

***Anthropology
for
Intercultural Ministries***

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Studying and Ministering in Human Contexts

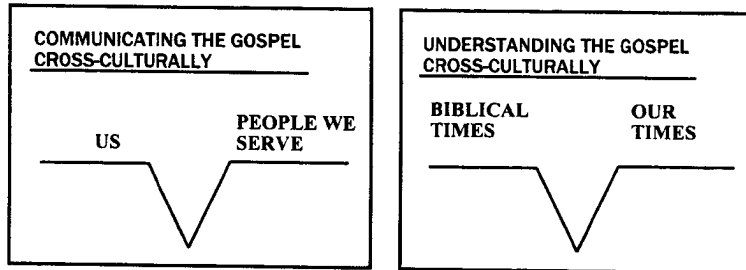
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ANTHROPOLOGY FOR MISSIONS

Paul G. Hiebert

I. DOING MISSIOLOGICAL THEOLOGY

1. THE PROBLEM:



1.1 Peter's encounter with God: (Acts 10:9-33)

Peter: *God is a Jewish God* God: *God is the God of all people.*
 Peter: *Christianity is the way we do it.* God: *Christianity can be done in all cultures.*
 Peter: *We come as outsiders.* God: *We must come as insiders.*
We need a worldview change when we minister in other cultures.

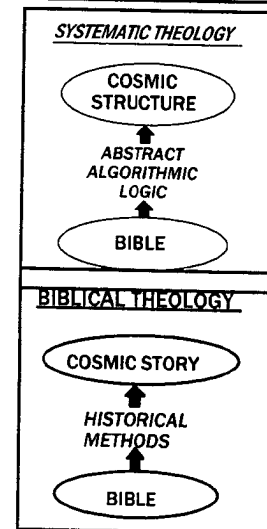
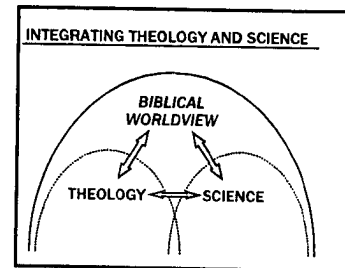
1.2. In missions we need to exegete Scripture and exegete humans and build a bridge between them.

2. BRIDGING BETWEEN BIBLICAL AND HUMAN EXEGESIS

2.1 Reductionist approach:

2.2 Stratified approach:

2.3 Integrated approach:



3. DOING THEOLOGY

3.1 Systematic theology:

3.2 Biblical theology:

3.3 Missiological theology:

3.31 Steps:

- *Phenomenology*

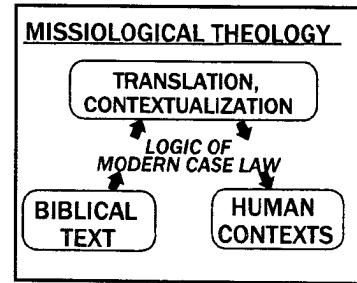
- * study situation from your viewpoint
- * see situation through eyes of the people [*emic*]
- * develop a metacultural grid to compare [*etic*]

- *Ontology*

- * study biblical teaching on the subject
- * do 'reality testing' on the subject
- * evaluate the situation in the light of Scripture and reality testing

- *Missiology*

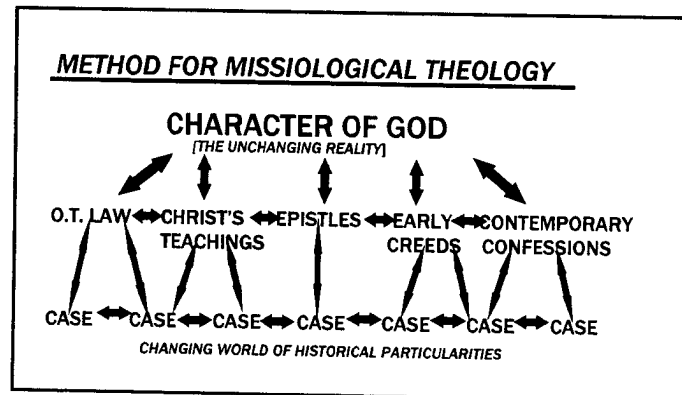
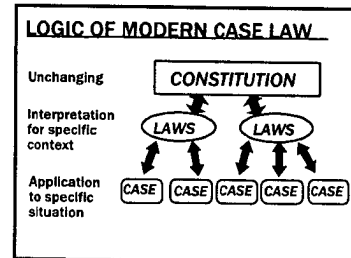
- * gently help people move from where they are to where God calls them to be



