

**Muslim Idiom Translation And Insider Movements for Muslims:
a Response to Harley Talman and John Travis**
by Adam Simnowitz

Preface

This article is a response to the claim made by Harley Talman (i.e. Mark Harlan) and John Jay Travis (i.e. Jay Muller) that "there is no inherent link between insider movements and Bible translation" as co-editors of the book, *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples Of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015). I have drawn on some of my previously-written materials, including my thesis¹ and other writings.² An abbreviated version of this article appears under the title, "Do Muslim Idiom Translations Islamize the Bible? A Glimpse behind the Veil." It is published in the book, *Muslim Conversions to Christ: A Critique of Insider Movements in Islamic Contexts*, eds. Ayman S. Ibrahim and Ant Greenham (New York: Peter Lang, 2018).

Introduction

Since 1987,³ a small but growing group of professing evangelicals have taken greater "liberties" in the name of Bible translation for Muslims than the "liberties" taken by the "Jehovah's Witnesses" of the Watchtower Society with their *New World Translation*.⁴ The justification for this practice is "contextualization," the popular notion within evangelicalism — especially in missions — that the Gospel is most "fruitful" in producing "believers" when it is "incarnated" for the receptor. In other words, the Gospel must be adapted to the culture of the people hearing it by adopting their pre-existing religious practices and vocabulary. This view is rooted in the cultural relativism of Anthropology which presupposes that there is no "truth" to which all cultures are subject (i.e. nothing is supercultural; or, super-cultural; supracultural; supra-cultural).⁵

¹ Adam Simnowitz, "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" (M.A. thesis, Columbia International University, 2015). It will be herein referred to as Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis). It is available online at: <http://biblicalmissiology.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Simnowitz-Muslim-Idiom-Translation-for-Bib-Miss.pdf>.

² As a sole author see: <http://biblicalmissiology.org/author/adam/>; <http://answering-islam.org/reviews.html>. As a co-author see: <http://fatheron.ag.org/download/paper.pdf>. See also: Adam Simnowitz, "How Insider Movements Affect Ministry: Personal Reflections," in *Chrislam: How Missionaries Are Promoting an Islamized Gospel*, ed. Joshua Lingel, et. al. (Garden Grove, Calif.: i2 Ministries, Inc., 2011), 199-226.

³ Anonymous [David Owen], *Sīrat Al-Masīh bi lisān 'arabī faṣīḥ = The Life of the Messiah In a Classical Arabic Tongue* (Larnaca, Cyprus: ABDO, 1987). For my reasoning in referring to this publication as the first "Muslim Idiom Translation" (MIT), see Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 19-20.

⁴ The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* by the Watchtower Bible And Tract Society Of New York, Inc., in all of its editions is well-known for intentionally mistranslated passages of the Bible to bring it into accord with its teaching that Jesus is not God incarnate but rather Michael the archangel incarnate. For two examples of how the deity of Jesus is denied the reader is referred to its renderings for John 1:1 and Hebrews 1:8.

⁵ The term "contextualization" was coined by Shoki Coe in 1973. See Shoki Coe "In Search of Renewal in Theological Education," *Theological Education* 9 no.4 (Summer 1973): 233–243. It is but one of several different ways that refer to receptor-response in which the message is adapted to the receptor. This idea, however, was primarily introduced into evangelicalism by Eugene A. Nida. By use of his highly effective coining of "dynamic equivalence" for the cultural relativism of Anthropology, he has greatly influenced what many professing

The practice of Scripture "translations for Muslim audiences"⁶ will be herein referred to as "Muslim Idiom Translation" (MIT).⁷ These productions are not confined to a specific medium but include printed books, digitized books and files, audio recordings, and audio-visual materials. MIT exists in languages native to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, Southern Asia, and the Far East where the majority of its speakers are Muslim. In many, if not most instances, MIT productions are undertaken *where there is already at least one existing translation of the same part of Scripture* (or of the entire Bible). Some of these languages, like Arabic, have multiple versions of MIT.

MIT does not result in uniform "translations." From one version to another, even within the same language, the wording can vary greatly. Nevertheless, there are features of MIT that distinguish it from accurate and faithful translations of Scripture. Each MIT version contains *at least one* or more of the following features:

- non-literal renderings for Father and Son terminology
- words and phrases from the Qur'an
- Islamic theological terms
- the omission of certain sections of Scripture

The result of these distinctive features is a "translation" that upholds an Islamic worldview.⁸ Since the Islamic worldview is built upon explicit denials of biblical truth,⁹ adoption of its terminology will naturally reflect these aspects of Islamic teaching. At best, MIT can only serve

evangelicals understand about missions and Bible translation. For a historical overview of "contextualization" by one of its proponents see: Darrell L. Whiteman, "Part I: Anthropology and Mission: The Incarnational Connection," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 20, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 35-44; Darrell L. Whiteman, "Part II: Anthropology and Mission: The Incarnational Connection," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 78-88. The term, "incarnational," is often used interchangeably with "contextual" or "contextualized."

⁶ Simnowitz, *Muslim Idiom Translation* (thesis), 14-15.

⁷ To the best of the author's knowledge, the term, "Muslim Idiom Translation" (MIT) first appeared in print in 2009 and was coined by WBT-SIL personnel. See Simnowitz, *Muslim Idiom Translation* (thesis), 14, fns. 27-28. MIT has also been described by such terms as "heart language," "Muslim-friendly translations," "Islamic-friendly translations," "contextualized translations [for Muslims]," "translations for Muslim audiences," "Islamic styled Bible translations," "Jesus translations," and "Scripture-based products." MIT seems to be the current term of choice by the administrators and faculty of the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (G.I.A.L.) in Dallas, Texas, which is the primary training center for WBT-SIL translators. At the annual EMS conference held at G.I.A.L. from October 14-16, Dr. David Ross, the president of G.I.A.L. and Dr. Kurt Anders Richardson, a professor of Applied Anthropology at the Abraham Center of G.I.A.L. both used it. See David Ross, "Case Study: Muslim Idiom Translation," in "2016 Daily Schedule for EMS Conference," SATURDAY (10/15/2016), *Missional Theology and Islam*, 11:25-11:55 AM, 4, accessed December 12, 2016, https://www.emsweb.org/images/national-conference/2016/EMS_Conference_2016_Daily_Schedule.pdf and Kurt Anders Richardson, "Comparative Theology and Islam: Five Priorities in Method, Translation, Scripture, Soteriology, and Dialogue" (audio lecture), Evangelical Missiological Society, "2016 National Conference Highlights," accessed December 12, 2016, <https://www.emsweb.org/images/national-conference/2016/audio/EMS-2016-Plenaries-Richardson.mp3>.

⁸ Simnowitz, *Muslim Idiom Translation* (thesis), 39.

⁹ These denials include the Trinity (or, God's triune nature); the Fatherhood of God; the Sonship of Jesus (which is a biblical witness to His deity); the Incarnation of Jesus Christ; the deity of the Holy Spirit; and Jesus' death, resurrection, and ever-living intercession at the right hand of God the Father. See Simnowitz, *Muslim Idiom Translation* (thesis), 52-53.

to obscure the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; at worst, it altogether deprives its intended Muslim audience of the matchless message of salvation from sin and reconciliation with our triune Creator whose Name is the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

Examples of wording and omissions

Awareness of MIT in the West has been limited to relatively small circles of professing evangelical missionaries and translators. For this reason key examples of wording and omissions found in existing versions are given to help quickly familiarize the reader with MIT.¹⁰ These selected passages, arranged in 10 categories, show some of the serious problems with these renderings (and lack of renderings) that are neither accurate nor faithful translations of Scripture. Passages from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB)¹¹ are provided where needed to help the reader easily compare the MIT renderings against an accurate and faithful translation of Scripture. Observations and comments follow each chart.

1. John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (NASB)

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Back Translation in English
Sirat Al-Masih (a harmony of the Gospels and part of Acts) ¹² Arabic 1987, printed book	For Allah has given as an offering the Masih in love for mankind, so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have life forever.
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) ¹³ Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	Because God loved the people of the world so much that he sacrificed his one beloved to save them, so that every one that brings faith on him, he shouldn't go to hell, but should receive eternal life.

¹⁰ This is not to imply that these referenced versions comprise all MIT versions. There are more MIT versions than the ones referenced in this paper. In addition, there are Scripture translations that incorporate only part of the distinctive features of MIT such as inserting "spiritual" with "Son" and "Son of God" in reference to Jesus which is common in a number of languages spoken in Central Asia; or completely changing "Adam, son of God" in Luke 3:38 to "Adam was from God" as is found in several Farsi translations and in a Dari translation.

¹¹ The text of the 1995 version is used.

¹² Anonymous [David Owen], *The Life of the Messiah = (Sirat Al-Masīh): In Classical Arabic with English Translation* (Atlanta, GA: Global Publications, 1992). This is the edition used for the back translation into English. David Owen was the person responsible for this MIT - see Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 66 and in passim. Jeff Hayes had "significant input" for this MIT - see Adam Simnowitz, "Nine Reasons Why I Named Jeff Hayes as the Main Translator and Responsible Party for Al-Injil," *Biblical Missiology*, March 7, 2016, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/03/07/nine-reasons-why-i-named-jeff-hayes-as-the-main-translator-and-responsible-party-for-al-injil/> (see section, "Nine Reasons Further Explained," number 4).

¹³ Tim Farrell of WBT-SIL and Pakistan Bible Society were the primary parties responsible for this MIT - see Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 66 and in passim.

The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (Matthew - Acts) ¹⁴ Arabic 2008, printed book	God so loved all of humanity that he sacrificed his unique Son (i.e. his only-beloved) [as] a ransom for them, so there is no fear upon those who believe in him, because the garden [of Paradise] is their destiny.
Al-Injil (New Testament) ¹⁵ Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	God loved the worlds with a great love that he sacrificed his unique, beloved prince to redeem from the torment of eternity all who rely upon him and he gives them life [in] eternity.
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised ¹⁶ (Matthew-Acts) Arabic 2017, printed book	God has loved all humans that he sacrificed the unique, spiritual son to him, the exalted one, [as] a ransom for them, so there is no fear of perishing for those who believe in him, for their destiny is the hereafter.

