

Beyond Anthropology

Dear Ralph,

Thank you for another excellent issue of IJFM. I would like to raise a question for you to consider. It is the matter of broadening the attention of missionaries and missiologists to the whole of the social sciences, as opposed to an understandable, but rather narrow focus on anthropology.

Darrell Whiteman's second article on "Anthropology and Mission" was most helpful for its historical detail. However, it seems to me that the time has come for us to use all of the social sciences. Rebecca Lewis' most interesting article is a good example. She uses the theories advanced by the sociologist, Rodney Stark, in a most effective way. He is perhaps the first well-known sociologist to study missions, and I am glad you have recommended his books. As you know, he attacks the anti-religious bias of many of his colleagues.

There are historical reasons for the separation of the disciplines within the social sciences. Much of this has been exacerbated by the fact that anthropology and sociology (and the others) have different professional organizations, journals, book reviewers, etc.—in other words, different "social networks!"

Missiology also needs political science and economics to understand other factors affecting missions. However, I would place anthropology and sociology at the core for missiological attention.

... Yes, the social sciences, like the natural sciences, are "secular" disciplines, but they are disciplines based on a particular methodology. Of course, many scientists (social scientists more than natural scientists, and anthropologists more than sociologists) make a philosophy or an anti-theology out of the methodology. Namely, they make God irrelevant to total reality, not just to the study of empirical reality. However, good science certainly does not require this. In fact, this introduces an often unrecognized anti-religious bias to studies.

Actually, scientific study does not keep God out, but only our theology (or thought about God) out of the study. This helps to limit the influence of sin in our theology, as well as the sin that is in anti-religious thought. There may well be a philosophy of science (the place of science in thought), but science itself cannot be a philosophy. It is too bad that people universalize the assumptions of scientific methodology and then attack it as being anti-theological. To me, this is what Milbank does in his attack on sociology or "social theory." He is really only attacking the philosophers who have built an anti-religious philosophy on their notion of science, not the disciplines of either the natural or social sciences or the good work of some anti-Christian scientists.

Thank you for your good work!

Bob Montgomery

IJFM More Seeker Sensitive?

Hello,

First of all, thanks for the fantastic and wonderful articles and thoughts of IJFM. It is awesome and welcome. However, on the web page it would be very helpful if I could use a search

tool to locate articles, say, by Joshua Massey or others.

Thanks be to God,

Linda

Editor's Note: In response to your request, we've added a search mechanism to our site. However, because it's free, it might at times display ads that do not reflect the values of the IJFM. We're working to remedy this problem, but for the time being, user beware!

A Good Deal on a Great Issue?

Dear Rory,

Can you give me a great price for 100 copies of IJFM Oct 2003? I am doing a seminar on the relationship of Science and Christianity on October 23. Let me know what price you can give me and how I can pay for them.

Michael Mowry, Director
Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship
Ellensburg, WA

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Online Articles of High Value

Dear Sirs,

I've been reading through a number of articles from back issues of IJFM and have been impressed by the value they may bring to the leadership of our mission. I'd like to ask for permission to forward PDF copies of on-line IJFM articles through our secure email system to Trans World Radio's regional leadership overseas and also save them on an internal computer server for

future reference by our leadership. We will not distribute them externally.

Thank you sincerely,

B.D.

Editor's Note: Please feel free to forward these pdfs to whomever you think would benefit from them! We realize that not everyone can (or should) receive the paper edition, although paper is still far and away more convenient for leisurely reading, note making, etc.

Count Me In

Dear Editor,

I am interested in the discussion groups that was mentioned in the editorials. You may include me on any list that may develop.

Bob Johnson
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Lake Nebagamon WI 54849
715-374-2199

Editor's Note: See page 135 for more information.

Dear Editors,

I am open to any contact in this area (Las Vegas or beyond who happens to be in town for a convention or passing through) who is interested in face-to-face encounters on the content of the IJFM, Mission Frontiers, Global Prayer Digest, etc. Various quality mission resources are already on hand for ready reference if needed during our discussion. Please contact me at the above address.

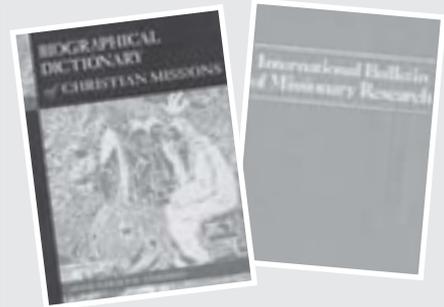
Sincerely yours as Christ's,

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