3.32 Logic:

- modern case law

- missiological theology



3.33 Checks against syncretism:

- the Scripture: don't equate theology with Scripture
- the Holy Spirit: test to make sure it is God's Spirit, not our desires
- the hermeneutical community:
 - * past saints
 - * present global church

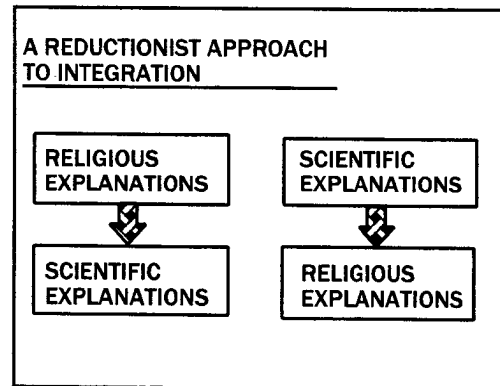
II. A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO STUDYING HUMANS

1. STUDYING HUMANS

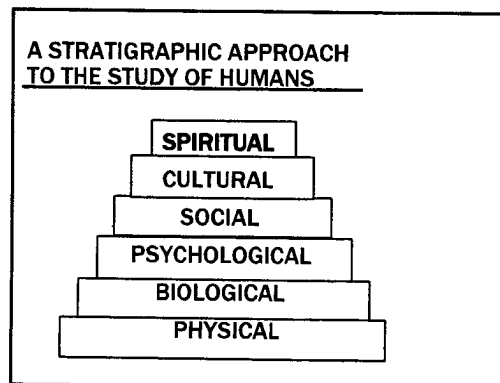
- physical realities
- biological realities
- psychological realities
- social realities
- cultural realities
- spiritual realities

2. INTEGRATING THESE MODELS

2.1 Reductionism

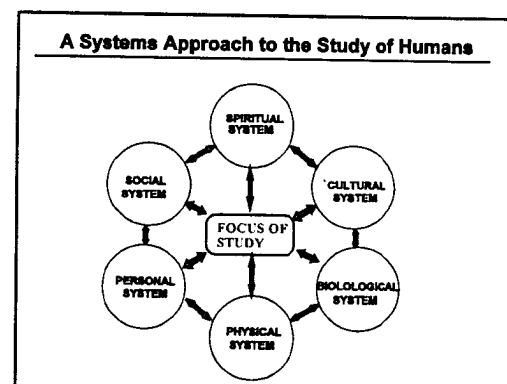


2.2 Stratigraphic approaches



2.3 A Systems approaches:

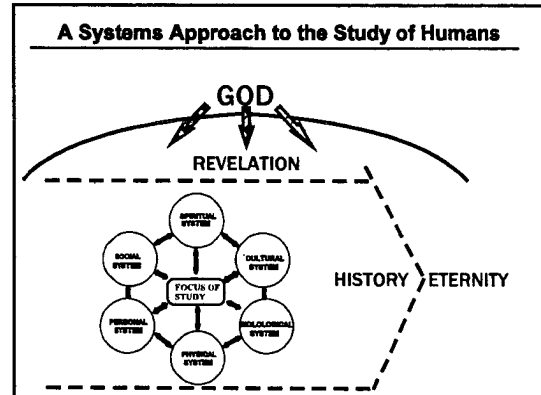
- the concept of 'structure': A structure is 1) a set of elements, 2) that are interrelate and 3) form a single systemic whole, which 4) undergoes transformation involving orderly change governed by stable transformation rules. The whole is more than the sum of the parts, and there are self-maintaining mechanisms.



2.4 A systems-of-systems approach:

- we examine each of the levels of analysis as a system.
- we see the systems embedded in a larger **system-of-systems**, and look for the interrelationships between them.
- we look at how interacting systems help us understand the human situation at hand.

- 2.5 We embed this model within a Biblical worldview beginning with God, and cosmic history.



3. SOCIAL SYSTEM

- 3.1 **Society:** the 1) more or less enduring 2) systems of relationships 3) that order people 4) into a community.

