MISSIOLOGY MEETS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY:

THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF PAUL G. HIEBERT

_____

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

_____

by

Philip Wayne Barnes

May 2011

APPROVAL SHEET

MISSIOLOGY MEETS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY:
THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF PAUL G. HIEBERT

Philip Wayne Barnes

Read and Approved by:

_____

M. David Sills (Chair)

_____

George H. Martin

_____

James D. Chancellor

Date _____

To Laura,

my best friend and my bride,

and to

Daniel and Jonathan,

our amazingly wonderful boys.

You three are God's gifts to me.

I love ya'll.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBS	Chronological Bible Storying
CSBS	Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary
DBU	Dallas Baptist University
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
KSU	Kansas State University
MBTS	Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
MBBS	Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
NLT	New Living Translation
OMF	Overseas Missionary Fellowship
RTS	Reformed Theological Seminary
SIM	Serving in Mission
SBC	The Southern Baptist Convention
SBTS	The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
SEBTS	Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
TEDS	Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
UW	University of Washington
WCC	World Council of Churches

PREFACE

The fact that I have completed this work is a testimony to God's grace. He has been gracious to me in allowing me to study at this wonderful school, under these great scholars, and with kind and generous colleagues.

The professors on my committee were also the only three professors under whom I sat during my doctoral studies. Drs. George Martin and James Chancellor have both challenged and encouraged me along the way. My supervisor, Dr. David Sills, has pushed me to research more deeply, work harder, and think more clearly. All three have also been examples of gentlemen scholars who care deeply about both scholarship and the Kingdom of God.

As to the actual work, I must begin by thanking Jon Hirst, who first put me into contact with Eloise Hiebert Meneses, the eldest daughter of subject of this work. Eloise was extraordinarily gracious with her time and provided me much needed information about her family. The biographical section would have simply been impossible without her.

I have had many friends and colleagues at Southern who have built into me and edified me along the way. Jeff Walters and Will Brooks have stood out among the rest, and I am deeply thankful for them. They are wonderful brothers who have sharpened and exhorted me along the way.

My church family at Rolling Fields, especially my fellow elders, Andy Langdon, David Russell, and Ray Brangers, have all supported me along the way. Andy's leadership at Rolling Fields and understanding with me as I have had to spend many hours away from the church have allowed me to complete this work. He is a dear

brother and a patient friend.

My dad is the finest Christian gentleman that I know. If I am ever half the man of God that he is, it will be a clear testimony of the mercy and grace of Christ in my life. My mom has been a constant encouragement to me throughout my academic career and is my biggest fan. I love you, Mom. My brother and his wife, who earned their Ph.D.'s before me, have been helpful and encouraging guides throughout my academic career. My in-laws, Marvin and LaNette Thompson, have been missionaries in West Africa for twenty-five years, and my passion for the work of intercultural missions has been fostered and encouraged by watching their faithful service to the Lord and to the people of West Africa. LaNette has also patiently edited this work and offered many helpful suggestions and corrections along the way. Any remaining errors are probably the result my foolish rejection of her correction and are, therefore, clearly my own.

Finally, above all, I must thank my wife, Laura, who has been my best friend for the past thirteen years of marriage. Her constant support and encouragement has gotten me through many rough spots, and she is truly God's gift to me. Laura, I love you. This dissertation is as much as result of your hard work as it is mine. I also want to thank our two extraordinary sons, Daniel and Jonathan, who have put up with Daddy's being on the computer and at the library more often than they would have liked. Boys, you are amazing, and Mommy and I love you more than you can know.

Philip Wayne Barnes

Jeffersonville, Indiana

May 2011

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paul Hiebert was the missionary anthropologist par excellence. Throughout his career as a classically trained anthropologist and Evangelical missiologist, Hiebert demonstrated both an academic rigor and an evangelistic fervor that made his work indispensible for anyone seeking to integrate missiology and cultural anthropology.

In his work, *Customs and Cultures*, Bible translator and linguist Eugene Nida wrote that "good missionaries have always been 'anthropologists.'"[1] Nida clarified this assertion by explaining that the missionaries who are most effective at presenting the gospel to a given group of people are those who seek to understand the culture of that people, because "only by such an understanding of the indigenous culture could they possibly communicate a new way of life."[2] Since the gospel is more than a set of propositional truths to which people should give mental assent, and since the task of missions and evangelism is calling people to a new way of life and not merely to accept a set of facts (though it is certainly not less than that), Nida was exactly right. Nida's work as a Bible translator and linguist led him to conclude that searching for the correct word or set of words to communicate a particular truth of Scripture may take weeks or even months, but he was equally convinced that these phrases could indeed be found if one goes at the task in the same way that a prospector hunts for diamonds and gold.[3]

---

[1]Eugene A. Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975), xi. Nida does not mean that all missionaries should be classically trained anthropologists and elsewhere writes that "it is impossible to train all missionaries as anthropologists." Eugene A. Nida, "Missionaries and Anthropologists," *Practical Anthropology* 13, no. 6 (November-December 1966), 275.

[2]Nida, *Customs and Cultures*., xi.

[3]Eugene A. Nida, *God's Word in Man's Language* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952),

1

Nida was surely correct that faithful Bible translation is hard and painstaking work. He was also correct to conclude that "putting eternal truths into the speech of everyday life reflects exactly the style of the Greek New Testament."[4] From this conclusion, Nida, and others since him, have contended that this same concept of communicating in the language of the people should be applied not just the work of translating Scripture but also to the work of missions as a whole. The task of missions is largely concerned with communicating a message.[5] Additionally, communication always takes place within a given cultural context. Therefore, only by adjusting our methods, using different mediums, constantly evaluating our own means of communication, studying the norms and patterns of other cultures, and critiquing and evaluating our own culture can we effectively proclaim the eternal truths of the gospel into diverse and ever-changing cultures. Insights gained from the work of the cultural anthropologists can greatly assist the missionary's task.[6] Hiebert's integration of cultural anthropology and

_____

19.

[4]Ibid., 23. Paul's sermon at the Areopagus in Acts 17:22-34 as well as his statement in 1 Cor 9:22-23 that he has "become all things to all people" in order that they might share in the blessings of the gospel support Nida's contention that correct understanding was the goal of the authors of Scripture – and it should be missionaries' goal, as well.

[5]I am aware of the numerous conversations being had about holistic missions and agree that the task of missions is more than *merely* verbal proclamation, but the task of missions is surely *never less than* the verbal proclamation of the gospel. I prefer not to think of evangelism or verbal proclamation as *primary* (since the word primary implies a sequencing that might allow one to "check off" verbal proclamation on one's way to some other task) but rather as *central* to the task of missions. See John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, IVP Classics (1975; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008) and Christopher J.H. Wright, *Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

[6]Hiebert himself credited Nida and other Bible translators like H. A. Gleason, Kenneth Pike, William Reyburn, William Smalley, and Jacob Loewen as some of the early pioneers of applying anthropological insights to missions. Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 9. David Sills writes, "If these matters are not learned and taken into consideration, the missionary will inevitably communicate unintentional messages and fail to communicate the primary message clearly." M. David Sills, "The Great Commission and Intercultural Communication," in *The Challenge of the Great Commission: Essays on God's Mandate for the Local Church*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Thom S. Rainer (Pinnacle, 2005), 87. Elsewhere Sills contends that those who refuse to contextualize the gospel are doing just what they are seeking to avoid doing – changing the gospel. M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 198. Writing a generation earlier, A. Tippett proposed that all missionaries be required to receive training in anthropology if for no other reason than to help them deal with culture shock and to

missiology was second to none.

While it seems clear that cultural anthropology and missiology can benefit one another, the history of interaction between the fields has not always been a harmonious one. For instance, in a 1986 *Missiology* article Frank A. Salamone reported that the overwhelming majority of anthropologists often feel that missionaries do more harm than good; missionaries, on the other hand, frequently feel like they are disrespected or marginalized by anthropologists who use them as sources for ethnographic data.[7] Anthropologists often criticize missionaries as only being interested in converting others to their way of thinking and paint themselves as objective observers interested only in gathering and then reporting data. The truth of the matter, however, is that anthropologists actively seek to convert people to their way of thinking – namely the desire to leave unchanged the cultures with which they come into contact.[8] Hiebert is, therefore, right when he contends that "anthropologists were no less philosophically ethnocentric in their relationship to other world views than were most Christian missionaries."[9]

---

identify with their new culture. A.R. Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory* (Lincoln, IL: Lincoln Christian College Press, 1969), 138.

Similarly, Dennis Mahon writes that cultural anthropology helps us "avoid mutilating the language God has chosen. The message of the missioner is entirely outside the realm of anthropology." Dennis Mahon, "Cultural Anthropology," *Practical Anthropology* 13, no. 6 (November-December 1966): 277.

[7]Frank A. Salamone, "Missionaries and Anthropologists: An Inquiry Into Their Ambivalent Relationship," *Missiology* 14, no. 1 (January 1986): 60, 67-68. According to Nida, anthropologists often disapprove of changing a society. Nida comments that "perhaps without quite realizing it, many anthropologists are devotees of the cult of the exotic." Eugene A. Nida, "Missionaries and Anthropologists," *Practical Anthropology* 13, no. 6 (November-December 1966), 273. See also Mark Andrew Ritchie, *Spirit of the Rainforest: A Yanomamo Shaman's Story*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Island Lake Press, 2000) and Charles R. Taber, *The World is Too Much with Us: 'Culture' in Modern Protestant Missions*, The Modern Mission Era, 1792-1992 An Appraisal (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991), 150.

[8]Sjaak Van Der Geest, "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Brothers Under the Skin," *Man*, n.s., 25, no. 4 (December 1990): 558-601.

[9]Paul G. Hiebert, "Missions and Anthropology: A Love/Hate Relationship," *Missiology* 6, no. 2 (April 1978): 169.

Many cultural anthropologists are mistrustful of missionaries and missions, but it has been demonstrated that this mistrust is grounded in a refusal to apply their critique of missionaries to themselves. Similarly, Christian missionaries are often just as leery of cultural anthropology as anthropologists are of missionaries and missions. Having watched liberal theologians deny one orthodox belief after another, some missionaries refuse to even look into the use of anthropological insights. The result, Harvie Conn wrote, is that "ignorance breeds suspicion."[10] Evangelical missionaries and other Evangelical Christians often fear that an incorporation of anthropological insights into missiology might lead to a wholesale acceptance of the philosophically relativistic worldview often associated with cultural anthropology, comparative religions, etc.[11] This fear, however, is ungrounded. The truth is that the Spirit of God works through the application of methods informed by good cultural anthropology to make the gospel message clear to people so that they may properly respond to its demands.[12]

In sum, as Hiebert wrote, the history of the relationship between cultural anthropology and missions has been "long and checkered."[13] Hiebert concluded his

---

[10]Harvie M. Conn, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Mission in Trialogue* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1984), 12.

[11]I want to make a distinction here between philosophical relativism and cultural relativism. The former rejects any and all absolute truth claims and must be rejected in light an orthodox understanding of the nature of biblical revelation as being absolutely true for all times and for all peoples. The latter, cultural relativism, should be embraced (and was by Hiebert) and is the widely accepted notion that "in order to understand the behavior of a group of people, he must first refer their behavior to the standards and values held by the people themselves." *Anthropology Today* (Del Mar, CA: Communications Research Machines, 1971), 326.

It is equally important to note that cultural relativism does not mean the indefinite suspension of judgment about a given culture or cultural practice – just a temporary suspension. This suspension of judgment does "not imply any approving judgment for what happened, but rather that the approach is more likely to show why it happened in the first place." Ibid., 327.

[12]I agree with Andrew Fuller's contention that unbelievers are, in fact, commanded to believe in Christ. Fuller writes, "Unconverted sinners are commanded, exhorted and invited to believe in Christ for salvation." Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel Worthy of All Acception: Or the Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ* (BiblioLife, 1805).

[13]Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 79.

discussion of this topic by writing that "anthropology and missions are like half-siblings who share – at least in part – a common parentage, are raised in the same settings, quarrel over the same space, and argue the same issues."[14] It was Hiebert's contention that cultural anthropology can greatly aid missionaries in their work of evangelism and church planting. As such, missionaries should actively seek to "learn how to ask the right questions in the right way."[15] With cultural anthropology informing the manner in which we ask questions, we will come to a deeper and clearer understanding of the culture with which we hope to share the gospel. Equipped with this understanding, we can more effectively plant indigenous churches which will stand the test of time and continue to remain true to the "faith that was delivered to the saints once for all."[16]

Purpose

The overarching purpose of this work was to determine Paul G. Hiebert's legacy by investigating his influence on Evangelical missiology. It is particularly concerned with the manner in which Hiebert applied anthropological insights to the academic study of missiology. I investigated how Hiebert's life and assertions, theories, and proposed approaches to missions, which I have consolidated into six seminal ideas, have influenced missiology in the past and present.[17]

In order to fulfill this purpose, I first wrote a brief biography of Hiebert. The purpose of this biography is to discover and report how his personal life history affected

---

[14]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 126.

[15]Eugene A. Nida, "Missionaries and Anthropologists," *Practical Anthropology* 13 (November-December 1966): 273-77, 275-76. For an example of what it means to ask of the "right questions in the right way," see Jacob A. Loewen, "Missionaries and Anthropologists Cooperate in Research," *Practical Anthropology* 12, no. 4 (July-August 1965): 158-90.

[16]Jude 3 HCSB.

[17]This paper deals primarily with the way that Hiebert's ideas have influenced missiology that is primarily concerned with missions outside of North America. There are some reflections on Hiebert's influence on North American missiology, but a full examination of that influence is beyond the scope of this work.

his approach to missiology including seeking to discover the origin of his interest in the intersection of missiology and cultural anthropology. The biography also serves to give the reader a picture of the type of man that Paul Hiebert was, because Hiebert the missionary anthropologist cannot be separated from Hiebert the man. Next, I fulfilled this purpose by investigating and examining six of Hiebert's seminal ideas. Those six seminal ideas are: critical realism, critical contextualization, the flaw of the excluded middle, set theory, missional theology, and self-theologizing.[18]

My investigation of Hiebert's six seminal ideas takes the following form. First, I organized the discussion of these ideas according to the order in which Hiebert himself reported that they developed in his own thinking and writing.[19] I identified where each concept first appeared in his published works, and then I showed where he fully developed each idea. Next, I gave examples of how Hiebert himself applied these ideas to the practice of missions, trace connections between each idea and the other ideas, and ask one research question of each of these seminal ideas. Finally, I have given some examples of how widespread Hiebert's influence has been on the world of Evangelical missiology as well as shown how Hiebert's ideas have been applied and adapted. Sometimes these applications have been legitimate and sometimes they have demonstrated a misunderstanding and/or misapplication of Hiebert's ideas.

---

[18]These six ideas are the ones that occur most frequently both in Hiebert's writings and are the ones that are cited most often by those referencing Hiebert's ideas and writings. After I had identified these six ideas as Hiebert's six seminal ideas, my supervising professor David Sills confirmed that these are the six ideas that most accurately represent Hiebert's legacy. After I began my research, I also discovered a Fall 2009 journal from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School dedicated to Hiebert which also mentions five of these six ideas as those which best represent Hiebert's legacy.

[19]Paul G. Hiebert, *Reflections of Life-Time Research and Publication in 5 Stages*, telephone conversation conducted by Enoch Wan, 3 March 2007. Paul G. Hiebert, *A Conversation with Doctoral Students at Western Seminary on Research Methodology*, telephone conversation conducted by Enoch Wan and misc. seminary students, 6 March 2007. Both were accessed 19 July 2010 and are available from http://www.globalmissiology.org/cms/ index.php?option=com_content&view =article&id=16&Itemid=11. In each of these phone interviews (given eight and five days before his death, respectively), Hiebert surveyed the development of his thoughts and ideas and also responded to questions by a class at Trinity Evangelical Seminary.

Definitions

In order to promote clarity and seek to avoid misunderstandings, it is necessary to provide some definitions to key terms that are used in this dissertation. Since this dissertation is primarily concerned with cultural anthropology and missiology, I will provide definitions for culture, cultural anthropology and missiology. When defining missiology, it will become necessary to provide a definition of mission/missions. Likewise, when providing a definition for culture, it will be necessary to provide a clarification about the terms intercultural and cross-cultural.

Culture

Culture is a term that is widely used and misused. In popular lingo, culture is sometimes used as an unqualified good. For instance, when someone speaks of a person as being "cultured" of "having culture," he often means that the person is familiar with the fine dining, classical music, wine tasting, and the "finer things" in life. One "gets culture" by listening to symphonic music, taking cooking classes, or learning to dance the waltz. This use of the word culture should instead be thought of as "high culture" and is not the manner in which I wish to use the word culture. Culture is also sometimes used in the North American church context as the battleground where the social-political "wars" are often waged among conservatives and liberals in regard to public policy. While this topic is important, one thing that is usually missing is a clear definition of exactly what culture is.

In the late 19th century, Englishman Sir Edward Tylor introduced the concept of culture into anthropological academic life.[20] Tylor has been referred to as "the first

---

[20]Edward B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, 1881, ed. Leslie A. White, Abridged (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1960), iiv.

professional anthropologist."[21] Tylor's definition of culture is "that complex whole

which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and

habits acquired by man as a member of society."[22] Tylor's definition has had abiding

influence, and many still use this definition as a starting point for a discussion of the

concept.[23] For the purposes of this work, it is important to take note that Tylor

recognized that that culture has cognitive (belief), affective (morals), and evaluative

(custom and habits) aspects.

　　While the study of culture was once just for those who had an academic or

religious interest in the study of "others," the reality of a globalized world, and

specifically a globalized economy, has forced secular business writers to seek to

understand culture.[24] For instance, in a book written for secular business people about

how to manage conflict in the workplace, LeBaron and Pillay wrote, "And what is

culture? This is the million-dollar question, subject of everything from folk tales to

academic treatises to talk shows. For our purposes, culture is the shared, often unspoken,

---

[21]*Anthropology Today*, 37.

[22]Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*, vol. 1, Third American (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1889), 1.

[23]See *Anthropology Today* and Simon Coleman and Helen Watson, *An Introduction to Anthropology* (Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1990) for two examples of Tylor's abiding influence. The former work refers to this definition as Tylor's "greatest achievement," and the latter points out that while some anthropologists might disagree with some of the details of the definition, as a whole, the definition still points us in the right direction.

[24]Thomas Friedman sees globalization as "the dominant international system that replaced the Cold War system after the fall of the Berlin Wall," and by "system," Friedman was primarily referring to the economic "system," and his first book on the matter investigates how traditional culture (i.e. the olive tree) is often at odds with global free market capitalism (i.e., the Lexus). Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 7.

　　Friedman's analysis of globalization is largely accurate, and businesses are quickly learning that they must adapt in each new culture in which they are seeking to do business.

understandings of a group."[25] These authors have firm grasp on the cognitive aspect of

culture. Also writing for secular business people, Hofstede, Pedersen, and Hofstede

wrote that culture can be defined as "the rules of the social game."[26] These authors

indicate that they understand the evaluative aspect of culture. A final definition from the

world of business comes from Richard Lewis, who wrote, "A nation's culture is its

blueprint for survival and, hopefully, success. It is an all-embracing pattern of a group's

entire way of life, including a shared system of values, social meanings, and agendas

passed on from generation to generation."[27] Lewis' definition is the fullest and

demonstrates that he understood that culture is more than just cognitive and/or evaluative;

it also has an affective dimension to it. He also demonstrated that he understands that

culture is shared and taught. Understanding all of these parts of the definition of culture

is vital to getting a firm grasp on the meaning of culture.

      While, as mentioned above, good missionaries have always been involved in

"doing" cultural anthropology, it is only relatively recently that serious attention has been

given to providing a definition of culture from an Evangelical perspective. In a book

written for missionaries, Steffan and Douglas defined culture as "a unique way of life for

a specific group of people."[28] Also writing for missionaries, Grunlan and Mayers defined

---

[25]Michelle LeBaron and Venashri Pillay, *Conflict across Cultures: A Unique Experience of Bridging Differences* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 2006), 14.

[26]Gert Jan Hofstede, Paul B. Pedersen, and Geert Hofstede, *Exploring Culture: Excercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures* (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2002), 29.

[27]Richard D. Lewis, *The Cultural Imperative: Global Trends in the 21st Century* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 2007), xxiii.

[28]Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney Douglas, *Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry*, Encountering Mission (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 40.

culture as "learned and shared attitudes, values, and ways of behaving."[29] Again, these authors have provided part of a good definition of culture, but they are all incomplete.

While the above definitions of culture are helpful, and each of them contributes something to the conversation, none of them provides a completely full-orbed understanding of culture. Since this paper is concerned with the life and legacy of Paul Hiebert, it is appropriate to turn to him for the best definition of culture. Hiebert's definition of culture in his 1976 anthropology textbook titled *Cultural Anthropology* was "the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas, and products characteristic of a society."[30] About a decade later, in 1985, Hiebert expanded his definition as he defined cultures as "the more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel, and do."[31]   In his second and final posthumously published book, that definition is nuanced and expanded to "the partially integrated system of ideas, feelings, and values encoded in learned patterns of behavior, signs, products, rituals, and worldviews shared by a community of people."[32] The key addition in the second two definitions that was absent in the first definition is that culture is not only about ideas and behaviors but also values and feelings. This change indicates Hiebert's understanding that cultures are made up of three dimensions – cognitive, affective, and evaluative.[33]

---

[29]Stephen A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 39.

[30]Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976), 25.

[31]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 30.

[32]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 18n.

[33]Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 30-35.

Since this work is concerned with the interaction of cultures and not just the evaluation of cultures, clarification about the terms intercultural and cross-cultural is necessary. For this work, they will be used interchangeably. I am aware that much of the current literature is moving toward the former term. However, the latter term has a long history of usage by Evangelicals wishing to communicate the same idea that those who use the word intercultural use today, so I will retain its usage, as well.[34] The concept behind both ideas is the process or work of crossing from one culture to another – usually to communicate. For this dissertation, the primary motivation for this process and work is to communicate the gospel and see biblical churches planted in that second culture.

Cultural Anthropology

Given Hiebert's understanding of culture, a definition of cultural anthropology can now be provided. First, anthropology is the study of humans as they make up different societies.[35] Implicit in this definition is the comparative nature of anthropology. The process of studying one group of people (i.e. one society), one must have another group (or some ideal group) against which one is comparing that group.

Simply following the etymology of the word, Hiebert defined anthropology as "the study of people."[36] While this definition seems very broad and not a little bit vague, when coupled with his above understanding of culture, it provides us with a working

---

[34]For example, see David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) and David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991).

[35]Simon Coleman and Helen Watson, *An Introduction to Anthropology* (Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1990), 8. See also William A. Haviland, *Cultural Anthropology*, 1975, 9th ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999).

[36]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 1. Grunlan and Mayers write that "cultural anthropology deals with the system as a whole, how the parts fit and function within the whole, and how whole systems relate and compare." Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, 54.

definition of cultural anthropology as the study of the way that the people of a given community think about, feel, act, and evaluate one another compared with how the people of another community think about, feel, act, and evaluate one another.

Missiology

Missiology is the academic study of missions. It is concerned with the nature, goal, and means of missions.[37] The academic disciplines that make up missiology include but are not limited to the following subjects: the biblical basis for missions; the theology of missions; the history of missions; the philosophy and methodology of missions; and the research and writing of books, articles, and other publications which deal with the topic of missions. It should be noted that the academic discipline of missiology was preceded by many centuries of doing missions.[38] As an illustration of this point, Neely contends that Raymond Lull, a Spanish missionary to Muslims and Jews who wrote in the thirteenth century, should be thought of as the first missiologist.[39] Since missiology is the academic study of missions, it will be helpful to provide a working definition of mission and missions, as well.

The distinction between mission and missions is a much discussed and debated topic. Writing in 1972, George Peters distinguished between mission and missions by referring to the former as the overall biblical directive for the church and the latter as the efforts of any given church, society, individual, etc. to carry out that directive in "gospel destitute areas" with the result being "functioning, multiplying local congregations who

---

[37]A. Scott Moreau, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*, Encountering Mission, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 17.

[38]Alan Neely, "Missiology," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 633. Quoted in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Martin Kahler was surely correct when he wrote that mission is "the mother of theology" – and we could say that missions is also the mother of missiology. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

[39]Neely, "Missiology," 633.

will bear the fruit of Christianity in that community and to that country."[40] Another term

that is often included in this discussion is *missio Dei*. While I greatly admire Christopher

Wright's book *The Mission of God* and agree with his contention that "mission . . . is not

primarily a matter of our activity or our initiative . . . [but] the committed participation of

God's people in the purposes of God," [41] I will refrain from using the term *missio Dei* as I

find an unnecessary redundancy given Peters' definition of mission.

Despite Peters' helpful distinction, many use the terms mission and missions

interchangeably. This has led to a labeling of many different activities of the church such

as Vacation Bible School, local outreach, poverty alleviation ministries, etc. as missions –

since all of these activities do represent legitimate expressions of the mission of the

church. However, I find Peters' distinction to be a helpful one and agree with the

assessment first advocated by Stephen Neill that if everything is missions, then nothing is

missions.[42] Additionally, I contend that missions is primarily concerned with the task of

planting healthy New Testament churches. Since planting healthy New Testament

churches involves more than starting a prayer group and handing out some Bibles, a

---

[40]George Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1972), 11. While I will follow Peters' distinction between the two words and applaud his emphasis on evangelism and church planting as being the very heartbeat of the task of missions, I do take issue with his understanding of the result of missions, since the resultant churches should surely do more than reach out to their community and their country. Biblical churches (both the ones from which we are sent and the ones which we seek to plant) must see their task as *global* in scope.

[41] Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 67.

[42]Neill actually said, "There is a great deal of talk to-day about the 'theology of mission.' This may be a good thing; but I apprehend certain dangers in both of two contrary directions. The first is that we may cast our net too wide and so make the enquiry almost meaningless. *If everything is mission, nothing is mission.* If everything that the Church does is to be classed as 'mission,' we shall have to find another term for the Church's particular responsibility for 'the heathen,' those who have never yet heard the Name of Christ . . . By reaction against this too general formulation, we are in danger of thinking really in terms of a theology of missionary societies and of missionaries." Stephen Neill, *Creative Tension: The Duff Lectures, 1958* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1959), 81-82, emphasis mine. Neill had at least two concerns. His first concern (and the one that I am referencing here) is that the concept of taking the gospel to people and places where the gospel is absent needs to remain as a distinct function and not be lumped in with the rest of the tasks given to Christ-followers. His second concern (which is outside the scope of this work) was that this kind of work would be outsourced to mission societies instead of a function of the church.

logical and legitimate extension of church planting is church renewal which Hiebert believed was also a part of the task of missions.[43]

Background

God called me to ministry while on a cross-cultural mission trip. Though I did not have that term or the concept in my mind at the time, I was involved in crossing cultures as my white upper-middle class church travelled just a few miles to do a backyard Bible club in a working-class predominately African-American neighborhood. Although I did not know terms like worldview, contextualization, or intercultural communication, our team found ourselves having to adjust to different ways of thinking and communicating as we tried to share the gospel and do ministry with these children.

During my time as an undergraduate student in Religion at Samford University in Birmingham, God confirmed a call on my life to international missions (we called it foreign missions back then), and my wife and I were given the opportunity to be involved in cross-cultural missions in the Center Point area of Birmingham, Alabama. Under the leadership of Pastor Bill Henard, Ridgecrest Baptist Church started Mission Birmingham, and my wife and I were the first residents, and I was the Director. I again found myself doing cross-cultural missions – though without the correct terminology. Our methodology improved slightly as we offered English as a Second Language classes for the large Spanish-speaking community in our apartment complex, but the Bible studies we offered were merely repackaged Bible studies which we had used at our church. Though I did seek out materials that were a bit more appropriate for people without church backgrounds, the materials were not contextualized. It would be several years

---

[43]See Paul G. Hiebert, "Missions and the Renewal of the Church," in *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 157-67. This essay is also available as chap. 9 of Hiebert's *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 159-72. For a biblical and full understanding of the nature and task of missions – particularly church planting also see M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010).

later that I came across a whole method of doing ministry that takes into account the culture of those one is trying to reach.

While I was studying for a Masters of Divinity degree in The Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism at Southern Seminary, I took a class with Dr. David Sills that helped to solidify a growing interest in the subject of cross-cultural communication and missions. His class (which at the time was transitioning from being called The Gospel Across Cultures to Cultural Anthropology) opened my eyes to an entire way of thinking about missions. Though I had already taken a number of classes in the history and biblical basis for missions prior to Sills' class, this class was the first one that helped me understand that while the Bible is eternally true for all peoples at all times, the way which we communicate with other cultures can make the difference between being understood and being misunderstood.

During our International Service Corps assignment with the International Mission Board in Central Asia, I had the opportunity to teach a course titled "Cross-cultural Management" in a business institute where my supervisor and I had both been teaching. This was a great opportunity for me to not only teach cultural anthropology but also to apply it as I had to adapt my teaching to a different culture and to a specific academic context (i.e. business). I also had the opportunity to communicate daily with people of other cultures, and my educational background in cultural anthropology began to inform my understanding of how to interact with both the local people and other ex-pats living in our city. Our time overseas deepened my interest in the intersection of cultural anthropology and missiology, and it solidified my desire to return to Southern to pursue a Ph.D. in missions under Dr. Sills.

Upon returning to Southern to pursue my Ph.D., I have had the chance to take two seminars in cultural anthropology in which we read Hiebert's works. I also took a colloquium led by Dr. James Chancellor in which we read another of Hiebert's works.

All of these opportunities confirmed my desire to write a dissertation which attempted to evaluate the impact that cultural anthropology has on missiology. In particular, I have become increasingly interested in investigating Paul Hiebert's life and legacy.

Limitations and Delimitations

My study of Paul Hiebert's life and legacy was limited by several factors. Hiebert never wrote an autobiography, did not leave personal journals which can be examined by the public, and both he and his wife are deceased. As such, all biographical material will be secondary. I have attempted to overcome these limitations by interviewing his family members, close friends, colleagues, former students, and others whom he influenced and with whom he shared life.

There is currently no official collection of Hiebert's writings anywhere in the country. In an e-mail from its interim director I was told that the Hiebert Library at Fresno Pacific University is currently in discussion with his children about housing his papers, but there has not been any progress on that process for some time.[44]

There are also several delimitations. First, I did not attempt to write a full biography of Paul G. Hiebert. A full biography of Hiebert should be written. Academic anthropologists and missionaries alike would benefit from a book length biography of Hiebert.

Second, I did not attempt a thorough critical analysis of any one of the six seminal ideas that I have identified. As with the full biography, this is work that needs to be done, and future dissertations should consider dealing with each one of these ideas

---

[44]In an e-mail message to the author, 8 June 2010, interim director and archivist Kevin Enns-Rempel indicated that he did not know what the children had decided to do with the papers. In a telephone interview with the author on 5 July 2010, Eloise Hiebert Meneses indicated that she had not heard from the Hiebert library in a few years. In the same interview, Meneses said that she was inclined to let Fresno Pacific house the documents (over and against Fuller or Trinity), since it is a specifically Mennonite school and is the current manifestation of the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary from which Paul graduated in 1954. According to Enns-Rempel, the Hiebert Library is not named for Paul but for Cornelius Hiebert, a furniture manufacturer who funded construction of the building.

individually. For example, Hiebert's concept of self-theologizing needs to be investigated to determine whether or not it can legitimately be added to Anderson and Venn's original three-selfs. Additionally, a dissertation should be written which argues that Hiebert's critical realism is the foundation upon which all of his other seminal ideas are built. My research has convinced me of this truth, but I have not attempted to systematically build a case for that assertion.

Third, my investigation of Hiebert's influence on contemporary missiology was limited to a representative example. I have attempted to contact several of the leading Evangelical professors of missions, Evangelical training centers, and several Evangelical schools and departments of missions, but these have served only as representative examples of these groups.

Fourth, my investigation of the influence that Hiebert has had and continues to have on missiology is limited to Evanglicalism. While Hiebert's influence surely extends beyond those who self-identify as Evangelicals, it is beyond the scope of this work to investigate non-Evangelical missiology.

Last, I did not attempt to fully analyze the current state of missions vis-à-vis an application of Hiebert's ideas. For example, further work should be done to analyze whether or not Hiebert's ideas are relevant in an increasingly urbanized, interconnected, and globalized world. While I will deal briefly with each of these phenomena, close analysis is still needed. Additionally, since much of the world is made up of primary or secondary oral learners, work should be done which investigates how some of Hiebert's ideas (such as critical contextualization) would work in an oral society.

Methodology

In order to investigate the life and legacy of Paul G. Hiebert one must begin with primary sources. In this case, those primary sources are the books, articles, essays, and other published works.   Over the course of my academic career, I have gathered all

of Hiebert's book-length works in my personal library. I have also obtained for my personal library a number of the books in which he wrote a section, chapter, or essay. The Boyce Centennial Library holds the journals in which the vast majority of Hiebert's articles are found. It also holds many of the remaining books in which Hiebert wrote a chapter or essay. For the few journals and books not held by the Boyce Library, I have made use of inter-library loan to gain access to them, make copies of those articles, and add those copies to my files. All of these resources have allowed me to do a thorough literature review of Hiebert's work.[45]

In order to compile a biography of Hiebert, I have conducted a number of interviews both by phone and by email with Hiebert's family, colleagues and friends, former students, and other people whom he influenced and impacted. Hiebert's daughter, Eloise Meneses, is a professor of cultural anthropology at Eastern University, and she has been a willing and valuable source for not only compiling the biographical data but also for providing additional people to contact. I have interviewed Bill Pannell, one of Hiebert's closest friends from his days at Fuller Seminary, on the phone. I also interviewed Paul Pierson, the dean of the School of Missions at Fuller during Hiebert's time there, via email. I have interviewed Titè Tienou at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to discuss Hiebert's time there. Upon the recommendation of my supervisor professor, David Sills, I have also interviewed Sam Larsen at Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS). Larsen was mentored by Hiebert, and Hiebert's legacy can be partially seen throughout Larsen's teaching career at RTS.

In my initial contacts with Eloise Meneses, she indicated that she personally held several of her father's papers and was willing to send me paper copies of anything that I would like to have. Robert Priest at Trinity indicated that Trinity has a collection of

---

[45]The nature of this literature review is described in the methodology section as well as in the descriptions of the chapters.

Hiebert's papers in its Ph.D. room that could be accessed. Since neither indicated that there was any unpublished material in these collections and since this dissertation is primarily concerned with determining Hiebert's influence on missiology, the documents were not essential to the task of a review of Hiebert's works. However, Meneses did send me a copy of one of Hiebert's works which was not available at Boyce Library nor through interlibrary loan nor online. Given the lack of unpublished materials, the task of identifying the first occurrences of the concepts behind each of Hiebert's six seminal ideas was limited to his published works which were easily arranged chronologically according to date of publication. Similarly, identifying when each idea was fully developed, how Hiebert himself applied this ideas, and determining how these six ideas were connected to one another was also limited to published works and arranged according to publication date.

My investigation of Hiebert's influence took four forms. First, I conducted a survey of a representative sample of various Evangelical schools and departments of missions to determine how often Hiebert's books and articles are used in missions and anthropology classes. Second, I polled a representative sample of various Evangelical professors of missions to determine which of Hiebert's ideas have had the most significant influence in their own missiologies. Third, I polled a representative sample of missionary training centers to determine how Hiebert's ideas and theories are applied to missionary training and orientation. Finally, I studied books, journal articles, and other works written by Evangelicals to investigate how Hiebert's ideas have been variously cited and then applied in Evangelical missiology. As I deal with these works in the fifth chapter, I demonstrate that in some cases these applications have been legitimate extensions of Hiebert's ideas, and in some cases they have been illegitimate and not at all what Hiebert intended.

Secondary sources on Hiebert's work, especially the six seminal ideas which I

have identified, are available in my personal library, at the Boyce Library, and through inter-library loan. Additionally, Hiebert's ideas are often the subject of online journal articles and blogs.

Chapter Descriptions

Chapter 1 introduces the overall research question which investigates the interface of cultural anthropology and missiology. Key terms are introduced and defined in order to provide clarity for the remaining work. The author's background as it relates to the study is presented. The research methodology is identified as are the limitations and delimitations related to the study.

Chapter 2 is a brief biography of Paul G. Hiebert. The biographical section begins before his birth as I will briefly investigate the origins and particularities of the Mennonite Brethren Church of which Hiebert was a part. Next, I have traced his paternal grandparents' and parents' experiences as missionaries and advocates of missions in India. I have then traced Hiebert's childhood as missionary/third-culture kid and seek to understand how those experiences affected his later education and missionary career. I have outlined his educational background as he obtained one undergraduate and three graduate degrees. Next, I outlined his academic career as a professor of anthropology and missiology at various institutions of higher learning. I have given brief overviews of each of these major publications and inserted these overviews into the chronology of his academic career to demonstrate when in his academic career that he published each of these major works. Finally, I have reported on his final years leading up to his death in 2007.

In chapter 3, I have identified and traced the development of Hiebert's six seminal ideas. For each of these ideas, I identified when and where the concepts behind each idea first appeared in his published writing and when each idea fully emerged and was defined by Hiebert. I also discovered and identified Hiebert's own application of

each idea to missions practice from his published works. I have also sought to recognize

connections between each idea and any of the other six seminal ideas. In some cases,

these connections are explicit in the sense that Hiebert himself reported the connection.

In other cases, the connections are implicit and must be demonstrated.

In chapter 4, I have examined how Hiebert's six seminal ideas introduced in

the third chapter apply to some questions being dealt with in contemporary missiology.

This investigation will take the form of a research question associated with each idea.

For critical realism, I attempted to answer the question, How does one's epistemology

affect the way that one does missions? For critical contextualization, I attempted to

answer the question, How much contextualization is too much contextualization? For the

flaw of the excluded middle, I attempted to answer the question, How does the Western

missionary who lives and operates with a two-tiered understanding of the world interface

with those cultures that embrace the middle realm? For centered-set theory, I attempted

to answer the question, What is required to be a Christian? For self-theologizing, I

attempted to answer the question, Is self-theologizing a legitimate exercise for

Evangelicals? For missional theology, I attempted to answer the question, How does

missional theology differ from systematic and biblical theology?

In chapter 5, I attempted to apply Hiebert's six seminal ideas to current

missiological practice. I first surveyed a representative sample of Evangelical schools

and department of missions to determine how widespread Hiebert's influence is through

an evaluation of various syllabi used in missions classes and reading lists provided for

students. Next I polled several Evangelical professors of missions to discover how

influential Hiebert and his seminal ideas have been in their own missiological thinking

and writing. Then, I inquired of Evangelical training programs to discover how much of

an influence Hiebert's ideas have had on the way that they conduct missionary training

and orientation. Finally, I surveyed secondary sources to determine when Hiebert has

been cited in order to support various missiological ideas and positions, and then I have evaluated whether these ideas are legitimate or illegitimate extensions of Hiebert's ideas.

Chapter 6 concludes the study. This final chapter reflects on Paul Hiebert's life as a man who loved the Lord his God with all of his heart, soul, mind and strength.

CHAPTER 2

A BIOGRAPHY OF PAUL G. HIEBERT

As a boy Paul Hiebert did village evangelism at his father's side in central India. As a young man Hiebert returned to some of those same Indian villages to continue his father's work and conduct anthropological research for the sake of the gospel. As an adult, he returned to the States as a professor of missions and anthropology and prolific author, so that more young men and women might be sent to the nations with the good news of Jesus Christ. Paul Hiebert's life from beginning to end was tied to the mission of God to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hiebert's commitment to the missions task did not originate with him, however. As with all great men, Hiebert stood on the shoulders of those who went before him and was a product of the prayers and dedication to the gospel demonstrated by his predecessors. By looking at some of these predecessors by investigating his ancestral roots in the Mennonite Brethren Church and his family history, we will see how his personal history, his educational history, and his professional history positioned Paul Hiebert to have the significant impact that he had. In the end we will see that Hiebert's life was one truly committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mennonite Brethren Roots

The story of Paul Hiebert's involvement in the cause of missions does not begin with his appointment as a missionary with the Mennonite Brethren Church, nor with his birth on a missionary compound in South India in the early twentieth century, nor with his parents' call and appointment to missionary service there, and not even with his grandparents' surrender to missionary service at a tent revival in 1899. Hiebert's

story began much earlier and can be traced to his familial roots in the Mennonite

Brethren Church.

Paul Hiebert was born into and raised in the Mennonite Brethren Church. The

history and distinctive beliefs of the Mennonite Brethren must have been taught to

Hiebert from a very young age. As such, an investigation of Mennonite Brethren history

and their distinctive beliefs is warranted. This investigation will reveal that Hiebert

inherited a passion for missions, discipleship, and the clear communication of the gospel

from his ancestors, and that, as a result, Hiebert had missions in his blood.

Who are the Mennonite Brethren? In her book by that name, Katie Wiebe

answered that question like this, "Mennonite Brethren have consistently defined

themselves as a separate group and yet a group which is part of two other groups: the

Mennonite family and also the mainstream evangelical family."[1] Our discussion of the

Mennonite Brethren will reveal that Wiebe was correct and that the Mennonite Brethren

should be thought of as part of two groups which while distinct from one another are not

mutually exclusive – Evangelicals and Anabaptists. While many Mennonite Brethren

prefer to view themselves as a sect due to their history of resistance to the influence of

the world and the state, the North American Mennonite Brethren of the late twentieth

century (i.e. the Mennonite Brethren of Hiebert's time) should probably be thought of as

a conservative denomination.[2]

The issue of the relationship between ethnicity and the identity of Mennonite

Brethren was the subject of one of Hiebert's journal articles and has been much discussed

among the Mennonite Brethren.[3] While both Hiebert's article and Wiebe's comment on

---

[1]Katie Funk Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?* (Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1984), viii.

[2]Richard G. Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination: Church Types and Their Implications for Mennonite Brethren History* (Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1985), 129-31.

[3]Paul G. Hiebert, "Ethnicity and Evangelism in the Mennonite Brethren Church," *Direction* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 87-102. In 1987, Kyle wrote that "without a doubt, ethnicity has been and still is the

this issue indicate a desire to not be identified with a specific ethnicity, it is clear that there is a close relationship between the identity of the Mennonite Brethren and a specific ethnic identity – namely a Germanic people who migrated to the United States Midwest from the area formerly known as West Prussia via the area of Russia which is modern-day Ukraine.[4]

History of the Mennonite Brethren

As with the first Christians in Antioch, the name Mennonite Brethren was not one that they chose. Rather, it was given to them by others. Also like the Christians at Antioch, both parts of the name were initially used in a disparaging sense. Initially, those who followed Menno Simons were called "Mennists," and then the term "Brethren" was added to those who left the Mennonite church seeking a community that demonstrated brotherly love toward one another.[5]

Anabaptist beginnings. The Mennonites trace their history to one of Ulrich Zwingli's disciples, and one of radical Reformers, Conrad Grebel.[6] While the Grebel agreed with Zwingli's teaching about the nature of the Lord's Supper, he broke from

---

central feature for many in the more historic and traditional Mennonite Brethren churches, though its impact today has been reduced in the less inbred congregations." Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination*, 99. See also John H. Redekop, *A People Apart: Ethnicity and the Mennonite Brethren* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1987).

[4]Wiebe writes, "Most of our leaders would agree we are not primarily an ethnic group but a denomination with peoples of various ethnic descent among its membership, the largest group in North America being the descendants of the German-speaking immigrants from Russia." Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 5

[5]Ibid., 2-3.

[6]Some credit Grebel, along with Felix Mantz, for founding Anabaptism; an inscription on a mansion in Zurich makes this claim. The claim does have some merit, since it was Grebel who performed the first "rebaptism" on January 21, 1525 and thus began the Anabaptist movement. Heinhold Fast, "Conrad Grebel: The Covenant on the Cross," trans. Verlag C.H. Beck, in *Profiles of Radical Reformers: Biographical Sketches from Thomas Muntzer to Paracelsus*, ed. Hans-Jurgen Goertz and Walter Klaassen (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982), 118-19.

Zwingli over two issues – baptism and the church's (and individual Christian's) relationship with the state.[7] Grebel and the Anabaptists believed that baptism was a practice for believers – not infants. On the latter issue, Grebel did not believe that the church derived its authority from the state but rather that the church "comes into existence through the preaching of the Word, through the voluntary acceptance of the Word of truth, and through the consequent conversion of individuals."[8] Unlike Zwingli, Grebel did not have the patience to wait for the civil government to be reformed and sought to create a community without the assistance of the state.[9]

While other reformers had taken up arms to promote their theology and view of the nature of the church, Grebel and the other Anabaptists rejected this approach of taking up arms and instead focused on their own willingness to suffer for the sake of discipleship.[10] Grebel's plea to other Anabaptist leaders and Reformers was to avoid teaching according to human tradition, and to "establish and teach only the clear word and practices of God."[11]

Grebel's influence on the history of Christianity is remarkable – especially given the fact that Grebel died after merely one year following his break from Zwingli.[12] From Grebel in Switzerland, the story of the Mennonite Brethren moves to the Netherlands where a Menno Simons, a "disgruntled Catholic priest . . . became convinced

---

[7]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 55-60.

[8]Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination*, 29.

[9]Fast, "Conrad Grebel," 123.

[10]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 60. Grebel wrote, "True Christian believers are sheep among wolves, sheep for the slaughter; they must be baptized in anguish and affliction, tribulation, persecution, suffering, and death." Conrad Grebel, "Letters to Thomas Muntzer By Conrad Grebel and Friends Zurich, September 5, 1524," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, ed. George Huntston Williams, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 25 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), 80.

[11]Grebel, "Letters to Thomas Muntzer," 85.

[12]William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), 21.

of the truth of Anabaptist teaching and accepted the leadership of this evangelical group in Holland and Germany, which became the first free church of modern church history – not part of a state-church system."[13]

Once a Catholic priest, Simons began to teach and preach the authority of Scriptures, the necessity of grace for salvation, credobaptism, Christian brotherly love, and other Anabaptist teachings. Simons' acceptance of these doctrines led him to make 1 Corinthians 3:11 his foundational verse.[14] While Simons' writings and message had a significant impact on Anabaptism, it was his unassuming character that was his most important contribution to the movement.[15] This same modest character was present in Hiebert – as attested to by his friends and family.[16]

While often thought of part of the larger Protestant community, some historians have asserted that Anabaptism should be thought of as a third way between Catholicism and Protestantism.[17] However one classifies Anabaptism, it is clear that Anabaptism's history of focusing on discipleship and the purity of the church had a lasting impact on the group that eventually developed into the Mennonite Brethren. Consequently, that same focus on discipleship and church purity had an impact on the life and ministry of Paul Hiebert.

Russia and the birth of the Mennonite Brethren. Many Mennonites moved to Russia on the invitation of Catherine the Great in the late eighteenth century who

---

[13]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 61.

[14]"Because no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid—that is, Jesus Christ." (HCSB). Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 65.

[15]Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 122.

[16]More will be written about Hiebert's character as a man who loved the Lord will of his heart, soul, mind, and strength in the sixth chapter of this work.

