "translation" both before and well after the first "official" DE versions were published in 1966.

While Kraft is credited for applying DE to culture, he simply made the cultural relativism of Nida's theory explicit. Kraft's article, "Dynamic Equivalence Churches," describes this:

Once again the forms in terms of which the content is presented are determined by the receptor culture and language. A dynamically equivalent church must fulfil [sic] its functions in and through the forms of its own culture and language.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁸ Charles H. Kraft, foreword to *Message and Mission: the Communication of the Christian Faith*, Revised ed., by Eugene A. Nida (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1990), vii-ix.

⁵⁹⁹ Nida, *Message and Mission*, 191-192.

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁶⁰¹ Charles H. Kraft, "Dynamic Equivalence Churches," *Missiology* 1, no. 1 (January 1973): 52.

To illustrate what he meant, Kraft referred to the list of church leadership qualifications mentioned in 1 Timothy and Titus. He asserted that these qualifications can be maintained, disregarded, or modified depending on the culture. For instance, a DE church among the Higi in Nigeria, "will find some additions and subtractions from the lists and at least one major reinterpretation of a criterion."⁶⁰² By this "reinterpretation" he meant accommodating the Higi ideal of a leader to include being the husband of "at least two wives"⁶⁰³ (in contrast to the literal wording of Scripture which states "the husband of one wife").⁶⁰⁴

A year later, Kraft applied the same principle of cultural relativism to "Arabic Christians" from a Muslim background. For them a DE church would include such "doctrinal patterns...[as] a more distant concept of God...a God of mercy rather than a God of love...at least [as] fatalistic as extreme Calvinism in western culture. It would probably be quite legalistic...[and] an emphasis on God as a group Lord, rather than as a personal Saviour."⁶⁰⁵ He also spoke of:

stimulating a faith renewal movement within Islam. This, I believe, is Biblical...since this is exactly what Jesus and His disciples did within Judaism... I am seriously suggesting that we encourage some Christians to become Christian Muslims in order to win Muslims to Muslim Christianity.⁶⁰⁶

Several years later Kraft continued with these themes in his paper, "Dynamic Equivalence Churches in Muslim Society," presented at the 1978 North American Conference on Muslim Evangelization in Glen Eyrie, Colorado.⁶⁰⁷

Kraft also addressed the use of "Father" and "Son" terminology among Muslims. In his lecture, "Distinctive Religious Barriers To Outside Penetration," he said:

⁶⁰² Ibid., 53.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 54.

⁶⁰⁴ See 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6 ("the husband of one wife").

⁶⁰⁵ Charles H. Kraft, "Psychological Stress Factors Among Muslims," in *Conference On Media In Islamic Culture: Report, Marseille, France; 1974*, ed. C. Richard Shumaker (Clearwater, FL: International Christian Broadcasters and Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974), 142.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 143-144.

⁶⁰⁷ Charles H. Kraft, "Dynamic Equivalence Churches in Muslim Society," in *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry (Monrovia, Calif.: MARC, 1979), 114-128.

My own feeling is that terms like Father, Son, and Trinitarian references to God ought in general, to be abandoned in mass media, unless, there should arise a special circumstance of some kind, but then always with careful explanation. If I understand correctly, the terms for Messiah and prophet serve quite well as substitutes for Son.⁶⁰⁸

This advice implies that *the Scriptural terminology* of "Father" and "Son" are unnecessary for proclaiming the Gospel to Muslims. Kraft was clearly influenced by Nida as evidenced by a positive reference to him from the same lecture: "Incidentally, you may find some help here in a very important article written in 1959 by Eugene Nida of the Bible Society, 'Are We Really Monotheists?'"⁶⁰⁹ Although Kraft did not explicitly address translation the following implication is present: any terminology which is unnecessary for belief in the Gospel, even if excluded from Scripture "translation" would not hinder one's ability to believe.

Nida's influence on Kraft is clear. For this reason, M. Coleman and P. Verster wrote:

Drawing upon Nida's theories, Kraft laid a foundation that would prove to be the basis for much of today's contextualisation theory as it applies to Muslims. He was one of the first to call for the formation of "dynamic equivalence churches" in mission efforts.⁶¹⁰

With Kraft so faithfully conveying Nida's teachings, it is not surprising that so many Fuller alumni have come out in favor of what has come to be known as C5/IM, or that men like Coke, Malek, Mallouhi, and Owen have all spearheaded their own versions of MIT.

