Sociocultural Anthropology for Missions

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Section One:

Anthropology and Missions:

Laying the Foundations

Chapter One
MISSIONS AND ANTHROPOLOGY

In recent years, missiologists have increasingly drawn on the insights the human sciences provide for their work. One key question keeps arising: how can missions keep from becoming captive to the sciences, and how can the findings of the sciences be integrated into missions while keeping solid theological foundations? This problem of relating theology to science is not unique to missions. It underlies much of the discussion surrounding the inclusion of psychology in training ministers and Christian counselors, the integration of medical sciences and Christian healing, and the use of modern business sciences in the administration of churches and church institutions. Despite these discussions, a big chasm often exists between theology and the sciences.

At a deep level, the problem of integrating theology and the sciences is a worldview issue. It is due, in part, to our definitions and perceptions of what constitutes 'theology' and the 'sciences.' We will examine these and suggests avenues for a rapprochement between these two critical bodies of knowledge.

RESEARCH TRADITIONS

Larry Laudan (1977) classifies the sciences as 'research traditions'--bodies of knowledge shared by communities of scholars seeking to understand the truth in their fields. Each research tradition is determined by: 1) the critical questions it seeks to answer, 2) the body of data it examines, and 3) the methods it accepts as valid means of discovering answers (figure 1). Each is embedded in a worldview–the fundamental assumptions it makes about reality. Different answers or 'theories' are offered to the key questions, and competing ones are debated until one or the other emerges as accepted doctrine until it is further questioned. For example, physics, as a research tradition, is the study of the building blocks of the material world, which it assumes to be real. It examines material objects using experiments, electron microscopes, ion chambers and other means to find answers to questions such as what are the basic components of matter, what are the major physical forces, and how do these interact.

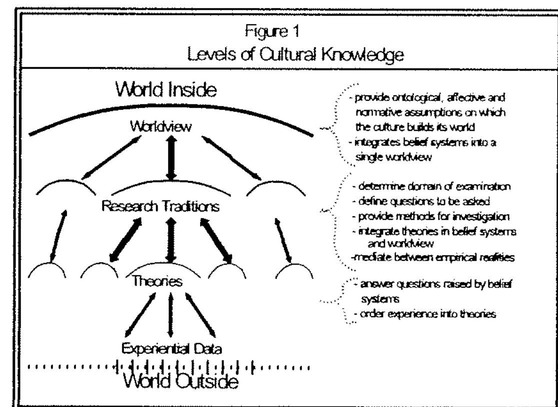


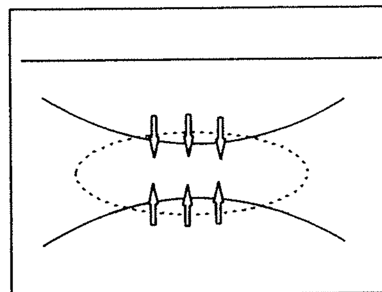
Figure 1
Levels of Cultural Knowledge

Theology, too, is a research tradition. It is a body of knowledge debated by a community of scholars seeking to answer certain critical questions. On the level of theories, there are debates over Calvinism and Arminianism; pre-millennial, post-millennial and amillennial eschatologies; and orthodoxy, liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. These are true arguments because

the different proponents are seeking to answer the same questions using accepted methods. In other words, theology is a research tradition not because it has arrived at one universally agreed upon answer, but because those in the field are seeking to answer the same questions by using accepted methods of inquiry and examining the same data.

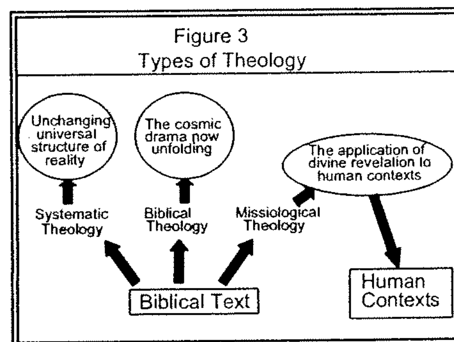
WAYS OF DOING THEOLOGY

If theology is a research tradition, how does this change our perception of it as a discipline, and its relationship to the sciences? Before answering this, we need to clarify what we mean by theology. We are assuming here that Scripture is divine revelation given to us by God, not our human search for God. Theology, then, is our attempt to understand that revelation in our historical and cultural contexts (figure 2). As Millard Erickson notes, it is a second level activity (1986). It is important, therefore, that we study Scripture carefully so that our theologies are biblically informed. We must remember, however, that all our theologies are shaped by our societies and cultures. We must remember, too, that there are great gulfs between biblical times and our times, between universal theories and the particulars of everyday life, and between synchronic theologies which examine the unchanging structure of reality and diachronic theologies that study cosmic history. It is important in any theological reflection to work to bridge these differences.



Theology, like the sciences, is divided into different research traditions, each seeking to answer specific questions, making certain assumptions, and using different methods of research (figure 3). We will examine two of these types briefly, and suggest a third way of 'doing theology' that complements the other two.[1]

Figure 3
Types of Theology



Philosophical Theology

One approach to the study of Scripture is to use the assumptions, questions and methods of philosophy. This has led to systematic theology, which

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[1] We will not examine the doxological or tropological theology of Eastern Orthodoxy which is done in the context of worship, and stresses the mystical, sacramental and iconic nature of truth. The key question it addresses is, "How can we comprehend complex, transcendent truths about God and reality that lie beyond words, logic and human reason?" It uses nondiscursive signs and tropes such as icons, metaphors, types and parables to communicate transcendent truth. For an analysis of doxological theology see Wainwright (1980), and of tropological or metaphorical theology see McFague (1982).

emerged in the twelth century with the reintroduction of Greek logic from the universities of the Middle East and Spain (Finger 1985, 28-21).[2] At first, systematic theology was seen as the "queen of the sciences," but over time it became one discipline among others in theological education--alongside biblical exegesis, hermeneutics, history, missions and other disciplines (Young 1998, 78-79).

The central question systematic theology seeks to answer is: "What are the unchanging universals of reality?" It assumes that there are basic, unchanging realities, and if these are known, we can understand the fundamental structure of reality.[3] It also assumes that ultimate truth can be known by means of human reason, and that this truth is ahistorical and acultural--it is true for everyone everywhere. Philosopical theology uses the abstract, digital, algorithmic logic, and rhetoric of Greek philosophy, which are propositional in nature. It rejects all internal contradictions and fuzziness in categories and thought.[4] Its goal is to construct a single systematic understanding of ultimate truth that is comprehensive, logically consistent and conceptually coherent.[5] To arrive at objective truth, it, like the modern sciences, separates cognition from feelings and values, because the latter are thought to introduce subjectivity into the process.

The strength of systematic theology is its examination of the fundamental elements and categories in Scripture. It gives us a standard to test our knowledge, and helps us understand in

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[2] It is based on the resurgence of Platonic realism that gave rise to scholasticism and later the humanistic school of Erasmus and culminating in the Enlightenment school. For a historical summary of its emergence see Fuller 1997). See also G. R. Evans, A. E. McGrath and A.D. Gallway (1986, particularly pp. 62-173).

[3] This is rooted in the Newtonian assumption that everything is composed of basic building blocks and put together as a machine. This view leads to determinism and a engineering approach to reality based on technological solutions. It also leads to the division of the sciences into disconnected disciplines which creates a division of labor and a gap between experts and laity.

[4] An algorithm is a formal logical process which, if carried out correctly, produces the right answer. Algorithmic logic is sometimes called 'machine' logic because it is the basis on which calculators and computers work, and can be done faster and more accurately by these than by humans. For an introduction to fuzzy categories and fuzzy logic see Hiebert 1994, 107-136).

[5] Peter Lombard founded systematic theology when he sought to disengage key theological questions from their original biblical contexts and to arrange them in a logical sequence of their own that would provide a comprehensive, coherent and synthetically consistent account of all the major issues of Christian faith, and demonstrate the rational credibility of Christian faith (Finger 1985, 19) . Lombard's Scentences, written in the 1140's, provided the form of much of later Medieval and Reformation Theology (Evans, McGrath and Gallway 1986, 71, 132).

some measure the biblical worldview–the view of reality as God sees it, and as he has revealed to us in Scripture.

Systematic theology has its limitations. Because, like Greek thought, it focuses on a synchronic analysis of the ultimate, unchanging structure of reality, it loses sight of the cosmic drama or plot in the Scriptures, and the place of history and historical events in that drama. It cannot adequately deal with change, and must see changes in God's attitudes and responses as surface phenomena, not intrinsic to God's ultimate nature.[6]

Because systematic theology focuses on universals and an ascent to knowledge through contemplation divorced from everyday life, it does not tell us how to deal with the beliefs and practices found in different cultures or times, or with the particularities of our own lives. Its focus on abstraction and rational coherence has often turned it into an intellectual exercise remote from life's everyday issues. Moreover, the Greek distinction between 'pure' and 'applied' knowledge has relegated the problems of everyday life to a position of lesser importance because they deal with the subjective and changing messiness of human lives.

Philosophical theology is also in danger of becoming captive to the methods of philosophy.[7] In the West, the search for a comprehensive system based on digital sets and algorithmic logic implies that humans can grasp the fullness of truth with clarity. It leaves little

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[6] Unlike Newton who look for systems that change over time, in his theory of General Relativity Eienstein argues that space and time are not absolute grids within which nature exists, but are part of that existence itself (Bodanis 2000). Moreover, time is not a separate variable apart from the three dimensions of space. It is the fourth dimension. We cannot start with a static view of reality and then introduce time and change. To leave time out of our analysis, is like trying to describe a three dimensional world in two dimensional terms. Consequently, to speak of unchanging timeless universals in creation is to omit an essential dimension of creation itself. One consequence of this is that when God, the Creator, reveals himself to humans in his creation, he does so not only in space but also time. At the heart of Creation and the Gospel is God's Story.

[7] For discussions about doing theology from non-western perspectives see Tabor (1978), Schreiter (1985), Schults (1989), and Lee (1978). One issue philosophical theology must wrestle with is the fact that different cultures use different logics–each of which is perfectly logical and internally consistent, but differs from the others in the assumptions it makes. For example, much of modern logic is based on digital sets, all things can be sorted into different discrete, non-overlapping categories. In number theory, this sees numbers as intervals. This is true of Euclidian geometry and Cantorian algebra. Other logics, such as Indian logic and calculus, see numbers as ratios–as infinite continua from one point to another (Zadeh 1965). Greek logic is abstract and analytical. Other logics are concrete and function (Luria 19##), and narrative (Fisher 1987). Can we do philosophical theology using different logics, and, if so, what are the strengths and weaknesses of each of these logics?

room for the particularities and ambiguities of life, the mysteries that transcend human comprehension, and the wisdom that can deal with the contradictions and paradoxes of a rapidly changing world (Yancy 2000).

Systematic theology too often has a weak sense of mission. Thomas Finger notes, "Systematic theology arose as a branch of academic study pursued in universities and not primarily as a task of the church involved in the world at large (1985, 20-21)." Missiology is not a category in systematic theology, and systematic theology is not the driving force behind missions.[8] Missiology is commonly relegated to the category of practical theology.

Finally, systematic theology was itself a product and reflection of western intellectual history. Calvin, Luther and their successors appealed not only to *sole scriptura*, but logic, rhetoric and other methods available to them to shape their theologies. In so doing, they allowed scholasticism in at the back door. G. Ebling notes,

> What was the relation of the systematic method here [in the post-Reformation] to the exegetical method? Ultimately it was the same as in the medieval scholasticism. There, too, exegesis of holy scripture went on not only within systematic theology, but also separately alongside of it, yet so that the possibility of a tension between exegesis and systematic theology was *a priori* excluded. Exegesis was enclosed within the frontiers fixed by systematic theology (1963, 82-83).

Systematic theologians need to examine the cultural and historical contexts in which they formulate their theologies to discern the biases that these might introduce in their understanding of Scripture. All theologies are human creations seeking to understand divine revelation, and all theologies are embedded in worldviews that shape the way they see things. There are no culture-free and history-free theologies. We all read Scripture from the perspectives of our particular context. This does not mean we can know no truth. It does mean that we must never equate our theology with Scripture, and that we need to work in hermeneutical communities to check our personal and cultural biases.

Philosophical theologies are now being done by committed evangelical theologians around the world. But different human contexts raise different questions that require theological reflection. Donald Shultz writes,

> The time is also past when Western theologians had all the "definitive answers". Asian theologians now bear the responsibility and willingly accept it. The latter have discovered that Western definitive answers do not automatically fit the Asian situation and often answer questions not asked in Asia (Stultz 1989, 23).

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[8] Few trained as theologians go into missions, and many schools with strong departments of theology have no department or vision of missions. On the other hand, all missionaries, of necessity, must become theologians.

Biblical Theology

A second theological research tradition that emerged in the West was biblical theology. Reacting to the scholasticism of post-Reformation theologians, Johann Gabler advocated a new way of doing theology. He saw theology as a practical science, and stressed experience and the illumination of the Spirit (Evans, McGrath and Gallway 1986, 170-71). His central question was, "What did the biblical passages mean at the time of those writing them, and what lessons can we learn from them today?" In so doing he advocated a return to the Bible as history, and an emphasis on the unfolding of the cosmic story.

Biblical theology examines the narrative nature of Scripture. It assumed that the heart of revelation is historical in character--that there is a real world with a real history of change over time which is 'going somewhere', and which has meaning because it has a plot and culminates in God's eternal reign.[9] Biblical theology argues that this view of truth as cosmic story is fundamental to the Hebrew worldview, and to an understanding of Scripture. To describe ultimate reality, the Jews told and reenacted in rituals the acts of God in their lives. Wolfhart Pannenberg reminds us that God is not only the ground of all existence, but all of history is a revelation of his existence and reign (1968).

Biblical theology uses the questions, methods and assumptions of modern historiography.[10] It uses the temporal logic of antecedent and consequent causality, and accepts teleological explanations in which God and humans act on the basis of intentions. Biblical theology is important because it gives us the diachronic dimension of a biblical worldview. It gives meaning to life by helping us see the cosmic story in which human history and our biographies are embedded.

Biblical theology also has its limits. It focuses on diachronic meaning, leaving the unchanging synchronic structure of reality in our peripheral vision. It focuses on past biblical history, not on present events. It looks at the universal story, not the particular lives of individual and communities outside the biblical narrative. It does not directly help us apply biblical truth to the problems we face in specific cultures and persons today. If we are not careful, it can become a study unto itself with little relevance to us today. We must focus on the cosmic story, but we need to remember that God speaks to us through Scripture in the context of concrete settings of

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[9] We use the term 'plot' here in the way Paul speaks of the 'mystery' now revealed to us (Rom. 16:25, Eph. 1:9, 3:3, 6:19, Col. 1:26). This is to say that there is real history, that it is moving in a direction and not changing randomly, and that behind it is a 'plot' or drama--a cosmic story that gives it meaning because it is 'going somewhere.' For us it is the story of God creating a perfect world, redeeming the lost who turn in faith to him, and restoring creation to perfection in which all will bow before Christ the Lord.

[10] For G. Vos, Biblical Theology is the "History of Special Revelation (1948, 23). Biblical Theology is Historical, Systematic Theology is logical.

human and personal history, and that our stories as individuals and as the church are part of that cosmic story.

Biblical theology is essential to our understanding of Scripture, but like systematic theology, God's mission in the world, particularly as that relates to us today, is not a central theme in its analysis. It has not been a strong motivating force driving people and churches into missions.

Missional Theology

To communicate the Gospel in human contexts, we need a third way of doing theology–a way of thinking biblically about God's universal mission in the context of the world here and now, in all its particularities, paradoxes and confusions. We will refer to this as "missional theology," although the same principles of studying Scripture, studying humans and incarnating the Gospel in human life apply equally to pastors, church elders, and, indeed, every Christian.[11]

Missionaries, by the very nature of their task, must become theologians. Almost a century ago Marti Kähler wrote, "Mission is the mother of theology." Theology began as an accompanying manifestation of Christian missions, and not as a luxury of the world-dominating church. David Bosch notes, "Paul was the first Christian theologian precisely because he was the first Christian missionary (1991, 124)." Elwood points out (1980, 75), "Asian theology cannot afford to be purely academic and philosophical, but rather it is valid only if it is produced not primarily in between piles of books, but in the "field" where it is put to the test every day."

The question arises, how do mission theologians do theology, and how is this different from other ways of doing theology? Their central question is: "What is God's Word to humans in their particular situations?" Mission theologians assume that God is a missionary God, that mission is the central theme in God's acts on earth, and that all Christians are to be a part of this mission. They also assume that all humans live in different historical and sociocultural settings, and that the Gospel must be made known to them in the particularity of these contexts. Eugene Peterson writes,

> This is the gospel focus: *you* are the man; *you* are the woman. The gospel is never about everybody else; it is always about you, about me. The gospel is never truth in general; it's always a truth in specific. The gospel is never a commentary on ideas or culture or conditions; it's always about actual persons, actual pains, actual troubles, actual sin; you, me; who you are and what you've done; whom I am and what I've done (1997, 185).

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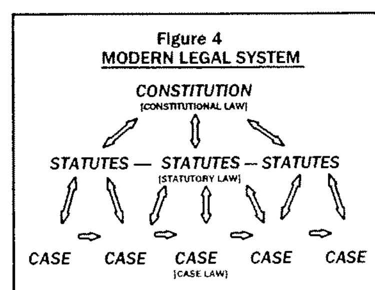
[11] The need to "contextualize" the Gospel in human cultures became obvious as missionaries went to other societies. So long as people live and minister in their own cultures, they are largely unaware of their own cultures and worldviews, and how these shape their understandings of the Gospel. Missionaries, on the other hand, confront deep cultural differences immediately, starting with language, culture, theology and worldview shocks (see chapter 1).

The task of the mission theologian is to translate and communicate the Gospel in the language and culture of real people in the particularities of their lives so that it may transform them, their societies and their cultures into what God intends for them to be. Missional theology seeks to build the bridge between Biblical revelation and human contexts. It seeks remove the gap between orthodoxy and orthoparxy,[12] and between truth, love and holiness.

The logic of missional theology can use is that of modern common law (figure 4). For a preliminary model we will look at the methods of common law as it has been developed in the United States.[13] In the United States there are three levels of law: constitutional law, statutory law, and case law (Figure 4. Romantz, and Vinson, 1998). The Constitution is the unchanging foundation on which the legal system is built. Constitutional law examines statutory and case laws to see if any violate the Constitution. If they do, they are declared invalid. Statutory laws are laws passed by legitimate government bodies such as Congress, state governments and government agencies. They seek to interpret constitutional principles in a changing world. For example, federal agencies determine what is private property with the introduction of new technologies and information. Case laws are the legal guidelines that emerge out of legal rulings in precedent cases on specific instances. Judges are bound by the principle of *stare decisis* which calls for them to make their judgments in accord with the legal findings by judges in the past on similar cases, except where such precedents can be shown to be misinterpretations of the constitution or legal statutes. On other words, judges must take into account the community of law around them, including those who have gone before. Their findings contribute to a growing, dynamic body of case law that applies general principles to specific cases.



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[12]Western theology is deeply influenced by the Platonic dualism of Supernatural/Natural, spirit/matter, mind/body, evangelism/social ministry, religion/science, faith/fact, and miracle/natural. The biblical view is contingent dualism: Creator/creation, God/humans (in the incarnation), eternal/temporal. This is dualism, but contingent in that God is eternal and source of all creation, and creation is constantly dependent on God's ongoing creation for its very existence every moment it exists. In Biblical thought the incarnation of God is far more profound than as seen in Greek thought where an invisible God in the heavenlies involves himself in a material world.

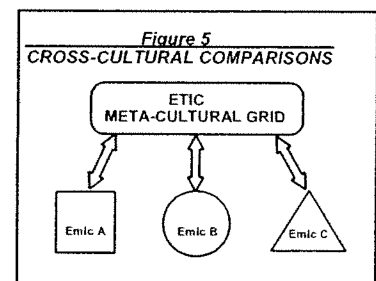
[13] The use of common law as a model draws on a Western paradigm. Like all human models, including those of philosophy and history, this has its limitations and weaknesses. In other cultures, there are other ways of handling the problems of everyday life, such as *panchayats* and India, and *palavers* in West Africa. All these seek to apply moral principles to specific situations using different logics embedded in the broader method of 'wisdom.' The relevance of these methods for doing missional theology needs to be studied. Most of them lack a set of eternal absolutes that determine ultimate truth and morality. Consequently these are determined by social consensus, not divine revelation that shows us Truth and Morality as God sees these, and has revealed them to us.

In missional theology, Systematic Theology plays the role of constitutional law. It helps us understand the ultimate realities with which all reflections regarding human contexts and specific human cases must take account. It is important to remember that systematic theology is our understanding of unchanging universals based on our study of Scripture, and does not carry the authority of Biblical revelation. Consequently, we must constantly test it against Scripture as we deal with the realities of life.

Biblical Theology, and church creeds and confessions play the role of statutory law. They show how the universal principles revealed in Scripture have been manifest in biblical history, and interpreted by God's people in an ever changing world. Both systematic and biblical theology are the reflections of the Church in its attempt to understand divine revelation. Missional theology also draws on precedent cases in the life of the church–on how other Christians have reflected and ruled in similar situations.

Phenomenology

Like common law, missional theology begins with phenomenology: a careful study of the specific facts of the case at hand. What are the facts in the case, who are the participants, what are the history of events, and what is the sociocultural and historical contexts. This is the crucial fact-finding stage, the "pain and anguish of giving birth to the facts which are compared with those in earlier cases (Levi 1949, v)." It is here that human studies, such as anthropology, sociology and psychology, are of a great help. They can help us understand the participants, events and sociocultural and historical context. In doing so, we must seek to understand the situation as the people involved see it. This involves studying their beliefs and practices, because these inform their behavior. This emic analysis, however, does not provide us a full understanding of situation, nor a bridge for deciding on a biblical solution. We must compare different perspectives, including our own emic, and develop a metacultural 'etic' that enables us to understand more fully the realities of the case (figure 5). In this step the human sciences and history can help us develop generalizations and theories that help us understand the case.



Case law is based on the process of reasoning by comparison to precedent cases. This requires the presentation of competing examples, and the articulation of similarities and differences between them. Levi writes, "A working legal system must therefore be willing to pick out key similarities and to reason from them to the justice of applying a common classification (1948, 3)." In the process classifications are created and refined as the relevant classification is made. Moreover, the categories must be left to be ambiguous to some extent in order to permit application to new and different cases, and to allow growing understanding of the laws themselves. Laws are not rigid formulae mechanically and blindly applied to human situations. They are the reflections of people seeking to build a moral community. Morality is not based on a set of impersonal laws that exist apart from God. They are Gods moral commands, and

righteousness is living in right relationships with God, and with one another and the world. Missional theology is God's people seeking to live as God's people in a fallen and ever changing world, and to bear witness to God's Kingdom to the world around them

Ontology

The second step in missiological methodology is ontology. Having studied the relevant particular facts involved in the case at hand, missional theologians, like judges in modern law evaluate the case in the light of reality checks, and of the law. They examine systematic theology (i. e. constitutional law), biblical theology and church history (i. e. statutory law), and precedent cases (i.e. case law) as these apply to the case at hand. We examine Scripture to throw light on the problems we face using our questions, theories and methods, but we must also examine the questions, theories and methods we bring with us in the light of biblical revelation. We must then evaluate the human situation in the light of biblical truth and the history of how the church has understood and applied that truth in specific situations, and pass judgment on the issues at hand, prescribe a course of action and determine a course of action based on our reflections.[14] We must never forget that theological reflections are done by humans using human languages, living in particular contexts, and, therefore, should never be equated one-to-one with divine revelation.

As in the case of legal reflections, it is important in our theological reflections to realize that the mechanism of theological reasoning should not be concealed by the illusion that theology is a system of know rules that simply need to be applied in a specific case. Levi notes that too often we have seen the legal process as though it were "a method of applying general rules of law to diverse facts–in short, as though the doctrine of precedent meant that general rules, once properly determined, remained unchanging, and then were applied, albeit imperfectly, in later cases (1949, 2)." In fact, legal rules change from case to case and are remade in each case. These changes are an indispensable dynamic quality of law. Levi adds,

> In an important sense legal rules are never clear, and, if a rule had to be clear before it could be imposed, society would be impossible. The mechanism accepts the differences of view and ambiguities of words. It provides for the participation of the community in resolving the ambiguity by providing a forum for the discussion of policy in the gap of ambiguity. . . The mechanism is indispensable to peace in the community (1949, 1).

Like modern law, theology seeks to formulate and communicate universal truth (cognitive), love (affective) and holiness (moral) in particular human contexts which are very diverse.[15]

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[14] For a full discussion of this process see "Critical Contextualization" (Hiebert 1994,). For an application of it to issues raised in folk religions see Understanding Folk Religion (Hiebert, Shaw and Tiénou, 1999).

[15] In seeking to develop a comprehensive model for understanding humans, Talcott Parsons, Edward Shills (1952) speak of the three dimensions of persons, societies and cultures:

Like modern law, theology must also deal with human contexts that are ever changing. To assume that that general rules, once properly determined, remained unchanged, and needed simply to be applied in later cases overlooks the changing nature of human life and the dynamic quality of theology that must be extended to new situations.