[17]Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination*, 28.

promised them that they would be exempt from military service.[18] Catherine had heard

about the Mennonites' hard work ethic and had also heard that they were good farmers.

So, in addition to the military exemption and the freedom to practice their religion, she

offered each family about 180 acres to cultivate.[19]

After they arrived in Russia, a revival spread among the Mennonite

community. Wiebe writes, "If a former Catholic priest was the first reformer of the

Mennonites, the second reformer for the Mennonite Brethren was a Lutheran pastor.

Menno Simons built the foundation, but Pastor Eduard Wuest . . . contributed the most to

the spirit of the Mennonite Brethren Church before its official organization."[20] Wuest's

influence extended throughout the region. His preaching was one of the contributing

factors in what was called the "joyous movement" which resulted in widespread

involvement in Bible study in the vernacular.[21]

Despite (and, indeed, maybe because of) this revival, it would not be long

before the group of Mennonites split. A small group who emphasized personal Bible

study and taking the Lord's Supper with only *true* believers (and not those merely

socially associated with the church) removed themselves from the Mennonite church.[22]

The underlying reason that this group, who became known as the Mennonite Brethren,

broke from the Mennonite church in Russia was a deep conviction that the church had

---

[18]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 66.

[19]John H. Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, KS: The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1950), 18.

[20]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 67.

[21]Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination*, 77.

[22]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 69-72. This group's desire to be removed from the larger group seems to have been based at least partly on Simons' teaching on 1 Cor 5:11 in which he encouraged a strict interpretation of the command to not eat with those confessing to be believers but remaining in sin. See, for example, Menno Simons, "On the Ban: Questions and Answers By Menno Simons," in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, The Library of Christian Classics, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 263-71).

become hopelessly corrupt and would soon face the wrath of God.[23]

       This small group began to grow despite external threats and opposition and internal "testings."[24] In this group, "a strong spirit of evangelism and missions developed not only for the immediate neighborhood but also for peoples in other lands."[25] In addition to other factors, the circulation of Moravian literature about missions influenced the Mennonite Brethren community to be involved in missions.[26] The emphasis on church purity manifested in the transformed lives of individual believers will be evident in Hiebert's assertion that church membership must be measured by one's commitment to Christ and not by one's pledge to a set of ideas. Additionally, this group's increasing concern for, as Wiebe wrote, "people in other lands," is the precursor to the passion for missions in the life of Paul Hiebert.

       North America. In the nineteenth century, a changing relationship with the Russian government caused the Mennonite Brethren to seek another homeland. Concerning that time, Peters reported that "the most disturbing innovation . . . was the introduction of universal, compulsory military service in 1871."[27] Upon having their promised exemption from military service revoked, some of the Mennonite Brethren began moving from Russia to America in the late part of the nineteenth century.[28] About

---

[23]Gerhard Wilhelm Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions in the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, KS: The Board of Foreign Missions The Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America, 1952), 29-30. Kauffman and Harder believed that this split was "an inevitable consequence of the conditions under which the Mennonites settled on the Russian steppes," since for the first time they had to establish not only a church government but a civil government, as well. J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975), 39.

[24]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 33-36.

[25]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 72.

[26]Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 45.

[27]Ibid., 40.

[28]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 74-75. While only about one-third of the Russian

half of the Mennonites who made the trip to North America settled in Kansas while others settled in Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota, and along the Red River south of Winnipeg in central Canada.[29]

When the Mennonite Brethren first arrived in America, there was some hesitation about doing evangelism and missions – fearing for the "purity of life and doctrine," but that hesitation would not last. In fact, contemporary Mennonite Brethren (and the Brethren of Hiebert's time) desire to be obedient to "Christ's command to reach all people with the message of the gospel."[30] Though the concern for missions was peaking at Hiebert's time, this concern was not new for the Mennonite Brethren. The American Mennonite Brethren first demonstrated their commitment to missions in 1884 by pledging $100 annually to support mission work in India.[31] They further demonstrated their commitment to intercultural missions (though it would not have been called that at the time) in their mission to the Comanches in Oklahoma as well as mission work in Cameroon.[32] One hundred years later in 1984, the Mennonite Brethren were supporting 150 missionaries all over the world.[33]

The history of the Mennonite Brethren reveals that they are a people who are not afraid to stand firm on their convictions – even in the face of persecution. While the

Mennonite Brethren migrated to North America at this time, many more would migrate during the Bolshevik Revolution. Kyle, *From Sect to Denomination*, 92. For more about this second migration, see John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921-1927*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, ed. J.C. Wenger, vol. 12 (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1967).

[29]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 63. It was more than the Mennonite Brethren who made this trip. Other Mennonites also fled from Russian and migrated to the United States at this time.

[30]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 26.

[31]Ibid., 80.

[32]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 86-89.

[33]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 80.

preceding history of the Mennonite Brethren has revealed some of these convictions, a closer look at those beliefs that distinguish the Mennonite Brethren as a distinct people is necessary.

Distinctive Beliefs of the Mennonite Brethren

History influences theology, and theology influences history. The two are not easy to separate. This discussion of the distinctive beliefs of the Mennonite Brethren must first recognize that these theological disincentives grew out of the preceding historical developments. According to Wiebe, the most significant influence on Mennonite Brethren theology was "the spirit of pietism in the 1850s affecting the first members, German-speaking settlers from Prussia living in the Ukraine in Russia."[34] This influence was most directly connected to the Lutheran Eduard Wuest's preaching and teaching ministry.[35] The pertinent question for this work is, What were the distinctive beliefs of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Hiebert's day? In particular, what positioned the Mennonite Brethren to give rise to the person of Paul Hiebert?

Zeal for missions. In 1984, Wiebe wrote that "zeal for missions" was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mennonite Brethren.[36] Wiebe's definition of missions lines up with the definition of missions used in this work, since she later wrote that "the priorities of the mission program are church planting and evangelism."[37] The Mennonite Brethren church during Hiebert's day was passionate about missions in the

---

[34]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 19.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., 74.

[37]Ibid., 82. See my chap. 1 for the definition of missions used throughout this dissertation. In short, missions is planting and growing churches in places where there currently is not a church (i.e., evangelism and church planting).

form of evangelism and church planting. The question shifts to an investigation of the beliefs that undergirded this zeal. One of the clearest answers to that question is that eighty-five per cent of Mennonite Brethren in 1975 believed that people who die having not "accepted Christ as their redeemer and savior will spend eternity in a place of punishment and misery."[38] This exclusivist understanding of salvation among the Mennonite Brethren of Hiebert's day is one of the driving forces behind their commitment to and zeal for missions.

Orthodoxy. The Mennonite Brethren Church of Hiebert's day was orthodox in their doctrine. In addition to the exclusivist understanding of salvation mentioned above, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Mennonite Brethren Church of Hiebert's time was their view of Scripture. Wiebe wrote,

> In the past, the name "Mennonite Brethren" has meant to its members the essence of the Good News, the reliability and final authority of the Scriptures, the necessity of personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, and the urgency to bring the word about that salvation to all humankind. . . . If the name doesn't mean that today, the problem is not with the name, but with us, its members.[39]

Kauffman and Harder's survey confirmed this assertion. Their survey revealed that ninety-three percent of Mennonite Brethren in 1975 confessed to believe that "the Bible is the divinely inspired and infallible Word of God, the only trustworthy guide for faith and life."[40] The people who made up the Mennonite Brethren denomination from which Hiebert came were happy to embrace the term "biblicists," as they were very "concerned that their doctrine should be based on the Bible as the authoritative Word of God."[41] Wiebe's explanation of the difference between doctrine and theology may help

---

[38]Kauffman and Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*, 112.

[39]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 5-6.

[40]Kauffman and Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*, 112.

[41]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 10.

to explain some of the background to Hiebert's emphasis on self-theologizing.[42]

Given their orthodox understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture, it should not be surprising that the Mennonite Brethren of Hiebert's time were overwhelmingly orthodox on the issues of the virgin birth and the flood.[43] The Mennonite Brethren also placed more emphasis on conversion than did most other Mennonite denominations.[44] Conversion for the Mennonite Brethren is not mere mental assent to a set of doctrines. Subsequent sanctification is a necessary indicator of true saving faith and is essential for assurance of final salvation. Sanctification is defined as "a fruit and result of the saving faith in Jesus Christ."[45] There is no distinction between Jesus as savior and Jesus as lord of one's life. The necessity for one to demonstrate one's faith through a life of sanctification (i.e. a transformed life) was one of the assertions that stood behind Hiebert's development of a centered set approach to church membership and the question of what it takes to be a Christian.

Education. Because of their strong emphasis on personal Bible study, the Mennonite Brethren have historically stressed the value of education for their people.[46] This emphasis on education was apparent in the Hiebert family, since Paul and three of his sisters earned Ph.D.'s.[47] A corollary of this emphasis on education is the Mennonite Brethren's emphasis on the church as an interpreting community.[48] The interpretation of

---

[42]Ibid, 11.

[43]Kauffman and Harder, *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*, 112.

[44]Ibid., 87.

[45]*Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America* (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1965), 12.

[46]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 86.

[47]Eloise Hiebert Meneses, telephone interview with author, 5 July 2010.

[48]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 10.

Scripture is not left to professional clergy, biblical scholars, or a select group within the local church. The whole church takes part in interpreting and applying Scriptural truth to their particular setting. This emphasis on the church being an interpreting community was certainly behind Hiebert's concept of critical contextualization – which will be examined later in this work.

Personal piety and the purity of the community. One of the reasons that Mennonite Brethren place so much confidence in the entire community's being a part of the hermeneutical process is due to their emphasis on personal piety and the purity of the community. As discussed in the history of the Mennonite Brethren above, the Mennonite Brethren Church stands in the tradition of pietists. Wiebe defines pietists as people who "emphasize that the indwelling power of the Spirit enables one to become more like Christ."[49]

An issue related to personal piety is the purity of the community. Their history of splitting from larger communities which they did not believe to be authentically regenerate and Spirit-led indicates the Mennonite Brethren's emphasis on the purity of the church. Hiebert's centered-set theory which emphasizes the actions of a new convert over and against the verbal confessions of a new convert demonstrates Hiebert's Mennonite Brethren background in regard to its emphasis on personal piety and the purity of the community. Hiebert's centered-set theory and its application to church membership will be explored later.

Pacifism/church-state relations. The distinctive beliefs commonly associated with Mennonites are their pacifism and their belief in separation from the state government. While the Mennonite Brethren are part of the larger Mennonite community,

---

[49]Ibid., 20. An issue related to the emphasis on personal piety was a refusal to take oaths. In Wiebe's analysis, however, while being honest is still important, the refusal to take oaths should not be considered a distinctive belief of the Mennonite Brethren. Ibid.,*52*.

and consequently do indeed share this set of beliefs, their stance on this issue is somewhat moderated. According to a 1975 survey, compared with other Mennonite denominations, the Mennonite Brethren Church is not as strong in the traditional Anabaptist doctrine of pacifism.[50] However, it is probably best not to think of the Mennonite Brethren as having abandoned this view as much as having decided that this view was not a test of genuine faith. As Wiebe wrote,

> Mennonite Brethren are not ready to become political activists on behalf of these teachings, nor to make Christ's words on peace (Sermon on the Mount) normative for all believers, yet most agree that we need clearer and stronger strategies for peacemaking compatible with our desire to evangelize and help in the formation of new congregations.[51]

Mennonite Brethren once held a position of complete separation from the government, but by Hiebert's time they had migrated from that position, and there was a diversity of opinion on the topic. Currently, there are even some Mennonite Brethren who hold governmental positions. Young men are still discouraged, however, from taking part in war activities and instead encouraged to accept alternative service.[52]

This survey of the Mennonite Brethren has demonstrated that their history and distinctive beliefs led them to become a people who were deeply involved in the cause of missions during Paul Hiebert's lifetime. According to a booklet published in 1962, the year that Hiebert turned thirty and two years after he and Fran arrived on the mission field in India, the role of the missionary was very compatible with an Evangelical understanding of the missionary task. That document stated that the missionary's role was "the strengthening and establishing of the church; maintaining the fervor of evangelism within the younger churches by example and teaching; the training of national leadership able to cope with present-day problems; pioneer work in unoccupied

---

[50]Kaufmann and Harder, *Anabaptist Four Centuries Later*, 133.

[51]Wiebe, *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?*, 50.

[52]Ibid., 48-50.

areas of the world; and technical and professional ministries."[53]

Family History

Paul Hiebert's familial roots in the Mennonite Brethren Church providentially prepared him to be involved in missions and to make the contributions that he made. The Mennonite Brethren's commitment to missions contributed to Hiebert becoming a man whose life was committed to missions and uniquely prepared him to develop the ideas which he contributed to missiology. In addition to the contribution of Mennonite Brethren history, Hiebert's parents and grandparents evident passion for taking the gospel to the ends of the earth further prepared Hiebert for his life as a missionary and missiologist.

Hiebert's Grandparents' and Parents' Missionary Service in India

Paul Hiebert and his wife, Frances, were not the first missionaries in the Hiebert family. They were not even the first missionaries to India from their family. The Hiebert family had been involved in missions to India since the turn of the twentieth century – for two generations before Paul and Frances. Hiebert's eldest daughter, Eloise Hiebert Meneses, reported that her father's paternal great-grandparents were among the Mennonite Brethren who fled from Russia in the 1860s and came to North America. After arriving in North America, the Hieberts settled in Minnesota.[54]

Grandparents' call and service. The history of the Hiebert family's *personal* involvement in missions began at a tent revival meeting in 1899. It was at that meeting that Nicholas (N. N.) and Susie Hiebert went forward and surrendered to a call to what

---

[53]Board of Missions, *Mennonite Brethren Missions Today* (Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Church, 1962), 23-24.

[54]Meneses, telephone interview.

was then called foreign missions.[55] The decision to go to India (instead of East Africa

where the Hieberts had initially planned to go) was apparently due to a number of factors.

According to a phone interview with Meneses (i.e. Nicholas' great-granddaughter), the

Mennonite Brethren did not have a missions sending agency of their own at that time, so

Nicholas and Susie went to India in accordance with a partnership with the American

Baptists.[56] Lohrenz, however, reported that "the American Mennonite Brethren

Conference accepted Mr. and Mrs. N. N. Hiebert and Elizabeth Neufeld as its first

missionaries to India."[57] The truth is probably both. The Hieberts and Neufeld were,

retrospectively, the first Mennonite Brethren missionaries from North America, but at the

time that they were appointed, the sending agency was not yet fully formed.

Another factor that contributed to the decision for the Hieberts and Neufeld to

go to India was the fact that other Mennonite Brethren had already gone there as

missionaries. Lohrenz reported that the American missionaries went to the Telugus in

Hyderabad State because the Russian Mennonite Brethren Church had already sent

missionaries there.[58] Lohrenz's report accords with Peters' report: "In summer of 1899

Reverend and Mrs. N. N. Hiebert and Miss Elizabeth Neufeld, who had been secured by

the Board of Missions were ready to accompany Reverend Abram Friesen as he returned

to Russia to proceed from there with his family to India."[59]

Whatever the precise details of their being sent to India, once on the ground in

India, the Hieberts immediately got to work. N. N. Hiebert invoked Acts 18:10 in his

---

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 230.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 84-85.

belief that the Mennonite Brethren's involvement in South India was "God appointed."[60] The first order of business for this new team of American missionaries was to study the language of the Telugus.[61] Next, having decided to live in Hughestown, a suburb lying between the cities Hyderabad and Secunderbad, and after discussions with various missions agencies, including the American Baptist Telugu Mission, Hiebert and his team set out to establish a mission station in the area south of Hyderabad.[62]

Though their time in India would end up being relatively brief, the Hieberts still had the opportunity to meet with Indian believers. Mrs. Hiebert wrote: "We are privileged to have our first Telugu meeting last Sunday in our home. The group was but small, ten Telugus, Brother and Sister Unruh (Heinrich) and we two, thus fourteen in all. The Lord has given us a native Christian whose name is Lazarus; he spoke to us and preached on Daniel, chapter three."[63] Before they could firmly establish the mission station, however, N. N. Hiebert got very ill.[64] On January 14, 1902, N. N. Hiebert "went down with a heavy fever" and was immediately transferred to Secunderbad and was told to leave India as early as possible.[65] Peters reported,

> Having stayed with the Baptists in Secunderbad for some time, Mr. Hiebert regained his strength sufficiently to undertake his return journey to America never to see India again. Before leaving in March Mr. Hiebert, however, arranged with the Baptists to care for a few Christians that had been won for Christianity until reinforcements would come from America.[66]

---

[60]For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city." (HCSB). Ibid., 167.

[61]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 230.

[62]Ibid., 230-31.

[63]Quoted in Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 168. Mrs. Hiebert's report that this group of missionaries sat under the teaching of an Indian preacher is remarkable and an early indication of the spirit of support for indigenous churches and leaders that pervades Hiebert's works.

[64]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 231.

[65]Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 168.

[66]Ibid., 168-69.

The news of Hiebert's failing health crossed the Atlantic. Peters reported that "it was a sad day when the news reached the Board of Missions that Reverend N. N. Hiebert's health was completely broken and that he was seriously ill."[67] Despite having to leave the mission field in India, N. N. did not let his poor health prevent him from being involved in missions among the Mennonite Brethren. After his return from India, N. N. remained very involved with the Mennonite Brethren's missions efforts. For instance, in 1902 he was named the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Board of Foreign Missions for the Mennonite Brethren. He remained at that post for the next thirty four years – until 1936.[68] Additionally, N. N. Hiebert is listed among the three men elected as the City Missions Committee in 1907.[69]

God was providentially at work in the midst of these seemingly disappointing turn of events in the Hiebert family. Though N. N. Hiebert would never return to India as a missionary, his son (and Paul's father), John Nicholas Christian (J. N. C.) Hiebert would. N. N. Hiebert proved that the missionary call is a lifetime call as he and his wife created a home in which missions was central.[70] As a result, J. N. C. was raised in a home in Minnesota where a great deal of emphasis was placed on missions, and he was determined to be a missionary from a young age.[71] Paul's passion for evangelism was present in his father before him.[72] A family photograph shows a young J. N. C. doing

---

[67]Ibid., 85.

[68]Ibid., 111-12.

[69]Ibid., 91.

[70]David Sills wrote, "The missionary call is a lifelong love and burden that will find expression in many ways. . . . It is as important to be submissive and meek in accepting a redirection as it is to pack and go in the beginning of your call." M. David Sills, *The Missionary Call: Find Your Place in God's Plan for the World* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008), 111-12. N. N. and Susie Hiebert are wonderful examples of being willing to accept this kind of providential "redirection," and, we will see, that Paul Hiebert was as well.

[71]Meneses, telephone interview.

[72]In a printed copy of radio transcripts from KMJ in Fresno, CA that the author received from

street preaching in his community and carrying a sign telling people to repent.[73] When he grew up, J. N. C. Hiebert married Anna Junga, and they went to India as career missionaries.[74]

    Hiebert's parents' service. Paul Gordon Hiebert was born in 1932 in Shamshabad.[75] Shamshabad had officially become a center of Mennonite Brethren missionary activity in South India twelve years earlier – in 1920.[76] Peters noted that the Mennonite Brethren had been in Shamshabad since the beginning of the 20th century (since the time of N. N. Hiebert and his team), and it was considered "an ideal location for a mission station."[77] After spending their first few years in India in Shamshabad, J. N. C. Hiebert was put in charge of the mission station in Hughestown in 1935 (the town where his parents had intended to settle thirty-five years earlier), and the work in the area around Hyderabad was divided into two sections of Hughestown and Shamshabad.[78]

    The method of Mennonite Brethren mission work in South India during J. N. C Hiebert's time was evangelism, church planting, and institutional work in the form of Christian education and medical work.[79] J. N. C. Hiebert wrote, "The main work,

---

Eloise Hiebert Meneses, J. N. C. Hiebert pleaded with the audience to come to Christ for salvation: "God only knows, my friend, the service that you could render in the Kingdom of God if you would only come to Him and let Him save you. He not only longs to save your soul; He longs to use your life. Why don't you give Him a chance!" In another radio address, J. N. C. preached on John 3:16 and is quoted as saying: "Receive that promise, that the Word of God, take it by faith into your heart, and you will be born again, you will be born of the water and of the Spirit. No greater experience can come to any mortal man than that, my friend."

    [73]Meneses, telephone interview.

    [74]Ibid.

    [75]Meneses, telephone interview.

    [76]Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 180.

    [77]Ibid., 179.

    [78]Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 178-79.

    [79]Ibid., 191-201.

however, is in the villages that surround the station. The mission station is but the

starting point and not the goal. . . . Our purpose, therefore, is not to build up strong

stations, but *to develop strong churches* in villages."[80] As to the motivation for this work

of developing strong churches, J. N. C. Hiebert wrote, "It is our obligation to preach the

gospel unto all, even to them in the most distant villages. Not all will receive the

proclaimed Word, but *all are to hear it. We have not only the commission of the Lord,*

but also His example."[81] The Mennonite Brethren of this time understood that church

planting was "not only for the purpose of 'salvation of the souls' but also for the planting

of the Christian Church in India and for the Christianization of the community."[82]

The Mennonite Brethren, and J. N. C. Hiebert in particular, had an approach to

missions that stands firmly in the tradition of indigenous missions.[83] For instance, J. N.

C. Hiebert, who after affirming the need for churches to continue to follow the Anderson-

Venn formula of being self-supporting and self-governing, wrote that they need to

continue in the three-self formula by becoming self-propagating: "The churches that we

are to establish must become the evangelizing agency in India, and even beyond India.

This is the ultimate goal of our missionary effort and we dare not lower it."[84]

Again, having been apparently influenced by Roland Allen, another missiologist in the

---

[80]Quoted in Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 192, emphasis mine.

[81]Ibid., emphasis mine.

[82]Ibid., 193.

[83]Indigenous missions is a method of planting churches in which every effort is made to "plant churches that fit naturally into their environment and to avoid planting churches that replicate Western patterns." John Mark Terry, "Indigenous Churches," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 483.

[84]Quoted in Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 194. For more on Anderson and Venn, see, Max Warren, ed., *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), and R. Pierce Beaver, ed., *To Advance the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967).

indigenous missions tradition, J. N. C. Hiebert wrote, "The New Testament remains our guide even today, also in missionary work. We are not only called upon to preach a New Testament message; we are also called upon to use New Testament methods."[85] This apparent influence of Allen on his father's life and work suggests that Paul Hiebert came by his understanding of self-theologizing as the "fourth self" honestly, as his father once wrote that "the real leaders of the Telugu Church must be Telugu preachers."[86]

As to the details of the method of his work, Paul's daughter, Eloise Meneses reported that J. N. C. Hiebert would often take a young Paul, and "they would go clunking between the rice fields from village to village doing evangelism."[87] The Hieberts' linguistic skills, anthropological instincts, and relational style made them effective missionaries.

As to their linguistic skills, Meneses stressed that her father's and grandfather's fluency in the language contributed to their effective missions work. An illustration of this fluency is the fact that J. N. C. founded a small Bible college in Shamshabad where he (and later Paul) taught in the local language.[88]

In addition to their language fluency, they, J. N. C. and Paul, had personalities that Meneses described as "a very relational." As an illustration of his anthropological instincts and relational style Meneses shared a story about how J. N. C. and a young Paul used to ride into villages on bicycles – as opposed to in a car or jeep as most missionaries of that time would have done. On one such trip, J. N. C. slipped and fell in the mud

---

[85]Quoted in Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 194. For more on Allen's approach to missions, see Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962). Allen's work was originally published in 1912 – more than twenty years before J. N. C. went to India.

[86]Quoted in Peters, *The Growth of Foreign Missions*, 202.

[87]Meneses, telephone interview.

[88]Ibid.

coming around a specific corner in one village. The children in the village all laughed and "thought it was hysterical."[89] Seeing that something as simple as making himself vulnerable by becoming the subject of a funny story for the children to tell and laugh about brought him closer to the people, J. N. C. "made a point of always slipping and falling in the mud every year after that."[90] Meneses provided an interpretation for this story:

> You know I think the on the ground practice of some of the 19th and early 20th century missions had more richness to it than we may imagine . . . my father says that his father was always loved by the kids, welcomed wherever he went. He had a very personable style. I think he had my dad's character approximately, quite humble . . . he made himself plenty vulnerable when he went into a village and then he would talk to them and I do not know the details of how he would present the gospel but I know that he was a very relational person.[91]

She summed up her grandfather's ministry style as being centered on relationships: "If you really relate to people you kind of cannot help but pick up where they are coming from, try to understand them, they try to understand you and some of the anthropological insight comes that way, just from the relationship."[92]

Hiebert's incorporation and anthropological insights was something that he first learned as a child at his father's side. His desire to see the gospel communicated and lived out in ways that were appropriate for various cultural situations had its origins in the heart of his father whose desire was to see souls saved, churches grown, and societies transformed by the gospel of Christ.

So, what kind of person was behind these techniques? What were the ideas that stood behind J. N. C.'s approach to mission? Meneses reports on these ideas:

> He had a strong interest in education and all of his children, including all of his daughters, heavily remember him stressing the value of education and he was for his

---

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid.

time a somewhat politically liberal thinker. Not a theological liberal at all . . . But he was concerned about the treatment of people in India by the British and was an admirer of Mahatma Ghandi actually in a time and a social network in which that was not particularly considered valuable. So *he had kind of a broad view of incorporating Indian people into the church more thoroughly and into leadership* than they had been and he had this strong value on education which certainly my dad picked up, and so did all these other daughters.[93]

J. N. C.'s emphases on local leadership, the ethical treatment of all people, and education were all passed onto Hiebert and showed up in his writing. For instance, critical contextualization and self-theologizing are possible only when a local church is educated, taught to read and interpret Scripture, and encouraged to think critically in their own cultural context. Hiebert was truly the product of his own family's involvement in the cause of missions.

<div align="center">**Childhood as Missionary Kid in India**</div>

Hiebert's experiences as a missionary kid had a direct impact on his calling to be a missionary to India. His daughter reported,

I think he took that for granted that it [having grown up as a missionary kid in India] very much did affect his calling. He would have claimed, in fact, that it was partly about his identity also, his bicultural identity. I think in a lot of his anthropology writing you can see that he is concerned to understand what it means to live in more than one culture at the same time. So, I do think it had a strong role.[94]

Meneses' assertion about Hiebert's childhood playing a strong role in his call to missions is confirmed though an investigation of Hiebert's years as a child in India. From his years as small child, through his time stateside during World War II, and finally his teenage years in the late 1940s, God was working to call Paul Hiebert to the task of missions.

The Early Years

Hiebert was born in 1932 in Shamshabad, India – the mission station where his

---

[93]Ibid., emphasis mine.

[94]Ibid.

parents were working as missionaries. He was the fourth child born to J. N. C. and Ana Hiebert. There would be a total of seven children – six girls and just one boy. Being the only son, Hiebert grew up having a very close relationship with his father. Meneses reported that there are a lot of family jokes about how the origin of Hiebert's humble character can be found in this dynamic – being raised as the one son among six daughters.[95] At the age of six, Hiebert was sent with all the other missionary children in central India to a boarding school in the hill country, and he spent nine months out of every year there – away from his parents.[96] Meneses reported that due to his very young age, this was "was a very, very tough, traumatic experience." In addition to being away from his parents, and, as a result of being sent away to the missionary boarding school, Hiebert was relatively isolated from direct interaction with Indian culture during his early childhood.[97]

World War II Years

In 1942, when Hiebert was ten years-old, World War II came to the Indian sub-continent in the form of the Japanese invasion. As a result of this invasion, all Americans were evacuated. Whenever he reflected back on that time in his life, Hiebert said that being evacuated "saved him." By this he meant that it "prevented him from developing a lot of the missionary kid problems due to the fact that he had the time with his family in the United States."[98] The Hiebert family lived near Fresno, California, and they stayed there until India gained independence from Great Britain in 1947.

---

[95]Ibid.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid.

Later Years

After the war was over, the Hiebert family returned to India, and Hiebert once again was sent to Kodaikanal International School, the boarding school in India that he had attended as child. He attended high school there, and this experience at boarding school was apparently not as hard on him as the one he had known as a small child. Hiebert received his high school diploma from Kodaikanal, and was in the debate club during his time there.[99]

Education

Throughout his career in higher education, Hiebert was an excellent student. He excelled academically and demonstrated an interest in pursuing further academic study every step of the way. A survey of Hiebert's academic career reveals that Hiebert had committed his mind to the service of God.

Tabor College (B.A. 1954)

After graduating from high school in 1950, Hiebert sailed from India back to the United States by himself in order to attend Tabor College in Hillsboro, KS.[100]

History of Tabor College. Tabor was first established in the early twentieth century; its first school year began in September 1908. The initial enrollment was thirty-nine.[101] By the end of the first year, the enrollment of the school had jumped to 104.[102] After ten years in operation, a fire destroyed the college's only building. Undaunted,

---

[99]Eloise Hiebert Meneses, email to author, 25 October 2010. Kodaikanal was founded in 1901 as a missionary boarding school. It continues to operate; though it now serves a broader constituency. See "Introduction to KIS" [on-line]; accessed 30 November 2010; available from http://www.kis.in/index. html; Internet.

[100]Eloise Hiebert Meneses, email to author, 5 July 2010.

[101]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 102.

[102]"History" [on-line]; accessed 16 July 2010; available from http:// www.tabor.edu/about-tabor/history; Internet.

supporters of the college rallied together and built two buildings that are still being used today. One initially served a dormitory/dining hall, and the other served as an administrative and classroom building.[103]

Though initially Tabor was restricted to Mennonite Brethren students, it now serves a more diverse group of students while remaining distinctively Christian. Administratively, Tabor operates under its own charter, and its board of directors reports to the Mennonite Brethren churches of the Central, Southern, Latin America, and North Carolina districts.[104]

Tabor College's purpose and beliefs. According to Lohrenz, "The main objective in establishing and conducting the college was to train young men and young women for a useful vocation in life, for the teaching profession, and for work in the church, such as the ministry, evangelism, home and foreign mission work, and other church work."[105] This was still the objective of Tabor during Hiebert's time there. Currently, the Tabor College website states that it "accepts and seeks to follow the Confession of Faith of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches."[106]

Hiebert's time at Tabor. Though he planned to be a missionary, Hiebert studied history and physics at Tabor.[107] The fact that he fully intended to be a missionary

---

[103]These buildings are currently known as the Mary J. Regier Building and the H. W. Lohrenz Building, "History" [on-line], accessed 16 July 2010, available from http:// www.tabor.edu/about-tabor/history; Internet.

[104]"History" [on-line]; accessed 16 July 2010; available from http:// www.tabor.edu/about-tabor/history; Internet.

[105]Lohrenz, *The Mennonite Brethren Church*, 103.

[106]"History" [on-line]; accessed 16 July 2010; available from http:// www.tabor.edu/about-tabor/history; Internet. A portion of that statement of faith is listed on the Tabor College website and is available as Appendix 1.

[107]Robert J. Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert: A Life Remembered," *Trinity Journal* 30, n.s., no. 2 (Fall 2009): 171.

and yet studied history and physics demonstrated that Hiebert had an inquisitive mind and an eclectic range of interests – even as a young man. In fact, Hiebert has been praised for his ability (and I would add "his desire") to take ideas from various fields and apply those truths to theology and missiology.[108]

The most significant event in Hiebert's life, however, did not have happen in the classroom. Hiebert met Frances Flaming while they were both studying at Tabor College. On one day, he approached her and said, "I'm Paul Hiebert. I'm going to be a missionary. Would you like to have dinner with me?"[109] That first dinner date budded into a romance, and Paul and Frances got married while at Tabor, and according to their close friend, Bill Pannell, they "lived life all in one piece, what we probably call an integrated life."[110]

Frances Flaming, daughter of Menno and Emma Grace Flaming,[111] was Hiebert's bride for forty-five years. She was born August 22, 1934, in El Reno, Oklahoma, and went to Corn Bible Academy from 1949-1952. Fran and Paul married on December 28, 1954.[112] She earned a master's degree from Fuller and was awarded a Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity after her death.[113]

Their friends have reported that the Hiebert's marriage was one of warmth and

---

[108]Robert J. Priest and Craig Ott, "Guest Editorial," *Trinity Journal* 30, n.s., no. 2 (Fall 2009): 169.

[109]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 171.

[110]Bill Pannell, telephone interview with author, 14 July 2010.

[111]Paul G. and Frances F. Hiebert, *Case Studies in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 5.

[112]"Obituary" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology. org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[113]Ibid. It is not clear how Fran earned a Master's degree, since, according to their eldest daughter, Eloise, Fran dropped out to support Paul after they got married. Eloise Meneses Hiebert, e-mail to author, 25 October 2010.

devotion to each other and to the Lord. Mary A. Meye, wife the former Dean of the

Fuller School of Theology, wrote, "Fran and her husband Paul were rather the Ying and

the Yang of human personality types. Paul, always gentle and retiring, Fran not always

gentle, and not given to retreat. But always for the cause of righteousness. And there they

were conjoined disciples of Jesus."[114] Elizabeth Patterson wrote about Fran and her

marriage to Hiebert: "She and Paul together were a marvelous illustration of mutuality in

marriage. She, and they, inspired and influenced so many people, more than those dear

humble souls ever would have realized."[115] Pannell put it even more succinctly when he

said, "Their marriage was a lovely marriage."[116]

Hiebert's father, J. N. C. Hiebert, was the president of Tabor from 1951-

1953.[117] J. N. C. Hiebert died unexpectedly of an unreported cause in 1953. Hiebert

graduated from Tabor one year later in 1954. Hiebert received the Bachelor of Arts

degree and immediately headed to seminary as he continued on his path to be a

missionary to India.

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (M.A. 1957)

After graduating from Tabor in 1954, Hiebert went to seminary at the

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary (MBBS) in Fresno, California. The Mennonite

Brethren Biblical Seminary opened in September 1955.[118] J. B. Toews, a one-time

---

[114]Mary A. Meye, "Remembering Fran Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[115]Elizabeth Patterson, "My Tribute to Fran Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/ view/37; Internet.

[116]Bill Pannell, telephone interview with author, 14 July 2010.

[117]"Presidential Inauguration" [on-line]; accessed 30 November 2010; available from http:// www.tabor.edu/about-tabor/from-the-president/presidential-inauguration; Internet.

[118]"Our Roots" [on-line]; accessed 21 September 2010; available from http:// www.mbseminary.edu/about/roots; Internet.

president of the seminary, is quoted as saying, "The Seminary was born in 1955 because of the vision of the church for trained leadership that could lead wisely, theologically, and above all, *biblically* in a society that was rushing madly after the gods of learning and mammon."[119] Hiebert's master's thesis at MBBS reflected his growing interest in and application of sound missiological thinking on the mission field.[120]

University of Minnesota
(M.A. 1959; Ph.D. 1967)

From MBBS, Hiebert went to the University of Minnesota (UM) to study anthropology. Hiebert primarily chose to go to UM for family reasons. His father and his uncle's families were all from a small town in Minnesota, and he often returned "home" to Mountain Lake, Minnesota throughout his life. Meneses reported that, given these family roots in Minnesota, his decision to go to UM (as opposed to other schools) was "sort of natural" for him to do.[121]

Hiebert completed his Masters of Arts in Anthropology from UM in 1959. The following year, Hiebert, Fran, and their two daughters left for India to be missionaries with the Mennonite Brethren foreign missions agency.[122] Hiebert also used his time in India to do the field work necessary for his Ph.D. in Anthropology under E. Adamson Hoebel. It is significant that Hiebert studied under Hoebel, since it was under Hoebel that Hiebert likely began to develop his understanding of the importance of studying a group's worldview in order to truly understand that group's behavior. As

---

[119]Ibid., emphasis mine.

[120]Paul Gordon Hiebert, "The Impetus of Nationalism on the Indigenization of the Protestant Church in India," Th.M. thesis, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1957).

[121]Meneses, telephone interview.

[122]Their first daughter, Eloise, had been born in Oklahoma while Paul and Fran were staying with Fran's parents as they transitioned from MBBS to UM. Their second daughter, Barbara, was born in Minnesota. Their son, John, would be born during their time in India. Eloise Hiebert Meneses, email to author, 25 October 2010.

evidence of this influence, in his work on the Cheyenne Hoebel lists sixteen postulates that "form the bedrock upon which the Cheyennes have raised their cultural edifice."[123] This bedrock constitutes what many would now refer to as the Cheyenne worldview. Hiebert reported that Hoebel was also influential in his development of the "case-research method" that he made use of in many works – especially *Case Studies in Missions*.[124]

It was not until after his first (and what would turn out to be only) term on the mission field that Hiebert completed his dissertation and received his Ph.D. from UM in 1967. Robert Priest reported that Hiebert's doctoral dissertation "established him as a rising scholar."[125] Hiebert's intelligence and skill as an anthropologist could have afforded him a career as a secular anthropologist and/or professor of anthropology. However, just as his father and grandfather before him, he had a higher calling – the missionary call to see the gospel proclaimed among the nations.

Missionary Service in India

Hiebert, Fran, and their two young daughters, Eloise and Barbara, went to India to be missionaries with the Mennonite Brethren Church in 1960. This move to India was the fulfillment of a lifelong call, since Hiebert had wanted to be a missionary since he was child. Though Hiebert was a foreign missionary, in many ways, going to India was going home – "India was not a foreign country for him."[126] The normal term of service for Mennonite Brethren missionaries at that time was seven years, and that is

---

[123]E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyennes: Indians of the Great Plains*, Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, ed. George Spindler and Louise Spindler (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1960), 98-99.

[124]Hiebert and Hiebert, *Case Studies*, 12.

[125]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 172.

[126]Meneses, telephone interview. Meneses reports that while he always did say that he had two homes – both the U.S. and India, he used to always joke that he was most comfortable aboard the airplane.

what Hiebert and his family set out to serve.[127]

Hiebert's return to India must have been different as an adult. As a child at his father's side, the mission field was simply home. Upon his return to the mission field as a missionary – and not a missionary kid anymore – he "began rethinking missiology for a postcolonial age."[128] Though there was a strong sense of how things were supposed to be done on the mission field when he arrived on the field and Hiebert faced some opposition from those who had been on the field for many years, Hiebert was determined to stay, die, and be buried in India.[129]

Despite his determination to live out his entire life and career on the mission field in India, the providence of God brought him back to the States. Their return was due to the fact that Frances "did not adjust very well to India."[130] She developed some severe gastrointestinal problems that required stomach surgery. As a result, the Hiebert family returned to the States after six years instead of seven. Though brief, Hiebert's missionary service in India had a significant impact on his missiology.

Having gathered field research in Andhra Pradesh during his six years on the field, Hiebert returned to UM and completed his dissertation. Hiebert initially planned on being in the States for one year, but Frances' medical problems did not allow them to return to India.[131] The Mennonite Brethren Foreign Mission Society's loss was gain for Evangelical missiology.

---

[127]Though Priest reports that the normal term of service was six years, the prescribed term of service was seven years. However, the Hieberts did return after six years. Meneses, telephone interview. Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert: A Life Remembered," 172.

[128]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 172.

[129]Ibid.

[130]Meneses, telephone interview.

[131]Ibid.

Professional Academic Career

Finding himself stateside, Hiebert began an academic career that would span the rest of his life. It was his professional academic career that gave Hiebert the platform to impact a larger audience with his missiological ideas. I will outline Hiebert's career chronologically using educational institutions and major publications as mile markers along the way.

Kansas State University

Hiebert accepted his first professional academic position somewhat under duress. Fully intending to return to India once his wife's health improved, Hiebert accepted a one-year assignment teaching anthropology at Kansas State University (KSU) as a "stopgap measure."[132] When Frances' health did not improve, he ended up teaching at KSU for three years.

Meneses reported that taking a job at KSU and settling into the world of academic anthropology was difficult for Hiebert since he had expected and looked forward to a career as a missionary in India. Additionally, having been raised in India, the change to American culture was also an adjustment for him – as was beginning to function as a secular anthropologist in a university setting. Despite these difficulties and being in the world of secular anthropology not being Hiebert's ideal situation, Meneses reported that he adjusted well: "He certainly got along well with the secular anthropologists as a Christian. He was very able to understand their issues and priorities and speak the language and function as an anthropologist but it was not a calling for him. He felt strongly the call of missions on his life and Christian work of some kind of ministry."[133] It was this call to missions that made Hiebert restless enough at KSU to listen to an offer from his alma mater – The Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary.

---

[132]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 172.

[133]Meneses, telephone interview.

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

Thinking that it would be closer to his fulfilling his missionary call, Hiebert went to join the faculty of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in 1969.[134] Instead of fulfilling his call to missions, Hiebert was more frustrated at MBBS than at KSU. He ended up teaching no anthropology and only a little bit of missions during his time at MBBS: "They were sort of patching together classes for him and there was not a lot of real interest in subjects that he taught, in anthropologic missions, and so, at the end of the year, he told them that he would be returning to Kansas and he did so."[135]

This brief and disappointing stint at MBBS did not have any lasting negative effect on Hiebert's relationship with the seminary or the denomination.[136] The student body simply did not seem to be interested in the issues that Hiebert was teaching. MBBS was primarily a pastoral training school at that time, and Hiebert felt that his calling would be better served and his skills, education, and background better utilized back at KSU.[137]

Back to KSU

Hiebert returned to KSU in 1970. He taught anthropology and directed the

---

[134]Ibid.

[135]Ibid.

[136]As to his relationship with the Mennonite Brethren denomination as a whole, Meneses reported that his loyalty to the denomination was primarily familial: "He was certainly mixing with people all over and yet he had a kind of denominational loyalty to the Mennonite Brethren. It was really, I think I would call it a family loyalty. There were some theological issues. Certainly he was committed to the peace position that the Mennonites hold and truth in general and Anabaptist theology of understanding discipleship of the believer and so forth. But I also think that there was a kind of a family loyalty there. For missionary kids their mission agency can be their family and I think that may have been the case for him a little bit. I was just noticing when I looked at the little tiny book he wrote on critical contextualization talking about realism. He calls himself in that book an evangelical Anabaptist and so I think that self identified and he is exactly that term, evangelical Anabaptist. But of course he believed in the mission of the whole church and certainly in interdenominational cooperation." Ibid.

[137]Ibid.

South Asian Study Center for two years.[138] During this time, Hiebert began to establish himself as an anthropologist, and, as a result, he began to look around for more opportunities to further his career as an anthropologist. One such opportunity came when the University of Washington in Seattle invited him to join their large and prestigious department of anthropology.[139] During his time at KSU, Hiebert published *Konduru*, his first book.

Hiebert's *Konduru* (1971)

Hiebert's first major publication was *Konduru: Structure and Integration in a South Indian Village*.[140] It was published one year into his second stint at KSU. *Konduru* is a republication of Hiebert's Ph.D. dissertation first published by the University of Minnesota Press. It is currently available as one of their Minnesota Archive Editions books. E. Adamson Hoebel, Hiebert's doctoral supervisor, wrote the introduction to *Konduru*. It contains tables and photographs that serve to supplement the text of the book. Hiebert did not write this book for an Evangelical audience, nor did he reflect on missiological implications for his anthropological findings. Despite these caveats, *Konduru* is a valuable resource in understanding how Hiebert approached cultural anthropology. It also serves as an indicator of the influence that Hiebert's formal anthropological training had on his approach to missiology.

University of Washington

The University of Washington (UW) already had a large graduate anthropology program when Hiebert went to join the faculty.[141] He went there in 1972

---

[138]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 172.

[139]Meneses, telephone interview.

[140]Paul G. Hiebert, *Konduru: Structure and Integration in a South Indian Village* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

[141]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 172.

and taught anthropology. He remained on the faculty at UW until 1977.[142] It was during

his time at UW that he published one book, *Cultural Anthropology*, and contributed to a

third book -- *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*.

Hiebert's *Cultural Anthropology* (1976)

Hiebert wrote *Cultural Anthropology* while he was on the faculty at UW. It

was first published by J. P. Lippincott Company and is currently being published by

Baker Academic as a second edition. Hiebert dedicated it to his doctoral supervisor, E.

Adamson Hoebel. It was written as a textbook to be used by cultural anthropology

classes in a secular setting. At nearly 500 pages, *Cultural Anthropology* is Hiebert's

longest book. *Cultural Anthropology* still in print and is being used by some seminary

anthropology classes. It is also part of the "Lingualinks Library" used by Wycliffe/SIL to

train and prepare their perspective missionaries for overseas assignment.[143] While this

textbook, was not written from an explicitly Evangelical perspective, one can see the

seeds of some of Hiebert's ideas in it.[144]

In the preface of this textbook, Hiebert wrote that the book is "not intended to

be a comprehensive introduction to the field of cultural anthropology . . . Rather, is a core

text that introduces the student to anthropological ways of thought."[145] Hiebert believed

---

[142]During the 1974-1975 academic year, Hiebert and his entire family went to India where Hiebert taught at Osmania University in Hyderabad on a Fullbright Scholarship. Ibid.

[143]Tim Woodward, e-mail to author, 29 October 2010.

[144]I will return to a discussion of how some of Hiebert's seminal ideas had their origins in this work, and others, in chapter three of this work.

According to Sam Larsen, Hiebert's publication of *Cultural Anthropology* slowly began to cause him to lose respect in the secular world of cultural anthropology after this work began to be widely read and circulated. Hiebert's critics were not able to point to any deficiencies in the work itself, and their criticisms of Hiebert were due to the respectful way that he dealt with the Christian faith. Larsen reported that Hiebert paid a high price for his refusal to budge on this issue. Sam Larsen, telephone interview with author, 17 January 2011.

[145]Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976), xii.

that the study of anthropology is unique among academic disciplines in that it seeks to take a holistic approach to understanding human beings and human systems.[146] *Cultural Anthropology* was written toward that end, and the most important contribution of cultural anthropology according to Hiebert was its contribution to "our understanding of ourselves and our world."[147]

Hiebert's *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization* (1976)

Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization was a joint project. Hiebert joined Arthur Glasser, C. Peter Wagner, Ralph Winter, and a few other minor authors in order to present what they viewed as the "crucial dimensions of a highly crucial task."[148] *Crucial Dimensions* was published in 1976 by the William Carey Library and is no longer in print.

While Hiebert had previously written a few journal articles on missiology, his section on mission anthropology in this work represented his first major venture into the world of missiology. His goal in his section was to seek to bring anthropological insights to the task of missions.[149] It was Hiebert's contention that studying anthropology helps us "understand and love other people, particularly those who are so different from ourselves. . . But this concern is not new. It expresses only in part what we mean by Christian love. And to be a true missionary we must begin with love (I Cor. 13)."[150]

---

[146]Ibid., xiii.

[147]Ibid., 446.

[148]Ralph D. Winter, "Preface," in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*, ed. Arthur Glasser et al. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976), x.

[149]Hiebert, "An Introduction to Mission Anthropology," 43.

[150]Ibid., 87.

