Research and the Doing of Missional Theology

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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, Patrick Johnson, Global Mapping Institute), or ethnographic and descriptive (Caleb Project and Joshua Project). The former is helpful primarily for mission strategists in mission headquarters. It offers little help 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 make thorough, theoretically based research a central part of our ministry if we want to avoid the current confusion and wastefulness in missions.

Missiology as a Discipline

Before we examine missional research, we need to define what we mean by missiology,

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[1] One of the lasting contributions of Donald McGavran was his 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 heartily affirmed.

because the research questions 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. Moreover, a discipline is embedded in a worldview made up of the fundamental 'givens' the discipline takes to be true (Laudan 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 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 sub-fields, each of which has its own central questions (figure 1), data to be examined and methods to be used. It examines the place of

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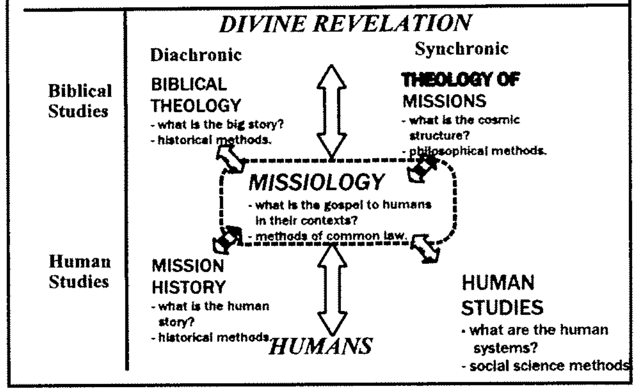
[2] Systematic Theology helps us understand the biblical worldview, but it has no section on missions in its field, despite the fact that mission is central to the nature of God, and his work in creation and salvation. Missions is seen as 'applied' theology, but the methods used for applying theology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

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.

Figure 1
MISSIOLOGY



Missiological Research

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

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[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.

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 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 us aware of the need and possibilities 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.

Macro and Micro Research

Research in missiology is related to the four sub-fields: systematic theology of missions draws on exegetical and philosophical methods, biblical theology of mission on exegetical and historical methods, mission history on historical methods, and the Gospel in human contexts on the methods of the human science. It is the last of these that will be explored here.

Broadly speaking, research in the human sciences ranges between the two poles of macro and micro analysis (figure 2). The former seeks to examine the big picture, the latter specific human situations. Macro analysis has been called a 'balcony' or 'helicopter' view of humans. It is to study a whole city, nation or world. To do so, the researcher must be outside the field to examine the various units [e. g. ethnic groups in a city, classes, and migration patterns], 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 perspectives are those of the analyst. In this approach we lose sight of individuals and their perspectives. We are concerned with broad generalizations.

Figure 2
The Study of Human Situations

MACRO ANALYSIS	***MICRO ANALYSIS***
- balcony view	- street level view
- big picture	- human view
- demographic, survey, quantitative	- participant-observation, qualitative
- detached observations,	- involvement with people
- etic	- emic
- reductionist, focuses on a few variables	- thick description, looks at many variables
USEFUL FOR PLANNERS	**USEFUL FOR FIELD PERSONNEL**

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 requires 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]. Emic analysis 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. Both macro and micro research raise 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 is reductionism— 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.

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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 categories, 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.

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] which 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 analysis studies one or a few cases 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 a single culture [e. g. several village study to generalize about Indian village life], to compare two or three cultures [e. g. a comparison of Indian and Mexican villages], and to do ethnology–the formulation of broad theories about humans based on the comparison of many cultures.

Thick ethnographies are important in missions to help missionaries understand the people they serve. However, they do not help us to understand the coming of the missionary and the communication of the Gospel in human contexts. 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.

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[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.

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 to observe things systematically and deeply. 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 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 insideroutsider 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 of 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 us what they think we want to know in order to not offend us, or they may answer in ways to get something from us 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 (see appendix 2).. 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 **referring 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 expectations 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 referring 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 genealogical data by asking a person about his real relatives and diagraming these. This data can help us see whether the community practices polygyny,[7] polyandry, cross-cousin marriage, adoptive marriages and the like. It also helps us see roughly how common these are.