3.2 Dimensions of social organization:

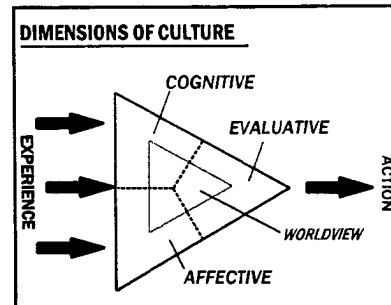
- **social:** the definition, allocation and use of relationships
- **economic:** the definition, allocation and use of resources
- **political:** the definition, allocation and use of power
- **legal:** the definition, allocation and use of legitimacy
- **function:** the primary purpose of the human activity being studied

4. CULTURAL SYSTEM

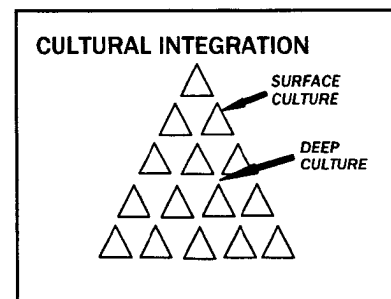
- 4.1 **Culture:** the 1) more or less integrated 2) systems 3) of ideas, feelings and values, 4) encoded in 5) learned patterns of behavior, signs and products 6) created and shared by a community of people.

4.2 Dimensions of culture:

- *cognitive*: ideas, beliefs
- *affective*: feelings
- *evaluative*: values and judgments

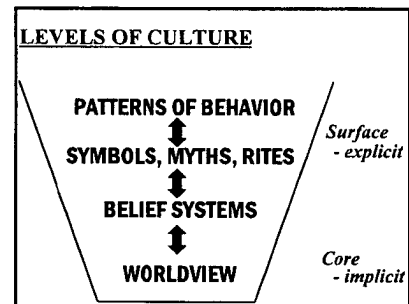


4.3 Integration:

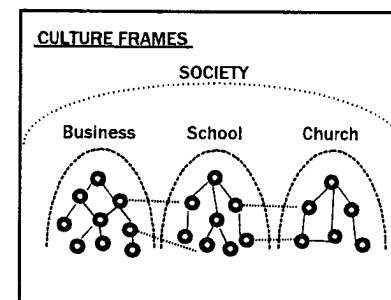


4.4 Levels of culture:

- Patterns of learned behavior, cultural products
- Symbols, myths and rituals
- Belief systems
- Worldview: the fundamental cognitive, affective and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people make about the nature of reality, and which they use to order their lives.



4.5 Culture frames:



III. STUDYING HUMAN CONTEXTS

Research is an often neglected but essential dimension of Christian missions. Too often we copy what those around us are doing, or draw on a few anecdotes to make a case for our methods of outreach. We rarely take the time or money to study mission methods carefully. Consequently we are caught up in current missiological fads.

Mission research must be done along with ministry. Too often we think of doing research, and when that is done, doing ministry. We then cut off research too soon, and rarely return to it, or we extend research so long we never get around to ministry. Good research opens many doors for ministry, and ministry raises questions that require further research. The two are parallels, on-going tasks essential to effective outreach.

How can we study human beings? There are many methods. Like tools, we must choose those that are appropriate to the task at hand. Here we can only examine a few methods. Broadly they divide into three broad types: qualitative, grounded theory, and quantitative.

1. QUALITATIVE METHODS

Qualitative methods focus on micro analysis. They are used to construct ethnographies which seek to present rich descriptions of people and their communities from both *emic* and *etic* perspectives. They are based on interacting with human beings.

1.1 Observation: This is the first and most fundamental way of gathering data. Too often we look down on it, and try to get on to other methods too quickly.

1.2 Participant-observation: Participating in the life of the people, while observing it.

- *Observer*: - etic analysis, outsider. We remain largely outside the normal life of the people, and does not participate in their life.

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF HUMAN SITUATIONS	
<p><i>MICRO ANALYSIS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - street level view: study "real " people" as persons - micro, qualitative , descriptive - focus on particulars, details thick descriptions - participant-observation, informants interviews, cases - involvement with people - emic or people's categories - wholistic, many variables <p>USEFUL FOR FIELD MISSIONARIES</p>	<p><i>MACRO ANALYSIS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - balcony or helicopter view: study people as objects - macro, quantitative, survey - focus on generalizations, comparisons - questionnaires, demographic data - detached observations - etic or scientific categories - reductionist, focus on a few variables <p>USEFUL FOR MISSION EXECUTIVES</p>

- *Observer as Participant*: - etic analysis, outsider but in dialogue with the people. We participate in the life of the society, but remains an 'outsider'.
- *Participant as Observer*: - emic analysis, insider/outsider. We see identification with the culture as much as possible, but retain an 'observer' part of us.
- *Participant*: "Go native". We seek to become totally one with the people. This is impossible, nor, as Christians do we want to do so, for we the Gospel as a transforming power from without.