Finally, like modern law, theology must done in a community that functions even when people do not agree completely. It needs structures that enables it to give meaning ambiguities and to test constantly whether the community has come to deeper understandings of truth, love and holiness, and how these are embodied in the individuals, societies and cultures in this fallen world. The effort to find complete agreement before going to work is meaningless. It is to forget the very purpose for which theological reflections must be done, namely to make know the Gospel to humans in their contexts so that it can transform them.

Missiology

The final step in missional methodology is to decide on a course of action based on the ontological evaluations of the case at hand. This includes deciding on an immediate response, and also deciding on long term responses to the issues raised in the case. Too often, we pass judgment on the specific case, and fail to use it as a call for deeper reflection in the church on the issues it raises.

The analogy to common law is not perfect. Missional theologians must go beyond the role of modern judges. We have divine revelation that shows us Truth--how God, not we, sees things. But we must also remember our theologies are our human understandings of that revelation done by humans using human languages living in particular contexts, and, therefore, should never be equated one-to-one with divine revelation. We are also part of the church, the community of people we study. In judging human situations we are judging ourselves. Moreover, we have a mission. We are seeking to help the church and the people move from where they are to where God wants them to be. This is a process of transformation that includes individuals, and corporate social and cultural systems. We cannot expect people simply to abandon their old ways and adopt new ones. They can only move from where they are by an ongoing process of transformation.

One strength of missional theology is its focus on mission. It takes humans seriously, in the particularity of their persons, societies and cultures, and their ever changing histories. It integrates cognition, affectivity, and evaluation in its response to biblical truth, and defines faith not simply as mental affirmations of truth, nor as positive experiences of God, but as beliefs and

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cognitive, affective and evaluative. Theologically, these three dimensions are seen in the essence of God Himself. He is "Light", "Love," and "Holy." The Enlightenment, seeking to attain Objective truth, divorced truth, defined primarily by the sciences, from emotions and values because these introduced subjectivity, and relegated them to the private spheres of life. Western Christianity continues to struggle with this divorce and tends to stress Truth, Aesthetic Experiences, or Morality rather than seeing them as dimensions of a whole.

feelings that lead to response and obedience to the word of God. It rejects the division between pure and applied theology, and sees ministry both as a way of doing theology and as a form of worship.

Missional theology also has its limitations. It begins by studying particular cases and people in the realities of their everyday lives. In doing so, it must develop theoretical and methodological ways of studying humans as individuals and societies, and the cultures they create. Here missiology can draw on the insights provided by the humanities and sciences. But many of these are built on assumptions that omit or reject biblical foundations. It is important, therefore, for missional theologians to examine carefully the underlying premises of the theories and methods they use, just as systematic and biblical theologies must examine the theories and methods that inform their disciplines.

Complimentarity

We need systematic, biblical and missional theologies. To leave one out is to omit an essential dimension of the Gospel. The first danger is reductionism. This assumes that two of these are secondary and can, ultimately, be reduced to one underlying theology. Biblical philosophers assume that if we have the correct systematic theology, the others will follow. Biblical historians assume the same for biblical theology. Practicing missionaries and pastors assume that what we need are practical methods because we know the Gospel and all we need is effective ways of communicating it.

A second approach is strategraphic. We admit the importance of each of these, and study each separately, assuming that a proper knowledge of each will automatically lead, in practice, to their integration. There are two flaws in this. First, there is implicit in this a hierarchy in which one is more foundational than the others. Second, true interdisciplinary dialogue and integration rarely take place, neither in individuals, nor in the academic and ecclesiastical communities.

All three theologies are essential to understanding and living out of the Gospel, but they must be brought together. Given our human finiteness, we cannot (at least at this stage of our theological unders tandings) develop an overarching Grand Unifying Theory (GUT) that subsumes the three. Rather, we need to see that all three are essential and have their own identity and integrity, and that they complement and interact with one another. In missional theologizing, it is important the we draw on the understandings of systematic and biblical scholarship. Similarly, systematic and biblical scholarship must study the insights of missional theologians and their studies of human contexts with all their diversity and particularities to reexamine the questions they seek to answer, and the categories and logics they use. They must deal with the questions arising out human lives, and with the theories, methods and answers people give to these questions.

It is important, therefore, that missionaries and missiologists study biblical and systematic theology to know the basic cognitive (truths), affective (love and beauty) and moral (holiness,

righteousness) nature of the Gospel. This informs them in their ministry, and helps them draw on biblical and systematic theologians in dealing with specific cases. It is equally important that systematic and biblical theologians be trained in the theories and methods of the humanities and human sciences so that they can understand the people they serve, and the way they themselves are shaped by their own historical and sociocultural contexts. Otherwise theologians will answer questions people do not ask and be seen as irrelevant, and they will not be aware what of the Gospel they proclaim is from Scripture and what is from their sociocultural contexts. Moreover, they must help missiologists dealing with the bewildering array of particular issues that the missiologists face in order to bring biblical critique to bear on them.

In the process of incarnating Divine Revelation in human contexts, we begin with classifications, methods and theologies, and in the process we not only seek to communicate the Gospel to humans in the particularities of their lives, we also reexamine the classifications, methods and theologies we use. In this process the classifications change as the classifications are made, and theological understanding change as theology is applied (cf. Levi 1949, 4). In other words, our theologies are open to examination and new insights even as we use them in life in an ever changing world. What keeps theologians of any kind from becoming the final arbiters of truth? In law (constitutional, statutory and case) judges are accountable in a community of law that gives authority to the constitution, statutes and precedent cases.[16] In theology, we must give ultimate authority to God, and his revelation, given as it is through and to humans, and not to human understandings. which are always limited and approximate.

A complimentary approach to drawing on systematic, biblical and missional theologies recognizes that as human we all live in and are shaped by particular cultural and historical contexts. We can only begin with our existing systems of thought. We must then consciously reflect not only on the task at hand, but also on our questions, assumptions, methods and theories in the light of revelation and human realities. This reflection needs to be done by the community of theologians--including systematic, biblical and missional theologians, because each can help correct one another's biases. This hermeneutical community should involve theologians from different cultures and from the past to correct cultural and historical biases. To build a bridge between universals and particulars, between past revelation and the gospel to the present requires a continual dialogue between them all.

CASES

Two cases can help us understand missional theology and the methods it uses. The first is from Scripture, the second a hypothetical case from modern missions, but which draws on thousands of real cases.

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[16]In law this raises the question whether or not judges ultimately make the laws because in interpreting the constitutions and statutes it is they who make the final decisions (Levi 1949). In modern law, however, they are bound by the constitution, statues and precedent cases, and accountability to a community that can appoints and can overrule them.

Acts Fifteen

The first major case in the early church is recorded in Acts 15. The problem of neglecting the Hellenist widows was handled by an administrative decision made by council of the twelve apostles (Acts 6:1-2). Now a new problem arose that called into question the very identity of the church, and threatened to split it apart. The crisis arose in Antioch, and the church sent Barnabas, Paul and others to present the case to the apostles and elders, who met together to consider the matter (15:6). The question was clear: did Gentiles have to be circumcised and become practicing Jews before they were admitted into the church?

First the council gathered information from different witnesses on the events leading up to the crisis. The facts were clear. After persecution set in at Jerusalem, Philip went to preach to the Samaritans (8:4-25), and many were healed and believed. When the apostles heard about this they sent Peter and John to investigate. They reported back that the Holy Spirit had indeed come and that these could legitimately be seen as new believers. Some may have argued that the Samaritans were half Jews, and that God was gracious in letting them back into the fold. Then Philip, claiming to be led by the Holy Spirit, baptized an Ethiopian (8:26-40). Some may have argued that he was a "God Seeker" who had come from Jerusalem where he was probably looking into becoming a Jew through the prescribed process. But he was a eunoch, and eunochs were not allowed into the temple. However, the Ethiopian resolved the problem himself by leaving the scene and not disturbing the status quo in the church. Then Peter witnessed to Cornelius (10:), a godly man, but fully a Gentile. This raised the anger of circumcised believers who criticized him when he came to Jerusalem. He had to explaiin himself to them at length. What could they say? Peter was one of the apostles, and who were they to challenge him? But then some unnamed people began to witness to the Hellenists in Antioch, and many of them and of Gentiles turned to the Lord and began to meet in fellowship together (11:19-21). The elders sent Barnabas to investigate, and he decided on the spot that God indeed was bringing Gentiles into the church. In fact, Barnabas and Paul had gone out on a mission journey and openly invited Gentiles to follow Christ and join the church. Now the matter had come to a head, and a decisive decision was needed to resolve the problem.

There was little disagreement about the facts of the case. There was much disagreement on what should be done. All the parties involved argued their briefs before the council, seeking to persuade the elders that they were right (15:7). After Peter gave his closing statement, the assembly asked Barnabas and Paul to retell the central facts surrounding the issue. Then James announced the verdict. After citing Scripture to lay the foundation for theological reflections on the matter, he decided that a Scriptural interpretation of the facts justified the admission of Gentiles into the church, and that without becoming Jews by circumcision and keeping the law. He then issued instructions on implementing the findings, and urged Gentile converts, for the sake of maintaining unity, to abstain from behavior that was an unnecessary offense to the Jewish Christians. This was not a new law, but an exercise of their freedom in Christ to show love to their fellow Christians.

James and the elders, in fact, were doing missional theology. They began by studying the facts in the case, and hearing arguments from various factions in the church. Then James used theological reflection to reach a decision and pass judgment based on the situation at hand.

A Case of Polygamy

A second case can help us understand the methods of Missional Theology. It comes from Africa (Hiebert and Hiebert 1987, 62-65), but the same questions it raises are found around the world. What should the church do with polygamy, whether one husband and many wives, or one woman and many husbands?

The facts of this case are clear. Amadu is the chief of the village. When the missionaries came, they asked him for permission to stay, and, out of hospitality, he allowed them to do so. After three years ministry, a small church of believers was formed made up of two singles and five young couples, all monogamous. Having heard the Gospel and seen its effects on new believers, Amadu came and wanted to be baptized into the church, along with his five wives. What should the church and missionaries do?

If we turn first to systematic theology for an answer, we are in danger of passing judgment on situations we do not understand, and, therefore, to fall into a blind legalism. If, on the other hand, we turn to biblical theology, the answer is more ambiguous. All the heros of the Old Testament were polygamists, and there is no divine sanction of their actions. If we start with a careful study of the culture and the real life issues involved, we may come to an answer that is biblically based and culturally sensitive.

First, we need to examine the reasons for Amadu having five wives. The first was arranged by his family, because as the to-be chief the matter is a political and social matter. The first wife had no children, so Amadu took a second wife. It is imperative that a chief have an heir, and a man's greatness is measured, in part, by having many descendants who remember and honor him. Amadu inherited two wives when his brother died. Each society must make provision for widows and orphans, and in Amadu's society it is the responsiblity of a man to take care of his deceased brother's wives and children. This gives him the right to cohabit with them, but, more important, it provides them with food, shelter, companionship, offspring, parenting and role models. In his old age, as a renoun chief, Amadu took a young wife to help at home, and to add to his prestige.

Second, we need to look at the theological and sociocultural issues involved in the case. A few of these are:

- are traditional marriages true marriages, or should Christians be remarried with Christian rites? In other words, are any of Amadu's marriages true marriages in the sight of God?
- is polygamy [in this case polygyny] sin?
- is divorce sin?

- which is the greater sin–polygamy or divorce [if traditional marriages are true marriages and we ask Amadu to 'put away' all but one wife, we teach monogamy but also divorce]?
- if we ask Amadu to put away all but one wife, which one should he keep: his first, the mother of his children, one of those he inherited, the youngest?
- if we ask Amadu to put away some wives and children, which will become of them [often they become prostitutes or are sold into slavery]?
- can the church baptize the wives of a polygamist [they are all monogamous, but if we do so the church will be made up largely of women]?
- how should the church deal with the sins people commit before they become Christians?
- what are the evangelistic consequences of our decision [forcing men to put away wives has been a great hindrance to the growth of the church]?
- if Amadu is baptized with his wives, can he be a leader in the church [1 Tim. 3:2, 12]?
- can a leader who is widowed remarry [Paul's instructions are that a leader is to be "a one woman man." This can interpreted as a prohibition of digamy–remarriage of a widower–as well as polygamy].
- who should make the decision [the missionary, the young church, the mission board]?
- what should the missionaries do if their mission board has given them specific instructions not to baptize polygamists [they may be fired if they disobey]?

The next step is to study Scripture for principles that determine our judgments. Here we should begin by studying how the character of God himself informs our judgment. God is a covenant keeper, so Amadu should honor the covenants he made, even though he made these before he became a Christian. God is compassionate, so the decision must take into account the wives and children, who are the real victims if they must be sent away. God is concerned that none should perish, so the judgment must be such that the door to forgiveness and salvation is open to all.

We should then examine specific issues that arise in this case. There is no question that monogamy is God's ideal, but is polygamy a sin, and, if so, what do we do with non-Christians who come with several wives? Is divorce a sin, and, if so, how do we avoid making Amadu sin by divorcing wives to whom he is legitimately married so that he can be monogamous? After extended biblical studies, theologians such as Karl Barth find no compelling certainty that polygamy is a sin. The Old Testament makes no issue of it, and the instructions in the New Testament are for leaders in the church. On the other hand, divorce is condemned in both the Old and New Testaments.

There are other issues that must be decided. If we ask Amadu to put away all but one of his wives, what should Amadu or the church do for them? Is it realistic for Amadu to continue to support them–including his own children, and not to treat them as wives? They will be looked down upon, and gossiped about. The young ones can have no children and will be condemned by a society in which women are honored for their children. And what will the church do with widows when the traditional solution has been rejected? Each of these, and many more issues, need extended theological reflections.

We need also to look at how polygamy has been viewed throughout history. In the Old Testament little is said about it. In the New Testament Paul makes reference to it with regard to

elders. The church in the West followed Greek morality and condemned polygamy outright. In modern mission history, missionaries from the west have traditionally required polygamists to put away all but one of their wives. The Lambath Conference decreed:

> After we evaluate the case in the light of the findings of systematic theology, biblical theology and church history, and of the ways other mission agencies have handled such cases in that and other parts of the world, we need to formulate principles that inform the case, make a decision, and provide ways in which to carry out the judgment and deal with its consequences.

We will not pass a final judgment on the case here. Our purpose is to illustrate the methods of missional theology. What is clear is that a careful study of both Scripture and specific cases can help us apply biblical teachings to the realities of everyday life. It makes theology live for us, because theology is no longer an abstract understanding of truth, but a map for living our lives.

Chapter 2
ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MISSIONS

Most mission training programs today require courses in anthropology and cross-cultural communication. This is an important corrective. In the past, missionaries generally knew their Scripture well, but were not taught how to study and understand the people they served, or to examine the methods of communication they used. Consequently, they had a good message, but the people often did not understand it, or they reinterpreted it in their old worldviews.

The introduction of anthropology raises a critical question. To what extent are we in danger of becoming captive to its assumptions, theories and methods? The same question must be raised of Systematic and Biblical theologies. To what extent is Systematic Theology captive to Greek abstract, analytical, digital logic? Certainly Greek logic can help us understand elements of the deep structure of reality as revealed to us in Scripture. But what are its blind spot? And can young churches around the world do Systematic Theology using other logics? To what extent is Biblical Theology today captive to modern critical historiography?

In examining the way anthropology shapes the way we think and do missions, it is important to recognize that there is no 'one anthropology'. As Larry Laudan points out (1977), a discipline is shaped not by the answers it gives, but by the questions it raises, the data it examines and the methods it legitimates. Anthropology asks the question 'what is the nature of humans and their systems.' The data it examines is humans beings wherever they are found. The methods it legitimates are observation, participation, interviews, cases, questionnaires, and other 'empirical' ways of gathering information. In short, it is the study of humans in all their dimensions and all their contexts.

Like all disciplines, including missions, anthropology is embedded in a worldview–a set of cognitive, affective and normative assumptions about the nature of reality. As this changes, the discipline undergoes theoretical shifts from one school of thought to another. Thomas Kuhn points out (1970) that these schools of thought compete for acceptance, and, over time, changes take place in the discipline as one theoretical 'paradigm' replaces another. We must ask what are the anthropological paradigms that have shaped missiology, how have these shaped the way we think about and do missions, and how do they stand up under Biblical critique? Here we will look only at a few of the paradigms that have shaped Protestant missions in recent years.

THE BIRTH OF ANTHROPOLOGY

People around the world have always encountered "others," and the question of how to view and relate to them. During the Middle Ages educated Europeans saw foreigners as "monsters," or as "infidels." During the Age of Exploration their perceptions changed. Others came to be seen as humans, but they were "savages" or "immature children" needing to be taught. The coming of the Enlightenment challenged these perceptions. Both anthropology and

the modern mission movement were products of the Enlightenment, and both faced the question, who are these others, and how should the civilized world deal with Otherness

Anthropology in England had its origins in the active mission and humanitarian movements of the early nineteenth century that arise, in part, out of the Wesleyan revivals (Reining 1970:3-11). One of these movements, the Society for the Abolition of Slavery, arose in defense of the slaves. After bringing an end to slavery in England (1807 to 1813), the abolitionists turned their attention to the welfare of the native peoples in the colonial dependencies, and organized the Aborigines Protection Society in London in 1838.

Soon after its establishment, the society split over the question of how best to help the "natives." One faction, associated with missionaries, wanted to protect the rights of the aborigines by giving them immediately the "privileges of western civilization." The other wanted to raise their standards and to protect them from the invasion of the outside world. This faction left the society and organized the Ethological Society of London in 1843. In 1863 the society split over the question of whether or not humans were one or more species. Those who believed that there were more than one species of humans left the society and formed the Anthropological Society of London.

The critical question of the time was "what does it mean to be human?" Both anthropologists and missionaries had come face to face with a bewildering variety of humans from different races and cultures, and both had to decide whether or not they considered these people to be fully human in the same sense that educated people of the west were thought to be humans. Where they godlike or where they merely animals? Were they one species or were they more?

The missionaries were committed to the unity of humankind by their theology. Convinced as they were of the truthfulness of their Christian message an/d its universality, they went to all parts of the world and to every level of society to minister, for they considered all to be created in the image of god, and having an eternal destiny. But, as anthropologists were all too ready to point out, in subtle ways they often depersonalized the people whom they served.

Some of this depersonalization took place because missionaries were people of their times. Like their contemporaries, they were convinced of the superiority of their culture and they did not always differentiate this feeling from their faith in the superiority of Christianity. They came from a society that was dazzled by the success of science and technology, and that saw itself as the end point of an ascending cultural and religious evolution. It is not surprising, therefore, that missionaries gave little credence to indigenous sciences, social organizations and religious beliefs. For the most part they were not free from the cultural ethnocentrisms of their civilization.

Depersonalization also occurred because western theology dichotomized people into supernatural and natural beings. Some saw people as spiritual subjects to be converted, others as creatures needing social and material aid. Neither viewed humans from a holistic perspective.

To be fair, it must be recognized that on the ground level most missionaries were deeply involved with programs of evangelism, church planting, relief, education, health care and social uplift. For example, faced with famine, most did all they could to care for the needy. But a theological dichotomy often led to fragmented programs that ministered to one or another human need, and not to integrated programs the ministered to whole people. Theological the problem was how to deal with people's humanness and its relationship to their divine calling.

Finally, anthropologists charged the missionaries with being the tools of colonialism. They were supported by foreign funds, and they were not above using their relationships with colonial rulers to bring about changes in the native cultures. Even more significant was the fact that they shared the basic assumptions that underlay colonial thought–assumptions that led to the segregation of western peoples mentally and socially from the people they came to served.

Anthropologists, for their part, accepted the people in their own cultural contexts, and sought to understand them by studying them. At first this was done at arm's length, but in time living with the people and participating in their cultures became the hallmark of anthropological fieldwork. But, the missionaries were quick to point out, the anthropologists, too, were guilty of dehumanizing the people. This occurred on the theoretical level. As we will see, anthropologists accepted the evolutionary approach to human origins, but this raised critical questions. When in the evolutionary sequence did creatures become human? What sets humans apart from animals? Are all living races of humankind fully human? Debates were held on whether the newly discovered Pygmies of central Africa were humans or apes, and whether tribal people had a "primitive mind" that, in some sense, was prelogical land irrational. In 1863 the Ethological Society split over the question of whether "Negroes' were a different, and presumably lesser, species than European. The big majority held not only that the Blacks were physically of a different species, but that this difference made them mentally and morally incapable of assimilating "civilized" ways. The two factions finally reunited in 1871 and formed the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. By then many of the anthropologists had come to affirm the essential racial and psychological unity of humankind. By the 1880s anthropology had gained acceptance in the academic community.

On another level, a naturalistic approach to humans questioned the meaning of human cultures. If culture, like human, can be reduced to biological determinants, how are humans distinct from other creatures, and what meaning was to be found in their existence? Carried to the extreme, this position rendered all human thought systems meaningless.

Anthropologists also dehumanized people by their attempts to be value-free. Given their growing Rousseauian commitment to non-intervention in the lives of other peoples, there was little to justify their existence as applied anthropologists. Consequently they turned to academia for legitimacy. They adopted the scientific methodology that had worked so well in the physical sciences and sought to give objective, unbiased analyses of nonwestern peoples. However, "objective" in this context meant detached and value-free. This detachment led them to dehumanize people by treating them as predetermined objects rather than as rational human beings, wh8ile their avoidance of morals denied help to those in need and those oppressed by the

advance of western civilization. Referring to the Queensland aborigine hunts in which Europeans slaughtered the nomadic peoples of Australia for their land, one anthropologist noted,

> Anthropological science, like all sciences, is passionless on the point, but a better knowledge of its deductions and principles would have installed some feelings of prudence and pity into the murderers, who seem to revel in the unnatural process of extinction (Popular Magazine of Anthropology 1866,6).

Still, anthropologists did nothing, for anthropology had no basis on which to build morality.

Finally, anthropologists were increasingly involved in the colonial process. The early ones provided an academic rationalization of slavery, the colonial rule and the "white man's burden," the later ones by providing the field training and information necessary to implement the move to indirect colonial rule made necessary by budget cutbacks. A great deal of research carried out between 1930 and 1950 by many of the leading anthropologists was funded by the British colonial office. Furthermore, like their missionary contemporaries, anthropologists shared the basic colonial assumptions. Despite their intimate associations with people during their fieldwork, they remained ultimately segregated from them. Anthropologists returned to the safety of their academic environments where they could take about "their people." In the long run, they shared even less identification with the "natives" than the missionaries. Jacob Loewen notes that on the whole missionaries were less guilt that anthropologists of exploiting the peoples they studied. They stayed, and the sought to serve the people they learned to know.

In recent years the relationship between anthropologists and missionaries has been that of half-siblings–drawing on one another, and frequently quarreling and condemning the other. Both work with people abroad. Both struggle with the questions of "Others" and "Otherness". Many anthropologists have lived with and gotten much of their field data from missionaries, and missionaries have benefitted from anthropological findings. Nevertheless, the relationship has remained a strained one (Salamone 1986).

Let us examine this relationship and look at the ways the social sciences, particularly anthropology, have influence Christian missions for good and for bad (Table 3.1).[1]

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION (1840-1930 A.D.)

The discovery of a new world populated by previously unknown creatures raised profound theological, economic, political and scientific questions. Were these creatures humans,

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[1] Catholic missiology has had a long history of interaction with anthropology. During the evolutionary period, the Vienna School, led by Father Schmidt and Father Grabner, played a leading role in showing that the majority of simple tribal societies have a high God concept, thereby discrediting the previous theory that the high God and monotheism were late in the evolution of religion. Later Louis Luzbetack played a key role in giving Catholic missiology a solid anthropological foundation.

and in need of salvation? Could they be enslaved or ruled? And what accounted for their diversity? The academic community's response was *anthropology* – the science of Others and Otherness. The church's response was *missions* -- ministry to these Others.

One grand unifying theory emerged in anthropology to explain the diversity of human beings. Comte proposed a theory of cultural evolution from savagery to barbarism and finally to civilization. Darwin extended this theory to biological evolution. The two together formed a secular history designed to explain humans and their diversity.

Biological Evolution

The first major paradigm to emerged in anthropology was that of biological evolution. The central question from 1840 - 1900 had to do with classifying the great biological diversity among humans. Missionaries, on the basis of Genesis 1, affirmed the biological unity of all humans despite their diversity, and the need to bring the gospel to all of them. Anthropologists split over the issue of human origins. In 1863 the Anthropological Society of Britain broke with the Ethnological Society, arguing that some ethnic groups were descendent from lower primates. Because of its views, the Anthropological Society found it difficult to condemn the brutal slaughter of the aborigines of Queensland and Tasmania going at that time (Reining 1962, 5). In 1871 the two organizations merged to form the Anthropological Society, which now affirmed the unity of humankind.

A second question now arose–if all humans are one species, how can we explain the racial differences. The answer, according to anthropologists, lay in biological evolution–humans are the same species, but some are more evolved than others. This accounted for their differences. It also justified slavery and colonialism. Europeans had the moral responsibility to help backward "natives" become more fully humans.