Fuller Seminary

"Return to mission." Hiebert's inability "to connect his professional

achievements with his sense of calling" at UW led him to join the faculty of Fuller

Seminary in 1977.[151] Robert Priest reported that Hiebert referred to this move to Fuller

as his "return to mission."[152] However, Hiebert was initially not so sure that he wanted to

make this move. In fact, when Fuller first contacted him, he declined. As he thought

back to his disappointing experience at MBBS, Hiebert did not think that teaching at

seminary would work out.[153]

With the retirement of Alan Tippett, Fuller was in need of an anthropologist,

so they persisted in their pursuit of Hiebert.[154] They eventually convinced him to come

for a visit, and his visit to the campus at Fuller changed his mind. Hiebert was very

pleased with the emphasis that Fuller put on missions, and he was happy there for many

years.[155] As Priest wrote, "For the first time he was able to devote teaching, writing, and

interaction with colleagues and doctoral students to issues of gospel and culture,

contextualization, and mission theology."[156] Hiebert came to Fuller as Associate

Professor of Anthropology and South Asian Studies.[157] During his time at Fuller, Hiebert

---

[151]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 173. It seems that Fran, too, had many opportunities to be involved with the work of preparing missionaries at Fuller. While there she was the advisor the Cross Cultural Studies program and the Director of Women's Concerns. Georgia R. Grimes Shaw and Enoch Wan. "Tributes to Fran by Her Friends" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http: //ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[152]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 173.

[153]Meneses, telephone interview.

[154]Charles R. Taber, *The World Is Too Much with Us: 'Culture' in Modern Protestant Missions*, The Modern Mission Era, 1792-1992 An Appraisal, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991), 131.

[155]Meneses, telephone interview.

[156]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 173.

[157]Sarah Hendershot, email to author, 25 October 2010.

taught a large number of classes ranging from Phenomenology and Institutions of Animism to Research Method. Most of the classes could be classified under the headings of anthropology and religion.[158]

Though Hiebert supported the central emphasis of Fuller's theology and missiology, Hiebert has been described as someone who during his time at Fuller challenged some of those in the School of World Missions who were only interested in church growth. His concerns were both missiological (i.e. he was concerned about what kind of growth was happening in the church) and methodological (i.e. he was concerned with the kind of research that supported some the theories espoused by those who were part of the Church Growth Movement).[159] Despite his differences with some of his colleagues on Church Growth methodology, he remained content and happy to teach and be involved with developing missiological theories and practices at Fuller. He did, however, find himself on the opposite side of another disagreement with some of these same colleagues that would eventually lead him to leave Fuller and accept a teaching position elsewhere. A brief survey of that controversy follows.

The return to animism. It was not until several years after his arrival at Fuller that Hiebert became involved in a more public missiological controversy. John Wimber, Peter Wagner, Charles Kraft, and others had picked up Hiebert's theory on the flaw of the excluded middle and began appropriating his ideas in ways with which he was not comfortable. Hiebert believed that much of what these men were teaching and advocating was a "return to animism," and he began to speak out against it.[160] Though

---

[158]Ibid. See Appendix 2 for a list of classes Hiebert taught at Fuller.

[159]Pannell, telephone interview with author, 14 July 2010. Pannell reports, "Paul was a much more sophisticated sociologist than Charles Peter Wagner ever would be. Wagner was only concerned that things grow and Paul was concerned with what kind of growth it was."

[160]Meneses, telephone interview. I will return to this issue in chap. 5 of this work when I discuss Hiebert's influence on missiological literature – particularly the applications and misapplications of some of Hiebert's seminal ideas – in this case, the flaw of the excluded middle. I will also discuss his

not looking to leave Fuller, the atmosphere over this issue eventually became divisive enough for Hiebert to return a phone call from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School when they contacted him.[161] When Hiebert left Fuller, he was Professor of Anthropology and South Asian Studies and was also the Director of Doctoral Program.[162]

Hiebert's *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (1985)

The first book that Hiebert published while at Fuller was *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* – first published in 1985. The time that elapsed between his previous publications, *Cultural Anthropology* and *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*, and this book was nine years – the longest length of time between publications until his death in 2007. It was during these nine years that Hiebert moved from primarily focusing on issues of cultural anthropology inside the world of secular academia to focusing on missiological issues within the Evangelical world from an anthropological perspective. *Anthropological Insights* is still in print and is currently being published by Baker Academic.

In the preface of *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Hiebert wrote that the purpose of the book was to help young missionaries understand themselves and other cultures as they cross cultural boundaries to be missionaries. He did not believe, however, that this book alone can prepare people to work cross-culturally. He wrote that missionaries also need to be trained in Scriptures and ministry.[163] The source for the insights provided in this book was his own life and work in India. *Anthropological*

contributions to the book *Wonder and the Word* in that chapter.

[161]Ibid.

[162]Hendershot, email to author.

[163]Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 10.

Insights reflected the lessons that he learned – both in terms of learning from mistakes and learning from Indian pastors.[164]

Hiebert's *Case Studies in Missions* (1987)

The second and final book that Hiebert published while at Fuller was *Case Studies in Missions* which he co-edited this book with his wife. *Case Studies* was published in 1987 by Baker Book House and is no longer in print. It is a collection of case studies written by various writers from all around the world – including Hiebert and Hiebert. The case study writers represent a range of theological and ecclesiological positions. The writers often do not share their own positions on the various topics represented by their case studies. Instead, they share the case studies as guides to help other cross-cultural workers "deal with problems commonly faced by cross-cultural missionaries and national church leaders in their ministries."[165]

According to the preface of the book, Frances did the majority of the editing, and the case studies were collected over a period of seven years.[166] The book was written with two purposes in mind. First, the Hieberts hoped that sending churches all over the world would use the case studies to become more informed about the task of missions. By becoming more informed, these sending churches would be able to pray for and support missions in a more knowledgeable and up to date way. Second, the Hieberts hoped that missionaries and those preparing themselves for missions service would use the case studies. They believed case studies, when combined with sound biblical and missiological education, would help missionaries be better equipped to face unusual circumstances and make decisions when serving cross-culturally.

---

[164]Ibid.

[165]Hiebert and Hiebert, *Case Studies*, 12.

[166]Ibid.

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

In 1990, Hiebert became a member of the faculty at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School as Professor of Mission and Anthropology. In 2001, he became Distinguished Professor of Mission and Anthropology.[167] Hiebert's move to Trinity in 1990 removed him from the controversy in which he had become involved when he sought to bring a balance between Wimber, Wagner, and Kraft's power encounter approach to missions and a more theological approach.[168] Hiebert was "very happy" at Trinity.[169] He understood that his role was to represent the world of missions and anthropology to the community at Trinity and appreciated the theological foundation at Trinity.[170] The one point of tension for Hiebert was Trinity's "lack of encouragement for women in ministry."[171]

While Meneses did not indicate any major problems during his time at Trinity, Pannell tells somewhat of a different story about Hiebert's time at Trinity. Though he did not have anything specific to cite, Pannell believed that Hiebert was disappointed with his time at Trinity. However, it seems that Pannell may have been revealing some of his own feelings about Trinity rather than Hiebert's. Pannell was apparently disinvited to speak at

---

[167]Robert Priest, email to author, 18 October 2010.

[168]Priest, "Paul G. Hiebert," 174. Pannell believes that Hiebert left Fuller because of the discrepancy between his view of the task of the church and the Church Growth Movement's view. Pannell, telephone interview. While Hiebert certainly had a view of missions that differed from many in the Church Growth Movement, he was willing to agree to disagree with his Fuller colleagues on these issues. It was not until the controversy surrounding signs and wonders that he decided to move on. For an indication of Hiebert's view of a holistic approach to missions and theology, see Paul G. Hiebert, "Healing and the Kingdom," in *Wonder and the Word: An Examination of Issues Raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement*, ed. James R. Coggins and Paul G. Hiebert (Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1989), 109-52, and Paul G. Hiebert, "Evangelism, Church, and Kingdom," in *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millennium*, ed. Charles Van Engen, Dean S. Gilliland and Paul Pierson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 153-61.

[169]Meneses, telephone interview.

[170]Ibid.

[171]Ibid.

Trinity after the president of Trinity read his book and spoke with a local pastor about Pannell, and Pannell's reporting of Hiebert's time at Trinity might be somewhat truncated.[172] One of Hiebert's colleagues at Trinity, Tité Tienou confirmed that Hiebert was very happy at Trinity and reports that Hiebert referred to Trinity as "his true home."[173] Another indication that Hiebert was happy at Trinity and that he was pleased with his teaching responsibilities there was that he continued to teach after the normal age for retirement and even after his cancer diagnosis.

Hiebert's *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (1994)

Hiebert published *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* while he was at Trinity. *Anthropological Reflections* is a collection of Hiebert's most important essays and journal articles up to 1994. As with the previous occurrence of a long period of time between publications, this relatively long period of time between his previous publication, *Case Studies in Missions*, and this book can be explained by a transition that was taking place in his life. As mentioned in the life history above, in 1990, approximately mid-way between the publication of *Case Studies in Missions* and *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, Hiebert moved from Fuller to Trinity.

Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues is Hiebert's most widely

---

[172]Pannell, telephone interview with author, July 14, 2010. Pannell did not go into details about this event, but it did lead him to speak about the differences in demeanor between Hiebert and his wife, Frances. According to Pannell, she was "much more feisty" and was apparently not afraid to speak her mind to whoever she felt needed to hear from her. Pannell summed this difference up by saying, "Fran was a sister, I'm telling you. But they were temperamentally quite different. Paul was much more reserved, much more quiet about his activism than she, but they were exactly the same in terms of what they believed about matters of justice." On the issue of Fran's passion for justice, Ruth Vuong, Dean of Students at Fuller, is quoted as saying, "Fran's 'activism' was not about ideology, but about the conviction that God's Spirit is poured out on all of us, and we honor Him and one another best when we live that truth." Shaw and Wan, "Tributes to Fran by Her Friends."

[173]Tite Tienou, phone interview with author, 3 November 2010.

read book and is still in print. It was first published by Baker Books in 1994 and is currently being published by Baker Academic. In the introduction, Hiebert introduced the idea of a trialogue in missions. According to Hiebert, this trialogue happens between "philosophical, historical, and empirical approaches to the study of both Scripture and humanity."[174] As with his comments about some of his other books, Hiebert did not believe that this book is sufficient for preparing people for cross-cultural work. He also repeated his belief that his study of anthropology has caused him to study his own worldview and believed that this indicates that anthropology is as valuable for examining one's own belief system as it is for evaluating others and their belief systems.[175]

Hiebert's *Incarnational Ministry* (1995)

Hiebert co-authored *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* with his oldest daughter, Eloise Hiebert Meneses. It was first published in 1995 by Baker Books and is still in print and available from Baker Academic. At the time of publication, Hiebert was a professor at Trinity and Meneses was an assistant professor of anthropology at Eastern University (where she is still teaching). When I asked her why and how she was involved as a co-author on this book, Meneses spoke about her father's academic generosity: "He was going to write that book anyway and basically he took me under his wing, because I was becoming an anthropologist at that point. So, in terms of why I was a co-author it was simply a matter of apprenticeship and he offered it to me and I helped him on his book. He was helping me get a start."[176]

---

[174]Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 15.

[175]Ibid.

[176]Meneses, telephone interview. The fact that he brought Meneses along with him to help him with this project shows something of the character of the man. He was a quiet and humble man always seeking to share his knowledge and wisdom with others.

In *Incarnational Ministry*, the authors presented four different types of societies (band, tribal, peasant, and urban) and then gave strategies for planting churches in each of these types of societies based on the anthropological insights specific to each type of society. In the introduction, the authors reported that they wrote this book in order to help missionaries avoid making cultural mistakes that often hinder the task of church planting. These mistakes often result due to using the wrong methodology for a given cultural and social circumstances.[177] According to Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry* represents Hiebert's standard approach to mission:

> But in terms of the book itself, I think it simply falls under in the flow of what he was already doing, bringing anthropology to missions and that would be probably how I would sum up what he ended up actually doing. He was bringing the insights that are available from anthropology as a discipline into the mission community for use for evangelical purposes.[178]

Hiebert's *Missiological Implications* *of Epistemological Shifts* (1999)

Hiebert's third book written while he was at Trinity, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World*, is the culmination of his thinking about critical realism. *Missiological Implications* was published in 1999 by Trinity International Press and is still in print. At only 135 pages, it is the shortest of all of Hiebert's books. Along with *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization* (which was published twenty-three years earlier), it is one of only two of his books dealing with missiological issues that was not published by Baker. It was part of a series, Christian Mission and Modern Culture, published under the authority and direction of the Institute of Mennonite Studies. The series' purpose was to investigate how Christianity can, will, and should interact with cultural developments – especially

---

[177]Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 19.

[178]Meneses, telephone interview.

postmodernism.[179] Other books in the series were written by authors like David Bosch, Lesslie Newbigin, and Lamin Sanneh.

According to the introduction, Hiebert's interest in the subject of this book (i.e., epistemology and its effects on the task of Christian missions) grew out of two lifelong concerns. First he was committed to Christian missions, and, second, he desired to see theology and anthropology integrated in the missions task.[180] In the final chapter of this book, Hiebert explains what he understands to be the central task of missions – "not to communicate a message but to introduce people to . . . Jesus Christ."[181]

Jon and Mindy Hirst's book *Through the River* serves as a popularization of the ideas presented in *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*. The Hirsts' book was published in 2009, and it was Hiebert himself who encouraged them to write it. In fact, the Hirsts believe so much that their work simply interprets Hiebert's work for a larger audience that they listed him as a co-author.[182]

Hiebert's *Understanding Folk Religion* (1999)

In *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*, Hiebert was joined by two co-authors. They were R. Daniel Shaw, one of Hiebert's colleagues at Fuller, and Tité Tienou, one of Hiebert's colleagues at Trinity. Tienou reported that his involvement with this project was a result of Hiebert's

---

[179]Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), xi-xii.

[180]Ibid., xiii-xiv.

[181]Ibid., 116. This very provocative statement could have a variety of meanings depending from whose lips and/or pen it came, but over the course of this work, it will be demonstrated that Hiebert did not mean by this statement that doctrine was unimportant or that the gospel was not a message to be communicated, but rather that each culture which comes into contact with Jesus through the message of the gospel must put that message into its own language and cultural norms.

[182]Jon Hirst, Mindy Hirst, and Paul G. Hiebert, *Through the River: Understanding Your Assumptions about Truth* (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2009). I will return to the Hirsts' work and their collaboration with Hiebert in my chap. 5.

generosity as a scholar. According to Tienou, Hiebert wanted others to succeed in

scholarship even if that meant that he shared credit for work that he, in fact, had mostly

done on his own.[183]

Understanding Folk Religion was first published in 1999 and is still in print. It

was first published by Baker Books and is still available from Baker Academic. At over

400 pages, *Understanding Folk Religion* is the longest of Hiebert's missiological works.

The authors wrote that *Understanding Folk Religion* was "born out of life experience,"

"matured in classes," and that it had "a long gestation period."[184] The purpose of the

book is "to sensitize Christians to the need to deal with folk religions, and to understand

them."[185] They did not seek to provide theological answers as much as they seek to

present the questions that folk religionists are seeking to answer in their belief systems,

so that Christian missionaries can effectively present the gospel to folk religionists.[186]

The book was organized by applying two ideas of Hiebert's six seminal ideas: critical

contextualization and "a three-tiered framework for the analysis religious

phenomenology" (i.e. a worldview that included an understanding of the excluded

middle).[187]

About nine years after Hiebert had moved to Trinity, Fran Hiebert was

diagnosed with a serious illness that would eventually take her life. Even after Fran's

diagnosis, the Hieberts maintained their characteristic hospitality. David Hesselgrave

testified to Hiebert's gracious spirit:

---

[183]Tienou, telephone interview.

[184]Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 9-12.

[185]Ibid., 10.

[186]Ibid., 11.

[187]Hiebert, Shaw, and Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion*, 392.

I recall quite distinctly the time that our missions faculty was invited to the Hiebert home for dinner. The invitation came as a surprise because Paul's wife Fran had recently been diagnosed with the disease that ultimately took her life. When I momentarily hesitated, Paul knew what I was thinking. He responded quietly and in a way that was characteristic. With a twinkle in his eye, the hint of a smile on his lips and a slight nod of the head he replied, "God will care for that, you and Gertrude just come."[188]

Following Fran's death, Hiebert's home became the Hiebert Ashram – a place of "fellowship and scholarship" housing up to eight Trinity students at a time.[189] Hiebert served as a mentor to these young scholars, and the description that Charles Cook provided is reminiscent of the Francis and Edith Schaeffer's ministry as L'Abri. Reflecting on the experiences of those that lived at the Hiebert Ashram, Cook wrote,

Those who shared in the Ashram experience have been forever shaped by the spirit of a man who loved learning, enjoyed people and wanted to tangibly assist in the preparation of leaders for the global church. It is one thing to observe Paul "from a distance" and appreciate his spirit and scholarship. It was quite another to watch him "up close and personal" and see the consistency of his life![190]

Hiebert continued to be involved in teaching and writing up to within a year of his death. He responded to his diagnosis and prognosis with a complete and total trust in God. When his friend and colleague expressed his concern over Hiebert's diagnosis, Hiebert responded with "his usual quiet and considerate way."[191] Hesselgrave reported that instead of focusing on his disease and the relative short amount of time that he had left, Hiebert was instead concerned with the tasks that he felt God had given him to complete.[192] Hiebert even made himself available to Enoch Wan's classes at Western

---

[188]David J. Hesselgrave, e-mail to author, 4 November 2010.

[189]Charles A. Cook, "Quintessential Global Soul" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[190]Ibid. More reflection on the Hiebert Ashram will be offered in chap. 6 of this work.

[191]Ibid.

[192]Ibid., Hesselgrave wrote, "I want to make clear that this response did not stem from either fatalism or lack of faith. Paul invited and greatly appreciated prayer for healing. It stemmed, rather, from a calm and quiet confidence that God was in total control and that whatever lay ahead would be for his own greater good and God's greater glory. And also from a firm belief that , after all, that is what living--and serving and dying--are all about." Ibid.

Seminary in his final few days. When I asked him what Hiebert did in his final days, Wan confirmed Hesselgrave's report saying that Hiebert spent much of the time leading up to his death finishing up the work on his last book.[193]

Paul Gordon Hiebert died on March 11, 2007. He had moved into the home of his daughter, Barbara, in Baltimore, Maryland and was under Hospice care through Johns Hopkins.[194] He died of mesothelioma which is a form of cancer that is related to exposure to asbestos which can lay dormant for many years. His family is not certain how he contracted this disease, but Meneses reported that it was probably when working a part-time job in college when he had worked with a cement mixer that apparently contained asbestos.[195]

An entire issue of *Global Missiology* published in 2007 was dedicated to Paul and Fran Hiebert. The issue contains a number of tributes to both Paul and Fran. It was compiled by Hiebert's close friend, Enoch Wan. The conclusion of this work in chapter six will contain some of the tributes and reflections offered in this issue.

Hiebert's *Transforming Worldviews* (2008)

The manuscript for *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, written before Hiebert's death in 2007, was published posthumously by Baker Academic and edited by several individuals who all worked under Meneses' supervision.[196] It has been praised by many as "Hiebert at his best." At 367 pages, *Transforming Worldviews* is the longest of Hiebert's missiological

---

[193]Enoch Wan, email to author, 21 October 2010. Wan was referring to *Transforming Worldviews*,which would end up being his second to last book.

[194]R. Daniel Shaw, "A Tribute to Paul Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[195]Meneses, telephone interview.

[196]Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 9.

works written without a co-author.

Transforming Worldviews has two central premises. First, true Christian conversion must result in changed behavior, changed beliefs, and a transformed worldview, and, second, Hiebert believed that "transforming worldviews must be [missions'] central task in the twenty-first century."[197] In many ways, *Transforming Worldviews* is the culmination of Hiebert's work in the field of missiology. In his concluding comments, Hiebert writes that in order to effectively transform the worldview of others, we must seek to avoid the two extremes of completely withdrawing from the world and becoming captivated by the world.[198]

Hiebert's *The Gospel in Human Contexts* (2009)

The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions is a mixture of new material and material that had previously appeared in other places.[199] It was published in 2009 by Baker Academic and is one of his shorter works at just over 200 pages. It is, in many ways, a summary of all of Hiebert's works and therefore does contain some duplication.[200]

The central idea of *The Gospel in Human Contexts* is what Hiebert called missional theology.[201] Missional theology was Hiebert's concept that intercultural

---

[197]Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 11-12.

[198]Ibid., 333.

[199]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 9.

[200]Ibid..

[201]The concept of "missional theology" first occurred in a chapter that he co-authored with Tité Tienou. Tité Tienou and Paul G. Hiebert, "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 117-33. See also Tite Tienou and Paul G. Hiebert, "Missional Theology," *Missiology* 34, no. 2 (April 2006): 219-38. It should be noted, however, that while these two articles represent the first occurrence of the term "missional theology," Hiebert had been writing about "missiological theology" for many years previously. See Paul G. Hiebert, "An Anthropologist Looks at Human Systems: The Gospel in Our Culture," *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 21, no. 1 (April 1998): 65-81, and Paul G. Hiebert, "Spiritual Warfare and Worldview,"

workers should attempt to communicate the gospel in particular human contexts by exegeting those contexts and communicating the gospel to people in those contexts in a culturally appropriate manner.[202] In the final chapter of *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, which serves as a conclusion to the book, and really to his entire body of work, Hiebert wrote,

> To become transcultural mediators we need transcultural identities. This requires developing a metacultural mental framework that enables us to live in different worlds while keeping our core identity secure. Such a framework emerges as we live in more than one culture and seek to understand each them deeply from their own perspectives, while yet comparing and evaluating them.[203]

Hiebert's Legacy Continues

Though he is no longer with us, Paul Hiebert's legacy continues. There will never be another Paul Hiebert, but I believe that he would be very pleased to know that many have been influenced by his ideas. He would be encouraged by this not because he wanted people to pay attention to *his* ideas but because he believed those ideas aided clear communication of the gospel message. It is those ideas and their examination and investigation that are the subjects of the next three chapters of this work.

Evangelical Review of Theology 24, no. 3 (July 2000): 240-56. The development of missional theology will be explored more in my chap. 3.

[202]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 13.

[203]Ibid., 198-99. Hiebert's exhortation for missionaries to become "transcultural" is an update to his earlier idea of becoming "bicultural." See chap. 9, "The Bicultural Bridge," in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*.

CHAPTER 3

HIEBERT'S SIX SEMINAL IDEAS

Paul Hiebert was the author or editor of twelve books and no less than 150 journal articles and chapters in edited books. The overarching theme is Hiebert's desire to illuminate missiological thinking and practice with insights gleaned from cultural anthropology. A survey of this large volume of works reveals some recurring ideas related to this overarching theme. In attempting to summarize Hiebert's writing, I have identified six seminal ideas that occur throughout his published works. This chapter will introduce those six seminal ideas.

Hiebert's six seminal ideas were critical realism, critical contextualization, the flaw of the excluded middle, centered set theory, self-theologizing, and missional theology. These six ideas will be discussed one at a time in the following manner. First, I will identify instances when the idea itself was preceded by hints that Hiebert would later fully develop that idea. For several of the ideas, seeds were planted throughout various works. Next, the first appearance of that idea will be identified. Then Hiebert's mature expression of the idea will be presented and evaluated. Finally, any connections between the idea being discussed and his other seminal ideas will be identified.

Critical Realism

Hiebert's first idea to be discussed, critical realism, serves as the foundation upon which all of his other ideas are built. Critical realism is the approach to epistemology that contends that while objective reality actually exists, our understanding of that reality is always limited and, consequently, should be open to adjustment. Critical realism developed within the philosophical discipline of epistemology. The concept can

be traced to Wilfrid Sellers and his father Roy Wood Sellers. These two philosophers developed the concept of critical realism in order to explain the relationship between phenomenological perceptions of physical objects and the objects themselves.[1] Furthermore, Durant Drake explained that critical realism was developed in order to propose a way forward in the area of epistemology which avoided some of the pitfalls of other types of realism while also avoiding the idea that it is impossible to speak in any meaningful way about physical objects which exist outside of one's own person.[2]

Background to Hiebert's Critical Realism

Hiebert developed a *missiological* understanding of critical realism not because he was interested in epistemology per se but because he desired to see the gospel "in a local context."[3] His desire to see the gospel translated into various local contexts led him to think deeply about contextualization. In turn, his thinking about contextualization led him to think about the role of presuppositions and epistemology.[4] It should be noted that Hiebert was not along among Evangelical scholars in purporting a critical realist epistemology. Critical realists also show up in the world of Evangelical biblical studies and hermeneutics.[5] In a taped conversation with one of Enoch Wan's classes at Western

---

[1]Paul Coates, "Sense-Data," in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [on-line]; accessed 13 October 2010; available from http://www.iep.utm.edu/sense-da/#H7; Internet.

[2]Durant Drake, "The Approach to Critical Realism," in *Essays in Critical Realism*, ed. Durant Drake (New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1968), 4.

[3]Hiebert, *Reflections.*

[4]Ibid.

[5]According to Robert B. Steweart, N. T. Wright employs a critical realist approach to the interpretation of Scripture. Robert B. Stewart, *The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on The Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008). Wright wrote, "Over against both of these positions [positivism and phenomenalism], I propose a form of *critical realism. This is a way of describing the process of 'knowing' that acknowledges the *reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower* (hence 'realism'), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiraling path of *appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known* (hence 'critical'). This path leads to critical reflection on the products of our enquiry into 'reality,' so that our assertions about 'reality' acknowledge their own provisionality. Knowledge, in other words, although in principle concerning

Seminary, Hiebert reported that his thinking on epistemology was largely influenced by Ian Barbour, Charles Peirce, and Larry Laudan.[6]

Ian Barbour. Barbour wrote as a contemporary to Hiebert, and his works are primarily concerned with the relationship between science and religion. While many saw these two fields as being mutually exclusive, Barbour saw critical realism as a way to unify these two seemingly divergent fields of knowledge.[7] Barbour believed that the critical realist approach to knowledge was the answer to those who claimed that scientific knowledge was useful for delivering objective knowledge while religious knowledge was useful for delivering subjective knowledge.[8] Barbour rejected this dichotomy of objective and subjective knowledge and promoted critical realism as the middle way in between naïve realism and instrumentalism.[9]

Charles Peirce. Writing around the turn of the twentieth century, Charles Peirce was another person that influenced Hiebert's development of critical realism.[10] Like Hiebert, Peirce was not first and foremost a philosopher. He was a scientist who came to the field of philosophy in order to lay the epistemological foundation for science.[11] Though Peirce is known as a pragmatist and for his influence on William

realities independent of the knower, is never itself independent of the knower." N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

[6]Hiebert, *Reflections*.

[7]Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* (San Francisco: HarperSanFranisco, 2000), 22. Barbour had previously developed this idea in Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974).

[8]Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms*, 171. Barbour's approach to theology was distinctively Neo-Orthodox. However, this does necessarily indicate that Hiebert himself bought into the Neo-Orthodox view of Scripture. Instead, Hiebert pulled the concept of critical realism out of the Neo-Orthodox camp into Evangelicalism.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Hiebert, *Reflections*.

[11]Edward C. Moore, "Introduction," in *Charles S. Peirce: The Essential Writings*, ed. Edward

James and John Dewey, Peirce's own particular understanding of pragmatism (which he called "pragmaticism") was "grounded in his metaphysical realism."[12]

While Peirce influenced Hiebert's overall approach to epistemology, Peirce's primary influence on Hiebert was in the area of semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and their subsequent interpretation. For Peirce, "a sign has two objects, its object as it is represented and its object in itself."[13] Peirce was saying that a sign exists as an external actual objective reality, and it also exists in the mind of the speaker. This understanding of signs and symbols as having two "realities" is crucial to understanding Hiebert's approach to critical realism.[14]

Larry Laudan. In addition to Barbour and Peirce, Hiebert also cited Larry Laudan as a having significant impact on his epistemology.[15] While Hiebert cited

---

C. Moore (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), 4.

[12]Ibid. Peirce wrote, "The [critical] realist theory is thus a highly practical and *common-sense* position." Charles S. Peirce, *Values in a Universe of Chance: Selected Writings of Charles S. Peirce*, ed. Philip P. Wiener (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), 84, emphasis mine. It is Peirce's appeal to common sense that appears to have attracted Hiebert to his writings and approach to epistemology. As with Barbour, it is not necessary to equate Hiebert's incorporation of some of Peirce's ideas as an endorsement of Peirce's entire body of work. Instead, Hiebert extracted the bits of Peirce that he found helpful in helping him apply anthropological concepts to missiology. Hiebert cites Peirce as having created the term "pragmaticism" in order to separate himself from James and Dewey who had "hijacked" pragmatism and turned it into a kind of instrumentalism. Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 121-22 n 6. Hiebert's analysis of Peirce's rebuttal of James and Dewey, is in line with Buchler's critique of Arthur Lovejoy's and others' erroneous attempts to turn Peirce's epistemology into something that Peirce never intended – namely the assertion that things can only be understood in terms of their usefulness to the speaker (i.e. their instrumentality). Justus Buchler, "What Is the Pragmaticist Theory of Meaning?" in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Philip P. Wiener and Frederic H. Young (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 21-32.

[13]Charles S. Peirce, *Letters to Lady Welby*, ed. Irwin C. Lieb (New Haven, CT: Whitlocks, Inc., 1953), 12.

[14]Hiebert wrote, "On the one hand, symbols have an observable physical form, by which they enter our experiences: on the other hand, symbols are mental concepts." Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976), 114. For Hiebert's analysis of the role of form and meaning, see his chapter in *The Word Among Us*. Paul G. Hiebert, "Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel," in *The Word Among Us*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 101-20.

[15]Hiebert, *Reflections.*

Laudan as having influenced his approach to epistemology, Laudan presented himself more of pragmatist in the mold of William James or John Dewey and not as a realist. Regardless of whether or not Laudan and Hiebert would have agreed over the precise nature of a correct approach to epistemology, Laudan's impact on Hiebert is clear. He provided clear and strong rejections of both positivism and relativism.[16]

Early Critical Realism in Hiebert's Writing

Having briefly surveyed three of the thinkers who had a significant influence on Hiebert's understanding of epistemological foundations, Hiebert's own understanding of critical realism will now be presented. Hiebert's concern with epistemology was neither a disengaged interest nor a concern with epistemology as a purely academic discipline. Instead, his concern was intimately connected to his desire to see the cause of missions advance through contextualized presentations of the gospel in various cultural settings.

The seeds of critical realism in Hiebert's writing. When Hiebert first began writing about epistemological issues in relationship to missiological issues, he did not use the term critical realism. Nevertheless, the concept was there. For instance, in an article written in 1973 for *Direction*, Hiebert wrote, "Scientists have become increasingly aware of the part which the observer or scientist plays in the scientific process."[17] He went on

---

[16]Laudan wrote that positivism "transforms itself into a potent tool for resurrecting the very anti-empirical ideologies that it was invented to banish," and that "the relativist critique of epistemology . . . has produced much heat but no light whatever." Larry Laudan, *Positivism and Relativism: Theory, Method, and Evidence* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

See also the following work for a presentation of Laudan's critique of positivism and relativism and support of pragmatism – over against the unqualified "realist" position. Larry Laudan, *Science and Relativism: Some Key Controversies in the Philosophy of Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[17]Paul G. Hiebert, "Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes," *Direction* 2 (January 1973), 2. *Direction* is a Mennonite Brethren journal established in 1972 which presents itself like this: "Neither a purely academic journal nor a denominational magazine, *Direction* highlights the interdependence of Christian reflection and mission." "What is *Direction*" [on-line]; accessed 27 October

to point out that the scientists influence the data that they claim to be merely observing and stated that conclusions reached through scientific study "are simply ways at looking at the data."[18] When Hiebert applied these ideas to theology and missiology, he asserted the provisional nature of theology and insisted that all theologies must be constantly "tested and revised against the biblical record to keep them true to divine revelation."[19]

Two years later, Hiebert furthered his development of critical realism (though he still did not give it that label) in his article "Missions and Anthropology: A Love/Hate Relationship," in the April 1978 issue of *Missiology*. In that article, Hiebert wrote that hermeneutical knowledge must be reflexive, self-reflexive, and "historical and developmental in perspective."[20] Hiebert summarized his epistemological theory: "If knowledge is a map, it is *not an absolute statement of reality*, but an approximation of it."[21]

Hiebert's development of an epistemological basis for his missiological ideas continued to develop. Just one year later, in his discussion of ethnocentrism in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*, Hiebert wrote that ethnocentrism is "judging other people's behavior by one's own values and assumptions."[22] In that same work, Hiebert

---

2010 from http://www.directionjournal.org/about/#history; Internet.

[18]Hiebert, "Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes," 2.

[19]Ibid., 4. Hiebert went on to write, "We do not claim to know the totality of truth." This is different from saying that "total truth" does not exist as a philosophical relativist would say. Hiebert is merely asserted a very common sense and humble approach to knowledge which says that we recognize that other people "out there" and those yet to come may yet contribute a point of view which supplements (and possibly corrects) our understanding.

[20]Paul G. Hiebert, "Missions and Anthropology: A Love/Hate Relationship," *Missiology: An International Review* 6, no. 2 (April 1978), 177. In order to clarify that he was not promoting a kind of theological relativism, Hiebert wrote, ""Approximation' must be differentiated from 'relative.' Maps must fit or reflect accurately a real world, a given, or an absolute." Ibid., 178.

[21]Ibid., 177, emphasis mine.

[22]Paul G. Hiebert, "An Introduction to Mission Anthropology," in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*, ed. Arthur Glasser et al. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976), 53.

would go on to write that "no words in one culture carry exactly the same meanings as the words in another culture."[23] Both of these statements are the seeds of the concept of critical realism which he would present several years later.

Hiebert's epistemological foundations show up in his work written for secular audiences, as well. In his *Cultural Anthropology* textbook Hiebert's evaluation of different models of knowledge demonstrated a critical realist approach:

> While theories were formerly considered as accurate statements of reality (as true descriptions of the order and laws that exist in the universe), we now organize our experiences and replicate the outside world. They are our maps of the world, and just as a map itself is not the actual land but a simplified way of showing the structural arrangements of cities, roads, rivers, and mountains, so also is a model a means by which the basic structure and operation of the real world is portrayed. But to be useful, maps must accurately reflect their geographical counterparts . . . Similarly, models must replicate our experiential world if they are to help us to understand and function within it.[24]

Hiebert was not promoting an approach to knowledge which stated that our descriptions of reality are not connected to that reality at all. He was stating that those two categories are not tautologies. He was rejecting both relativism and postitivism.

The first appearance of the term "critical realism." Despite having introduced the seeds of critical realism, it was not until 1985 that Hiebert first used the term "critical realism" in his published work.[25] Again, clarifying that he was not promoting theological relativism or a postmodern approach to truth, Hiebert explicitly denied one of the central tenets of postmodern relativism when he wrote that "critical realists . . . cannot accept mutually contradictory theological positions."[26] Hiebert

---

[23]Ibid., 55.

[24]Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976), 12.

[25]Paul Hiebert, "Epistemological Foundations For Science and Technology," *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 8 (March-April 1985): 5-10. Hiebert followed up this article with an article the title of which would become the title of his book on the topic of epistemology. Paul G. Hiebert, "The Missiological Implications of an Epistemological Shift," *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 8 (May 1985): 12-18. This later article appears as the second chapter of *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*.

[26]Hiebert, "The Missiological Implications of an Epistemological Shift," 16.

concluded this initial presentation of critical realism by writing,

> We need to reexamine again our epistemological foundations, and to see how they affect our relationships to other people, culture, theologies and religions in a pluralistic world. I am convinced that critical realism is a biblical approach to knowledge (1 Cor 13:12). I am also convinced it is the approach we must take in a post-colonial era in missions in which we must deal with cultural, religious and theological pluralism with deep convictions about the truth, but without arrogance and paternalism.[27]

Hiebert's Fully-Developed Presentation of Critical Realism

Hiebert fully developed this understanding of critical realism and its impact on missiological thinking in his 1999 book *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*. The book is relatively short and contains only three chapters. In the first two chapters Hiebert presented and rejected positivism, instrumentalism, and idealism. He believed that they were inadequate bases for Evangelical missiology. In the final chapter, he presented and defended critical realism as the only viable option for Evangelical missiology.

In the first chapter, Hiebert presented the epistemology of positivism. Positivism is the epistemological approach which contends that there is a one to one correspondence between external reality and reality as it is perceived. While ultimately Hiebert's purpose is to show that positivism is an insufficient ground upon which to build knowledge, he pointed out that "positivism has changed the world for good."[28] Modern science and technologies grew out of the positivist approach to knowledge, and these things "have benefited life on earth."[29] In terms of semiotics, positivists see form and meaning as identical.[30] In other words, words are "exact (mathematical) representations

---

[27]Ibid., 17.

[28]Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications*, 29.

[29]Ibid., 29.

[30]Ibid., 10.

of reality – as depicting 'the way things are.'"[31]

Hiebert concluded chapter one by outlining attacks on positivism – both internal and external. Internally, positivism simply could not survive an application of its own ideas to itself. Positivism only allows people to make factual statements about their immediate circumstances without providing an explanation for the significance of those statements to the world at large. Positivists cannot say that the weather is nice today; they can simply report measureable data like temperature, relative humidity, etc.[32] Hiebert concluded this section by asserting that "human knowledge can no longer be equated literally with reality."[33] Externally, positivism was critiqued as failing to deliver on its promises – namely its failure to produce an ideal society which it promised. Positivism is also charged with imperialism, amorality, and ethnocentrism. The charge of amorality is especially devastating, since positivism, as Hiebert wrote, "asks whether a nuclear weapon *can* be built, but not if it *should* be built."[34]

Hiebert addressed the postmodern approaches to epistemology known as instrumentalism and idealism in the second chapter of *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*. Hiebert saw instrumentalism as a kind of realism in the sense that it recognizes that there is, indeed, a real world out there which we perceive. The key distinctive of instrumentalism, however, is it asserts that all knowledge is so conditioned by culture that having true knowledge of the external world is not possible so that when one speaks about a tree his relative understanding about trees as they actually exist is completely conditioned by his cultural context and unknowable by anyone outside of that

---

[31]Ibid. Similarly, Ronald Nash critiqued the positivist approach to epistemology by showing that it cannot stand up to its own criteria for truth claims. Ronald H. Nash, *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 203.

[32]Hiebert, *Missiological Implications*, 32.

[33]Ibid., 33.

[34]Ibid., 35, emphasis mine.

contexts. In terms of semiotics, then, instrumentalism claims that form and meaning are completely separate and not inherently related to one another.[35] Hiebert provided the example of an instrumentalist umpire who calls balls and strikes "the way that he sees them," but also says that there is no way to verify if he is correct or not, since everyone's view is completely limited to their own perception of reality.[36] In many ways, instrumentalism is a helpful correction to positivism. First, it recognizes that there is a subjective aspect to human knowledge, and second, it admits culture's impact on the way form and meaning are processed by a given individual.[37]

Idealism is the second approach to epistemology taken by postmodernists that Hiebert presented. Contrary to positivism and instrumentalism, idealism is not a form of realism. Instead, idealism contends that the only real things are ideas. The external world does not exist outside of our own minds.[38] According to idealism, instead of describing reality, language creates reality. As a result, the semiotics of idealism contend that a sign has only one reality – the meaning.

Hiebert critiqued these two postmodern epistemological positions in regard to Christian theology and missions. Hiebert contended that holding to either one of these epistemologies ultimately undermines both theology and missions. Theologically, instrumentalism creates many different theologies but undercuts "Truth."[39] Idealism, on the other hand, denies the acts of God in history and, therefore, is an inadequate basis for theology.[40] Missiologically, instrumentalism denies the uniqueness of the gospel while

---

[35]Ibid., 41. See also Hiebert, "Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel."

[36]Ibid., 38.

[37]Ibid., 42.

[38]Ibid., 47.

[39]Ibid., 58. As Nash wrote, "When someone says that all religious beliefs are true and then asserts that there is at least one false religious belief, he is contradicting himself." Nash, *Life's Ultimate Questions*, 232.

[40]Hiebert, *Missiological Implications*, 59.

idealism "makes the gospel a pure abstraction."[41] In short, instrumentalism and idealism are simply incompatible with Evangelical Christianity which attempts to be faithful to Scripture. Hiebert concluded chapter two by writing that

> The easy solution is to stress tolerance, to live our own lives and let other live theirs, and to hope that communities can somehow coexist in peace in the same nation and world. One of the greatest challenges to the Western church is to lay again the theological foundations of the truth of the gospel and to train its members how to proclaim this with humility and love.[42]

In the third chapter Hiebert took up this challenge and presented and defended critical realism as an adequate epistemological basis for theological and missiological thinking and writing. Theologically, Hiebert's critical realist approach makes a distinction between Scripture and theology. The former is the final authority against which we evaluate and judge the latter.[43] Missiologically, critical realism recognizes the need for a serious approach to evangelism and discipleship by rejecting religious relativism and embracing the uniqueness of Christ and the authority of Scripture.[44] As Hiebert wrote, "they [critical realist missiologists] do so not in arrogance because they are in some way superior to other people, but in love, seeking to extend the Good News of salvation to all who suffer under the tyranny of sin."[45] In *Transforming Worldviews*, Hiebert brought out the following implications of critical realism for a biblical worldview which, in turn, have implications for missiology:

1. Our understandings are culturally constructed and therefore limited
2. A worldview is the composite of many cultural parts
3. The church ought to seek the Holy Spirit for guidance
4. Worldviews are in flux
5. Feelings and morals (and not just knowledge) play a part in forming a worldview.[46]

---

[41]Ibid., 62-63.

[42]Ibid., 67. Hiebert was simply not content to take the easy way nor is he content to do theology and missiology the way that they have always been done.

[43]Ibid., 97-98.

[44]Ibid., 106-15.

[45]Ibid., 115.

[46]Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 274-275.

Connections between Critical Realism
and Hiebert's Other Ideas

Critical realism was directly connected to critical contextualization for Hiebert,

since his interest in epistemology was driven by his desire to see the gospel clearly

communicated in various cultural settings. In an explicit connection between the ideas,

Hiebert wrote in his widely acclaimed article on critical contextualization that critical

realism forms the epistemological foundation for critical contextualization.[47]

Since critical realism deals with foundations (i.e. with the issue of

epistemology), it is directly connected to all six of Hiebert's seminal ideas. This means

that one must understand Hiebert's epistemological approach, namely critical realism, if

one hopes to understand the rest of his ideas. For example, Hiebert hinted at a connection

that he would fully develop later when he wrote that having a critical realists approach to

epistemology will necessarily impact the way that one approaches the training of national

church leaders.[48] A critical realist approach will also affect the way that one understands

Christian conversion. From a critical realist perspective conversion is seen primarily as a

change of what is at "the center of their lives."[49] Since the concept of conversion is

connected to Hiebert's centered set theory, there is a connection between critical realism

and centered set theory.

Critical Contextualization

While critical realism precedes critical contextualization in terms of logical

sequencing, critical contextualization was actually Hiebert's initial and primary concern.

In Hiebert's thoughts and ideas, his desire to see the gospel critically contextualized was

---

[47]Paul G. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (July 1987): 104-12.

[48]Hiebert, "The Missiological Implications of an Epistemological Shift," 16. Hiebert's concepts of self-theologizing and missional theology will both flow from this idea. Both of these ideas will be developed and investigated more fully later in this work.

[49]Ibid., 17. As Hiebert wrote, "Critical realists take conversion seriously." Hiebert, *Missiological Implications*, 108.

the spark that lit his interest in the topic of epistemology and his embrace of critical realism as the epistemological foundation upon which he would build his other missiological ideas.

Early Critical Contextualization
in Hiebert's Writing

The seeds of critical contextualization. Hiebert understood that communicating a message from one culture demanded more than a bilingual dictionary. Language is but one aspect of culture, and clear communication of any message involves more than the verbal aspect of language. It involves the whole culture. Hiebert understood this truth about communication. His concern for communication in missions, which was behind the concept of critical contextualization (a term which he would not develop until later), was evident as early as his 1967 essay "Missions and the Understanding of Culture." In that essay Hiebert wrote, "Missions is the communication of the Gospel. This means that the Word of God must be translated into a new language. Translation *involves more than replacing words and sentences of one language with those of another.*"[50] Hiebert went on to write that the purpose of the article was "to show how an understanding of the fundamental postulates of another culture can help us to translate the Gospel and the church into a new language and culture."[51]

As with critical realism, and in the same *Direction* article cited in the discussion of critical realism, the seeds of critical contextualization appear before Hiebert's fully orbed understanding of the idea is developed. He wrote, "Generally it is

---

[50]Paul G. Hiebert, "Missions and the Understanding of Culture," in *The Church in Mission: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to J.B. Toews*, ed. A. J. Klassen (Fresno, CA: Board of Christian Literature Mennonite Brethren Church, 1967), 251, emphasis mine. This essay is Hiebert's earliest published work. It was published in the same year that he received his PhD from the University of Minnesota and was written for a Mennonite Brethren audience.

[51]Ibid., 252.

impossible to maintain both the form and the meaning completely."[52] Hiebert recognized

that critical contextualization is not the easy way to do missions. This understanding led

him to that "it is easier to bring a potted plant than to plant and raise a seed."[53] The easy

way, however, is often not the best way. Hiebert recognized this principle. As such, he

promoted critical contextualization as the best way to impact the culture for Christ – but

not the easiest.

Hiebert continued to write about the issue of critical contextualization before

he applied either the label "critical" or "contextualization." For instance, in an article

published in 1979, he wrote that "cultural translation is an ongoing process of

communication, feedback, recommunication [*sic*], and more feedback."[54] The process

that Hiebert hinted at here can be thought of as the basis on which he would later build

the four step process of critical contextualization. In an indication of his development of

the process of critical contextualization, Hiebert recognized that this process of

translation is not limited to an issue of language, but also applies to "thought forms,

symbols and customs of a new culture."[55]

Hiebert's anthropologically informed understanding of the complexity and

power of culture would prove to be one of the most significant factors in his development

of critical contextualization for missiological purposes. It is not only in his missiological

writings that one can see the seeds of critical contextualization, however. Hiebert's

concern that the gospel be *critically* contextualized is also evident in his evaluation of

---

[52]Hiebert, "Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes," 5. See also Hiebert, "Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel."

[53]Ibid.

[54]Paul G. Hiebert, "The Gospel and Culture," in *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979), 61-62.

[55]Ibid., 60. Hiebert went on to write, "Just as the gospel calls people to repentance and new life, so it calls for new lifestyles, and the forsaking of cultural practices and institutions that foster sin." Ibid., 63.

cultures as an anthropologist. In an article about India written for a secular audience which investigated the relationship between religion and society, Hiebert wrote, "India with its varied religions and cultures is too complex to be reduced to a simple generalization."[56]

   The first appearance of the term "critical contextualization." After having written about some of the principle beliefs behind the idea, Hiebert introduced the term "critical contextualization" in his article by that name in the July 1984 issue of *Missiology*.[57] In that article, Hiebert asked, "What should people do with their past customs when they become Christians?"[58] Hiebert went on to outline how this question has been answered in the history of missions. Many have completely rejected any and all old customs. Some have done this from a position of ethnocentrism while others have recognized "that in most traditional cultures no sharp lines can be drawn between religious and mundane practices," and have therefore rejected them outright as well.[59] The opposite response was to accept any and all old customs into the church. This approach invited the development of syncretism.[60] Hiebert offered critical contextualization as a way forward.[61]

---

[56]Paul G. Hiebert, "India: The Politicization of a Sacred Society," in *Religions and Societies: Asia and the Middle East*, ed. Carlo Caldarola (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1982), 325.