1.3 Interviews: Talking to people informally and formally to gather data.

- Conversation analysis
- Unstructured interviews
- Semi-formal interviews
- Formal interviews

1.4 Key informants: Talking to people who have specialized knowledge to gain information.

1.5 Focus groups: Uses group discussions to gather data on a subject.

1.6 Ethnosemantic analysis: Studying words to discover categories, themes and worldviews.

1.7 Myth and ritual analysis: Investigating the nature and meaning of myths and rituals.

1.8 Case studies: Studying cultural events that have a beginning, process and end.

2. GROUNDED METHODS

Grounded theory lies between qualitative and quantitative methods. It studies many cases or instances--enough to give the research an idea of the general categories in the field.

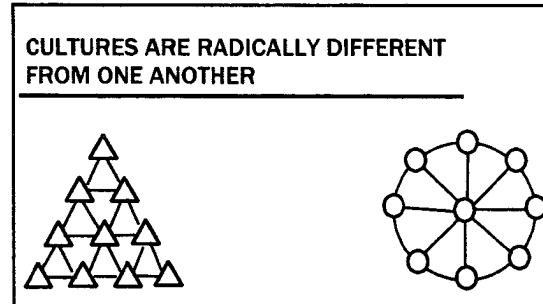
3. QUANTITATIVE METHODS

3.1 Questionnaires:

3.2 Demographic surveys:

IV. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND THE MESSENGER

In missions we encounter daily the reality of cultural differences. People do not live in the same worlds with different labels attached—they live in different worlds. The differences are far deeper than simply food, dress, language and beliefs. They occur at the deepest levels of the cultural and social systems. What implications do these have for us in missions? We look first at the impact of cultural differences on the messenger.



1. CULTURE SHOCK

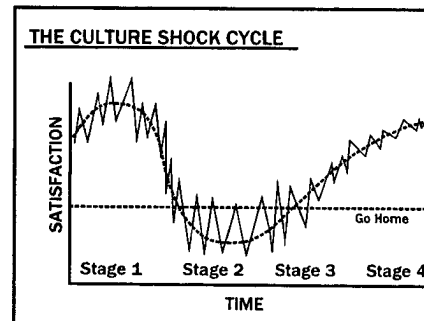
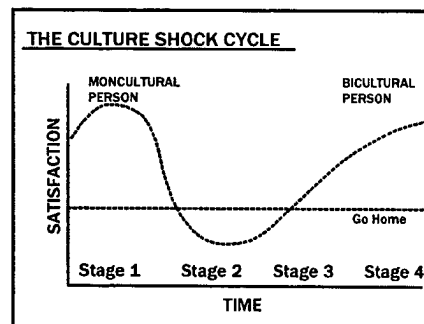
1.1 Adjusting to a new culture:

1.2 Stages:

- tourist
- disenchantment
- resolution
- adjustment

1.3 Symptoms:

- rising stress
- physical illness
- psychological and spiritual depression



1.4 Dealing with culture shock:

- **recognize our anxieties**: we need to be honest with ourselves, and transparent to others.
- **study the new culture**: enter as a student, bond with the people and their culture.
- **build trust**: share ourselves with the people, and learn to appreciate and show that appreciation for their culture.
- **deal with stress**: set realistic goals, don't take ourselves too seriously, treat ourselves.

1.5 Reverse culture shock:

- things are no longer the same when you return 'home'—you have changed
- sense of loss of 'home' and of relatives and friends
- be understanding of your home church—treat it like a 'native community.'

2. MISUNDERSTANDINGS

On the cognitive level we often misunderstand other cultures. Remember, a culture makes sense to its people. If it seems nonsense to us, it shows that we have not really understood it.

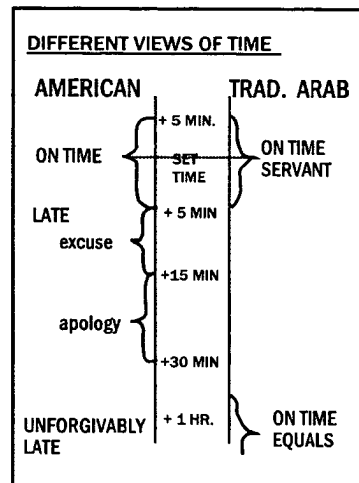
A culture must be understood in two ways:

2.1 *Emic view of reality*: this is the way people view their own and other cultures—from the worldview of their own culture. This includes the way we as outsiders look at a culture, and the way the people themselves look at a culture [their own and ours]. Remember, people act from their own emic perspective, whether they are right or not. It is their phenomenological reality, just as our culturally based view is our phenomenological reality. We take our views to be True ontologically.