Most missionaries rejected the theory of biological evolution, and the theory of racial polygenesis, but they had learned to think *how* Enlightenment people thought. They were not immune to the spirit of the time that upheld the superiority of the white race. Stephen Neill writes,

> Missionaries in the nineteenth century had to some extent yielded to the colonial complex. Only western man was man in the full sense of the world: he was wise and good, and members of other races, in so far as they became westernized, might share in this wisdom and goodness. but western man was the leader, and would remain so for a very long time, perhaps for ever (Neill 1982, 259).

Unlike Spanish Catholics who often settled abroad and intermarried with the local people (as in Goa and Latin America), North European missionaries generally saw their "home" as the country from which they came, often lived lives segregated from the "natives," and discouraged the marriage of their children with the local people. They looked forward to furloughs and retirement "at home." Many Western mission agencies resisted sending African-Americans as missionaries abroad.

Another example of racism was the preaching by missionaries in Africa as late as the 1950s that the Africans are under the curse of Ham, and therefore incapable of ruling themselves (Lumeah 1988). We today reject this interpretation of Scripture, but as Nzash Lumeah points out, it is still widespread among the Africans themselves, many of whom believe that Christian institutions will prosper only if a white person is present. As Billy Graham points out, racism is still a deep sin in European and North American churches and missions, which we must confront honestly and openly. All peoples have a sense of racial superiority, but we as whites have particularly bad dose of it.

Cultural Evolution

When studies of race failed to define distinct races and the superiority of one over another,[2] anthropologists turned their attention to cultural differences. Here the grand unifying theory was cultural evolution, a secular imitation of the biblical cosmic history. All humans were incorporated into one cosmic story of progress from simple to complex, from savagery to civilization, and from prelogical to logical. The superiority of the Western technology and life was self-evident. It enabled the West to conquer and rule the world, for its own good. It justified the modern Enlightenment theory of history.

In this paradigm, the others were not just prelogical primitives, they were our "ancestors"–*human fossils*. Joseph Conrad captured this view in his description of his trip in Africa.

> We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. . . . But suddenly as we struggled around a bend, there would be a glimpse of peaked grass roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands slapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying. . . . It was unearthly, and the men were–No, they were not inhuman. . . . They howled and leaped . . . but what thrilled you was the thought of their humanity–like yours–the thought of your remote kinship (1950, 105).

In the newly established discipline of anthropology, Lewis Henry Morgan developed a universal theory of evolution that put humans on three levels of development: savages, barbarians, and civilized. James G. Frazer argued that human beliefs in magic and animism were displaced by high religions, and religions by science. E. B. Tylor argued that religion began with animism, and evolved into polytheism and finally monotheism. Regarding E. V. Tylor, McGrane writes,

> It's as though Tyler saw the whole world as a museum-drama: on stage one, in the Amazon, for instance, we see can see act one. Simultaneously, on stage two, in New Guinea, we can see act two, etc. The people of the world act out the story of our history, and the only audience who can understand the play is, of course, "us." We have the benefits of hindsight: we know how the story ends, we are how the story ends (1989:95).

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[2] In comparative studies, Africans were found to be furthest from other primates, and Whites most like them. Data such as this helped undermine the popular notion that Whites were the most evolved of the human races.

Early anthropologists saw themselves a scientists analyzing humans as objects, using scientific methods and logic. They gathered their data from explorers, travelers, and later missionaries, not from living with the 'natives.' Moreover, they saw themselves as not in the scenes they described, nor did they see that they themselves and their theories were socially and culturally shaped. What the people thought was unimportant. What the scientist said was true. What the people thought was unimportant. Shaped by the enlightenment, they placed humans at the center of reality.

During this era, anthropologists, based in universities, depended increasingly on missionaries for their primary data, and some missionaries drew in anthropology to do in depth studies of the cultures in which they served. Lorimer Fison wrote on Fiji, Robert H. Codrington on Melanesia, Henri Alexandre Junod on south Africa and William and Charlotte Wiser on India.[3]

Many missionaries rejected the theory of cultural evolution, but the ideas which were a part of its *zeitgeist* were absorbed with the air they breathed. Charles Tabor notes,

> The superiority of Western civilization was the culmination of human development, the attribution of that superiority to the prolonged dominance of Christianity, the duty of Christians to share civilization and the gospel with the "benighted heathens"--these were the chief intellectual currency of their lives (1991, 71).

The key word here is "civilization." During this era the word "culture" was not used the ways we use it today.

Christians in Europe and North America in the nineteenth century grew up in an intellectual environment dominated by Social Darwinism, the theory of cultural evolution that incorporated all humans into one cosmic story of progress from simple to complex, from primitive to civilized, from pre-logical to logical. The superiority of western technology and life was self-evident. It enabled the West to conquer and rule the world. It justified the modern Enlightenment view of history.

This Enlightenment agenda shaped the modern mission movement in several ways. First, it led to the Westernization of the church. Wilbert Shenk writes,

> The seventeenth-century New England Puritan missionaries largely set the course for modern missions. They defined their task as preaching the gospel so that Native Americans would be converted and receive personal salvation. The model by which they measured their converts was English Puritan civilization. . . . They gathered these new Christian into churches for nurture and discipline and set up programs to transform Christian Indians into English Puritans (1980: 35).

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[3] Before the founding of anthropology, Catholic missions had an early and long tradition of ethnographic research. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bartholmė de Las Casas and Bernardoino de Sahagun wrote ethnographies on Latin American, Matteo Ricci on China, and Roberto de Nobili on India.

Not all missionaries agreed with the dominant theories of the enlightenment, such as racial polygenesis, and cultural evolution, but they had learned to think *how* Enlightenment people thought–the determination to rethink everything free from the constraints of authority. They trusted the autonomy and trustworthiness of reason defined in terms of Greek algorithmic logic. As such, they played a central role in the spread of modern education and medicine around the world.

Early missionaries struggled with not only understanding but relating closely to the Others they encountered around the world. Given their biblical commitment, they affirmed the oneness of humanity, despite the variety of physical differences they found. In the 19th century they played a key role in the development of Ethology, writing extensive ethnographies on the people they ministered to. R. H. Codrington wrote that

> when a European has been living for two or three years among strangers,. He is sure to be fully convinced that he knows all about them; when he has been ten years or so amongst them, if he is an observant man, he finds that he knows very little about them, and so begins to learn (1891, p. vii).

Some argued that missionaries long term residence in a place made their observations more accurate than those of short-term scientific visitors.

Western missionaries, however, were part of the modern *zeiteist*, which they absorbed with the air they breathed. Charles Taber notes;

> The superiority of Western civilization as the culmination of human development, the attribution of that superiority to the prolonged dominance of Christianity, the duty of Christians to share civilization and the gospel with the "benighted heathen"–these were the chief intellectual currency of their lives (1991, 71).

Many missionaries accepted the superiority of Western civilization, and saw their task as the two "Cs": to Christianize and to Civilize the people they served.[4] They made sure the people wore clothes. They built schools and hospitals alongside churches, and saw science as essential a part of the curriculum as the gospel. This equation of the gospel with Western civilization made the gospel unnecessarily foreign in other cultures.

Second, missions exported the Enlightenment split between supernatural and natural realities. Evolutionists argued that prelogical humans created animism to explain their world. This was full of earth-bound spirits, witchcraft and magical powers. As humans evolved, they developed high, philosophical religions, more logical in character, which displaced animism. Finally they developed science as a new kind of knowledge based on reason, which, in time, would replace religious thought. Missionaries rejected the displacement of religion by science, but assumed that Christianity would automatically displace animism with its beliefs in earthly spirits and powers. For the most part, they did not take seriously the people's beliefs in spirit possession, witchcraft, divination and magic, and simply denied the reality of these. As a result,

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[4] Later David Livingston added the third 'C'–Commericalize– because he saw commerce as the means to undermine slavery.

many of the old beliefs went underground because the missionaries did not deal with them, or provide Christian answers to the questions these addressed. Today these underground beliefs are resurfacing around the world and creating havoc in young churches.

Third, the supernatural/natural split contributed to the secularization of nature. Many Western Christians turned to religion to deal with the eternal matters such as creation, sin and salvation, and to science to explain the events of everyday life. Diseases were attributed to germs, personality disorders to psychological distortion. Missionaries brought the gospel and planted churches. They also established schools and hospitals. Too often these were seen as based on science. Many who studied in mission schools and hospitals rejected the gospel they heard, but adopted science. As a result, as Leslie Newbigin (1966) points out, Christian missions have been a great secularizing force in the non-Christian world.

How do we evaluate the effects of the theory of cultural evolution on missions. On the positive side–and there was a positive side–we must remember that the modern mission era witnessed the greatest Christian outreach the world has ever seen. Too often we in the West feel so guilty about the colonial era that we forget that the missionaries, like explorers, traders and colonial government rulers and even anthropologists were people of their times. Moreover, as Lamin Sanneh (1993) points out, the missionaries gave the people dignity and empowered them by translating Scripture into their languages. We must retell the stories of the thousands of young people who felt the call of God and went to the end of the earth, suffering great hardships and often laying down their lives. Exploration, colonialism and *pax Britannica* did open the doors for missionaries to serve and plant churches in the most remote corners of the earth. God used imperfect people with imperfect understandings in imperfect conditions to carry out his work in remarkable ways.

Another positive side of this era was the affirmation of the unity of humankind. In missionary circles, there was no doubt that all humans are created in the image of God, are fallen and lost, and need salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It was this deep conviction that drove missionaries to sacrifice their whole lives for the salvation of people they did not know. It was this that led the to build schools, hospitals and agricultural training centers, call for justice and moral rectitude, strive to end infanticide, widow burning, intertribal wars, and identify with the poor and oppressed. Their concern to help the people stood in sharp contrast to the colonial rulers and businessmen who sought mainly to exploit the people and the lands they ruled. In our day, we do not have this driving passion or sacrificial commitment that turned the world upside-down.

On the negative side, the theory of cultural evolution gave rise to Western arrogance, ethnocentrism and colonialism that often influenced the missionaries. The gospel they brought was the gospel as they understood it. The churches they planted were copies of their churches at home in terms of organization, architecture and worship forms. Regarding Sri Lanka, W. T. J. Small wrote,

> . . . there was no attempt to adapt the form of worship to a national or truly Sinhala [Sinhalese] form. . . . Sihala renderings of the great Methodist hymns were

> produced and sung to Western tunes, to the accompaniment of an organ or harmonium; the few lyrics included in the hymn book were hardly used in the services inside the church, and were reserved for open air services. No one dared to play an eastern musical instrument or a drum in a Methodist church in Ceylon. In short, a visitor from the West entering one of our churches during this period would find nothing to suggest to him in the ritual music or appointments that was in an eastern church (Small 1971 367).

Little attention was given to contextualization because other cultures were seen as evil, or neutral at best, and, in time, they would be displaced by modernity.

A second consequence was that many missionaries saw little good in the people's cultures on which they could build. Consequently, every aspect of traditional cultures had to be destroyed before Christianity could be built up. It also led to a separation (even segregation) between missions (made up of Westerners) and churches (made up of "natives"). The result was the domination of young churches by Western missions, and the inability of young churches to mature into fully equals. A hundred years after the founding of the Batak Church in Indonesia, Theodor Müller-Krüger wrote,

> So the missionary became the patriarch, who was readily obeyed, and under whose leadership it was confidently believed that all would go well. Is it surprising that this position of the missionary was taken for granted and reflected in the order of the ?Church as this developed? The patriarchal structure of the Church was accepted as the only means by which its stability and its future could be safeguarded (Neill 1982, 257).

A third consequence was that missionaries increasingly saw Christianity the same as other religions, but also as their fulfillment. David Bosch notes,

> It was, however, not until the arrival on the scene of the theory of evolution in the nineteenth century, the rise of liberal theology, and the birth of new disciplines of comparative religion, that the stage was set for an approach according to which religious could be compared and graded in an ascending scale. In the Western world there was no doubt, however, about which religion stood at the pinnacle. In almost every other religion–even if it might be termed aa *praeparatio evangelica*–was deficient when compared with Christianity (1991, 479).

Finally, this evolutionary view led missionaries to hold that truth is the central concern of the Gospel, and that it need to be defended in rational terms. They defined truth in propositional terms, and saw themselves as God's lawyers, proclaiming and defending the Gospel.

THE MIDDLE YEARS (1930s - 1970s)

The second fundamental question to face both anthropologists and missionaries was that of the unity and diversity of humankind. By the 1930s, both had come to accept the basic unity of humankind, but both were faced with the apparently unending and arbitrary variety in human behavior and social and cultural structures. The critical question emerged, if humans are one, how can we account for and respond to the great diversity their societies and cultures?

The question manifested itself in several forms. For missionaries the primary problem was: How should Christianity relate to the great variety of non-Christian religions? Some took the position of radical displacement: truth is found only in Christianity, therefore all other religions were categorically rejected and would have to be replaced *in toto*. Others saw all religions as human searches for God, and Christianity only as the closest approximation to the truth. In between lay many positions assessing in varying degrees the uniqueness of Christianity and the presence of truth in other religions.

Closely related to this were several other problems. How does the gospel express itself in the context of cultural variety? Western thought stressed cultural uniformity and western civilization as the ideal. The gospel was often equated with western cultural forms. But missions faced the fact that the gospel does take many different cultural forms and that the church, to be effective, must be indigenous. Then what of the gospel and the church are unchanging and eternal, and what are cultural and temporal? How should missionaries deal with such phenomena as people movements, and polygamy? Or how should the unity of the church manifest itself in the midst of caste and class differences? Is the church the divine body of Christ, or is it a sociocultural organization subject to analysis by the social sciences? To emphasize only one or the other is to overlook the fact that the church, indeed, is both.

To anthropologists, the question of unity versus diversity came in another form. The earlier attempt to incorporate them all in a single broad theory of sociocultural evolution had failed. Intense fieldwork made it clear that simple traits, such as wearing of clothes, or having writing, make little sense by themselves. They have to be understood in the context of larger sociocultural systems. But there seemed to be no limit to the ways in which these systems organized the universe, and no way to integrate the variety into a single comprehensive theory of humanity. To be sure, there was some search for cultural universals using the methods of cross-cultural comparison--a search for universals such as the family and belief in a high god, but none of these stood the test. The vision of the unity of humanity faded in the light of sociocultural diversity.

In the face of this diversity and lacking any unifying empirical universals or metaphysical and moral absolutes, anthropological relativism prevailed. Diversity was thought not only to exist at the most basic level of human thought and behavior, but also at times extolled. Even comparisons were called into question. It soon became apparent, however, that pure relativism undermined anthropology's claims to be a universal science of humans, and, in the end, amounted to a denial of the validity of science itself.

British Social Anthropology (1930s - 1970s)

Two theoretical movements displaced cultural evolutionism in the nineteenth-century, both emerging out of closer encounters with Others in the process of studying them. The first of these was British Structural Functionalism started in England by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955), and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). Both (Radcliffe-Brown in particular) were

influenced by the newly emerging science of sociology started by Emile Durkheim in France. Both did anthropological fieldwork and learned to know the Others personally as fully human beings.

At first social anthropologist such as Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard, sought to give detailed objective descriptions and explanations of other cultures, but they did so using the categories and methods of anthropology. These *etic* analyses viewed human cultures as objects to be studied scientifically.

Bronislaw Malinowski went a step further. He argued that to understand Others we must enter their world, and see it in their categories (*emically*) rather than others. We must be *participats* as observers. We must cross the line and identify ourselves primarily with the people rather than the academy. In so doing he made us aware of the tension between being a participant and an observer at the same time–an insider-outsider, a scientist-native, an observer who knows the native language but speaks in English. After Malinowski, in-depth fieldwork became the hallmark of anthropological methodology.

Social anthropologists studied tribes in Africa and the South Pacific Islands in which tribes were living, functioning realities. They saw each society as unique and wholly *sui generis*–a unique, unchanging, bounded and more or less successful adaptation to a particu8lar environment. Each was made up of parts that "function" to maintain a harmonious, balanced whole. Each society was homogeneous and uniform. Each could be explained in terms of "social facts." Moreover societies were seen as morally neutral. For people in one society to judge those in another was seen as ethnocentric and imperialistic. There were no supra-cultural moral and cognitive universals by which societies could be evaluated.

Social theories are important in the study of people, but the early ones had limitations and distortions. They were often reductionist and used linear causality, explaining most human realities in terms of social dynamics. Religions were seen as not "true" in any ontological sense, but as social constructs that keep people together. There was no place for God and spiritual realities. Moreover, social anthropology focused its attention on small scale societies and examined them as closed social systems. It had difficulty understanding large, complex societies and global systems. Finally, social anthropology saw societies as harmonious wholes, and change as bad. There was no place for the discussion of oppression, injustice and human sinfulness.

Social anthropology has had a great impact on missions in recent years through the writings of Donald McGavran, Allen Tippett and the Church Growth School, and the concepts of "people groups" and "people movements." They showed how social dynamics play a major role in the growth and organization of the church. They introduced such concepts as homogeneous groups, people movements, social receptivity/resistance, and social barriers into mission literature. The results have been a major paradigm shift in modern mission strategizing.

More recent applications of social theory to missions is the people group movement that defines some seventeen thousand people groups and seeks to plant churches in each of them (an part through the Adopt-a-People movement), and the Ten-Forty Window emphasis which focuses on resistant peoples.[5]

How should we evaluate this impact of social theory on missions? On the positive side, it has made us think in terms of social systems. Prior to this, mission thinking was based largely on geographical thinking. Mission agencies went to Africa, India or China. There they divided the country on the basis of comity, and each mission divided its territory into mission fields with the missionary stationed in each.[6] Missionaries were given responsibility to evangelize a certain number of villages, and toured the countryside holding evangelistic services in each of them. But, as McGavran pointed out, geographic distances are not the only, or even the major barriers to the proclamation of the gospel. Invisible social walls are very real. People may live a few hundred feet from one another, but socially be a hundred miles apart. We need to understand social structures and social dynamics to understand how to churches grow.

A second contribution of church growth thinking was to focus the mission task on planting churches as socially viable institutions that could sustain and proclaim the faith. In this it is heir to the legacy of Henry Venn, R. Anderson and Roland Allen, with their stress on indigenous churches. Missions too often focused on evangelism. Today the goal of many missions is not simply individual conversions, but the planting of living, reproducing churches.

A third contribution was the renewed stress on evangelism and the grown of the church during a time when institutionalization had diverted many missions from their central task. Maintaining church schools and hospitals took up much of the efforts of the majority of missions.

On the negative side, the church growth and people groups movements are in danger of social reductionism. Understanding and applying social principles are essential to mission outreach. It is hard, however, for us to integrate these with prayer, divine guidance, and spiritual

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[5] Ironically, in America, George Murdock started the Human Relations Area File in which he sought to break down all societies into discreet, bounded 'people groups', and to develop a method to examine their cultures systematically. These files are extensive and professionally done, but mission strategists working with 'people groups' have not drawn on them, settling rather for data that is often shallow and incomplete. Similarly, in India in the 1891 census, and again in the 1961 census, detailed notes are give on different castes and tribes of India. These, too, have been overlooked by mission strategists working with 'people groups.'

[6] The majority of American missionaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from mid-West farms. Unlike Europe, where farmers cluster in small hamlets and walk to their fields, in the United States farmers had large farms and each build a house and barn in the fields. This patterns of individualism appears to have been carried over to missions in India and Africa.

living because they are based on a notion of social engineering. If we know the social dynamics, we can bring about success. Moreover, success is measured largely in quantitative terms–in terms of numbers of professed converts. How does this fit with the biblical emphasis on faithfulness, hardship, suffering and persecution?

A second limitation is that of the early theories of sociology.[7] The concept of "people groups" fits small scale societies best, societies like those social anthropologists used as the basis for their studies. But small scale societies are constantly changing, and peasant and urban societies cannot be cut up into distinct bounded people groups without seriously distorting the picture. Individuals participate in many different groups and cultural frames, and do not fully identify with any one of them. Associations, institutions and networks are the middle-level organizing principles in urban societies. The major exceptions are immigrants who may form distinct ethnic communities. Consequently, we cannot really speak of distinct "people groups" among peasants and old time urbanites, nor can we hope to generate people movements to Christ in mature city contexts.

A third weakness is a static view of societies. Healthy ones are seen as organic wholes striving for stasis. There is no place for change or conflict. In mission terms this has led to calls for conversion with a minimum amount of social change, and to an uncritical approach to contextualization. People should be allowed to become Christians with a minimum of social dislocation. All social systems are seen as essentially good if they maintain social order. They cannot be judged as sinful. Consequently, sin is reduced to personal sins, and conversion to inner personal transformations. But societies are not static, or harmonious. Nor are they inherently good. To argue that they are is to ignore corporate sin and to see the world through the eyes of the dominant parties. All this does not fit well with Paul's call for radical social transformation in the lives of new believers. Moreover, this approach often produces large but theologically shallow churches.[8]

A fourth weakness is a truncated view of culture. British structural functionalism and its offspring, including church growth, have a strong sense of social organization and how this plays itself out in the lives of people. This includes concepts such as "homogeneous groups," "people movements," and "receptivity-resistance axis." It is also the basis for defining "church growth." But these theories have very weak understandings of culture–of the symbol systems, rituals and myths, belief systems and worldviews that shape a people's thinking. Consequently, they do not deal with the questions of cross-cultural communication, contextualization of the Gospel message, theologizing in different cultural settings, and transforming worldviews. This explains, in part, the limited role that theology plays in church growth theory.

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[7] Church growth is based largely on social theories of the 1930s - 1950s. It has drawn little from more recent conflict and dynamic-oriented theories of social systems.

[8] Examples of this are North East India, and Rwanda where large people movements have led to large churches, but where corruption, hostility and killing have continued, little affected by the gospel's power to transform not only lives but whole societies.

A fifth weakness is the problem of cultural relativism. British structural functionalism began with the much needed correction of view other cultures in Western terms. It ended in the 1950s with pragmatism and cultural relativism, which rejects all notions of social evil and cultural untruth. In missions this had led us to seek to preserve cultures at almost any cost, and to avoid judging the corporate sins found in all of them. Many are no longer certain that Christ is the only way to salvation, and that those who reject him are lost. More see missions as cultural imperialism, and see few ways to avoid it.

Finally, social missiology tends to have a weak view of history. It is concerned with synchronic models of social organization–with how societies are put together, how they function, and how they change. It has little awareness of the fact that cultures are always changing due to historical forces.

American Cultural Historicism (1930s - 1970s)

A second theoretical challenge to the theory of cultural evolution emerged in North America, and came to be known as American Historicism. It was pioneered by Franz Boas (1858-1942), A. L. Kroeber (1876-1960) and their disciples. They studied the North American Indians whose cultures had been shattered, and who were now living largely on reservations. For the American Historicists, the questions of change and the history of change were central. How had the Indians survived in the midst of such cultural turmoil and maintained their sense of cultural identity? Why had some of them acculturated to the new ways introduced by Western settlers?

Like other scientists of the time, American anthropologists came as outsiders, confident that their scientific categories and methods produced objective truth, but they rejected the arrogance and ethnocentrism associated with the word "civilization" and replaced it with the word "culture." This shift in terms reflects profound changes in how anthropologists began to view other peoples. McGrane writes,

> The emergence of the concept of "culture" has made possible the democratization of differences. . . . The twentieth-century concept of "culture" has rescued the non-European Other from the depths of the past and prehistory and reasserted him in the present; he is once again contemporary with us. Twentieth-century "culture" was a concept forged in the teeth of "evolution," and the hierarchical scheme implied in it (McGrane 1989, 114).

The anthropologists used the plural form "cultures" not only to affirm their autonomy, but also their diversity. They did not see cultures as bounded, tightly integrated wholes. Rather they talked about cultural traits and configurations, and described cultural cores and areas in the way linguistics looked at phonemes, morphemes and syntax, and defined linguistic families and regions. Moreover, they saw culture as constantly changing, and change was potentially good.

Cultural anthropology has its limitations. It tends to reduce everything to cultural explanations and is weak on social analysis. Moreover, cultures are seen as essentially subjective–the arbitrary constructs of human societies. Consequently all cultures are relative to one another. None could stand in judgment on another. In this view there is no external

objective truth or morality. Moreover, secular cultural anthropologists have no place for God or spiritual realities. Consequently, they do not take the ontological claims of religions seriously. They claim a privileged stance as scientists on discovering objective truth.

The American Historical school gave rise to a number of subdisciplines that have impacted missiology significantly.

Acculturation Theory and Applied Anthropology

British social structuralists did extensive field research on the sociopolitical structure of local tribes. This was key to the introduction of indirect colonial rule. In India direct rule had become so expensive that the empire was in danger of collapse. With the help of Lord Lugard, who moved from Indian colonial administration to Africa, the British established their colonies not by ruling the people, but by ruling the tribal chiefs. This proved far less expensive, but it required a great deal of knowledge about the political systems of different tribes, and the ways chiefs ruled their peoples. Here anthropologists were accused of being handmaidens of the Colonial Government.

American Historicists studied American Indian tribes who had been forced off their lands and confined to reservations. American anthropologists focused their studies on culture change and culture collision. Many were interested in applying anthropology to social engineering and global development programs to help the American Indians, and in 1879 the Bureau of American Ethnology was established by the U. S. government.

