

My Life

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Intellectually, we scratch where it itches. Three itches, in particular, have shaped my pilgrimage.

The first of these comes from being an M.K.--a mixed up missionary kid. I was born and raised in India. I and my sisters had positions of privilege, but we were different. We were the only bleached kids for miles around. Early in life we were aware of cultural differences and the tensions these created. Culturally we were marginal. This led to a personal struggle with cultural identity, cultural differences and intercultural relationships.

This concern with cultural identity eventually led me to study anthropology, the study of others and otherness. I was concerned not only with understanding myself and cultures in general, but in applying anthropological understandings to the task of missions. I saw first hand the legacy, good and bad, of colonial missions in India where missions were concerned with evangelizing the lost, but often were entrenched in compounds and institutions.

My pilgrimage in anthropology began with two years of fieldwork in an Indian village, seeking to understand the people and cultures among whom we were ministering. This raised in my mind critical issues such as that of contextualization, and doing theology in local settings. Eventually it led me to work on concepts such as critical contextualization and self-theologizing.

On returning to the U.S., I became increasingly aware of the cultural context of the west. This led me to study American culture and to compare it with the Indian culture I had studied. This led me to the study of bounded and fuzzy sets, and the work of Zadeh, Kauffman and others.

The comparison of Indian and American cultures made me increasingly aware that neither was neither fully biblical in its worldview. This led me to work on the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic (centered) sets. It also led me work on the worldview of modernity and the

contemporary challenge of postmodernity

= folk religion: spiritual warfare and western secular dualism

The second intellectual 'itch' was being M.B.--Mennonite Brethren. This is a theological tension. Mennonite refers to the radical wing of the reformation in Holland and Germany in the sixteenth century that stressed personal faith, adult baptism, separation of church and state, the church as an outpost of the Kingdom of God, and believers as resident aliens. Stress on the Kingdom of God, the whole gospel, and shalome. Brethren refers to a pietistic revival in the Mennonite churches in Russia in the late nineteenth century that brought renewal to the Mennonite churches. It refers to the stress on personal piety and on radical discipleship and evangelism, which had been lost over the centuries in parts of the Mennonite movement.

I was raised in a family deeply committed to Christ and his kingdom. On furlough, and in my seminary years, I was trained in fundamentalism with its emphasis on saving the lost. I am thankful for these theological roots, and value them highly. However, when seeking to lead people to faith in India, to plant churches and train national leaders, it became clear that we could not simply translate western understandings of the gospel into the Indian context.

Rediscovered my anabaptist roots that combines evangelical faith with a stress on the priesthood of believers and a whole gospel. This led me to work on self-theologizing and the importance of hermeneutical communities

- early felt call to missions

- trained in evangelical framework. Strongly value this.
- went to India and found this could not be contextualized, and rediscovered my anabaptist roots which is based on a meta-theology and can be contextualized.
- rediscover of the anabaptist theologies of king and kingdom of God, trinitarian view of God, reconciliation as model for salvation, theology as our understandings of Scripture

2.1. Anthropology and Theology --> Missiology:

- question of epistemological foundations
- questions of contextualization, inculturation etc.

3. Missionary-Anthropologist: Professional tensions.

- fourth self
- set theory
- criticalcontextualizaiton
- criticalrealism
- middlezone
- metatheology
- metacultural grids
- spiritual warfare