From the 5 above renderings of John 3:16 the following features are apparent:

- 1-"Son" is not literally translated; or is redefined within the text; or is accompanied by other words that change its meaning.
- 2-There is a tendency to define "eternal life" as blessedness in the hereafter.
- 3-There is an egregious disregard for the Greek text which results in highly interpretive and mistaken renderings.¹⁷ The frequency of non-literal renderings and the insertion of additional wording not only changes the meaning of this verse, but destroys its thematic unity within the context of John as well as the rest of the Bible.

All of the above features produce a text that is, in varying degrees, compatible with Islamic beliefs about God, Jesus, and the hereafter. Not translating "Son" as "Son" obscures the inseparable unity between God and Jesus (e.g. John 10:30; 14:9). This feature also diminishes

¹⁴ Mazhar Mallouhi and Al Kalima are the public "face" of this MIT. Frontiers, the missions organization with which Mallouhi is a life-time member, is also responsible for it - see Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 66 and in passim. An update to the Al Kalima website reveals that it also involved "SIL and other partners" - see "How did we get involved in Bible translation?" in "Translation projects" in "In Translation," accessed December 12, 2016, <http://www.al-kalima.com/content/in-translation/publishers-and-distributors>. Jeff Hayes had "significant input" for this MIT - see Simnowitz, "Nine Reasons," accessed December 12, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/03/07/nine-reasons-why-i-named-jeff-hayes-as-the-main-translator-and-responsible-party-for-al-injil/> (see section, "Nine Reasons Further Explained," number 4).

¹⁵ Jeff Hayes is the person responsible for this MIT. See Simnowitz, "Nine Reasons," accessed December 12, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/03/07/nine-reasons-why-i-named-jeff-hayes-as-the-main-translator-and-responsible-party-for-al-injil/> and Adam Simnowitz, "Jeff Hayes and Al-Injil: Another Mistranslation of the New Testament in Arabic Intended for 'Insider Movements of Muslims' or C5 (C5/IM)," Biblical Missiology, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/01/23/jeff-hayes-and-al-injil-another-mistranslation-of-the-new-testament-in-arabic-intended-for-insider-movements-of-muslims-or-c5-c5im/>.

¹⁶ Mazhar Mallouhi and Al Kalima are the public "face" of this MIT. Based on the wording choices, footnotes, and articles, it would seem that *all* of the other parties mentioned in footnote 14 above are also involved. Private correspondence sent to the author confirms that both Frontiers and "Larry Chico" [pseudonym] of WBT-SIL have direct involvement with this MIT.

¹⁷ The earliest biblical manuscripts (mss) for the New Testament are in what is often referred to as *koine* Greek.

the extent of God's love toward the world. The redefinition of "eternal life" bars the reader from realizing that the believer in Jesus receives eternal life the moment he believes. The reader also cannot see the connection to "eternal life" found in other places in John (e.g. John 17:3) and the rest of the Bible. Such a redefinition, especially when Islamic terminology describing the hereafter is used, reinforces Islamic beliefs about Paradise and Hell, both of which are incompatible with the teaching of the Bible.¹⁸

2. Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (NASB)

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Back Translation in English
Sirat Al-Masih (a harmony of the Gospels and part of Acts) Arabic 1987, printed book	Go throughout the earth and make for me disciples among all peoples. Call them to my Injil [i.e. Gospel]. Baptize them in the name of Allah, his Word and his Spirit.
Lives of the Prophets, a.k.a Stories of the Prophets (Luke, modified) Arabic (Baghdadi) ¹⁹ c. 1994, audio recording	so go and tell the people from all the nations about the message of salvation so that they may be My followers...and baptize them with water in the name of God and His Messiah and the Holy Spirit.
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	Go to every nation of the world, give them invitation to become my followers, and to make them my followers give them washing in the name of the sustainer, in my name that I am his beloved, and in the name of the holy spirit.
The Sublime Meaning of the Injil Sharif (Matthew) ²⁰ Turkish 2011, printed book	Now go to all the nations and train islamic disciples [lit. mürits] to me and make them 'purify themselves by islamic ritualistic washing unto repentance' [lit. <i>tövbe abdesti</i>] to the name of the Protector, his Representative and the Holy Spirit.
Al-Injil (New Testament)	So go and make followers of me [lit. my followers] from all

¹⁸ A word search in the Qur'an for "Paradise," "Garden(s)," "Hell" (Jahannum, i.e. Gehenna), and "Fire" (i.e. Hell fire) will show how both Paradise and Hell are described in physical terms. For a brief contrast between what Islam teaches on these two topics compared to the Bible see: 'Abdallah 'Abd al-Fadi, *Is the Qur'an Infallible?* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, 1995), 151-155.

¹⁹ WBT-SIL are responsible for this MIT which is the first of this series (there are numerous audio versions of it in Arabic as well as other languages) - see Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 66 and in passim. Jeff Hayes had "majority input" for this MIT - see Simnowitz, "Jeff Hayes and Al-Injil, accessed December 12, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/01/23/jeff-hayes-and-al-injil-another-mistranslation-of-the-new-testament-in-arabic-intended-for-insider-movements-of-muslims-or-c5-c5im/>.

²⁰ Bruce Privratsky and Frontiers were responsible for this MIT. For Privratsky, who is a member with Frontiers, the author has a forwarded email message of correspondence between Privratsky and a native Turkish clergyman dated, January 19, 2012. For Frontiers see Thomas Cosmades, "An Analysis of the Paraphrased New Testament by FRONTIERS," December 2007, accessed December 9, 2016, <http://www.cosmades.org/articles/frontiers.htm>.

Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	of the nations, immersing them, in the name of the king, the merciful one, and the beloved prince, and the holy spirit of God.
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From the 5 above renderings of Matthew 28:19 the following features are apparent:

- 1-"Father" and "Son" are never literally translated.
- 2-There is a tendency to render "make disciples" and "baptize" with Islamic terminology.
- 3-There is an egregious disregard for the Greek text which results in highly interpretive and mistaken renderings. The frequency of non-literal renderings and the insertion of additional wording not only changes the meaning of this verse, but destroys its thematic unity within the context of Matthew as well as the rest of the Bible.

As with the features seen in the renderings for John 3:16, all of the above renderings for Matthew 28:19 produce a text that is, in varying degrees, compatible with Islamic beliefs about God and Jesus. For instance, the Balochi/Baluchi, contrary to the Greek manuscripts, inserts "my name" and "the name of" (before "the holy spirit") into the text. The addition of these two phrases undermine the witness to the most explicit verse in the Bible to God's triune nature. It also gives the appearance that the monotheism of the Bible is compatible with the monotheism of Islam (i.e. tawhid) which denies all plurality within God's nature.²¹ In the Turkish, Jesus is presented as explicitly advocating Islamic teachings and rituals.

3. Luke 3:38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Back Translation in English
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	Cainan was Enos' son, Enos was Seth's son, Seth was Adam's son, and God created Adam.
Lives of the Prophets, a.k.a Stories of the Prophets (Luke, modified) Arabic (Urbed) ²² c. 2004?, audio recording	the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the male child [lit. boy] of <i>our father</i> [an "honorific"] Adam, whom God created, be he praised and exalted [i.e. God be praised and exalted, an Islamic phrase]
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (Matthew-Acts) Arabic 2008, printed book	the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of <i>our master</i> [an "honorific"], Adam, whom God created.

²¹ Gimaret, D. "Tawhīd (a)." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by: P. Bearman; , Th. Bianquis; , C.E. Bosworth; , E. van Donzel; and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2011. Brill Online. Univ. Of Michigan-Ann Arbor. 14 March 2011, http://0-www.brillonline.nl.wizard.umd.umich.edu/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-7454. See also Samuel M. Zwemer, *The Moslem Doctrine of God* (New York: American Tract Society, 1905), 65, 82 (see "plurality").

²² WBT-SIL are responsible for this MIT. See footnote 19.

Al-Injil (New Testament) Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the creation of God.
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised (Matthew-Acts) Arabic 2017, printed book	the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of <i>our master</i> [an "honorific"], Adam, whom God created.

From the 5 above renderings of Luke 3:18 the following features are apparent:

- 1-"son of God" is never literally translated.
- 2-There is a tendency to insert Islamic "honorifics" prior to Adam's name as well as a common Islamic phrase spoken or written after "God."
- 3-There is an egregious disregard for the Greek text which results in highly interpretive and mistaken renderings. The frequency of non-literal renderings and the insertion of additional wording not only changes the meaning of this verse, but destroys its thematic unity within the context of Luke as well as the rest of the Bible.

As with the features seen in the renderings for John 3:16 and Matthew 28:19, all of the above renderings produce a text that is, in varying degrees, compatible with Islamic beliefs about God, Jesus, Adam and humanity. The rendering of "son of God" by "created" or "creation" eliminates one of the most helpful verses in understanding what the Bible means by "son of God." Adam had no parents, yet is called "son of God" by divine inspiration. From this we realize that the reality of "son" (or, sonship) existed before there was any human procreation. By not literally translating this verse, Muslims are deprived of God's inspired Word that will ultimately serve to help clear up the Islamic misunderstanding of "Son of God" in reference to Jesus.²³

4. "Son" and "Son of God" as "Caliph of God"²⁴

Scripture Reference	NASB	Non-Literal Renderings for "Son" in Lives of the Prophets, a.k.a Stories of the Prophets Arabic (Urbed), ²⁵ c. 2004?, audio recording back translated into English
Luke 1:32	Son	the king

²³ Since Adam was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), we understand from this verse that this image was specifically that of "the son of God" (as opposed to the Father or the Holy Spirit) This is an implicit witness to the eternal Son of God (Heb. 7:3) whose existence *as the Son of God* prior to Adam being created in this image is necessary. In nature, which reflects God's glory (Ps 19:1-4) and witnesses to a number of His attributes (Rom 1:19-20), an image cannot exist without there being a prior source. According to this same principle, Adam could have never borne the image of God as "the son of God" had there not already been the Son of God for him to reflect this image. This agrees with the pattern that we see for believers under the New Covenant - we who are sons and children of God (Rom. 8:14-21) are such on the basis of "the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). The existence of the Son *as Son* precedes believers being sons and children of God.