Applied anthropology entered another phase during and after World War II. Attempts were made to understand different cultures and ways they would respond to propaganda, and ways in which they could be rebuilt after the war. This was followed by attempts to apply anthropology to the Vietnam War.

Christian applied anthropologists have contributed much to missions programs involving development with agencies such as World Vision, Mennonite Central Committee. Overall, missions, even those involved in relief and development, have been slow in drawing on the insights provided by anthropology. The main danger here is to be pulled into a form of social engineering in which humans are in charge, and a social gospel that forgets the priority of sin and salvation. An example of this is the current interest in "meeting felt needs," and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which puts spiritual needs at the end of a long list of human needs, and we rarely get to them in view of the pressing immediate needs.

Descriptive Linguistics

The emergence of descriptive linguistics in anthropology to enable scholars to learn oral languages an to reduce these to writing has played a key role in the modern Bible translation movement in the last fifty years. The American Bible Society team led by Eugene Nida and including a number of outstanding linguists such as William Smalley, William Reyburn and Jacob Loewen contributed greatly to the development of linguistics and translation theory.

So too did the Wycliffe Bible Translators team (SIL) led by Kenneth Pike and including a long list of solid linguists such as Dan Shaw and Jon Aarenson, have contributed much to our understanding of semantic analysis.

Linguists pioneered the concept of dynamic equivalence translations which are based on a dyadic view of signs made up of forms and meanings. Early translation theories held that signs, such as words, refer to objective realities. The word "tree' refers to real trees that can be seen and touched. This led to literal Bible translations in which the corresponding words in various languages were used to communicate the original objective meanings. Ferdinand de Saussure showed, however, that meanings lie in heads, and that signs evoke images in the mind and organize them mentally into taxonomies and complex webs of meaning. Now signs were seen as having forms (the sign itself) and meanings (in the head). In translation, therefore, it was more important to maintain meanings than literal forms. This provided an important corrective, because the simple literal translation of texts did not take into account the complex mental webs of meaning created by cultures. This fresh approach to reducing language to writing, and to translate and publish more readable and understandable biblical texts contributed greatly to the world church.

The introduction of dynamic-equivalence Bible translations raises a number of questions. First, the use of a dyadic view of signs as made up of form and meaning, and the location of meaning totally in the heads of people renders the message totally subjective. There is no way to check such meanings against experiences of the external world and objective reality, or whether what the sender sends and the receiver receives are 'equivalent' in any objective sense of the world. Consequently, communication is receptor oriented. It is what the reader makes of a text that is important, not what the sender means. While this is a good correction to the earlier formal translation theory, it removes any objective criteria for testing truth or for communicating it accurately.[9]

We need to return to a modified reference theory of signs that affirms that we can speak about truth meaningfully. It is here that the recent interest in Charles Peirce's theory of signs is helpful (1958). Peirce points out the triadic nature of signs. A sign has 1)the cultural sign (its form), 2) the objective or external reality to which it refers, and 3) the image it evokes in the mind. Communication in Peircian terms is measured by the correspondence between what the speaker says and what the hearer understands. This can be determined, in part, by both checking with the external realities to which they refer.[10] Moreover, signs are part of complex sign systems which are not private, but are cultural constructs shared by a community of people.

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[9] Wilhelm von Humboldt, one of the fathers of linguistics, differentiated between th e"inner" and "outer" dimensions of signs, such as words., The former, he said, was the mental concept associated with a word, the latter its oral or written form. His student, Ferdinand de Saussure, labeled these as the "form" and "meaning" of a word. Here "meaning" no longer is found in words that directly represent reality, but in the idea and images in our minds.

[10] For an example of such checking see Brent Berlin and Paul Kay's cross-cultural study on color (1969).

Second, there is a danger of linguistic reductionism. Because communication is so central to human life, it is easy to use it as the model for understanding all human systems. This overlooks the social, economic, political and legal dimensions of societies, which are real in themselves and have their own systemic natures, and it does not examine the complex relationships between social and cultural systems. It also ignores the fact that communication is ultimately about something–namely events in history. In missions this can lead us to focus on the communication of the gospel, and overlook the central question, "What is the gospel?"

Anthropology of Religion

Tylor, Frazer and Morgan recognized the importance of religions as systems of belief, but discounted them as prelogical forms of thought. Social anthropologists tended to follow Durkheim and saw religions as epiphenomenal–as the creations of societies to hold people together, and to enforce the community rules. They did not take religious seriously as *belief systems which the people are convinced are true statements of reality.*

Starting with Evans-Pritchard, some anthropologists began to take religious belief systems seriously, and to show that these re not prelogical or fantasies and projections of corporate minds. Robin Horton has done much to help us understand that the logical behind traditional religions is not some foreign logic, but rooted in human experience and in universal thought patterns common to us all. In doing so, he helped us take science off its modern pedestal and to see it as one system of beliefs alongside other systems of belief.

Along another line of enquiry. A. F. C. Wallace (1958) has provided us with a preliminary framework for understanding religious movements. Building on his insights, Harold Turner analyzed the impact of Christianity on primal religious and the emergence of New Emerging Religious Movements (1981). Much more study is needed, however, to help us understand the explosion of new and new-new religious movements around the world today, and the implications they have for Christian missions. In recent years missiologists have begun to study the religions of people anthropologically, and to deal with issues such as spirits, magic, divination, witchcraft and spiritual warfare (Tippett 1967, Hiebert, Shaw, Tiënou 1999).

Taking religions seriously is an important step forward in anthropology, but so far no anthropologist has raised the next, and most vital question–which of these belief systems is true? They are afraid to move beyond phenomenology to ontology–to the questions of what is really real–because they fear accusations of ethnocentrism and imperialism if they do. We can learn much from the recent study of religions from a social science perspective, but they do not take spiritual realities seriously, and they fail to point us beyond phenomenology, leaving us by default in a morass of religious relativism. At some point we must confront the questions of truth and falsehood, righteousness and evil, or we are diletants and cretians who watch the world crumble and do nothing about it.

Ethnoscience

Following the lead of Malinowski, many anthropologists began in-depth field-based research in which they sought to "enter inside the heads" of their informants (cf. Conklin 1955,

Frake 1961) using linguistic rather than psychological models. The result was enthoscience and componential analysis. Both seek to use the linguistic categories of their informants. Several subfields emerged including "ethnomusicology," "ethnobotany," "ethnopsychology," and so forth. The advantage over previous ethnographies is that the method can be precisely described so that studies can be replicated and verified.

The new ethnologists have been relatively silent about the possibility of cross-cultural comparisons. If each culture is described in its own terms, how can cultures be compared? Many ethnoscientists argue that valid comparison is impossible. One possible answer is to compare principles of cognition found in different cultures in order to find human universals, a task undertake by Claude Lēvi-Strauss.

Ethnoscience has contributed to missiological thought through the work on ethnomethodology by Charles Kraft and on ethnomusicology by Roberta King. Others have applied the methods of ethnoscience to our *emic* understandings of cultures and worldviews. The strengths of the approach are a systematic methodology that allows replications of findings, and its ability to help us "enter into the minds of other peoples." Moreover, it enables us to get out, at least in part, from our own linguistic-cultural categories and penetrate deeply into the thinking of other peoples.

But ethnoscience has failed to remake anthropology. It is now one of the many streams in the discipline. In part, this failure is due to the fact that it failed to provide us a basis for cross-cultural comparison and for formulating generalizations. In the end, we are in danger of being locked up in different cultural prisons with no way out. Any attempts to develop meta-cultural grids for comparison are accused of being ethnocentric, a new imperialism. Lamin Sanneh accuses such accusers of being cultural believers and cultural prophets (1993).

Second, ethnoscientists tend to reduce everything to cognitive processes and communication. There is little room for dealing with the affective and moral side of human life. There is also a weak view of social systems and their power to shape cultures and persons. and a neglect of history as the reality behind cultures, societies and persons.

Third, the cognitive model used in most ethnoscience treats knowledge as totally subjective, as existing only in the minds of people. As we have seen, this based on the belief that signs consist of forms and meanings. The result is receptor-oriented communication.

Fourth, in applying ethnoscience to missions there is a danger of letting the context determine the text of Scripture. Scripture then becomes what people believe it to be, not an objective communication from outside. Ultimately this leads us to an uncritical contextualization that is willing to bend the gospel to fit each culture, and to a neglect of its prophetic call for all cultures, societies and people to be transformed by the power of God. This subjectivism, rooted as it is in an instrumentalist epistemology (Hiebert Missiologial Implciations) ultimately leaves us with total cognitive relativism and an inability to determine truth. In this, ethnoscience is more a product of the instrumentalism of postmodern science that has emerged as a reaction to the positivism of modern science. However, like positivism, instrumentalism perpetuates the divorce of cognitive processes from the moral and affective dimensions of humans.

French Cognitive Structuralism

The passion for discovering social and cultural laws based on the comparison based on empirical universals was modeled after the social sciences. But this undermined by the growing realization that different cultures construct different views of reality. No universal, timeless categories, logics or structures emerged from the many ethnographies of specific cultures, other than those that the anthropologists brought with them.

This led to a new theory that universals are found not in empirical realities but in the structures of the mind. All humans have the same minds, therefore, they must think and reason alike. "The certainty of fact is replaced with assumptions about how mind classifies experiences by virtue of its innate structure (Hobart, 1987, 25)." Levi-Strauss, one of the leaders in this field, wrote,

> In anthropology as in linguistics, therefore, it is not comparison that supports generalization, but the other way around. If . . . the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing form on content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds–ancient and modern, primitive and civilized . . . it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions (1968, 21).

Ethnographies no longer undergird generalizations. Rather they confirm the universal working of the mind. This view assumes the psychic unity of humankind, the universality of perception, and a necessarily shared rationality of humankind. The fundamental laws of culture can be reduced to the unconscious structuring of the mind.

In-depth ethnographic studies, however, have not supported the assumptions of cognitive structuralism. Not only do different cultures construct different views of reality, they use different ways of creating categories and different logics in doing so. Moreover, its heavy dependence on analogical reasoning in comparing cultures raises the question of whether similarities found are in the psychic unity of humankind, or in the mind of the ethnographer.

Cultural anthropology has contributed much to missions in recent years. The recognition that people do not live in the same world with different labels attached it, but in radically different conceptual worlds led to attempts to contextualize the gospel in each in ways that the people understand. It has helped missionaries understand the reality and power of cultural systems, including signs (such as languages), patterns of behavior, rituals, myths, beliefs and worldviews. The methods of descriptive linguistics helped missionaries to learn and analyze new languages and played a major role in the modern Bible translation movement of the last sixty years. Symbolic anthropology has helped missionaries and national leaders seeking to contextualize worship in specific cultures. Ethnosemantics has helped missionaries realize that they become participants in the communities they serve, and that both they and the people negotiate meanings through social transactions. Human relationships, not simply communication of information, become central to the mission task. Moreover, attention must be given to hermeneutics and the cultural presuppositions of the missionary. Cognitive anthropology contributes much to our understanding of doing local theologies and engaging worldview.

But notions of cultural relativism have also influenced missions, and led, at times, an uncritical contextualization of the gospel and the church. It also denies the importance of history as a human reality, and of the cosmic story, reducing everything to momentary personal perceptions.

CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES (1970- present)

In the period following World War II considerable thought was given both in anthropology and missions to the two questions posed earlier. But even as some resolution was beginning to be reached on them, another, and more fundamental, revolution in modern thought began to take place, the question of what is the nature of human knowledge itself–a question that demands a reassessment of anthropology, missions and theology themselves.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, science was seen as a process by which laws existing in nature were discovered by the systematic use of human senses, and organized into a growing body of knowledge based on digital sets and algorithmic reason. The scientist was seen as a passive observer who saw accurately (with a one-to-one correspondence) and without bias an order that existed in nature itself. Therefore, his or her statements were "true" because the corresponded to reality. 'Science was compared to building a building in which each block of knowledge added to the temple of truth;

In recent years, this concept of knowledge has been challenged as scientists became increasingly aware of the importance of understanding what is going on in the minds of the people they study, and how their role as observers shapes these understandings. It was thought that anthropologists were detached objective observers recording the facts about a people. What they presented was a photograph of reality. It became clear that the data gathered was chosen and interpreted by the observer.

If knowledge is not a photograph of reality–an objective, accurate statement of the truth, then what is it? Is it simply the creation of humans in different cultures, each constructing their own view of reality? Or does it correspond in any way to reality itself? These are key questions in contemporary anthropology. They are questions that need to be asked also in theology and missiology. What is the relationship of theology to Scripture, and to what extent is theology shaped by the cultural context of the theologian? What is the relationship of mission to the gospel and to human cultures and societies, and how can the universal gospel be contextualized in human contexts?

For the most part we in missions are about twenty years behind the current thinking in the social sciences. The growing edges of anthropology have moved on. We need to examine here in more detail the unfolding of this story, and look at a few areas in anthropology that have significance for us in missions.

Symbolic Anthropology and Semiotics

Some of the new insights into human realities have been the work of Mary Douglas and Victor Turner. Douglas is interested in the relationship between individual actions and cultural frameworks in which action is interpreted. She developed a grid/group framework for analyzing cultures, societies, and between individuals and corporate bodies. The *grid* dimension is the amount of group constraint. To be low group is to have freedom to act as an autonomous individual. The *group* dimension is the measure of group cohesion–whether people in a group do everything together (high group) or act individually (low group). Her analytical framework has been particularly helpful in analyzing specific sociocultural settings, and not in comparing whole cultures. Bruce Malina (1986) uses Douglas' work in his analysis of Scripture. Sherwood Lingenfelter (1998) applies Douglas' work in analyzing mission settings with great benefit.

Victor Turner leads us into the study of signs, symbols and symbol systems, and shows how these relate cognitively to social and personal systems. Here we begin to see the importance of sacred symbols and rituals in shaping and maintaining religious beliefs and communities. Given our Western rejection of formal symbols and rituals in our search for secular truth and individual expression, many of us view symbols and rituals in other cultures as empty, dead or idolatrous formalism that needs to be destroyed in order for true inner Christian faith to find expression. But it is we who are impoverished without nondiscursive languages to speak of realities that cannot be reduced to words. As Douglas and Turner show, it is difficult to construct and maintain sacred beliefs if these are not linked to the sacred community of the church and to sacred rites that give corporate expression to our faith.

The awareness of the importance of rituals in religious life is particularly important in missions where we deal with societies for whom rituals are central to their encoding and communicating their beliefs. Here we need to draw more from Turner's work on rituals, because these play so central a role in the religious life of most people, and because we as evangelicals, in our iconoclasm, have often rejected or misunderstood rituals in general, and so deprived ourselves of powerful ways of communicating the Gospel.[11] While retaining our emphasis on personal faith and piety, we need in modernity to learn how to express our faith in the church using living sacred symbols and rituals that renew and transform us individually and corporately. We also need nondiscursive ways to communicate the transcendence, mystery and love of God. Words alone will not do.

Another new frontier in symbolic anthropology is the study of worldviews and their formative powers. We have often communicated the gospel in terms of surface behavior (don't drink alcohol, attend church regularly) and conscious beliefs (Christ is the incarnate Son of God and the only Savior). Too often we have been unaware that beneath these forms and beliefs lie largely implicit worldviews that shape the categories and logic we think with. Too often we find young churches talk the right talk, but somehow we get the feeling that they are not saying the

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[11] See Hiebert, Shaw, Tiénou 1999. ch. 12.

same things–that prayers become a new form of magic, that the church becomes another arena for community infighting. There remains much to be done in the study of worldviews and in the definition of a biblical worldview. It is hard to think *about* what we think *with*.

Interpretive Anthropology

Current anthropologists challenge the very assumptions of the twentieth century approach to anthropology as a positivist, materialist science, and argue that it is the "communication of lived-through experience (Harries-Jones 1985, 234)." The crisis arises from uncertainty about right ways of describing reality. Anthropology as objective descriptions of sociocultural 'facts' as seen by an outside observer gave way to anthropology as shared inter-personal experiences and information of both the observer and the people. There was a growing awareness that anthropologists were very much a part of the research situation, and that they brought categories, logics and deep assumptions into the interpretation of what they observed. Moreover, they were studying people, not objects–people who had their own understandings of things. Ethnographies now had to take into account not only the views of the researcher. but also those of the people. Furthermore, the research itself should be done not only by the anthropologist but also by the people being studied.[12] Finally, the uses of research needs to be controlled not only by western academicians and universities, but also by the people being studied, for now many read what anthropologists have written about them.

This crisis of representation has raised a host of new questions. How can social realities be represented in a rapidly changing world? Who can speak for a people? What conceptual frameworks should be used in describing them? What are the consequences of the knowledge produced?

The crisis in anthropology has led to the emergence of multiple distinct anthropologies. One of these focuses on the question of presenting sociocultural realities to the academy and the world at large. At the heart of the debate are questions of hermeneutics and interpretations. With these came the question of whether anthropology is a science, or should it find its home in the a humanities? One school of thought that has emerged is interpretive anthropology (Geertz, 1973, 1988). Geertz argues that anthropology is the study of humans, and that humans cannot be reduced to purely objective scientific observations. Anthropology is more a humanity than a science.

To study humans as humans, ethnography must become the "communication of lived-through experiences." It must go beyond seek to understand the "native point of view," to an examination of the processes by which the anthropologist in the field relates to and gains knowledge of his or her subjects' systems of cultural meaning, and represents them in texts. The

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[12]An example of this is the development of Participatory Research and Action by Robert Chambers (1997), and Rabi Jayakaran at World Vision China (2003).

focus is on a deeper understanding of the research process itself. It recognizes that anthropologists must negotiate meanings with the people through the use of language and other sign, and communicate the interpretations they construct people in other cultural contexts.

In recent years Interpretive Anthropology has gained credibility through the works of Clifford Geertz (1973, 1983), who places anthropology firmly in the humanities. He rejects the overarching concepts of 'culture,' 'worldview,' 'custom,' and 'customary law,' and focuses on thick descriptions of 'local' human settings in which the minutia of culture as a symbolic system within which social action takes place and political power is generated. In so doing, he points out that there is no single culture in a community, but different groups and individuals have different views of their life, and that their identities and culture are constantly negotiated.

George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fisher (1986) follow Geertz' lead, and go a step further. They call for anthropology as a cultural critique of the anthropologist's culture. Many anthropologists have compared the cultures they study with their own. These authors go further is noting that the primary function of anthropology may be a critique of western cultures.

Interpretive Anthropology has much to contribute to missions. Missionaries must realize that they become participants in the communities they serve, and that both they and the people negotiate meanings through social transactions. Human relationships, not simply the communication of information, become central to the mission task. Attention must also be given to hermeneutics and the cultural presuppositions of the missionary.

Advocacy Anthropology

At the end of the twentieth century, anthropologists such as Peter Harries-Jones challenged the very assumptions of the earlier approaches to the study of humans, and provided a rationale and pointed to a new direction for anthropology to take in the twenty-first century. Harries-Jones notes that anthropological research is ostensibly based on the exchange of communication between human equals of two different cultures. In fact, anthropologists saw the local people as "informants,' and "objects" to be studied "as a mine whose product was extracted for export to the Western academic community (1985,27)." Rarely is there a genuine two-way exchange of information and beliefs to discover reality. In the past, anthropologists felt they had no responsibility to the people they studied other than the gift of a published ethnography, but this was published in a different language, and few, if any, benefits trickled down to the host societies. Now nonWestern students argue that anthropologists do have a responsiblity to the community in which or she lives and studies.

Harris-Jones calls anthropologists to take the people they study seriously as human beings, not simply objects of study, but this raises deep ethical questions. In the past anthropologists enjoyed the hospitality of people and wrote ethnographies in the language and intellectual categories of the researcher's culture, not the host culture. In western universities, anthropology was taught descriptively or to illustrate social principles. Anthropologists sought to

remain neutral to the scene, and hoped that the benefits of their contributions would trickle down to the people they studied, but this rarely happened. They felt little responsibility for the people they studied. In fact anthropological findings were often used to exploit the societies.[13]

As the human sciences began to study the role of scientists, science and the university in the process of producing knowledge, they became increasingly aware of the power of knowledge systems in shaping the world, and focused their attention in information as a commodity. It became clear that research, science and educational systems are not neutral. Universities as factories of relevant knowledge have become crucial to the development and viability of nations. No longer is the focus on studying the past in order to shape the future, but now the emphasis is on the future and transformation because change is seen as essential for meaningful survival In the past, 'pure' knowledge was seen as part of a higher order, and 'applied' knowledge of lesser value. Now the reverse is demanded. The day of moral neutrality is over for knowledge industries, including anthropology.

Harris-Jones and others point out that the day of moral neutrality is over. Knowledge is power used by people in the different arenas of their lives–both by anthropologists and by the people they study. In the past, anthropologists interpreted others from the view point of Western culture, and shared their knowledge with the West. Today they must become advocates of the people they study (1985, 225), interpret the points of view of the local people to those in power in their own lands, and helping them cope in a rapidly changing world. In many cases this will involve equipping and empowering minority cultures to cope successfully with cultures that impinge on them, and making governments and dominant cultures more aware of the views of the minorities. Anthropology can no longer be taught as an objective, morally neutral description of culture., and anthropologists can not see themselves as quiet observers, because to do so aids the rulers, colonial or other. As Jacob Loewen notes, "Students of anthropology must be taught that ethnographic and cultural knowledge carries with it responsibilities to facilitate mutually beneficial interaction between different social and racial groups (1975, 48)."

In recent years applied or advocacy anthropology has returned as a central concern in anthropology, but may issues remain to be resolved. The universal nature of human rights were affirmed in Paris (1789), Philadelphia (1791), Geneva (1948) and Capteown (1996) (Goodale 2006, 29). The question is, do these exist as natural rights that are universal, timeless, irrevocable and entailed by common nature? If so, on what moral basis do these exist? To assume these as based on nature itself is to assume that the individual is ontologically preexisting any society and culture–a neoliberal view. If communitarianism is preexistent, the individual is not ontologically prior, but rather constituted by his or her society and culture (Goodale 2006:25-37).

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[13]An example of this is British anthropologists who studied African political systems so that the British colonial administrators could rule the people more effectively by means of 'indirect rule.' British anthropologists also trained colonial administrators to be more culturally sensitive.

There has been a critique of traditional development projects as the new agendas of powerful governments (Escobar 1995, Ferguson 1997), and calls for more balanced, people oriented approaches to development (Lewellen 2002, Jayakaran, Carothers and PRA). The latter has been modeled by World Vision in its outreach to the poor and oppressed.

Postmodern Anthropology

It should not surprise us that anthropologist have begun to apply the theories and methods they used to study other peoples to examine their own societies and cultures. Traditionally they have compared the cultures they studied with their own to come to grips with what in Western terms was exotic.

A recent school to emerge out of this self-analysis is postmodern anthropology. In part, this is a reaction to the arrogance of modern positivism, to colonialism and to a concern for the subaltern and oppressed. It critiques the creation by anthropologists of the "other" (and consequently the definition of "self") as the driving force for all previous theories in the human sciences. It argues that all grand narratives and definitions of "others" are set up by the elite and oppressive, thus not true. Alan Barnard writes,

> Postmodernism constitutes a critique of all 'modern' understandings. Postmodernists define what is 'modernism' as what is all-encompassing; they reject both grand theory in anthropology and the notion of completeness in ethnographic description. On the latter score, they oppose the presumption of ethnological authority on the part of the anthropologist. Thus reflexivity, and ultimately embodiment, came to the fore. . . [It] levels its critique at the creation of the 'other' (and consequent definition of the 'self') as the driving force of all previous positions in the discipline (2000, 168).

One theme in postmodern anthropology is reflexivity. When anthropologists returned home, they began to study their own cultures using the theories and methods they used to study others abroad. Radical postmodern anthropologists go further. They claim that no true statement can be made about other cultures. There are only the anthropologist's perceptions and interpretations of parts of a culture, or, in the extreme view, what anthropologists say happened to them when they were in that culture. As Bernard notes, "Radical reflexivists are happy to write more about themselves doing ethnography than about the ethnographees, their subjects (2000, 174)." The result is a radical epistemological relativism that denies any possibility of knowing or making known the truth. In a stinging critique, Ernest Gelner writes,

> [Postmodernist anthropologists] agonize so much about their inability to know themselves and the Other, at any level of regress, that they no longer need to trouble to much about the Other. If everything in the world is fragmented and multiform, nothing really resembles anything else, and no one can know another (or himself), and no one can communicate, what is there to do other than express the anguish engendered by this situation in impenetrable prose (1992, 45).

A second theme is deconstruction–the rejection of grand anthropological theoretical truth, and the notion of completeness in ethnographic descriptions. In response to modernity's claim

that science is public truth, postmodernity argues that there is no truth, only culturally constructed perceptions of reality. For example, James Clifford, in his introduction, attacks the idea of ethnography as a representation of the wholeness of culture, and stresses the incompleteness of all ethnographic descriptions (1986) .

A third theme in postmodernity is its interest in power. One of the leaders in examining western scientists and their theories is Edward Said (1978) in his discourse on 'orientalism.'. He argues that the West created a notion of the East, the Orient, to dominate it by trade and colonialism, and to define itself as what the East is not. This raises the suspicion that all grand narratives are oppressive and set up by the elite, including Marxism, and Scientism.