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

Focus Groups

Focus groups use group discussion to gather data on a subject. They are particularly useful in societies with a strong sense of group, and in which private interviews may be seen as inappropriate, or as a means to getting secret knowledge that can harm others. In this method, we raise questions in the group, and let the conversation proceed. we may enter the discussion, particularly to ask specific questions or to direct the flow of the conversation. Differences of opinion may be expressed, and we should note these. But the presence of an 'audience' puts pressure on the participants to conform to the generally accepted answers to maintain good relationships with the others. This audience effect must be kept in mind when evaluating the data gathered in group discussions. These method helps us see public consensus, and does not show us the real opinions of many in the group.

In gathering information in focus groups it is important to keep in mind the roles the various participants have in the society–for example, note the responses of men and women, elders and juniors, and local persons and outsiders.

One of the reasons to use focus groups is to understand complex motivations. Many of the behaviors we may wish to understand are not matters of conscious explanations, and the participants often find that the answers from other participants or the moderator make them of things they had not thought about before. The interaction often is a stimulus that gives us information not readily gained by other methods.

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.

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 inter-caste 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.

Ethnography and Ethnology

When we have several ethnographies in hand, we can begin to move to ethnology. Ethnographies are in-depth studies of particular human settings, such as a culture, a community or a class room. Ethnology compares ethnographies to formulate general statements about human societies and cultures (see appendix 3). For example, we can compare family systems in different societies and develop theories regarding patrilineal, matrilineal, bilateral and double descent systems. We can compare the political, economic, or religious systems in one region of the world, such as tribals in the North East Frontier Areas, or villages in North and South India. Or we can do global comparisons to move towards tentative theories about humankind in general. Such comparisons requires the formulation of an *etic* or outside grid, which, on the one hand allows for the development of general human theories, but, on the other, raises the question whether such *etic* analysis truly captures the *emic* perspectives of the people in different cultures.

Ethnography and ethnology complement one another. The first provides rich, human information. The latter helps us gain analytical power, and the ability to formulate broad theories and applications.

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

In missions, if we want to move beyond copying others or making decisions on the basis of a few stories of success, we need to do careful research. But good research can also help raise a community's awareness of a situation and motivate it to action. Self-studies help churches and agencies to see themselves, and to correct bad courses of action. Doing research together with people we serve helps them build confidence, and teaches them how to study themselves. Finally, research helps us see ourselves and our ministries. It is like a mirror that can show us our biases and limitations and strengths. But research does not come easily. We must invest time and resources, and do the work systematically and carefully. The rewards in our ministries will be great.

Recommended Readings

Alan Bryman, ed. 1994. *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. N.Y.: Routledge.

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Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson. 1995. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. 2nd ed. N.Y.: Routledge.

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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

Appendix 2

INDIAN ROAD TRAFFIC

PARTICIPANTS:

1 Immovable objects: rocks, trees, walls, sleeping water buffalo and cows, tombs, shrines and graveyards, grain and rugs drying on the road, steel poles and pipes on the road side, central lane barriers.

2 Moveable objects: sleeping dogs, heavy slow moving objects [8 men carrying a piano, ox cart loaded with 20 foot long steel beams].

3 Pedestrians:
- humans (children, adults, infirm),
- animals (cows, water buffalo, goats, sheep, donkeys, chickens, camels, elephants).

4 Unmotorized vehicles:
- carts (ox carts, horse jutkas, camel carts, human carts),
- cycles (bicycles, trishaws).

5 Motorized vehicles:
- two-wheelers (mopeds, motor cycles),
- three-wheelers,
- four-wheelers (cars, vans, trucks, tractors),
- others (steam rollers, cares, bull dozers, digging machines), trains.
- trains

RULES

1. All participants (except trains at crossings) must compete on the same roadway.

2. Traffic is negotiated by transactions.

3. Avoid accidents because they delay you.

4. Generally speaking, pass on coming traffic on the left. Overtake traffic on the right.

5. Use signals [horns, whistles, bells, calls] to communicate your intended actions. These generally do not signal anger, but they may convey impatience.

6. Do not get upset if someone cuts you off. Given the chance, you will do the same.

7. If possible, keep the traffic flow moving:
   - for buses: moving stops are preferable to full stops, particularly at unauthorized stops (people are free to embark and disembark whenever they think they can do so safely).
   - traffic circles are preferable to stop lights and stop signs because the latter force the traffic to come to a dead stop.
   - fill voids in the traffic space to assure maximum use and efficiency.