²⁴ The two charts are slightly modified from the author's thesis while the subsequent comments have been expanded. See Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 79, 92.

²⁵ WBT-SIL are responsible for this MIT. See footnote 19.

Luke 3:22	Son	the beloved king, my caliph
Luke 9:35	Son	my caliph
Luke 10:22	Son	me (first occurrence)
Luke 10:22	Son	I (second occurrence)
Luke 10:22	Son	I (third occurrence)

Scripture Reference	NASB	Non-Literal Renderings for "Son of God" in Lives of the Prophets, a.k.a Stories of the Prophets (Luke, modified) Arabic (Urbed), c. 2004?, audio recording back translated into English
Luke 1:35	Son of God	the deputy who became the caliph of God over all the people
Luke. 4:3	Son of God	caliph of God
Luke 4:9	Son of God	caliph of God
Luke. 4:41	Son of God	caliph of God
Luke 8:28	Son of God	caliph of God
Luke 22:70	Son of God	the king, the caliph of God

The above two charts show one of the most flagrant examples of Islamizing the text of the Bible. "Caliph of God" refers to "a leader whom God has chosen as His viceroy upon earth and appointed *imām* [i.e. leader] for His creatures."²⁶ It is a distinctly unique Islamic title indicating the religious, military, and political ruler of the caliphate (i.e. the Islamic nation or empire).²⁷ This title was first used by 'Abd al-Malik bin Marwan,²⁸ of the Umayyad Dynasty who ruled from 692-705 AD.²⁹ In addition to its function as a unique technical term within Islam that introduces a meaning completely different and contrary to the biblical witness of the meaning of Son of God, its use also introduces a glaring anachronism within the text.

This term is also defined in an "explanatory" comment as a "king over the Lord's Kingdom." This comment occurs between Luke 1:27 and Luke 1:28.³⁰ Not only is this *not* the biblical meaning of "Son of God" or its abbreviated form, "Son," it reinforces the Islamic idea of a theocracy which allows for the use of military force for the promotion of Islam. This is consistent with the Qur'an which states that the message of the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ According to Islamic teaching, all Muslims are ideally one *umma*, that is, one people or nation (e.g. Sura 3:110, "You are the best nation [*umma*] ever brought forth to men..."). The current nation-states are considered by devout Muslims to be the religious, military, and political imposition of infidels (i.e. non-Muslims), even if the leader of a nation-state professes to be Muslim.

²⁸ 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: "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]."

²⁹ Chase F. Robinson, *'Abd Al-Malik, Makers of the Muslim World* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2012), xv, 1, 34-35.

³⁰ See Adam Simnowitz, "Luke 1:26-35 in 'The Life of Jesus' from 'The Stories of the Prophets' (originally, The Lives of the Prophets), Urbed/Bedouin Version," Answering Islam, accessed December 13, 2006, http://answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/lop-lk1_26-35.pdf, 2-3.

is identical — to kill and be killed.³¹ Unbiblical ideas about the meaning of "Son of God" (and "Son") have emboldened the "translators" to find a "dynamic equivalent" specific to Muslim audiences. By so doing they reveal their practical denial of the divine inspiration of Scripture while at the same time affirm that Islam is true and that Jesus, like all of the "prophets" was a Muslim.³²

5. "Father" in keeping with Islamic theology

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Scripture Reference & Literal Translation (NASB)	Selected Non-Literal Renderings for "Father" back translated into English
Sirat Al-Masih (a harmony of the Gospels and part of Acts) Arabic 1987, printed book	Matt 6:9 (our Father)	Allahuma, Lord of all the world
Lives of the Prophets, a.k.a Stories of the Prophets (Luke, modified) Arabic (Baghdadi) c. 1994, audio recording	Luke 11:2 (Father)	loving, heavenly Lord
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	Rom 8:15 (Abba, Father)	we say to God that "Oh Sustainer, you hold love for us!"
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	Gal 4:6 (Abba, Father)	you say to God "Oh Sustainer, you hold love for us!"
Lives of the Prophets, a.k.a Stories of the Prophets (Luke, modified) Arabic (Urbed) c. 2004?, audio recording	Luke 9:26 (Father)	God
Injil Sharif (Mark) Bangla/Bengali	Mark 11:25 (your Father)	your protector

³¹ Sura 9:111: "God has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill, and are killed; that is a promise binding upon God in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Koran; and who fulfils his covenant truer than God? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him; that is the mighty triumph."

³² Samuel M. Zwemer, *The Moslem Christ* (New York: American Tract Society, 1912), 7-8: "Jesus Christ...is acknowledged by all Moslems as one of their prophets..." The Qur'an states that Jesus was "the apostle of God" (Sura 4:157, 171; 61:6) as was Muhammad (Sura 33:40; 48:29) and Moses (Sura 61:5). It also states that Abraham (Sura 3:67) and Jesus' Apostles (Sura 5:111) were "Muslims" and implies that all "believers," from at least the time of Abraham were "named Muslims" (Sura 22:77-78).

2005, printed book		
Injil Sharif (Mark) ³³ Bangla/Bengali 2005, printed book	Mark 14:36 (Abba, Father)	Rabbul Alamin (Arabic for Lord of the worlds) [This "name" for God in the Qur'an is "borrowed" from Arabic]
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (Matthew-Acts) Arabic 2008, printed book	Matt 5:16 (your Father)	God, your supreme guardian
The Sublime Meaning of the Injil Sharif (Matthew) Turkish 2011, printed book	Matt 11:26 (Father)	Protector
Al-Injil (New Testament) Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	Heb 12:9 (the Father of spirits)	The merciful king [lit. the king, the merciful one], the Creator of our spirits
Sharif Bible ³⁴ Arabic 2013, printed book	Jam 1:17 (Father)	Maker
The Bold Proclamation of the Apostles of Christ (Romans-Revelation) ³⁵ Arabic 2016, printed book	Eph 3:14 (Father)	God, the merciful guardian
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised (Mathew-Acts) Arabic 2017, printed book	John 5:36, second occurrence (Father)	he the exalted, he whom

From the above 13 renderings for "Father" the following features are apparent:

- 1-"Father" is never literally translated.
- 2-There is a tendency to use Islamic "names" for God.

³³ Milton Coke and Global Partners for Development are responsible for this MIT. See Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 66 and in passim.

³⁴ Sobhi Malek of the Assemblies of God is responsible for this MIT - see Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 66 and in passim. Jeff Hayes had "significant input" for this MIT - see Simnowitz, "Nine Reasons," accessed December 12, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/03/07/nine-reasons-why-i-named-jeff-hayes-as-the-main-translator-and-responsible-party-for-al-injil/> (see section, "Nine Reasons Further Explained," number 4). WBT-SIL also played a part in this MIT - see Coalition of Ministries to Muslims in North America (COMMA), "COMMA Report for September 2014," email message to author, November 25, 2014.

³⁵ Mazhar Mallouhi and Al Kalima are the public "face" of this MIT. Based on the wording choices, footnotes, and articles, it would seem that *all* of the other parties mentioned in footnote 14 above are also involved. Private correspondence sent to the author confirms that both Frontiers and "Larry Chico" [pseudonym] of WBT-SIL have direct involvement with this MIT.

3-There is an egregious disregard for the Greek text which results in highly interpretive and mistaken renderings. The variety of non-literal renderings and the insertion of additional wording not only changes the meaning of this key term, but wreaks havoc with its verbal consistency throughout the Bible.

As far back as the ninth century AD, Muslim renderings of Scripture often did not include literal translations for "Father" in reference to God. For instance, the four occurrences of "Father" in John 15:23-16:1 in Ibn Hisham's, *Biography of the Prophet* [Muhammad] (*al-sīra al-nabiwiyya*), are changed to "Lord" or "God."³⁶ In the Hadith collection,³⁷ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, also from the ninth century, there is a modified version of the "Lord's Prayer" (Matt 6:9-13). Instead of beginning with "Our Father" it reads "Our Lord God."³⁸ In the tenth century, 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Asadābādī in his *Kitab al-mughnī* wrote that "Father" in John 20:17 should be corrected to "Lord" in accordance with Qur'an where Jesus is alleged to have said, "Assuredly God is my Lord and your Lord; therefore serve Him; this is a straight path" (Sura³⁹ 43:64).⁴⁰ Another example from the tenth century is a codex of the Gospels in Arabic, copied by a Muslim.⁴¹ The renderings for "Father" include both literal and non-literal renderings. The non literal renderings include "God" (e.g. Matt 5:16, 45; 6:4, 6, 8); "Lord" (e.g. Luke 23:34, 36); and "God, Lord of the worlds" (Matt 5:48), the latter (i.e. "Lord of the worlds") being an oft-repeated phrase in the Qur'an and employed in two of the examples in the above chart.⁴²

The noted Muslim theologian, Ibn Taymiyya (1263 – 1328 A.D.) well expressed the thinking behind these changes to "Father":

[Jesus] calls God a father to them 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...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.⁴³

³⁶ Alfred Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1968), 104.

³⁷ The Hadith collections are understood by Muslims to be the sayings of Muhammad. Although Muslims do not officially consider them to be divinely inspired such as they believe about the Qur'an, much of their interpretations of the Qur'an are dependent on the Hadith collections.

³⁸ Abū Dā'ūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī, *English Translation of Sunan Abu Dawud* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2008), 321 (for the Arabic), 322 (for the English).

³⁹ "Sura" refers to a chapter in the Qur'an. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is God's inspired, literally dictated word to Muhammad, conveyed by the angel Gabriel.

⁴⁰ David Thomas, "The Bible in Early Muslim Anti-Christian Polemic," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 7, no.1 (1996): 30-31.