WBT-SIL

Mention has already been made about Nida's founding roles for both SIL and WBT and serving as a linguistic teacher for SIL from 1936-1953.⁶¹¹ In 1991, Mildred Larson, then Vice-

⁶⁰⁸ Charles H. Kraft, "Distinctive Religious Barriers To Outside Penetration," in *Conference On Media In Islamic Culture*, 76.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 72. See above for a treatment of this article.

⁶¹⁰ M. Coleman and P. Verster, "Contextualisation of the Gospel Among Muslims," *Acta Theologica* 26, no. 2 (2006): 101.

⁶¹¹ When Nida first taught in 1936, SIL was not officially organized and was known as "Camp Wycliffe." See Hefley and Hefley, *Uncle Cam*, 94 ("As June [1936] approached, Cam wondered how many new students would

President of Personnel for SIL, wrote, "Surely no one will deny that the development of translation theory within SIL has its roots deep in the soil of Nida's version of translation theory."⁶¹²

According to Frederick "Boone" Aldridge, a missionary with WBT-SIL,⁶¹³ there was a period of time, however, when Nida's theory was ignored, if not abandoned in SIL:

When Eugene Nida and William Wonderly resigned in 1953 and 1955 respectively, they took with them much of the theoretical emphases on translation that existed in SIL at the time...One reason for this lack of prominence given to translation theory was due in part to the legacy of Nida and Wonderly's criticisms of inerrancy, which ensured that their views on translation theory now carried a faint odour of heresy in the conservative wing of SIL.⁶¹⁴

Aldridge noted that this situation reversed itself in the 1960s through John Beekman, who

was the ideal person to reintroduce the concept of dynamic equivalence into SIL. 'The clear implication from the differences in languages', Beekman wrote in 1965, clearly echoing Nida, 'is that any message to be communicated from one language to another should be conveyed in the linguistic form of the receptor language.' 'Only thus,' he added, 'can meaning be preserved.'⁶¹⁵

This agrees with Larson's assessment of the then-current (1991) situation with SIL:

The theory of translation taught and practiced by SIL linguists is not, I believe, too different from that of the Bible Societies [i.e. Nida's DE/FE]. It is what we are now calling "meaning-based translation." Beekman used the term "idiomatic."⁶¹⁶

We have seen above how Brown referred to MIT as "meaning-based"⁶¹⁷ and how Farrell referred to his MIT as "a communicative (explanatory) translation."⁶¹⁸ Far from being a thing of the past,

come to the third Camp Wycliffe. Two of Evelyn Griset's UCLA classmates, Eugene Nida and Florence Hansen, had written for information.").

⁶¹² Mildred L. Larson, "The Summer Institute of Linguistics and Translation," *TBT* 42, no. 2A (Apr. 1991): 27.

⁶¹³ "About Us: Missionaries We Support: Boone and Julie Aldridge," Highland Park Church (Kokomo, IN), accessed October 23, 2015, <http://www.highlandpc.com/aboutus/missions/aldrige.php>; cf. "KJV 2011 Conference: Full Conference Schedule," Digital Commons @ Liberty University, accessed October 23, 2015, http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/kjv400/kjv_conf/KJV400/28/ ["Frederick (Boone) Aldridge teaches at SIL International in Dallas, Texas, and is working on his doctorate at the University of Stirling. He has studied linguistics in Cameroon and France, and worked with SIL International in Benin and Kenya."].

⁶¹⁴ Aldridge, "The Development of the Wycliffe Bible Translators," 121.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁶¹⁶ Larson, "The Summer Institute of Linguistics and Translation," 29.

⁶¹⁷ E.g. see footnote 21.

⁶¹⁸ See footnote 381.

Nida's influence on WBT-SIL still retains its vitality. This is certainly evident in their MIT productions, which are ultimately DE "translations for Muslim audiences."

Chapter 6

Conclusion (with recommendations)

Translating Scripture may be the most important undertaking in which a Christian can be involved. Since "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17), and being a disciple of Jesus is dependent on continuing in His Word (John 8:31),⁶¹⁹ God's Word, or, Scripture, is foundational for both salvation and discipleship. Its proper translation, therefore, is essential; otherwise, the validity of one's initial faith in Jesus and continuance in this faith are compromised, if not negated. If this is true of unintentional mistakes regarding the core doctrines of the Gospel, it is especially so for a "translation" containing intentional changes made to the text of Scripture based on cultural considerations. As shown in this paper, the practice of such intentional changes in MIT is the direct result of applying anthropology to missions and translation. MIT is a product, not of linguistics proper, but of a relativistic philosophy that considers each culture valid only for itself and each language as a bounded system of its culture incapable of expressing truth, which by definition, is super-cultural.