Postmodern anthropology raises important questions with which we must wrestle, namely the ways perspectives shape reality, and the ways power is exercised in the definition of reality, both in the community and in the writing and sharing of ethnographies. There are risks in using these to deny that any objective statements can be written. Marcus and Fisher write (1986, 68),

> It is possible for this sort of inquiry to slide into simple confessionals of field experience, or into atomistic nihilism where it becomes impossible to generalize from a single ethnographer's experience. The danger in both cases is allowing the anthropologist informant dialogue to become the exclusive or primary interest.

Anthropology is learning from these discussions on reflexivity and power that it is important to be aware that anthropologists = are social actors as well as gatherers of data, and that they bring with them not only theoretical frameworks, but they are players in the local scene, and that their roles do influence what data they get and how they interpret it. But this does not mean that they can make no objectively true statements, and that they can never truly know the Other, or themselves.

Postmodern anthropology has its flaws. Ernest Gellner (1992, 22-79) attacks postmodernity for its subjectivism, relativism and self-indulgence. He writes,

> [Postmodernists] agonize so much about their inability to know themselves and the Other, at any level of regress, that they longer need to trouble too much about the Other. If everything in the world is fragmented and multiform, nothing really resembles anything else, and no one can know another (or himself), and no one can communicate, what is there to do other than express the anguish engendered by this situation in impenetrable prose (1992, 45).

The conscious Christian critique of Western societies and cultures has a long tradition, particularly among those who see the church as a manifestation of the Kingdom of God in all cultures in which it exists. Now it has become part of public discourse (xxxx). It is not surprising that missionaries who studied the social and cultural systems of the people they served, and identified with sisters and brothers in other contexts, used their insights and methods to study their own cultures when they returned home. They began to look at the West not as a sending country but as a "mission field," and asked how they should respond to it as missionaries to the West. Insiders assume they know their own societies and cultures because they live in them. Things simply are "the way things are." Returning missionaries and non-Western church

leaders come as outsiders and are forced to look at Western contexts more deeply from non-Western points of view. Moreover, they have developed theories and methods to do so. It should not surprise us that many of those involved in the critique of Western culture have been Western missionaries to the non-West and global leaders from around the world.

Finally, we must ask the critical question: What do young churches have to teach churches in the West? Hugh Montefiore writes,

> Over the last twenty years the Christian mission has made little progress in the west. And yet there has hardly been a period in the long history of Christian mission when the Church at the parochial level has seemed to be better equipped for mission. . . . The position in Western Europe is in stark contrast to that in Africa, where during the last century the Christian mission has registered the greatest advance in all its long history, and also to the position in Eastern Europe or China, where the Church has emerged from a long period of state repression with greater increased energies with vastly increased numbers (19...).

Global/local Anthropology

In recent years anthropologists have turned their attention to the 'globalization.' 'localization.' and 'regionalization' of the world (Gannon. et. al. 1994; Herzfeld, 2001; Lewellen, 2002), inspired, in part, by Immanuel Wallerstein's idea of a 'world system' that links the economies of the smallest societies to the powerful capitalist economies of the West and the Far East, generally to the benefit of the latter (1974). Sociology, economics and political science help us understand global, transnational and metanational systems. But these often overlook the local and the individual. Macro analysis shows the spread of global forces around the world, but micro studies show that most people live in local settings. The limitation and the strength of anthropology is that it seeks to understand local people and give voice to the marginalized in the world Studies show that despite globalization, local and regional identities play critical roles in the lives of most people. Out of these discussion has emerged theories of a "glocal" world, referring to the fact that people live locally, but participate in varying degrees in the emerging global networks of goods, services and information.

One question in the emerging anthropological theory of globalism is the relationship between the global and local (Cvetkovich and Kellner 1997). Some, like Kahn (1980) and Wolf (1982) have examined the relationship between the 'global' and the 'local' in cultural and economic spheres. Macro analysis shows the spread of global forces around the world, but it overlooks the fact that most people live in local settings. The limitation, and strength, of anthropology in this discussion is that anthropology is strong in understanding the local, and so can give voice to the marginals in the world. Their weakness is that their voice is seldom hear by the global leaders in power.

Studies of the global-local relationship also help us understand the rise of various 'fundamentalisms' around the world.. Many of these are reactions to modernity and

globalization, and seek to reaffirm traditional identities in the face of the corrosive acids of globalization.[14]

A second insight from global anthropology is that there are different kinds of globalizations which interact in complex ways. Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington (2002) list four major globalizing forces: 1) the spread of the English language, 2) the globalization of Western intelligentsia, 3) popular culture propagated by businesses such as McDonald's, Disney and MTV, and 4) popular movements such as environmentalism, feminism, and, above all, evangelical Protestantism, especially in its Pentecostal version. To these must be added global business and global political agencies such as the United Nations. While many cultures contribute to globalization, the dominant one now is American in origin and content.

Another set of insights emerging out of the anthropology of globalization has to do with migrants, immigrants, and refugees, both forced and voluntary, legal and illegal. Today am estimated 100 million people live outside the countries of original citizenship (Lewellen 2002, 123). Regarding refugees Lewellyn writes,

> The 20th century might deservedly be called the Age of Refugees; it is estimated that there have been 140 million people uprooted by war and the threat of political violence this century. L In 1994 alone, there were 23 million refugees.

Closely related to immigrations are diasporas–people who share a collective identity who are spread around the world, but maintain networks that sustain and nurture their identity and beliefs. Examples are the Jewish, Chinese, Sikh and Armenian diasporas (Cohen 1997). They raise the question of what is 'local'. The old definition defined it in term of space–a particular place, and small size. It has now been defined more in relational and contextual terms (Appadurai, 1996) It has been deterritorialized, and is something people carry with them. Now we can speak of local neighborhoods, self-reproducing "life-world" of relatively stable associations and shared histories, but also of transnational communities and "virtual neighborhoods" (Lewellen 2002, 187-201).

Another type of immigrant is the transnational. A transnational is a person who maintains active, ongoing interconnections in both home and host countries, and often with communities in other countries as well. Transnationalism is growing due to cheap and rapid travel and instantaneous communication, and to internationalization of corporations and job markets, It leads to new hybrid identities, and transnational communities (Crush and McDonald, 2000).

A fourth insight provided by glocalization theory is that identities in the modern world are constantly constructed and contested. In small communities, identities are often ascribed by birth. On the regional and global level today, identities are created and mobilized for political and economic reasons, often as a means to subjugate or control others. This has particular significance for the creation of the identity 'Christian' in a global world.

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[14] A. F. C. Wallace's analysis of revitalization movements seen as as reactions to modernity can help us understand fundamentalist and similar movements.

The glocalization of the world has profound implications for missions in the 21st century. Brian Stanley points out, "The missionary movement has been portrayed as one of the earliest forces of 'globalization,' creating networks and new media of communication no less powerful than those established by the global market and information technology of the twentieth century (2001 ,1)." This was true of Catholic missions of the 16th and 17th centuries, and even more so of Protestant missions of the 18tth, 19th, and 20th centuries.

The success of modern missions today raises critical questions regarding the global nature of Christianity, implications we have only begun to explore under the topics of contextualization and ecumenism, partnership, and religious pluralism.

Glocalization raises difficult questions for the Church. How should churches around the world relate to one another when there are great social, cultural and theological differences, but a common commitment to the truth of the gospel and the unity and dignity of all churches and individuals in their participation in the global processes? What does partnership mean when it comes to finances, confessions of faith, evangelism and missions? Should globalization in the churches be developed from the top down–from centralized institution built around specialists–or should it be bottom up–beginning at the local level and developing dialogues, partnerships and global networks of fellowship and ministry? If the later, then on the theological level we need a metatheology, and agreement on how we do theology.

Globalization also raises critical questions regarding the nature and role of missions. In the past missionaries went from the "Christian" West to the "pagan" non-West. Today we too often use the methods they used in the past to reach small scale, tightly-knit, resident communities in complex urban settings and wonder why we fail. In the modern world people no longer belong to 'people groups,' but participate in many different intersecting communities in different ways. The assumption that we can foster 'people movements' in complex urban settings needs to be reexamined. Today, the majority of Christians live in non-Western countries. Many missionaries are now "inbetweeners." They are bridge persons, culture brokers, who stand between worlds and help each to understand the other. They stand between the church and unreached people, and between churches and missions in different lands. This calls for a new understanding of the psychological, social and cultural nature of missionaries in the future. They must be "bicultural" or "transcultural" people, living in different worlds and nut fully at home in any one of them. We need to develop an ecclesiology and missiology that enables us to bear bold witness in a glocal world with its global powers, regional loyalties and local identities.

Glocalization also raises the question of mission to immigrants and refugees. Most voluntary immigrations take place through networks of kinship and friendship, and are more fluid than formerly thought. This has important implications for outreach to a growing population in the world. Many immigrants and refugees, particularly those who have migrated to the U.S., are particularly open to the Gospel extended to them through hospitality. More research needs to be done on immigrants and refugees and our responsibilities to them as churches and missions.

ANTHROPOLOGY AND MISSIONS IN THE 21st CENTURY

The relationship between anthropology and missions has been an ambivalent one for over a hundred years.[15] It is clear that have and can learn much from the social sciences in seeing to understand the people we serve, and to contextualize the Gospel and church in their cultures and societies. There is much more we can mine from social science theories. But we face a real danger. In recent years we have been fascinated by the power of the social science, and are in danger of leaving our biblical foundations, and, in the process, of losing the heart and soul of missions. We need to return to Scripture to lay the foundations for a theology of missions for the next century. Let me suggest a few directions in which I believe we must move.

Return to Priority of Revelation

For all the contributions the social sciences have made to missions, they cannot be the foundation for missions. If we start with anthropology, we become anthropologists, not missionaries. We will never be drive by our social science insights to give our lives for others. We will reduce mission to what we can do for god by strategizing, management and effort. Only a personal experience of the gospel, a deep sense of God's call and the support of a community of believers will motivate us to go, and sustain us in the difficult times when we face loneliness, persecution, and even death. Only Scripture offers us a message of salvation for a lost world.

It is important at this juncture that we rebuild missiology on a biblical worldview. Like the early scientists, many of whom were Christians, we need to see the sciences, including anthropology, as a branch of theology in the general broad sense–as thinking the thoughts of God after him, not theology as the division of science having to do with God. In the later view, spiritual realities are relegated to one discipline, and all the other sciences are totally secular. We must begin again with God and his divine revelation through his Word, his works and his Son.

We must also build missiology on theology–but not any theology.[16] Unfortunately, many who study theology in our schools do not hear the call to missions. They become pastors and professional theologians. Few departments theology have of missiology as an essential field in their discipline, require courses on studying humans, or offer courses on the theology of mission. We must begin with a theology in which mission has a central place, if for no other reason than

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[15] For an excellent discussion of these relationships see Robert Priest, 2001, and Darrell Whiteman, 2003.

[16] We must remember that systematic theology as we now know it was born during the twelfth century as Europe rediscovered Aristotle's work, which the crusaders brought back from Egypt and the Middle East (Finger 1985, 18-29). It was based on the same epistemological foundations as science, and many theologians, such as A. Hodge, L. Schafer, W. Sheed and A. Strong, defined theology as a kind of science. Like science, systematic theology takes a synchronic approach to the study of truth, and seeks for unchanging universals that underlie all reality.

the fact that the Bible is essentially and centrally a book about mission. Neither mission or theology will be revitalized in our day until they both are brought back together. Interestingly enough, we begin as missionaries, we must be become theologians who exegete Scripture, and anthropologists who exegete human beings. As Martin Kähler said decades ago, mission is the "mother of theology" (cited in Bosch 1991:16). Paul was the first Christian theologian because he was the first Christian missionaries, and it is intrinsically wrong to differentiate his mission and his theology. Paul's mission did not flow from his theology–his theology is a missionary theology.

How can we bring theology and mission back together again. This was the focus of the first chapter that outlines a three step process. The first is *phenomenology*–the study of humans in their contexts in order to understand them deeply. Here anthropology can help us a great deal to see and grasp the human contexts that shape our thinking, and the realities of people in other social and cultural contexts. One of our great weaknesses in missions in the past has been that we often knew little about what was going on either in the local cultures or in the thoughts and lives of new believers.

The social sciences can help us understand humans, but they can also distort our vision by defining the categories, the logic, and the theories we use to analyze human realities. We must constantly test these against Scripture. For example, the concept of "culture" as we now use it is a powerful tool in the study of people, but we are in danger of becoming captive to it. Like "mission" and "incarnation," the term is not found in Scripture. The closest terms in the New Testament to "culture" are *sarks* and *archeon,* which carry quite different meanings from "culture" as we now use it. Does this mean we must get rid of these terms and theories? No, but we must test them against biblical teaching.

The social science stop with phenomenology, but we must move on to *ontology*–to seeking to understand reality as God sees it as he has revealed it to us through Scripture. Here theology, systematic and biblical, plays a central role, for it helps us understand truth and righteousness from God's perspective.

The third step is *missiology*–evaluating humans in their contexts in the light of Scripture and leading them to Christian faith and maturity. We cannot simply =condemn the existing beliefs and practices of new converts and expect these to die. With the new believers, we must explicitly deal the old ways, keeping some and rejecting others, to lead them and us into Christian truth and maturity in one area of life after another.

These steps do not form a linear formula. Rather they are part of an ongoing process of reflection and ministry in missions. We are challenged by our reading of Scripture and by what we see around us. We apply these learnings to our ministry, but in the process we face new questions, see new things, evaluate them and apply our conclusions in our ministry. In mission, research and ministry must go together, each informing the other.

How can we develop a theoretical model that helps us to study humans and to evaluate them in the light of the gospel? We will turn to that question next, but first we need to say a few things about epistemology–the nature of our human knowledge and its limitations.

Chapter 3
The Nature of Anthropological Knowledge

Anthropologists and anthropology are embedded in human contexts. It should not surprise us, therefore, that they are deeply shaped by the cultures and worldviews in which they live. To understand the history of anthropological theory, it is helpful to examine the fundamental paradigm shifts that have been taking place from modernity, to postmodernity, and to post-postmodernity. These shifts have many dimensions to them, but we will examine primarily the epistemological and semiotic shifts and how these shaped the history of anthropological theory.

Modernity

In modernity, science became the dominant form of creating human knowledge. The epistemological foundation was Positivism.[1] The focus of this is to discover Truth that is universal and timeless. Radcliffe-Brown wrote,

> The postulate of the inductive method is that all phenomena are subject to natural law, and that consequently it is possible, by the application of certain logical methods, to discover and prove certain general laws, i.e. certain general statements or formulae, of greater or lesser degree of generality, each of which applies to a certain range of facts or events. . . . For social anthropology the task is to formulate ad validate statements about the conditions of existence of social systems (laws of social statics) and the regularities that are observable in social change (laws of social dynamics) (1958: 7, 128)."

Positivism saw scientific knowledge as an accurate photograph of reality. Facts and theories corresponded one-to-one with realities. Moreover, scientific knowledge was universal and timeless. It was true for everyone everywhere.

To assure objectivity, the scientists had to be an outside, detached observer, and had to eliminate feelings and morals from his or her judgments, because these are subjective and contaminate the truth.

Underlying Positivism is formal semiotics which holds that signs, such as words and numbers, refer directly to objective realities. The word "tree" takes on meaning because it refers to real trees in the world that can be independently experienced by everyone. In science this led to the development of extensive taxonomies classifying realities into sets, subsets and sub-subsets. There are tress, but these can be divided into Oaks, Pines, Firs, Birch and so on. These can be further divided into subtypes. The belief was that if we can discover the basic building blocks of reality, we can reconstruct the universe, which is like a building made up of many bricks, mortar and beams.

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[1] Sometimes referred to as 'naive realism.'

Positivism dominated anthropological theories until the 1930s. Anthropologists, such as E. B. Tylor, James Frazer and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, saw anthropology as a science, and modeled their research after the natural sciences. They believed their theories of social organization were timeless and universal–they applied to all peoples down through history. The beliefs of the people they studied were primitive, and the people needed to be educated in the truth, namely modern sciences.

Post-modern Deconstruction

The privileged position scientists claimed for their knowledge was challenged by philosophers of science such as Karl Popper (1957), Thomas Kuhn (1962), and Paul Feyerabend (1970). They studied scientists at work and found that they were deeply shaped by their cultures, and that they were part of the pictures they were studying. They were not objective outsiders, but passionate, moralizing insiders for whom knowledge was not only about truth but also about power.

Anthologists began to challenge Positivism when they began to study other peoples and their cultures deeply, and began to see the world through the people's eyes, not their own. This shift, led in part by Bronislaw Malinowski, led to the distinction between etic points of view–those the scientist brings with her, and emic points of view, the way the people see realities. Anthropologists continued the formulation of broad general etic theories, but increasingly their focus was on in-depth, emic ethnographies that tried to help us see the world as other people see it.

The tension between etic and emic points of view raised difficult questions. Whose questions, categories and theories should we use for comparisons between them? Which of these is 'true,' and why is it truer than another? Now we are no longer comparing 'facts' in different cultures, we are comparing different ways of looking at the facts. It is arrogant to claim that etic theories are superior to the emic understandings of the people, but without comparison between different emic views, there is no way to formulate general theories about humans. All we are left with is many different cultural worlds, none of which can judge another. The result was cultural relativism, which came to dominate anthropological theories after the 1930s.

Cultural relativism raised a profound question: can people from different cultures ever truly understand one another. Modernity assumed that all people lived in the same world. They simply attached different labels to the same realities. Postmodernity argued that people live in totally different worlds. How then can they communicate or understand one another? One answer was that the bridge between cultures is that all humans have the same minds and think in the same ways. This assumes universal rationality common to all people that provide the bridgehead into other cultures. Further research, however, showed not only do people create different categories and do so in different ways, but that they have different logics, none of which is privileged and correct. The positivist assumptions of science itself were challenged and it, too,

lost its privileged position. It became one set of belief systems over against other belief systems such as religions and animism.

To see scientists as humans deeply involved in the scenes they study, bringing with them the unexamined assumptions and worldviews of their own cultures, and the emergence of cultural relativism led to a new epistemology, namely Instrumentalism. This holds that all people see their worlds through their own cultural eyes, and that they cannot judge other cultures, claiming that their own is truer or better. The only judgements that can be made are based on pragmatics. This culture can produce more food than others, that culture develops stronger families than others.

Underlying this epistemological paradigm shift was a fundamental change in the theory of signs. Ferdinand de Saussure (19##) argued that signs do not point to objective realities, as formal semiotics affirmed. Rather signs are cultural creations and they evoke images in the mind. In other words, the English word "male" does not point to real men, but is the way English speakers group together a great many beings who share a few common characteristics, but are, in fact, infinitely diverse. Moreover, "male" must be set over against "female" to complete the classification of reality. In other words, words refer to the images people have in their heads, not to clear objective categories that exist in the real world. Signs, such as words, have external forms and internal meanings. Given this view, there is no objective way to compare cultures and to translate between them. Knowledge systems around the world form a collage--a juxtapositioning of many different pictures, but which have no unifying theme or truth behind them.

The critique of modern positivist anthropology began in the 1930s, but the implications of postmodernity continue to be worked out even today. Some, like Clifford Geertz, argue that anthropology is not a science, but belongs to the humanities. It is dealing not with lifeless objects subject to impersonal laws. It looks at humans who are living beings be beyond the range of mechanistic analysis. To understand them we need hermeneutics, not simply observation and testing.

Other anthropologists argue for a radical cultural relativism. Each culture is autonomous and whole, and there are no criteria for judging between them. We can only seek to mutually understand one another across cultural boundaries. They argue 1that we cannot develop general theories from detached points of view, that we can every really begin to understand another culture, and that in research, anthropologists can only talk about what happened to them when they lived in other cultures.

Glocal Anthropology

In recent years, there have been a growing number of critiques of postmodern anthropology (Hobart 1987). It has served as a corrective to the arrogance and imperialism of

early positivist anthropology which saw reason and empiricism as sufficient to determine truth. But postmodernity offers no answers to the questions humans face in living together in a culturally pluralist world full of oppression, violence or poverty. Postmodern anthropology is in danger of becoming voyeurism, a study of the exotic, with little to offer modern humans today other than entertainment.

Both modernity and postmodernity fail because they are rooted in the proposition that either translation is possible and propositions true across languages and cultures or we can never understand other people at all. Mark Hobert writes,

> This 'myth of perfect communication' presumes that understanding cannot be partial, even in our own culture. . . . Behind the myth are several perniciosus and related dichotomies. Either one understands people or one doesn't. Either statements are true or they are not. Either native beliefs accord with the universality of logic, perception, classification or what not, or they a culturally specific. Either native utterances are factual [propositional or rational] or they are symbolic (1987, 38).

Post-postmodern anthropology challenges this dualism and is seeking to discern the nature of human knowledge and its relationship to 'reality.'

One answer to the epistemological question is Critical Realism, which a much humbler view of human knowledge. It holds that reason and empiricism are not sufficient to discern the truth. They are, however, useful guides we can draw upon. It rejects cultural relativism in which ethnographies are seen as elegant fiction, or ingenious and informative sketches. It recognizes that as humans we see through a glass darkly, but that we *do see.*

Critical Realism allows us to study and compare cultures without the arrogance and domination of positivist science or nihilism of instrumentalism.. It sees all humans as seeking to make sense of the world around them. They do so by constructing knowledge systems which are attempts to understand a real world outside. The world outside does not fall into neat categories, such as 'trees,' 'bushes,' 'grass,' and so on. Each tree is different from the next, and each category we create overlaps with the others we use to make sense of our world.

Critical realism acknowledges the fact that different cultures can construct different mental images of reality, but that these need, in some way, to correspond to reality, or life is impossible. If, when we drive down a road, our mental images of traffic do not match reality, we will soon be dead.

Knowledge, in a critical realist view is like maps. Maps are selective: there are road, railroad, sewer and electrical power maps. Moreover, maps are simplified schemes that claim to be true on certain things, but not on others. For example, a road map must show the relationship between various streets to be true, but it need not show each curve and bridge to be true. In fact, if a map contains too much information, it is useless. Knowledge in critical realism is always focused, partial and approximate. Human minds cannot grasp the fullness of this universe, let alone God.

The fact that maps differ does not mean they are contradictory. Rather, each maps a certain aspect of reality. Similarly, different cultures (and different academic disciplines) focus on different parts of reality, and ignore what may be seen as central in other cultures. In anthropology it is important, then, to learn to see the world through different eyes, and realize that all have some validity and some limitations. The development of an etic grid emerging from many emic perspectives can help us not only to translate between cultures, but also to see a much bigger picture of reality.

To use another metaphor, critical realist knowledge is like a montage. We see thousands of faces of people who have been patients of a certain doctor, but they are put together so that we see behind these pictures the face of the doctor himself. Or we see the faces of many Christians, and taken together we see the face of Christ.

Critical realism is based on the semiotics of Charles Peirce. Peirce argued that a sign is not made up of form and reality, nor of form and meaning. It is triadic. Signs are forms that point to realities and evoke images in the minds of the people. The people see a tree and construct the word 'tree' which is tied to their mental maps. They are able to talk about trees without pointing to real trees, because their knowledge is in their heads, but if need be, they can check with one another to see if they mean the same things but going out and pointing to real trees. In other words, Peirce argues, signs have forms, realities and meanings. They have an objective side– the real tree, a subjective side–their mental classification and image of trees, and an experienceable form–the word 'tree'. Signs are the links between minds and the world outside.

Critical realism takes a humble view of human knowledge, and does not grant a privileged position to science or any other belief system. This is not to say that all are equally good in answering specific questions, but none can claim authority to judge the others. Each can bear witness to what it claims to have found, and judgment between them is ultimately a matter of faith, not proof. Rather it recognizes "the fact that even the truest description comes nowhere near faithfully reproducing the way the world is. . . . (no true description) tells us *the* way the world is, but each of them tells *a* way the world is (Goodman 1972: 29, 31).

Critical realism also brings thoughts, feelings and morals together. All three are present in all belief systems. Bracketing out feelings and morals does not lead to objective knowledge, for all knowledge has both objective and subjective dimensions to it.

Critical realism is based on community hermeneutics. No one specialist sees and knows the whole picture. It is through dialogue that we see reality from different perspectives. Burke writes, "it is by the approach through a variety of perspectives that we establish a character's reality. . . . [W]e could say that characters possess *degrees of being* in proportion to the variety of perspectives from which they can with justice be perceived (1969, 504).

Cross-cultural understandings begin with recognizing that there are different ways of representing reality, and that a dialectical process is needed for each party to understand the other, and to compare the two. We begin by using all kinds of information to try to grasp what

our informants tell us about what we see. Our first impressions are often wrong, but as we interact with the people, our previous assumptions are modified, and our knowledge and understanding comes closer to theirs. This dialectic between our informants and our own representations goes both ways. As we study them, they are studying us, and as we increasingly learn to think as they do, and they begin to understand us. We need to keep in mind that in all communication, even within a culture, there will be widespread miscommunication, but there is also a possibility of basic communication. Our mutual understandings are never complete or perfect, but they do enable us to communicate and to learn from one another, and to understand one another more fully.