⁴¹ Hikmat Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: the Manuscripts and Their Families* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2102), 128.

⁴² E.g. Sura 1:2; 2:131; 5:28; 6:45, 71, 162; 7:54, 61, 67, 104, 121; 10:10, 37; 26:16, 23, 47, 77, 98, 109, 127, etc.

⁴³ 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, 277.

By rendering "Father" with non-literal renderings, the Fatherhood of God, one of the most significant and unique doctrines of the Bible, fundamental to the Gospel message, is thus lost. The inevitable consequence of this common feature of MIT is a portrayal of God that is much closer, and perhaps in some instances, identical to the Islamic understanding of God.

6. Embedding the first half of the *Shahada*, or Islamic confession of faith in MIT

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Scripture References
Al-Injil (New Testament) Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	1 Cor 8:4, 6; 1 Tim 2:5; James 2:19
Sharif Bible Arabic 2013, printed book	2 Sam 7:22; 22:32; 1 Chron 17:20; Ps. 18:31; Isa 45:14; 1 Cor 8:4; 1 Tim 2:5; James 2:19
The Bold Proclamation of the Apostles of Christ (Romans-Revelation) Arabic 2016, printed book	1 Cor 8:4, 6; Eph 4:6; 1 Tim 2:5; James 2:19

From the above 3 versions the following features are apparent:

- 1-The first part of the shahada, or Islamic confession of faith is considered to have the same meaning as each of the biblical passages in which it appears.
- 2-There is an egregious disregard for the Hebrew and Greek texts. There is neither textual justification nor biblical theological justification for the insertion of the first part of the shahada in any so-called translation of any part of Scripture.

In order to become a Muslim, one must repeat, *in Arabic*, the shahada, or Islamic confession of faith:⁴⁴ "there is no god but God and Muhammad is his messenger."⁴⁵ According to Islam, it is irrelevant whether or not one can speak or understand Arabic. The shahada is treated as if the pronunciation of the Arabic words themselves carry divine power. This idea is evident in what a number of the hadiths state about the benefits of repeating *just the first part* of the shahada.⁴⁶ Its repetition is even claimed to provide the basis for Muhammad to intercede on the Day of Judgment for those who are in Hell and so enter Paradise.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Zwemer, *Moslem Doctrine of God*, 53.

⁴⁵ Technically, the shahada is either called, the shahadatayn (i.e. the two shahadas) or the kalima (i.e. the word). The transliteration of the first part is, "lā ilāha illā allāh."

⁴⁶ G.F. Haddad, "Forty Hadiths On The Merit Of Saying La Ilaha Illallah [i.e. there is no god but God], accessed December 1, 2016, http://www.sunnah.org/aqida/forty_hadith_merits_tahlil.htm#_ftnref6.

⁴⁷ Al-Bukhārī, *al-jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo: al-maktabah al-salafiyya, 1400 A.H. [1979-80 A.D.]), vol. 4, book 97 (kitāb al-tawḥīd), section (bāb) 19, no. 7410, 385-386 and section (bāb) 36, no. 7510, 405-406. For English see respectively, Bukhari: Book 9: Volume 93: Quran Explorer, accessed December 1, 2016; [Hadith 507](#) (the first part of the shahada is transliterated as "La ilaha illal-lah") and [Hadith 601](#) (the first part of the shahada is rendered as "None has the right to be worshiped except Allah").

Regardless of the claim that the first part of the shahada faithfully expresses biblical monotheism,⁴⁸ any MIT that contains it will be understood by most, if not all Muslims as affirming Islam or as a deceitful means of trying to fool Muslims who are naive in their understanding of Islam. In common practice, Muslims typically accept the repetition of just the first part of the shahada as affirmation of its entirety. This implies acknowledgment that Muhammad is the final "prophet" superseding all of the preceding "prophets," including Jesus. Since the first part of the shahada occurs more times in the above three MIT versions than it does in the Qur'an, it can be argued that *in this respect they are more Islamic than the Qur'an!*⁴⁹

7. Hebrews 1:8

But of the Son He says, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM.

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Back Translation in English
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	But about God's beloved this is written in the Zabur [i.e. the quranic name for Psalms] that "God has established your kingdom forever, and you will do government according to justice.
Al-Injil (New Testament) Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	However, he addresses the beloved prince, saying: your throne stands with God for ever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is the scepter of uprightness.

From the above two versions the following features are apparent:

- 1-The deity of Jesus is eliminated.
- 2-"Son" is not literally translated.
- 3- There is an egregious disregard for the Greek text which results in highly interpretive and mistaken renderings. Because this verse includes a quote from the Old Testament there is also an inherent disregard for the Hebrew text of Psalm 45:6-7a. The variety of non-literal renderings and the insertion of additional wording destroys its thematic unity within Hebrews as well as the rest of the Bible.

⁴⁸ Dr. Rev. Ekram Lamie [a.k.a. Ekram Lamie Hennawie], "Ekram Lamie (T3)" (The monotheistic nature of God and the nature of Jesus), The Sabiil Videos, accessed December 1, 2016, <http://thesabiil.com/video/ekram-lamie-t3>. See video starting at approximately 0:44 until 1:07. Dr. Lamie is named on the cover of *The Bold Proclamation of the Apostles of Christ*, one of the MIT versions in the above chart as having worked with the translation committee (the same is true for *The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ*, revised edition).

⁴⁹ The first part of the shahada only appears twice in the Qur'an (Sura 37:35; 47:19). Since the Qur'an does not contain the entire shahada, yet is understood by Muslims to teach that Muhammad was the final prophet, it is extremely problematic for any purported translation of Scripture to include it. A Muslim can argue that as the Qur'an only contains the first part of the shahada yet teaches that Muhammad was the final prophet, so any "translation" of Scripture which contains it also affirms the same.

These renderings do violence to the Greek text in similar fashion as that of the *New World Translation* (2013) of the Watchtower Society (i.e. the Jehovah's Witnesses) which reads, "But about the Son, he says: 'God is your throne forever and ever, and the scepter of your Kingdom is the scepter of uprightness.'" This elimination of one of the most explicit verses for the deity of Jesus also eliminates one of the clearest Scriptural witnesses that the term "Son," and by implication, its fuller form, "Son of God," in reference to Jesus indicates deity.⁵⁰

The agenda to hide the deity of Jesus from Muslims is fully evident by the fact that neither of these versions literally translate "Son of God" while "Son" is only literally translated six times between the both of them. Even with these few occurrences, the verses in which they occur are rendered in ways that seek to give the appearance that Jesus is only a human son.⁵¹ This gross misrepresentation is in keeping with the Qur'an that refers to Jesus as "the son of Mary" instead of the "Son of God."⁵² It is also in agreement with what Ibn Taymiyya wrote about the meaning of "son" in reference to Jesus: "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."⁵³ MIT cannot escape the condemnation that it is presenting — as does the Qur'an — "another Jesus" (2 Cor 11:4).

8. Psalm 2:7 and as quoted in Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5

I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5

"YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU."

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Back Translation in English
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	You are my beloved. Today I have appointed you as my vicegerent. (Acts 13:33) You are my beloved. Today I have appointed you my vicegerent. (Heb 1:5; 5:5)
The True Meaning of the Gospel	You are my son, today I have begotten you (you are my

⁵⁰ For a brief study on the Old Testament witness of "Son" or "Son of God" to deity see: Adam Simnowitz, "Son of God in the Old Testament," *Biblical Missiology*, accessed December 2, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2013/02/11/son-of-god-in-the-old-testament/>. For the New Testament see: e.g. John 5:17-23; 10:30-36; Col 1:13-17; Heb 1:2; 7:3; 1 John 5:20.

⁵¹ For the occurrences of "Son" and "Son of God" in the *Injil Sharif* see: Simnowitz, *Muslim Idiom Translation* (thesis), 83-85. For the occurrences of "Son" and "Son of God" in *Al-Injil* see: Simnowitz, "Jeff Hayes and Al-Injil," accessed December 1, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/01/23/jeff-hayes-and-al-injil-another-mistranslation-of-the-new-testament-in-arabic-intended-for-insider-movements-of-muslims-or-c5-c5im/>.

⁵² See Sura 2:87, 253; 3:45; 4:157, 171; 5:17 (2x), 46, 72, 75, 78, 110, 112, 114, 116; 9:31; 19:34; 23:50; 33:7; 43:57; 57:27; 61:6, 14.

⁵³ 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), 275.

of Christ (Matthew-Acts) Arabic 2008, printed book	beloved, today I have crowned you king over my nation) (Acts 13:33)
Al-Injil (New Testament) Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	You are my beloved prince, today I have made you unique to me. (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5)
Sharif Bible Arabic 2013, printed book	I announce what God has proclaimed to me, for he had told me, "You are my son, today I have crowned you a son to me." (Ps 2:7) You are my son, today I have crowned you a son to me. (Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5)
The Bold Proclamation of the Apostles of Christ (Romans-Revelation) Arabic 2016, printed book	You are closer to me than the father is to his son and today we seated you upon the throne. (Heb 1:5; 5:5)* *The preposition in Arabic rendered "to" in these verses differs here than what is used in the passage in Acts below but the meaning is the same.
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised (Mathew-Acts) Arabic 2017, printed book	You are closer to me than the father is to his son and today we seated you upon the throne. (Acts 13:33)* *The preposition in Arabic rendered "to" in this verse differs here than what is used in the passages in Hebrews above but the meaning is the same.

From the above 6 versions the following features are apparent:

- 1-"Son" is usually not literally translated.
- 2-Where "Son" is literally translated it is redefined within the text.
- 3- There is an egregious disregard for the Hebrew and Greek texts which results in highly interpretive and mistaken renderings. The variety of non-literal renderings and the insertion of additional wording destroys their thematic unity within their immediate contexts as well as the rest of the Bible.

All of the above renderings, with one exception, either state or imply that "Son" means "king" (which "meaning" we have already seen above in example 4). The reason for this becomes clear when consulting the explanatory notes and footnotes provided in some of these versions⁵⁴ as well as articles written for the defense and advocacy of MIT.⁵⁵ According to their thinking, "Son"

⁵⁴ For some examples of these footnotes see the authors charts at <http://answering-islam.org/> under "Reviews" (<http://answering-islam.org/reviews.html>).