The person most responsible for creating an environment for MIT is Dr. Eugene A. Nida. His indefatigable labors to influence Scripture translation and missions with his anthropological views have resulted in what Stine repeatedly stated was a "revolution" in Bible translation.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁹ "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed him, 'If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine.'"

⁶²⁰ Stine, *Let the Words Be Written*, viii ("a revolution in translation that Nida and his colleagues...brought about"), 2 ("a revolution that completely changed the way Bible translation was carried out...To tell the story of this revolution in Bible translation is to tell the story of Eugene A. Nida"), 6 ("Extensive descriptions of these theological and missiological aspects of Nida's translation revolution"), 139 ("Without these skills he [i.e. Nida] would not have led the revolution he did."). Nida implied, echoing Immanuel Kant, that he helped effect a Copernican Revolution in Bible translation. See Eugene A. Nida, *Language Structure and Translation: Essays*, ed. Anwar Dil (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975), 273 ("The pre-Copernican statements concerning the movements of the planets were indeed basically accurate...but these formulations were terribly complicated. After Copernicus discovered the true relation between the sun and the planets, the formulations became amazingly less complex. To a

When professing evangelicals have sought to apply the DE theory behind this "revolution" to create "Scripture translations for Muslim audiences" the result is invariably MIT. This is to be expected when receptor response takes priority over the text of the biblical manuscripts in the original languages.

Conspicuously absent from most discussions regarding MIT are the implications it poses for the historic, evangelical belief in the divine inspiration of Scripture. MIT treats the text of Scripture as something pliable to be shaped according to the dictates of Islamic belief as each "translator" sees fit. If thematically-significant scriptural terminology like "Father" and "Son" can be abandoned, or the first half of the Islamic creed can be inserted as if present in the original text of Scripture, the wording of the biblical manuscripts has no super-cultural or transcendent meaning. Such treatment of the text is not only contrary to the absolute claims of Scripture but stands in direct opposition to its explicit claims for divine inspiration which includes specific words which must be literally translated.⁶²¹

By resorting to DE, wittingly or unwittingly, the MIT "translator" succumbs to Nida's views about language and culture that preclude belief in the divine inspiration of Scripture. The

large extent, the same is true of language: correct interpretations are relatively simple, and therefore one tends to become suspicious of explanations which seem to require the use of highly esoteric symbols and numerous neologisms." Nida, by skilful use of implication, was making an analogy between himself and Copernicus that as Copernicus "discovered the true relation between the sun and planets," he had done the same regarding language (and by extension, translation). It is ironic, however, that he was guilty of "numerous neologisms."

⁶²¹ E.g. 2 Tim 3:16 ("All Scripture is inspired by God..."); Prov 30:5-6 ("5 Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar."); Matt 24:35 ("Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."); 1 Cor 2:13 ("which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*."); 2 Peter 1:20-21 ("20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."); Heb 4:12-13 ("12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."). See Matt 22:31-32 where Jesus bases his argument for the resurrection by appealing to the verb tense of the wording of Ex 3:6. See Gal 3:16 where Paul bases his argument for a prophecy of Jesus by appealing to the singular form of a noun (as opposed to its plural form) from a repeated promise given by God to Abram/Abraham from Gen 12-22, in passim.

result of this capitulation is that instead of Scripture being treated with the necessary care to produce a translation that properly reflects the truth of the original text, serves in this case to only reaffirm the claims of Islam. MIT, therefore, well illustrates the flaws of DE as expressed by Nichols: "the DE model itself is wrong-headed insofar as it reflects an inadequate theory of language and an inappropriate definition of equivalence."⁶²² As long as those responsible for the oversight and support of organizations and personnel involved in MIT do not hold them and their products accountable to the historic, evangelical conviction that Scripture is divinely inspired very little will change. Simply put, the theologians must hold translators accountable.