[57]Paul G. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," *Missiology: An International Review* 12, no. 3 (July 1984): 287-96.

[58]Ibid., 287.

[59]Ibid., 288.

[60]Ibid., 289.

[61]Hiebert presented his step by step process in this article, but I will deal with it in the next section when I discuss his 1987 article, since it is more complete (and more widely referenced).

Hiebert's Fully-Developed Presentation
of Critical Contextualization

Hiebert's most complete presentation of critical contextualization is presented

in his July 1987 article by the same name in the *International Bulletin of Missionary*

Research.[62] In this article, Hiebert traced the different approaches to contextualization as

he did in the previous article. However, in this article he showed where the various

approaches have fit into their historical setting by framing the conversation around a

discussion of different eras.

The first era was "The Era of Noncontextualization" and took place during the

time of colonialism (1800-1950). This time period promoted the idea of cultural

evolution and the "triumph" of science.[63] This era was marked by a refusal to change

anything in one's approach to gospel ministry and missions. Hiebert went further than

calling this era a time of noncontextualization. He also called it an era of anti-

contextualization that "was essentially monocultural and monoreilgious," since "truth

was seen as supracultural."[64] Hiebert admitted that there are some good things about

taking a monocultural point of view to Christian missions. Namely, it preserves the

exclusivity of Christ, takes history seriously, and supports the "oneness of humanity."[65]

---

[62]Paul G. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (July 1987): 104-12. As mentioned earlier, though this is not his first article on the subject, it has proved to be the most influential. It is the fourth chapter in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* and is also part of J. I. Packer's *Best in Theology* collection. Paul G. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," in *The Best in Theology* vol. 2, ed. J. I. Packer (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Inc., 1987), 387-400. It should also be noted that Hiebert indicated that the data from which he drew to develop this model was taken exclusively from India. He believed, however, that the model will still apply to various cultural settings around the world.

The chapter entitled "Critical Contextualization" in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* is very similar to the 1984 article, but it also contains an explanation of various aspects of culture from material to expressive to ritual culture. The focus of the process of critical contextualization remains on the question of what to do with old pre-Christian ways of life. Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 183.

[63]Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization" (1987), 104-05.

[64]Ibid., 106.

[65]Ibid.

As will be demonstrated, however, the negatives outweighed the positives in this approach to missions.

In regard to the central question of whether or not old customs could and should be preserved, the noncontextual approach supported the complete and total rejection of local pre-Christian customs. For instance, missionaries who entered a culture in which drums were used in pagan religious rituals might have forbidden converts from playing drums during Christian worship services. Two negative consequences resulted from the noncontextual approach. The first seems rather obvious while the second is somewhat counter-intuitive. The first negative result to the noncontextual approach was that Christianity became equated with Western culture and was therefore seen as foreign. This foreignness became a barrier to gospel advance.

The second negative result was that the old customs, instead of dying out or going away as the missionaries suspected that they would, "went underground."[66] This hiding of old customs led to the exactly what the missionaries who had rejected these customs were trying to avoid – syncretism. The resultant syncretism was not the conspicuous type of syncretism existing on the surface of a culture which is lived out in the public square. Instead, this syncretism existed in the private and family lives of individuals – away from the eyes of the missionaries.[67] Hiebert's conclusion was that the noncontextualized approach to missions simply does not work. When noncontextualized approaches are used, the result is false churches being planted and a distorted and false gospel, which is no gospel at all, being presented. This failure became evident, and, as a result, the next era of contextualization surfaced.

As with the first era, the second era was impacted by forces outside of the world of Christian missions.[68] The end of colonialism (which was, in turn, influenced by

---

[66]Ibid., 106.

[67]Ibid., 106.

[68]Hiebert does not give exact dates for this era, but it most closely approximates with the mid

a number of historical and political happenings), the rise of new approaches to anthropology known as structural functionalism and ethnoscience, and the postmodern approach to science all contributed to the rise of the second era which embraced "uncritical contextualization."[69]

As with the first era, this era had some positive apsects. First, it steered clear of the danger of the gospel being equated exclusively with Western cultural forms. It was decidedly non-ethnocentric and sought to affirm the good that could be found in various cultures around the world. Second, it also affirmed the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers which gave Christians in each country, culture, and people group the right to make their own decisions regarding the adaptation of the gospel into their particular cultural context and social setting.[70]

As with the era of noncontextualization, however, the era of uncritical contextualization would prove to have more negatives than positives. Hiebert lists seven of them. A review of each point is not necessary, since his seventh point serves as a good summary of the previous six points. Hiebert wrote,

> There is an offense in the foreignness of the culture we bring along with the gospel, which must be eliminated. But there is the offense of the gospel itself, which we dare not weaken. The gospel must be contextualized, but it also must remain prophetic -- standing in judgment on what is evil in all cultures as well as in persons.[71]

Christ alone must be the cornerstone over which people stumble – not our sin-stained cultures, and removing the stumbling block of a crucified Christ is not an option for

---

to late twentieth century. These eras should not be thought of as completely airtight, however, as many of the impulses from the colonial era survived colonialism – and still survive today. For a more complete investigation of different eras and their impact on missiology, see David Bosch, *Transforming Misssion*: David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

[69]Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization" (1987), 108.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Ibid.

Evangelicals.[72]

Given the inadequacies of both noncontextualization and uncritical contextualization, Hiebert developed the process of critical contextualization. He believed that critical contextualization provided the proper framework for answering the question of what to do with old pre-Christian customs. Critical contextualization is based on "postrelativism."[73] Postrelativism is based on three foundations. Critical contextualization is, in turn, built on these three foundations, as well. First, critical contextualization approaches the question of colonialism by rejecting both dependency and independency and asserts that the real need is for interdependency. Second, critical contextualization seeks to integrate both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives. Finally, critical contextualization moves beyond postmodern science's instrumentalism and relativism and embraces critical realism as its epistemological foundation. The remainder of the essay outlines the process of critical contextualization. Hiebert credited Jacob Loewen and John Geertz for developing the ideas behind critical contextualization.[74] Critical contextualization is a four-step process that presupposed that there is an indigenous church with which the missionary can dialogue.[75]

The first step in the process is "exegesis of culture."[76] In this step, the local

---

[72]Rom 9:33; Isa 8:14; Isa 28:16

[73]Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization" (1987), 109.

[74]Ibid.

[75]It should be noted that while the essay being discussed is Hiebert's mature treatment of the *subject* of critical contextualization, the most mature *application* of critical contextualization is *Understanding Folk Religion*. The entire book is organized around the application of critical contextualization among folk religions. Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tité Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 29.

[76]Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization" (1987), 109. In his initial article on the subject, Hiebert broke this step down into two sub-steps: first, recognizing the *need* to deal with this or that subject, and second, gathering information about that subject. It seems that in the 1987 article this first sub-step is assumed and/or incorporated into the thorough exegesis of culture. Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization," (1984), 290.

culture is studied for the purpose of understanding. No judgment is made about the custom being investigated.[77] Putting it into anthropological language, an emic perspective of the given custom is sought. The second step in critical contextualization is an exegesis of Scripture and what Hiebert labeled the "Hermeneutical Bridge." Relevant biblical passages are studied in order to understand how the Bible speaks to the custom being studied. During this step, the missionary plays an active role in pointing the community toward a right understanding of the relevant biblical passages.[78] It should be noted that Hiebert stressed the role that the missionary and/or pastor plays in this step of the process. He did not believe that providing a copy of the Bible and trusting in the Holy Spirit was sufficient to prevent syncretism and false teaching. The process had to be guided by a mature Christian teacher who helped them to discover and apply the truths of Scripture to their particular situation and cultural context. The third step is called the "critical response" and involves the people evaluating their own practices based on the understanding that they received from Scripture. This evaluation might lead to an acceptance of the old practice, a rejection of the old practice as irredeemably non-Christian, or, finally, an adaptation of the old practice.[79] When the final option is chosen, the final step in the process of critical contextualization is put into practice. A new contextualized practice is developed by the people.[80]

---

[77]Hiebert, "Critical Contextualization" (1987), 109. Hiebert warns against any condemnation taking place at this stage saying that condemnation will simply result in customs and practices being driven out of the sight of the missionary.

[78]Ibid., 109-110.

[79]Ibid., 110.

[80]Ibid. This new practice is sometimes referred to as a functional substitute and they develop in response to a crisis of belief within a given culture. For instance, many cultures around the world practice ancestor worship, and when a person or group of people comes to Christ, a crisis of belief occurs. They ask, "Should we continue to worship our ancestors when we know that God alone is worthy of worship?" Isn't honoring our ancestors what God commanded in the fifth commandment? It is precisely these types of question which critical contextualization addresses.

**Connections between Critical
Contextualization and
Hiebert's Other Ideas**

Critical contextualization is built on the foundation of critical realism. Hiebert's interest in critical realism was driven by his desire to clearly communicate the gospel in non-Western cultures. The process of critical contextualization assumes a critical realist epistemology, as it does not merely assume that any and all rituals and other elements of a non-Christian culture are completely irredeemable as a positivist might do. Additionally, it does not uncritically accept the validity of the pre-Christian practice as an instrumentalist or idealist might do. Instead, critical contextualization seeks to bring those rituals into the light of the gospel and allow the Word of God to speak to them.

Critical contextualization is also connected to both the flaw of the excluded middle and self-theologizing. Those connections will be discussed more fully in the sections on each of those ideas respectively.

The Flaw of the Excluded Middle

The discussions revolving around the flaw of the excluded middle are usually focused on one specific article. The flaw of the excluded middle was Hiebert's contention that Western missionaries tend to ignore "the middle zone" of spirits, demons, angels, and powers when ministering to people in cultures that focus much of their concern and energy on this zone. Hiebert's thinking and writing this topic produced one of the most influential – if not *the* most influential – articles written on the topic of spiritual warfare during the late twentieth century.[81] However, the flaw of the excluded middle was developing in Hiebert's thinking and writing before the publication of that important article in 1982.

---

[81]Andrew Anane-Asane et al., "Paul G. Hiebert's 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle'," *Trinity Journal* 30, n.s., no. 2 (Fall 2009): 189.

The Seeds of the Flaw of the Excluded
Middle In Hiebert's Writing

One of the earliest indications of the seeds that became the flaw of the

excluded middle in Hiebert's missiological writing is in his discussion of cross-cultural

differences in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization.* When discussing issues

regarding translation, Hiebert's understanding of the flaw of the excluded middle was

present. In that discussion, he distinguished between the American two-tiered worldview

and the Indian view of life as a continuum.[82] Hiebert wrote,

> Because they feel all life is one, Indians make no sharp distinction between gods
> and people. Saints may be worshipped just as deities. It is not uncommon,
> therefore, for the people to reverence Krishna, Mahatma Gandhi and J.F. Kennedy
> at the same time. On the other hand, there is no sharp distinction between animals
> and people. To kill either is wrong. When a United States development agent
> suggested Indians kill many of their cows and eat them, the people reacted much as
> we might if an Indian suggested we solve our poverty problem by shooting the poor.
> We keep our poor in ghettos, but we cannot kill them. So, too, an Indian may work
> his cow in a field, but he should not kill it.[83]

According to Hiebert, once one recognizes this stark difference in the ways that the two

cultures view life, it becomes evident that translation is much more nuanced, and

therefore difficult, than it might first appear. Consequently, the manner with which one

addresses the concept of God is not a matter of simple translation. The translator must

get at the concepts behind the words used, and the lack of distinction between gods and

people in the Indian worldview causes problems that must be addressed in order for the

gospel to be clearly communicated.[84] Equally difficult translation issues can be found in

cultures all around the world, and many of these difficulties are tied to what Hiebert

identified as "the middle."

Distinguishing between the American view of life which is two-tiered and the

Indian view of life (that came to represent the view of many non-Western worldviews)

---

[82]Paul G. Hiebert, "An Introduction to Mission Anthropology," in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*, ed. Arthur Glasser et al. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976), 55-56.

[83]Ibid., 56.

[84]Ibid.

that views life as a continuum is not just seen in Hiebert's missiological writings. It

shows up as early as his Ph.D. dissertation (published as the book *Konduru*) where

Hiebert wrote, "No sharp line divides natural being from supernatural ones."[85] He went

on to suggest that this same lack of distinction between categories is sharply

dichotomistic in a Western worldview. Meanwhile, the distinction is simply not there in

the Indian/non-Western worldview. This distinction (or lack thereof) showed up when

discussing the difference between religion and entertainment and religion and magic in

the Indian worldview. These differences between the Western and non-Western concepts

of the universe led to Hiebert's development of the categories of high religion and low

religion.[86] A high religion is primarily concerned with "ultimate" questions like the

origins of life while low religion is primarily concerned with day-to-day questions like

how to have a good harvest or find a wife.[87]

Hiebert's approach to the issue of the varying views of life can also be seen in

his discussion of "religion, magic, and science" in *Cultural Anthropology*:

> The distinction between religion and magic as polar types on a continuum of
> supernatural rites may be useful for analytical purposes. In practice, however, the
> performers often mix the two or shift from one moment to the next in use of one or
> the other. A prayer for divine assistance may in a moment of desperation, turn into
> an effort to coerce God to act.[88]

In an article on India written for a secular religion and society book, Hiebert mentioned

issues related to his observations of folk religion and syncretism, and these issues lie

behind his thesis about the flaw of the excluded middle. He pointed out in that article

---

[85]Paul G. Hiebert, *Konduru: Structure and Integration in a South Indian Village* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 131. Hiebert's dissertation was completed in 1967, so his thinking about the flaw of the excluded middle was developing even earlier – some fifteen years before the publication of his landmark article on the topic.

[86]Hiebert, *Konduru*, 131-38. This categorization between high and low religion will play an important role in his later book *Understanding Folk Religion*.

[87]I will return to the relationship between these two types of religion in my discussion of empirical encounters in chap. 4 of this work.

[88]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 380.

that the tendency for people to turn to "low religion" like shamanism, etc. is not present just among Christian groups. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in India also have a propensity to seek answers for their everyday lives in these places, as well.[89]

First Appearance and Fully-Developed Presentation of "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle"

While it has been demonstrated that Hiebert had developed the crucial elements of the concept of the flaw of the excluded middle earlier, it was not until 1982 that he first published an article which explicitly dealt with the topic and assigned it the title "the flaw of the excluded middle."[90] Unlike his other seminal ideas, Hiebert's first mention of the term "the flaw of the excluded middle" also represents his mature thinking on the topic.

Hiebert's concern for the topic of the excluded middle did not originate in a classroom or in reading the works of others. His concern for this topic grew out of his practice as a missionary in India. In fact, his concern for "the middle" can be traced to a singular event. One day during his time as a missionary in India, he was asked to pray for a sick girl from a Christian family. This request brought on a crisis of belief for Hiebert. He reported, "As I knelt, my mind was in turmoil. I had learned to pray as a child, studied prayer in seminary and preached it as a pastor. But now I was to pray for a sick child as all the village watched to see if the Christian God was able to heal."[91]

---

[89]Hiebert, "India: The Politicization of a Sacred Society," 289.

[90]Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," *Missiology* 10, no. 1 (January 1982): 35-47. Curiously, a full treatment of these issues is not present in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* even though it was published in 1985. Hints at the concepts are present in chapter five, "Cultural Assumptions of Western Missionaries," but the article itself is not republished until 1994 when it appears as chapter twelve in *Anthropological Insights on Missiological Issues*. There it serves as a kind of introduction to an entire part of the book which deals with "reflections on spiritual encounters."

[91]Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," 36. This incident launched Hiebert on a trajectory of analyzing his own worldview, and he believed that the best way to perform this analysis was by looking at another worldview and then comparing and contrasting it with his own.

Hiebert's analysis of the problem was that while many traditional societies focus much of their time and energy on a plane of existence that includes forces, powers, and personalities like mana, astrology, the evil eye, spirits, demons, ancestors, etc. Western missionaries typically do not. This group of forces, powers, and personalities make up "the middle."[92] The "flaw" according to Hiebert was that Western missionaries typically do not have an answer for "the middle."[93] Hiebert did not go into great detail about how Western missionaries should address this flaw. The primary value of his work on the flaw of the excluded middle was that he correctly diagnosed the problem. His diagnosis, however, had to be clarified.

**Clarification of the Flaw of the
Excluded Middle**

The article presented above is Hiebert's mature thinking and writing on the flaw of the excluded middle. However, after that article began to be read and applied in the context of spiritual warfare, it became necessary for him to clarify what he did and did not mean by his idea. To that end, Hiebert wrote several more articles which dealt with the topic. Most notably among these articles was his article in *Wonders and the Word*, "Healing and the Kingdom."[94] He also clarified his thinking in his chapter in a book on folk Islam.[95]

---

[92]Ibid., 39-43.

[93]Ibid., 43.

[94]Paul G. Hiebert, "Healing and the Kingdom," in *Wonder and the Word: An Examination of Issues Raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement*, ed. James R. Coggins and Paul G. Hiebert (Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1989), 109-52. This article also appeared as chap. 14 in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*.

[95]Paul G. Hiebert, "Power Encounter and Folk Islam," in *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989), 45-61. A fuller treatment of the controversy that occurred over other missiologists' application of his idea will be presented in chapter five of this work.

Connections between the Flaw of the
Excluded Middle and Hiebert's
Other Ideas

There is a clear and necessary connection between the flaw of the excluded middle and critical contextualization. Hiebert, Tité Tienou, and Dan Shaw demonstrated this connection in their book *Understanding Folk Religion*. The purpose of that book was to help Western missionaries realize that there is a need to address folk religions. They addressed this purpose by applying the process of critical contextualization to the context of folk religion.

Additionally, the flaw of the excluded middle is related to critical realism by way of critical contextualization. This interaction between critical realism and the flaw of the excluded middle also takes the form of Western missionaries being confronted with "the middle" in their missionary practice and subsequently being forced to rethink their own worldviews. A Western missionary who does not think in terms of "the middle" must have a critical realist epistemology if he is going to adjust to the realities of "the middle."

Centered Set Theory

As with his other ideas, Hiebert's thinking and writing about set theory was not merely academic. Hiebert began to think about centered set theory because he believed that Christian conversion is important. Those who are outside the Kingdom are outside of salvation, and Hiebert desired for people to receive salvation. Consequently, the question of how one becomes a Christian and how missionaries and pastors identify who is and is not a Christian is, therefore, very important. That question is exactly what Hiebert sought to answer with his approach to centered sets.

Seeds of Centered Set Theory in Hiebert's
Early Writing

Hiebert began writing about centered set theory very early in his professional academic career. His first article on the subject was published one year after he joined

the faculty at Fuller.[96] One can see this theory being developed, however, even earlier in his writing.

In *Konduru*, for example, Hiebert wrote about religious associations that function as centered sets. Hiebert rebuked some observers of Indian culture for focusing exclusively on caste issues without looking deeper at other groups and associations.[97] As an example of an association which cuts across "religious as well as caste boundaries," Hiebert discussed associations centered on a guru.[98]

Furthermore, Hiebert's discussion of societal groups in *Cultural Anthropology* indicates that he believed centered set theory applies to more than Christian conversion. It also applies to all societal groups.[99] Additionally, in his discussion of boundaries and groups within the discussion kinship groups, he wrote about bilateral kinship groups which are groups at which each individual stands at the center of a given kinship networked, and one's relationship is determined by his relationship to the center (i.e. to an individual).[100]

Hiebert's discussion of "the nature of associations" shows that he believed associations are best thought of as groups who have a central interest. These associations also "serve the important functions of reinforcing an individual's sense of personal identity, of validating his status in the community, and of exercising social control."[101] These functions are similar to the functions that Hiebert extended to Christian communities which are centered on Christ.

---

[96]Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion, Culture and Cognitive Categories," *Gospel in Context* 1, no. 4 (October 1978): 24-29.

[97]Hiebert, *Konduru*, 40.

[98]Ibid., 43.

[99]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 179.

[100]Ibid., 224.

[101]Ibid., 245.

In perhaps the most explicit indication of what would develop later in regard to centered set theory for Christians, Hiebert discussed the "boundaries of analysis" in *Cultural Anthropology*. In discussing that topic, he argued that both how boundaries around certain groups are drawn and how the relationships between units within those groups are viewed "play important roles in molding his theories. There has been a great deal of unnecessary confusion simply because *those discussing change have not always specified the units of their analysis.*"[102]

Early Appearances of Centered Set Theory

Hiebert wrote several articles and book chapters on the subject of set theory before he fully developed the idea. Other than the implicit references indicated above, Hiebert explicitly addressed the topic of centered sets as they applied to Christian conversion.

Hiebert's chapter in *New Horizons in World Missions*. In 1979, Hiebert published an essay, "Sets and Structures," in *New Horizons in World Mission*, edited by David Hesselgrave. This book was a collection of papers and responses presented at "The Consultation on Theology and Mission" at Trinity in March of 1979. Its purpose was to discuss the burgeoning issues and challenges that the task of world evangelization faced at the dawn of the 1980s.[103] Hiebert's chapter, "Sets and Structures: A Study of Church Patterns," sought to answer the question of exactly who to count as a Christian. As with his other ideas, Hiebert's interaction with this idea began on the mission field, so his response to the issue was driven by actual questions being asked on the mission field.

---

[102]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 414, emphasis mine. When one applies this view to Christian conversion (as Hiebert did), it becomes evident that the discussion of what a Christian is necessarily impacts the question of how one becomes a Christian (i.e., how one enters into the set called "Christian").

[103]David J. Hesselgrave, "Preface," in *New Horizons in World Mission*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 10.

Additionally, it was set in the Indic/Hindu context. In this case, he was responding to Indian church leaders' reluctance to draw sharp lines between those who were and were not Christians.[104]

Hiebert responded to this issue of church membership and what it means to be a Christian by presenting the idea of sets – which he borrowed from the field of mathematics. Hiebert asserted that Western missionaries and churches tend to view sets as bounded. Bounded sets are marked by four characteristics according to Hiebert. First, the category is determined by a list of distinguishable characteristics; second, there is a clear boundary; third, items within a category are not distinguished from one another in regard to their relationship to the category itself; finally, categorical status is not changeable.[105]

Those who view sets as bounded will have a certain perspective on what it means to be a Christian. They will also understand the nature of the church in a particular way. Hiebert believed that bounded set theorists wishing to apply this theory to their understanding of what it means to be a Christian will usually have a list of external characteristics that determine whether or not someone is inside or outside the boundary. Additionally, Hiebert contended that bounded set theorists, who clearly and strongly delineate between Christians and non-Christians, would view all Christians as basically the same. They would also stress evangelism (in terms of an identifiable boundary-crossing event) over any kind of *necessary* spiritual growth.[106]

Since, the question of church membership was the genesis of the conversation, it is important to see how bounded set theory affects that discussion. In regard to church membership, bounded set theorists must also draw certain conclusions. Hiebert's first

[104]Paul G. Hiebert, "Sets and Structures: A Study of Church Patterns," in *New Horizons in World Mission*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 218.

[105]Ibid., 220-21.

[106]Ibid., 221-22.

conclusion is that church membership is egalitarian in regard to Christian maturity (i.e. mature Christians are not distinguished from people who are young in their faith).[107] Second, Hiebert concluded that maintaining the boundaries becomes essential to bounded set theorists.[108] Third, leadership is determined by democratic process, and, last, the church's main task is to "expand the circle" – and not necessarily bringing people to spiritual growth.[109]

As undesirable as some of these results are, above all, Hiebert believed that the crucial flaw in the bounded set approach is "a loss of the presence of God at the center."[110] Hiebert believed that a bounded set approach "easily becomes a self-centered fellowship in which real loyalties are to the group and its boundaries rather than to God."[111] From Hiebert's perspective, when rules, regulations, and a list of necessary beliefs became the central focus of a church, the biggest danger was that God will be completely removed from the picture.[112] So, if bounded set theory is insufficient for answering the question of church membership, what is a better theory? Hiebert believed that the answer was centered set theory.

Centered sets have the following characteristics. First, objects are defined by their relationship to the center instead of the boundary. Next, while the focus is on the center, *there is a boundary*. Third, not all objects within the category are the same, and, last, centered sets are fluid.[113] Hiebert's application of this theory to the question of what

---

[107]Ibid., 222.

[108]Ibid.

[109]Ibid., 222-23.

[110]Ibid., 223.

[111]Ibid.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Ibid.

it means to be a Christian is directly related to the first three of these four points.[114] The

first and third are closely related. One is a Christian if Christ (and not a set of rules and

regulations) is at the center of his life, and not all Christians are the same – some are

more mature than others.[115] Hiebert's second conclusion was that a centered set approach

to this question does not necessitate an abandonment of boundaries all together. They are

still there; they are simply not the focus.[116]

Hiebert's conclusions about church membership based on centered set theory

are directly related to his conclusions about what it means to be a Christian. First,

spiritual gifts and maturity within the church would be recognized.[117] There is "less need

for a specific membership roll."[118] Third, leadership is chosen by consensus – not

majority vote, and, finally, building the core and not widening the circle is primary, and

evangelism flows naturally from that discipleship.[119]

In conclusion, Hiebert wrote that the Western missionary and the Indian

pastors are both equally concerned about the question of who is a Christian and are also

concerned about maintaining the purity of the church. Their disagreement was more

subtle. It was not with whether or not people *should be* counted but rather *if they could

be* counted. The missionary, approaching the issue as a bounded set theorist, was sure

that they could be counted. The Indian pastors, who were approaching the issue as

---

[114]The last characteristic, that centered sets are fluid (or dynamic) goes directly to the question of apostasy and the perseverance of the saints. Unfortunately, Hiebert simply did not address this issue in this article.

[115]Hiebert, "Sets and Structures," 224.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid., 225

[118]Ibid.

[119]Ibid., 225-226. One cannot help but see Hiebert's Mennonite Brethren background standing behind this emphasis on discipleship and spiritual growth. Indeed, the Mennonite Brethren's overall approach to spiritual growth and spiritual vitality of the church stands behind much of Hiebert's thinking on these issues.

centered set theorist, were not so sure.

In a response to this article, D.A. Carson wrote that he believed Hiebert was seeing the Indian model through rose-colored glasses while only speaking negatively about the Western model. Michael Yoder and his co-authors have pointed out that Carson either did not understand Hiebert's position or did not represent that position clearly, since Hiebert supported a centered set model and not a fuzzy set model as Carson implied.[120] Additionally, in his rejoinder to the respondents, Hiebert admitted to having painted an overly positive picture of the Indian point of view. Hiebert wrote that he was intentionally positive about the Indian point of view because his audience was Western, and he wrote that he would have done the opposite if his audience had been a group of Indian pastors and missionaries.[121] Hiebert, the consummate teacher (and critical realist), was trying to stretch his audience to see another perspective.

Hiebert's chapter in *The Gospel and Islam*. In another essay published in1979 (for which the content was actually delivered as a lecture one year earlier in 1978), Hiebert applied centered set theory to his evangelism approach among Muslims. In his rejoinder to his respondents, Hiebert presented the concept of centered sets as a solution to the question of how one may move from being a Muslim to being a Christian. Hiebert believed that the key was growth: "Growth is an essential part of the structure of centered sets."[122] According to Hiebert's centered set theory, one's growth in the Christian life necessarily indicates whether or not one has truly repented, crossed the boundary, and began walking toward Christ.[123] Growth in faith made manifest in

---

[120]Michael L. Yoder et al., "Understanding Christian Identity in Terms of Bounded and Centered Set Theory in the Writings of Paul G. Hiebert," *Trinity Journal* 30, n.s., no. 2 (Fall 2009): 186.

[121]Paul G. Hiebert, "Reply to Respondents," in *New Horizons in World Missions*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids, Baker), 237.

[122]Hiebert, "Gospel and Culture," 70.

[123]Ibid.

outward behaviors, values, and attitudes and not mere verbal affirmation of creeds were the true indicators of saving faith.

Hiebert's chapter in *Conversion*. Hiebert also addressed the issue of centered sets in his essay, "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective," which appeared as a chapter in *Conversion: Doorway to Discipleship*. This book was published by the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, and is somewhat of an inside look at the Mennonite Brethren Church.

The concern behind this essay was, once again, a question which had arisen from the practical work of missions on the international field. However, instead of approaching the question from the perspective of a group of Indian pastors and Western missionaries discussing membership roles, Hiebert began the discussion of set theory by asking the question, "Can an illiterate peasant become a Christian after hearing the gospel only once?"[124] The setting was India, and Hiebert was concerned with the question of what it means to be a Christian (i.e. a question about the category of Christian).

After demonstrating that the language that a given culture uses necessarily influences the way the members of that culture view the process of conversion, Hiebert again presented the centered set theory approach as a solution to the initial question. His answer to the initial question of whether an illiterate person could come to faith having heard the gospel just one time was a resounding, "Yes!" He supported his answer by presenting the same material about bounded sets and centered sets as he did in the chapter outlined above. Drawing the same conclusions, therefore, Hiebert believed that the illiterate person who hears the gospel for the first time can become a Christian because becoming a Christian is not *primarily* about being exhaustively knowledgeable about a certain set of facts or behaving in a specific manner. Becoming a Christian, instead, is

---

[124]Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Conversion: Doorway to Discipleship*, ed. Henry J. Schmidt (Hillsboro, KS: The Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1980), 88.

about centering one's life around Christ and being transformed by that commitment to Christ as the center of one's life.[125]

   Hiebert's article in *International Review of Mission*. In the July 1983 issue of *International Review of Mission*, Hiebert presented his centered set theory in an article entitled "The Category 'Christian' in the Mission Task."[126] In this article, Hiebert combined some of the material he had presented previously but also presented some new material. In regard to new material, he addressed the issue of fuzzy sets which had previously been relegated to a note in his chapter in *New Horizons*.

   Fuzzy sets share several characteristics. Two of those characteristics are most significant for the question at hand. First, the boundary in fuzzy sets is, at best, fuzzy. In fact, it might even be thought of as non-existent.[127] Second, as Hiebert wrote, "there are degrees of inclusion within the set." Something may be a certain percentage in the set and a certain percentage outside the set.[128] Relative humidity of a summer day or whether or not someone is tall are examples of the latter case, since they only have meaning in a comparative context. There is no such thing as ontological "tallness" – only taller and shorter. Similarly, a humid day in Oklahoma City is likely to be perceived as a dry day in Houston. Fuzzy sets, then, do have some value in clarifying what one means by certain adjectives and categories. The question pertinent for Hiebert (and for us) is whether or not fuzzy sets are valuable in the discussion of the category Christian.

   In much the same way that Hiebert presented how a bounded and centered set theory approach impacts what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be a church

---

[125]Hiebert, "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective," 97.

[126]Paul G. Hiebert, "The Category 'Christian' in the Mission Task," *International Review of Mission* 72 (July 1983): 421-27.

[127]Ibid., 425.

[128]Ibid.

member, Hiebert presented how a fuzzy set approach would impact those discussions. He came to several conclusions about how a fuzzy set approach would impact one's understanding of what it means to be a Christian and church membership. First, whether or not a person was a Christian would be determined by either their statement of beliefs or their actions depending on the type of fuzzy set that was being employed. Second, there is no boundary between Christian and non-Christian; people could be thought of as part Christian and part non-Christian. Third (which is a corollary to the second point), one could conceivably be a member of two different religious groups. Finally, conversion is "not a decisive event."[129]

Hiebert concluded this article by rejecting both bounded sets and fuzzy sets. His critique and rejection of the bounded set approach in this article was the same as has been previously discussed – namely that it overemphasizes the boundaries to the neglect of a dynamic relationship with Christ.[130] His critique and subsequent rejection of the fuzzy set approach, to which he alluded briefly in his work in *New Horizons*, was that it is worse than a bounded set approach.[131] In a statement about the necessity of a decisive conversion event, Hiebert remarked, "If we contextualize the gospel into fuzzy-set terms, have we not lost an essential part of the gospel?"[132]

Hiebert's Fully-Developed Centered Set Theory

Hiebert fully developed his centered set theory in his essay "The Category *Christian* in the Mission Task" which appeared as chapter six of *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues.* The chapter is an incorporation of all of his previous

---

[129]Ibid., 425-26.

[130]Ibid., 427.

[131]Ibid. For his previous (brief) critiques of fuzzy sets, see Hiebert, "Sets and Structures," 227n.1, and Hiebert, Reply to Respondents to "Sets and Structures," 237.

[132]Hiebert, "The Category 'Christian' in the Mission Task," 427.

articles and essays on the subject. All of the previously presented theories about sets are represented here. In this chapter, however, Hiebert applied additional labels to them.

Intrinsic well-formed (bounded) sets. In this essay Hiebert referred to bounded sets as "intrinsic well-formed sets."[133] After repeating the same material about the implications for this set theory for understanding what it means to be a Christian and for the nature of the church, Hiebert added a section on "missions and bounded sets."[134] This section makes explicit what was implicit in his previous articles in regard to how being a bounded set theorist would influence one's view of the task of missions. He drew four conclusions. First, baptism would be reserved for those who demonstrated a change in lifestyle and not just a change in statement of belief. Second, there would be a call for a "radical displacement of all the elements" of other religious systems. Third, there would be tendency for missions to result in churches that adopt Western cultural patterns. Fourth, the appointment of national leaders to leadership would be slow.

Intrinsic fuzzy sets. Hiebert had introduced and critiqued the fuzzy set approach in his *International Review of Mission* article. However, in that article he had treated the fuzzy set approach as a monolith. In this essay, he introduced and critiqued two different types of fuzzy sets.[135] The first type of fuzzy set was "intrinsic fuzzy sets."[136] Hiebert's treatment of intrinsic fuzzy sets was very similar to his treatment of fuzzy sets in the *International Review of Mission* article. As with the section on bounded

---

[133]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 111.

[134]Ibid., 117-18. The four conclusions described in this paragraph are all taken from this portion of the chapter.

[135]Hiebert had mentioned the fact that there are two different types of fuzzy sets, but he "lumped them together" in his previous article. Hiebert, "The Category 'Christian' in the Mission Task," 425.

[136]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 118.

sets, he added a section on "missions and intrinsic fuzzy sets."[137] His three conclusions all come back to one central concern – the loss of an exclusivist understanding of salvation.[138] This concern about intrinsic fuzzy sets caused Hiebert to reject this approach and continue to look for another approach to set theory.

Extrinsic well-formed (centered) sets. Hiebert's treatment of extrinsic well-formed sets was very similar to his previous treatment (and advocacy) of this approach to set theory.[139] He added two sections. First, he added the section "Hebrew Culture as a Centered Set."[140] His argument in this section was that the Christian worldview is primarily about relationships (i.e., about one's position relative to the center – which is God in Christ). Hiebert wrote, "The teachings of Christ and Paul are *primarily* about our relationships to God and to one another."[141] Hiebert's contention that being a Christian is *primarily* about relationships should not be confused with the position that being a Christian is *solely* about relationships (at the expense of any propositional statements). Citing Hiebert for the support of the latter is reading something into Hiebert that is not

---

[137]Ibid., 122.

[138]Ibid. The loss of an exclusivist position is traced back to two characteristics of intrinsic fuzzy sets: first, fuzziness leads to lack of boundaries between different groups – including religions; second, an ontology which does recognize a difference between truth and non-truth leads to philosophical relativism. Ibid., 119.

[139]Instead of grouping the two fuzzy set types together, Hiebert chose to group the two extrinsic set types together. In my opinion, it would have been more helpful had Hiebert inverted the order of these final two types of sets and presented the two types of fuzzy sets together. Not only would that have grouped the two fuzzy set theories together, it would have also made the extrinsic well-formed (centered) set approach the final presentation. Since this is the approach he advocates, being placed it in the final position would have made more sense. Nevertheless, I will treat them in the order in which he presented them.

[140]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 124-25. In previous articles, Hiebert had mentioned in passing that the centered set approach was more consistent with the Hebraic mindset, but he had not previously expounded upon or defended that assertion as fully as he does here. Hiebert, "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective," 98 and Hiebert, "The Category 'Christian' in the Mission Task," 426. In the latter article, Hiebert offers a brief defense of the position which included a quote from Eugene Nida's work *Meaning Across Cultures*, but there his stress was on obedience and behavior, whereas his stress in this section was on a relational over against a structural worldview.

[141]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*., 125, emphasis mine.

there.

The second section was the same one that he added to the discussions of the other approaches to set theory – "missions and centered sets."[142] Hiebert drew four conclusions. First, a centered set approach combined with an orthodox view of Scripture leads one to be exclusivist in one's soteriology. As a result, centered set missions seeks to witness to (but not argue with and against) followers of other religions.[143] Second, baptisms would be immediate and not contingent upon a certain set of behaviors. Third, evangelism would be seen as point plus process. As he had previously argued, evangelism would recognize that there is a turning point but would also emphasize that true indication of that having turning point having occurred would be growth. Fourth, leadership would be handed over very early. This last point, however, does not indicate that Hiebert advocated an approach which advocates that having the Bible in the local language and trusting the Holy Spirit is sufficient discipleship. Hiebert believed that these new leaders must be adequately trained by mature believers.

Extrinsic fuzzy sets. Hiebert's treatment of extrinsic fuzzy sets is by far the shortest. First, Hiebert presented the concept of extrinsic fuzzy sets. These types of sets are the most difficult to conceptualize, but their central attribute is relativism. The members within this group are classified by their relationship to one another and/or their relative success in obtaining their mutually independent relational goals.[144] Following his customary pattern, Hiebert next presented how an extrinsic fuzzy sets approach impacts the way that one views what it means to be a Christian, the nature of the church, and how

---

[142]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 130-31. The following conclusions are the ones Hiebert sets out in this section.

[143]Hiebert cites E. Stanley Jones' work *Christ at the Round Table* in this discussion. Despite his initial attraction to debate (he was on the debate club in high school) Hiebert reportedly was strongly influenced by Jones' conviction that Christians are called not to be Christ's lawyers but his witnesses. Eloise Hiebert Meneses, telephone interview conducted by author, 5 July 2010.

[144]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 131.

missions is to be done.[145] As with the intrinsic fuzzy sets, the fatal flaw of using an

extrinsic fuzzy set approach for the Christian worldview is a loss of the exclusivity of

Christ. Boundaries are fuzzy or non-existent, differences between various truth claims

are relativized, and religious conversion is seen solely as process without a definitive

turning point.[146]

Support for centered set theory. Hiebert concluded his chapter on centered

sets in *Anthropological Reflections* by supporting the centered set approach to missions.

Foundationally, he believed that a centered set approach is the best approximation of the

Scripture's view of reality.[147] He recognized that a centered set approach raises at least

two concerns for one's view of evangelism and conversion. First, it means that

missionaries and evangelists cannot definitively know when someone is truly a Christian.

Hiebert had no answer to this objection and instead admitted that the practical

outworking of this approach is that conversion will be *viewed* as more of a process than a

point and that we must be willing to "see through a glass darkly."[148] Second, a centered

set approach causes difficulties for institutional management of membership and

organizational planning. Hiebert's responded, "We must make people more important

than programs, give relationships priority over order and cleanliness, and spend more

time in prayer than in planning."[149] Despite these concerns, Hiebert supported a centered

---

[145]Ibid., 132.

[146]Ibid., 132-33.

[147]Ibid., 134.

[148]Ibid. Notice that Hiebert did not advocate that conversion was only a process. He simply acknowledged that a given person's knowledge of another person's status as a believer is limited.

[149]Ibid. I offer one critique to Hiebert at this point. Planning and prayer are not dichotomies, and neither are programs and relationships. His point, however, is well taken. Relationships need to be the church's *priority*, and this paradigm shift would surely solve a lot of problems in the Western church. See *The Trellis and the Vine* for a recent example of advocating relationships with people over maintaining programs. Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009).

set approach to missions believing that the benefits of a centered set approach outweighed the concerns.

Sets across cultures. Hiebert's concluding section of this chapter brought the issue back to its origins – cross-cultural application of set theory and a critical evaluation of one's own worldview. Hiebert was originally set on this task of evaluating set theory when he was forced to examine the question of conversion and church membership. This led him to establish a centered set theory of Christianity. He believed that a centered set approach was both the most biblically faithful approach to conversion and church membership and also the one which best fit in non-Western cultural contexts.

Hiebert also believed that Christians should critique their own worldviews in light of Scripture before evaluating the actions of Christians in different cultural contexts. When churches are encouraged to examine Scripture within their own cultural contexts, and then apply the truths of Scripture in culturally appropriate ways, growth occurs. When external methods and theories are imposed without a conscious evaluation of Scripture to the given context, growth is stunted.[150]

Connections between Centered Set Theory and Hiebert's Other Ideas

In Hiebert's chapter in *Conversion*, "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective," he connected centered set theory to at least two other of his seminal ideas – the flaw of excluded middle and critical realism. The connection is actually between all three ideas and is brought out early in that chapter. Under the heading "Conversion and Cultural Differences," Hiebert discussed the differences between the American and Indian concepts of life. His graphic illustration of these differences is a demonstration of

---

Hiebert's mention of the churches in India that organize them according to centered sets is intriguing, and more investigation into this particular group (if it is still identifiable) would be beneficial. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 134 n. 27.

[150]Ibid., 136.

the American (i.e. Western) two-tiered view of life contrasted with the Indian view of life

that is a continuum.[151] Two years later, Hiebert presented this same concept and labeled

it "the flaw of the excluded middle." Critical realism forms the foundation upon which

the other two concepts are built, and centered set theory relates to the excluded middle,

since both ideas deal with the issue of an individual or group's understanding of the

concept of individuals and groups.

The connection between centered set theory and the epistemological

foundation of critical realism can be seen in Hiebert's presentation of the contrast

between the American and Indian views of life. His discussion of cultural differences did

not mention critical realism by name, but the concept was there: "Now we must ask not

only what knowledge must Papayya have to become a Christian, but also whether this

knowledge must be perceived in a particular way . . ."[152] Hiebert also connected critical

realism to centered sets in his full presentation of centered set theory in *Anthropological

Reflections on Missiological Issues*. In his discussion of how one knows if someone else

is truly a Christian, Hiebert contended that we must be willing to live with a degree of

ambiguity in regard to categories. However, that ambiguity is not ontological but

perceptual.[153]

Hiebert also explicitly connected centered set theory to his seminal idea of

self-theologizing. In his discussion of "missions and centered sets," Hiebert argued that

an approach to missions based on a centered set approach would "encourage young

churches to do their own theologizing based on the Scripture, while sharing with them the

---

[151]Hiebert, "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective," 89.

[152]Ibid., 91.

[153]Hiebert wrote: "Consequently, *to us* conversion often looks more like a process than a point, and the church more like a fuzzy body made up of people with different degrees of commitment to Christ. The problem here is not the true nature of spiritual realities, but the *limits of our human perception*. Though we do see reality as God sees it, but only through glass darkly. We do not yet see fully as he does." Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 134, emphasis mine.

theological insights gained by the church down through history and around the world."[154] Notice that Hiebert did not expect new churches to develop theologies in a historical and theological vacuum. He believed that the missionary should be actively involved in the process. The missionary task is not completed when converts are won and a church is planted.[155]

Self-Theologizing

Hiebert intentionally labeled his idea "self-theologizing" in order to explicitly connect it to the indigenous missions approach. This approach supported the concepts of self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing, and it had been introduced and promoted some one hundred years earlier by the American missiologist Rufus Anderson and the British missiologist Henry Venn.[156] As mentioned in chapter two of this work, Hiebert's father had promoted an indigenous approach to missions, and Hiebert picked up where his father had left off.[157]

Seeds of Self-Theologizing
in Hiebert's Writing

As with his other ideas, Hiebert's mature presentation of self-theologizing was preceded by some earlier indications that he would eventually develop this idea.

[154]Ibid., 130.

[155]See M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010).

[156]See Max Warren, *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971) and R. Pierce Beaver, ed., *To Advance the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967). See also the writings of John Nevius, Roland Allen, and Allan Tippett. John Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (Philadelphia, The Reformed and Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1958). Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962). Allan Tippett, Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory* (Lincoln, IL: Lincoln Christian College Press, 1969).

[157]For an explanation of the indigenous approach to missions, see notes eighty-six and eighty-seven in chapter two of this work.

"Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes." The earliest indication of Hiebert's thinking on the topic of self-theologizing was in his article, "Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes," in the January 1973 issue of *Direction.*[158] In that article, Hiebert wrote, "The biblical record is the 'data' to which theologians go to test their theologies, just as the scientist returns to his observational data."[159] Hiebert's commitment to Scripture as the divinely inspired Word of God would not permit him to approve of an approach to theological development which allowed for cultural context to be in the driver's seat. Culture can and should provide direction and consultation, but final authority for the development of local theologies lies with Scripture. Hiebert also asserted that Christian missionaries "must trust that the Holy Spirit will guide the converts in the development of their theologies just as we are confident that He has led us into a growing understanding of the truth."[160] As indicated earlier, Hiebert's trust in the Holy Spirit did not preclude him from advocating theological training and mentoring.

Hiebert's chapter in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*. In a section entitled "Theological Autonomy and World Christianity," Hiebert addressed the topic of self-theologizing. He wrote, "As the Gospel becomes indigenous to them [various cultures around the world], their theologies – their understandings and applications of this Gospel – will also vary." [161] Hiebert went on to explain how to deal with the inevitable disagreements that are sure to arise between Christians over particular

---

[158]Hiebert, "Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes." This brief article was cited earlier as an indicator of Hiebert's thinking on critical realism and critical contextualization and represents the best single incident of the kind of missiological thinking that Hiebert was doing while he was still working in the world of secular academic anthropology. At the time of publication, Hiebert was a professor of anthropology at the University of Washington, and he would not move to Fuller (and "return to missions") for another four years.

[159]Ibid., 4.

[160]Ibid., 5

[161]Hiebert, "An Introduction to Mission Anthropology," 59.

points of theology. First, Hiebert asserted a critical realist epistemology by writing that "we need to understand the nature of human knowledge and recognize its limitations."[162] Second, Hiebert wrote that Christian missionaries "must never forget that the same Holy Spirit who helps us to understand the Scriptures is also interpreting it to believers in other cultures."[163]

**Fully Developed Definition of
Self-Theologizing by Hiebert**

The three selves and the "Fourth Self." Hiebert presented his fully developed idea of self-theologizing in the essay, "The Fourth Self," which appeared as chapter eight in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Though Charles Kraft and others had written about and advocated doing theology in other contexts, Hiebert coined the term "self-theologizing."[164] Hiebert began the chapter by placing the conversation about self-theologizing within the context of Anderson and Venn's three selves. Hiebert offered two addendums to this discussion. First, he supported the idea that new Christian leaders must be allowed "to make mistakes and learn from them."[165] Hiebert did not explain exactly what he meant by "mistakes," and others have taken the next step beyond "mistakes" and said that new Christian communities should be allowed (and even encouraged) to go into outright heresy so that they can learn their way to orthodoxy.