We must also remember that in an increasingly glocalized world, people from many cultures interact with one another, and that knowledge from one to another is spread, reinterpreted, misunderstood, and corrected. No culture is an island to itself. It has links to the world that are bridgeheads for the development of mutual understandings.

In this post-post modern setting, it is important that as Christians to examine our own cultural assumptions and to examine them in the light of Biblical teachings. This is especially true of our epistemological and semiotic assumptions, for these are foundational to the way we think about Christianity and do missions. This new era also affords us tremendous possibilities in Christian missions. We no longer have to be God's lawyers, proving to people the truth of the Gospel. We can be bold witnesses to what we know. The gospel we bring is not abstract propositional truth, it is a living relationship with Christ that involves our whole beings–cognitive, affective and moral. We no longer come with a sense of arrogance and superiority, as those who have found the whole truth. We invite people to follow Christ and the church and to let him transform their cultures.

We will turn now to examining some of the methods anthropologists use to study various aspects of humans, and look at their strengths and limitations.

Chapter 4
A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF HUMANS

In doing missional anthropology we must begin with *phenomenology*: with deeply studying humans and their contexts in order to understand them and the ways they see their worlds. But how do we do this? Humans are studied by physicists, chemists, biologists, psychologists, sociologist anthropologists, theologians, artists, historians and many other scholars. Each brings their perspectives, but the result is a hodge-podge of ideas, each of which may be helpful, but none of which gives us the whole picture. How can we bring these together?

INTEGRATING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

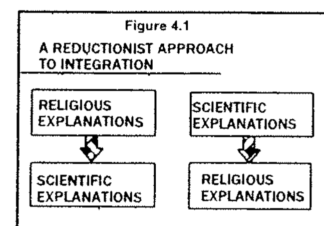
First, we will examine synchronic approaches to the study of humans what are their components, and how are these organized into larger models. We must also study humans diachronically: as the stories and story of their personal, corporate and human histories. We will leave diachronic approaches for another time.

Reductionism

The simplest way to integrate these different perspectives is through reductionism. Here all insights are ultimately reduced to a single explanatory system. Religious truths are reduced to cultural beliefs, cultural beliefs to social constructs, societies to aggregates of individual humans, humans to animals, animals to chemical reactions, chemical reactions to atomic particle, atomic particles to quantum particles. In the end, there are nothing but masses of wiggling loops or vibrating strings. All the rest, including humans, is epiphenomenal.

This way to integrate knowledge is self-defeating. Ludwig von Bertalanffy writes, "Regarding this theory, I am in fundamental disagreement, not because of . . . metaphysical prejudices, but because the theory does not fit the facts. . . Human beings (and organisms in general) are not stimulus-response machines, as the theory presupposes. . . (1981, 15)." When applied to scientists, because in studying humans they are studying themselves, they and their theories are nothing more than strings vibrating in different patterns.

One particularly devastating reductionism has to do with science and theology. One form of reductionism is scientific reductionism (figure 4.1). This is common among non-Christian scientists who reject the claims of Christianity. Some see it as a useful fiction that holds societies together. Others see it as a harmful opiate that justifies oppressive social systems. Many see Christianity as a human creation having to little to do with its claims of truth. Few Christians would consciously admit to such reductionism. It is, however, one of the fundamental assumptions on which many scientific theories are built, and an uncritical use of these theories leaves God outside our everyday worlds, and undermines our faith in God.



A second form of reductionism is theological reductionism. Some Christians reject scientific knowledge altogether. They attribute all human problems, such as illnesses, to spiritual causes and refuse to go to science for answers, for fear that science will lead them astray. Others are willing to make use of scientific knowledge because it is useful, but do not seriously examine the conceptual foundations on which it is built.

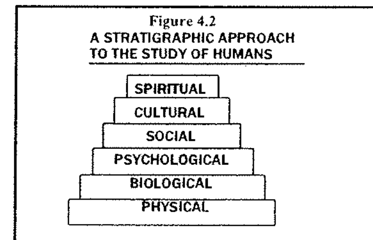
There is a real danger in this approach for us as Christians. First, there is a measure of mental dishonesty to it. On the one hand, most of us are willing to use what the sciences have to offer–modern medicine, cars, television, airplanes, computers, cell phones, communication theories, counseling insights and knowledge of human societies. On the other hand we are unwilling to give credit where it is due for these advances in human knowledge and technology.

Second, and more seriously, in using the ideas and the products of the sciences for practical purposes, we bring its assumptions into our thinking unawares. It is not uncommon, for example, to find Christians who epress faith in Scripture but who live their lives on the basis of pragmatism and materialism.

Stratification

A second way to integrate different perspective of humans is compartmentalization–what Clifford Geertz calls the "stratigraphic method." The validity of each system of thought is accepted, but each is assigned to different compartments (figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2
A STRATIGRAPHIC APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF HUMANS



Many people, including theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, argue that the sciences are matters of fact and truth. Religion, they say, is a matter of feelings–int provides people with meaningful transcendent experiences. Some, such as Immanuel Kant, argue that religion is a matter of morality–it provides people with values that regulate their behaivor and make corporate life possible. Most Christian reject this view. Christianity, they hold, is about facts and truth.

Modernity imposes another stratigraphic dualism on us. As Lesslie Newbigin points out (1989), in the west science is seen as public truth. All students, including those in Christian schools, must study mathematics, physics, chemistry and the social sciences. Religion, however, is seen as a matter of personal truth, as a matter of faith, not facts and experimental verification. No classes on Christianity, Islam or Hinduism are required. In fact, they cannot be taught as truth in public schools. While this compartmentalization enables people of different disciplines and religions to live peacefully together, it undermines their convictions that their beliefs are part of the greater Truth. Christian "beliefs" are left to govern Christians at home, but scientific "truth" rules their public lives (Bellah et. al. 1985).

Compartmentalization in a more subtle form finds wide acceptance in Christian circles. Many Christians affirm Christian truth with regard to the gospel and supernatural maters such

sin, salvation, miracles and prophecies, but they use scientific theories to expain and respond to immediate "natural events" such as illnesses, technology, and business decisions. This leads to an other-worldly Christianity and to the secularization of everyday life. It also produces a sharp distinction between evangelism, which is seen as a spiritual matter, and social ministries such as healing and education, which are left to the sciences. A recent variation of this dualism is to use theology to define the gospel, but to use the methods of social and business sciences to grow churches. This approach fits the western worldview with its emphasis on human control, planning, pragmatism, problem solving and "doing something."

Reducing Christianity to emotions, values, private opinions, or supernatural truth secularizes large areas of our lives. If we preach Christ, but turn to secular sciences for answers to our everyday problems, we lose sight of Him. We are busy planning and working, but there will be little of God in what we do. Scripture is clear: God created both the heavens and the earth, including humans, and he continues to be constantly involved in both.

Integration

A third approach to bring together different perspectives in the study of humans is to integrate them into a single theory. Ideally we would like a grand unifying theory that incorporates all knowledge into one system of explanation. In reality, this is impossible because we are finite humans and cannot comprehend at one time the infinite complexity and fully story of God and this universe. At best, our theories are partial explanations of reality. It is also true that we live in human cultures which shape how we think and live. We cannot occupy a position outside of societies and cultures. Even our attempts to develop metacultural grids are themselves formulated in the symbols and thought patterns of particular cultures.

To bring different perspectives together, we must recognize that each focuses on certain aspects of human beings, and of necessity leave out many others. The analogy of maps helps understand the nature of human knowledge. To understand a city we need a number of maps, each of which tells us some truth about it. We need maps of road, political jurisdictions, sewage and electrical systems, building zones and so on. It is impossible to chart all the facts about a city on one map. Similarly, to describe human realities we need different maps including theology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, biology, chemistry and physics. Each contributes to our understanding of the whole. None is complete by itself.

Another useful analogy is blueprints. To construct a house we need different blueprints diagraming different parts of the building: structure, wiring, plumbing and landscaping. The analogy of blueprints is an apt one because there is one master blueprint that presents the basic structure of the house. As Christians we hold that this encompassing blueprint is a biblical worldview that helps us see the big picture of reality presented in Scripture and in nature. This begins with the God of the Bible and includes the reality of an orderly creation, humans shaped in the image of God, the fall, redemption through the death and resurrection of Christ, and eternal life in him. The fullest expression of this worldview is found in the New Testament and in the teachings of Jesus. Theology, science, and humanities chart the details and applications of this

worldview. When they conflict, we must reexamine both our different understandings as well as our worldview to seek a resolution.

The blueprints of the same house must be complementary, that is, the information they provide must fit together without contradiction. For example, the electrical blueprints should not show wires running where the structural blueprint shows no wall. In complementarity we take the theories of each discipline seriously with regard to its own context, the questions it asks, the data it collects and the methods it legitimates. But we must also check to see that they are congruent with other theories.

Systems

In recent years, systems approaches have emerged as a powerful model to study complex realities. The pioneer was Ludvig von Bertalanffy (1981). Since then the has undergone elaboration and critique, and now provides a well development theory of complex organizations (Bailey 19xx, Land 1973), 'Society for General Systems Research 1982). Systems theory is now used to understand such complex fields as ecology, psychology, life (Miller 1978), the military[1], and institutional organizations (Scott 19xx)..

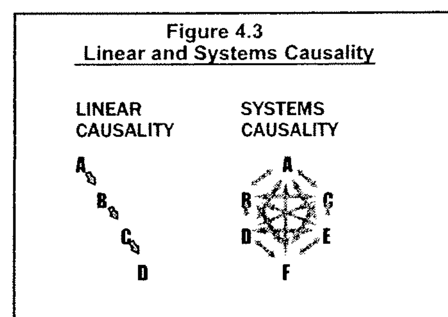
What is a system? Howard Brody and David Sobel give a starting definition:

> A system is an organized set of components regarded as a whole consisting of interdependent parts. The parts can be replaced by similar parts without severely disrupting the system, but alteration of the organization among the parts will disrupt the system. Each system can be a part of another higher-level system. A hierarchical pattern of system of systems can be formed to represent the living systems (1979, x).

Systems see causality as bidirectional. Both reductionist and stratigraphic approaches to integration are based on linear logic. A causes B, which in turn cause C. To integrate different parts we need a systems view of causality. A can cause B and C, but B and C can also cause A (figure 4.3). The three are related, and change in any one of them affect the other two. Bertalanfy writes,

> You cannot sum up the behavior of the whole form the isolated parts, and you have to take into account the relations between the various subordinated systems and the systems which are super-ordinated to the in order to understand the behavior of the parts (1968, 68).

Figure 4.3
Linear and Systems Causality



[1] In Vietnam some said the failure was due to the fact that the American forces fought four wars: army, navy, air force and marines. After that a 'system of systems' approach to help the U.S. military fight as a single integrated force.

Bidirectional causality is often referred to as 'feedback.'
There are basically two types of feedback: a negative feedback to return the system to previous equilibrium and a positive feedback to stimulate growth and maturation. Each level of hierarchy has its specific information patters. The information flow is not limited to a hierarchical level. It may influence the adjacent levels and even jump to influence widely spaced levels (Brody, Sobel et. al. 1979).

There are several characteristics of systems. First, the whole is greater and different from the sum of its parts. Single components cannot be properly understood apart from their place in the system. Indeed complex living systems cannot be understood as the sum of their parts, but must be understood in terms of the ways that parts and subsystems function. Particularly the way that they continually change their relationship to each other and to the system–and the environment around them. The fun of figuring the whole this out is that all living things and all their sub-systems are spontaneously active.

Second, systems are frequently structured in ways that individual members are systems at the next lower level. The result is a hierarchical structures that combine systems into ever higher levels of order. At the highest level we have what some call a 'system of systems.'

Mechanistic and Organic Systems

Systems can be divided into two broad types: mechanical and organic. Examples of the former are complex machines, such as cars and computers. These are closed systems based on the notion of equilibrium. Dis-equilibrium is bad, and the primary forces that can disturb this stasis is external forces.

Living systems, on the other had, are open systems. Examples of the later are living beings such as cells, organs (liver, heart), and organisms (plants, animals, humans). These also include larger systems made up of living beings, such as an ant colony or bee hive. In human systems these include groups, organizations, societies, and, ultimately, the global human web. The boundaries within and between living systems are often fuzzy or "leaky," We will focus here only on living human systems (figure 4.4).

Living systems share several characteristics. First, in contrast to healthy mechanical systems which are static and most changes are signs of malfunction, everything alive is in constant disequilibrium and change. No living system is stable for long. Change may be good or bad, but equilibrium is a form of death. This quality of change is remarkably similar among an unexpected array of living things ranging through simple cells, humans, corporations, nation-state, global systems, and the earth. Systems may change any time their contexts change. The contrast can be seen by way of illustration. Airplanes are flying machines. In flight they essentially remain unchanged. Birds are flying beings. In flight they constantly change their wings, feathers, and body shape to adjust their fight. Planes impersonally consume jet fuel. Birds digest their food and convert it into the many different compounds needed to keep them alive and in flight.

Changes in organisms are systemic. They can be initiated in any of the parts or systems, and these affect other systems or the 'system of 'systems as a whole. There is a feed-back loop which is the defining property of non-linear systems. Living systems do not simply run, they change. In this view, the living beings in a system are not simply mechanical parts or objects controlled by the system, they are active parts in shaping the whole. The result is a focus not only on the system, but also the individuals that make it up. This also introduces moral issues because it treats the parts as living beings, not as inanimate objects (Lash, Scott 2001, viii).

Third, change in living systems is due to their relationships to their changing relationships with their environments.

> Living systems are continuously exchanging matter, energy, and information with their environments and must periodically adapt their inner activities to accommodate changes in the environment. Environment is simply and relatively defined as everything outside the boundaries of the system (Brody and Sobel 1979, xx)

Finally, new components introduced into a system are normally reinterpreted within the framework of the system. For example, when pills were first introduced to Papua New Guinea tribals, they saw these as new and more powerful forms of magic.

Figure 4.4

MECHANISTIC SYSTEMS	ORGANIC SYSTEMS
• static -- change is bad. New improved models replace old	• dynamic, growth and change are normal
• linear causality. Change begins at one point and affects other areas	• multidirectional causality. Change begins at different places
• age, develop hardening of the categories, grow rigid, die	• reproduce, regenerate, transform themselves or die
• old corporations: bureaucracies , top down management, must communicate up through channels	• new corporations: flexocracies bottom up feedback loop, communication can jump levels
• management by engineering and control	• management by building vision, relationships, teams and ownership

Levels of Systems

In looking at living systems, we can examine different levels of organization. Human organs are made up of different cells, each of which is born, lives, serves its function in the whole system, and dies. Organs, in turn, can be seen as subsystems within the human biophysical body. Similarly the physical, biological, psychological and spiritual parts of a human interact to form a whole person. But people are not autonomous beings. They are products of and contribute to corporate human systems: social systems that organize them into societies, and cultural systems that encode their beliefs, feelings and values. To this we need to add spiritual systems, for human are spiritual realities and therefore relate to angels and fallen angels, and to God, the source of all creation.

Ultimately, in exegeting humans, therefore, it is important that we take a 'system-of-systems' approach that avoids reductionism and stratigraphic approaches to the study of humans, and denial of spiritual realities (figure 4.5). In this we must recognize that the boundaries are "leaky" within and between living systems. We must recognize that change can be initiated in any of the systems or subsystems, and that such changes affect all other human systems. Moreover, we must differentiate when changes take place between cause and symptoms. For example, biological problems can cause disruption in our family (social system), and eventually force to reexamine our theological explanations (cultural system), and our prayer life (spiritual system). Similarly, living in known sin can cause biological, social and cultural symptoms. Often in examining humans individually and corporately, it is difficult to find the root cause for the changes, and to treat symptoms with the hope that the problem will go away.

Human systems are influenced by changes in the outside environment. Climate changes can radically change the social, cultural and personal lives of a society. On the other hand, changes in human systems affect the outside environmental systems, for instance through deforestation, and urban spread.

Systems approach is not the full answer. There is always the tendency to stratify them. Economists treat economics as foundational and define human well being ultimately in economic terms. Sociologists define it in terms of social health. Christians are in danger of defining it in spiritual terms. A true system of systems approach must rank priorities of human health, but do so recognizing the importance of that all systems play in achieving that well being.

In our analysis drawing on the insights that anthropology can provide to missions, we will focus on social and cultural systems, although these are seen in their relationship to the biological and physical systems to which they are related. Psychological anthropology throws some light on psychological systems. We will need to constantly add the awareness of the spiritual system and how it relates to the others.

SYSTEM OF SYSTEMS

As we noted earlier, we can study humans in terms of different systems: physical, biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual. Each of these throws unique understandings on our humanity, but none is adequate in itself to give us the whole picture. For that we need to see each of these as a system in a larger 'system-of-systems.' (Figure 4.1)

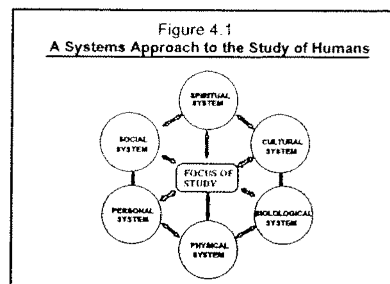


Figure 4.1
A Systems Approach to the Study of Humans

In studying humans it is important to remind ourselves that we are physical beings, and that our physical systems influence deeply the way we live. The same is true of biological, psychological, social and cultural systems.

Too often we stop here and do not look for the spiritual systems at work in the world. Those of us who are influenced by modernity must also begin to see spiritual systems as part of our everyday world. This is particularly hard for us to do as modern people, because modernity has relegated the spirit world to fiction. As Christians, we must take these systems very seriously, and begin to see how the angels and fallen angels are involved in human lives, and, above all, how God is ever present and acting in all areas of our lives.[2]

Human physical, biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual systems are symbiotically related. This is particularly true of social and cultural systems which involve groups of humans living and working together. On the one hand, societies shape cultures. We talk to one another and in so doing reinforce and change our language. We organize activities and create rules to do so. We make computers and soon think of the mind as a supercomputer. In everyday life we create and recreate our culture.

On the other hand, culture shapes society. Culture is the map we use to live our lives. Without this map, the world is meaningless and chaotic--like trying to drive in a strange city with out a map. We try to act as good fathers and mothers by doing what our culture tells us "good fathers and mothers" do. We kneel, bow, or hold up our hands in prayer because our culture tells us that is how to worship God. Our cultural knowledge enables us to produce food, make tools, heal the sick, build cares, and fly airplanes. These, in turn, alter radically the way we live and relate to one another. In short, cultures make social life possible.

Because of this constant interaction between how we live and how our culture tells us to live, it is not always easy to distinguish between what is social and what is culture. Nevertheless, it is helpful for analytical purposes to do so. For instance, each culture prescribes how good fathers and mothers should rear their children, but a particular couple may act differently from the norm. If their social behavior differs too much form the cultural norms, other people in the society will act to stop it.

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[2] For some preliminary reflections on taking spiritual realities into account in our everyday lives see Hiebert, Shaw, Tiénou, 1999.

A systems of systems approach helps us in Christian ministries to exegete individuals and groups of people. This is an essential step in missional theology--in making the Gospel known to humans in their social and cultural contexts.

HISTORY

Finally, we must keep in mind that worldviews exist in and are deeply shaped by their historical contexts. The west has been deeply shaped by Greco-Roman and Hebrew worldviews, China by Confucius and Buddha, and Latin America, Iberian, African, Aztec and Mayan worldviews. A full system of systems approach must see them as being shaped by and shaping an ever changing world (figure 3.7).

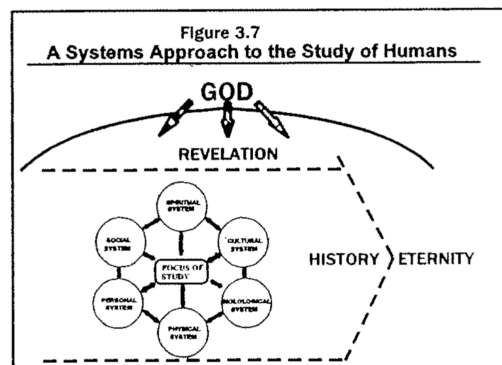

Figure 3.7
A Systems Approach to the Study of Humans

Cultures and societies exist in time and are constantly recreated by the people in their social transactions. People learn their worldviews from their parents and their communities. It is primarily ideas from the past, therefore, that shape those of the present. But people can and do change their worldviews through changes in their surrounding worlds and changes in their own ways of thinking. We will examine worldview change later.

Chapter 5
ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

There is a great lack of systematic, theoretically based research in missions. Science, business and government invest significant percentages of their budgets in research. Mission leaders and practitioners, with some exceptions,[1] have no programs or budgets for research. Most imitate the practices of others who have gone before, or follow current fads based on anecdotes and untested hypotheses. Where research has been done, it largely macro-demographic and quantitative (David Barrett and Patrick Johnson), or ethnographic and descriptive (Caleb Project and Joshua Project). The former is helpful primarily for mission strategists in mission headquarters. It offers little to the missionary entering a local community. The latter helps missionaries to begin to understand their people, but is not grounded in theoretical and theological frameworks that can guide them in how to do their work. It is difficult to get mission agencies to spend any significant amount of their funds on systematic research, or to use the findings of such research in planning their work. Without good research, we waste many of the resources Gold has given us, human and material, to carry out our mission to the world. We must to make thorough, theoretically based research a central part of our ministry if we want to avoid the current confusion in missions.

Missiology as a Discipline

Before we examine missional research, we need to define what we mean by missiology, because the research topics and methods will be determined by how we view the subject. A discipline as defined by: 1) the critical questions it seeks to answer, 2) the data it examines, and 3) the methods it accepts as legitimate. And a discipline is embedded in a worldview made up of the fundamental 'givens' the discipline takes to be true (Laudin 1977).

Missiology is a discipline, a body of knowledge debated by a community of scholars seeking to answer certain critical questions. It is a discipline not because it has arrived at one universally agreed upon answer, but because those in the field are seeking to answer the same questions by using accepted methods of inquiry and examining the same data.

The critical question in missiology is how to communicate the Gospel to people in their historical and sociocultural contexts. To answer this question missiologists must examine what they mean by the Gospel. They must draw on Systematic Theology[2] which studies the

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[1] One of the lasting contributions of Donald McGavran was the call for systematic research based on a clearly articulated theory–in his case Church Growth. While the theoretical framework underpinning Church Growth may be questioned, his call for systematic research must be affirmed.

[2] Systematic Theology helps us understand the biblical worldview, but it has no section on missions in its field, despite the fact that mission is central to the nature of God, and his work in creation and salvation. Missions is seen as 'applied' theology, but the methods used for applying theology are not defined. Systematic Theology rarely motivates people to go into

underlying structure (synchronic) of Scripture, and Biblical Theology[3], which looks at the underlying story (diachronic) of Scripture. They must also draw on studies of human history and human sociocultural systems. Missiologists then must study how the Gospel can be communicated to humans in their many settings.

The study of missiology covers four main areas, each of which has its own central questions (figure 5. 1), data to be examined and methods to be used. It examines the place of mission in theology, using the philosophical methods of Systematic Theology. It looks at the mission of God as a central theme in the unfolding story of God's revelation, using the methods of Biblical Theology. It studies the history of the missionary outreach of the church down through history using the methods of historiography. Finally, it studies human social and cultural systems using the methods of the human science in order to understand how best to communicate the Gospel in specific human contexts.[4] The missiologist seeks to translate and communicate the Gospel in the language and culture of real people in the particularity of their lives, so that it may transform them and their cultures into what God intends for them to be.

There is, today, a great lack of missiological research. As missiologists we are driven by the needs of the people we serve, and so are committed to activism. We often find it hard to take time to reflect deeply and to develop sound theoretical frameworks for our ministry. Even when research is done, our tendency is to think of first doing research and then doing ministry. The danger is that we cut off research too soon and rarely return to it, or we extend research so long we never get around to ministry. Research and ministry must go hand in hand. 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.

Research in missions has several important uses. First it helps us gather information for the sake of making informed decisions, and to correct the course of our actions. Too often we

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missions, and does not answer the theological questions raised by missions, such as dealing with spirit possession, and the nature of divine guidance and healing in specific human situations.

[3] Neither the study of Biblical Theology nor Church History have been central in motivating people to go out as missionaries. One focuses on Scripture, the other on the history of the church.

[4] Many say that in drawing on the theories and methods of the human sciences, missiology is in danger of becoming captive to the social sciences. There is a real danger here, just as there is a great danger that Systematic Theology become captive to the theories, logic and methods of Greek philosophy, and Biblical Theology become captive to the theories, logic and methods of modern historiography. To think at all we must draw on human theories and their accompanying methods, because we as theologians and missiologists are humans rooted in history and culture, but we must hold them lightly. We dare not absolutize them and make them equal to Scripture, which is divine revelation. All theologies are human reflections on Scripture, and all are shaped by the historical and sociocultural contexts in which they are done. We must not only use human theories and methods, but also constantly examine and evaluate these in the light of Scripture, even as we are using them to try to 'see' reality.