MIT also presents the professing evangelical world, especially in the US, with a serious issue that makes many within it extremely uncomfortable, namely, confronting beliefs and practices among its own that are a departure from the Gospel. As noted in Chapter 3, a number of the leading advocate-practitioners of MIT have argued for MIT based on unorthodox interpretations of Scripture and inclusive views of salvation. As the visible Church, are we willing to come to grips with the reality that we may not be simply dealing with well-meaning brothers and sisters in the faith? Are we willing to assess MIT and its advocates, not on the basis of assumed "good intentions," nor on the basis of established friendships and partnerships, but on the basis of fidelity to the biblical manuscripts and biblical orthodoxy?⁶²³

⁶²² Nichols, "Translating the Bible," 296.

⁶²³ 2 Cor 11:4 ("For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully."); Gal 1:6-10 ("6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! 10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.").

Another serious, but difficult issue to be considered regarding MIT is the lure of money. Considering the biblical teaching regarding the deceitfulness of sin⁶²⁴ and the deceitful nature of our hearts,⁶²⁵ are we willing to acknowledge that some involved in MIT may be - perhaps even unwittingly - "lovers of money"?⁶²⁶ Scripture translation has been (and continues to be) an extremely profitable way to raise money among professing evangelicals because it transcends both denominational and theological differences. DE renditions of Scripture like MIT can be easily exploited as a perennial "cash cow" because "receptor response" is a never-ending call for ever new "translations" and "revisions" within a given language.⁶²⁷

The present situation among professing evangelicals is highly favorable for MIT. Mention has already been made of the WEA Report and its acceptance by the A/G.⁶²⁸ Even though the report specifically concerns WBT-SIL, the prevailing sentiment among professing evangelicals seems to be that the problem of "Father" and "Son" terminology in "Scripture translation for Muslim audiences" has been sufficiently rectified. There are at least two problems with this mistaken notion. First, as previously mentioned, the ongoing distribution of MIT versions containing non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology continue to make this an ever-present issue.

⁶²⁴ Heb 3:13 ("But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.").

⁶²⁵ Jer 17:9 ("The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?").

⁶²⁶ By "lovers of money" the author includes those who are unwilling to uphold biblical convictions at the risk of losing financial support. This is not to imply that everyone involved in MIT are "lovers of money." 1 Tim 6:10 ("For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."); Matt 6:24 ("No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.").

⁶²⁷ E.g. see Nida, *Message and Mission*, 200 ("One may quite rightly ask why so many revisions are required..." See his fourth point which implicitly refers to his own teaching about "communication" and "translation"); Nida, *TAPOT*, 1 ("there will be different translations which can be called 'correct'"); Nida, interview by JFL Correspondent, 4-5 ("The principle of the Bible Societies is that a translation needs to be revised at least every 50 years because changes in meaning, studies in hermeneutics, and greater insights into cultural correspondences make such re-translating not only advantageous but also essential."); Nida, *Christianity Today* Interview, 49 ("All major languages need these three types of translation.").

⁶²⁸ See Chapter 2.

Second, the *Forum of Bible Agencies International* (FOBAI),⁶²⁹ which includes ABS and SIL among its members, with UBS as a "collaborating agency,"⁶³⁰ has a set of guidelines entitled, "Basic Principles and Procedures for Bible Translation." Its sixth principle states:

it is often necessary to restructure the form of a text in order to achieve accuracy and maximal comprehension...*Changes of form will also often be necessary when translating figurative language.*⁶³¹ [emphasis added]

This means that anyone holding to the view that "Father" and "Son" terminology are metaphors, anthropomorphisms, idioms, "human language," etc. can find justification in these guidelines for changing the literal form, or wording, to non-literal wording such as is found in MIT. Perhaps this partially explains why WBT-SIL have never acknowledged any wrongdoing regarding their MIT productions. It may also help to explain why a number of their leaders and other personnel have been unwilling to comply with the straightforward request "to commit in writing that your agency will not support any translation that replaces or removes 'Father,' 'Son,' or 'Son of God' from the text [of Scripture], when referring to God the Father or God the Son."⁶³²

Another factor related to the favorable conditions for MIT is the initiative, "Every Tribe Every Nation" (ETEN).⁶³³ ETEN is a collaborative effort of "Today's biggest Bible ministries" of which the founding partners also happen to be associated with FOBAI.⁶³⁴ Their ever-growing "Digital Bible Library," which helps supply such sites as YouVersion⁶³⁵ with its digitized versions of Scripture, has as its goal "a world in which everyone has immediate access to a high

⁶²⁹ <http://www.forum-intl.org/>.

⁶³⁰ "Members," FOBAI, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.forum-intl.org/membership>.

⁶³¹ FOBAI, "Basic Principles and Procedures for Bible Translation," principle 6, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.forum-intl.org/resources>.