It is important for us to understand the people's view of reality to relate to them. We must begin with their views when we communicate and introduce change

It is important to examine our own view of reality to see how it has been shaped by our culture and not reality itself.

2.2 *Etic view of reality*: this is a view of cultures based on a comparative analysis of cultures. It is a meta-cultural perspective that serves as the basis for becoming a bicultural person. It is essential to enable us to communicate interculturally, and to compare and judge different *emic* views of reality.



3. ETHNOCENTRISM

On the affective level, we often dislike other cultures, and judge them by the likes and dislikes of our own culture. These deep emotions reinforce our cognitive judgments of other cultures. To overcome this, we must remember that people love their cultures, and we must develop a deep empathetic appreciation of other cultures that transcends our own automatic ethnocentric responses.

Ethnocentrism is seen in the way we view OTHERS and OTHERNESS.

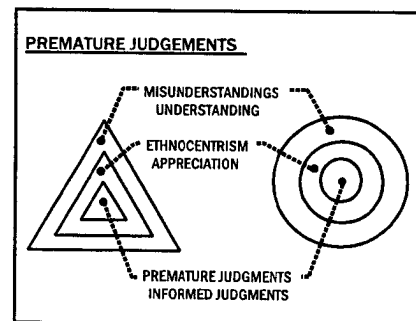
HOW DO WE VIEW OTHERS?			
	OTHERS		US
MIDDLE AGES:			
	• Monsters	vs	Humans
	• Infidels, Heretics	vs	Christian
AGE OF EXPLORATION:			
	• Pagan, Heathen	vs	Christian
	• Slave, Child	vs	Free, Adult
	• Savage, Barbarian	vs	Civilized
AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT:			
	• Primitive	vs	Civilized
	• Aborigine	vs	Modern
AGE OF POST-ENLIGHTENMENT:			
	• Native	vs	Native
OUR CHRISTIAN VIEW:			
	• There is only US -		
	- one in our common humanity		
	- one in the body of Christ		

Ethnocentrism expresses itself in many ways:

- Individuals identify with groups. People are either in-group or out-group.
- Groups have their own signs of identity, and ways of identifying 'strangers.'
- Groups generally have little knowledge of or interest in knowing about outsiders and their ways.
- People treat in-group members as individuals, but stereotype outsiders. The result is prejudice.
- People discriminate against outsiders by taking actions on the basis of ethnocentrism.
- People show empathy to insiders, but mistrust outsiders. They give the benefit of a doubt to in-group members, but assume the worst of out-group members. They are highly sensitive to and suspicious of outsiders.
- People seek peace in the group, but often seek conflict with out-groups.
- The out-groups saints are the in-group's devils. People judge others by the group's standards. They scapegoat—blame the out-group for their problems.
- Ethnocentrism intensifies during times of crisis
- Ghettoization: Out-groups, particularly racial out-groups, are often confined to particular locations and/or occupations.
- Essentialization: in-group members generally believe that they have an essential commonality that is different from outsiders.¹

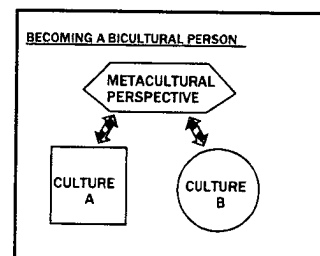
4. PREMATURE JUDGMENTS

On the evaluative level we often judge other cultures before we understand and appreciate them. We need to be cautious in our judgments, and keep them open to review. We should avoid judging other cultures by the values of our own. Rather we need to judge all cultures, including our own, by 1) a bicultural perspective that compares and evaluates all cultures, and, above all, by 2) Scripture which reveal to us how God judges all cultures.



5. BECOMING A BICULTURAL PERSON

In inter-cultural ministries it is essential that we become bicultural persons who identify deeply with two or more cultures, but who also stand outside all of them and observe them from a bicultural perspective.



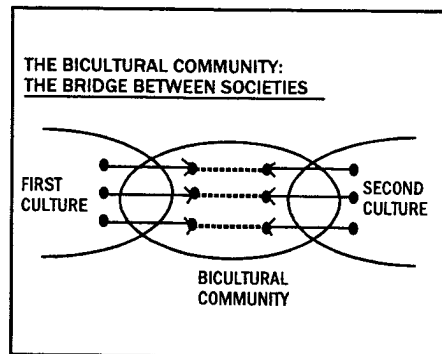
5.1 *Insiders*: We must seek to inculturate ourselves in the culture of the people we serve, just as Jesus identified himself fully with us in our humanity. He was one hundred percent human. We only know what God intended for us to be without sin by looking at Jesus.