⁵⁵ For representative examples of this argument by arguably the foremost public advocate for MIT, see Rick Brown, "The 'Son of God': Understanding the Messianic Titles of Jesus," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 41-52; 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

and "Son of God" are synonyms for "king." It is preferable, therefore — so they claim — to use an "equivalent" rendering that "retains" the "meaning" while avoiding the Muslim misunderstanding of these terms if literally translated. This alleged "meaning" for "Son" or "Son of God" ultimately portrays Jesus as a mere human which is in keeping with Islamic teaching.⁵⁶ Other Islamic features from the above examples include the use of allāh (i.e. God) to render Yahweh in Psalm 2:7,⁵⁷ and the insertion of "we" as an indication that God is speaking.⁵⁸

9. Omissions

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Omitted Passages (selected examples)
Lives of the Prophets, a.k.a Stories of the Prophets (Luke, modified) Arabic (Baghdadi) c. 1994, audio recording	Luke 15 ⁵⁹
Lives of the Apostles, a.k.a Stories of the Apostles (Romans-Revelation, selections) Arabic (Urbed) c. 2004?, audio recording	Rom 1:2-4; 3:1-9, 13-18, 25-31; Rom 8:1-9, 12-33, 35-36, 38-39; Gal 4:4-7 ⁶⁰
Al-Injil (New Testament) Arabic 1434 AH (this Islamic year corresponds to Nov. 15, 2012 - Nov. 3, 2013), printed book	John 7:53-8:11; Mark 16:9-20 ⁶¹

From the above 3 versions the following features are apparent:

- 1-Seemingly any part of the Bible can be omitted.
- 2-Most of the omissions contain teachings that directly contradict the teachings of Islam.

Term 'Son(s) of God' in Muslim Contexts, pt. II," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 22, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 135-145. All of these articles are available at: <http://www.ijfm.org/archives.htm>.

⁵⁶ The Qur'an explicitly denies Jesus' deity (e.g. Sura 4:171; 5:116-117) and refers to Him most often as "Son of Mary - see footnote 52..

⁵⁷ "allāh " has been used to render "God" in Arabic since the earliest-known translations of Scripture into this language. It is not, however, used to render, "Yahweh," unless there has been a willful Islamizing of the text.

⁵⁸ The Qur'an often uses the first person plural pronouns ("we"; "us"; "our"; and "ours") in its declarations. Muslims understand this to mean that God is figuratively speaking as would a king who uses the first person plural pronouns instead of the singular ("I"; "me"; "my"; "mine") as a way to show his authority and power (i.e. the so-called *pluralis majestis*).

⁵⁹ Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 7, fn. 9.

⁶⁰ Adam Simnowitz, "Selections from Galatians & Romans in "The Stories of the Apostles," Answering Islam, accessed December 2, 2016, <http://answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/lives-of-apostles.pdf>.

⁶¹ Simnowitz, "Jeff Hayes and Al-Injil, accessed December 2, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/01/23/jeff-hayes-and-al-injil-another-mistranslation-of-the-new-testament-in-arabic-intended-for-insider-movements-of-muslims-or-c5-c5im/>. There is no indication to the reader that these two disputed sections have been omitted from the rest of the text. An added element of confusion awaits the reader in John 8 as verses 12-59 are renumbered as 1-48.

3-There is an egregious disregard for the Greek texts. These omissions destroy the thematic unity within their immediate contexts as well as the rest of the Bible.

As we have already seen for individual words and phrases, one of the features of MIT is to omit key biblical terms that Islamic teaching considers controversial. This penchant for omitting such parts of Scripture also extends to entire passages. In the above examples, these omissions include the following essential truths of the Gospel: the Fatherhood of God; the sonship of the repentant believer to God and enjoyment of this glorious ongoing, intimate relationship, all made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the Old Testament emphasis on the depravity of sin; and one of the clearest expositions on Jesus' atoning death. *Every one of these truths are denied by Islam.* These omissions are hardly coincidental and only function to uphold the anti-biblical teachings of Islam.⁶²

10. Infusing literal translations of "Father" and "Son" with unbiblical meanings

MIT (Name, Language, Date of Publication, & Original Format)	Scripture Reference & Literal Translation (NASB)	Back Translation in English
Injil Sharif (New Testament, Greek-Balochi) Balochi/Baluchi 2001 (2nd ed.), printed book	John 5:17 (My Father)	God who is like a father for me
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (Matthew-Acts) Arabic 2008, printed book	Matt 4:3, 6; Mark 15:39; Luke 1:35; John 20:31; Acts 9:20 (the Son of God)	the son of God (the beloved of God)
Sharif Bible Arabic 2013, printed book	Ps 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5 (You are My Son, today I have begotten You)	You are my son, today I have crowned you a son to me.
The Bold Proclamation of the Apostles of Christ (Romans- Revelation) Arabic 2016, printed book	Heb 1:5; 5:5 (You are My Son, today I have begotten You)	you are closer to me than the father is to his son and today we seated you upon the throne
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised (Mathew-Acts) Arabic 2017, printed book	Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32 (the Father)	God the father, the merciful one, the merciful
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised (Mathew-Acts)	Matt 4:3, 6; Mark 15:39; Luke 1:35; John 20:31; Acts	the spiritual son of God or the spiritual son to God

⁶² See 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. He claims among other things that it is unnecessary to believe that Christ died for our sins or in Jesus' deity to become a "believer" in Jesus!

Arabic 2017, printed book	9:20 (the Son of God)	
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised (Mathew-Acts) Arabic 2017, printed book	Matt 3:17; 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 3:22 (My beloved Son)	the beloved, the spiritual son to me
The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, revised (Mathew-Acts) Arabic 2017, printed book	Matt 27:40 (the Son of God)	the son [who belongs] to God

From the above 8 renderings any number of the following features are apparent:

- 1-Literal translations of "Father" and "Son" terms have been turned into similes.
- 2-Literal translations of "Father" and "Son" terms have been accompanied by textual commentary that redefines their meanings.
- 3-Literal translations of "Father" and "Son" terms have been accompanied by distinctive Islamic words and phrases.
- 4-There is an egregious disregard for the Greek texts which results in highly interpretive and mistaken renderings. The insertion of additional wording decisively changes the meanings of these key terms while the variety of the additional wording wreaks havoc with their verbal consistency throughout the Bible. This destroys the thematic unity within their immediate contexts as well as the rest of the Bible.

All of the examples in the above chart reveal consistent efforts to counteract the presence of literal translations for "Father" and "Son" terms through the insertion of additional wording. These insertions either lessen or eliminate the offense that their literal translations *without additions* pose to Islamic theology. The use of similes where none exists is inexcusable⁶³ and, as we have seen above, consistent with how Muslim theologians like Ibn Taymiyya interpret "Father" and "Son" terms. Inserting interpretive commentary such as "the beloved of God" (Arabic, ḥabīb allāh) after "Son of God" *redefines* this phrase with a distinct term that is often used by Muslims to refer to either Muhammad⁶⁴ or other Muslims⁶⁵ (especially Sufi Muslims).⁶⁶ "Son of God" is thus degraded from Jesus' exclusive, divine-to-divine relationship with God the Father to merely a human-to-divine relationship that *only Muslims* can enjoy with God. Other

⁶³ To render "Father" and "Son" terms as similes reveals that they are understood by the translator(s) as analogical to human fathers and sons. This same error holds true in referring to them as metaphors. The Bible teaches that "Father" and "Son" terms are ontological, that is, they are precise descriptors of God's very being or nature.

⁶⁴ Margaret Doolittle, "Moslem Religious Education In Syria," *The Moslem World* XVIII, no. 4 (October 1928), 376 ("Then shall arise the beloved of God and the choice of all creation, the seal of the apostles and prophets, our Lord Mohammed...").

⁶⁵ C.G. Naish, "Al Ghazali On Penitence," *The Moslem World* XVI, no. 1 (January 1926), 10 ["The prophet (peace upon him) said, "The penitent is beloved of God; and he who repents of sin is as he who has no sin."].

⁶⁶ Murray T. Titus, "Mysticism And Saint Worship In India," *The Moslem World* XII, no. 2 (April 1922), 132 ("And when this Inner Light is fully received into the breast of the believer, then, says a tradition from the Prophet, 'the devotee becomes the beloved of God...').

Muslims understand "beloved of God" to be a *lesser* term of approbation for Muhammad.⁶⁷ According to this interpretation, the use of "beloved of God" for Jesus places Him lower in honor than Muhammad. This is thoroughly in keeping with what Islam teaches about Jesus in relation to Muhammad.

The Arabic *Sharif Bible* literally translates "Father" and "Son" terms in the New Testament with the exception of 5 occurrences.⁶⁸ In spite of this relatively good feature (i.e. when compared to other MIT versions), the interpretive rendering of "begotten" by "crowned you a son to me" effectively provides the "definition" for "Son" and "Son of God" in *all* of its occurrences in this version (and by implication, "Father"). The reader of the *Sharif Bible*, if doing a word study on "Son" and "Son of God" would have to come to the conclusion that these terms only mean "king." This misunderstanding would be "confirmed" by its incorrect rendering for Psalm 2:7. "Son" and "Son of God" are thus rendered compliant with Islamic teaching that Jesus is human, not divine.