⁶³² "Lost In Translation: Keep 'Father' & 'Son' in the Bible," Change.org, Inc., accessed October 28, 2015, <https://www.change.org/p/lost-in-translation-keep-father-son-in-the-bible>.

⁶³³ <http://www.everytribeeverynation.org/>

⁶³⁴ The only "exception" is that WBT (US) is listed with ETEN while one of its "affiliate organizations," Wycliffe Global Alliance, is listed as a member with FOBAI.

⁶³⁵ <https://www.youversion.com/>.

quality translation of God's Word in their heart language."⁶³⁶ The use of "heart language" is troubling because, as we have seen, is one of the "code language" phrases deceptively used by MIT advocates.⁶³⁷ Additionally, the founding partners all agree to Principle 6 of the FOBAI which allows for "Changes of form...when translating figurative language." This does not engender much confidence that ETEN will hold its founding partners accountable regarding MIT productions, especially regarding "Father" and "Son" terminology.⁶³⁸

A final point about ETEN has to do with billionaire Mart Green, who is on its Steering Committee along with Bob Creson, the President and CEO of WBT.⁶³⁹ According to "Reach," the "Newsletter of Wycliffe's Last Languages Campaign," it was Green who initiated ETEN by approaching a number of the founding partners.⁶⁴⁰ Green not only presently serves with Creson of WBT, but has also served with Freddy Boswell, the Executive Director of SIL, on the Board of Trustees for ORU.⁶⁴¹ Green's close, working relationships, both past and present, with the two highest leaders of WBT-SIL also make it highly unlikely that ETEN could serve as a safeguard against MIT. Of course, with WBT, SIL, ABS, UBS, and Biblica as founding partners, all of which have been involved in the production of MIT, ETEN has major, internal conflicts of interest regarding MIT.

⁶³⁶ "About: Vision," ETEN, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.everytribeeverynation.org/about>.

⁶³⁷ This is not to imply that everyone who uses "heart language" is being deceptive.

⁶³⁸ See Appendix B for an opposing view about "Father" and "Son" terminology.

⁶³⁹ "About: Leadership: Steering Committee," ETEN, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.everytribeeverynation.org/leadership>.

⁶⁴⁰ "Spreading Scripture Through Cell Phones," *Reach: Newsletter of Wycliffe's Last Languages Campaign* (Summer 2011), 2 ["This boom in mobile phone access recently prompted Christian bookstore owner Mart Green to initiate a cooperative effort called Every Tribe Every Nation (ETEN), with the goal of making the Bible available on cell phones around the world in the languages users understand best. ¶Mart was impressed by the success of YouVersion, a smart phone application that allows people to read Scripture on their phones. Recognizing the technology's potential for reaching the last languages, Mart approached organizations like American Bible Society (ABS), Biblica, United Bible Societies (UBS), and Wycliffe."].

⁶⁴¹ "Mart Green," accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.martgreen.net/> ["From January 2008 to April 2014, Mart served as Board Chair of the Board of Trustees at Oral Roberts University (ORU)."]; Laura Hopkins, "Meet the Trustees," *Excellence* (Fall 2010): 38 ("Freddy Boswell, who has been a member of the ORU Board of Trustees since January 2008").

The prospect of any fundamental change regarding MIT does not look promising. There are, however, several steps that can be taken to advance the true Kingdom of God by being true to His Word (each suggested step is listed and then followed by further comments in order of each bullet point):

- Thorough investigations must be made of Nida's life and teachings.
- Financial supporters must hold individual missionaries and organizations accountable with regard to their theological beliefs.
- Financial supporters must hold individual missionaries and organizations accountable with regard to their actual missions practices.
- Supporters of missions need to have a vision and to raise up Hebrew and Greek scholars among native speakers in any given language.
- God's people need to pray.