- 5.2 *Outsiders*: We must also remain in part outsiders, for we are bearers of God's message to people. We cannot [and should not] 'go totally native,' for that would deny who we are, and what we can bring to the people.
- 5.3 *Insider-outsider*: We live in the tension of being insiders-outsiders. We are cultural brokers—bridges between two cultural worlds. As such we are often mistrusted by both sides because they do not know what we are doing when we are away, and we seem to have changed when we come back to them. But culture brokers are essential in mission and in the formation of the global church.

V. THE BICULTURAL COMMUNITY

Missions calls for building new communities made up of missionaries and the national leaders with whom they work. This bicultural community is the vital bridge for communicating the Gospel in a new society. The effectiveness of the missionaries' work depends in large measure on the quality of the relationships in this community.

This bicultural community is not like that from which the missionary comes, although it often has many characteristics brought in by the missionary. Nor is it like the local community, because of its international ties. Both missionaries and national leaders are changed in their interaction.



The bicultural community requires building a new society and a new culture. Some of the dimensions of this task are listed here.

1. DEFINING A NEW CULTURE

1.1 Lifestyle issues:

- language
- housing
- food
- clothing
- transportation

1.2 Deep cultural issues:

- belief systems
- feelings
- values
- worldviews

2. BUILDING A NEW SOCIAL COMMUNITY

2.1 Building relationships:

- defining roles and relationships for missionary and national leader
- generationalism

GENERATIONALISM IN MISSIONARIES AND NATIONAL LEADERS

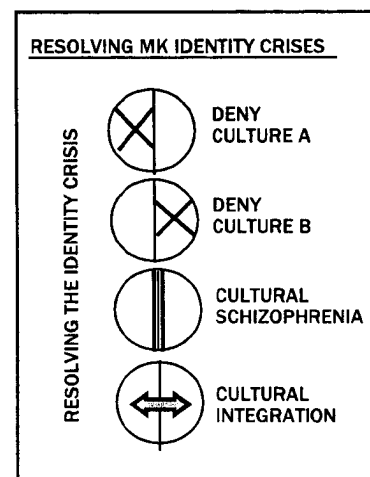
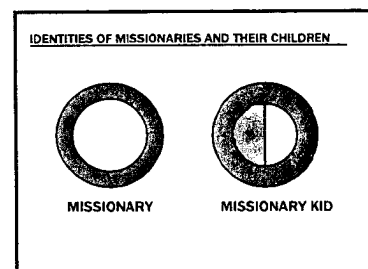
1. "First Termers"
 - zealous
 - "plungers"
 - potential for high success and high failure
2. "Experienced"
 - realistic
 - committed for the long haul
 - do the major work
3. "Old Timers"
 - nostalgic for the past
 - advisers

2.2 Becoming a bisocial person:

- historical legacy of the specific bicultural community
- social identification:
 - life style
 - work relationships
 - attitudes to others and otherness
- partnership:
 - contract style
 - familial style
 - patron-client style

2.3 Raising children

- characteristics of M.K.s
 - identity crisis: bicultural schizophrenia
 - mature early: develop self-reliance and social skills
 - detached view of life: participate but with a part of them being the outside observer– often become ‘professional outsiders’–missionaries, diplomats, anthropologists
 - adjust to differences rapidly: accused of being chameleons
 - compensators: high achievers and special psychological problems
 - “homeless” and wanderers–never fully at home anywhere
 - bicultural perspective–think in world terms
- questions in raising M.K.s
 - their cultural identity
 - schooling
 - adjusting to moves
 - spiritual nurture
 - teaching them to work
 - raising special children
 - dating and marriage
 - guardianship
- blessings of being bicultural [few would ever trade the experience]
 - global perspective
 - friends around the world
 - learn from young, vital churches
 - a meaningful ministry



3. NATIONAL LEADERS AND THE BICULTURAL COMMUNITY

3.1 Stages in relationships to a new church:

- dependency
- independency
- interdependency and partnership

3.2 Problems facing national leaders:

- dependency on foreign funds and structures
- must stay in times of crisis
- alienation from their own culture [often the family]
- expected to take over without financial support

4. INCARNATIONAL MINISTRIES

How should missionaries relate to other peoples and cultures? The model for us is Christ, who became incarnate among humans to save us and bring us the Gospel. He so fully identified with us in our humanity that most people never recognized that he was God. Moreover, in him we see what God intended humanity to be, for he is fully human but untouched by the fall and sin. Yet he remained one hundred percent God. This is our ideal. Clearly we can never become totally one with the people we serve, but the further we go in identifying with them, within the limits of our Christian beliefs and consciences, the less distance our national colleagues have to carry the Gospel to their own culture and society.