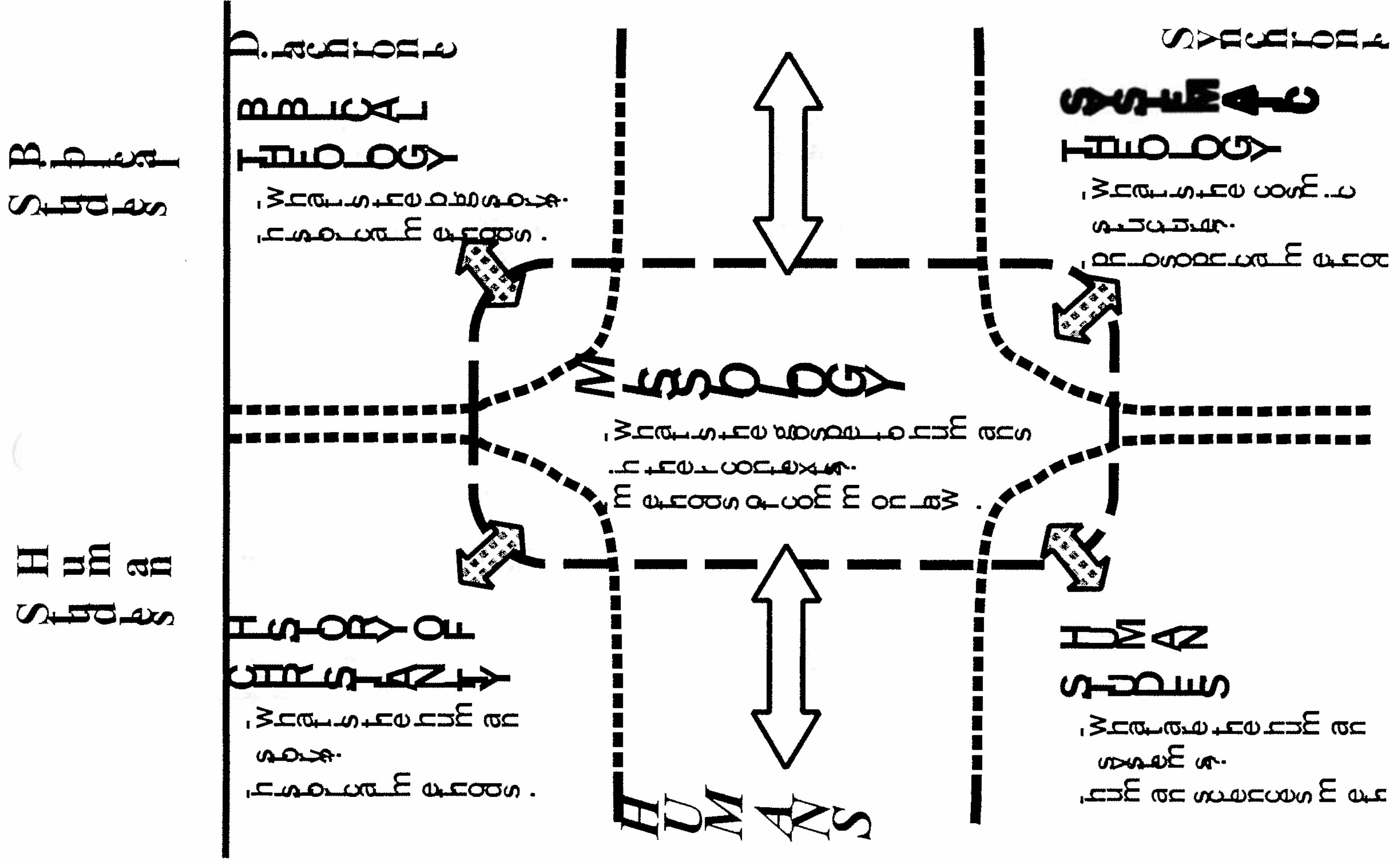
Figure 5.1
The Disciplines of Missiology
DIVINE REVELATION
Biblical Studies
Diachronic
BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
-what is the biblical story?
-historical methods.
Synchronic
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
-what is the cosmic structure?
-philosophical method
MISSIOLOGY
-what is the gospel to humans in their contexts?
methods of common law.
Human Studies
HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY
-what is the human story?
-historical methods.
HUMAN STUDIES
-what are the human systems?
-human sciences meth
HUMANS

simply keep doing what we have always done and what others are doing, and base our decisions on anecdotes rather than on solid information. We need to constantly evaluate our activities and programs in the light of solid research to correct drift and blind routine.

Second, good research can help us to raise the church's awareness of missions, and to motivate it to action. Self-studies help us see both the work and ourselves, and thereby make ujs aware of the need and posibilities of ministry.

Third, research can help us empower the church we serve to study its own situation and to take action. In recent years, we have become increasingly aware of the fact that not only should we do research as outside observes, but also we should be insiders helping the church and mission to do research itself. Doing research together with people we serve helps them build confidence and abilities, and teaches them how to do study and reflection for themselves.

Finally, we need research to see ourselves. Too often we are blind to our own biases and limitations. Self-reflection in research acts like a mirror for it helps us see our own historical and cultural contexts, and how these shape our understanding of missions.

Anthropological Research

Here we will examine some of the methods used by anthropologists in their research. These are methods we can use in the first step in missiological theology: **phenomenology**. Here our aim is to understand human beings in their contexts in order to communicate the Gospel to them in ways they understand. Like all methods, including those of philosophy used in Systematic Theology, and history used in Biblical and Church history, these are human efforts to try to understand certain realities. None of these methods is fully capable of grasping the truth, and all are themselves part of larger cultures. We, therefore, need to examine them carefully, but not to absolutize any one of them. Taken together, they can throw light on different parts of the Gospel and of human beings.

Macro and Micro Research

Broadly speaking, research in the human sciences ranges between the two poles of macro and micro analysis. The former seeks to examine the big picture, the latter specific human situations. It has been called a 'balcony' or 'helicopter' view of humans. It is to study a whole city or nation. To do so, the researcher must be outside the field to examine the various units [e. g. ethnic groups in a city, classes, migration patterns and the like], and their relationships to each other. This requires ways to study whole populations, or samples of populations to gain validity. The result is a stress on sampling and quantitative methods of analysis. The categories and perspective is that of the analyst. In this approach we lose sight of individuals and their perspectives. We are concerned with broad generalizations.

` The other research pole is micro analysis. This seeks to understand the situation from the point of view of the humans involved. This is a 'street level' approach to studying humans. It r equires an involvement with humans as individuals [participatory research], and of trying to understand the ways they view reality [*emic* studies[5]] in contrast to the outside researcher's theories of reality [*etic* studies]. This raises profound questions of intercultural hermeneutics, and the ability of the research to truly understand the world as seen by the people, and the methods needed to gain that understanding. It also raises deep questions of the ethics of doing research on humans, because research produces knowledge, and knowledge is power not only in the academy, but also in the lives of the people being studied.

Closely related to the macro-micro continuum is the question of the validity of the findings. In macro studies, the ideal is to study the whole population. Rarely is this possible, so the study is limited due to the time and resources available for the study. One way to limit it is to narrow the focus of what is studied to a few variables, and to assume that other variables are constant. The variables to be studied are determined by the theory informing the study. The danger, here, is reducationism— to overlook variables that in fact are significant to the study. The second way to limit the study is to choose a sample from the population that is representative of the whole. Here the questions of sampling become critical, for the validity of the whole study depends on the validity of the sample.

Micro studies begin on the other end of the continuum. These are ethnographies that examine specific human situations in great detail with no restriction on the variables that can be introduced to explain the situation. The result is 'thick description'[6] This avoids the reductionism of macro-analysis, but introduces the problem of great piles of data that need analysis, and the problem of intercultural hermeneutics. Another problem is that micro-anaysis is the study of one case in great depth, which leaves us with little ability to formulate theory, to compare different human cultures, and to formulate generalizations about humankind.

The middle ground between these poles of micro and macro analysis examines more than one case or situation. Many anthropologists move beyond single ethnographies to the examination of two or more cases. This enables them to formulate broader generalizations about

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[5] The terms *etic* and *emic* were coined by Kenneth Pike of Wycliffe Bible Translators. *Emic* is the way the people we study see reality. Here we study their categorties, logics and explanation systems. *Etic* is the outside scientific view of reality based on the careful study and comparison of different cultures. We must avoid assuming that *etic* is true and *emic* is false. First, people believe their perceptions of reality (*emic*) are true, and to understand them we need to understand their perceptions. Moreover, as Christians, we must begin with them and their *emic* perceptions to evangelize and transform their culture. Second, as Christians we need to test the perceptions of science (*etic*) against a biblical understanding of reality. Science, too, has its cultural biases which need to be examined.

[6] The term was coined by Clifford Geertz, and refers to deep, detailed ethnographies of specific human situations in order to understand the cultures in which they are embedded.

a single culture [e. g. several village study to generalize about Indian village life], to compare two or three cultures [e. g. a comparsion of Indian and Mexican villages], and to do ethnology–the formulation of broad theories about humans based on the comparsion of many cultures (see appendix 1). The latter requires the formulation of an *etic* grid which, on the one hand allows for the development of panhuman theories, but, on the other, raises the question whether such *etic* analysis truly captures the *emic* perspectives of the people in different cultures.

Thick ethnographies are important in missions to help missionaries understand the people they serve. But in themselves they do not help us to understand the coming of the missionary and the Gospel from outside the culture–in other words, intercultural situations. Moreover, single ethnographies do not help us to understand humans in general. Nor do they lead to the development of general missiological theories.

Ethnological studies involving the deep study of specific cultures, and comparisons between them to formulate broad generalizations are vital to missiology. It is here that we are the weakest in our understanding what is happening in missions around the world.

Ethnographic Research

Ethnographic research is central to our understanding of and ministry to small scale (tribal) societies. They are largely face-to-face ethnic communities, and any ministry among them must begin with a deep understanding of their histories, societies and cultures.

A number of ethnographic methods have been developed to answer specific theoretical questions. Many of these are particularly helpful in our study of tribal societies. We will examine a few of these.

Observation

Generally, the first method we use in entering a new culture is observation because it is what we can do from the beginning. Too often we overlook what we can learn by careful observation, and try to get to other methods too quickly. It is important to make good observations when we first enter a place because we soon become too busy and preoccupied with other matters after we have been there for some time. The longer we live in a community, the more we cease to see the obvious. It is amazing what careful, systematic observation can teach us.

There are many things we can learn from observation. We can look at how people use space. We can draws maps of a house, temple, village, and region, noting the various activities associated with different locations. We can map social realities such as different spaces used by women and men, by upper and lower classes, and by different castes. We can map economic realities, such as agricultural lands, housing lands, rivers and other resources. We can map religious realities, such as temple, shrine, festival centers, places where spirits and demons reside, and village ritual boundaries.

We can observe the people's use of time: the cycles of agriculture and industry, of festivals, and of daily activity of women and men. We can look also at sequences: the order in stages of life, and in festivals.

We should examine cultural artifacts and technology, the things people make and how they do so. We can examine human transactions, the patterns of the peoples' everyday behavior, their rituals, and and their relationships to outsiders. We need to examine the signs and symbols they use to communicate their ideas: their language, architecture, religious signs, dance, music, art, decorations.

Systematic observation helps us build relationships and develop trust. When we show interest and respect for people and their ways, and ask them about their creations we show interest in them. We can ask them about the names of things, and how these are made. Most people are happy to teach us about their ways, if we truly come as students, because they love their ways and are proud of them.

Observations also lead us to preliminary hypotheses to investigate by other methods. Don't only ask the questions of "what," "where," and "how," but also **"why."**

Participant-Observation

As we live with people, we begin to participate in their lives. We buy goods at a shop, have the barber cut our hair, talk to our neighbors and invite people to our home. In turn, they begin to invite us to their activities, and include us in their lives. This participation in the lives of the people is important, for it starts relationships that can grow and become strong and intimate. Too often our temptation, as outsiders, is to withdraw into our little worlds by reading books and surfing the internet. Relationships and understandings only come when we leave our places and live and interact with the people. This is often psychological and culturally hard, but it is critical to our studies and ministries.

At first, we remain outsiders observing and participating in the public life of the community. As we do so, we start learning to see the world through the eyes of the people, not the eyes of outsiders. It is vital that we study this inside (*emic*) view of the people, for it is what they believe to be the true nature of things. Even if we do not agree with them, its important that we understand their world because that understanding, not ours, shapes their lives. To study it, we must show deep interest in their beliefs, and not judge or criticize their views as foolish, because they will not tell us if they know we will laugh at them. Moreover, it is important to remember that our way of viewing reality is not always right, and understanding their world can help us reevaluate our own.

As we participate in the lives of the people, some of them will invite us to become part of their communities–their families, clans and tribes. Now we are participants, but participants who remain observers as well. The people often mark this transition with a ritual of adoption into the group, or initiation into the tribe. This is a mark of honor because it means the people trust us, but it also puts a new burden on us. Now we are insiders, and we must act as good

insiders. If we are adopted as 'uncles' or 'aunts,' we must act as good uncles and aunts. When our new 'nephews' and 'nieces' are married we must bring appropriate gifts. When there is a family gathering we must attend and help pay for the feast. If we do not, we will be seen as a bad insider, and our relationship with the others will be strained. On the other hand, being an insider-outsider helps us study intimate, private parts of the culture. We are entrusted with the 'secrets' of the people, but we must also handle those secrets responsibly.

Some argue that our goal is ultimately to become totally insiders–total participants, not observers. This, however, is not possible nor desirable. While we want to identify with the people as much as possible, we can go only so far as our Christian faith and consciences allow. Moreover, our value to the people is that we have knowledge and outside contacts which can help them. If we are fully insiders, we become rivals for the social positions and resources in the community.

Participant-observation adds a new dimension to research. We can observe a people as outsiders, using our own theories and categories. But when we study humans, we want to know what is going on in their minds, and this we can only learn through interpreting what is their minds by means of communication and hermeneutics. No longer are we studying impersonal objects–we are studying human beings who are like ourselves. Our theories must apply not only to the people, but also to ourselves, because we, too, are humans.

The number of variables in studying humans is so great that we cannot control them all. We must therefore deal with partial and open ended theories in which many factors are left unaccounted for. We must treat the people we observe as rational self-determining creatures in the way we assume we are. We cannot use completely deterministic models in explaining peoples' behavior.

In studying people we must be aware that our presence influences them. If they think we are unaware of them, their actions may be more natural. If they think we are aware of them and observing them (say by pointing a camera at them) they will often "stage" their behavior. We must also take teleology into account. People have their own agendas, and make decisions and act to achieve their own particular goals. In relating to us they often have their own purposes, and this shapes the ways in which they respond to us.

Conversations and Interviews

As we participate in the life of a community, occasions arise for us talk to people about questions we have. We can learn much from the ordinary everyday conversations we have with people, wherever these take place.

In time we often move to interviews. On the informal end, these are simply conversations with someone in which we take note of what is said. We make no effort to control the direction of the conversation. In unstructured interviews we sit down with an informant and ask questions regarding a topic. We have no fixed agenda regarding items to address. Rather,

new questions emerge as the conversation continues, and we are open to go in new directions as information is gathered. In unstructured interviews it is generally best to begin with broad, open-ended questions, and then fill in the specifics as one's knowledge of the topic grows. In studying various activities, it is good to begin with the examination of objects, their uses, and the mechanics of the processes in which they are used. This type of interview is particularly important when we first begin to explore a subject.

In semi-formal interviews we have a definite mental list of items we want to investigate (our protocol). We ask general questions and give the respondent considerable freedom to go in various directions. We control the direction of the interview by raising questions that draw the discussion back to the basic research agenda.

In formal interviews we use controlled interviews in which specific data is gathered systematically. We often have fixed questions which require there are specific answers. These questions may be general verbal or essay questions to which the interviewee is free to give a long and detailed answer, or they may be more specific questions with a limited number of fixed answers.

Selecting a good informant for interviews is a delicate art, and grows best out of the experiences of participant-observation. Through this the researcher sees which people are most involved in certain activities, and what interests and 'stakes' they have in them, thereby enabling him/her to evaluate the accuracy of information they give. The researcher must be cautious in drawing on people who may push themselves forward. These are often marginal to the society, looking for some support and prestige,

Interviewing is an important part of all our lives. It is useful not only in research but in effective ministry. Any pastor, missionary, leader must constantly monitor where his/her people are, and this information is gathered largely by conversations and questioning. Learning the art of interviewing is essential to effective ministry. We must remember that this begins with a genuine relationship in which we are truly interested in the people, and then moves to the gathering of data. For example, in casual table conversations, we should ask others about themselves and their interests. We must avoid going on about our own activities and interests. Learning begins with listening, not talking.

In interviewing we must assure the informants that we will keep their confidence, and not use their information against them. In dealing with sensitive topics, it is better to discuss the material indirectly. Rather than asking, what do 'you' do or think, ask 'what do others' or what do people in the other village' think or do. Avoid judgmental responses, and learn to prove sensitively. Don't push the interview along. Wait quietly for the informant to go on. Let the informant know you are listening by affirmative statements such as "yes, I see." At appropriate times, share your own experiences.

In interviewing, remember that the answers people give reflect many things beside the interview itself. People may tell you what they think you want to know in order to not offend

you, or they may answer in ways to get something from you for their own benefit. They may shape their answers to make themselves look good. Or they may provide answers rather than admitting they forgot or don't know. It is important to evaluate responses for their deeper meanings.

Interviewing is an art, so practice it. Consciously evaluate an interview as it is going on, noting what blocks further discussion, and what fosters trust. Remember, gestures, facial expressions, body language and other subtle signs often speak louder than words.

Key Informants

When we want to know what 'ordinary people' think, we need to talk to a number of them to get some general impression of their knowledge and opinions. The more we interview, the more confident we are of the findings. But at this level we can only make statements about what "ordinary people" think.

Sometimes we want to study the knowledge of specialists. In these cases, we select "key informants," people who the public believes are technical specialists in a given field. For example, we might interview the Hindu priests in a temple to learn about formal Hindu thought, a shaman to learn about folk religious beliefs about spirits, healing and ecstatic religious experiences, a local 'historian' to learn about the local past, or a 'doctor' to learn about local medicine systems. A *key informant* is someone in the society who, because of his/her experience and knowledge, is considered to be an expert in the subject that the ethnographer has chosen for research. Because of their expertise they are often leaders and decision-makers in the society.

Choosing the right key informants is one of the most important and challenging aspects of cross-cultural ethnographic research. It is a 'delicate art' that demands a great deal of time, patience and energy. It is essential to establish a healthy, friendly and open relationship with the key witness.

Ethnosemantics

Ethnosemantics is the analysis of the conceptual categories people use in thinking about reality. For example, in each culture there are words for colors, for geographic features, and for rituals such as marriages and funerals. Studying these words helps us understand the mental categories people use to view their world. For example, we can study traffic in an Indian town by looking at the participants (figure 2), and the mental rules people have as they move down the roadway (these customary rules often do not correspond with the legal rules set by law). We can also study a Hindu wedding by noting the various stages in the ritual, and their meaning for the people.

Once the words used in a particular cultural domain are gathered, we can organize them into larger, more inclusive categories. For example, on an Indian road oxen, buffalo, humans, and sheep can be lumped as 'pedestrians'. Motorized vehicles would include cars, buses, trucks,

motor rickshaws, motor cycles and mopeds. An examination of fundamental categories can help us discover the worldview themes that underlie the way a culture orders its world.

One way to begin studying the social structure of a community is to examine it the kinship terms it uses. This can be done in three ways. The first is to study the terms people use when **refering to** particular relationships. We ask for the word a person uses when he/she refers to his father, to a mother, to a sister (older and younger), to a brother (older and younger), and so on. We can then explore what expections the people have for each relationship. This helps us see how the people view relationships in a family and clan. For example, in many societies the same word is use when refering to a father and all the father's brothers. This shows that the people view all these as 'fathers' who are part of a larger family and who are free to discipline the child.

A second way to study kinship systems is to study the words people use when they **address** a relative. How do wives address their husbands, husbands their wives, daughters and sons their mother and father, and fathers and mothers address their sons and daughters? This throws light on how participants view their relationships with others in their group. Respect and distance, and familiarity and intimacy are often reflect in the words people use to address one another.

A third way is to gather geneological data by asking a person about his real relatives and diagraming these. This data can help us see whether the community practices polgyny,[7] polyandry, cross-cousin marriage, adoptive marriages and the like. It also helps us see roughly how common these are.

Cases

One of the most powerful methods ethnographic research is the case study method. A case is any social event that has a beginning, a process, and an end. A biography is a case. It begins with the person's birth and ends with her/his death. A ritual, such as a Sunday morning service or a wedding, can be treated as a case. Legal disputes are also cases. They begin when the social order is disrupted by some misbehavior, and end when the society finishes settling the case.

One value of case studies is that we are looking at real life events, not what people say should happen, but what actually happens. Cases are particularly helpful in studying complex social phenomena in a holistic and real life fashion.

In gathering data on a case, it is best to use multiple sources of evidence. We can talk to the people involved, and to others outside the case to gain different perspectives on it. This 'triangulation' helps us to check the facts of the case, but also to learn how different people explain what is going on.

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[7] Polygyny is one man marrying several wives, polyandry is one woman marrying several husbands, and polygamy is the general term used for both polygyny and polyandry.

The first level of analysis is **description**. Here our purpose is to explore and understand a particular situation. If we study several similar cases, we begin to see patterns appear that help us understand the processes and explanations involved. The second level of analysis moves beyond description to **explanation**. Here we generate hypotheses and explanations for various steps in the case. These explanations may be historical–we look at the factors leading up to the case, and the processes involved in the case itself, or these explanations may be synchronic–looking at the various factors and forces in the case and the relationship between them. For example, we can study the social structure of a village: the castes, the rules for intercaste relationships, the economic and political forces at work, and the religious beliefs associated with the caste system.

The strengths of case studies is that they deal with real life in its everyday flow. They are not artificial situations. Moreover, they are not reductionist. They help us deal with the complexities of life by providing an open-ended research method. Their limitation is that we cannot make broad generalizations based on the study of only a few cases.

Participatory Research and Action

In recent years a new approach has emerged in doing human studies called Participatory Research and Action [PRA]. In this the people being studied are invited to be involved as participants in a self-study project. Here the outside researcher helps the people define the topic to be studied, develop methods for gathering data, analyze the data, and draw conclusions. This method is powerful in cases where research is conducted to help the people deal with specific problems, such as diseases, family unrest, and lack of food. If outside researchers come and study the people, decide what is wrong, decide on what must be done, and do it, the projects generally fail because the people do not understand the remedies and have no 'ownership' in the project. If they are involved from the outset in defining the problem, deciding on the solution, finding the resources, doing the job, and evaluating the outcome, the project becomes theirs and they maintain it after the outsiders leave.

<u>Ethnography and Ethnology</u>

Emic analyses help us see the world as others see it, but they do not provide us a comprehensive understanding of human realities, nor a bridge for intercultural communication and partnerships. Anthropologists take a second step and compare different cultures in order to provide a metacultural 'etic' grid that enables them to translate between cultures. These enable them to develop broader generalizations and theories about humans-- their societies, cultures and histories based on careful comparisons.

We must take care in developing etic comparative grids because in the selection of the categories, criteria for comparison and theoretical deductions, we often import our own cultural and theoretical biases. These grids need to be developed with care, and with participation of representatives from different cultures being compared.

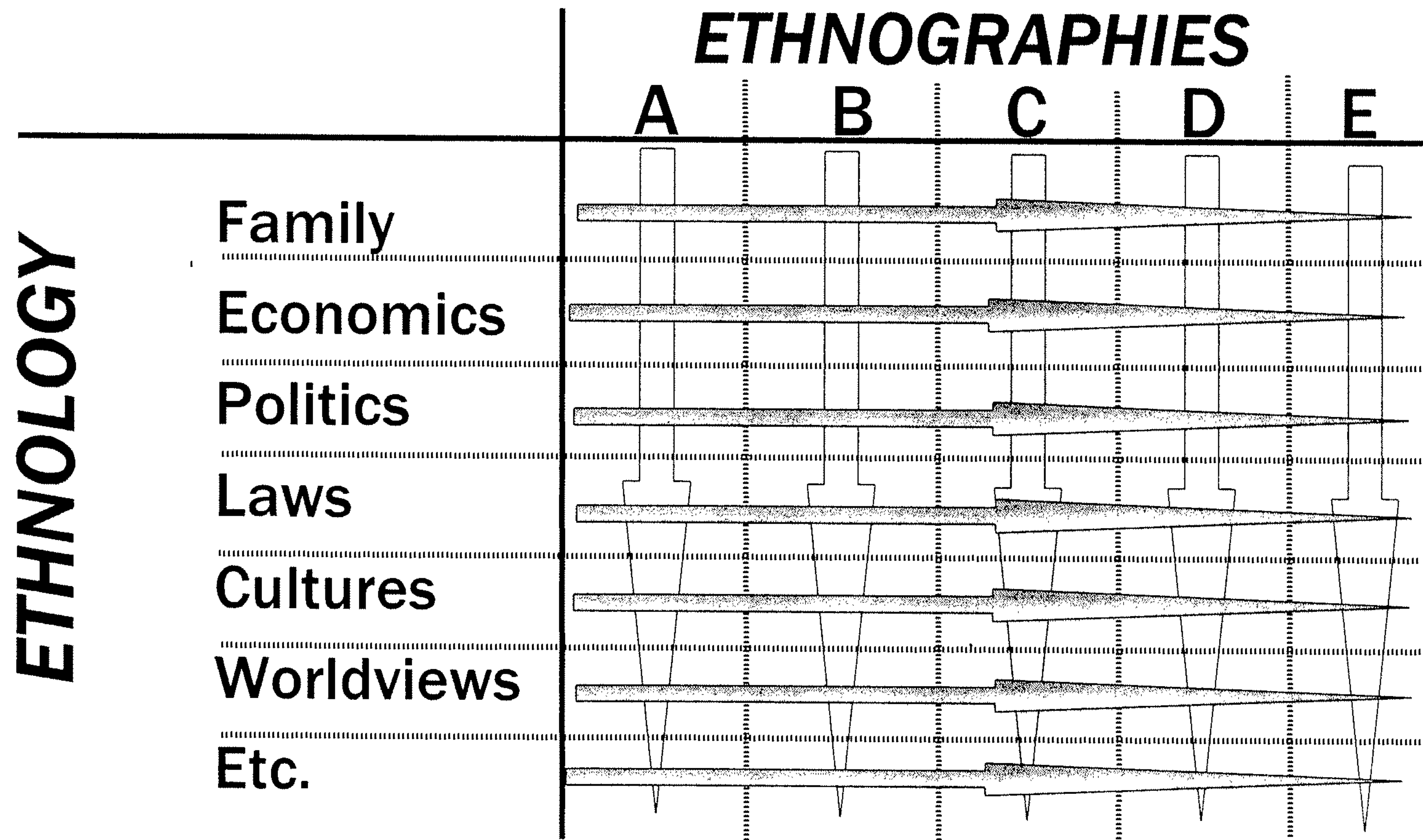
Figure 5.2
Ethnography and Ethnology
ETHNOGRAPHIES
A
B
C
D
E
ETHNOLOGY
Family
Economics
Politics
Laws
Cultures
Worldviews
Etc.