Until Nida's life and teachings are scrutinized in the light of biblical teaching, no widespread, biblical reforms will be made in the areas of Scripture translation and missions among those given to DE and contextualization. For instance, in the area of translation Wayne Grudem and Vern Poythress have each given trenchant analyses of DE yet at the same time praised him or exonerated him from wrongdoing,⁶⁴² The visible Church must be willing to

⁶⁴² Wayne Grudem, "Are Only Some Words Of Scripture Breathed Out By God? Why Plenary Inspiration Favors 'Essentially Literal' Bible Translation," in *Translating Truth: the Case for Essentially Literal Bible Translation*, ed., Wayne Grudem et al. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 51 ("Although I will disagree with Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence in the following paragraphs, it is important that I first express appreciation to Nida for his immense contributions to the translation of the Bible into many hundreds of obscure languages in many remote parts of the world. In addition, his dynamic equivalence theory no doubt provided a helpful correction to the overly literal views that had led, for example, to the 1901 American Standard Version, with its difficult sentence structure that reflected the word order of the original languages but yielded very awkward, unnatural English. For these things I do have appreciation."); Vern Sheridan Poythress, "Truth And Fullness Of Meaning: Fullness Versus Reductionist Semantics In Biblical Interpretation," *Westminster Theological Journal* 67 (2005): 223 ("The problem, if you will, is not with Nida's own personal awareness of meaning, but with the program he proposes to others— others who may be less aware of the complexities."), 227 ("Such models [i.e. from Nida] offer insights, but the clumsy, the doltish, and the

accurately assess Nida's teachings *and* properly lay the blame at his feet for his unbiblical views about language and culture, both of which feed into his DE translation theory and contextualization in missions. C5/IM and MIT are direct consequences of Nida's teachings and obscuring his role in them can only result in treating the symptoms instead of identifying their source in the attempt to provide a more comprehensive corrective to the visible Church.

If individual Christians or local churches do not want to be unwittingly involved in MIT, they will have to investigate for themselves the theological beliefs of their missionaries and supported organizations engaged in work among Muslims and Bible translation. Assent to statements of faith without verification is insufficient. Fundamental areas to focus on are one's understanding of: the divine inspiration of Scripture; the Trinity (God's triune nature being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) which include the deity of Jesus and deity of the Holy Spirit; the meaning of "Son"/"Son of God;" and salvation. Another area to address, though not normally considered part of theology, is one's specific belief about language. It is essential to know if a supported individual or organization views language from a biblical standpoint as the means of conveying God's unchanging, culturally-transcendent revelation which necessitates that certain terminology must be literally translated regardless of the receptor response.

C5/IM, to which MIT is inextricably linked, because of its unbiblical foundation, has created an environment in which missionaries and organizations often report on their activities in ways that are deceptive in which supporters assume biblically orthodoxy when such is not the case. Regarding MIT, supporters need to ask for copies of Scripture "translations" and products, along with back translations into the language of the supporters. Key passages and terminology need to be verified. Native speakers need to be sought out who can verify what is actually said

arrogant can still misuse them."). In both of these quotes, Poythress lays the blame, not on Nida, but upon those he implies misuse Nida's DE theory.

or written in these productions. Even if a supported missionary or organization is not involved in any "translation" endeavor, these suggestions can be extended to the versions of Scripture and Scripture products they are using and distributing in their work. While this may be beyond the typical pale of a church's missions board's responsibility, it must be done to hold supported individuals and organizations accountable. The convenient pretext of "security concerns" and serving in "sensitive areas" must not be allowed to hinder proper inquiry into these areas. Support ought to be contingent upon full disclosure as well as maintaining integrity to professed biblical orthodoxy.

Making disciples of all nations is the purpose of missions:

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."⁶⁴³

If we are to really equip believers, especially with the rise of MIT versions, a systematic vision to produce Hebrew and Greek scholars among believers is absolutely necessary. This vision must include the goals to produce exegetical and translation helps such as concordances, lexicons, and interlinear versions of the OT, NT, and the Septuagint (LXX). The best defense against MIT are native-language believers with knowledge of biblical Hebrew and Greek. Such believers can much better explain to other believers who speak the same language where a given version of MIT has failed to accurately and faithfully render the biblical texts. In this way local churches can be freed from the dictates of what the Bible societies and translation organizations define as "accurate" and "faithful" translations. The training of nationals in the biblical languages requires a patient, forward-looking view towards missions but is the best way to equip

⁶⁴³ Matt 28:18-20.

national churches, not only for daily instruction in the faith, but for them to undertake their own Scripture translations or revisions.

Prayer may seem to be a trite proposal as a solution to such a serious problem as MIT.

Jesus, however, has given us incredible promises regarding prayer which include the following:

And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.⁶⁴⁴

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.⁶⁴⁵

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.⁶⁴⁶

Confronting MIT challenges people's reputations, positions, finances, relationships, and pride in one's labors. Touching on these areas tends to elicit highly defensive responses. We are also dealing with the almost impossible elimination of digitized copies of MIT that continue to present a compromised message of Scripture to Muslims around the world. In confronting MIT, prayer is no placebo but a means of God's grace to know how to effectively deal with all of these matters (and others besides them). God is willing to give us wisdom "generously and without reproach" if we will "ask in faith without any doubting."⁶⁴⁷ Let us obey Hebrews 11:6 by exercising our faith in the One who "is a rewarder of those who seek him" regarding MIT.