GOD
 ||
 v
HUMAN

MISSIONARY
 ||
 v
**PEOPLE WE
 SERVE**

GOSPEL
 ||
 v
**HUMAN LANGUAGES
 AND CULTURES**

VI. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND THE MESSAGE

The messenger and church must be placed in the local social context. So, too, the message—the Gospel—must be translated and communicated in the local social context. This must take place on many levels.

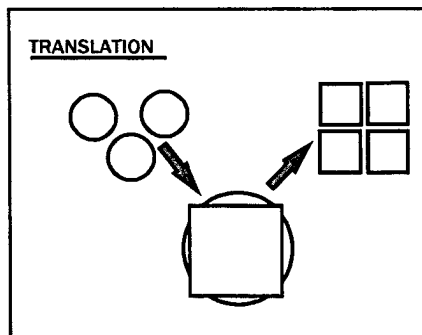
1. CONTEXTUALIZING THE GOSPEL IN CULTURAL CONTEXTS

1.1 Translating the Bible

- cognitive

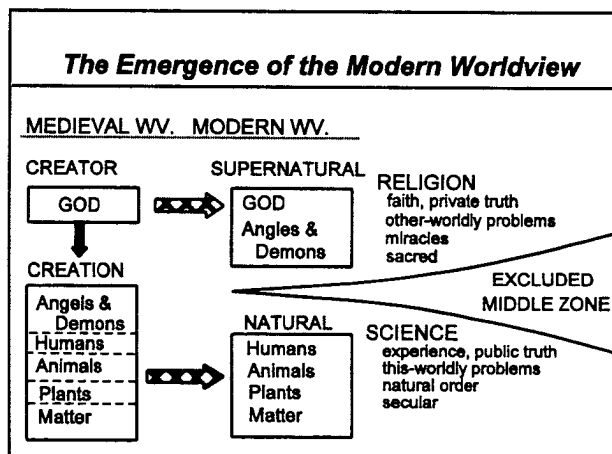
- affective

- evaluative



GROUP THE FOLLOWING INTO LARGER CATEGORIES:

COW	GIRL
TREE	ANGELS
ROCK	LION
WOMAN	BUSH
GOD	SAND
WHALE	DEMON
MAN	FISH
DEER	ANCESTOR
SPACE	MICKEY
CREATURE	MOUSE



VIII. RESEARCH METHODS FOR EXEGETING SOCIETIES

How do we study social systems? We will do so looking at the four dimensions that are present in every social transaction and system, and levels of analysis within these.

1. SOCIAL DIMENSION

Social: the definition, allocation and use of relationships. .

1.1 Interpersonal relationships: roles, statues, transactions, communication

1.2 Networks

1.3 Groups:

- kinships groups: marriage patterns, relatives, extended family
- geographic groups: dorms, neighborhoods, towns
- associational groups: clubs, gangs, unions, army, churches, committees

1.4 Societal categories:

- ethnic groups, and intra- and inter-ethnic relationships, migration and assimilation
- classes and interclass relationships
- political, religious and other groups

1.5 Societies:

- band, tribal, peasant and urban societies

1.6 Global and Local Systems:

2. ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Economic: the definition, allocation and use of resources.

2.1 Gift exchange: gifts, awards, sacrifices, offerings, gratuities, bribes

2.2 Redistribution: patron-client, taxes, insurance

2.3 Market exchange: barter, trade, contracts, banking

3. POLITICAL DIMENSION

Political: the definition, allocation and use of power.

4. LEGAL DIMENSION

Legal: the definition, allocation and use of legitimacy.

4.1 State governments

4.2 Colonial governments

4.3 Stateless governments

4.4 Global government

IX. EXEGETING CULTURES

How do we study cultural systems? We will examine levels of cultural analysis. At each level, cognitive, affective and evaluative processes are at work. One or another may be 'in focus,' but all are present simultaneously.

1. CULTURAL PRODUCTS

2. PATTERNS OF LEARNED BEHAVIOR

3. SIGN SYSTEMS

3.1 Language;

3.2 Other sign systems based on: 1) audio, 2) visual, 3) tactile, 4) taste, 5) smell.

4. RITUALS AND MYTHS

4.1 Rituals: formalized patterns of behavior required or expected in specific situations. These show us the underlying structures and cultural ideals of relationships.