---

[162] Ibid., 60. He further explained that "when we read the Scriptures, we must remember that we interpret them in terms of our own culture and personal experiences." Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Rochelle Cathcart and Mike Nichols, "Self Theology, Global Theology, and Missional Theology in the Writings of Paul G. Hiebert," *Trinity Journal* 30, n.s., no. 2 (Fall 2009): 209-21. Kraft had called for "dynamic-equivalence theology" in *Christianity in Culture.* Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 1979, rev. Twenty-Fifth Anniversary ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005). In the foreword to the revised edition, Hiebert admitted that not everyone would agree with the missiological positions that Kraft advocated but also believed the new addition of the book was "a most welcome event because the questions it raises and the insights it brings are still very central in missions today." Ibid., xv.

[165] Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 195.

However, given Hiebert's concern with sound theology expressed throughout his writing (including in this chapter), it is safe to say that he would not have supported such an approach to self-theologizing.[166] Second, Hiebert believed that the goal of the three selves is "not to establish isolated churches that work alone, but to sustain churches that share a unity of fellowship and a common mission to the world."[167]

Questions and concerns about self-theologizing. Having laid the foundation for the conversation about self-theologizing, Hiebert promoted the idea of self-theologizing as the fourth self but recognized that promoting self-theologizing raises a whole host of questions and concerns.[168] First, Hiebert recognized that in the same way that people experience culture shock when they come into contact with a different culture for the first time, coming into contact with a theology that was born in a different context will cause "theological shock."[169] Just as culture shock is not an indication that the new culture is evil or wrong, theological shock is not a measure of the new theology's relative merit or orthodoxy. Through a recognition that Scripture, and not our attempts to systematize Scripture, is inerrant, we can come to recognize the validity of other theologies. This validity is dependent upon how much the theologies are in line with Scripture. What does this process of judging various theologies commitment to and alignment with Scripture actually look like?

In order to answer that question, Hiebert introduced the idea of the "theological

---

[166]Hiebert wrote, "The central message of the gospel is clear: creation, sin, and redemption. Of these we can be certain. It is the fine details that we see less clearly." Ibid., 198. Additionally, later in the chapter, after stating that one of the uses of theology is to combat heresy, he wrote that "it is important here to distinguish between immaturity and heresy." Ibid. 206.

[167]Ibid.

[168]Hiebert argued that it should also be noted that a refusal to promote self-theologizing will not eliminate the potential problems that arise with self-theologizing since groups will merely develop their own theologies on their own – outside the influence of the missionary. Ibid., 216.

[169]Ibid., 197.

bridge."[170] The theological bridge has three steps. The first step is a careful reading and understanding of Scripture. Second, a careful investigation of one's own culture is needed. In this step, we must ask how our own culture and historical setting is impacting our view of Scripture. Last, Hiebert wrote that "we need a good hermeneutics in which the messages of the Bible that were given in other times and cultures are made relevant for the cultural environments of today." The theological bridge leads to an application of "tests of truth" to our theologies. The three tests that Hiebert lists are: the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the Christian community.[171]

This entire discussion of self-theologizing led Hiebert to a discussion of the different types of theology. Hiebert believed that there are two kinds of theology – synchronic and diachronic.[172] Hiebert believed that these two kinds of theologies are "maps 'of'" and "maps 'for'" life. Theologies provide "a system of ultimate explanation that provides us with a basic framework within which we fit our other models and theories."[173] A given culture's attempt to self-theologize aids this process for its individual members. Since theologies are maps, not only do they provide a structural framework with which to look at the world, they also help people make decisions. A good theology will "help the church be the church, to help Christians grow, and to help

---

[170]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 201-02. The three steps that follow are from this section of the chapter. Hiebert's instructions in this section are for the missionary – i.e. the missionary is to examine his own theology before attempting to guide the theological development of others.

[171]Ibid., 203. Most Western Evangelicals would quickly agree with the first two, but the final test will often cause Westerners to pause. As Hiebert explained, "We in the West, with our extreme forms of individualism, need to rediscover this corporate nature of the church, whereby the body checks the errors of the individual and the community of churches checks the errors of the individual congregation." Ibid. We can again see Hiebert's Mennonite Brethren background in his support for a corporate approach to bible reading and interpretation. As seen in chap. 2 of this work, the Mennonite Brethren are known for reading the Bible in community.

[172]In some of his later writings, Hiebert will refer to these two approaches, respectively, as systematic and biblical theology and will introduce missional theology as a third way to do theology. Hiebert's missional theology will be discussed later.

[173]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 205

non-Christians come to Christ."[174]

Having established the purpose of a theology, Hiebert wrote about "levels of contextualization." In the context of this chapter, Hiebert was basically responding to the question of how different cultural contexts affect the development of different theologies. Hiebert believed that this happens through new questions, new cultural categories, and a new worldview.[175]

As an example of a new question, Hiebert contended that Africans and Asian Christians are more apt to ask, What shall we do about our ancestors? In the discussion about new cultural categories, Hiebert wrote that issues can often become very complicated. While in some cultures, such as Korea, a pre-existing concept of a high god can be filled up with meaning by the biblical presentation of God, "Indian theologians must choose between a number of terms, none of which is truly adequate. There is the ultimate reality *Brahman*, but it is a force, not a person. There is *deva*, a personal god who is part of this illusory world. And there is *Isvara*, a term associated primarily with the Hindu god Siva."[176] As to worldview, Hiebert believed that many non-Western worldviews have the advantage of being closer to the worldview of the cultures of the Bible than our Western culture is.[177]

Having established what he meant by theology and theologizing, Hiebert was prepared to walk through the steps developing a theology for new context. He first offered two caveats. First, the process of developing a local theology is not instantaneous. It will take time. Second, he warned against "over-indigenization" by writing, "The message of the gospel must not only be expressed in the categories and

---

[174]Ibid., 207.

[175]Ibid., 212-13.

[176]Ibid.

[177]Ibid.

world view [*sic*] of the local culture, it must also fill them with biblical substance and so revolutionize them."[178] Hiebert believed that the process of self-theologizing was a two step process. First, new Christians must be taught. They must not just be taught ideas and concepts but the methods by which Christians arrive at those ideas and concepts. Hiebert wrote, "It is the responsibility of the missionary not only to teach the people the Scriptures, but also how to study the Scriptures for themselves, and to apply them to their own lives." The second step is the training of national theologians. Hiebert referenced 2 Tim 2:2 and stresses the importance of Evangelicals being involved in the training of a new generation of national theologians saying that liberal theologians have trained nationals and created a whole generation of liberal theologians outside of the West.[179]

As Hiebert indicated, while self-theologizing "recognizes that Christians need to develop theologies that make the gospel clear in their different cultures," there is also a need to develop a "transcultural theology" which "transcends cultural differences" and emerges from conversations between the various theologies developed in specific local contexts.[180]

Connections between Self-Theologizing and Hiebert's Other Ideas

When discussing Christianity and folk religions, Hiebert connected self-theologizing to the flaw of the excluded middle: "Given our Western view of things, we

---

[178]Ibid., 215.

[179]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 216. Earlier in the chapter Hiebert had written: "Furthermore, solid theological foundations are needed to keep a church true to Christian faith in the long run. . . . Missionaries and church leaders must think of evangelism and church planting not only for a five- or ten-year span, but in the time frame of fifty and a hundred years and beyond, for they are laying the foundations for the church." Ibid., 204.

[180]Ibid. Timothy Tennent picked up on this idea in his book *Theology in the Context of Global Christianity*. Tennent wrote that having these conversations are not just good for the cause of missions but aid in the development of a sound theology for all the cultures involved in the process. Tennent wrote, "In the end, I hope all of us recognize the truth that culture really is, after all, the best workplace for theology." Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 22.

do not take folk religions seriously. Consequently, we do not provide biblical answers to the everyday questions the people face."[181] Self-theologizing and the flaw of the excluded middle interface when missionaries train new believers to seek out biblical answers for the questions that the people of their community are asking. The missionary can assist this process by guiding pastors and church leaders to look for answers in the Bible and to take confusing and difficult matters to God in prayer. By doing this, the missionary addresses "the middle" and also encourages self-theologizing.

In his 1988 essay which appeared as a chapter in a book dedicated to the Mennonite theologian and missiologist George W. Peters, Hiebert wrote that self-theologizing is the logical next "step beyond critical contextualization."[182] Since the process of critical contextualization specifically deals with rituals, a broader process is needed to address the adjustments that whole cultures and societies need to make in response to the gospel's demands on their lives. The process of self-theologizing does just that.

The entire concept of self-theologizing is built on the epistemological foundation of critical realism, since a positivist would merely equate his own theology with the one and only theology and see any disagreements as aberrations.[183] Also, while an instrumentalist would certainly encourage others to develop their own theologies, there is no sense in which an instrumentalist could speak about the manner in which these various theologies related to one another, since each cultural context was the determining

---

[181]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 223.

[182]Paul G. Hiebert, "Metatheology: The Step Beyond Contextualization," in *Reflection and Projection: Missiology at the Threshold of 2001*, ed. Hans Kasdorf and Klaus W. Muller (Bad Liebenzell, West Germany: Verlag der Liebenzeller Mission, 1988), 382-95. This article also appears six years later as chap. 5 in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*.

[183]As an example of this approach, see Norman Geisler, "Response to Paul G. Hiebert's 'The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization'," in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 129-43.

factor in how the theology developed. Finally, an idealist may or may not promote the development of other theologies, but, if he did, a deeper understanding and application of Scripture would not be the goal, since the idealist views his development of a theology as the creation of (and not the reflection of) reality.

Missional Theology

Missional theology is the last of Hiebert's seminal ideas to develop in this writing. It some ways, it is also the least concrete. However, missional theology should also be thought of as the logical conclusion of Hiebert's other five seminal ideas being put into practice.

The Seeds of Missional Theology
in Hiebert's Writing and its Connections
to Hiebert's Other Ideas

As with his other ideas, Hiebert's thoughts concerning the idea that would become "missional theology" preceded the actual appearance of the term. These incidents demonstrate the aforementioned connection between missional theology and some of Hiebert's other seminal ideas.

For instance, in a discussion that in many ways is about critical contextualization, Hiebert demonstrated a concern for the concepts behind missional theology as early as 1976. In his section in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization,* Hiebert wrote, "We must distinguish between the Gospel and culture. One of the primary hindrances to communication is the foreignness of the message, and to a great extent the foreignness of Christianity has been the cultural load we have placed on it."[184]

In an article mentioned earlier as being one of Hiebert's works on critical realism, Hiebert demonstrated how missional theology connects to the epistemological foundation of critical realism. He wrote, "Critical realists hold to objective truth, but

---

[184]Hiebert, "An Introduction to Mission Anthropology," 57.

recognize that it is understood by *humans in their contexts.*"[185]

  As Cathcart and Nichols noted, missional theology can in many ways be thought of as a combination of Hiebert's concepts of self-theologizing and global theology.[186] They point to several articles which demonstrate this development – including the ones mentioned above. Cathcart and Nichols demonstrated how Hiebert's writing was influenced by Harvie Conn's writing – especially how Conn interacted with Charles Kraft in regard to the trialogue between missiology, anthropology and theology.[187] Cathcart and Nichols also demonstrated how Hiebert's writing on self-theologizing and missional theology has impacted the writing of other Evangelical missiologists.

"Missiological Theology"

  Cathcart and Nichols did not note, however, that Hiebert's concept of this subject continued to develop before the appearance of the articles that they referenced as his first writing on "missional theology" in 2002.[188] In an article published in 1998, the idea that would become missional theology was referred to as "missiological theology." The article, "An Anthropologist Looks at Human Systems: The Gospel in Our Culture," appeared in the April 1998 issue of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*.[189]

---

[185]Hiebert, "The Missiological Implications of an Epistemological Shift," 17, emphasis mine.

[186]Cathcart and Nichols, "Self Theology, Global Theology, and Missional Theology in the Writings of Paul G. Hiebert," 210.

[187]Ibid., 215.

[188]In fact, the article that Hiebert co-authored with Tité Tienou in *The Urban Face of Mission*, "Missions and the Doing of Theology," uses the term "missiological theology" instead of "missional theology." As is demonstrated below, while Cathcart and Nichols point to this article and the article in *Mission Focus* discussed below as the first appearances of missional theology, this article is neither the first appearance of the term (which is simply not present in the article) nor not the first appearance of the concept.

[189]Paul G. Hiebert, "An Anthropologist Looks at Human Systems: The Gospel in Our Culture," *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 21, no. 1 (April 1998): 65-81. This journal is a publication of The Brethren in Christ Historical Society. The journal was started in 1978 and is published in April, August, and December of each year. The society is an arm of the denomination Brethren in Christ in North

As with much of Hiebert's writing, he opened the article with a question. He asked what it means "to be biblical Christians in our modern world."[190] In order to answer that question, Hiebert introduced the concept of missional theology (but referred to it as missiological theology): "Missiological theology centers on the mission of God and his church in and to the world."[191] Hiebert referenced David Bosch's quotation of Martin Kahler who wrote that "mission is the mother of theology."[192] He also quoted Bosch who wrote, "Paul was the first theologian precisely because he was the first Christian missionary."[193] Hiebert went on to outline a four-step process to missiological theology which he explicitly tied to the critical contextualization process.[194] The four steps of "missiological theology" are phenomenological, ontological, evaluative, missiological.[195]

After outlining the four step process, Hiebert offered one very important caveat about the transformation the missiological theology seeks to bring in a culture – it "is rarely instantaneous or complete."[196] Summarizing the concept Hiebert wrote,

America. For more about the Brethren in Christ, see http://www.bic-church.org. For more about the publication, see http://www.bicweb.org/ministries/histsoc/pub_act.htm.

[190]Hiebert, "An Anthropologist Looks at Human Systems," 65. This question was actually Hiebert's reframing of the original question which concerned the maintenance of Anabaptist identity in North America in the twenty-first century. The fact that Hiebert expanded the question to include the maintenance of a larger Christian identity should not be interpreted as a dismissal of his Anabaptist heritage but as an indication that he saw himself (and, indeed, all Anabaptists) as part of a larger community of Christians committed to Jesus Christ and to the Bible as divine revelation.

[191]Ibid., 66. Hiebert also uses the phrase "mission theology" in the same context and with the same meaning. Both missiological theology and mission theology are clearly the same concept as missional theology – just three years earlier.

[192]Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 16.

[193]Hiebert, "An Anthropologist Looks at Human Systems," 66.

[194]Ibid. The four steps in missiological theology are very similar to the steps involved in critical contextualization.

[195]Ibid., 66-67. As will be seen, Hiebert later compressed this process into three steps as the evaluative step is swallowed up by the final step – missiology.

[196]Ibid., 67.

"Missiological theology focuses on God's Word and mission to humans in their historical, social, and cultural particularities."[197] As previously mentioned, and as will be demonstrated below, missiological theology is missional theology.[198]

First Appearance of "Missional Theology" in Hiebert's Writing

Missional theology was, in many ways, the culmination of Hiebert's thinking on various topics from epistemology to contextualization to "doing theology" in specific contexts. As such, Hiebert's first introduction of the term "missional theology" closely coincided with his mature thinking and writing on the subject in two articles. The two articles which first mentioned "missional theology" were co-authored by Tité Tienou, and one appeared in the on-line journal *Mission Focus*, and the other was a chapter in *The Urban Face of Mission*.[199] Other than the nomenclature change from "missiological" to "missional" theology, these two articles were very similar. In both articles, the authors began by discussing the concept of research traditions. The authors introduced theology

---

[197]Hiebert, "An Anthropologist Looks at Human Systems," 67.

[198]Paul G. Hiebert and Tité Tienou. "Missional Theology," in *Mission Focus* 10 (2002): 38-54 [on-line]; accessed 8 November 2010; available from http://www.ambs.edu/files/ documents/news-and-publications /publications/mf/Missioin_Focus_2002.pdf; Internet. Hiebert also refers to those who do the work of missional/missiological theology as "mission theologians" and also mentions that David Bosch wrote about this concept as "missionary theology." For the purposes of this work, from this point forward the term "missional theology" will be used to refer to the concept regardless of the label in a given article unless the label is of particular significance for the discussion at hand.

[199]Hiebert and Tienou, "Missional Theology," 48-49. Paul G. Hiebert and Tite Tienou, "Missions and the Doing of Theology," in *The Urban Face of Mission: Ministering the Gospel in a Diverse and Changing World*, ed. Manuel Ortiz and Susan S. Baker (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 85-96. The article in *Mission Focus* preceded the chapter in *The Urban Face of Mission* in regard to publication, but the articles appear to have been authored contemporaneously.

As Cathcart and Nichols indicated in response to their article in *Mission Focus*, Hiebert and Tienou are critiqued by Juan Martinez, a professor at Fuller, for not having critically reflected on specific theological cases. Juan Martinez, "Response to 'Missional Theology' by Paul Hiebert & Tité Tienou," [on-line]; in *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 10 (2002): 55-58; accessed 8 November 2010; available from http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications /publications/mf/ Missioin_Focus_2002.pdf; Internet. They responded to Martinez's critique by applying missional theology to Acts 15 and the case of polygamy in their 2005 writings onward.

as an example of a research tradition, and the remainder of each article was their attempt to reconcile how missions and theology relate to one another.

Hiebert and Tienou contended that missional theology is a "way of doing theology" that must complement other theological methods in order to provide "a way of dealing with the contemporary, particular problems we face in missions."[200] In each of these articles, Hiebert and Tienou presented missional theology as the fourth way of doing theology. The first three are referred to by various labels. In the *Mission Focus* article, they discussed philosophical theology (with Western systematic and "Nonwestern" systematic theologies as subsets), biblical theology, and tropological theology.[201] In their chapter in *The Urban Face of Mission*, Hiebert and Tienou referred to the various theologies as philosophical, historical, and tropological.[202] Regardless of these labels, the concepts are the same.

Fully-Developed Missional Theology in Hiebert's Writing

Hiebert and Tienou presented the same (or very similar) material in a chapter in *Appropriate Christianity* published in 2005, an article in the April 2006 article of *Missiology,* and finally in a chapter in Hiebert's second and final posthumously published book *The Gospel in Human Contexts*.[203] It is not clear why the order of authorship for

---

[200]Hiebert and Tienou, "Missional Theology," 48.

[201]Ibid., 40-46.

[202]Ibid., 87-91.

[203]Tité Tienou and Paul G. Hiebert, "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 117-33. Tité Tienou and Paul G. Hiebert, "Missional Theology," *Missiology: An International Review* 34, no. 2 (April 2006): 219-38. Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009). The relevant chapter in *The Gospel in Human Contexts* is almost an exact reprint of the *Missiology* article. Hiebert's most recent and, according to his daughter, final publication was a chapter in *MissionShift*, and while it shares a title with the aforementioned book and does outline the three steps involved in missional theology, it deals more with issues of contextualization than with missional theology. Paul G. Hiebert, "The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perspectives on Contextualization," in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 82-102.

these final three articles changed, but, according to Tienou, Hiebert brought him in to help with developing this concept, but the bulk of the thinking behind the idea was developed by Hiebert prior to his contact with Tienou.[204]

As with the previous articles, these articles show the complementary nature of various ways of doing theology and present missional theology as a new way. Tienou and Hiebert focused on the roles of philosophical/systematic theology and biblical theology.[205] Unlike the previous articles which list it as the fourth, these articles list missional theology as the third way of doing theology. Tropological theology is not listed nor discussed as a way of doing theology in these final articles.

Regardless of the number of other theologies and the various labels attached to them, systematic theology and biblical theology play a vitally important role in the development of missional theology. Tineou and Hiebert used the law as an illustration for how the different types of theologies can work together. For Tienou and Hiebert, systematic theology was akin to the role of constitutional law while biblical theology acts like statutory law.[206] Missional theology "draws on systematic theology and biblical theology to understand the gospel. It also draws on precedent cases in the life of the church – on how other Christians have reflected and ruled in similar situations."[207] The manner in which this process takes place was outlined earlier as phenomenology, ontology, and missiology.[208]

---

[204]Tité Tienou, phone interview with author, 3 November 2010.

[205]In the *Missiology* article the first type of theology is under the subheading "Philosophical Theology," but the only example given is systematic, so for Hiebert the two terms were synonymous. In the chapter in *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, the two terms are explicitly connected with the subheading "Philosophical and Systematic Theology." Henceforth, I will use the terms "systematic theology" and "biblical theology" for these concepts.

[206]Tienou and Hiebert, "Missional Theology," 226.

[207]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 47.

[208]Ibid., 47-51.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, Hiebert's six seminal ideas are all interwoven. They are all interconnected, and any attempt to examine one of the six ideas will necessarily lead one to examine some, if not all, of the others. The interconnectivity of these ideas demonstrates the holistic way with which Hiebert looked at missiology, anthropology, and, indeed, the world. In an email to the author, fellow Mennonite Brethren theologian and missions writer Wilbert Shenk wrote that he found it "difficult to separate these [Hiebert's six seminal ideas] neatly from one another, in part because Hiebert's approach was less linear than most Western scholars (reflecting, perhaps, the influence of India on his worldview)."[209] Shenk is surely correct in his assessment of the interconnectivity of Hiebert's work. This holistic approach to research and academics is part of Hiebert's legacy to the missiological world.

In this chapter I have examined how Hiebert developed his six seminal ideas and how they are connected to one another. Essentially, I studied how Hiebert developed those six ideas. In the next chapter I will ask some research questions of the various seminal ideas and then search through Hiebert's published works to see how he did answer of would have answered those questions. I will ask questions of the data to see how Hiebert applied these ideas and how he responded to different contexts and situations. In the fifth chapter I will investigate how widespread and influential his ideas have been in Evangelical missiology.

---

[209] Wilbert Shenk, email to author, 3 November 2010.

CHAPTER 4

EXAMINING HIEBERT'S SIX SEMINAL IDEAS

In the last chapter, Hiebert's six seminal ideas were introduced. The history of how each idea developed in Hiebert's writing was presented. Finally, Hiebert's fully developed idea was explained. In this chapter, I examine each of Hiebert's six seminal ideas introduced in the previous chapter. I will investigate how each of these ideas might help to answer questions being asked within contemporary missiology. This investigation will take the form of a research question associated with each idea.

For each of these questions, I will inspect Hiebert's published works to seek to understand how Hiebert would have answered these questions by bringing some of his relevant works to bear on the question. In some cases, these answers are rather explicit while at other times these answers are more implied by Hiebert's work. I conclude the discussion of each of Hiebert's seminal ideas by drawing some conclusions and providing an overall answer to the research question.

Critical Realism

Critical realism was Hiebert's epistemological foundation and the ground upon which he developed his other ideas. He believed that critical realism provided the most solid footing for understanding the world around us. He also believed that critical realism was the epistemological approach best supported by Scripture. As explained in chapter three, critical realism is the epistemological approach that contends that there are real objective realities "out there" and that reality can be known. However, critical realism also asserts that human understanding of those realities is always partial. Therefore, those holding to a critical realist epistemology should always be open to

modification and adaptation of their ideas based on exposure to other ideas that are equally valid. For Evangelical theologians and missiologists that validity is based on the idea's relative faithfulness to Scripture.

Research Question

Hiebert believed critical realism is the only epistemological approach that allows one to interact humbly with other cultures and worldviews while maintaining confidence in the Bible as the Word of God. As such, critical realism affects one's belief about the *necessity* of doing missions. The Kingdom of God and the sinful fallen world are real. Missions *must* be done – heaven and hell are real and souls hang in the balance. Is that all there is to critical realism – that it provides a solid foundation for doing missions, or does it also affect the way that one *does* missions?

The research question for critical realism, therefore, is, How does one's epistemology affect *the way that one does* missions? Specifically, I want to briefly address the issue of the relationship between verbal proclamation and social ministry and how Hiebert's epistemological approach of critical realism affected how he thought and wrote about the issue of holistic ministry.[1] It is beyond the scope of this work to address the topic of holistic ministry and relationship between evangelism and social justice exhaustively. I wish only to point us toward the answer to this question in regard to Hiebert's approach to epistemology.

Hiebert's Answer

A study of Hiebert's published works reveals how his critical realist epistemology affected his approach to doing missions. There are several instances in Hiebert's published works where he draws both implicit and explicit connections between critical realism and how to do missions.

---

[1]I use the term "verbal proclamation" synonymously with the term "evangelism." I use the term "social ministry" synonymously with "social justice."

In an example of the interdependence of Hiebert's seminal ideas, Hiebert's key article on the flaw of the excluded middle also demonstrated how he thought about critical realism and holistic ministry. When writing about the implications of recognizing the middle zone, Hiebert wrote, "On the middle level, a holistic theology includes a theology of God in human history*: in the affairs of nations, of peoples and of individuals.*"[2] Geopolitics, aid to hurting people, and the suffering of individuals are all issues that those who take the whole gospel seriously will take into account when considering how to do ministry.

This connection between the middle zone, critical realism, and holistic ministry is also evident in a 1987 article in *Direction*. In that article, Hiebert directly addressed several different issues. Among them were population growth, globalization, pluralization, urbanization, geopolitical instability, economic crisis, and technology and the information age.[3] In addressing those issues, Hiebert tied the implications of critical realism to the question of holistic ministry. In addition to affirming the uniqueness of Christ in a pluralized world[4], Hiebert also wrote that the "whole gospel takes into account the issues of justice and poverty."[5] Hiebert saw clearly the impact that one's epistemology has on one's approach to ministry. Positivists tend to ignore the middle zone because it does not exist in their worldview. As a result, many of the day-to-day issues that the middle zone addresses are subsequently ignored.

This connection between critical realism and the flaw of the excluded middle and holistic ministry is also evident in Hiebert's essay, "Healing and the Kingdom," which first appeared as a chapter in *Wonders and the Word* and later as a chapter in

---

[2]Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," *Missiology* 10, no. 1 (January 1982), 46, emphasis mine.

[3]Paul G. Hiebert, "Megatrends in Missions," *Direction* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 37-46.

[4]Ibid., 40.

[5]Hiebert, "Megatrends in Missions," 44.

Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues.[6] In that essay, Hiebert discussed

modern dualism and its impact on Christianity. He critiqued the epistemological

foundations of modernism and how it influenced the way modern Christians do missions.

In a strong critique of positivism, Hiebert wrote, "The consequences of this modern

dualism in the church have been destructive . . . Many of them [conservative modern

theologians] drew a line between 'evangelism' and the 'social gospel,' thereby

reinforcing the dualism that had led to the secularization of the West."[7]

One's epistemological foundations necessarily impacts the way one looks at

the world which in turn affects the way one prioritizes the various tasks involved in

missions. Hiebert believed that the modern approach to epistemology (which here is used

synonymously with positivism) prioritizes verbal proclamation over social ministry.

Hiebert believed that this priority was so strong that for those with a modernist

epistemology the latter is not even considered a legitimate task in the work of missions

except when it helps to build a platform on which to do the former.[8]

"Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries," which appeared as chapter 5

in *Christian Relief and Development*, is another important essay in understanding the

connection between Hiebert's seminal ideas and poverty alleviation and holistic

ministry.[9] Hiebert's central argument was that God cares about people's "everyday

---

[6]Paul G. Hiebert, "Healing and the Kingdom," in *Wonder and the Word: An Examination of Issues Raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement*, ed. James R. Coggins and Paul G. Hiebert (Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1989), 109-52. This essay is also chap. 14 in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. Paul G. Hiebert, "Healing and the Kingdom," in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 217-253.

[7]Hiebert, "Healing and the Kingdom," in *Wonders and the Word*, 113.

[8]Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 28. Jon and Mindy Hirst's book *Through the River* does an excellent job of showing how these two epistemologies impact the way that Christians do missions and outreach. Jon Hirst and Mindy Hirst with Paul G. Hiebert, *Through the River: Understanding Your Assumptions About Truth* (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2009), 173-84.

[9]Paul G. Hiebert, "Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries," in *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*, ed. Edgar J. Elliston (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 75-92.

lives." God is not merely a God who wants people's intellectual recognition that He is the supreme deity. Mental assent is not the way of salvation. God demands people's allegiance in their day-to-day lives as well.

Hiebert's epistemological ideas also bubbled to the surface when he discussed the *how* of doing social ministry. Hiebert discussed that topic in discussing the issue of "mental shock" where wrote, "Christians may use different cultural ways to express the same universal message."[10] He went on to discuss how Christians living and working in different cultures must seek to understand other cultures (whether they are Christians or non-Christians) if they are to minister to and with them.[11]

Hiebert's essay "Evangelism, Church, and Kingdom" in *The Good News of the Kingdom* also revealed his belief in a holistic approach to missions. In that essay, Hiebert critiqued various approaches to "evangelism, Church, and Kingdom of God."[12] After dismissing reductionism and partial integration approaches to how people relate these three terms to one another, Hiebert presented an approach that he calls "The King and the Kingdom."[13] According to Hiebert, a correct view of whole persons and whole societies and cultures that is informed by a critical realist epistemology focused on God instead of man. This focus correctly directs the way that Christians view evangelism, the church, and the Kingdom of God. After affirming the centrality of evangelism, Hiebert wrote, "*Kerygma* and *diaconia* – these two must go together because they are the witness of the Kingdom in a fallen world. We minister to the poor and oppressed because that is the character of the Kingdom. We actively invite people to enter the Kingdom because they

---

[10]Ibid., 79. Mental shock is a phenomenon – similar to culture shock – which occurs when one is confronted by an idea or set of ideas that is different from one's own ideas.

[11]Ibid., 81-83.

[12]Paul G. Hiebert, "Evangelism, Church, and Kingdom," in *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millennium*, ed. Charles Van Engen, Dean S. Gilliland and Paul Pierson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 153.

[13]Hiebert, "Evangelism, Church, and Kingdom," 158-61.

are lost outside it."[14] Hiebert's concern was for the whole person – soul, mind, and body.

Hiebert's concept of the relationship between social ministry and verbal proclamation was impacted by critical realism. Critical realism also influenced his view of the nature of humanity (i.e. his *theological* anthropology). Hiebert's theological anthropology is seen clearly in his article, "The Role of Religion in International Development," in the 1995 *Conrad Grebel Review*. There, in response to the question of what role religion plays in international development (i.e. social ministry), Hiebert and his younger daughter Barbara Hiebert-Crape replied,

> From a Christian point of view, this ontological dualism [between spirit and matter, mind and brain] is unbiblical. The distinction in our Scriptures is between God the Creator and his creation. Creation includes angels (good and evil), humans, animals, and the world. It is not divided into supernatural and natural realms – into spiritual and social concerns.[15]

Conclusion

Hiebert's critical realism drove him to a holistic approach to missions. In many instances, there was not a direct line between his writing on epistemology and his support of the holistic approach. However, as was indicated in chapter three, critical realism serves as the foundation upon which all of this other seminal ideas are built. As a result, when his article on the flaw of the excluded middle supported a holistic approach to missions, it was his epistemological foundation of critical realism that stands behind those arguments.

While Hiebert believed that verbal proclamation was *central*, he did not believe that it was *primary* in the sense of being "more important" than the social ministry. Instead, he believed that verbal proclamation and social ministries went

---

[14]Ibid., 161.

[15]Paul G. Hiebert and Barbara Hiebert-Crape, "The Role of Religion in International Development," *Conrad Grebel Review* 13 (Fall 1995): 282. Hiebert and Hiebert-Crape's contention that there is not a distinction between supernatural and natural should not be confused with a pantheistic worldview, since they clearly made a distinction between God and God's creation.

together and were both important functions of Christian missions. Hiebert rejected the bifurcation of the two functions of missions and supported both approaches – not as separate functions but as the whole gospel being taken to the whole world.

Critical Contextualization

As discussed in the previous chapter, critical contextualization was built on the foundations of critical realism. Critical contextualization was Hiebert's answer to both the era of non-contextualization when Western missionaries simply planted Western-style churches and to the era of uncritical contextualization when Western missionaries uncritically allowed local customs in the churches they planted regardless of if those customs were contrary to biblical revelation. Hiebert's model of critical contextualization was his answer and response to those two eras, and it has been a very important contribution to the world of Evangelical missiology. As such, critical contextualization calls for further examination.

Research Question

Since Hiebert's writing on the topic, the question of contextualization has continued to be much discussed in Evangelical missiology. One of the most controversial current conversations about contextualization revolves around the discussion of insider movements. I will attempt to answer the question, How much contextualization is too much contextualization? Specifically, I want to address the question of how Hiebert would have responded to the current conversation about insider movements. Seeking to discern how Hiebert's model of critical contextualization speaks to the subject of insider movements will require us to infer some of his answers to the question.

Before seeking to discern Hiebert's answer to the question of insider movements, it will be helpful to first frame the question. In order to do that, a definition of the term is needed. Kevin Higgins provides a helpful definition of insider movements as,

A growing number of families, individuals, clans, and/or friendship-webs becoming

faithful disciples of Jesus within the culture of their people group, *including their religious culture*. This faithful discipleship will express itself in culturally appropriate communities of believers who will also continue to live within as much of their culture, *including the religious life of the culture*, as is biblically faithful. The Holy Spirit, through the Word and through His people will also begin to transform His people and their culture, religious life, and worldview.[16]

The distinguishing component of this definition (and of insider movements) is the inclusion of the religious aspect of culture as part of the culture that can and should be adapted (i.e. contextualized) in missions efforts. So, based on Higgins' definition, the question becomes whether Hiebert would have supported missions efforts among people groups that encouraged people to keep as much as possible of their former religion and religious identity when making a faith commitment to Christ.

Hiebert's Answer

As pointed out in the article, "Paul Hiebert and Critical Contextualization," in the Fall 2009 *Trinity Journal*, Hiebert's writing on critical contextualization "does not focus on initial evangelism and church-planting but presupposes the presence of an indigenous church, with the missionary simply a dialogue partner with an indigenous church doing the contextualization."[17] As such, simply reciting Hiebert's critical contextualization model will not prove where he would have stood on the issue of insider movements. Instead, an appeal to how Hiebert's critical contextualization applies to the question at hand will require inferences to be drawn from his writing as a whole.

It must be stated that Hiebert supported cultural adaptations being made in order to make the gospel understandable to new cultures. He wrote, "We must distinguish between the Gospel and culture. One of the primary hindrances to communication is the foreignness of the message, and to a great extent the foreignness of

---

[16]Kevin Higgins, "The Key to Insider Movements: The 'Devoted's' of Acts," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21 no. 4 (Winter 2004), 156, emphasis mine.

[17]Eunhye Chang et al., "Paul G. Hiebert and Critical Contextualization," *Trinity Journal* , n.s. 30, no. 2 (Fall 2009), 205.

Christianity has been the cultural load we have placed on it."[18] The central contribution

that Hiebert made to the field of missiology was that anthropological insights must be

brought to bear on missiological issues. He believed that that only through a deep

understanding of culture and through critically evaluating the methods used will the

gospel take root in cultures that are different from the missionary's culture. The question,

however, remains. How far one can take these adaptations (i.e. contextualization) and

still remain faithful to the gospel?

In order to answer that question, we must first understand how Hiebert viewed

the role of religion within a culture. He believed that religion was closely related to

worldview and almost uses those terms interchangeably. Hiebert wrote, "In its broadest

sense, religion encompasses all specific beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality and

the origins, meaning, and destiny of life, as well as the myths and rituals that

symbolically express them."[19] Hiebert did not categorize religion as merely relating to

expressive or conspicuous aspects of culture. Hiebert understood religion to be the

content of one's worldview.[20]

Hiebert understood that religion was about one's beliefs about what is

ultimately real (i.e. one's worldview). Given that understanding of the close relationship

between religion and worldview, and given his view that worldviews must be

transformed by the gospel, it seems that Hiebert would not have supported the insider

movement approach to missions. Proponents of insider movements believe that religious

components of a given culture can be maintained even after one comes to Christ. Hiebert

believed that the changing one's faith allegiance was a change to the fundamental

components of one's worldview, and, therefore, *necessarily*, a change in religion. Faith

---

[18] Paul G. Hiebert, "An Introduction to Mission Anthropology," in *Crucial Dimensions in World Evangelization*, ed. Arthur Glasser et al. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976), 57.

[19]Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976), 372.

[20]Ibid., 371.

allegiance is directly connected to one's religion which is, in turn, tied to one's worldview.

An investigation of Hiebert's understanding of the nature of conversion as reflected in his understanding of centered sets also sheds light on the discussion of Hiebert's writing vis-à-vis insider movements. From the perspective of set theory, Hiebert understood that one's faith commitment is not an interchangeable component within culture that can be removed and replaced with something else without having an impact on the whole. If one is Muslim and the Qu'ran or Sharia or Muhammed or a Sufi saint is at the center of one's set, and then Jesus replaces that center, the rest of his life, and his worldview, will be *necessarily* changed.

In his response to Hiebert's essay in *MissionShift*, Darrell Whiteman wrote an article which supports an insider approach to missions by appealing to Hiebert's critical contextualization. Whiteman's response, however, is less about Hiebert's essay and more about his own support of the insider approach – which he calls "radical biblical contextualization."[21] Whiteman wrote that he believes there is a need to "reframe the question to ask if a person can enter the kingdom of God without joining the Christian religion." Only then, according to Whiteman, are we "asking the right question."[22] Whiteman went on to suggest that Hiebert's critical contextualization and understanding of semiotics allows for a radical separation of form from meaning.[23] Whiteman concluded his essay by suggesting that Hiebert's model of critical contextualization pointed missiology "into this missiological arena of radical biblical contextualization [which will] require that we relinquish our need for certainty in exchange for our quest

---

[21]Darrell L. Whiteman, "Response to Paul G. Hiebert's 'The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization'," in *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer (Nahsville: B&H Academic, 2010), 120.

[22]Ibid., 122.

[23]Ibid., 123-127.

for understanding."[24] Whiteman was a keen observer of Hiebert and his academic and

missiological career.[25] However, nowhere in the response to Hiebert's essay does

Whiteman definitely demonstrate why and how Hiebert's critical contextualization lends

credence to an insider movement approach to missions. Since he is attempting to speak

for Hiebert, the burden of proof is his, and he does not meet that burden. Whiteman does

not sufficiently demonstrate that Hiebert's works can be used to support an insider

movement approach to missions.

In the final indication of what Hiebert might have had to say about the issue of

insider movements Hiebert outlined four stages of contextualization in an interview with

Enoch Wan on March 3, 2007. After clearly supporting the necessity of contextualizing

the gospel, Hiebert was critical of what he called "radical contextualization," saying that

contextualization "can become too radical because [contextualization] is not the gospel

being changed into the shape of the culture, it is the gospel shaping cultures and

transforming it [*sic*]. God does not bend. It is ultimately the gospel that is a constant."[26]

Instead of supporting insider movements, or even being neutral about them, Hiebert

seems to have been speaking out against them specifically.

Conclusion

Hiebert's training as an anthropologist and background as a missionary kid and

missionary in India deeply influenced the way that he would have interacted with the

question of insider movements. First, Hiebert's understanding of religion and worldview

---

[24]Ibid., 127. Whiteman seems to be calling for some kind of trajectory hermeneutic in reading Hiebert on this issue. He seems to be suggesting that Hiebert had started on the contextualization trajectory, and the next step along that trajectory is to embrace insider movements.

[25]See Darrell L. Whiteman, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity,* ed. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 52-69.

[26]Paul Hiebert, "Reflections of Life-time Research and Publication in Five Stages," telephone interview with Enoch Wan, 3 March 2007 [on-line]; accessed July 23, 2010; available from http://www. globalmissiology.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16&Itemid=11; Internet.

as being almost synonymous would have prevented him from seeing a separation of the two, and that separation is necessary for a support of the insider movement approach to missions. Additionally, the necessary connection between religious identity and culture as a whole would have made the severing of one's personal faith commitment from one's religious identity impossible. Whiteman's attempt to assert that Hiebert's model of critical contextualization supports insider movements is not persuasive.

It is my conclusion that Hiebert would not have supported an insider movement approach to missions. However, Hiebert's humble personality and the spirit with which he expressed disagreement would also likely have kept him from writing about insider movements critically or speaking out against them in a strong way. In a telephone interview, Tité Tineou related how Hiebert would offer sharp criticisms to students who had presented papers but always did so with a gentle spirit of encouragement that both encouraged and rebuked students. [27] It is with that spirit that Hiebert would have likely addressed the topic of insider movements.

The Flaw of the Excluded Middle

Hiebert's main purpose for writing about the flaw of the excluded middle was to awaken Evangelicals to the *existence* of folk religions and to how folk religionists view the world. This desire to see Evangelicals made aware of the existence of folk religions grew out of Hiebert's own encounter with the middle that he recounted in his decisive article on the topic. In that article he recounted how he was jolted into an awareness of the middle when he was asked to pray for a dying child and realized that his Western worldview did not answer the questions the people were asking. Furthermore, in *Understanding Folk Religion*, Hiebert wrote, "The purpose of this book is not to present ready answers to the questions folk religions pose. Rather, it is to sensitize Christians to

---

[27]Tité Tienou, telephone interview with author, November 3, 2010.

the need to deal with folk religions."[28]

Research Question

One may read Hiebert's writing on the flaw of the excluded middle and become convinced that he *must* address the middle but might not have a clear understanding of *how* to do that. In this section, I will look again to Hiebert's writing on this topic in an attempt to answer the question, *How* does the Western missionary who lives and operates with a two-tiered understanding of the world interface with those cultures that embrace the middle realm? From a biblically faithful point of view, how does recognition of the middle zone as being ontologically real affect the way that a Western missionary interacts with and advises people from a folk religious background about day-to-day life issues?[29]

Hiebert's Answer

In his book *Paradigms in Conflict*, David Hesselgrave cited Hiebert's empirical encounter as being an often neglected but integral concept in the discussion of the relationship between power encounters and truth encounters.[30] The empirical encounter is what Hiebert believed to have happened when natural history was encountered by Christian theology.[31] Many Western missionaries who may have learned from Hiebert that truth and power encounters are essential to their ministries have not learned from him the need to see the impact of empirical encounters, as well.

---

[28]Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou, *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 10.

[29]I ask the question this way, because some may address the topic of the middle by dismissing a belief in such a realm to some kind of clinical psychosis and attempt to counsel people to see that their belief is not rational (i.e., not based on reality). Hiebert's thesis is that this realm does in fact exist, and, as such, it must be addressed as a reality and not just a perception about reality.

[30]David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Missions Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005), 194-195.

[31]Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," 45.

According to Hiebert, empirical encounters deal with questions like, "When should I go hunting? Where should I go hunting? Should my daughter marry this man or the other one? Can my lost money be found?"[32] Hesselgrave added questions like, "Which of these seeds will grow? How can we be sure this marriage will last? Why has my brother suddenly become ill?"[33] Hesselgrave called these questions "practical" and wrote that they are not on either the "religious or science level."[34] However, the mistake of many Western missionaries is giving *only* scientific answers to these types of questions without providing a biblically informed perspective on them.

Hiebert wrote that Western missionaries often continue to operate with a two-tiered worldview and give merely "natural" answers to questions like the ones above. The result is that the Christianity that missionaries have declared in other lands will thereby "continue to be a secularizing force in the world."[35] Unfortunately, Hiebert did not explicitly tell the missionary precisely *how* he should answer the questions which he posed in his original article. He did, however, provide a framework from which missionaries can work when he wrote, "Only as God is brought back into the middle of our scientific understanding of nature will we stem the tide of Western secularism."[36]

Working from Hiebert's plea to bring God into the middle of the world of science, missiologists need to rediscover the biblical concept of God's role as sustainer to answer some of these questions – specifically the questions that relate to people's interaction with the rest of creation.

In his chapter on the providence of God, Wayne Grudem wrote, "God, in

---

[32]Ibid., 45.

[33]Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 195.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," 46.

[36]Ibid.

preserving all things he has made, also causes them to maintain the properties with which he created them."[37] Therefore, according to Grudem, a correct understanding of God and his character as revealed in the Bible *does* inform questions like, Where should I go hunting and Which of these seeds will grow? The writer of Hebrews wrote, "The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command."[38] Similarly, in his letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote, "He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together."[39] It is passages like these that missionaries should teach and preach about to folk religionists and believers who have come out of that background in order to show that God is intimately involved in the day-to-day lives of all people everywhere through his creative and sustaining roles. In this context of a biblically sound understanding of God as Sustainer, Western missionaries can then use scientifically informed techniques and technology to improve the methods by which people can answer these questions. For instance, modern farming, hunting, and fishing techniques can be taught and modeled, and when teaching about these techniques is done in the context of God's created order and Christ's sustaining power, people connect God to the middle.[40]

Missionaries should also use Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) to answer many of these questions. [41] For instance, when combined with the doctrine of creation

---

[37]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 316.

[38]Heb 1:3 NLT.

[39]Col 1:17 NLT.

[40]In regard to the argument that missionaries and anthropologists should not "interfere" with cultures and civilizations by introducing modern technology, see Mark Andrew Ritchie, *Spirit of the Rainforest: A Yanomamo Shaman's Story*, 1996, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Island Lake Press, 2000).

[41]For a description of CBS, see "Chronological Bible Storying" [on-line]; accessed 17 November 2010; available from http://www.oralitystrategies.org/strategy_detail.cfm?StrategyID=1; Internet. For an example of an appeal to Western missionaries to use CBS in their ministries, see LaNette W. Thompson, "How Will They Hear? Reaching the Muslim Women of Sub-Saharan Africa," in *A Worldview Approach to Ministry among Muslim Women*, ed. Cynthia A. Strong and Meg Page (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006), 109-27.

and the fall of man from the opening chapters of Genesis, answers can be provided to questions like, Why has my brother suddenly become ill? Sin and its affects inform us about the nature and cause of illness. When equipped with a biblical understanding of God as Sustainer and also of the results of the fall from Genesis 3, basic medical advice and instruction in personal and communal hygiene can be introduced in order to answer these questions.

So, the doctrine of God's providence and specifically Christ's role as Sustainer helps to provide answers the questions concerning mankind's relationship with creation and illness, but what about the questions related to interpersonal relationships? For instance, how should missionaries respond to questions about marriage partners? Once again, Hiebert's entreaty to bring God into everyday lives answers this question. In this case, a robust prayer life and trust in the sovereignty of God points to the answer. CBS can again help give a biblical understanding of how God responds to prayer. For instance, passages such as how Abraham's servant found a wife for Isaac in Genesis 24 can help demonstrate God's involvement in his people's prayers for direction in finding a spouse.

What about the question above about making the marriage last? Some might look to resources from Christian counselors about making a marriage last through speaking the right "love language" or some other culturally bound approach.[42] However, a CBS approach to the book of Song of Solomon, the story of Joseph's trust in God to marry Mary in the face of social ostracism, and Boaz's loving kindness toward Ruth can help bring God "into the middle of our scientific understanding of nature" by allowing the people to apply the biblical truths of these passages into their own cultural context.