The revised version of *The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ* seeks to portray "Father" as the God of the Qur'an by inserting "God" before "Father" and adding the phrase, "the merciful one, the merciful," or "the merciful, the compassionate" (al-rahmān al-rahīm).⁶⁹ At the beginning of every Sura except the ninth, appears the *basmala*: "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate." These renderings seek to give the appearance of the *basmala*, implying that the meaning of "Father" (whatever it might be) is compatible with God as portrayed in the Qur'an and Islam (both of which deny the Fatherhood of God in Islam). Another feature of this MIT is how it often adds, "spiritual" to "Son of God" (and "Son") and places the preposition "to" (or, "for") prior to "God." The following explanation for this is given on the Al Kalima website:

The second edition of *The True Meaning* uses the expression *al-ibn ar-ruuhi lillah* (the spiritual Son of God). The expression is concordant to the Greek term throughout the New Testament. The rendering *breaks up* the taboo and misunderstood term *ibn allah*, and uses an adjective to help readers to see that this does not indicate biological procreation from God.⁷⁰ (emphasis added)

This explanation fails to state that this rendering for "Son of God" breaks up the possessive construction of this phrase in Arabic (which is inaccurate and unfaithful to the Greek text).⁷¹

⁶⁷ Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid, general supervisor, "34634: Can it be said of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) 'Habeeb-Allaah (the Beloved of Allaah)'?," August 6, 2003, accessed December 5, 2016, <https://islamqa.info/en/34634>.

⁶⁸ There are 5 occurrences where "Father" and "Son" terms are not literally translated. See Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 75-76, 81-82.

⁶⁹ This phrase can be rendered in various ways into English. Another popular way, based on Yusuf Ali's English translation of the Qur'an reads: "Most Gracious, Most Merciful." See <http://www.quranonline.net/html/trans/options/yali/1.html>.

⁷⁰ "Questions and Answers about 'The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ,'" Al Kalima, accessed December 3, 2016, <http://www.al-kalima.com/content/in-translation/questions-and-answers-about-brthe-true-meaning-of-the-gospel-of-christ>.

⁷¹ In Arabic grammar, possession of a noun by another noun is referred to in Arabic as *iḍāfah* (i.e. the construct state). The following rule for the *iḍāfah* is one that is learned in first year Arabic studies: "It is a rule of 'iḍāfah' that nothing must interpose between the noun and its following genitive [i.e. the subsequent noun which "possesses" the first noun]. Consequently, if the noun is to be qualified with an adjective, the latter must come AFTER the

Jesus is thus separated from God, contrary to what the Bible teaches. The other renderings shown above also show this separation as do the numerous footnotes which claim that "Son of God" only means a "king" chosen by God.⁷² Such insertions found in MIT do not clear up Muslim misunderstandings of "Father" and "Son" terms but rather redefine them to uphold Islamic teaching about God and Jesus.

Underlying Philosophy

Awareness of the wording of MIT is essential to recognizing it. Such recognition, however, does not necessarily indicate that one understands the common philosophy behind this wording. In spite of the differences in wording from one MIT version to another, they are all driven by the same premise, that is, to effect an "insider movement" within Islam.

David Owen, whom I have argued elsewhere is the "father" of MIT,⁷³ in a 1987 report, summarized his attempt to "pinpoint the problem of the failure of the Church in fulfilling the Great Commission in the Islamic world."⁷⁴ His verdict was as follows: "In the end, I concluded that *the root of the problem lay in a weak tradition of Arabic Bible translation*"⁷⁵ [emphasis added]. Owen's "solution" to this "problem" appeared in print in 1991. In his article, "A Jesus Movement Within Islam,"⁷⁶ he called for "a new approach to Bible translation":

It is a necessary requirement that Islamic-styled Bible translations be produced in order for a Jesus movement in an Islamic context to ever get off the ground. Bibles employing either ecclesiastical language or a so-called "neutral" style vocabulary (neither ecclesiastical nor Islamic) will not be adequate.⁷⁷

Bible translators will play a foundational role in the initial stages of a Haraka Isawiyya [Arabic for "a Jesus Movement"]. In carrying out their task they will also take a consolidating step in the work of re-theologizing the Christian message within their particular context. 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. New "councils" will have to be called by those involved in the Jesus movement to hammer out new and more appropriate statements of faith.

But this cannot be done apart from Scripture itself. From Scripture will arise all forms of discipleship, worship and witness that will enable a fledgling Jesus movement to be a

genitive..." See J.A. Haywood and H.M. Nahmad, *A New Arabic Grammar of the Written Language*, second. ed. (London: Lund Humphries, 1984), 36 (no. 7); cf. 64 (no. 4). The expression "*al-ibn ar-ruuhi lillah*" violates this rule in two ways: it inserts a preposition between the two nouns and places the adjective after the first noun instead of the subsequent or second noun.

⁷² Adam Simnowitz, "Occurrences of 'Son of God' in Mazhar Mallouhi's and Al Kalima's, The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (revised version, 2016/2017 *المعنى الصحيح لانجيل المسيح*) and The Bold Proclamation of the Apostles of Christ (first ed., 2015/2016 *البيان الصريح حواربي المسيح*), Answering Islam, accessed December 3, 2016, <http://answering-islam.org/fileadmin/reviews/mallouhi-rev-son-of-god.pdf>.

⁷³ Simnowitz, *Muslim Idiom Translation* (thesis), 19-20.

⁷⁴ David Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report* (Larnaca, Cyprus: unknown. September 1987), 11.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ D.O. [David Owen], "A Jesus Movement Within Islam," *Interconnect* 5 (Jan. 1991), 12-27.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 17.

permeating yeast in Islamic society. The use of traditional ecclesiastical language, or even a neutral approach, WILL NOT support a Jesus movement.⁷⁸

What Owen referred to as a "Jesus movement" is now known as "C5" or the "Insider Movement" for Muslims (herein referred to as C5/IM).⁷⁹ Owen stated that his motivation for this "movement" was to develop "a fruitful strategy...to see large numbers of people [i.e. Muslims] entering into faith in Jesus"⁸⁰ as opposed to "a few individual conversions at the core of Islam or people movements at its fringes."⁸¹

The desire to see as many people as possible come to the Lord is commendable if its basis is in God's desire for people.⁸² The emphasis on developing a strategy and the reference to "people movements," however, was likely due in large part to Owen's time at Fuller Theological Seminary (Fuller), from 1973-1976.⁸³ It was at Fuller, especially its School of World Mission (now, School of Intercultural Studies) that Owen would have been exposed to the teachings and influence of both Dr. Donald McGavran and Dr. Charles Kraft. McGavran would have encouraged Owen to seek strategies for a "church growth movement," which consisted of "people movements."⁸⁴ Kraft, on the other hand, would have encouraged Owen to seek a "movement" *within Islam*, including the abandoning of "Father" and "Son" terms in evangelism:

My major suggestion is that we bend every effort towards stimulating a faith

⁷⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁹ The term, "C5" originated from John Travis [pseudonym], "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. See also, "Maximizing the Bible!: Glimpses From Our Context," *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 1 (January-February 2006), 21, accessed December 6, 2016, <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/28-1-insider-movements.pdf>: "John and Anna Travis...are also the creators of the 'C1-C6' spectrum...'C5' believers are those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and who remain legally and socially within the community of Islam. John and Anna Travis utilize 'C5' and 'insider movements' as synonyms."

⁸⁰ Owen, *Jesus Movement*, 12, 27.

⁸¹ Owen, *Jesus Movement*, 13.

⁸² E.g. Ezek 18:32; John 3:16; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9.

⁸³ Anonymous, "Sira to Sabiil History," January 16, 2006, Word document in folder, "Sirah-Sabeel," in folder, "Arabic translation of scriptures," in folder, "Jesus in the Koran," 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 [Owen] was a Fuller student..." See also David Owen, *Project Sunrise Publication Report*, 11. Owen stated that from 1973-1976 he pursued "theological studies" in "southern California" but listing the location as "Los Angeles." Dr. Charles Kraft, who taught at Fuller Theological Seminary from 1969-2009, in an email to the author, March 20, 2015, implied that Owen was one of his students: "I suspect that Owen was influenced by my approach but I sincerely hope his misreading of my stuff played no part in his leaving the faith. As far as I know, he had no influence on me except as an example of one who wa, s [sic] not tethered to Scripture."

⁸⁴ George G. Hunter, III, "McGavran, Donald A(nderson)," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 449: "In time, he became recognized...as the "Father of the Church Growth Movement...he advocated the validity of what he described as 'group conversions' and 'people movements' within peoples who have a group identity and make important decisions together."

renewal movement *within Islam*. This, I believe, is Biblical.⁸⁵ (emphasis added)

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. I personally would not press the deity of Christ either, since it is sure to be misunderstood. Likewise with the details of the Atonement, especially Jesus' death, since that is sure to be misunderstood as well, but you may not agree with me. I would press hard for a faith relationship with God and for faith renewal movement starting within Islam as a culture, based on the faith of Abraham (Or Ibrahim), pointing to Qur'an, Old Testament and New Testament as the sources of our information concerning this faith, and issuing in a renewal and distinct People of God, who retain their Muslim cultural allegiance, worship forms and self-respect. I would press further for this faith renewal movement to use all three books (Qur'an, Old and New Testament) as its basis and confidently expect and pray for them to discover both Jesus and the exciting relational aspects of the faith that Jesus characterized by referring to His relationship with God as a Father-Son relationship. But the Muslim must be able to feel at home, both in his society and in his religious allegiance.⁸⁶

With this kind of influence coming from Kraft, it is not surprising that Owen called for the "translation" of Scripture through the use of Islamic terminology for the sake of creating a "movement" *within Islam* ("insider movement" being a re-branding of this notion). Even though Kraft was not specifically addressing Bible translation, nevertheless, we have seen how the following points for which he advocated, are consistently evident in the various examples of wordings and omissions given in the previous section:

- abandoning the literal terms of "Father" and "Son"
- avoiding the deity of Jesus
- avoiding the atonement
- employment of words and phrases from the Qur'an
- the "Father-Son relationship" between God and Jesus is an analogy that can be expressed as a simile

In addition to these points, Owen adds the following: "I believe that a Muslim follower of Jesus could repeat the witness [i.e. the shahada], 'there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger,' with conviction and integrity, without compromising or syncretizing his faith in Jesus."⁸⁷ We have seen how this point — at least in part — is also a feature of MIT by the incorporation of the first part of the shahada in at least three of its versions.

⁸⁵ 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), 143.

⁸⁶ Charles H. Kraft, "Distinctive Religious Barriers To Outside Penetration," in *Conference On Media In Islamic Culture*, 76.