Human rights

When we study humans, we have a moral responsibility to protect them and their rights. Research provides information that can harm people. It is important, therefore, that we take steps to safeguard those we study. One step is to ask people for permission to interview them, and tape their responses. Another is to keep their identities anonymous in our writing, so that readers cannot trace the sources of our information. Often this is done by giving fictitious names to the people we interview.

Working closely with key informants for long periods of time raises the question of reciprocity. We gain much from the informants. In turn, we should expect to give something in return. One thing we must give is our friendship--to be available to spend time not only for gathering data, but also for fellowship and exchange. In most cultures it is appropriate to give key informants a gift. In a few cases it is appropriate to pay informants for the time they spend in working with us.

Conclusions

Careful, indepth anthropological research is crucial to any mission outreach. It is worth repeating: most missionaries are well trained in the study of Scripture, but few now how to study humans. This is an area which missionaries must take much more seriously.

Appendix 1
Number of Cases in Research

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

1. One Case:
  - examples: ethnography, biography, history, single ritual analysis, one subject analysis
  - nature: stress uniqueness and particularity of object of analysis. Can take subjective dimensions seriously
  - positive: depth, richly nuanced, multiple variables taken into account
  - negative: no generalization, no development of theory

2. Two - Five/Ten:
  - example: study of two or more churches, mission agencies, individuals, rituals, events
  - nature: not quite so deep, but still allows considerable depth and dealing with many variables. Rich combination of subjective and objective observations. Enables the researcher to develop comparisons by dividing the population into two or three groups
  - positive:
    = allows for preliminary generalizations at descriptive level
    = allows for comparisons and development of theory
  - negative: cannot speak of statistical generalizations, nor develop high level theories

3. Ten - Twenty:
  - example: study ten to twenty individuals, rituals, churches or mission agencies.
  - nature: the larger number of cases allows for stronger generalizations, and comparisons. It also allows for comparing two or more factors in cross-breaks [e.g. Male vs. Female attitudes towards or responses to different styles of evangelism].
  - positive: stronger generalizations and theory building
  - negative: can focus only on a limited number of variables, and therefore reductionist in nature. Assumes other variables can be controlled or ignored as irrelevant

GROUNDED THEORY RESEARCH

4. "Sufficient Number" of Cases:
  - example: doctor studying diseases in a region, pastor studying people in a neighborhood, evangelist discussing patterns of conversion
  - nature: selecting enough cases so that the pattern emerges and few or no new categories emerge as additional cases are studied. This method allows the research to formulate the categories in the domain being studied, and so to develop basic theoretical constructs
  - positive: developing theoretical constructs out of the data.
  - negative: cannot make statistical generalizations about the distribution of the data

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

5. Sampling the Population:
- examples: telephone polls of a hundred or more persons in a city or nation. Studying a sample of churches in a denomination.
- nature: a sample is selected from a larger population that is taken to represent that population. Studies of the sample are generalized to the population as a whole. Because of the larger scope, the study must be restricted to a few variables. The methods for gathering data must be quantitative to enable statistical calculations and generalizations regarding the population. The validity of the study depends first on the validity of the sample: does it indeed truly reflect the population from which it is taken
- positive: this enables the researcher to make statistical generalizations about a population. It is more manageable than studying the whole population and so is more efficient and cost effective.
- negative: large quantitative studies must be limited to the study of a small number of variables. Moreover, the validity of the study depends heavily upon the sampling process

6. Studying the Population:
- example: interviewing everyone in a church, interviewing all the churches in a denomination
- nature: study of every member of the population
- positive: no sampling problems, can make valid generalizations about the population if the methods for gathering the data are valid. Fosters the testing of high level theories
- negative: can only handled a limited number of variables, so tends to be reductionist in nature. The methods for gathering information, too, tend gather only a narrow range of data, so studies based on studying a population tend to be broad but shallow in terms of many variable at work in human lives

Section Two:

Social Systems

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SYSTEMS

All humans live in societies, or communities of humans who relate to one another in orderly ways. Without some social order, human life is impossible. Even the ascetics living alone in the desert were given life and nurtured by other humans.

Order in human relations is created by each community for itself. It is the result of human interactions that, over time, lead to socially acceptable ways of doing things. Patterns emerge as people relate, imitate one another, learn from their parents, or are forced to behave in certain ways by those with power over them. Patterns help people to understand what is going on and how to behave in different situations. Social order makes community life possible and meaningful.

Social systems are not static. They are contested by different parts of the community, males and females, rich and poor, high caste and low caste. They are reinforced or changed every time humans interact. When, as church members, we let Pastor John preach on Sunday morning, we are acknowledging the fact that he is our pastor and we are his parishioners. If we someday decide he is no longer our pastor, we will prevent him from leading church services. We may even decide we want a lay pastor and so change the social order of the church.

Order varies greatly from one society to another. In small bands it is based largely on ties of kinship and personal acquaintance. In modern cities social organization may have many layers and is based more on institutions, voluntary associations, and networks. Relationships are less personal and are based on contract and law, not intimate personal knowledge of one another.

Social Structures

In examining social systems, we will look first at their structure, then at their functions.

Levels of social organization

Human societies are often complex. We need only look at a modern city to see this. How do thirty million people and more live together to form an urban society such as Mexico City, Beijing or Calcutta?

To understand how these societies function, we need to examine their organization at several different levels. On the lowest level, all human societies are based on countless transactions between individuals. On an intermediate level, people form groups to accomplish certain tasks. On the highest level, complex social systems emerge that enable people and groups to live in large societies and the world. Here we will look at the major categories of social organization.

<u>Status and Role</u>

The basis of society is interactions between individuals in everyday life. A mother scolds her child, two friends play golf, and a shopper pays a check for merchandise. In each of these relationship much is unique to the individuals and situation. Each mother, child, friend, shopper and clerk is unique and each transaction has its own historical context. The behavior in each of these settings must also fit socially defined patterns understood by both parties if the relationship is to continue. If the mother scolds her child in a socially unacceptable way, others will intervene. If the shopper walks out of the store without paying for the goods, the community through its police will enforce its rules with socially defined sanctions.

Two concepts help us understand these basic social transactions: *status* and *role*. Status is a socially defined position in a society. In American society, for example, statuses include mother, son, doctor, plumber, teacher, pastor, pilot and so on. In South India they include *brahmin* (high-caste Hindu), *vaidudu* (a type of doctor), and *mantrakar* (magician). Each society has its own sets of statuses.

It is important to separate in our minds social structures from real people. Real people occupy statuses, but the statuses exist apart from these people. For example, a church may have a position called pastor. There may be no one in that status at the moment, but the church may be looking for someone to fill it.

People must occupy one or more statuses in society to be a part of it. In our society, a person may be child, lawyer, teacher, or any other status recognized by the society. He or she cannot function without a status. If a stranger appears, we do not know who she is or how to relate to her until we can place her in one of the statuses we recognize. One of these statuses may be foreigner.

Each status is associated with a role: the patterns of behavior that we expect of those who occupy that status. In our society the pastor must preach, the shopper must pay the clerk, and the driver must drive on the right side of a two-way highway. If people do not behave properly, they are disciplined or removed from their statuses.

Statuses in a society are linked to each other to form paired relationships. For example, the position of teacher is linked to that of student, husband to wife, and employer to employee. Most statuses, in fact, are linked to more than one other status. As teachers we relate to students, principals, parents, other teachers and the public. The teacher acts differently toward a student then he does toward the principal, and that relationship is different from his relationship to the parents of the students.

To illustrate the usefulness of status and role in examining social organizations, let us look at the American family. It is made up of eight statuses (husband, wife, mother, father, daughter, son, sister, brother), and eight possible pairs of relationships in a nuclear family. A

family with only one child does not have a full set of family relationships. By contrast, a large family may have several instances of mother-daughter or mother-son relationships.

In everyday life the relationship between a particular father, such as Tom, Smith, and his sons, John and Henry, will vary according to their individual personalities and the specific settings in which they interact. From a social point of view, however, we look fro the common patterns underlying all father-son relationships in a given society. For example, many North Americans believe a husband should treat older and younger sons alike. The oldest should not be favored or get all of the inheritance. In other societies, fathers are expected to favor their oldest sons, as was true of the Old Testament Israelites.

Using status and role analysis, we can examine the social organization of a family system. We can also trace historical changes in that system. For example, the relationship between husband and wife is currently being redefined in our society. This affects the other relationships in the family, such as mother-child and father-child.

It is important to remember that each society has its own sets of statuses and roles. Even such basic relationships as husband-wife, father-son, and mother-daughter are not the same in different societies. For instance, a Trobriand Island "father" gives the yams he raises to his sister to support her and her children. He, his wife and his children live on the yams brought to him by his wife's brothers. To him, this arrangement seems as natural as parents working to earn money to support their own family seems to us.

Networks

Interpersonal relationships are the basis for all social activity. Linked together, they give rise to the simplest form of social organization, namely, social networks. A social network is a web of relationships that links people to each other. For example, John knows Maria, George, and Marcee (fighre 2) . Marie knows Julius and Margert. Margaret knows Sarah. A network is not a social group because those in the network do not all know and interact with one another. Sarah, for instance, knows only Margaret, and George and Marcel know John but not Maria, Julius, Margaret and Sarah.

Social networks are important as channels of communication. In all societies people get important information through gossip and word of mouth. Moreover, networks are important means of social control. John may not like what Julius is doing and may say this to Maria, knowing that Maria is Julius's friend. This second hand communication allows messages to be sent without the volatility latent in direct confrontation.

Networks also play an important part in the formation of social groups. If John organizes a party, he invites George, Marcel, and Maria. Maria asks if she can bring her friend Julius. As the party these people all learn to know each other and plan to meet weekly for lunch. Sarah is part of the larger network, but she is not a part of the group because she does not interact directly with the others.

Groups

On another level, we can analyze social organization in terms of the kinds of social groups that people form. A group is a set of people who relate to each other face to face for specific purposes. For example, people in a local church form a group because they belong to the same congregation. In their church they have smaller groups such as classes, committees and cliques.

In all societies groups enable people to join together to accomplish common goals. People may gather together to organize a factory, a school, or a recreational club. In each of these, they must create statuses and roles and link these together to form a single social system.

Kinship groups: Groups fall into three basic types depending on the nature of the relationships on which they are built: kinship, association and geography. Kinship groups are based on the ties of marriage and descent. The primary kinship group is the nuclear family made up of husbands, wives, and their children. In many societies families include several husbands (polyandry) or several wives (polygyny).

Extended families are made up of several nuclear families linked together by blood and marriage. In India, for example, extended families include aged parents, their married sons and grandsons an their families, and their unmarried daughters and grand-daughters. These all live and work together and often share a common kitchen and house. With few notable exceptions, families are the basic building blocks of all societies.[1]

On a larger scale, kinship ties are used to organize lineages and clans. A lineage is a group of people known to be linked to each other by blood ties through either male or female descent. A patrilineage is made up of men linked through male descent to a common known forefather. Usually their wives and unmarried daughters are also members of their lineage. A matrilineage is made up of women traceable through female lines to a common ancestress, plus their husbands and children.

Patriclans and matriclans are the same, except that the lines of descent fade into myth as one goes back to the founding ancestors. In other words, these are groups of people who believe they are linked to one another through their common ties to some distant progenitor, but who cannot actually trace the links. Often there is a myth of common origin and the founder of the clan may be thought to have been a god or an animal. Lineages and clans are powerful ways to organize large groups to carry out community tasks such as crop production, defense, government and social welfare.

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[1] One exception is the Nayar society of Kerala, South India. In the past, Nayar women had sexual relationships with Brahmin men from the highest caste, but could not marry them. The women formed households with their brothers, who helped them rear their children.

The highest level of a kinship organization is a tribe or an ethnic community. The former exists more or less by itself, the latter with other ethnic communities in a larger society such as the Indian caste system. Both tribes and ethnic communities include all people who believe they are the same kind of people because they share the same kind of blood and marry one another. Marriage to someone of another blood is seen as threatening to the ethnic group. Because tribes and other ethnic communities can be large, numbering in the tens and hundreds of millions, we will examine they under societal categories.

People believe ethnicity is based on genetic ties, but it si important to remember that their beliefs do not always match genetic realities. What matters is how people socially interpret biological ties. A great many social mechanisms, such as adoption, surrogate marriages, and fictive descent override biological realities. Ultimately, all societies choose to define some genetic ties and kin, and to deny or ignore other such ties.

Geographic groups. A second kind of group is based on ties of geography: people who are grouped together because they live in a common place. The smallest stable geographic groups is the community. The members of a community live out their daily lives and deal with the common problems of everyday life together. Examples of this are a nomadic camp, a village, and a neighborhood in a city. Larger geographic groups are cities, nation states, regional alliances and, increasingly, the earth webbed together as one world.

Associations and Institutions. A third kind of group is made up of people who gather or organize on the basis of a common interest (such as clubs), common tasks (such as schools and work crews), or common identity (ethnic and alumni associations). Groups may be organized on more than one of these principles. For instance, the German Baptist Church used both ethnicity and association as the basis for its organization. The German Baptist Church of Mount City also uses geography to define its identity.

Some groups, like crowds, audiences, and mobs, are temporary gatherings that are loosely organized. Others, such as clubs, professional associations, and churches, are more formally organized and endure over time. Membership may be voluntary, as in a sandlot baseball team, or coerced, as in a drafted army. Admission may be open to all or restricted to a few.

Associations are extremely flexible. They are readily organized for any common purpose, and members can be added or dropped quiet easily. This makes it possible for people to move from one place to another and change their social ties rapidly. Moreover, simple gathering can be organized into enduring associations that may grow in to complex institutions such as business corporations and political parties. Because of their flexibility, associations have emerged as the dominant form of social group in modern, complex societies.

As societies grow larger, associations develop into institutions and complex social systems emerge that enable people to organize increasingly complex systems of relationships. An association, such as a local flying club, can grow into a major airline with a vast array of personnel, ground workers, planes and technical services. Similarly, a local factory may grow

into a multinational business conglomerate. In the process of this growth, what starts as a social group ends up as a complex organization that links many groups of people together. An airline, for instance, develops relationships with other institutions that manufacture planes, supply fuel, maintain airports, sell tickets, provide insurance coverage, produce meals, and deliver late luggage, to name a few.

Large institutions, such as banks, industrial corporations, governments, armies, universities, denominations, and medical systems, are the backbone of modern social organization above the level of families, communities and associations. Institutions develop their own internal social organizations and subcultures and provide people in urban settings with much of their social identity.

Societal Categories

Societal categories are part of the mental maps people have of their society. For example, in the U.S. we mentally group Americans as Democrats, Republicans and Independents. And we categorize them as Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and so on. These categories help us think about the way the society is ordered.

Societal categories shape social relationships. In North America, being middle class rather than lower class, and Democrat rather than Republican, effects how we behave. It also influences the way we are treated and the way we treat others. Societal categories also give rise to social groups. People who are Republicans organize local caucuses (social groups) and try to influence the Republican Party (the institution).

There are two types of societal categories that we should note here: *ethnicity* and *class*. As we have seen, an ethnic group consists of people who share a consciousness that they are the same kind of people because they share the same blood. In other words, they believe they have common ancestors, share a history, and are linked by ties of descent and marriage.

Ethnicity, as a societal category, divides a society into different types of people. People of the same ethnicity turn to one another for mutual support and base their identity on the larger category of which they are a part. They usually look at people in other ethnic communities as outsiders.

Classes are sets of people who have in common a certain range of income. They also share a set of occupations and a lifestyle. In North America people of the same class live in similar homes, drive similar cars, go to similar clubs, have similar interests and share similar values. They feel comfo9rtable with others in their class. They are what Robert Bellah (11985) calls "life-style enclaves"– groups of people held together primarily by similar occupations, incomes and values. While identity in ethnic groups is largely ascribed, classes are based more on achievement. Consequently, there is more social mobility in classes. People who work hard can rise to higher classes, and those who fail can drop to a lower class.

Societies

Large units in social organization are whole societies. These are composed of the people who belong to one social system and one territory. The boundaries of a society are often fuzzy and it is sometimes easier to define its core than to delimit its boundaries. One way to determine where the boundaries are is to take note of how people greet one another. People from other societies are greeted as strangers and outsiders. Armies from the outside are fought as enemies.

In small societies, one ethnic group constitutes a whole society, speaks one language, share one culture, and occupies the same territory. We refer to these societies as bands and tribes. Unfortunately the word *tribe* is seen in some parts of the world as demeaning, and associated with notions such as primitive, backward and uncivilized. In other parts of the world, people are proud to belong to tribes. Because we found no other good word in English to refer to this type of society and because "tribe" is used in anthropology as a term with strong affirmative connotations, we will use it here. We do so not in the popular or negative sense of the term, but in a positive technical sense.

Large peasant societies are made up of multiple ethnic groups and classes. For example, Indian villages organize many castes (ethnic groups) and classes into relatively autonomous agricultural communities. Such villages often have clear geographic and ritual boundaries, but these are porous. Traders, government officials, religious leaders, pilgrims and many others constantly pass through the village, but they are seen as outsiders.

Cities, by contrast, have no clear boundaries and are made up of many ethnic groups and lifestyle enclaves. They may be politically and territorially defined, but they shape and are shaped by their sociocultural contexts and by the world.

Increasingly the world itself is being networked into a global society. There are, in fact, many globalizations that ally and compete for global power and prestige (Berger and Huntington 2002). Today, few societies on earth are unaffected by this emergence of global economic, political, legal and social systems.

Dimensions of Social Systems

All human relationships and social organizations have four primary dimensions. One or another of these may be the focus of the activity in a given relationship or organization, but the others are always present in the background in any social system.

Social relationships

By social we mean the definition, nature, allocation and use of relationships. This includes the statuses and roles of those involved in the relationships. It also includes the types of social and societal groups people form, their institutions, and their larger societal systems.

Some relationships are egalitarian--they take place between people who see themselves as equals. Others are hierarchical. Some are informal. Others are formal--they are carefully regulated by rules of etiquette and order. Some are temporary and others are lasting. All these factors have to do with the social dimension of relationships and structures.

Economics

Economics has to do with the definition, nature, allocation and use of resources. All societies use material resources. People plow fields, catch fish, build houses, ride horses and make music. They heat their houses, fly , and communicate by electromagnetic waves. To do so they create tools that enable them to shape the material world around them. These natural assets, tools and products, are among people's economic resources.

Economic resources also include intangible assets such as people's labor, time, specialized knowledge, the right to sing a song, and magical powers. Each society defines what it sees as economic resources.

Each society also decides who owns the resources and who can use them. For instance, in our society fish in most lakes area resource and they are owned by people who catch them. In many migrant band societies, land and trees are resources anyone can use, but no one can own them. In agricultural villages land is one of the most valued commodities and usually can be owned by individuals. Among the Eskimo, only the writer of a song is free to sing it. Others must ask permission to do so.

Politics

Politics involves the definition, nature, allocation and use of power. Power is an essential part of all human relationships. It is the ability to persuade or influence through prestige or moral authority. It is economic power, or religious power such as the ability to curse or condemn to hell. It includes the power of the weak to ignore, disobey, boycott, and badger. Ultimately, it is physical coercion and the ability to destroy another or ability to care for the vulnerable.

In ordinary relationships power is hidden because everyone plays by the social rules. If the social order itself is challenged, however, power is often exercised to reestablish it. For example, people may demonstrate on the streets against a government, and it uses its police and army against its own people to crush the rebellion.

Law

The fourth dimension of human relationships and social systems is law. This has to do with the definition, nature, allocation and use of legitimacy. Legitimacy is the people's consent

to let certain persons have and use power.[2] A person may use power to take control of a situation, but if she or he does not have the publicly recognized authority to do so, the act will be seen as a revolution. If she or he acts as a recognized leader, the actions will be seen as part of normal government.

The allocation of legitimacy varies greatly from society to society. In ancient Egypt it was thought to be given by the gods and allocated to the Pharaoh by birth. In dictatorships it is based on conquest followed by rituals of legitimization. In democratic societies it is given to the rulers directly by the vote of the people.

The nature of legitimacy, too, varies greatly. In some monarchies the ruler has absolute power. In many democracies the leader is subject to the constitution and a body of law. In stateless societies there are no formal governing bodies. In these societies, governmental functions are allocated to other social agencies such as clans, villages and age-based associations.

Politics and law are closely related to each other. Power without legitimacy is political. It is revolution. Power with legitimacy is government. So when revolutions succeed, they seek to add legitimacy to their rule. A careful analysis of human relationships shows that both are present.

Functions of Social Relationships

Social activities focus on specific tasks at hand. People work together to build a road, celebrate a wedding, choose a leader, or worship God. In the process they relate to one another using resources, power and legitimacy. One or another social dimension may be primary in an activity. We go to bank primarily for economic reasons, to clubs for social reasons, to government for political and legal reasons. As we will see, functions include building and sustaining the community culture. We build churches for religious purposes, radio and television stations for communications, and universities for academic reasons.

It is wrong to assume that these social and cultural functions act independently from one another. All are present in every human relationship and social organization, and each affects the others. At times it is hard to differentiate between them. For instance, high social status often enables a person to gain wealth or political power. Conversely, political leaders may be able to convert their power into social prestige and wealth.

Institutions are organized for specific functions. Political groups focus their attention directly on the control of power, but in the process they must deal with economic, legal and

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[2] People do not have to like the leaders or agree with what they are doing to consider them legitimate. As long as people believe that these leaders should be in power, or at least are not willing to make the effort to depose them, the leaders will have enough legitimacy to rule. Not all Americans like the president of the U.S. or his policies, but most of them do consider him the legitimate leader of the U.S.

social matters . Banks, factories, and businesses are concerned primarily with economic matters. Government bodies deal mainly with legal matters. All these, however, must deal with all of the dimensions of social systems we have examined.

An example of the interaction between the functions of social systems can be seen in the relationship between a mother and her daughter. Socially, their statuses are mother and daughter. They are, therefore, expected to act in certain ways toward each other. These patterns of behavior are their roles. Because of her status, however, the mother controls many resources the child wants: the mother's attention, candy in the jar, and staying up late. Politically the mother can pressure her daughter to obey by giving commands, offering rewards, or, if necessary, by using force. Legally the society recognizes the mother's right to use this power and will not intervene except when the mother goes beyond the socially recognized use of force. In the evening the child wants to watch television, but the mother wants to read her a Bible story. The disagreement is over which task to do. The child exercises her power by crying. The mother negotiates a compromise, such as allowing some of each.

Power, authority, resources, tasks, and interpersonal contact are all intertwined in this social relationship. Still, at any instance, or another of the dimensions may be the focus of the relationship. When the mother and daughter read the Bible together they are engaged in cultural communication. When the daughter refuses and cries, she initiates a power confrontation, and the Bible study cannot continue until the issue of power to make decisions is resolved.

Similar analyses can be made of human groups. People organize a church to worship God and to communicate the gospel to the world. The church also has a social side to it. Members seek statuses in the congregation and gather in social fellowship. The church must deal with the economic dimension of life: buildings, salaries, volunteer time, and copyrights on songs. It must also deal with political issues such as leadership selection and use of power. It is regulated internally by legal matter such as its constitution, by-laws, and rules of order; and externally by government zoning rule, noise regulations and lawsuits. It is impossible to organize a church that focuses only on worship and witness and is free from economic, political, social and legal concerns.

We turn now to looking at social systems in greater detail.

Section Three

Cultural Systems