People also often look to the middle realm to find answers to the question of

---

[42]It is not my purpose to denigrate Christian counseling or Christian books on marriage and communication within in, but these approaches are inevitably tied to the specific culture in which they are written. A return to the biblical text is needed in order for the Christian community in a given context to determine how they will be faithful to the Bible within their cultural context.

suffering. Again, CBS helps to provide the answer. The early church's prayer for Peter's

deliverance in Acts 12 should be storied. However, lest prayer turn into a "new form of

magic," missionaries must also heed Hiebert's advice and "realize that true answers to

prayer are those that bring the greatest glory to God, not those that satisfy my immediate

desires."[43] A biblical understanding of prayer will demonstrate that God, and not

diviners and magicians, can be looked to for answers. In Hiebert's experience, the girl

for whom he prayed died, but people were drawn to Christ anyway – because of the way

that the Christian community demonstrated hope of resurrection in the face of death.[44] In

the early church's case, while Peter was delivered, James had not been, and church

tradition tells us that the other apostles were also martyred. In spite of this, and some

have argued because of this, the church grew and flourished. So, a biblical understanding

of prayer will give Christians a confident boldness to "approach the throne of grace with

boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time."[45]

Christians should also be taught to keep in mind that God often does not answer our

prayers the way that we think he should because often we are asking, as Hiebert alluded

to, with the wrong motives.[46]

Conclusion

As Hesselgrave pointed out, Hiebert's concept of empirical encounter is rarely

referenced. It is, however, a very valuable tool for Western missionaries working among

folk religionists and/or people who have come to Christ from a folk religion background.

In seeking an answer to the question of how Western missionaries should respond to the

---

[43]Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," 47.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Heb 4:16 HCSB.

[46]"And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure." Jas 4:3 NLT.

day-to-day questions they will inevitably encounter among these peoples, Hiebert's thinking and writing can help provide a framework for responding to these questions from a perspective that is both biblical and speaks to the issues with which the people are dealing.

Centered Set Theory

As an Evangelical, Hiebert was deeply concerned that lost people be converted to Christ. In chapter three of this work, it was demonstrated that Hiebert's discussions of set theory were in response to questions about the nature of Christian conversion and the meaning of church membership. He applied centered set theory to his understanding of missions in order to help answer these questions.

Research Question

The research question for centered set theory becomes, What is required to be a Christian, or what does it mean to be converted to Christianity? As with the other questions, the purpose of this section is to seek to answer this question in the manner in which Hiebert would have answered the question. As such, Hiebert's published works will be investigated in order to find his answer to this question.

Hiebert's Answer

As with all of Hiebert's answers, questions regarding the issue of conversion are directly related to culture. Also, demonstrating his concern to answer practical questions that directly relate to the issues that pastors and missionaries face, and not just theoretical ones, Hiebert wrote that ". . . an understanding of culture can help us to avoid mistakes which hinder the growth of the church."[47]

Yoder, Lee, Ro, and Priest's article, "Understanding Christian Identity in

---

[47]Paul G. Hiebert, "Missions and the Understanding of Culture," in *The Church in Mission: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to J. B. Toews*, ed. A. J. Klassen (Fresno, CA: Board of Christian Literature Mennonite Brethren Church, 1967), 251-65.

Terms of Bounded and Centered Set Theory in the Writings of Paul G. Hiebert," in the Fall 2009 *Trinity Journal* is excellent.[48] In that article, the authors summarized Hiebert's model of centered set theory. The chief value of the article, however, is in its demonstration of how Hiebert's writing on centered sets has influenced Evangelical missiology while also demonstrating that his set theory has, at times, been misunderstood and misapplied.[49] In order to answer the research question at hand, however, we need to look more broadly at Hiebert's writing about the issue of conversion rather than just looking at the articles and essays these authors cited as dealing with the issue of set theory.

"The Kingdom Reconciling Humanity." In "The Kingdom Reconciling Humanity," an essay that appeared just one year after his initial writing on set theory, Hiebert discussed the issue of conversion.[50] In that article, Hiebert clearly indicated his early understanding of Christianity as a centered set. This centered set, according to Hiebert, is made up of people who have been (and are being) transformed by the Kingdom of God.

The introduction to this article recounted Carl Sagan's quest to hear from the voices of other intelligent life in the universe. It was Sagan's goal to hear the voices of other life forms and thereby have greater technology bestowed on us in hopes that our problems might be solved by these voices. Hiebert response was that *we have heard* a voice. We've heard the voice of God. Just like Abram heard and obeyed the voice of God, we must, too. That transformation is the hope of humanity. Hiebert wrote, "What

---

[48]Michael L. Yoder et al., "Understanding Christian Identity in Terms of Bounded and Centered Set Theorgy in the Writings of Paul G. Hiebert," *Trinity Journal*, n.s. 30, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 177-88.

[49]Ibid., 182-85. Some other examples of how Hiebert's centered set theory have been misunderstood will be explored in chapter five of this work.

[50]Paul G. Hiebert, "The Kingdom Reconciling Humanity," in *Kingdom of God and the Way of Peace* (Lombard, IL: Mennonite World Conference, 1979), 26-36.

we need is [*sic*] new people, people who are spiritually transformed."[51]

So, for Hiebert, conversion was about transformation. Evangelism then, according to Hiebert, is not getting people to agree to stand inside a certain boundary of demarcation (i.e. in a bounded set). Rather, evangelism is actively participating in the process whereby people are transformed by the power of Jesus and encouraged to continue to move toward becoming like Jesus. People must be moved from being centered on themselves to being centered on Christ. Hiebert wrote,

> [Jesus] began with a message of the Kingdom, with God and His great work in heaven and earth. Upon this the Apostles constructed a strong theology of the Church as God's people in worship and witness. Built on these foundations the theology of evangelism takes on greater meaning, not as an end unto itself, but as the entry into the Church and the Kingdom.[52]

Hiebert's rejoinder in *The Gospel and Islam*. Hiebert's article on the relationship between the gospel and culture in *The Gospel and Islam* is followed by a summary of responses offered to Hiebert's original presentation of the essay. He presented a centered set theory approach that he believed would help answer the question about one's culture's influence on one's understanding of conversion. Once again, Hiebert emphasized the necessity of "turning around and heading toward a new center."[53] As Hiebert indicated, however, turning around is not enough. Growth in Christ must follow.[54] Hiebert presented the necessity of both repentance and faith.

Hiebert's presentation is in accordance with J.I. Packer, who pointed out that the demand for repentance cannot be separated from the demand for faith. In his classic work, Packer argued that both repentance and faith are essential to a correct understanding of the nature of the gospel, and, therefore, to a correct biblical

---

[51]Ibid., 28.

[52]Ibid., 31.

[53]Paul G. Hiebert, "The Gospel and Culture," in *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979), 70.

[54]Ibid.

understanding of the nature of conversion and the task of evangelism.[55]

"Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective." As the title indicated, Hiebert wrote about the nature of conversion in his essay "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective." In that article, Hiebert wrote that conversion "means that the person has *turned around*. He has left another center or god and has made Christ his center."[56] Hiebert's insistence that conversion involves one turning away from anything other than Christ and then focusing on Christ reflected a biblical understanding of the necessity of repentance and faith. Once again, Hiebert was in agreement with Evangelical theologian Packer who pointed out that a "summons to repentance and faith" is an essential part of the gospel. [57]

"Window Shopping the Gospel." In the May 1987 issue of *Urban Mission*, Hiebert wrote an article, "Window Shopping the Gospel," where he asserted that the use of sacred symbols (in particular sacred space) was an essential element in doing evangelism in an urban context. He wrote,

> Without sacred symbols such as place and time to give expression to our experiences with God, we are in danger of being drawn into the secular world of the city and becoming nothing more than a social club that talks about religion. There is another reason why the church needs sacred space. It is a testimony to the world of the presence of the church in its midst.[58]

This call to use sacred symbols and sacred space was Hiebert's centered set theory in an urban context. Since he believed that decision-making in the city was qualitatively different from decision-making in small societies, Hiebert contended that

---

[55]J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 79-81.

[56]Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Conversion: Doorway to Discipleship*, ed. Henry J. Schmidt (Hillsboro, KS: The Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1980), 97, emphasis mine.

[57]Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 78.

[58]Paul G. Hiebert, "Window Shopping the Gospel," *Urban Mission* 4 (May 1987), 12.

people ought to come out of what he called neutral space into sacred space. Hiebert believed that this intentional movement out of the world and into sacred space will serve as a testimony to the world. It will testify to the world that the church is not of this world. This new group of people is centered on Christ – and their external differences are no longer their defining characteristics.[59]

"Ethnicity and Evangelism in the Mennonite Brethren Church." In an article in the Spring 1988 issue of *Direction* Hiebert gave some more indications about how he believed his set theory applied to the question of what is required to be a Christian.[60] This article was written to and about the Mennonite Brethren Church and its distinctive identity. Hiebert contended that the Mennonite Brethren must begin to see their central identity as who they are in Christ and not who they are in regard to their ethnic identity. Hiebert wrote that "so long as our ethnicity is our deepest identity, our churches will not grow."[61]

According to Hiebert, an essential part of being a Christian was identifying oneself as a Christian *across* ethnic lines. One's center as a Christian is Christ – not anything else. Hiebert recognized that this switch in allegiance does not happen immediately upon conversion, however. He wrote, "Christian identity is something new that must be learned."[62]

"Asian Immigrants in American Cities." Hiebert's emphasis on identifying with other Christ-followers regardless of ethnic barriers can also be seen in an article he

---

[59]Ibid., 6-7, 12.

[60]Paul G. Hiebert, "Ethnicity and Evangelism in the Mennonite Brethren Church," *Direction* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 87-102.

[61]Ibid., 100.

[62]Ibid.

co-authored in the March 1993 issue of *Urban Mission*.[63] Hiebert and his co-author,

Young Hertig, surveyed the problems and pressures faced by Asians who had immigrated

to the United States. They outlined how different generations of immigrants face issues

that are particular to their generation. Next, they applied the lessons learned from that

investigation to immigrant churches and churches' ministries to immigrant communities.

Hiebert and Hertig believed that churches could learn a lot from the struggles of Asian

immigrants. They believed that one of the central lessons concerned the issue of identity.

The authors argued that churches must, "live in the world, but . . . not belong fully to it. . .

. Our real danger is that we have become too much a part of our culture that we have lost

our unique Christian identity."[64] Again, we see that Hiebert saw distinction from the

world and the joining together with other believers in a new community as an integral

part of being a true Christian.

"Are We Our Others' Keepers?" Hiebert continued to write about the issue

of the church being in the world but not of the world in his article, "Are We Our Others'

Keepers?" in the October 1995 issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission*.[65] After

surveying the various historical reactions to "others," Hiebert answered the question of

how the church ought to respond to "others." He answered the question by writing that

"there are no others."[66] Instead, Hiebert argued that there is "one humanity," "one

church," and "one mission."[67] Given those assertions as true, Hiebert drew two

conclusions. First, "the church must refuse to understand itself as a sectarian group,"

---

[63]Paul G. Hiebert and Young Hertig, "Asian Immigrants in American Cities," *Urban Mission* 10 (March 1993): 15-24.

[64]Hiebert and Hertig, "Asian Immigrants in American Cities," 24.

[65]Paul G. Hiebert, "Are We Our Others' Keepers?" *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22 (October 1995): 325-37.

[66]Ibid., 334.

[67]Ibid.

and, second, "the church is not only called to identify with the world, it is also called to be a prophetic community calling people into the kingdom of God."[68]

"Critical Issues in the Social Sciences." Hiebert brought this same understanding of the nature of the church, conversion, and centered set theory in his article, "Critical Issues in the Social Sciences and Their Implications for Mission Studies," in the January 1996 issue of *Missiology*.[69] In that article, Hiebert contended that only by understanding that "at the deepest level others are not other but us" can the church be effective in its evangelism. Hiebert began by repeating much of the same material that was in "Are We Our Others' Keepers?" Then, he concluded by quoting Berkhof (via Bosch) who insisted that being in the world does not equal being the same as the world. Hiebert then went on to write,

> This [understanding that we are in the world but not the same as the world] lies at the heart of mission. We cannot ignore the plight of our fellow humans, nor are we content simply to sit and to commiserate with them in their miserable condition. We long to share the good news of salvation which was given to us, a salvation not based on who we are or what we have done, but on God. Therefore, we invite everyone to join us in that salvation which is open to all.[70]

Conclusion

For Hiebert, worldview transformation was the essence of conversion. Hiebert wrote, "Conversion to Christ must encompass all three levels: behavior, beliefs, and the worldview that underlies them."[71] The purpose of this section has been to identify how this worldview transformation manifests itself.

---

[68]Ibid., 336.

[69]Paul G. Hiebert, "Critical Issues in the Social Sciences and Their Implications for Mission Studies," *Missiology* 24, no. 1 (January 1996): 65-82.

[70]Hiebert, "Critical Issues in the Social Sciences," 80.

[71]Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 11. See also Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 83-86.

From a survey of his works, it can be concluded that Hiebert saw three elements as being essential to conversion to Christianity. First, Hiebert insisted that one must "turn around." The sinner must turn from the path that he is on. This turning around is what theologians and pastors call repentance. Second, once one has turned around, he must head toward Christ (i.e. he must grow in his faith). As indicated earlier in the quotations and citations of J.I. Packer, these two elements of repentance and faith are standard elements of conversion among Evangelical Christians. Hiebert's distinctive contribution to the discussion is his insistence that turning from "another center or god" and following Christ must manifest itself in two desires. The first of those desires is making Christ known to other people – even those who are "other." The second desire is to identify oneself with Christ, and, therefore, with Christ's church over against any and all other ethnic, personal, or familial identities. So, Hiebert's answer to the question of what it is required to be a Christian is repentance, faith, and identification of oneself with the body of Christ.[72]

Self-Theologizing

As was demonstrated in chapter three of this work, Hiebert believed that self-theologizing was the legitimate descendant of the three selves that had originated with Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn in the indigenous church movement in the mid-nineteenth century. Even if one admits that self-theologizing is a legitimate extension of the indigenous church movement, that admission does not *necessarily* mean that Evangelicals should support it.

Research Question

This section of the work will ask the question, Is self-theologizing a legitimate

---

[72]This final element, "identification of oneself with the body of Christ," is another indication that Hiebert's missiology does not support insider movements. For a fuller application of Hiebert's missiology to insider movements, see my discussion of centered sets in this chapter.

exercise for Evangelicals? As with the other questions, I will first seek to discover Hiebert's answer to this question. Second, I will reflect on Hiebert's answer and draw some conclusions.

Hiebert's Answer

If it is conceded that self-theologizing should be thought of as the "fourth self," the first question that one must answer in regard to the above question is whether or not the first three selves are legitimate exercises for Evangelicals. After all, if the first three selves should not be supported by Evangelicals, then it stands to reason that the fourth self should not be either. Hiebert's response to the question of whether Evangelicals should support the first three selves was a resounding, "Yes." While admitting that the three selves were not all equally embraced by missionaries, all three of them "continue to guide much of contemporary missionary church planting."[73] His discussion of the three selves revolves around how they were variously debated by missionaries and local church pastors with the most heated debate occurring over the question of self-governance.[74] As mentioned in chapter two, Hiebert contended that self-governance must be supported even when that means mistakes are made. This attitude of allowance for mistakes is part of what drives Hiebert to support the concept of self-theologizing.

Hiebert's support for the concept of self-theologizing is evident throughout his writing, so the answer to the research question is clearly, "Yes." Hiebert clearly supported self-theologizing. Since he self-identifies as an Evangelical, Hiebert clearly believed that self-theologizing was a legitimate activity for Evangelicals. There must be some qualifications as to the boundaries of self-theologizing, however, so the question then becomes, What are the limits to self-theologizing?

---

[73]Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 195.

[74]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 194-195.

"Gospel and Culture: The WCC Project." Hiebert provided the framework for answering the question of boundaries around self-theologizing in his article, "Gospel and Culture: The WCC Project," in the April 1997 issue of *Missiology*.[75] Hiebert framed the question of self-theologizing in the discussion of how Christian missions has historically interacted with culture. Citing Acts 15 and the modern missionary movement, Hiebert wrote that "mission has always shaken the complacency of the church."[76]

As the gospel has moved into new cultures and societies by way of missions efforts, some questions have arisen in regard to the limits of self-theologizing. The first question is related to the subject of contextualization and is, "If true contextualization is the expression of the gospel in local cultural contexts without the loss of its truth and transforming power, does incomplete contextualization ever occur?"[77] Hiebert responded to that question by citing one of the WCC pamphlets that pointed out contextualization of the gospel in Europe was slow and pagan religious beliefs "persisted even after more of the people claimed to be Christian."[78] Hiebert's response is related to the question at hand because it demonstrates that Hiebert was willing to be patient in regard to contextualization, and, subsequently he was patient in regard to self-theologizing. The implication is that if it took many years for the gospel to completely transform the culture in Europe through the development of indigenous theologies, should not other societies and cultures be afforded the same opportunity?

Another question that Hiebert raised in this article was "What are the limits of

---

[75]Paul G. Hiebert, "Gospel and Culture: The WCC Project," *Missiology* 25, no. 2 (April 1997): 199-207. This article was Hiebert's response to the World Council of Churches (WCC) who had published fifteen pamphlets on the subject of the relationship between the gospel and culture. Hiebert references eleven of these pamphlets in his response.

[76]Ibid., 199.

[77]Hiebert, "Gospel and Culture: The WCC Project," 202.

[78]Ibid.

diversity? When can we say that a particular understanding is so far from the traditions of the church that it no longer stands in that tradition?"[79] Frustratingly, Hiebert never provided a clear response to those questions. He did, however, point the way toward his answer.

First, Hiebert wanted to be clear that the discussion was framed in a common understanding of the gospel and culture. As to his understanding of the gospel, Hiebert clearly articulated an exclusivist position in regard to soteriology. Hiebert also affirmed that Christians must be humble in their interpersonal relationships with people of other religions. Additionally, he believed that Christians should seek a deep understanding of non-Christian religions. After making these two qualifications, he wrote, "we must affirm the uniqueness of Christ as the only way to salvation in the fullest sense of this word."[80]

Second, Hiebert wrote that while a clear understanding of culture is "a corrective to the arrogance and ethnocentricism of the colonial past . . . [culture] is not a theological category."[81] While cultures can and should be recognized for their significant impact on people's understanding of the gospel, cultures should not be thought of as being fundamentally unable to relate to one another or some external study of cultures. Additionally, cultural change should not be thought of as being necessarily negative.[82]

Given these two definitions, Hiebert wrote that "the Bible is God's revelation which can be understood in all cultural settings." He pointed to three guidelines provided

---

[79]Ibid., 203. Hiebert went on to write, "In dealing with cultural differences, how concerned should we be if churches in one culture understand the gospel differently from those in another?" Ibid.

[80]Ibid., 205. Hiebert's statement might not sound very controversial to Evangelicals, but to the many of the members of the WCC and much of the readership of *Missiology*, this exclusivist understanding of soteriology was certainly not a given.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid. Once again, the concept that cultural change is not necessarily negative is not a difficult one for Evangelicals, but, for secular anthropologists, it can be. See chap. 1 of this work for a discussion of the relationship between cultures and anthropologists/missionaries.

by John Pobee that stated that the gospel within a given culture must be "biblical, apostolic, and catholic."[83] The first qualification ensures that self-theologizing uses the Bible as its final authority. The second qualification follows Hiebert's contention that the self-theologizing should always a call for cultures to be transformed. The final qualification connects self-theologizing to the church universal. Self-theologizing is never done in a vacuum outside the context of Scripture nor outside the context of the church in history. Hiebert argued that "the relationship of gospel and culture is not a problem to be solved, but the process of discipling all peoples – individuals and communities – in all things."[84] The process is not, for Hiebert, completely open to anyone's interpretation, however. Instead, interpretation must be guided by Christ, the Scriptures, and the history of the church.

Tienou's chapter in *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Missions.* Given Tité Tienou's close relationship with Hiebert in terms of thinking and writing, it is legitimate to look to Tienou's writing for a *hint* of what Hiebert might have thought about a given subject.[85] As such, an investigation of Tienou's work on the limits of self-theologizing will help to shed some light of Hiebert's own thinking and writing. In his essay, "Forming Indigenous Theologies," Tienou provided some guidelines for self-theologizing.[86]

---

[83]Ibid., 206.

[84]Ibid.

[85]In addition to their co-authorship on *Understanding Folk Religion* , the various articles on missional theology they co-authored, and their relationship with one another on the faculty at Trinity, their common missiological thinking is hinted at in the fact that Tienou reports that Hiebert called him "the brother he never had." Tité Tienou, telephone interview with author, November 3, 2010. Hiebert had six sisters but no brothers.

[86]Tité Tienou, "Forming Indigenous Theologies," in *Toward the Twenty-First Century in Christian Mission*, ed. James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 245-52.

In that essay, Tienou showed a marked concern for the universality of truth fleshed out in local contexts. He wrote that while Christians "have the right to self-theologizing," they "do not escape responsibility for seeking the truth."[87] In a process that is very Hiebertian, Teinou proposed that forming indigenous theologies will happen when the church is analyzed, the culture is analyzed, and the Scriptures are interpreted.[88] Tienou briefly outlined each step of this process and insists that the process of self-theologizing will require the participation of the entire Christian community.[89] Tienou believed that following all of the steps in this process will allow Christianity to "become genuinely multicultural and yet remain truly universal."[90]

Conclusion

What, then, were the limits to self-theologizing for Hiebert? First, self-theologizing must be grounded in an exclusivist understanding of salvation. Jesus Christ must be proclaimed as the one and only way to God. Second, self-theologizing must recognize that while cultures have a dramatic impact on how a given group of people think, the Bible is God's revelation for all peoples at all times and can be understood by every culture. Culture does not trump revelation. Third, by way of Tienou's article, and by drawing inferences from Hiebert's writings elsewhere, we can conclude that Hiebert believed that the entire church should be a part of self-theologizing.[91]

Hiebert passionately promoted the idea of the gospel spreading into different cultures throughout the world and recognized that as the church formed in different

---

[87]Ibid., 249.

[88]Ibid., 249-50.

[89]Ibid., 250.

[90]Ibid.

[91]The third step in Hiebert's critical contextualization is an investigation of the given issue by the hermeneutical community. This emphasis on the corporate nature of problem solving indicates that Hiebert supported a corporate approach to self-theologizing, as well.

cultural contexts, it would look different from one place to another. However, Hiebert did recognize that there were limits to this diversity. For these different groups to legitimately be recognized as biblical churches and for the theologies that they developed to be a part of the church universal, Hiebert believed that at least two standards had to be maintained. First, these churches and theologies must be firmly rooted in an exclusive understanding of Christ's work. Second, they must also have an orthodox understanding of the Bible as the divinely inspired and revealed Word of God as their foundation. If these criteria are met, then self-theologizing is a legitimate practice for Evangelical believers and churches. In fact, self-theologizing is crucial if one hopes to plant and grow churches which are faithful to Scripture and to Christ.

Missional Theology

Missional theology was Hiebert's attempt to see theology consciously done in such as way as to answer questions being asked by a specific people or culture in a specific historical and social context.[92] Hiebert's concern for cultural issues was not the most important issue in developing a missional theology, however. As with self-theologizing, Hiebert believed that developing a missional theology must always be done with Scripture having authoritative control.[93]

Research Question

The research question that I will attempt to answer for missional theology is, How does missional theology differ from systematic and biblical theology? Furthermore,

---

[92]Several years before Hiebert used the terms "missiological theology" and "missional theology" to describe this work, he wrote, "Each culture presents a different set of questions that must be addressed theologically." Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tité Tienou, "Responding to Split-Level Christianity and Folk Religion," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1999/2000): 173.

[93]Hiebert wrote, "Theologies must constantly be tested and revised against the biblical record to keep them true to divine revelation." Paul G. Hiebert, "Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes," *Direction* 2 (January 1973): 4.

what is the relationship between the three theologies? As with the other sections, I will first investigate Hiebert's works to find how Hiebert's body of published work provided hints and suggestions to how he would have answered that question. I will then close the section by drawing some conclusions.

Hiebert's Answer

Early in his writing about missional theology Hiebert argued that systematic, biblical, and missional theologies were complementary to one another.[94] In his later writing on the topic, Hiebert provided a helpful analogy from the legal system to illustrate this complementary relationship between systematic, biblical, and missional theology. The initial occurrence of this analogy can be seen in the first article in which Tienou became the primary author.[95] Beginning with that article, Tienou and Hiebert drew the following analogies: systematic theology is like constitutional law; biblical theology is like statutory law; and missional theology is like case law.[96]

Systematic theology, according to Tienou and Hiebert, is "our understanding of unchanging universals (not the universals themselves), based on our study of the Scripture."[97] This definition accords with Wayne Grudem's definition of systematic theology: "Systematic theology is any study that answers the question, 'What does the

---

[94]Paul G. Hiebert and Tité Tienou, "Missions and the Doing of Theology," in *The Urban Face of Mission: Ministering the Gospel in a Diverse and Changing World*, ed. Manuel Ortiz and Susan S. Baker (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002), 85-96.

[95]Tité Tienou and Paul G. Hiebert, "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology," in *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005), 117-33. Tienou and Hiebert recognized that the use of Western legal systems as an analogy will not speak to all cultures. They were writing for a Western audience, so they used a Western illustration. They pointed out that there are comparable analogies in Indian and African contexts – the two contexts with which Hiebert and Tienou, respectively, were most familiar. Ibid., 125 n. 10.

[96]Tienou and Hiebert, "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology," 126.

[97]Ibid., 126. In another example of the organic nature of Hiebert's missiological thinking, Hiebert's epistemological foundation of critical realism is evident in this statement. Notice his differentiation between "our understanding" and "the universals themselves."

whole Bible teach us today?' about any given topic."[98] Notice that both Tienou/Hiebert

and Grudem recognized the role that "we" play in the formation of systematic theology.

Tienou/Hiebert wrote that systematic theology is "*our* understanding," and Grudem

writes that systematic theology is about what the Bible teaches "*us* today." In both cases,

systematic theologies are seen as being set in a given historical, social, and cultural

context. While Grudem does not provide reflection on this limitation in scope, Hiebert's

intention was precisely to draw his readers' attention to that limitation.

Hiebert grouped biblical theology with church creeds and confessions. This

group taken together, according to Hiebert, is analogous to statutory law. Concerning the

role of biblical theology, Tienou and Hiebert wrote that "they show how the universal

principles revealed in Scriptures have been manifest in history and interpreted by God's

people in an ever changing world."[99] Tienou and Hiebert's definition is both similar to

and different from Grudem's. Grudem wrote that biblical theology "traces the historical

development of a doctrine and the way in which one's place at some point in that

historical development affects one's understanding and application of that particular

doctrine."[100] Grudem's definition is closer to the generally accepted definition of biblical

theology, and Hiebert's understanding is probably closer to Grudem's definition of

historical theology.[101] Nevertheless, the analogy is still valid. Hiebert was simply trying

to communicate that the universal truths of Scripture have constantly been applied to

given historical contexts (both in the Bible and in the history of the church). These

---

[98]Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, ed. Jeff Purswell (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 17. Grudem attributes this definition to his professor at Westminster Seminary, John Frame.

[99]Tienou and Hiebert, "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology," 126.

[100]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 18. While on the surface this definition seems to be in complete agreement with Hiebert's, Grudem's earlier reference to historical theology makes it clear that in this definition he was speaking about how doctrines *developed* in revelatory history. Hiebert, on the other hand, was writing about the application of doctrines to specific historical contexts.

[101]Ibid., 17.

applications are what Hiebert referred to as biblical theology.

Finally, Hiebert believed that missional theology was like case law. Tienou and Hiebert wrote that missional theology relies "on systematic and biblical theology to understand God's message to humans, and seeks to apply these truths in the infinitely diverse and particular situations of life. It also draws on precedent cases in the life of the church – on how other Christians have ruled in similar situations."[102] Notice that the strength of missional theology is at least twofold. First, it recognizes the need to develop different theologies for different cultures and contexts based on the "diverse and particular situations of life." While this first strength recognizes that theology is not done in a cultural vacuum, the second strength recognizes that theology should not be done in a historical vacuum.[103]

Conclusion

Hiebert probably should have been more precise with his usage of the term biblical theology. As argued above, his definition of biblical theology is more akin to historical theology. If he had used the latter term, then his analogy would still hold true. Setting aside what appears to be a matter of nomenclature, Hiebert's understanding of the relationship between these various theologies is clear.

In terms of logical sequencing (and according to Hiebert's analogy), systematic theology and biblical theology necessarily precede missional theology. Missional theology is built upon the foundations of systematic and biblical theologies. This is evident from Hiebert's analogy of the relationship between constitutional, statutory, and case law. In order to do missional theology in a way that is faithful to Scripture and affirming of Christ (i.e. in a way that Hiebert would have desired for it to be done), one

---

[102]Tienou and Hiebert, "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology," 126.

[103]Gailyn Van Rheenen's "missional helix" is a helpful way to view this relationship. Gailyn Van Rheenn, "From Theology to Practice: The Helix Metaphor" Monthly Missiological Reflection 25 [on-line]; accessed 24 November 2010; available from http://www.missiology.org/mmr/mmr25.htm; Internet.

must first do systematic and biblical theology. Systematic and biblical theologies are intellectual and logical pre-cursors to missional theology.

However, in terms of missiological practice, missional theology should precede the development of a systematic and biblical theology in a given cultural context. Missional theology is done by the missionary team and the church or churches from which the missionary team springs. Members of a given church or Christian group develop a systematic and biblical theology which spurs them to do missions, so they then develop a missional theology for a given cultural context with hopes of reaching that group with the gospel.[104] Systematic and biblical theologies are done by the national church once it is established. Hiebert's model of critical contextualization and self-theologizing can and should inform the development of biblical and systematic theologies for the national church.

Conclusion

As this examination of Hiebert's six seminal ideas has indicated, Hiebert's writing on various topics and ideas can provide answers to questions that current missiologists are asking. His writings do not provide every answer to every question, but the fact that many answers to contemporary questions can be found in writings from as much as forty years ago indicates that contemporary missiologists and students of missions would do well to look beyond contemporary writers and thinkers for answers. Often missiologists and writers from previous eras can provide keen insight into contemporary issues, and Paul Hiebert provided contemporary missiologists with a great resource for thinking critically about current missiological questions.

In the next chapter, the influence of Hiebert's six seminal ideas will be

---

[104]It is not my purpose to discuss or debate the specific role of modalities and sodalities in missions work nor about their relative merits. In short, I concur with Ralph Winter's position that both are needed. See Ralph D. Winter, "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 244-53.

investigated. This investigation will take several forms. First, some quantitative data will be provided in regard to how frequently Hiebert's books and articles are used in various missiological settings from classes on missions to missionary training. Additionally, it will be demonstrated that even when Hiebert's works are not directly used, the ideas outlined in this work are often referenced and depended upon in both classroom missions classes and training provided for missionaries. Finally, various adaptations and applications of Hiebert's ideas will be examined. In some cases it will be demonstrated that these adaptations and applications are legitimate, and in some cases these adaptations and applications have not been valid.

CHAPTER 5

INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF
HIEBERT'S SIX SEMINAL IDEAS

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the influence of Hiebert's six

seminal ideas. Hiebert's influence is seen in a number of arenas. First, his books are

widely used and required in missions classes in seminaries and schools across the

Evangelical spectrum. Additionally, many missiologists have shared personal

testimonies about Hiebert's impact on their missiological approaches and on them

personally. Third, some missionary training programs also reveal Hiebert's influence.

Finally, Hiebert's influence is reflected in the literature through applications and

adaptations of his works.

Missions Classes

One of the most profound examples of Hiebert's influence is the fact that his

works are so widely referenced and required by professors of missions in various schools

and seminaries across the Evangelical landscape. A representative sampling will reveal

that Hiebert's influence cuts across denominational categories and will give us a sense of

his influence.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
(SEBTS)

SEBTS is located in Wake Forest, North Carolina and is one of the six

seminaries supported by the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Led by their president Danny Akin, SEBTS is placing a strong emphasis on international

missions. Akin's "axioms of Great Commission Resurgence"[1] helped to lay the groundwork for the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force formed by SBC President Johnny Hunt in 2009. From Akin's position as President at SEBTS and as leader in the SBC, he has been a consistent voice for the cause of international missions.

There are twenty-two doctoral students at SEBTS who are either currently serving on the international missions field or are preparing for service on the international mission field.[2] SEBTS also has eighty-five students in its M.A. in Intercultural Studies program, and 148 in its M.Div. in International Church Planting program.[3]

Bruce Ashford. Bruce Ashford serves as the Headrick Chair of World Missions, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Intercultural Studies and Dean of The College at Southeastern at SEBTS.[4] Ashford expressed reliance upon Hiebert's writings and ideas in the missions courses that he teaches at SEBTS.

Ashford included Hiebert's *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, and *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* in the bibliography for his Ph.D. seminar, "The Church and Its Cultural Context."[5] Ashford indicated that these textbooks are not required reading for this seminar because it is assumed that the students participating in this seminar have already read Hiebert's books in their master's level missions and anthropology courses and are familiar with most of his central ideas. Ashford's seminar

---

[1]Jason Hall, "Akin Lays Out Axioms of Great Commission Resurgence" [on-line]; accessed 30 December 2010; available from http://www.sebts.edu/news-resources/headlines/articles/axioms_gcr.aspx; Internet.

[2]Jake Pratt, email to author, 21 December 2010.

[3]Wesley Handy, email to author, 19 January 2011.

[4]"Academics," [on-line]; accessed 13 December 2010; available from http://www.sebts.edu/academics/Deans/default.aspx

[5]Bruce Ashford, "The Church in its Cultural Context" (syllabus for Ph.D. seminar at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), 3.

is designed to build on that previously acquired knowledge.[6] Additionally, Ashford

requires his students to read *Understanding Folk Religion* for his course, "Current Topics

in International Missions: Folk Islam and Animism."[7] Since critical realism, critical

contextualization, the flaw of the excluded middle, centered set theory, and self-

theologizing are all included in the books indicated, the courses that Ashford teaches at

SEBTS reflect an impact of those ideas.

In an email to the author, Ashford reported that he frequently makes use of

Hiebert's works in his lectures. He cited critical contextualization, Hiebert's explanation

about the nature of culture (i.e. that culture is made up of affective, cognitive, and

evaluative elements), and Hiebert's anthropological methodology as being particularly

helpful and impactful in his teaching.[8]

Ant Greenham. Another professor at SEBTS who has expressed some

reliance upon Hiebert's ideas and works is Ant Greenham. Greenham serves as Assistant

Professor of Missions and Islamic Studies at SEBTS.[9] He does not require any of

Hiebert's books for his courses, but he does make reference to Hiebert in lectures in his

classes, "Christian Missions: Principles and Practice," and "Christian Faith and World

Religions."[10]

In some of his lectures in "Christian Missions: Principles and Practice,"

Greenham cites Hiebert's comments about the different uses of platforms from one

culture to the next in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries.* In that section of

---

[6]Bruce Ashford, email to author, 2 December 2010.

[7]Bruce Ashford, "Current Topics in International Missions: Folk Islam and Animism" (syllabus for course at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), 1.

[8]Ashford, email to author, 2 December 2010.

[9]"Missions and Evangelism Faculty" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.sebts.edu/CGCS/faculty-staff/faculty.aspx; Internet.

[10]Ant Greenham, email to author, 22 October 2010.

Anthropological Insights, Hiebert discussed how different cultures view sitting and sleeping. While North Americans will avoid sitting or sleeping on the floor if at all possible, the Asian view the floor quite differently. Japanese people will sit on a mat on the floor, and Indians will often sleep on the floor. Hiebert concludes that the different behaviors are based on different assumptions about whether the floor is clean or dirty. While North Americans view the floor as dirty and thus avoid sitting or sleeping on it, Asians view the floor as clean and thus avoid making it dirty by wearing shoes inside the house.[11] From this portion of Hiebert's works, Greenham concludes that we must be "constantly developing and enhancing a biblical worldview as the basis for evaluating everything else."[12]

Greenham also referenced Hiebert's brief exhortation to missionaries, also in *Anthropological Insights*, to evangelize their own children.[13] Referencing Hiebert's comments, Greenham wrote that missionary kids often have "all kinds of obstacles placed in the path of their coming to Christ."[14]

Greenham also reported that he refers to Hiebert's works in some of his lectures in "Christian Faith and World Religions." Greenham reported that he references three of Hiebert's books in that class.

First, Greenham mentioned that ancestors play an important role in many indigenous religions and referenced Hiebert's discussion of the role of idols and ancestors in *Case Studies in Missions*.[15] Also in *Case Studies*, Greenham referred to the case study,

---

[11]Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 42-44.

[12]Ant Greenham, email to author, 22 October 2010.

[13]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 246.

[14]Greenham, email to author.

[15]Paul G. Hiebert and Frances F. Hiebert, *Case Studies in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 24-25.

"The Threat of the Spirit Dancers" by Georgia Grimes.[16] Greenham believes that this story provides a good example of a power encounter in a North American context.[17]

Second, Greenham referred to a story by Ralph Linton included in Hiebert's *Cultural Anthropology*.[18] Greenham includes this story because it demonstrates the pervasive nature of pseudo-totemic practices. The story reported the development of such practices among American soldiers during World War I.[19]

Finally, Greenham referred to Paul B. Long's story about Kalonda and Kangate in *Anthropological Insights* as an example of how power encounters are sometimes necessary when presenting the gospel.[20]

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS)

Norm Chung, registrar at SBTS, reported that there were over 3,000 students at SBTS during the 2009-2010 academic year.[21] Approximately one-third of SBTS students were in the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism.[22]

Of the 1,008 students in the Graham School, 335 were pursing master's degrees in one of the missions tracks during that academic year.[23] An additional eighteen

---

[16]Ibid., 103-08.

[17]Greenham, email to author.

[18]Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lipponcott, 1976), 383-85. Linton's story was originally published in the journal *American Anthropologist* in 1924.

[19]Greenham, email to author.

[20]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 198-201.

[21]Norm Chung, email to author, 21 January 2011. There was a head count of 3,187 during the 2009-201 school year.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid. This category includes the following programs: M.Div. in International Church Planting (68 students), M.Div. in Missions (85 students), M.Div. in Missions and Bible Translating (10 students), M.A. in Missiology (65 students), and M.A. in Theological Studies in Intercultural Leadership (107 students).

were students in the Diplomas in Missions program, and another thirty-five were pursuing doctoral degrees in missions.[24]

George Martin. George Martin serves as the M. Theron Rankin Professor of Christian Missions at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and as an Associate Dean in The Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism.[25] Martin has taught a course on urban evangelism that made extensive use of Hiebert's class notes for "Evangelism in the City." Martin's course notes for this course are largely an application of Hiebert's work on critical contextualization. Martin reported that he used Hiebert's notes for the section of the class in which the class studied the nature of the city in order to understand its peoples.[26]

Martin also requires students in his online "Introduction to Missiology" course to read Hiebert's articles, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," and "Clean and Dirty: Cross Cultural Misunderstandings in India" from the *Perspectives* reader. Additionally, one of Martin's lectures for that course centers on Hiebert's presentation of the flaw of the excluded middle and its implications for missiological practice.

For another course, World Religions and the Christian Faith, one of Martin's lectures is titled "Split-Level Christianity." In that lecture Martin presents Hiebert's critique of split-level Christianity from *Understanding Folk Religion* and then presents Hiebert's critical contextualization as the solution to that problem.

---

[24]Ibid. The Diploma in Missions program is a programs designed for students who have not completed an baccalaureate degree and are over thirty years of age. "Diploma Programs" [on-line]; accessed 21 January 2011; available from http://www.sbts.edu/programs/diploma-programs; Internet. The doctoral category includes the following three programs: D.Min. in Missions Leadership (14 students), Ph.D. (11 students majoring in Christian Missions – there are additional Ph.D. students who are majoring in other areas but take missions seminars as either their minor or as electives), D.Miss. (10 students). Ibid.

[25]"George H. Martin" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.sbts.edu/bgs/faculty/george-martin; Internet.

[26]George Martin, email to author 11 December 2010.

M. David Sills. M. David Sills serves as the A.P. and Faye Stone Professor of Christian Missions and Cultural Anthropology at SBTS. He also serves as Director of Great Commission Ministries and Director of the Doctor of Missiology program at The Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism.[27] Sills requires several of Hiebert's works at both the masters' and doctoral level.[28]

For his doctoral seminar on cultural anthropology, Sills requires the students to read Hiebert's *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, *Transforming Worldviews*, and *The Gospel in Human Contexts*.[29] Additionally, students in his doctoral seminar, "Ethnographic Research and Worldview Identification," are required to read and review *Transforming Worldviews*.[30] For his master's level course on cultural anthropology, Sills requires students to read and review *The Gospel in Human Contexts*.[31]

Regarding Hiebert's influence on his personal missiology and his teaching, Sills wrote,

> Paul Hiebert's work is foundational to the content I teach in Cultural Anthropology. His understanding of culture, worldview, and methodological issues is *unparalleled by any other single author of the past generation*. In the times when I may disagree with his conclusions, I always appreciate his approach and intentionality. Hiebert's contribution to missiological research and work has been hugely significant and that significance is mirrored in the place his texts have in my classes.[32]

James Chancellor. James Chancellor serves as the W. O. Carver Professor of

---

[27]"M. David Sills" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.sbts.edu/bgs/faculty/david-sills; Internet.

[28]Every student at SBTS is required to take Introduction to Missiology. Since Martin and Sills are the primary professors for this course, it is safe to say that Hiebert's work have an influence on every student at SBTS.

[29]David Sills, email to author, 14 December 2010.

[30]David Sills, "Ethnographic Research and Worldview Identification" (syllabus for doctoral seminar in Spring 2009), 2.

[31]Sills, email to author, 14 December 2010.

[32]David Sills, email to author, 30 December 2010.

Christian Missions and World Religions at SBTS.[33] For a colloquium with Christian

missions and world religions doctoral students in Fall 2009, Chancellor required students

to read and discuss *Understanding Folk Religion*. The focus of this course was "on the

phenomenology of these religious traditions and the Christian missiological approaches

to them."[34] While the colloquium as a whole focused on both discussions of the religions

themselves as well as missiological approaches to these religions, the discussions about

Hiebert's book mostly centered on the missiological applications of Hiebert, Tienou, and

Shaw's analysis of the nature of folk religion.

Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS)

RTS is a seminary with several campuses, and it is supported by the

Presbyterian Church of America (PCA). RTS no longer offers an M.Div. in Missions nor

an M.A. in Missions.[35] As such, tracking the number of missions students is difficult.

The head count for RTS during the 2009-2010 school years was 1,140, and the FTE

during that same academic year was 584.[36]

Sam Larsen. Upon recommendation from his lifelong friend Harvie Conn,

Sam Larsen went to Trinity to study under Hiebert.[37] Conn believed that Hiebert's broad

influence and educational background uniquely positioned him to prepare ministers for

what Conn saw as the most important issue facing missions – Christianity and its

---

[33]"James D. Chancellor" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.sbts.edu/bgs/faculty/james-chancellor; Internet.

[34]"Missions Colloquium, World Religions Colloquium" (syllabus from Fall 2009 at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), 1.

[35]Elias Medeiros, email to author, 20 January 2011.

[36]"Annual Data Tables" [on-line]; accessed 21 January 2011; available from http://www.ats.edu/Resources/Publications/Documents/AnnualDataTables/2009-10AnnualDataTables.pdf; Internet. Head count is simply the total number of students enrolled, and FTE is "the number of students who would be enrolled if all students were attending full time." Ibid.

[37]Sam Larsen, telephone interview with author, 17 January 2011.

relationship with the world religions.[38]

Larsen reported that he appreciated many different things about Trinity, and that Hiebert modeled its "broad" Evangelical stance and its ability to "disagree without being disagreeable."[39] Hiebert served as Sam Larsen's mentor during his time at Trinity.[40] Larsen reported that Hiebert's teaching was based on three principles: a biblical ontology, a social science methodology, and a missiological goal.[41]

Larsen currently serves as Professor Emeritus of Missions at RTS.[42] Larsen reported that Hiebert's works have most influenced his missiology and missions pedagogy in the area of epistemology – namely Hiebert's critical realism – which Larsen qualifies as "biblical critical realism."[43] Until Hiebert opened his eyes to it, Larsen did not realize that he had become a theistic positivist.[44] However, after studying with Hiebert, Larsen reflected back on his time studying under Francis Schaeffer and realized that Schaeffer had taught him the same thing – that we can know truth truly without knowing truth exhaustively.[45] As an illustration of the influence of critical realism, for his course "Effective Communication" which he most recently taught in Spring 2010, Dr. Larsen recommended that the students read *Missiological Implications of*

---

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Sam Larsen, email to author, 20 October 2010.

[41]Larsen, telephone interview with author.

[42]Sam Larsen, "Effective Communication" (syllabus for course at Reformed Theological Seminary, Spring 2010), 1. While Larsen officially retired in June 2010, he continues to teach some classes at RTS, and Hiebert has had an influence on RTS students by way of Larsen during his entire tenure there. Larsen, telephone interview with author.

[43]Larsen, telephone interview with author.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

Epistemological Shifts.[46] Larsen's recommendation of *Missiological Implications* and his experience in studying under Hiebert indicates that Larsen's students are influenced by Hiebert's critical realist epistemology.[47]

Larsen also spoke about Hiebert's teaching on globalization and connected it to critical realism and self-theologizing. Larsen said that Hiebert taught him that globalization gives deep meaning to the Christian who can come to understand that the Bantu tribesman who has recently come to Christ could bring new insights on the Scripture that he had never seen before.[48] Larsen's comment demonstrates Hiebert's understanding of self-theologizing, since it stresses the importance of each new community of believers developing a theology that is pertinent to their local situation.

In addition to Hiebert's critical realism and the impact of self-theologizing, Larsen stated that Hiebert's work on worldview transformation, bringing cultural anthropology into missiology, and critical contextualization have had a significant influence on his missiology. Larsen said that every "set" of his students is taught Hiebert's model of critical contextualization.[49]

In addition to these tangible influences of his missiology and pedagogy, Larsen reported that Hiebert was a gracious and humble professor who "thrived on receiving criticism" and was "probably the most Christ-like man I have ever had the chance to serve alongside."[50] According to Larsen, Hiebert taught him how to learn and how to relate to other people.

---

[46]Larsen, "Effective Communication," 2.

[47]Though Larsen recommends *Missiological Implications* to his students, he mentioned that he warms his students about Charles Peirce's pantheism. In addition to influencing Hiebert's critical realist approach to missiology, Peirce influenced A. N. Whitehead's process theology, and Larsen ensures his students that he does not endorse Whitehead's process theology – and Hiebert did not either. Larsen, telephone interview with author.

[48]Larsen, telephone interview.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

Eunsoo Kim. Eunsoo Kim is an Associate Professor of Missions at Reformed Theological Seminary. He also serves as Director of the Korean Language D. Min. program at RTS.[51] For a course that he taught in Fall 2009, Kim required that his students read *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*.[52] Since Dr. Kim directs the Korean language program, Hiebert's influence is not limited to primary English speakers but can also be seen in primary Korean speakers who are studying at RTS.

**Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary
(CSBS)**

Though a relatively small seminary, CSBS represents another strain of students being influenced by Hiebert's works – Canadians Southern Baptists. Jimmy Cobb currently serves as Seminary Services Director and Professor of Theology, Ethics, and History at CSBS.[53] In Spring 2007, Cobb taught "Missiology" at CSBS. For that course, Cobb required the students to read Hiebert's articles "Flaw of the Excluded Middle", "Clean and Dirty: Cross Cultural Misunderstandings in India," and "Culture Shock: Starting Over." All of these articles are in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*.[54]

Cobb also reported that his interest in "the 'irreducible gospel' of 1 Corinthians 15:3ff" led him to use Hiebert's story of Omodo and polygamy in *Anthropological*

---

[51]"Dr. Eunsoo Kim" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.rts.edu/ faculty/StaffDetails.aspx?id=406; Internet.

[52]Eunsoon Kim, "Globalization and Contextualization in Intercultural Ministry" (syllabus for course at Reformed Theological Seminary in Fall 2009), 1.

[53]"Our Faculty" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.csbs.ca/ about/faculty.asp; Internet.

[54]Jimmy Cobb, email to author, 3 December 2010. Paul G. Hiebert, "Flaw of the Excluded Middle," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 407-14. Paul G. Hiebert, "Clean and Dirty: Cross Cultural Misunderstandings in India," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 423-24. Paul G. Hiebert, "Culture Shock: Starting Over," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th edition, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 452.

Insights.[55] Cobb reported that he also makes sure that his students are acquainted with

Hiebert's works on the flaw of the excluded middle, because Cobb believes that Hiebert's

exhortation not to ignore that middle is applicable to all missionaries – "even in

'civilized' N. America."[56] Cobb also added that he continues to encourage but not

require his students to read *Anthropological Reflections* and *Anthropological Insights.*[57]

Summing up, Cobb reported that he believes that Hiebert is "a worthy authority on

culture and worldview and their importance for evangelism/missions."[58]

Denver Seminary

Over fifty denominations are represented at Denver Seminary.[59] Denver

Seminary is currently training fifteen students who are focusing their studies on

intercultural ministry.[60] Through Alex Mekonnen, who teaches many of the missions

courses at Denver, these students are being impacting by Hiebert's ideas.

Mekonnen studied under Hiebert during his time at Fuller.[61] He currently

serves as Associate Professor of Missions at Denver Seminary. For one of his Spring

2010 courses there, "Introduction to Ministry in Intercultural Contexts," Mekonnen

required his students to read and write a book review of Hiebert's *Anthropological*

---

[55]Jimmy Cobb, email to author, 3 December 2010.   The story that Cobb referenced is included in *Anthropological Insights* but was written by Walter A. Trobisch and originally appeared in *Readings in Missionary Anthropology II.*, edited by William Smalley. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights*, 177-179. For a similar story directly from Hiebert, see one of the case studies which Hiebert authored in his book *Case Studies in Missions*. Paul G. Hiebert, "Too Many Wives," in *Case Studies in Missions*, ed. Paul Hiebert and Frances Hiebert (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997), 62-65.

[56]Cobb, email to author.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

[59]"Denver Seminary Statistics" [on-line]; accessed 30 December 2010; available from http://www.denverseminary.edu/about-us/denver-seminary-statistics; Internet.

[60]Pam Betker, email to author, 17 December 2010.

[61]Alex Mekonnen, email to author, 1 December 2010.

Insights for Missionaries.[62] Mekonnen stated that he continues to require this book

despite its age because "it is clear, concise, and to the point." Mekonnen expressed some

regret as to the fact that some of the illustrations are dated. Mekonnen also indicated that

he plans to continue to require Hiebert's works as they continue to add missions courses

to their catalogue at Denver. He specifically mentioned *Transforming Worldviews* as a

text that he plans to require in the future.[63]

Missiologists' Personal Testimonies

As a component of my research, I contacted a number or Evangelical

missiologists around North America and asked them which of Hiebert's ideas has had the

most significant impact on their missiology. I began by contacting the leadership of the

Evangelical Missiological Society and expanded my research as these various leaders

suggested that I contact others. I also contacted various professors of missions at a

sampling of Evangelical seminaries around North America.

Scott Moreau (Wheaton College)

Scott Moreau is a professor at Wheaton College and editor of *The Evangelical

Dictionary of World Missions*.[64] Moreau reported that both critical contextualization and

the flaw of the excluded middle have been very influential in his missiology. He reported

that he makes use of both of these ideas in his teaching and thinking as well in the way

that he acts when he is in new places.[65] Moreau added, "I think, however, the legacy that

looms largest to me is the humble spirit he demonstrated throughout his career. A

brilliant man with great ideas and focus—yet deeply humble and grateful to God for the

---

[62]Alex Mekonnen, "Introduction to Ministry in Intercultural Contexts" (syllabus for course at Denver Seminary, Spring 2010), 3.

[63]Mekonnen, email to author.

[64]"Faculty" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.wheaton.edu/intr/faculty/moreau.html; Internet.

[65]Scott Moreau, email to author, 18 October 2010.

life he was granted."[66]

Fred Smith (Toccoa Falls College)

Fred Smith who serves as the chair of the World Missions Department at Toccoa Falls College demonstrates that Hiebert's influence is not limited to graduate students.[67] Smith was one of Hiebert's students in the School of World Missions at Fuller in the early 1980s. Smith reported that of Hiebert's six seminal ideas, the two items that are most significant in his missiology are critical contextualization and centered set theory.[68]

Ryan Bolger (Fuller)

Ryan Bolger serves as Associate Professor of Church in Contemporary Culture at Fuller Seminary.[69] According to Bolger, he has been most significantly impacted by critical realism and centered set theory.[70] Bolger's inclusion on this list of those influenced by Hiebert is to demonstrate that Hiebert has had an impact on those who identify with the emerging church movement.

J. D. Payne (SBTS)

J. D. Payne serves as Associate Professor of Church Planting and Evangelism (2002); Director of the Center for North American Missions and Church Planting. He is also a national missionary with the North American Mission Board.[71] Payne reported

---

[66]Ibid.

[67]"Fred Smith" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://sports.tfc.edu/academics/faculty/fsmith.html; Internet.

[68]Fred Smith, email to author, 19 October 2010.

[69]"Faculty" [on-line]; accessed 30 December 2010; available from http://www.fuller.edu/academics/faculty/ryan-bolger.aspx; Internet.

[70]Ryan Bolger, email to author, 23 December 2010.

[71]"J. D. Payne" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.sbts.edu/bgs/faculty/jd-payne; Internet.

that both critical contextualization and self-theologizing have had impact on his missiology.[72] Payne remarked that Hiebert's critical contextualization is a "reminder that discernment is necessary to communicate effectively and to avoid syncretism" and that self-theologizing teaches missiologists that "contextualized churches have the freedom to do applied/systematic theology from a biblical theological foundation."[73]

Mike Barnett
(Columbia International University)

Mike Barnett is the Elmer V. Thompson Chair of Missionary Church Planting at Columbia International University and previously served as a missionary with the International Mission Board.[74] Barnett reported that Hiebert's two seminal ideas which have had the biggest impact on his missiology were the flaw of the excluded middle and missional theology.[75]

Concerning the flaw of the excluded middle, Barnett wrote that Hiebert's teaching on the excluded middle "illustrates the reality of disparity of spiritual consciousness between modern western worldviews and the rest of the world."[76] Barnett believes that teaching about the middle helps us understand "a concept that we often miss based on our experiences or lack thereof. It has been a great teaching tool for missionaries and even those of us who cross-culture from our home base."[77]

Concerning missional theology, Barnett wrote, "Hiebert applied anthropological studies to the world of the mission of God. For him there was no better

---

[72]J. D. Payne, email to author, 20 October 2010.

[73]Ibid.

[74]"Mike Barnett" [on-line]; accessed 14 December 2010; available from http://www.ciu.edu/faculty/bio.php?id=227; Internet.

[75]Mike Barnett, email to author, 19 October 2010.

[76]Ibid.

[77]Ibid.

application. Everything he taught about culture and worldview was taught to be applied to God's mission to all cultures."[78]

In addition to these contributions, Barnett cited Hiebert's continuous activity as a writer and speaker "even in his last years" as well as his willingness to address new and emerging challenges like globalization. Regarding the role of anthropology in missions, Barnett wrote that he was impressed that Hiebert "never forgot the reason for the science."[79]

Bob Garrett (DBU)

Bob Garrett is Director of the Master of Arts in Global Leadership program at Dallas Baptist University.[80] Garrett reported during his time on the mission field in South America he would sometimes encounter "very wild cases of people who had been involved in Afro-brazilian cults."[81] He found Hiebert's work on the flaw of the excluded middle helpful when dealing with these cases. He cited Gailyn Van Rheenen's book *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* as being indebted to Hiebert's prior work on the topic.[82]

Garrett, however, reported that he believes Hiebert's influence is broader than specific contributions and that Hiebert "legitimized the use of Anthopology [*sic*] among missionaries, and convinced evangelical missionaries that it was OK to be concerned about reshaping church life and restating the gospel message in terms of local customs and worldview."[83] Garrett also commented on Hiebert on a personal level:

---

[78]Ibid.

[79]Ibid.

[80]"Master of Arts in Global Leadership" [on-line]; accessed 15 December 2010; available from http://www3.dbu.edu/leadership/globalleadership.asp; Internet.

[81]Bob Garrett, email to author, 18 October 2010.

[82]Ibid.

[83]Ibid.

Paul was extremely personable. It was impossible not to like him. He was a very compelling speaker, not that you were overwhelmed, but his explanations just seemed natural and were never over-reaching--even when controversial. He had a great deal of just common sense, and the no nonsense attitude about whether missionaries could "get it" in the local culture that was based on his childhood as an MK.[84]

David Diasso
(EMS VP of Rocky Mountain Region)

David Diasso currently serves as the Vice President of the Rocky Mountain region of the Evangelical Missiological Society and is a missionary with Mission to the World, the Presbyterian Church of America's mission agency.[85] Diaso cited the flaw of the excluded middle as being the main way that Hiebert has influenced his missiology. Diaso wrote that he believes Western missionaries have too often ignored spiritual warfare in their approach to missions. Diaso regularly tries to educate and challenge missionaries to become more aware of "the middle."[86]

Diaso's application of Hiebert's concept is not just an academic issue for him: "My wife and I are also being more assertive in praying against the advances of the enemy of our soul. We pray for Christ protection, and we pray in the name of Christ against the influence that Satan and his demons would desire to use on us and our work for the advancement of God's Kingdom."[87] In a follow-up email about the role that his insights have played in the missions agency with which Diaso was previously involved, Greater Europe Mission, Diaso expressed regret that many missionaries "don't take seriously enough the role of spiritual warfare in ministry."[88]

---

[84]Garrett, email to author.

[85]"Rocky Mountain Region" [on-line]; accessed 15 December 2010; available from http://www.emsweb.org/rocky-mnt-region; Internet.

[86]David Diaso, email to author, 3 November 2010.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid.

Robin Hadaway (MBTS)

Robin Hadaway is Associate Professor of Missions and Director of Mission Atlas Project at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He previously served as a missionary with the International Mission Board in Tanzania and as the Regional Leader for Eastern South America.[89] Hadaway recently completed his Th.D from the University of South Africa.[90] Hadaway's history of interaction with Hiebert and his ideas goes back to when he took the class "Phenomenology of Folk Religion" from Hiebert in 1990 (Hiebert's last year at Fuller).[91] Hadaway cited this course as having a significant impact on his own missiology: "Paul Hiebert's class gave me an understanding that folk religion is the real faith of most of the world, rather than orthodoxy."[92]

Hadaway cited Hiebert as being "his inspiration" for his dissertation, "Contextualization and Folk Islam: A case study in the Sudan."[93] Hadaway reported that his work compares the folk Islam present in the Sudan with African Traditional Religion. Hadaway added that he was significantly impacted by the "contextualized devotions" that Hiebert led during each one of his class periods at Fuller.[94]

Wilbert Shenk (Fuller Seminary)

Wilber Shenk serves as Senior Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture at Fuller Seminary. Shenk is a member of the Mennonite Brethren denomination and has served in various capacities with Mennonite missions agencies. Additionally,

---

[89]"Faculty" [on-line]; accessed 15 December 2010; available from http://www.mbts.edu/academics/faculty; Internet.

[90]Robin Hadaway, email to author, 24 November 2010.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid. In folk religion colloquium directed by Chancellor mentioned earlier, our class came to the same conclusion.

[93]Ibid. Hadaway gives Hiebert an acknowledgement in the introduction to his dissertation.

[94]Ibid.

Shenk was one of the founders of the American Society of Missiology.[95] Shenk reported

that he first met Hiebert in the 1960s and that they remained in touch from that time

forward.[96] As to Hiebert's influence on Shenk's teaching, Shenk wrote that he has used

Hiebert's articles "whenever possible."[97] Shenk listed Hiebert's work on the flaw of the

excluded middle, worldview, set theory and the "bi-cultural bridge" as the articles that he

typically assigns.[98] Shenk is currently living in Indiana and working with the D.Miss.

program at Fuller. He requires the D.Miss. students to read *The Gospel in Human

Contexts* for that program.[99]

When I asked Shenk which of Hiebert's ideas have been most influential on his

missiology, Shenk replied that he views all of Hiebert's ideas as a whole and that he

cannot easily separate them from one another. He praised Hiebert's ability to think

holistically: "Although a first-rate anthropologist, Hiebert insisted on thinking as a

missiologist (i.e., bringing together resources from multiple disciplines). Pigeon-holing

and insisting on neat categories always results in reductionisms that distort. We, of

course, as finite minds, cannot avoid this completely; but Hiebert pushed back against

such tendencies and attempted to surmount these limits."[100] As to specific ideas, Shenk

added, "If I must choose two themes, I would single out 'critical contextualization' and

'centered set theory.'[101]

Since Shenk is a Mennonite Brethren, I also asked him how he believed

[95]"Wilbert R. Shenk" [on-line]; accessed 15 December 2010; available from http://www.fuller.edu/academics/faculty/wilbert-shenk.aspx; Internet.

[96]Wilbert Shenk, email to author, 3 November 2010.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid.

Hiebert was influenced by his Mennonite Brethren background. Shenk replied that he

and Hiebert had talked about Hiebert's intellectual development in regard to his

Anabaptist background:

> His initial theological studies were in a Bible Institute where George W. Peters, a fellow Mennonite Brethren, was the principal. Peters identified himself as a conservative evangelical, not an Anabaptist. As a missionary in India, Hiebert became critical of Peters' theology and missiology, which was rigid and tone-deaf to culture. In that generation it was typical that those teaching missions, even in seminaries, had never served as cross-cultural missionaries, an important liability.[102]

Despite this liability, Shenk reported that Hiebert was "forever grateful" that

he had been provided a "Biblically-shaped, Christo-centric, narrative-based theology as

the basis for missiological engagement" from his own Anabaptist heritage.[103] On the

issue of his Mennonite Brethren background, Shenk wrote that "Hiebert did not parade

his Anabaptist commitment in his writing but it is integral to his thought. He had no

difficulty interacting with other traditions and viewpoints while remaining true to his own

identity."[104]

Summing up Hiebert's influence and impact, Shenk wrote,

> Paul Hiebert was a master teacher. He had an eye/ear for ways of conceptualizing an issue that made his ideas accessible to the student. He had a gift for capturing the essence of an issue in a phrase or with terminology that sticks in the mind of the student. A measure of his contribution to both theory and to pedagogy is the way a series of Hiebert's conceptualizations . . . continue to be cited and used far and wide. Sometimes it is apparent the person using a Hiebert concept is not even aware of where it came from, a measure of the way these terms and concepts have gained acceptance and passed into our vocabulary.[105]

Missionary Training Programs

I contacted several Evangelical missions organizations in order to investigate

Hiebert's influence on the training that they deliver to their missionary force. Several of

---

[102]Ibid.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid.

[105]Ibid.

the people with whom I was put into contact indicated that they did not know if Hiebert's works had any influence on their training and several organizations did not respond to my attempts to contact them. Others, however, indicated that Hiebert has directly influenced their training.

New Tribes Mission

I corresponded with George Walker of New Tribes Mission to discuss Hiebert's influence on New Tribe's missionary training. Before becoming a trainer with New Tribes, Walker served as a church planter in Papua New Guinea for twenty years.[106] Since 1996, Walker and his wife have trained missionaries from North America, South America, and Asia to do cross-cultural ministry. Through the course of that training, Walker has developed two courses that "have been heavily influenced by Paul Hiebert and his teaching."[107] Those two courses are "Animism and Folk Religion - Increasing Ministry Effectiveness through Understanding Rival Worldviews and the People Who Embrace Them" and "Worldview Issues in Cross-Cultural Ministry - Living Biblically in Relationship with God, Man and Creation."[108]

In a follow-up telephone conversation, Walker indicated that he strongly recommends *Understanding Folk Religion* in the training that he provides to New Tribes missionaries. Walker requires Gailyn Van Rheenen's *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts* for the training that he provides. As to why he requires Van Rheenen's book instead of Hiebert's, Walker said that Van Rheenen's book is more introductory and better for students to "cut their teeth on," but that Hiebert's work is "at a different level"

---

[106]George Walker, email to author, 22 October 2010. New Tribes Mission purpose is to "help local churches train, coordinate and send missionaries to these tribes [2,500 unreached people groups]." "About NTM" [on-line]; accessed 19 January 2011; available from http://www.ntm.org/about; Internet.

[107]Walker, email to author.

[108]Ibid.

and a more complete treatment of the issue of folk religion and animism.[109]

Walker specifically mentioned Hiebert's analysis of worldview – in particular the importance of the flaw of the excluded middle. Walker believes that Western missionaries have a desperate need to understand this concept in order to truly understand the target culture's worldview before they begin to do evangelism.[110] Walker referenced "split-level" Christianity as a problem that he has seen in South America where people "accept Jesus" but still seek answers to sickness, crops, etc. to traditional beliefs because the Bible is seen as a book that only answers questions about the afterlife.[111]

Walker also mentioned Hiebert's distinction between high religion and low religion as having a significant impact on the training that he has delivered and continues to deliver to New Tribes missionaries. Walker said that he believes that Hiebert's analysis of the difference between high religion and low religion highlighted the importance of the difference between different kinds of worldviews. Certain people groups have geographically limited worldviews, and the worldview of the Bible is radically different. This difference often results in the missionary answering questions that a specific people group might not even be asking.[112] Walker also said that Hiebert's emphasis on how people use symbols was an important part of the training that he provides to missionaries.[113]

Walker left New Tribes in 2002, and, along with three others, he and his wife founded a missions agency called Worldview Resource Group.[114] Specifically, Walker

---

[109]George Walker, telephone interview with author, 26 October 2010.

[110]Ibid.

[111]Ibid.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Ibid.

[114]Ibid. Walker returned to NTM in 2009. Ibid.

was involved in the development of their curriculum.[115] Worldview Resource Group

provides training for overseas nationals in Asia and South America.[116] The purpose of

Worldview Resource Group is "to speed and strengthen the emerging mission

movements in the Majority World by preparing missionary leaders and trainers to change

worldviews."[117] Given Hiebert's influence on Walker and Walker's involvement with

Worldview Resource Group, it is safe to say that Worldview Resource Group also

reflects Hiebert's influence.

South America Mission

South America Mission's vision,

> is to see the Church of Jesus Christ established so that thousands of local,
> witnessing communities of believers are maturing in their own knowledge and faith,
> while working to ensure that everyone in South America has multiple opportunities
> to hear a clear, meaningful and persuasive presentation of the gospel from within
> their own ethnic or social group.[118]

South America Mission (SAM) focuses their resources on training and discipling leaders

in South American churches, so that these leaders can, in turn, reach others throughout

the continent.[119]

South America Mission's missionary training program has been influenced by

Hiebert's seminal ideas. Kenny Kresten serves as Director of International Staff

Development at SAM and is responsible for training SAM missionaries.[120] According to

---

[115]Ibid.

[116]Ibid.

[117]"Overview" [on-line]; accessed 15 October 2010; available from http://www.wrg3.org/about/index.cfm; Internet.

[118]"Vision/Mission" [on-line]; accessed 30 December 2010; available from http://www.southamericamission.org/?page=ABOUT+SAM; Internet.

[119]Ibid.

[120]"Kenny and Diane Kresten" [on-line]; accessed 30 December 2010; available from http://www.southamericamission.org/?page=ABOUT+SAM&content=12&mid=8; Internet.

Kresten, who studied at Trinity when Hiebert was a professor there, SAM missionary trainees are extensively exposed to Hiebert's ideas through required reading and teaching.[121] Kresten specifically mentioned *Cultural Anthropology* and *Incarnational Ministry* as required reading and Hiebert's teaching on critical contextualization and self-theologizing as being significantly impactful on the teaching delivered to SAM missionaries.[122]

The Literature

Hiebert is widely cited, quoted and referenced in a variety of books, articles, essays, and blogs. These references sometimes take the form of adapting and applying some of Hiebert's ideas into new contexts. At times, these adaptations are legitimate extensions of Hiebert's ideas. Other times, however, these adaptations and applications are contrary to Hiebert's original idea. The adaptations and applications mentioned in this work are not meant to serve as an exhaustive survey of Hiebert's influence but rather as representative case studies.

Legitimate Applications/Adaptations

Some Evangelical authors credit Hiebert as being a central influence in their own writing and thinking on missiology. Hiebert provided us with some indications of the times when he felt that these applications were legitimate extensions of his ideas. At other times, we can infer his support through an analysis of his body of work.

Jon and Mindy Hirst's epistemology. The clearest example of an adaptation and application of Hiebert's work on critical realism is Jon Hirst and Mindy Hirst's book, *Through the River: Understanding Your Assumptions about Truth.*[123] The Hirsts read

---

[121]Kenny Kresten, email to author, 22 December 2010.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Jon Hirst and Mindy Hirst, with Paul G. Hiebert, *Through the River: Understanding Your Assumptions About Truth* (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2009).

Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts and contacted Hiebert via phone and email about "a more accessible version."[124] The Hirsts traveled to Chicago to meet with Hiebert, and after they began talking about developing that type of work, Hiebert replied, "You should do it!"[125] The Hirsts took up this challenge and set out to write their book. *Through the River* is their attempt "to bring the ideas that Dr. Hiebert shared to live [*sic*] through everyday examples and analogies."[126]

In *Through the River*, the Hirsts presented their discussion of epistemology in an extended metaphor of a place they called "River Town."[127] Their use of water and a river was a continuation of Hiebert's reference to Peter Berger's analogy of three communities who all live along a river.[128] Positivists are "Rock Dwellers;" Instrumentalists are "Island Dwellers;" and the "Valley Dwellers" represent those who look at the world "the truth lens of critical realism."[129] As with Hiebert's book, the Hirsts present each view in succession and argue that critical realism is the only firm foundation upon which to build. They refer to critical realism as "the truth we know and the truth we are learning."[130] As indicated by this and also by Hiebert's involvement with the early stages of this project, the Hirsts' book clearly represents a legitimate successor to Hiebert's epistemology.

Another indication that the Hirsts are legitimate inheritors of Hiebert's

---

[124]Jon Hirst, email message to author, 21 November 2010.

[125]Hirst and Hirst, *Through the River*, 8. Jon reported that "Dr. Hiebert challenged us to 'let it cook' and so we processed the ideas and worked on the framework," Jon Hirst, email message to author, 21 November 2010.

[126]Hirst, email message to author, 21 November 2010.

[127]Hirst and Hirst, *Through the River*, 19.

[128]Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 68.

[129]Hirst and Hirst, *Through the River*, 19.

[130]Ibid.

thinking on epistemology is that Hiebert's echoes that can be heard in one of Jon's blog posts:

> When the chairman of the Board, Mark Carpenter, opened up our meetings he shared a story that impacted me and is a great example of the truth lens we highlight in our book. Here is how it went:
>
> Mark shared how he and his son attended a city-wide cultural event held in the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil. One of the sponsors who hosted a part of the event was a local art museum that had a large sculpture garden as a key exhibit.
>
> This museum's event was a walk through the sculpture garden at night with each participant holding a flashlight. The participants would shine their lights on a sculpture when the guide was sharing about that particular work. Mark also mentioned that some of the sculptures were so big that the group had to work together with all their lights to bring the entire work of art into the light.
>
> Mark went on to share how each of us on the board brings various experiences, ideas, etc. to the work of MAI. Each of us are [*sic*] shining our light onto the vision and mission of the organization to bring it into full view.
>
> What an amazing analogy for truth!
>
> As I thought about Mark's flashlight story, I realized that it is a wonderful example of the Far Shore of the river. The fact that the sculpture existed was not in question. Everyone knew it was there because the guide was talking about it. But the many visitors could not see it in the dark. To remedy this, they had to each shine their light on the sculpture to bring it out of the darkness.
>
> That is the way it is with truth. We know that truth exists and that God is the master of it. He is our guide in the sculpture garden. But many times that truth is not clear or easy to see. But as we learn together in humble community and shine each of our lights on that piece of truth, it becomes much clearer.[131]

Over email, I asked the Hirsts what motivated them to write a book about the issue of critical realism. They responded that they believe that epistemology is a crucially important topic for their generation and for this time in history. They wrote, "People are so confused about truth and their understanding of truth impacts their faith, relationships and outreach."[132] As demonstrated by this statement, the Hirsts are legitimate successors to Hiebert's philosophical and methodological desire which was to bring academic research to bear on real life problems. Epistemological writing is of no

---

[131]Jon Hirst, *Shining a Light on Truth*. Blog Entry, 10 June 2010; accessed 10 June 2010; available from http://throughtheriverbook. blogspot.com/2010/06/shining-light-on-truth.html; Internet.

[132]Hirst, email message to author, 21 November 2010.

value unless it actually impacts people who have real problems. Referring to epistemological foundations of Christian outreach and missions, Jon wrote that he is "convinced that Critical Realism [*sic*] is the epistemology of what comes next. Critical Realism [*sic*] represents the railroad tracks on which the next age of thought will run and thus is key to how Christendom will approach truth and relate to each other and the world it seeks to reach."[133]

Luzbetak's understanding of culture and critical realism. The Roman Catholic anthropologist, Louis J. Luzbetak cited Hiebert's epistemological foundations in his work, *The Church and Cultures*. When discussing epistemology, he referred to Hiebert's view as "the current view."[134] Luzbetak's concern was primarily with understanding the nature of culture, but his inclusion of Hiebert's work on epistemology demonstrates the width and depth of Hiebert's influence. It is wide in the sense that a Roman Catholic anthropologist is depending on an Evangelical Mennonite Brethren missionary anthropologist for his epistemological foundations. It is deep in the sense that Luzbetak's does not cite Hiebert's works which are typically referenced in discussions of epistemology but his *Cultural Anthropology* textbook. Hiebert's epistemology was upholding his work before he discovered the label critical realism. He was an intuitive thinker who thought like a critical realist long before he knew that he was one.

Bryant Myers, the excluded middle, and worldview. Bryant Myers is Professor of International Development in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Seminary.[135] Myers has been greatly impacted by Hiebert's thinking and writing –

---

[133]Ibid.

[134]Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*, American Society of Missiology, ed. James A. Scherer, Sister Mary Motte and Charles R. Taber, vol. 12 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 135.

[135]"Bryant Myers" [on-line]; accessed 15 December 2010; available from http://www.fuller. edu/academics/faculty/bryant-myers.aspx; Internet.

particularly the flaw of the excluded middle and worldview thinking.

In an email concerning Hiebert's influence on his missiology and teaching in missions, Myers wrote that Hiebert was "one of the two shoulders" that he built upon for his 1999 book *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. [136] Myers made a similar statement in the acknowledgements of that book where he wrote that Hiebert and Jayakumar Christian were the sources of the "two powerful sets of ideas" upon which his book draws and builds and thanks both men for their friendship.[137] Myers' book is a holistic approach to ministry that, according to my chapter four, aligns with Hiebert's view of the integration of evangelism and social ministry.[138] In a further indication that Myers' thinking and writing is a legitimate extension of Hiebert's ideas, Hiebert wrote the foreword *Walking with the Poor* and called it "a masterpiece of integration and application in thinking about Christian ministry."[139]

Myers also reported that Hiebert's writing on the modern worldview plays a significant role in one of his classes, Poverty and Development, at Fuller. Myers also reported that he requires students to read sections from *Understanding Folk Religion* which deal with the flaw of the excluded middle for two other classes that he teaches at Fuller.[140]

---

[136]Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999)

[137]Bryant Myers, email to author, 1 November 2010. Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, xvii.

[138]Another work that draws significantly from Myers work is Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert's book *When Helping Hurts*. Steve Corbett's work at the Chalmers Center for Economic Development is based upon the ministry approach laid out in *When Helping Hurts*, so Hiebert's influence continues in an indirect manner through that book and the ministry as the Chalmers Center. Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009). "Foundational Principles to Poverty Alleviation" [on-line]; accessed 17 December 2010; available from http://www.chalmers.org/ministry_to_the_poor/chalmers_poverty_ alleviation5.php; Internet.

[139]Paul G. Hiebert, "Foreword," in Myers, *Walking with the Poor*.

[140]Myers, email to author.

George Hunter and Richard Mouw on the excluded middle. In his book,

The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West . . . Again,

anthropologist, church growth writer, and professor at Asbury Seminary George Hunter

referenced Hiebert's work on the flaw of the excluded middle. Former President of

Fuller Seminary Richard Mouw also incorporated Hiebert's excluded middle concept in

his book *Consulting the Faithful: What Christians Intellectuals Can Learn from Popular

Religion*. In each of these works, Hunter and Mouw state that the contemporary Western

church can learn some things about authentic Christianity from folk religious practices in

order to better understand the gospel.[141] Both Hunter and Mouw appealed to Hiebert's

seminal article on the flaw of the excluded middle.[142]

Hunter's book was his plea to Western church leaders to look to the success of

the Celtic church in the late fourth and early fifth century for a model of how to become

successful in reaching North America and Europe.[143] Referencing Hiebert's article,

Hunter contended that Celtic Christianity did not succumb to the flaw of the excluded

middle as most Western churches and missionaries have and do. Instead, they addressed

people's everyday problems through the development of "a folk Christianity of, by and

for the people."[144] Hunter called for contemporary Western Christians to seek to bring

God into their day-to-day lives through the incorporation of "contemplative prayer."[145]

The prayers that Hunter included in this work encourage Christians to invite God into

every aspect of their lives. Hunter's appeal resonates with Hiebert's call to develop a

---

[141]George G. Hunter III, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West... Again* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 32. Richard J. Mouw, *Consulting the Faithful: What Christian Intellectuals Can Learn from Popular Religion* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 1-2.

[142]Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, 30-31; Mouw, *Consulting the Faithful*, 50-52.

[143]Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, 12-13.

[144]Ibid., 32.

[145]Ibid.

theology that "includes a theology of God in human history: in the affairs of nations, of peoples and of individuals."[146]

Mouw also appealed to Hiebert's article. He contended that, by ignoring the middle, Western Christians "run the risk of failing to address abiding human needs."[147] Mouw argued that Hiebert's theory revealed that Christians can and must connect the high and low zones of existence by demonstrating God's concern about people's day-to-day lives. A failure to do so drives people to turn to New Age and other superstitious practices or to develop "a fascination with angels and demons."[148]

Mouw offered some "low key" praise to televangelists and mega-church pastors on this issue. Mouw does not commend their treatment of the issues but does point to them as examples of Western Christians who have (however imperfectly) addressed the middle.[149] The first step in addressing the middle is becoming aware of its existence (i.e. seeing "the flaw"). The second step is addressing the middle in a manner which is faithful to Scripture and honoring to Christ.[150]

Illegitimate Adaptations

In addition to the legitimate adaptations of Hiebert's ideas, there have also been some attempts to incorporate Hiebert's thinking and writing in ways that do not remain faithful to his original meaning. In one of those cases, Hiebert himself responded to these misapplications. In other cases, the relative illegitimacy of ideas must be inferred from Hiebert's published works. Charles Cook and Tité Tienou have both

---

[146]Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," *Missiology* 10, no. 1 (January 1982): 45.

[147]Mouw, *Consulting the Faithful*, 50.

[148]Ibid., 52-53.

[149]Ibid., 55-56.

[150]See my discussion of Hiebert's empirical encounter in chap. 4 of this work.

testified to Hiebert's gracious spirit toward those with whom he had disagreements.

Tienou reported that he would always provide critiques of his students' works by telling

them what he appreciated about their work and then gently guide them to reconsider

points he felt needed attention.[151]

In another testimony about Hiebert's graciousness in dealing with those with

whom he disagreed, Cook testified to Hiebert's humble spirit:

> Paul was also a gracious encourager; I don't recall him ever verbalizing an unkind word about anyone. He would often have "concerns" about choices people would make but he never expressed anything about them in a negative way. In debates or discussions with others he would often use his acumen and wisdom to employ what I called the straight stick principle. Ever the gentleman, Paul rarely forthrightly told you were wrong. Rather, if he perceived that there was another way of looking at an issue, he would express his thoughts on the subject by simply laying down a "straight stick" beside your "crooked stick." As you compared your idea with his, it would often become self evident that maybe your approach was not necessarily all that well developed and that there was the possibility of understanding the issue from another perspective![152]

The return of animism and the excluded middle. *Wonders and the Word*

was a book written by Mennonite Brethren scholars in response to John Wimber and the

Vineyard movement. The authors were not *primarily* concerned with coming to a

consensus about Wimber's approach to ministry. Rather, they sought to address the

questions and concerns raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard movement.[153]

---

[151]Tite Tienou, telephone interview with author, 3 November 2010.

[152]Charles A. Cook, "Quintessential Global Soul" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet

[153]James R. Coggins and Paul G. Hiebert, "The Man, the Message, and the Movement," in *Wonder and the Word: An Examination of Issues Raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement*, ed. James R. Coggins and Paul G. Hiebert (Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1989), 21-22. The history of Hiebert's interaction with Wimber, Peter Wagner, and others is nicely summarized in the *Trinity Journal* article dealing with Hiebert's legacy regarding the flaw of the excluded middle. Andrew Anane-Asane et al., "Paul G. Hiebert's "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle"," *Trinity Journal* 30NS, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 189-97. Concerning Hiebert's personal and professional interaction with this controversy, his daughter, Eloise Meneses reported, "But when the signs and wonders groups had got going in Fuller he became increasingly uncomfortable and eventually he started to voice this since it was so heavily in the school of world mission. He began to voice this as a kind of return to animism that he saw that theologically it collapsed and was possibly dangerous. So, he did not feel that he could be comfortable with that particular movement. He was not looking to leave Fuller, not at all, but he did get increasingly uncomfortable with what was going on, especially with Peter Wagner and some of the others who he felt were taking almost a superstitious approach." Eloise Hiebert Meneses, telephone interview with author, 5 July 2010.

Despite the stated desire to primarily address the issues and not the man, the authors necessarily interacted with Wimber and the movement as it was happening on the ground. Hiebert was always concerned with the practical outworking of his both ideas and the ideas of others, and this issue was no different. As such, Hiebert's article in *Wonders and the Word* indicated that he did not agree with the direction that Wimber and others had taken his ideas. His list of dangers of the manner in which healing and exorcisms were being emphasized is indicative of the strong concerns that Hiebert had about this movement.[154] His concerns were largely summed up with his warnings about "the return of animism" and a "new Christian magic."[155] Hiebert wrote that returning to animism has two dangers – assigning too much power to the middle and rejecting the contributions of science.[156]

Hiebert concluded his article on Wimber and the Vineyard movement by writing that churches need to develop ministries that take seriously the concerns raised by the Vineyard movement while avoiding the dangers into which they appeared to have fallen. First, he called for a pastoral ministry that honestly addresses people's concerns without making promises that the Bible does not make.[157] Second, he called for a teaching ministry that helped people begin to see beyond themselves and to cultivate "a concern for the lost and suffering world."[158] Third, Hiebert wrote that "the church has a prophetic calling" and that part of this calling is steering clear of the temptation to provide quick fixes that "in the end subvert the gospel."[159]

---

[154]Hiebert, "Healing and the Kingdom," 140-48.

[155]Ibid., 117-19, 143-44.

[156]Ibid., 119.

[157]Ibid., 150.

[158]Ibid., 151.

[159]Ibid., 151-52.

Bosch's critical hermeneutic and critical realism. David Bosch's book *Transforming Mission* is extremely important for any study of either the history of missions or theology of missions. It provides a wonderful foundation for the study of historical missiology and is justifiably widely read and appreciated. However, I do not believe that Bosch correctly understood and applied Hiebert's critical realism in support of his "critical hermeneutic." Bosch's approving citation of Hiebert suggests that he was a critical realist, but, if so, Bosch was inconsistent in his own epistemology. In the initial discussion, Bosch wrote that a critical hermeneutic "assumes that there is no such thing as an objective reality 'out there. . .'"[160] Later, Bosch approvingly cited Hiebert when we wrote that Hiebert provided a way in between "absolute" and "relative" and affirms that "we see only in part, but we do see."[161]

In *Mission on the Way*, Charles Van Engen suggested that Bosch and Hiebert were very similar in their approach to hermeneutics.[162] However, there is considerable difference in Bosch's critical hermeneutic and Hiebert's critical realism. Hiebert's critical realism consistently affirmed that there was an objective reality "out there." Bosch, at least at times, denied this reality. While Bosch believed that understanding was completely subjective, Hiebert believed that knowledge was both subjective and objective.

Kraft's critical realism. Charles Kraft devoted an entire chapter in his book *Worldview for Christian Witness* to the subject of critical realism. In the introduction to that book, Kraft articulated a point of view that accords with Hiebert's critical realism when he wrote that the study of other worldviews can help us learn "more about reality as

---

[160]David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 24.

[161]Ibid., 184.

[162]Charles Van Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 64 n. 39.

God sees it."[163] In his chapter on critical realism, Kraft paid homage to Hiebert saying

that the majority of what he wrote is taken from Hiebert, and he cited *Anthropological*

Insights and *Anthropological Reflections* as sources. In many ways, Kraft's presentation

of critical realism accords with Hiebert's. Both Kraft and Hiebert recognized that naïve

realism (i.e. positivism) is not sustainable. They also both critiqued idealism as being

equally unsustainable. However, Kraft's presentation and defense of critical realism

differs from Hiebert's in a number of important ways.

First, Kraft's presentation of relativism only dealt with idealism. Idealism, as

Kraft pointed out, denies the existence of reality and, instead, makes reality a production

of the mind.[164] Kraft's analysis accords with Hiebert who asserted that idealism is not a

form of realism and, instead, claims that knowledge is what is real.[165] Idealism, however,

is only one of the epistemological approaches that Hiebert dealt with under the heading of

relativism. Hiebert also discussed instrumentalism, and Kraft fails to do so. The absence

of such a discussion is important, because it demonstrates that Kraft's analysis of critical

realism is incomplete.

Kraft's initial presentation of the four tenets of critical realism reveals that his

presentation of critical realism is more akin to instrumentalism than Hiebert's critical

realism. In his discussion of dialogue and disagreement within an instrumentalist

epistemology, Hiebert wrote, "Because no one claims to know the truth and because there

is no objective criteria on which decisions can be made, disagreements do not drive the

participants to reexamine their positions seriously." This is exactly what Kraft seemed to

be promoting. In his fourth "assumption underlying critical realism," Kraft wrote, "And

---

[163]Charles H. Kraft, *Worldview for Christian Witness* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008), 6.

[164]Ibid., 62.

[165]Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 47.

you (not I) will have the final say as to what I mean. Your part, then, becomes at least as

important as mine in determining the reality of what I intend."[166] In statements like

these, Kraft was supporting a reader centered hermeneutic in which the reader determines

the meaning of the text. This approach to hermeutics is much closer to Hiebert's

presentation of instrumentalism – not critical realism.[167]

As with Bosch, Kraft also considered all human knowledge to be subjective.[168]

Hiebert's critical contextualization demonstrates that he agreed with Kraft's general

contention that authors and speakers ought to be receptor-oriented. However, Kraft's

understanding of critical realism is much closer to instrumentalism as Hiebert presented

it. In order to try to recover support for critical realism, Kraft equivocated on the word

"reality," giving it three different meanings depending on the manner in which he

capitalizes it, but his presentation is not persuasive – and not Hiebertian.

Leeman's misunderstanding of centered sets. Jonathan Leeman critiqued

Hiebert and others who advocate a centered set approach to church membership in his

The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love.[169] In regard to centered-set

theory, Leeman directly quoted Hiebert twice and referenced him one additional time.[170]

Leeman, apparently unaware of Hiebert's larger body of work on the topic of centered

---

[166]Kraft, *Worldview for Christian Witness*, 63.

[167]Kraft's assertion was that the reader creates the meaning of the text – not the author. This epistemology accords with Hiebert's analogy of the instrumentalist umpire whose response to the question about the reality of balls and strikes: "I call it the way I see it, but there is no way to know if I am right or wrong." Hiebert, *Missiological Implications*, 38. While Kraft claimed to believe in a "REALITY" that exists outside of our understanding of it, his presentation leads one to conclude that people's understanding of this "REALITY" are so bound to one's culture and personality that we cannot speak about this "REALITY" in any meaningful way. Kraft, *Worldview for Christian Witness*, 65.

[168]Ibid., 69.

[169]Jonathan Leeman, *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Membership and Discipline* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

[170]Leeman's fourth reference to Hiebert praises Hiebert's work on pointing out the dangers of institutionalization in the church and is not directly relevant to the discussion of centered-sets.

sets, only quoted and referenced Hiebert's chapter on centered-set theory in

Anthropological Reflections and did not demonstrate a clear grasp of Hiebert's centered

set theory.

Leeman's first critique of a centered-set approach to church membership was

in the third chapter of *The Surprising Offense*.[171] In that chapter, Leeman defended the

argument that "authority, grounded in holy love, creates life."[172] After criticizing authors

like Dan Kimball, Stuart Murray, and others who have taken "the relational turn" as a

viable alternative to totalitarian institutionalism, Leeman presented the centered-set

approach to church membership as "a slightly more careful way of talking about

belonging before believing."[173] After a lengthy quote from Hiebert, Leeman presented

another lengthy quote *not* from Hiebert but from an unnamed fellow commenter on an

undocumented blog conversation in which Leeman participated. It is difficult to interact

with Leeman's critique of Hiebert on this point because he did not interact with Hiebert's

work but merely dismissed it as being dichotomistic and referred to the centered-set

approach to church membership as "reductionistic."[174]

Under the sub-heading "the borders of the church" in the same chapter,

Leeman again referenced Hiebert, and, again, demonstrated a misunderstanding of

Hiebert's theory of centered-sets. Leeman criticized Hiebert's approach as not

---

[171]Leeman, *The Surprising Offense,* 134-35.

[172]Ibid.*,* 127.

[173]Ibid.*,* 133. It is not my purpose here to interact with Leeman's overarching argument about the need for authority in the church but only to investigate whether or not he has correctly understood and presented Hiebert's centered-set theory.

[174]Ibid.*,* 135. Leeman's critique of Hiebert as being part of a group that is reductionistic is similar to Carson's critique in *New Horizons* where Carson critiqued Hiebert for wearing rose-colored glasses when looking at the Indian church's view of church membership to which Hiebert confessed that he was being intentionally provocative in order to stretch Western church leaders to see things from a different point of view and would have taken the opposite position had he been critiquing the Indian church. Paul G. Hiebert, "Reply to Respondents," in *New Horizons in World Missions*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids, Baker), 237.

recognizing boundaries of any kind.[175] His accusation that centered set theorists do not

believe that there are boundaries around church membership and conversion rings hollow

in regard to Hiebert's position. Leeman may have correctly critiqued Frost and Hirsch's

centered set theory. In regard to their understanding of centered sets, Frost and Hirsch

wrote that "everyone is potentially part of the community in its broadest sense."[176] They

wrote that centered sets are "hard at the center, soft at the edges."[177] However, Hiebert

explicitly affirmed that there is a boundary over which one must cross – and that this

boundary is clear and marked. Hiebert simply did not think that the boundary should be

the focus. Hiebert wrote,

> [W]hile centered sets are not created by drawing boundaries, *they do have sharp boundaries* that separate things inside the set from those outside it – between things related to or moving towards the center and those that are not. Centered sets are well-formed, just like bounded sets. They are formed by defining the center and any relationship to it. The boundary then emerges automatically.[178]

Overall, Leeman's critique of centered sets is a critique of something foreign to

Hiebert's thinking and writing. Leeman wrote, "Could it be, however that the advocates

of the centered-set church are presenting us with . . . either/or, when what we want is a

both/and?"[179] In this question, Leeman accused centered set theorists as being

dichotomistic. However, Leeman's lumping of Hiebert's centered set approach in with

---

[175]Ibid.*,* 165.

[176]Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 47.

[177]Ibid., 207.

[178]Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 124, emphasis original.

[179]Leeman, *The Surprising Offense,* 134. Leeman pointed to the work of Guder et al. in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* as being superior since they "more carefully call for a congregation that's part bounded-set, part centered-set." Leeman, *The Surprising Offense,* 134 n. 19. Pointing to the work of Guder et al. is not necessary, however, since Hiebert's proposal for a centered set approach functions similarly to the one that they propose. See the third chapter of this work for a fuller treatment of Hiebert's centered set theory and the fourth chapter of this work for an application of Hiebert's centered set theory to the question of church membership and what it means to be a Christian.

Hirsch and Frost's theory and therefore rejecting the centered set approach as a whole is precisely either/or reasoning. It is Leeman's, not Hiebert's, thinking that is too bifurcated.

This sampling of how Hiebert's ideas have been applied, adapted, and critiqued is an excellent sign of his influence. Though he has not always been *correctly* understood, adapted, and applied, the fact that his works are being read and consulted, and that those ideas are being addressed is a strong indicator of his abiding influence on missiological literature.

Conclusion

This chapter has indicated that Hiebert's influence on missiology is both wide and deep. It is wide in the sense that his works have had an impact on undergraduate schools, master's degree programs, doctoral programs, missionary training, and missiological literature. His influence is also wide in its crossing of denominational lines. From of the SBC, to the PCA, to The Christian and Missionary Alliance (represented by Toccoa Falls College), to interdenominational ministry centers like Denver Seminary, Fuller Seminary, TEDS, New Tribes Mission, and South America Mission, Hiebert's influence is wide.

A final indication of the width of Hiebert's influence is the succeeding generations that have been influenced by his missiological ideas. Sam Larsen reported that one of his former students once approached Hiebert at a missions conference in Tokyo and introduced himself to Hiebert as his grandson. The student went on to explain that he had studied under Larsen at RTS and that Hiebert's influence had passed from Larsen to him – making him Hiebert's grandson.[180]

The depth of Hiebert's influence is also seen in the fact that his ideas, while extremely relevant to the time period in which he wrote, were not so tied to the

---

[180]Larsen, telephone interview.

contemporary scene that they are no longer applicable. In fact, most of his works are still in print and continue to be used and discussed at colleges, seminaries, and in missionary training programs. This ongoing use of his works indicates the depths that are to be plumbed in his ideas. Additionally, his works are continuing to be referenced and cited many years after their initial publication indicating that missiologists continue to turn to them for insight.