⁸⁷ Owen, *Jesus Movement*, 21.

Though Owen was only directly responsible for *Sirat Al Masih*, we can see his pioneering role in MIT, not only as the "father" of the first MIT, but through the influence of his ideas, a number of which were shaped by the teachings of McGavran and Kraft. It is significant to note that any number of the above points feature prominently *in every version of MIT that has since followed*. This helps us recognize that both Owen's analysis of the "problem" to and "solution" for the "success" of "the Great Commission in the Islamic world" provides the common philosophical origin for the wordings and omissions of MIT. MIT was conceived as an attempt to foster C5/IM but is portrayed as a "sincere" attempt to convey the "meaning" of the Bible to Muslims. In reality the divine, revelatory nature of Scripture is sacrificed on the altar of "contextualization." MIT is not a valid approach to the translation of Scripture. It is a highly interpretive, agenda-driven practice that ultimately deprives Muslims of the Gospel in the name of "Bible translation"!

Separating MIT from C5/IM?

The following statement is given by "Harley Talman" and "John Jay Travis" the pseudonymous co-editors of the book, *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples Of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities* (UIM), both of whom are prominent proponents of C5/IM:

One topic not addressed in this book is Bible translation; there are two reasons for this. First, *there is no inherent link between insider movements and Bible translation*. A number of movements are thriving while using existing and quite traditional translations. There are insider leaders who prefer more literal translation approaches and Christian leaders who support more dynamic and Muslim- or Hindu-friendly ones. Second, the topic of what constitutes good translation is a large and complex field. To do justice to it would require a book of its own.⁸⁸ (emphasis added)

Their assertion, "there is no inherent link between insider movements and Bible translation," is belied by the facts. Starting with the editors, let us first consider Travis. An "affiliate faculty member at Fuller,"⁸⁹ he is well-known as one of the leading proponents for C5/IM, something that is evident by his joint editorship of and numerous articles in UIM.⁹⁰ He is also the person who developed the "C1-C6" scale from which "C5" originates.⁹¹ In the UIM description for Travis we read that he has "experience in...Bible translation."⁹² Elsewhere we find, "He has been heavily involved in two Bible translations for Muslim readers and assisted in a number of

⁸⁸ Harley Talman [pseud.] and John Jay Travis [pseud.], "Read This First!," in *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities*, eds. Harley Talman and John Jay Travis (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), xxxvi, fn. 3. It will be herein referred to as: Talman & Travis, *UIM*.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, xxviii.

⁹⁰ Travis has also authored numerous articles advocating for C5/IM in such journals as *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, *Frontier Missions*, and *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* and in other publications.

⁹¹ See footnote 79.

⁹² Talman & Travis, [pseud.] UIM, xxviii.

others"⁹³ and that he and his wife "are involved in contextualized sharing of the good news, Bible translation..."⁹⁴

Regarding "meaningful and respectful translations of Scripture for Muslim readers,"⁹⁵ Travis, who assumes "the figurative or metaphorical dimension of the title [Son of God]"⁹⁶ wrote:

*The fifth key is finding an appropriate way to express the terms "Word of God" and "Son of God". The expression "Word of God" (kalimat Allah) in reference to Jesus is found in the Qur'an...By using kalimat Allah or an equivalent phrase used by the local Muslim population, an important concept can be more readily grasped.*⁹⁷

For Travis, "Word of God" (*kalimat Allah*) can be retained (since it is found in the Qur'an),⁹⁸ leaving "Son of God" as the expression that needs to be expressed in an "appropriate way." He asserts that this can be done by either using "Word of God" or "an equivalent phrase used by the local Muslim population." Since Muslims do not use "Son of God" to refer to Jesus, the implication is clear that a Muslim (or, Islamic) phrase is to be used.⁹⁹ He confirmed this when he wrote, along with his wife, "C5 believers must have access to comprehensible translations of the Bible which incorporate religious vocabulary appropriate for Muslim readers."¹⁰⁰ Though he does not refer to these "translations" as MIT, he is faithfully describing the controlling thought behind its unique features.

Roger Dixon provides a firsthand account of Travis' direct involvement in MIT. Dixon was a missionary in Indonesia who had personal contact with Travis while the latter was there as "a Frontiers' missionary."¹⁰¹

In a meeting with three missionaries in March 2006, John Travis admitted to my wife and me that they deliberately changed the wording in the Gospel of John so that Muslims would want to read it. *And all of the missionaries present agreed that change was contrary to the intent of John's gospel.* This confirmed for us that there was a conspiracy of sorts to shift (for however long) the identity of Jesus from his role as the second person of the trinity to one of an outstanding prophet. Some missionaries had caved to Muslim

⁹³ John Travis [pseud.], "Producing and Using Meaningful Translations of the Taurat, Zabur, and Injil," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 73.

⁹⁴ John and Anna Travis [pseud.], "Maximizing the Bible!: Glimpses From Our Context," *Mission Frontiers* 28, no. 1 (January-February 2006), 21.

⁹⁵ Travis [pseud.], "Producing and Using Meaningful Translations," 73.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ This assumes the Qur'an as the ultimate authority in "Bible translation" for Muslims.

⁹⁹ It is worth noting that Travis assumes that "equivalent" phrases for "Son of God" exist in any given "local Muslim population." This is in keeping with his assumption that "Son of God" is a mere "title" (as opposed to His eternal nature), and contains a "figurative or metaphorical dimension."

¹⁰⁰ John Travis and Anna Travis [pseud.], "Appropriate approaches in Muslim contexts," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, ©2005), 409.

¹⁰¹ Roger Dixon, "Appendix 2: Insider Movement In West Java, Indonesia: A Case Study," in *Insider Movements: Biblically Incredible or Incredibly Brilliant?*, ed. Jeff Morton (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2012), 119.

replacement theology where the identity of Jesus is changed to be simply one of Islam's prophets.¹⁰² [emphasis added]

Travis, in his UIM article, "Insider Movements among Muslims: A Focus on Asia," under the subtitle, "Ways that Followers of Jesus Can Facilitate Movements to Christ," writes about the necessity for "contextualized Bible translations" (i.e. MIT):

4. Contextualized Bible Translations

In order for a movement to occur, it is crucial to have an appropriately contextualized Bible (or Bible portions) that a Muslim will read and then want to pass on to fellow Muslims...Even when a Bible is in use by an existing Christian population, it is likely that another translation will be necessary that intentionally uses affectively and cognitively meaningful vocabulary for Muslim readers.¹⁰³

He later mentions how one of the "movements" in one of the areas in which he lived "use a translation produced specifically for Muslim readers."¹⁰⁴ In another UIM article, Travis states that it was "insiders" (i.e. adherents and proponents of C5/IM) who produced a "translation" that was "culturally relevant" (i.e. MIT):

In another country, a network or team of alongsiders [i.e. a "Jesus follower from another culture or area", almost always consisting of Western missionaries who are proponents of C5/IM] was formed to serve a number of developing insider movements across several different language groups. They were involved in Bible translations, offering technical support related to Greek and Hebrew terms, checking translation, and training translators. One of these translations has had an enormous impact as movements begin and mature across this country. The impetus for this translation came from insiders who realized they needed a more culturally relevant translation to reach their own people, combined with the experience of alongsiders who had been in grassroots ministry and were likewise thoroughly convinced of the need for this type of translation.¹⁰⁵

Talman, the other editor of UIM, is the Director of the Abraham Center at the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL).¹⁰⁶ Like Travis, he is a well-known advocate for C5/IM and has

¹⁰² Roger Dixon, "Appendix 2: Insider Movement," 121.

¹⁰³ John and Anna Travis [pseuds.], "Roles of 'Alongsiders' in Insider Movements: Contemporary Examples and Biblical Reflections," in *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities*, eds. Harley Talman and John Jay Travis (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 137.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁰⁵ Travis [pseud.], "Insider Movements among Muslims: A Focus on Asia," in *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities*, eds. Harley Talman and John Jay Travis (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 463.

¹⁰⁶ Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS), "Historical Development of the Insider Paradigm," in "Conference Schedule," Sep. 18 [2015], Parallel Sessions, Room: Insider Movements, 3:20-3:55: "Harley Talman, Director - Abraham Center (Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics)," retrieved December 6, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/14140623/Faith_Missions_Financial_Dilemma_the_Belgian_Gospel_Mission. The email address given in the conference schedule, which includes Talman's actual name, matches the name on the GIAL website for the Director of the Abraham Center. There is a slight discrepancy between the email address printed in the conference schedule and the webpage. The former mistakenly placed a dot between the first and last names (the dot should have been printed as an underscore).

written numerous articles under several different names.¹⁰⁷ At the annual conference for the Evangelical Missiological Society (EMS), Oct. 14-16, 2016, Talman, under his actual name, Mark Harlan, gave a presentation entitled, "Reasons to Relax over Divine Filial Terminology."¹⁰⁸ In it he argued that the terms "Father" and "Son" are ultimately meaningless:

...the words selected to translate these terms [i.e. Divine Father & Son terminology] are not—in and of themselves—the determining factor as to their suitability...Therefore, we can relax re: issue (at least a little)...The biblical framework will compensate for the terminological weakness that concerns us.¹⁰⁹

In keeping with the idea that words — including "Father" and "Son" — have no meaning within themselves¹¹⁰ Harlan entitled four of his PowerPoint slides, "Context (not terms) Conveys Meanings of Jesus' Divine Sonship."¹¹¹ Evidently Harlan does not see in the use of "Son" for Jesus any indication of His deity. On a related note, this unbiblical idea is in complete agreement with the different examples of MIT above for the non-literal and additional wording for "Son" and "Son of God" that only indicate humanity. It is ironic, if not hypocritical on the part of MIT advocates to apply the theory that words have no inherent meaning to only those biblical terms that Muslims find objectionable. When it comes to finding "equivalent" terms, they are very careful to treat Islamic terms as if they have inherent meaning, carefully choosing terms that Muslims understand to only indicate that Jesus was a human. As we have repeatedly seen, MIT compromises biblical teaching in favor of Islamic theology.

