September 23, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Greetings. I am an SIM (Serving in Mission) “Missionary-at-large,” presently based in Charlotte, NC. My wife and I served in Bangladesh from 1962 to 1982. We had extremely close working relationships with IMB folk, whom I hold in highest regard. Jim McKinley is one of the most dedicated missionaries I have ever met anywhere. From 1984 to 2006 Julie and I served in the Philippines among Muslims.

One of the most exciting new tools to enhance outreach among Muslims is Kevin Greeson’s Camel. I am totally supportive of this approach and feel Kevin is postulating a methodology that is biblically conservative as well as contextually appropriate. As recent as July, I required this book as a text in my class on Islam at Columbia International University. The students were 100 percent enthused with the postulates set forth in Camel, and were committed to implementation of the strategy where contextually appropriate in the countries where they labor.

There has been some confusion concerning whether Camel represents a C5 position: i.e., have Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) remain in the mosque, say the Islamic creed, delete “Son of God” from New Testament translations, and call themselves Muslims without qualifier. I was on the 2005 IMB survey team in Bangladesh and saw no evidence whatsoever of C5 in any of the IMB-related ministry. I personally interviewed 72 MBBs in Bengali and each one gave a clear profession of faith. On the scale developed by John Travis, the work is C4, which is what I have practiced and taught since 1975. I am sorry that some folk have felt my Evangelical Missions Quarterly articles were concerned about a Camel-type approach. Not true. My concern is C5, of which I saw and heard nothing in my Bangladesh visit and see no evidence of in Camel.

It would be my heartfelt desire that this controversy over Camel not be used by Satan to distract IMB from the new, exciting direction they have taken in Muslim outreach. This is a kairos moment in evangelistic opportunity. IMB has personnel and resources that can be extremely effective in bringing Muslims to the feet of Jesus.

With warm appreciation….

A Fellow Baptist,

Phil Parshall