4.2 Myths: cultural stories that communicate deep cultural beliefs, feelings and values.

5. BELIEF SYSTEMS

6. WORLDVIEWS

The deep cognitive, affective and evaluative categories, logic and assumptions people make about reality. What people think *with*, not what they think *about*. Their basic maps of reality.

X. TRIBAL SOCIETIES

There are tribes in all nations.. They are not primitive forms of social organization, but sophisticated systems that have maintained life for most of human history. They do not destroy nature. They are the most responsive to the gospel.

1. Economics: Subsistence Technology:

- simple subsistence technology
- small populations
- less densely populated
- live in harmony with nature
- land owned by clans and tribe, crops belong to extended family, share outcome

2. Social: Organization Based on Kinship Ties:

- family and kin play a major role in life.
 - * three - four generation families, multiple parents,
 - * respect for the aged, children a great blessing, see death as a transition
- kinship is the basis of social organization: extended families, lineages, clans, tribe
 - * linkage, endogamy, exogamy
- ancestors or “living dead” and the unborn are present in everyday life. They are mediators to the spirit world.
- kinship ties may be extended to animals and plants in totemic rites and relationships
- kinship ties are used to handle social crises like death and disaster

3. Strong Group Orientation:

- strong sense of group solidarity and responsibility, help one another
- failure leads to a sense of shame, less to a sense of guilt
- important decisions are made by group leaders and consensus
- ostracism is the ultimate punishment

4. Political and Legal: Minimum Social Hierarchy:

- leadership is by tribal elders and chiefs, old is wisest even if not educated
- strong obligation to share everything
- communication exists between the top and bottom of the society

5. Associations:

- age grades
- gender associations
- secret societies

6. Oral Societies:

- store information in memories, songs, stories, rituals
- value sounds and spoken worlds
- equate forms with meanings in symbols, performative signs, rites, myths

7. Wholistic Approach to Life:

- little specialization
- religion at the center of everything

8. Religion:

- distant high god, this world is full of capricious spirits, ancestors, unborn and lesser gods
- supernatural powers such as magic, witchcraft, evil eye, curses, sorcery
- focus on existential questions: meaning of life now and death for those left alive, desire for a good life and threat of crises, desire to plan and problem of the unknown, and longing for righteousness, order and justice and problem of injustice and chaos.
- seek guidance thorough omens, dreams, visions and divination

- use many and contradictory explanations and solutions
- primary concern is POWER
- particularist rather than universalist orientation
- emphasis on ritual as performance
- organic view of life--everything is alive
- people live in a world of beings, so things are unpredictable and one must mediate life in the midst of complex relationships
- there is a linkage between;
 - * humans: the sins of parents bring punishment on the children
 - * humans and animals: totemism
 - * humans, lands and their gods: territorial gods and spirits
- stress space more than time
- event oriented time
- rituals are important: dowry is not a price but a gift, a symbols of kinship covenant. Funerals are symbols of unity. People stay until the grieving are comforted.

XI. PEASANT SOCIETIES

A great number of people live in peasant societies appended to urban centers. They are a great challenge in the mission outreach of the church.

1. CHARACTERISTICS

1.1 More Complex Technologies:

- sedentary
- cash economy, markets
- agriculture, economic insecurity
- taxation, exploited by cities

1.2. Strong Group Orientation:

- ethnic groups and/or social classes

1.3. Many groups:

- emergence of a social system integrating different groups

1.4. Hierarchy:

- growing inequality
- rise of dominant group
- emergence of an exploited undergroup (slaves, serfs, etc.)
- oppression of the lower groups by the upper groups

1.5. Oral and Literate Segments;

- exploitation of oral peoples by the literate

1.6. Growing Specialization:

1.7. “Limited Good”:

1.8. Festivals and Rituals a Heavy Burden

- taxed of surplus, so spend on festivals. Don't display wealth.

2. PLANTING CHURCHES IN PEASANT SOCIETIES

- 2.1 Ways to evangelize and plant peasant churches.
- 2.2 Problems we face in planting peasant churches.
- 2.3 Theological issues that arise in peasant churches.

XII. URBAN SOCIETIES

In the last hundred years the most massive displacement of persons has been taking place—from tribal and rural societies to cities.

1. What are the Characteristics of Urban Societies?
2. What are Ways to Evangelize Urban Societies?
3. What Unique Problems do We Face in Planting Urban Churches?
4. What Theological Issues arise in Urban Ministries?