Harlan also had 5 slides entitled, "Traditional Terms Can Blind Us to Aspects of Meaning."¹¹² In them he reveals the thinking behind the use of non-literal renderings for "Father" and "Son" terminology:

Literal /form-based translation (or traditional term) will not ensure we convey the various biblical meanings of the scriptures.¹¹³

Fixation on literal translations (form-based or traditional terms) for Father and

¹⁰⁷ Talman, under this name as well as "Mack Harling," has authored a number of articles advocating for C5/IM in *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, and other publications.

¹⁰⁸ Mark Harlan, "2016 Daily Schedule for EMS Conference," SATURDAY (10/15/2016), Missional Theology and Islam, 10:50-11:20 AM, 4, accessed December 7, 2016, https://www.emsweb.org/images/national-conference/2016/EMS_Conference_2016_Daily_Schedule.pdf.

¹⁰⁹ Mark Harlan, "Reasons to Relax over Divine Filial Terminology," (PowerPoint presentation at the annual meeting for the Evangelical Missiological Society, Dallas, Texas, October 14–16, 2016), slide 2 ("Introduction").

¹¹⁰ The notion that words have no inherent meaning is one of the major premises for Eugene A. Nida's theory of "dynamic equivalence." Nida was heavily influenced by the study of "Linguistics," specifically what is known as American Structural Linguistics or American Structuralism. Nida accepted the evolutionary premise that all language is of human origin. This is contradictory to the teaching of the Bible and precludes the possibility of divine, verbal inspiration. Appeal to this theory is how advocates of MIT justify their controversial non-literal wording choices. For a masterful critique of the theory of dynamic equivalence 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); cf. Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 98-134 (Chapter 5: Eugene A. Nida: his life and theory of Dynamic Equivalence considered).

¹¹¹ Harlan, Reasons to Relax, slides 19-22.

¹¹² Ibid., slides 23-27.

¹¹³ Ibid., slide 23.

Son hinders recognition that these terms are metaphors.¹¹⁴

Non-literal/meaning-based terms may assist in more accurate theological understanding.¹¹⁵

Clearly Travis and Talman, two of the most well-known and active proponents of C5/IM are openly promoting MIT, while the former has been directly involved in the "translation" of at least one version of MIT. In addition to the editors, there are other contributors to UIM, all of whom are C5/IM proponents and described as involved in "Bible translation," or more accurately, MIT:

- Kevin Higgins¹¹⁶
- Mazhar Mallouhi¹¹⁷
- Michael Roberts (i.e. Jeff Hayes)¹¹⁸

Elsewhere in UIM, Rebecca Lewis asserts, "It is crucial that all Jesus movements have an effective and accurate translation in their local language,"¹¹⁹ referring to them as "locally effective translations of the Scripture."¹²⁰ "Richard Jameson" (i.e. Dick Grady) writes:

Muslim followers of Christ continue to use exclusively Islamic religious vocabulary and names. They are strong advocates for some of the newer translations of the Scripture that

¹¹⁴ Ibid., slide 26

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Talman & Travis [pseuds.], UIM, xxiv; 222 (Higgins asserts that Islamic terms and quranic titles for Jesus can be used in Scripture "translation"); 224 (Higgins asserts, "the language of Muslims, including their religious vocabulary" can be used in Scripture "translation"). In his doctoral dissertation, which was approved by two well-known advocates of C5/IM, Martin Accad and John J. Travis (co-editor of UIM), Higgins wrote, "I...helped to facilitate the training of mother tongue translators. Later I became involved as a coordinator and consultant for several [MIT] projects." See Kevin S. Higgins, "The Qur'an In Urdu As A Resource For Bible Translation In Muslim Contexts: A Case Study In The Translation Of 'Spirit' And 'Spirits' In Urdu," (PhD thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2013), 7.

¹¹⁷ Talman & Travis [pseuds.], UIM, xxv. Mallouhi, through his organization Al Kalima, has produced three Arabic versions of MIT: The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ; The True Meaning of the Gospel of Christ (revised); and The Bold Proclamation of the Apostles of Christ. See <http://www.al-kalima.com/>.

¹¹⁸ Talman & Travis [pseuds.], UIM, xxvii. The identity of "Michael Roberts" is Jeff Hayes. For supporting documentation see Simnowitz, "Nine Reasons, accessed December 8, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/03/07/nine-reasons-why-i-named-jeff-hayes-as-the-main-translator-and-responsible-party-for-al-injil/> (see "Nine Reasons Further Explained," no. 8). Hayes' input and influence are evident in almost every Arabic version of MIT (if not all of them), including the very first one (i.e. Sirat Al Masih). See Simnowitz, "Jeff Hayes and Al-Injil," December 9, 2016, <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/01/23/jeff-hayes-and-al-injil-another-mistranslation-of-the-new-testament-in-arabic-intended-for-insider-movements-of-muslims-or-c5-c5im/> (see the subtitled-section, "Background to *Al-Injil*").

¹¹⁹ Rebecca Lewis, "Possible Pitfalls of Jesus Movements: Lessons from History," in *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities*, eds. Harley Talman and John Jay Travis (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 539.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 5

preserve the vocabulary from their Islamic background and attempt to interpret for the reader difficult theological concepts such as "Son of God."¹²¹

Every one of the above individuals are advocates for MIT (and most of them practitioners). All of them are also proponents for C5/IM. This is also true of such prominent defenders for MIT like Rick Brown (i.e. Darrell Richard Brown) and "Leith Gray" (a.k.a. Larry Chico; i.e. Larry Ciccarelli) whose writings on it and C5/IM are numerous¹²² but whose involvement in multiple versions of MIT are often undisclosed.¹²³ Based on these representative examples it should be clear that MIT arises out of a prior philosophical commitment to C5/IM. In all of my research on MIT, I have always found this to be true. Regardless of the editors' claims to the contrary, the facts reveal that *there is* an inherent link between C5/IM and MIT.

Conclusion

This article is meant to alert the reader to the presence of MIT within evangelicalism. Like an internal disease with seemingly few outward symptoms, this unbiblical practice has metastasized within the body of the visible Church. It continues to fester and grow while remaining for the most part undetected by those who are financially supporting it, namely, professing evangelicals in the English-speaking world.

The main practitioners of MIT, whether as organizations or individuals, position themselves as being biblically-orthodox in their beliefs and practices. They justify MIT by appealing to such things as "contextualization" and translation theories; the use of ambiguous terminology such as "heart language;"¹²⁴ and the employment of pseudonyms. The hiddenness of MIT, however, is primarily dependent on its versions being in languages that most native English speakers do not understand. If MIT is in keeping with biblical teaching there is no need for such obfuscation and non-disclosure. That MIT practitioners are not transparent about their beliefs and practices to all evangelicals is an implicit witness that MIT is at odds with historic, biblical orthodoxy. As David Gray, a member of WBT-SIL (UK), and advocate for C5/IM wrote regarding MIT, "this debate could, potentially, cause us a whole host of problems in a couple of year's time."¹²⁵

Gray's prescient sentiment is certainly true for those who become aware of MIT and do not merely profess biblical orthodoxy but actually believe and practice it. Thomas Cosmades, a missionary and translator of the New Testament into Turkish,¹²⁶ referred to the MIT version of Matthew in Turkish as "a more disturbing paraphrase" than the Turkish New Testament

¹²¹ Richard Jameson [pseud.], "God's Creativity in Drawing Muslims to Jesus," in *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities*, eds. Harley Talman and John Jay Travis (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015), 616.

¹²² Many of their most well-known articles can be found online at: <http://www.ijfm.org/archives.htm> and <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/>.

¹²³ Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 20.

¹²⁴ Simnowitz, Muslim Idiom Translation (thesis), 11, footnote 20.

¹²⁵ 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. This link, as with a number of other online references that also appear in my thesis, were removed from the internet subsequent to the online posting of my thesis on March 21, 2016.

¹²⁶ Anonymous, "Thomas Cosmades," accessed December 9, 2016, <http://www.cosmades.org/aboutme.htm>.

produced by the "Jehovah's Witnesses."¹²⁷ In 2006, Anwar Hossain, then chairman of the Bangladesh Bible Society, expressed the very same sentiment about the *Injil Sharif*, the MIT version of the Gospels and Acts in Bangla/Bengali: "In this translation, Jesus is an [sic] only a prophet not more than [sic] that. I think it is more dangerous than the Jehovah Witness[sic]."¹²⁸

By adopting Islamic terminology, MIT capitulates to Islamic theology. It is just as much a mouthpiece for the Devil as was the serpent in Eden and as was Peter when he *rebuked* Jesus!¹²⁹ It is not insignificant that the exact features in the Devil's words through both of these "mouthpieces" are the very things that Islam teaches — doubting God's word [i.e. the Bible] as true, denying the real consequences of sin, and denying Jesus' atoning work on the cross.

MIT is a practical denial and rejection of the divine inspiration of Scripture. It is especially destructive to the Bible's oft-repeated witness to God's triune nature from which all other doctrines of God and goodness are inseparably related, including the Gospel. From the beginnings of Islam until today, most Muslims have been deprived of the Gospel due to a lack of people witnessing and preaching to them. Professing evangelicals, in the name of being "missionaries" and "translators," now have the dubious distinction of depriving Muslims of the Gospel in the name of missions and Bible translation.

¹²⁷ Thomas Cosmades, "An Analysis of the Paraphrased New Testament by FRONTIERS," December 2007, accessed December 9, 2016, <http://www.cosmades.org/articles/frontiers.htm>.

¹²⁸ Anwar Hossein, "Report on Controversial Injil Sharif," received June 23, 2006, unpublished document in author's possession.

¹²⁹ In the case of the serpent, the Devil first sought to sow doubt about the truthfulness of God's Word and then openly contradicted God's word (Gen 3:1-5; cf. 2:16-17). In the case of Peter, the Devil rejected Jesus' prophecy about dying on the cross (Matt 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33).