The power of God's Word is such that through the convincing work of the Holy Spirit people put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God who became the Son of Man; who as God incarnate, lived sinlessly so that by His death on the cross through the blood He shed would atone for our sins; was buried and on the third day rose again; ascended to Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, ever interceding for those who believe in

⁶⁴⁴ Matt 21:22.

⁶⁴⁵ Matt 7:7.

⁶⁴⁶ John 15:7.

⁶⁴⁷ James 1:5-6.

Him, in order to be saved from their sin. This new life results in intimacy with God, not as slaves but as friends of God (as was Abraham);⁶⁴⁸ not as an unfaithful spouse but as a pure virgin;⁶⁴⁹ not as estranged children or slaves, but adopted "as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"⁶⁵⁰

Muslims, like everyone else, need to hear the Gospel! The very things that Islam denies about Scripture are the very things that Muslims need in order to be reconciled to God. This is the reason why the accommodations that MIT makes to these Islamic denials is so spiritually deadly. For us who believe, we were not saved by an emasculated rendering of God's Word but by "the word of truth."⁶⁵¹ If we have so freely received, let us freely give God's Word, faithfully translated, to Muslims. It is only as Scripture is so translated that Muslims or anyone else is able to receive it "not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God."⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁸ John 15:14-15 ("14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."). cf. James 2:23 ("and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God."); 2 Chron 20:7 ("Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?").

⁶⁴⁹ 2 Cor 11:2 ("For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin."); Rev 21:9 ("Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.").

⁶⁵⁰ Rom 8:15; cf. the Prodigal Son (or, Lost Son) who thought to relate to his father as a slave but received the full right of sonship upon his return, or repentance - Luke 15:17-24.

⁶⁵¹ James 1:18.

⁶⁵² 1 Thess 2:13.

Appendix A

Back Translations of MIT Online (created and compiled by the author)

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-father.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-son.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-sonofgod.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-sonofman.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-jn17.1-3.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-jn3.13-18.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-jn5.17-19.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/lives-of-prophets.pdf>

<http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/lives-of-apostles.pdf>

http://www.answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/lop-lk1_26-35.pdf

<http://fatherson.ag.org/> (see Appendix D) or

<http://biblicalmissiology.org/2013/03/04/translation-chart-for-muslim-idiom-translations-of-the-bible/>

While the following link is not a "back translation" it is a helpful resource when analyzing MIT word choices:

<http://biblicalmissiology.org/2015/04/06/occurrences-of-father-son-and-son-of-god-or-familial-language-terminology-in-the-new-testament/>

Appendix B

Are "Father" and "Son" Terminology Metaphors?

"Father" and "Son" terminology are commonly referred to as metaphors. This assertion is based on the premise that these terms are merely analogies drawn from human fathers and sons. While Scripture does indeed use metaphors to speak of God and Jesus respectively such as the vinedresser and the vine (John 15:1), "Father" and "Son" terminology are used in ways that are not analogical but rather ontological, referring to their very nature and identity.

According to Ephesians 3:14-15, "family" is derived from God being Father:

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name (Eph 3:14-15)

Even if the alternate reading for verse 15 is preferred, "Father" as the source of "family" still holds true:

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom *the whole* family in heaven and on earth derives its name (Eph 3:14-15 footnote)

It is evident from this passage that "family...on earth," which includes earthly fathers and sons, is not the reason why God is referred to as "Father." The exact reverse is true - human fathers are so called because God is Father. This is in keeping with the same principle found elsewhere in the New Testament in which different aspects of the physical Tabernacle and its service are said to be "a copy and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb 8:5), "copies of the things in the heavens" (Heb 9:23), and "a *mere* copy of the true one" (Heb 9:24; cf. 8:2).

These passages from Hebrews also help us to realize that the phrase, "heavenly Father" (e.g. Matt 5:48; Luke 11:13), is a reference to Him as the "true one" while earthly fathers would be "a copy and shadow of heavenly things" even as human high priests were "a copy and shadow" (Heb 8:3-5) of Jesus the high priest (Heb 8:1-2). The relationship between "heavenly

things" and what is true is corroborated by Jesus' statement to the Samaritan woman: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

Another reason for understanding that "Father" is not a metaphor but His very nature and identity is found in Jesus' prayer in John 17. Jesus makes two explicit statements regarding the Father as having existed as such from eternity:

"Now, Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was. (John 17:5)

"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24)

The explicitness of these statements is further strengthened when we consider the context of this prayer. Since Jesus is referring to God's existence as it was prior to Creation, before there were any human fathers, it would be meaningless if not misleading for Jesus to refer to God as "Father" unless this was a literal description of God's nature and identity. If "Father" were metaphorical, one would expect Jesus to drop the metaphor when speaking of God as He was in eternity prior to Creation. In such a scenario, referring to God as Yahweh (YHWH) would seem to make much more sense.

A second consideration of this prayer is that Jesus was speaking directly to God. If "Father" is a metaphor meant to help humans come to some approximate understanding about God there would be no reason for Jesus to use such "imprecise" terminology when not instructing people. These two considerations help us to recognize that the context of Jesus' prayer in John 17 in no way supports the notion that "Father" is a metaphor but is rather a precise description of who God truly is.

Because "Father" and "Son" terminology, with respect to God and Jesus, are reciprocal terms, by establishing that "Father" is ontological and not analogical is to implicitly establish the

same for "Son" (or the fuller phrase, "Son of God"). In other words, "Son" is not a metaphor in reference to Jesus but a literal description of His eternal nature and identity.

We have already seen above in the quotes from Jesus' prayer in John 17 that Jesus as the Son (see John 17:1) was eternally present with the Father in shared glory and love. This leads us to conclude that there was never a time when Father and Son did not exist as such. For this reason, Scripture elsewhere witnesses to the eternality of the "Son." For instance, we read that "having neither beginning of days nor end of life [is to be] like the Son of God" (Heb 7:3) and that "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2).

Another extremely significant passage regarding the eternality of the Son (and by implication the eternality of the Father) is found in Proverbs 30:4:

Who has ascended into heaven and descended?
Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
Who has wrapped the waters in his garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name or his son's name?
Surely you know!

Considering the explicit Old Testament teachings of God being the Creator of the heavens and the earth (e.g. Gen 1:1) and that God is one (e.g. Deut 6:4), we should expect the fifth question to simply read, "What is his name?" without the addition of "or his son's name." Nevertheless, in keeping with other Old Testament passages that point to a plurality within God's unity as being all involved in Creation (e.g. Gen 1:1-3; Job 33:4; Ps 33:6), we find this reference to the Creator's "Son" which agrees with Col 1:13 and 17: "his beloved Son...[who] is before all things, and in him all things hold together." The "Son" as Son, therefore, was involved in Creation.

Further evidence for the eternality of the Son comes from a most unlikely source, namely the lone exception where "son of God" (i.e. the singular construction) is *not* used of Jesus, namely, in Luke 3:38 where it reads: "Adam, the son of God." Upon reflection with other

Scriptures, we find several aspects about this phrase, all of which imply that the "Son of God" is eternal.

First, the phrase, "the son of God," was applied to Adam prior to there being any earthly fathers or sons! In this context "son" cannot be a metaphor drawn from human sons but rather serves as an actual description of Adam's nature and identity when first created. If the attribution of "son" to Adam is non-metaphorical, this is certainly true of "Son" in reference to Jesus who existed before Adam! Second, Adam was formed from the "dust of the ground" (Gen 2:7; cf. 1 Cor 15:47). In keeping with the above principle expressed in Hebrews regarding the relationship of the physical to the heavenly, as a physical son of God Adam was "a copy and shadow" of the "heavenly" or "true" Son of God.

Third and lastly, Adam was created in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26). A parallel for this is found within the New Covenant where believers in the Gospel are being "conformed to the image of his Son so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom 8:29). The term, "image," is an explicit reference to this key description of Adam in Creation. From this it follows that the relationship of "image" to "His Son" is also true of when God created Adam. In the same way that "the image of his Son" for believers is predicated on the preexistence of God's Son as such, Adam, created in God's image as the son of God, was predicated on the eternal existence of the Son of God. This relationship is further corroborated when we consider that as Adam was the son of God in Creation, believers in Jesus are sons or children of God (e.g. Rom 8:14-16; cf. John 1:12; Gal 4:4-7) in the "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17; cf. 2 Cor 4:6; John 3:3-8).

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