My investigation has confirmed that the six ideas that I identified have been seminal in their influence on contemporary missiology. All six of Hiebert's seminal ideas were mentioned at least once by the various missiologists whom I interviewed. Those ideas are also all represented in the various works that are required and recommended reading for students of missions and missionary trainees. The most widely referenced ideas were critical contextualization and the flaw of the excluded middle, and these two ideas have also been the ideas which have been referenced most often in missiological literature.

This chapter has indicated that Hiebert and his works have influenced and continue to influence Evangelical missiology. The majority of this chapter has been dedicated to demonstrating how his six seminal ideas in his published works have been influential. In the following chapter, I will reflect on how Hiebert as a person has influenced Evangelical missiology.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The testimonies and stories of Hiebert's friends and family reveal that Hiebert was loved by and influenced many people – personally, professionally, and academically. On April 1, 2007 (less than one month after Hiebert's death), *Global Missiology* published a special issue – "A Memoriam of Paul G. Hiebert." It consists of tributes and eulogies of Hiebert from various missions leaders, missiologists, and students of missions around the world. A survey of these various tributes and stories from Hiebert's friends, family, colleagues, and students reveal that Paul Hiebert was a man who fulfilled Christ's command to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."[1]

Mind

Hiebert devoted his truly gifted mind to the service of Christ in the cause of intercultural missions. He worked tirelessly to develop new ideas, help others develop ideas, and promote new ways of thinking that would fulfill the Great Commission. The bulk of this work has been devoted to demonstrating how Hiebert developed those ideas, how those ideas apply to current missiology, and how those ideas continue to have an abiding influence on missiology.

Wide-Ranging Scholarship

Up to this point, I have been almost solely concerned with Hiebert's scholarly influence, an influence that has been shown to be wide and deep. In addition to his

---

[1]Mark 10:30 (HCSB)

influence on the world of Evangelical missiology through the six seminal ideas which have been the focus of this work, Hiebert's scholarship is reflected in the world of secular anthropology where he published articles and taught for the first period of his academic career. His influence is also testified to by his wide-ranging study in subjects from physics to math to the finer points of writing and research. Succinctly, Roger Greenway referred to Hiebert as "America's foremost anthropologist and one from whom all of us have learned a great deal."[2]

Ralph Covell, senior professor of world Christianity at Denver Seminary, referred to Hiebert as "a renaissance missiologist" who never gave "narrow" answers to questions but always "embraced the whole academic spectrum."[3] Roger Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj testified to the breadth of Hiebert's scholarship: "In his scholarship Paul was modeling how a genuine theologian/ missiologist of world Christianity can contribute to the study of Christianity worldwide. As a result he was a man before his time."[4]

Steve Strauss formerly served as a missionary in Ethiopia and then as the director of SIM in the United States and is currently on the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS).[5] Hiebert served on Strauss' dissertation committee at TEDS. Despite the fact that Hiebert showed up late for the dissertation defense, Strauss testified to

---

[2]Enoch Wan, ed., "Tributes to Paul in E-Mail Format" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[3]Ralph Covell, "A Renaissance Missiologist" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[4]Roger Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj, "From India with Appreciations: A Tribute to Paul Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet. Hedlund and Bhakiraj are scholars are at the Mylapore Institute For Indigenous Studies in India whose purpose is "the interdisciplinary study of indigenous Christianity within South Asia in order to contribute to the overall life of the church and society." "Objectives" [on-line]; accessed 3 January 2011; available from http://www.dharmadeepika.org/miisnu/objectives.html; Internet.

[5]"Steven J. Strauss" [on-line]; accessed 3 January 2011; available from http://www.dts.edu/about/faculty/sstrauss; Internet.

Hiebert's scholarship by saying that Hiebert "understood the implications of what I had written better than anyone else in the room...including me!!"[6]

Norm Allison, emeritus professor at Toccoa Falls College, and former president of EMS, testified to Hiebert's legacy and influence on his own life: "It was Paul who helped me 'translate' secular anthropology into Christian anthropology, and I was always knowingly indebted to him for that valuable contribution to my life and ministry. He has left a legacy for those who follow him which will be difficult to equal."[7]

As this work has demonstrated, Hiebert's scholarship manifested itself in his published works on anthropology and missiology, but he was also well educated on various other subjects, as well. His intellectual curiosity led him to pursue various interests. At the age of seventy-two, Hiebert ordered video courses on physics and calculus in order to "brush up on them [i.e. his skills in physics and calculus]," since they "were getting rusty."[8]

"Generous Mind"

Hiebert served others with his gifted and curious mind. Writing about Hiebert, Jon and Mindy Hirst wrote, "He represented what we call a generous mind -- someone who takes what God has given and shares it with others."[9] Others who were impacted by Hiebert's life and work have indicated that the Hirsts' assessment about Hiebert's mind was correct.

Hiebert demonstrated his generous mind in his scholarship. In addition to the

---

[6]Steve Strauss, "Fond Memories of Paul Hiebert from a Grateful Disciple" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[7]Norm Allison, "My Indebtedness to Paul G. Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[8]Charles A. Cook, "Quintessential Global Soul" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[9]Jon Hirst and Mindy Hirst with Paul G. Hiebert, *Through the River: Understanding Your Assumptions about Truth* (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2009), 8.

Hirsts' testimony, Tité Tienou testified to Hiebert's generous spirit in regard to scholarship saying that Hiebert would bring along co-authors in order to help them along with their academic career – even when Hiebert had already done most of the work.[10]

Originally from Malaysia, T.V. Thomas currently serves as the director for the Centre for Evangelism and World Missions at the Canadian Revival Fellowship.[11] In his tribute to Hiebert, Thomas referenced Hiebert's generosity, his attitude of encouragement (referring to Hiebert's "Barnabus influence" in his life), and to Hiebert's "rich and wonderful legacy" as missiological scholar and teacher.[12]

Hiebert's generosity was the result of his realization that this world was not his home. Tienou reported,

> He lived the life of a pilgrim, sharing his earthly possessions and goods liberally. In this life he stood between many worlds but he was always conscious of the world to come. I will never forget his parting words, the last week I saw him, as he would take leave of us at his doorstep: "We do not say good-bye, we say see you!" Paul, the pilgrim is finally home! See you, Paul.[13]

Heart

As testified to by Tienou's report, Hiebert's mind was not the only thing devoted to Christ's service. Consistent with his own understanding of culture and worldview, Hiebert demonstrated that he believed that affections are as much a part of one's worldview as ideas. As such, he also served the missiological community by loving the Lord with his whole heart. His love and devotion is reflected in his humble spirit and passion for missions.

---

[10]Tité Tienou, telephone interview with author, 3 November 2010.

[11]"Dr. T.V. Thomas" [on-line]; accessed 3 January; available from http://www. revivalfellowship.com/team_tvthomas.html; Internet.

[12]T.V. Thomas, "A Mini Reflection of Fond Memories" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010.; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[13]Tité Tienou, "A Tribute to Paul G. Hiebert, Professor, Colleague, Brother, Pilgrim" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/ issue/view/37; Internet.

Humility

One of Paul Hiebert's heroes was E. Stanley Jones.[14] One of the lessons that Hiebert learned from Jones was that missionaries are not called to be God's lawyers but his witnesses.[15] Though he likely would have been a highly effective debater and persuasive attorney, Hiebert did not feel that this was the role of a Christian – let alone a Christian missionary in a cross-cultural setting. Instead, the role of the Christian missionary was to testify to Christ, his Word, and his work in the world. This approach to cross-cultural witnessing was reflective of one Hiebert's humble spirit – which was testified to by many friends, colleagues, and students.

Hiebert's humility was reflected in his willingness to take the position of a learner throughout his life. One of his doctoral students testified to Hiebert's treatment of students as colleagues and of their impact on him:

> He once told me that my fellow students at TEDS and I were scholars, not students. . . . He enjoyed the process of learning with us and from us. Here was one of the most brilliant minds I'd ever been exposed to and he was taking notes from me. Many other TEDS students have shared similar stories of how their papers and ideas spurred Dr. Hiebert to study an area he wanted to know more about.[16]

Jon and Mindy Hirst, authors of *Through the River*, reported that "one of the main gifts he [Hiebert] gave us was a commitment to humility in how we engage those around us. This humility is an important part of critical realism."[17] A humble spirit is crucial to understanding and applying Hiebert's critical realism, since one must be willing to critically evaluate the truthfulness of his own ideas as he comes into contact with new concepts and has new experiences.

As a testimony to Hiebert's humble spirit, Tienou told two stories. First,

---

[14]Eloise Hiebert Meneses, telephone interview with author, July 5, 2010.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Terry Stelle, "A Life Well Lived: My Reflections on the Life of Dr. Paul G. Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[17]Jon Hirst and Mindy Hirst, email to author, 21 November 2010.

whenever he was invited to the Tienou's for dinner, Hiebert would arrive early but he would park at the end of the street waiting for the right time. He was so conscious of not inconveniencing people that he did not want to be either early or late. Also, instead of sending a proxy as the department chair at TEDS, Hiebert came to the airport himself to meet Tienou and his family when Tienou came to be on the faculty at Trinity.[18]

Tienou and Hiebert's co-author for *Understanding Folk Religion*, Dan Shaw, also testified to Hiebert's heart. Shortly after arriving at Fuller, Shaw was speaking with Hiebert about his own feelings of inadequacy: "I replied that 'I felt like a very small tadpole in a pond of big frogs. Paul smiled, put his hand gently on my shoulder and said, 'The truth is, Dan, we are all little frogs and you are one of us.'"[19]

Jude Tiersma Watson is an associate professor of urban mission at Fuller. She reported two different stories which reflected Hiebert's consummate humility and his heart as a servant. First, during his time at Fuller, Hiebert and his family were members of a small Mennonite Brethren church where the pastor was an ex-gang member and ex-convict. Hiebert served that pastor and that church by supporting his pastor and doing practical work like repairing the church floors.[20] The second incident that Watson shared took place when they were both on a mission trip to serve a meal at a shelter in Los Angeles. Watson reported that she observed Hiebert "in conversation with a homeless man, listening to his story."[21] Watson interpreted her observation: "In class, he would speak of the importance of listening to people's stories, and here he was, doing just that on the streets of skid row."[22]

---

[18]Tité Tienou, telephone interview with author, 3 November 2010.

[19]R. Daniel Shaw, "A Tribute to Paul Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[20]Jude Tiersma Watson, "Tribute to Paul and Fran Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid.

In a poetic tribute to Hiebert, Paul Grant wrote that Hiebert, like the Paul the apostle, shunned fame and gave all glory to Christ:

> Just like your esteemed namesake
> You too dismissed all fame,
> "I do not deserve to be called an apostle",
> Were his words, but also went on to claim,
> "By the grace of God I am what I am"
> His glory was in God's Lamb[23]

Passion

Hiebert was a man of deep passion for his life's work. He threw himself fully into his scholarship and missions work. When I asked Hiebert's close friend Bill Pannell about one incident which typified Hiebert the man and missiologist, Pannell reported,

> I cannot think of an incident as much as an attitude. I was always impressed with Paul's passion to get back to India and not as a researcher primarily. He could do that and would do that but his heart was there and he loved those people and he loved the whole context of the church in that culture and finding ways to model and promote the gospel through the church there. Paul was a kingdom man. Everything he did was in that service. *You could not separate his scholarship, his research from his passion for the people of God*.[24]

When I asked him about an event which typified Paul Hiebert the man and missiologist, his close friend Enoch Wan shared a story about Hiebert's presentation of inter-disciplinary research methodology at an EMS meeting. Wan reported that Hiebert "was passionate about the topic and engaged in deep conversations with participants."[25] Hiebert's passion was not for academics alone but also for communicating the knowledge that he had accumulated to students and for interacting with participants at EMS. In short, Paul Hiebert was a man who loved the Lord with all his heart.

---

[23]Paul E. Grant, "Paul Hiebert: A Tribute" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[24]Pannell, telephone interview with author, July 14, 2010, emphasis mine.

[25]Enoch Wan, email to author, 21 October 2010.

Soul

Hiebert's commitment to love God with all of his soul manifested itself in his love for the family that the Lord gave him. It was also reflected in his wonderful sense of humor that he shared with others.

Love for Family

In addition to his love for and devotion to his wife Fran who preceded him in death, Hiebert loved his children and grandchildren, and he was loved by his family. His obituary reads,

> His family will remember him for the following things among many others: playing rough and tumble with kids, enjoying family camping, celebrating all events at Chinese restaurants, happily eating hot curry till dripping with sweat, traveling so much he could hardly be found ('Where's Dad?'), doodling on Styrofoam cups, being an honorary member of his sisters' Red Hat Society, and faithfully having family devotions.[26]

Mindy Hirst also reflected on Hiebert's love of family,

> Family was obviously very important to Dr. Hiebert. His daughter was there taking care of him during his Chemotherapy and it was clear that they had a special relationship. He talked about his wife with such love and admiration. You could tell he was excited to see her. He told us that she was given her doctorate after she died and when he sees her in heaven he will say, "Dr. Hiebert I presume."[27]

Hiebert's love for his own family overflowed in his desire to see others love their families well. Mindy Hirst reported that Hiebert conveyed a deep and profound love for the role of parents after the Hirsts had met with Hiebert to discuss their book: "As we were leaving after our day of talking over the points of the book, I said to Dr. Hiebert, now we have to get to work on this project. He pointed to the car seat I was holding (with our third child sitting in it) and said 'That's the most important project you need to work on.'"[28]

---

[26]"Obituary" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology. org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[27]Hirst and Hirst, email to author.

[28]Ibid.

Sense of Humor

Several of Hiebert's friends reported that he had a fantastic sense of humor. Wan reported that one of his fondest memories of Hiebert was a time they spent walking in the park telling stories and sharing cross-cultural humor.[29] Tienou reported that Hiebert had a self-deprecating sense of humor and also used to doodle on styrofoam cups during faculty meetings and regrets having not kept some of Hiebert's famous artwork.[30] John Branner, the chair of intercultural studies at Western Seminary, shared a story about Hiebert:

> Dr. Hiebert told of a doctoral student in entomology who's [*sic*] research focus had been the hind legs of the gnat. Upon receiving his degree an interviewer asked him if he had any regrets about his studies. Paul delivered the punch line with a twinkle in his eye: "If I had to do it over again I would just study the right leg!" The great anthropologist had a delightful sense of humor.[31]

Strength

Hiebert loved the Lord with all his strength by being an encourager to all those with whom he came into contact. He devoted himself to the multiplication of his ministry throughout the course of his life. Hiebert's involvement in the academic world was not about how many books and articles he could publish or gaining a certain amount of notoriety. He was involved in academics so that he could fulfill 2 Timothy 2:2 by training others in doing effective intercultural missions.

David Dougherty, of OMF International, testified to Hiebert's efforts at ministry multiplication: "His impact on generations of students who have been influenced by him during their pre-service or in-service training has resulted in their greater ministry effectiveness and influence. Only eternity will reveal the magnitude of his ultimate

---

[29]Enoch Wan, email to author, 21 October 2010.

[30]Tienou, telephone interview with author.

[31]John Branner, "The Professor/Anthropologist with a Sense of Humor" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

contribution to the cause of Jesus Christ."[32]

Hiebert remained committed to multiplication and passing on his ideas to others during his final days: "Even though he was undergoing chemotherapy, he was so excited about the ideas that he would get up in mid-thought and get a slide or a set of notes that would help us understand the point he was trying to communicate."[33]

In what sounds like Francis and Edith Schaffer's ministry at L'Abri, following Fran's death in 1999, Hiebert opened his home to various TEDS students, and his home became known as 'the Hiebert Ashram." The ashram was a place of fellowship and scholarship where Hiebert walked daily with young men who were students at TEDS. Early morning coffee, the evening meal, and late night ice cream became opportunities for these young men to discuss missions, anthropology, and life with Hiebert.[34] One of the students who benefited from the Hiebert Ashram, Charles Cook reported,

> Those who shared in the Ashram experience have been forever shaped by the spirit of a man who loved learning, enjoyed people and wanted to tangibly assist in the preparation of leaders for the global church. It is one thing to observe Paul "from a distance" and appreciate his spirit and scholarship. It was quite another to watch him "up close and personal" and see the consistency of his life![35]

Sam Larsen wrote that Hiebert was able to continue to encourage him – even in his final days on earth.[36]

Fran Hiebert, too, remained involved in encouraging missionaries and acting as a multiplier for the cause of intercultural missions. She served international students at

---

[32]E. David, "A Tribute to Paul Hiebert: Scholarship with Impact and Influence" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[33]Hirst and Hirst, email to author.

[34]Charles A. Cook, "Quintessential Global Soul" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[35]Cook, "Quintessential Global Soul"

[36]Wan, "Tributes to Paul Hiebert in E-Mail Format."

both Fuller and TEDS, as well.[37]

Michael Jaffarian credited Hiebert for keeping him and his family on the mission field – twice. On two separate occasions, the Jaffarians were ready to resign their missionary post and return to the States, and on both occasions they remembered Hiebert's advice to them as students at Fuller. He told them that when they are ready to resign to write the resignation letter and then wait thirty days to send it. Both times that the Jaffarians did this, God told them to stay on the field, and they continue to serve God faithfully as a missionary researcher for Operation World.[38]

Hiebert served as an encourager to Greg Waybright, the president at Trinity International University. Waybright wrote that few have been as much of an encouragement to him in his ministry as Hiebert, and he referred to Hiebert as,

> one of the leading global Christians of the past century: missiologist, anthropologist, teacher of those who will "teach the nations" (Matthew 28:20), *mentor to countless leaders* in Christ-centered higher education throughout the world, thinker, encourager, husband, father, friend, follower of Jesus.[39]

Conclusion

This work has sought to communicate the life and legacy of Paul G. Hiebert through an investigation of his six seminal ideas. It has been demonstrated that Hiebert's six seminal ideas have had and continue to have an abiding influence on Evangelical missiology. However, Hiebert's legacy cannot be summarized through a mere recitation of his ideas. His legacy runs much deeper than words on a page and ideas in people's heads. His legacy is in the lives that he influenced and helped to change by the power of the Spirit and for the glory of God.

---

[37]"Obituary" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology. org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[38]Michael Jaffarian, "Thanks to Paul Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[39]Greg Waybright, Greg, "Remembering Dr. Paul Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/ view/37; Internet.

Paul Hiebert was a gift from the Lord. In his rigorous scholarship, Christian example as husband and father, kind and gentle humility, and grace-filled encouragement and mentor, Paul Hiebert was a wonderful model. David Hesselgrave wrote that in order to truly know about mankind, one must know God, and he pointed to Hiebert as "the best kind of anthropologist" because of his deeply rooted theology which was "personal, academic, and practical."[40] Hesselgrave called Hiebert's personal demeanor "a model for all of us," and concluded his tribute by summing up Hiebert's life and legacy well: "If Paul G. Hiebert was not 'one of a kind,' he was certainly 'one of the kind of which we need many more.' So, thank you, Paul, for teaching us. And thank you, Lord, for sending Paul to our churches, our schools, our missions . . . our world."[41]

---

[40]David John Hesselgrave, David John, "A Tribute to My Colleague, Paul G. Hiebert" [on-line]; accessed 22 October 2010; available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

[41]Ibid.

APPENDIX 1

STATEMENT OF FAITH OF TABOR COLLEGE

The following is a portion of the Mennonite Brethren Statement of Faith
posted on the Tabor College website with the statement, "Following are some of the
important beliefs in the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith."[1]

God

The God of the Bible is the one true God. He has existed for all time and is the
Creator of everything.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The
life and teachings of Jesus provide direction for Christian living, and Jesus' death,
resurrection, and ascension provide the means by which we come to God. By
making a conscious, personal commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord, humans
find forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Holy Spirit

When Jesus ascended, He promised that God, the Holy Spirit, would come to
convict persons of sin, be their guide and teacher, and empower them for faithful
discipleship. The Holy Spirit is present in all believers.

Bible

The Bible is inspired by God and is the infallible and authoritative guide for the life
of Christian discipleship.

Discipleship

Being Christ's disciple means moving past the initial commitment to Him to careful
obedience to Him, recognizing Him as Lord, loving others as well as loving God,
and seeking to bring others into faithful discipleship.

Humanity

God created humans in His own image, but with the ability to do evil as well as
good. Because of the sacredness of human life, procedures and actions which
terminate human life violate God's plan.

---

[1]"History," [on-line], accessed 16 July 2010, available from http:// www.tabor.edu/about-tabor/history; Internet.

Reconciliation

Christ's obedience to the Father, along with His death and resurrection, make possible the reconciliation of humans to God. In turn, the Bible teaches Christians to be reconcilers, both in bringing people to God and in helping to reconcile conflicts among humans. Faithful Christians seek to be peacemakers in all situations and to find nonviolent ways to achieve justice.[2]

Church

The Church consists of all true followers of Christ. The Church is a community in which its members faithfully interpret God's voice and where we are accountable to one another for faithful Christian living and for the life of the Church.

---

[2]Ibid.

APPENDIX 2

HIEBERT'S CLASSES AT FULLER 1978-1985

The following is a list of Hiebert's classes at Fuller Seminary. They are included here not to give an exhaustive listing of classes that Hiebert taught in his academic career but rather in order to give the reader a sense of the scope of Hiebert's teaching.

1978-80 Catalog: M 620/720: Phenomenology and Institutions of Animism

M 520: Intro to the Study of Religion

M 534/634: Urban Anthropology

M 624: Hinduism and Christianity

M 639/739: Topics in Anthropology – with Kraft

M 649: Topics in Communication - with Kraft

M 694: Research Method.

M 730: Advanced Anthro

M 734: Anthropological Theory

M 756: Ethnohistory

1980-82 catalog – Same as 1978-80 plus

M 530: Cultural Anthro in Christian Perspective

M 624: Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity

M 630: Anthro – with Kraft

M 633: Ethnopsychology – with Kraft

M 720: Animism in the Great Religions.

M 735: Worldview and Worldview Change

Minus: M 730 (not listed in this catalog)

M 756 (Kraft listed)

1982/83 catalog – MB 500: Cultural Anthro in Christian Perspective

MB 520: Anthropology

MB 570: Applied Anthropology – with Kraft

MB 571: Urban Anthropology and Church Planting

MB 572: Ethnopsychology – with Kraft

MB 595: Topics in Anthro – with Kraft and Shaw

MB 700: Adv Seminar in Mission Anthro - with Kraft and Shaw

MB 720: Theory of Anthro – with Kraft

MB 725: Worldview and Worldview Change- with Kraft

MB 780: Research Methods

MH 565: Church and Mission in India

ML 595: Topics in Leadership Selection and Training – with

Clinton

ML 700: Advanced Seminar in Leadership Training

ML 800: Tutorial in Leadership

MR 500: Anthropology of Religion

MR 520: Phenomenology and Institutions of Folk Religion

MR 595: Topics in Religion

MR 700: Advanced Seminar on Religion

MR 720: Crucial Themes in Transcultural Theology

MR 800: Tutorial in Religion

1983/84 Catalog – Same as 1982/83 Catalog

1984/85 Catalog – Same as 1983/1984 Catalog plus

MB 560: Research Methods

Minus: MB 572: Ethnopsychology

MB 700: Advanced Seminar on Religion

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Books

Hiebert, Paul G. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985.

_____. *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994.

_____. *Cultural Anthropology*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1976.

_____. *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.

_____. *Konduru: Structure and Integration in a South Indian Village*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971.

_____. *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999.

_____. *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Hiebert, Paul G., and Frances F. Hiebert. *Case Studies in Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.

Hiebert, Paul G., and Eloise Hiebert Meneses. *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995.

Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, and Titè Tienou. *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

Articles

Hiebert, Paul G. "Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries." In *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*, ed. Edgar J. Elliston, 75-92. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989.

_____. "An Anthropologist Looks at Human Systems: The Gospel in Our Culture." *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 21, no. 1 (April 1998): 65-81.

_____. "An Anthropologist Looks at World Views: The Invisible Worlds in Which We Live." *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 21, no. 1 (April 1998): 122-44.

_____. "Are We Our Others' Keepers?" *Currents in Theology and Mission* 22 (October 1995): 325-27.

_____. "Barrett and Beyond." *Missiology* 12, no. 1 (January 1984): 63-68.

_____. "Beyond Anti-Colonialism to Globalism." *Missiology* 19, no. 3 (July 1991): 263-81.

_____. "Can We Change Entire Cultures?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 31 (January 1995): 66-67.

_____. "The Category "Christian" in the Mission Task." *International Review of Mission* 72 (July 1983): 421-27.

_____. "Checks against Syncretism." *Christianity Today*, 11 February 1991, 39-40.

_____. "Clean and Dirty: Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings in India." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (January 2008): 90-92.

_____. "Conversion and Worldview Transformation." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (April-June 1997): 83-86.

_____. "Conversion, Culture, and Cognitive Categories." *Gospel in Context* 1, no. 4 (October 1978): 24-29.

_____. "Conversion in Cross-Cultural Perspective." In *Conversion: Doorway to Discipleship*, ed. Henry J. Schmidt, 88-106. Hillsboro, KS: The Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1980.

_____. "Conversion in Hinduism and Buddhism." In *Handbook of Religious Conversion*, ed. H. Newton Malony and Samuel Southard, 9-21. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1992.

_____. "Critical Contextualization." In *The Best in Theology*, vol. 2, ed. J. I. Packer, 387-400. Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Inc., 1987.

_____. "Critical Contextualization." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 11 (July 1987): 104-12.

_____. "Critical Contextualization." *Missiology* 12, no. 3 (July 1984): 287-96.

_____. "Critical Issues in the Social Sciences and Their Implications for Mission Studies." *Missiology* 24, no. 1 (January 1996): 65-82.

_____. "Cultural Differences and the Communication of the Gospel." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 373-83. 3rd ed. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999.

_____. "Cultural Relativism and Theological Absolutes." *Direction* 2 (January 1973): 2-6.

_____. "Epistemological Foundations for Science and Technology." *Theological*

Students Fellowship Bulletin 8 (March-April 1985): 5-10.

_____. "Ethnicity and Evangelism in the Mennonite Brethren Church." *Direction* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 87-102.

_____. "Evangelism, Church, and Kingdom." In *The Good News of the Kingdom: Mission Theology for the Third Millennium*, ed. Charles Van Engen, Dean S. Gilliland and Paul Pierson, 153-61. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.

_____. "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle." In *Landmark Essays in Mission and World Christianity*, ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig, 179-89. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.

_____. "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle." *Missiology: An International Review* 10, no. 1 (January 1982): 35-47.

_____. "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 414-21. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999.

_____. Foreword to *Announcing the Kingdom*, by Arthur Glasser, 7-9. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

_____. "Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel." In *The Word among Us*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland, 101-20. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989.

_____. "Globalization as Evangelism." In *The Globalization of Theological Education*, ed. Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans and David A. Roozen, 64-89. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.

_____. "The Gospel and Culture." In *The Gospel and Islam: A 1978 Compendium*, ed. Don M. McCurry, 58-70. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1979.

_____. "Gospel and Culture: The WCC Project." *Missiology: An International Review* 25, no. 2 (April 1997): 199-207.

_____. "The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perspectives on Contextualization." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 82-102. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

_____. "The Gospel in Our Culture: Methods of Social and Cultural Analysis." In *The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, ed. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder, 139-57. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996.

_____. "Healing and the Kingdom." In *Wonder and the Word: An Examination of Issues Raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement*, ed. James R. Coggins and Paul G. Hiebert, 109-52. Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1989.

_____. "India: The Politicization of a Sacred Society." In *Religions and Societies: Asia and the Middle East*, ed. Carlo Caldarola, 290-331. Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1982.

_____. "An Introduction to Mission Anthropology." In *Crucial Dimensions in World*

Evangelization, ed. Arthur Glasser, Paul G. Hiebert, C. Peter Wagner and Ralph D. Winter, 41-88. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976.

_____. "Karma and Other Explanation Traditions in a South Indian Village." In *Karma: An Anthropological Inquiry*, ed. Charles F. Keyes and E. Valentine Daniel, 119-30. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983.

_____. "The Kingdom Reconciling Humanity." In *Kingdom of God and the Way of Peace*, 26-36. Lombard, IL: Mennonite World Conference, 1979.

_____. "Megatrends in Missions." *Direction* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 37-46.

_____. "Metatheology: The Step beyond Contextualization." In *Reflection and Projection: Missiology at the Threshold of 2001*, ed. Hans Kasdorf and Klaus W. Muller, 382-95. Bad Liebenzell, West Germany: Verlag der Liebenzeller Mission, 1988.

_____. "Missiological Education for a Global Era." In *Missiological Education for the 21st Century: The Book, the Circle, and the Sandals*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, Charles Van Engen and Edgar J. Elliston, 34-42. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

_____. "The Missiological Implications of an Epistemological Shift." *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 8 (May 1985): 12-18.

_____. "Missiological Issues in the Encounter with Emerging Hinduism." *Missiology: An International Review* 28, no. 1 (January 2000): 47-63.

_____. "Missions and Anthropology: A Love/Hate Relationship." *Missiology: An International Review* 6, no. 2 (April 1978): 165-80.

_____. "Missions and the Renewal of the Church." In *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk, 157-67. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983.

_____. "Missions and the Understanding of Culture." In *The Church in Mission: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to J.B. Toews*, ed. A.J. Klaassen, 251-65. Fresno, CA: Board of Christian Literature Mennonite Brethren Church, 1967.

_____. "The Missionary as Mediator of Global Theologizing." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, 288-308. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

_____. "Planting Churches in North America Today." *Direction* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 6-14.

_____. "Popular Religion." In *Toward the Twenty-First Century in Christian Mission*, ed. James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote, 253-66. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

_____. "Power Encounter and Folk Islam." In *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry, 45-61. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989.

_____. "Religious Fairs in Andhra Pradesh: An Analysis of Cultural Infrastructures." In *Culture and the Anthropological Tradition: Essays in Honor of*

Robert F. Spencer, ed. Robert H. Winthrop, 77-95. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.

_____. Review of *A People of Missions: A History of General Conference Mennonite Overseas Missions* by James C. Juhnke. *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 55 (January 1981): 86-87.

_____. Review of *Anabaptists and Postmodernity* Edited by Susan Biesecker-Mast and Gerald Biesecker-Mast. *Missiology* 30, no. 2 (April 2002): 244.

_____. Review of *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* by John B. Cobb, Jr. and Zen and Christian: The Journey Between by John D. Eusden. *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 8 (March-April 1984): 29.

_____. Review of *Bread for the Journey: The Mission of Transformation and the Transformation of Mission* by Anthony J. Gittins. *Missiology* 22, no. 3 (July 1994): 386.

_____. Review of *Caste in Tamil Culture: The Religious Foundations of Sudra Domination in Tamil Sri Lanka* by Bryan Pfaffenberger." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52 (June 1984): 405-06.

_____. Review of *Caste, Cult, and Hierarchy: Essays on the Culture of India by Pauline Kolenda. Journal of Asian Studies* 45 (May 1986): 631-32.

_____. Review of *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation* by B.J. Malina. *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 91.

_____. Review of *Christianity and Cultures* Edited by Norbert Greinacher and Norbert Mette. *Missiology* 24, no. 3 (July 1996): 415-16.

_____. Review of *Gospel versus Gospel* by Theron F. Schlabach. *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 55 (January 1981): 87-89.

_____. Review of *In the Shadow of the Mahatma: Bishop V.C. Azariah and the Travails of Christianity in British India* by Susan Billington Harper. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 37 (October 2001): 530-32.

_____. Review of *Kandila: Samo Ceremonialism and Interpersonal Relationships* by R. Daniel Shaw. *Missiology* 20, no. 4 (October 1992): 548-49.

_____. Review of *Meaning across Cultures* by Eugene A. Nida and William D. Reyburn. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8 (January 1984): 33-34.

_____. Review of *More than Bread: Ethnography of a Soup Kitchen. Urban Mission* 6 (May 1989): 61.

_____. Review of *Religion: The Great Questions. Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 8 (November-December 1984): 34.

_____. Review of *Religions and Cultures: First International Conference of Mediterranean* Edited by Adrianna Destro and Mauro Peace."*Missiology* 31, no. 4 (October 2003): 495-96.

_____. Review of *Rivalry and Tribute* by Bruce Elliot Tapper. *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 1 (1989): 176-77.

_____. Review of *Spiritual Power and Missions: Raising the Issues* Edited by Edward Rommen. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21 (January 1997): 43.

_____. Review of *Symbol and Ceremony: Making Disciples across Cultures* by A.H. Mathias Zahniser. *Missiology* 27, no. 1 (January 1999): 135.

_____. Review of *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion* by Andrew Buckser and Stephen D. Glazier. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30, no. 2 (2006): 103-04.

_____. Review of *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America* Edited George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder. *Missiology* 25 (April 1997): 230-31.

_____. Review of *The Cult of the Goddess Pattini by Cananath Obeyesekere. Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53 (June 1985): 310-11.

_____. Review of *The Sacred in Popular Hinduism* by A.M. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 52 (September 1984): 615.

_____. Review of *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview* Edited by Gregory Baum. *Missiology* 24, no. 4 (October 2000): 505.

_____. Review of *The World In Between: Christian Healing and the Struggle for Spiritual Survival* by E. Milingo. *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 9 (Fall 1987): 194-95.

_____. Review of The *World Is Too Much with Us: "Culture" in Modern Protestant Missions* by Charles R. Taber. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 28 (October 1992): 431.

_____. Review of *The World Is Too Much with Us: "Culture" in Modern Protestant Missions* by Charles R. Taber. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 17 (April 1993): 85-86.

_____. Review of *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth. Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 31 (October 1995): 504-05.

_____. Review of *Unearthly Powers: A Christian Perspective on Primal and Folk Religion* by David Burnett. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 15 (January 1991): 41-42.

_____. "Sets and Structures: A Study of Church Patterns." In *New Horizons in World Mission*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave, 217-27. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.

_____. "The Social Sciences and Missions: Applying the Message." In *Missiology and the Social Sciences: Contributions, Cautions, and Conclusions*, ed. Edward Rommen and Gary Corwin, 184-213. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996.

_____. "Social Structure and Church Growth." In *Perspectives on the World*

Christian Movement: A Reader, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, 422-28. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999.

_____. "Sociocultural Theories and Mission to the West." In *Evangelical, Ecumenical, and Anabaptist Missiologies in Conversation*, ed. James R. Krabill, Walter Sawatsky and Charles F. Van Engen, 169-76. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.

_____. "Spiritual Warfare and Worldview." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 24, no. 3 (July 2000): 240-56.

_____. "Spiritual Warfare and Worldviews." *Direction* 29, no. 2 (2000): 114-24.

_____. "Syncretism and Social Paradigms." In *Contextualization and Syncretism: Navigating Cultural Currents*, ed. Gailyn Van Rheenen, 31-46. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006.

_____. "Window Shopping the Gospel." *Urban Mission* 4 (May 1987): 5-12.

_____. "Worldview Transformation." In *From the Straight Path to the Narrow Way: Journeys of Faith*, ed. David H. Greenlee, 23-34. Waynesboro, GA: Authentic, 2005.

_____. "Worldviews and Why They Matter." In *Even the Demons Submit: Continuing Jesus' Ministry of Deliverance*, ed. Loren L. Johns and James R. Krabill, 3-23. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2006.

Hiebert, Paul G., and Young Hertig. "Asian Immigrants in American Cities." *Urban Mission* 10 (March 1993): 15-24.

Hiebert, Paul G., and Barbara Hiebert-Crape. "The Role of Religion in International Development." *Conrad Grebel Review* 13 (Fall 1995): 281-98.

Hiebert, Paul G., John Nyquist, and Harold Netland. "Books We Recommend On Religious Pluralism." *Direction* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 114-15.

Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, and Titè Tienou. "Responding to Split-Level Christianity and Folk Religion." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1999/2000): 173-82.

_____. Review of *Partners in Dialogue: Christianity and Other World Religions* by Arnulf Camps, Translated by John Drury. *Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin* 9 (January 1986): 36.

Hiebert, Paul G. and Thomas Norman E. "Selected Annotated Bibliography on Missiology: Missions--Social Aspects." *Missiology: An International Review* 29, no. 3 (July 2001): 393-97.

Hiebert, Paul G., and Titè Tienou. "Missions and the Doing of Theology." In *The Urban Face of Mission: Ministering the Gospel in a Diverse and Changing World*, ed. Manuel Ortiz and Susan S. Baker, 85-96. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002.

Hiebert, Paul, and Sam Larsen. "Partnership in the Gospel: Misers, Accountants, and Stewards." *Direction* 28, no. 1 (1999): 55-62.

Internet

Hiebert, Paul G. "Short-Termers -- Leave Your Jeans, Shorts, and Sneakers at Home!" (Paper presented on his behalf at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Missiological Society Regional Meeting -- Northeast Region, April 1, 2007) [on-line]. Accessed 23 July 2010. Available from http:// www.globalmissiology.org/ cms/images/stories/hiebert/hiebert_short_termers_2007.pdf; Internet.

Hiebert, Paul G. and Tité Tienou. "Missional Theology." [on-line]. *Mission Focus: Annual Review* 10 (2002): 38-54. Accessed 8 November 2010. Available from http://www.ambs.edu/files/documents/news-and-publications /publications/mf/ Missioin_Focus_2002.pdf; Internet.

Thesis

Hiebert, Paul Gordon. "The Impetus of Nationalism on the Indigenization of the Protestant Church in India." M.A. thesis, Department of Missions, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1957.

Sound Recordings

Hiebert, Paul. *A Conversation with Doctoral Students at Western Seminary on Research Methodology*, MP3 Audio [on-line]. Telephone interview conducted by Enoch Wan on the telephone, 6 March, 2007, 27 minutes. Accessed 23 July 2010. Available from http://www.globalmissiology.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view =article&id=16&Itemid=11; Internet.

_____. *Reflections of Life-Time Research and Publication in 5 Stages*. MP3 Audio [on-line]. Telephone interview conducted by Enoch Wan, 3 March, 2007, 26 minutes. Accessed 23 July 2010. Available from http:// www.globalmissiology. org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=16&Itemid=11; Internet.

<div align="center">

Secondary Sources

</div>

Books

Allen, Rolland. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962.

Anderson, Neil T. *The Bondage Breaker: Overcoming Negative Thoughts, Irrational Feelings, Habitual Sins*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990.

_____. *Victory over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990.

Angrosino, Michael V. *Projects in Ethnographic Research*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005.

Barbour, Ian G. *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion.* New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

_____. When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners? San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000.

Beaver, R. Pierce, ed. *To Advance the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Rufus Anderson*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967

Bharati, Swami Dayanand. *Living Water and Indian Bowl*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2004.

Board of Missions. *Mennonite Brethren Missions Today*. Hillsboro, KS: Mennonite Brethren Church, 1962.

Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991.

Burnett, David. *Unearthly Powers: A Christian's Handbook on Primal and Folk Religions.* Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1991.

Coleman, Simon, and Helen Watson. *An Introduction to Anthropology*. Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, 1990.

Communications Research Machine, Inc. *Anthropology Today*. Del Mar, CA: Communications Research Machines, Inc., 1971.

Confession of Faith of the Mennonite Brethren Church in North America. Hillsboro, KS: The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1965.

Conn, Harvie M. *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Mission in Trialogue*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1984.

Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009.

Corbitt, J. Nathan. *The Sound of the Harvest: Music's Mission in Church and Culture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Coulson, C. A. *Science and Christian Belief*. London: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.

de Waard, Jan, and Eugene A. Nida. *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986.

Driscoll, Mark, and Gerry Breshears. *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Estep, William R. *The Anabaptist Story*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963.

Fetterman, David M. *Ethnography: Step by Step*. Applied Social Research Methods, ed. Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989.

Fielding, Charles. *Preach and Heal: A Biblical Model for Missions*. Richmond, VA: International Mission Board, 2008.

Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. New York: Anchor Books, 2000.

Frost, Michael and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003.

Fuller, Andrew. *The Gospel Worthy of All Acception: Or the Duty of Sinners to Believe in Jesus Christ*, 1805.

Gittins, Anthony J. Bread for the Journey: The Mission of Transformation and the Transformation of Mission. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.

Grudem, Wayne. *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*. Edited by Jeff Purswell. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.

_____. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

Grunlan, Stephen A., and Marvin K. Mayers. *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*. 1979. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.

Guder, Darrell L., ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

Hamm, Peter M. *Continuity and Change Among Canadian Mennonite Brethren*. Religion and Identity: Social-Scientific Studies in Religion, ed. Hans Mol, vol. 31. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1987.

Haviland, William A. *Cultural Anthropology*. 1975. 9th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999.

Hesselgrave, David J. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.

_____. *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005.

_____. *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980.

_____. *Scripture and Strategy: The Use of the Bible in Postmodern Church and Mission*. Evangelical Missiological Society Series, vol. 1. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1994.

Hirst, Jon, and Mindy Hirst with Paul G. Hiebert. *Through the River: Understanding Your Assumptions about Truth*. Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2009.

Hoebel, E. Adamson. *The Cheyennes: Indians of the Great Plains*. Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology, ed. George Spindler and Louise Spindler. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1960.

Hofstede, Geert, and Gert Jan Hofstede. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.

Hofstede, Gert Jan, Paul B. Pedersen, and Geert Hofstede. *Exploring Culture: Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 2002.

Hunter, George G. III. *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West... Again*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Jones, E. Stanley. *Abundant Living*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942.

Juhnke, James C. *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930*. The Mennonite Experience in America, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, vol. 3. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989.

Kauffman, J. Howard, and Leland Harder. *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1975.

Kraft, Charles H. *Anthropology for Christian Witness*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.

_____. *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective.* 1979. Rev. Twenty-Fifth Anniversary ed.. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005.

_____. *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*. 1983. Revised. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

Kyle, Richard G. *From Sect to Denomination: Church Types and Their Implications for Mennonite Brethren History*. Hillsboro, KS: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1985.

Leeman, Jonathan. *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Reintroducing the Doctrines of Membership and Discipline*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

Laudan, Larry. *Positivism and Relativism: Theory, Method, and Evidence*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996.

_____. Science and Relativism: Some Key Controversies in the Philosophy of Science. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

LeBaron, Michelle, and Venashri Pillay. *Conflict Across Cultures: A Unique Experience of Bridging Differences*. Boston: Intercultural Press, 2006.

Lewis, Richard D. *The Cultural Imperative: Global Trends in the 21st Century*. Boston: Intercultural Press, 2007.

Lingenfelter, Judith E., and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood. *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood G., and Marvin K. Mayers. *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986.

Loewen, Jacob A. *The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2000.

_____. *Culture and Human Values: Christian Intervention in Anthropological Perspective.* Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975.

Lohrenz, John H. *The Mennonite Brethren Church*. Hillsboro, KS: The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1950.

Luzbetak, Louis J. *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology*. American Society of Missiology, ed. James A. Scherer, Sister Mary Motte and Charles R. Taber, vol. 12. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Making Disciples of Oral Learners. Edited by David Claydon. Lima, NY: Elim Publishing, 2005.

Marshall, Colin and Tony Payne. *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything*. Kingsford, Australia: Matthias Media, 2009.

Mayers, Marvin K. *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Crosscultural Evangelism.* 1974. Revised. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987.

McKinney, Carol V. *Globe-Trotting in Sandals: A Field Guide to Cultural Research*. Dallas: SIL International, 2000.

Moore, Edward C. "Introduction." In *Charles S. Pierce: The Essential Writings*, ed. Edward C. Moore, 1-44. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972.

Moreau, A. Scott, Gary R. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee. *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey*. Encountering Mission, ed. A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.

Murphy, Ed. *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*. 1992. Revised and Updated. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996.

Neill, Stephen. *Creative Tension: The Duff Lectures, 1958*. London: Edinburgh House Press, 1959.

Newbigin, Lesslie. *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.

Nida, Eugene A. *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1954.

_____. *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975.

_____. *God's Word in Man's Language*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1952.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London:

Routledge, 1982.

Packer, J.I. *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008.

Peters, George. *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1972.

Peters, George Wilhelm. 1952. *The Growth of Foreign Missions in the Mennonite Brethren Church*. Hillsboro, KS: The Board of Foreign Missions. The Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America.

Peirce, Charles S. *Charles S. Pierce: The Essential Writings*. Edited by Edward C. Moore. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972.

_____. *Letters to Lady Welby*. Edited by Irwin C. Lieb. New Haven, CT: Whitlocks, Inc., 1953.

_____. *The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings*. Edited by Justus Buchler. London: Routledge, 1956.

Pocock, Michael, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell. *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends*. Encountering Mission, ed. A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Ray, Benjamin C. *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual and Community*. Prentice-Hall Studies in Religion, ed. John P. Reeder, Jr. and John F. Wilson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

Redekop, John H. *A People Apart: Ethnicity and the Mennonite Brethren*. Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: Kindred Press, 1987.

Richardson, Don. *Eternity in Their Hearts: Starling Evidence of Belief in the One True God in Hundreds of Cultures Throughout the World*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2005.

Ritchie, Mark Andrew. *Spirit of the Rainforest: A Yanomamo Shaman's Story*. 1996. 2d ed. Chicago: Island Lake Press, 2000.

Rubin, Herbert J., and Irene S. Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995.

Schnabel, Eckhard J. *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods*. Downer's Grove: IVP Academic, 2008.

Shaw, R. Daniel, and Charles E. Van Engen. 2003. *Communicating God's Word in a Complex World: God's Truth or Hocus Pocus?* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Shenk, Wilbert R. *Changing Frontiers of Mission*. American Society of Missiology, ed. Jonathan J. Bonk, Angelyn Dries and Scott W. Sunquist, vol. 28. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999.

Sills, M. David. *The Missionary Call: Find Your Place in God's Plan for the World*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008.

_____. *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010.

Smalley, William A. *Translation as Mission: Bible Translation in the Modern Missionary Movement*. The Modern Mission Era, 1792-1992 An Appraisal, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991.

Spradley, James P. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rineheart, and Winston, Inc., 1979.

_____. *Participant Observation*. Fort Worth: Holt, Rineheart, and Winston, Inc., 1980.

Steffen, Tom, and Lois McKinney Douglas. *Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry*. Encountering Mission, ed. A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Stewart, Robert B. The Quest of the Hermeneutical Jesus: The Impact of Hermeneutics on The Jesus Research of John Dominic Crossan and N.T. Wright. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008.

Stott, John. *Christian Mission in the Modern World*. 1975. IVP Classics. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008.

Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.

Taber, Charles R. *The World is Too Much With Us: 'Culture' in Modern Protestant Missions*. The Modern Mission Era, 1792-1992 An Appraisal, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991.

Tennent, Timothy C. *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

Tippett, A.R. *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory*. Lincoln, IL: Lincoln Christian College Press, 1969.

Toews, John B. *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921-1927*. Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, ed. J.C. Wenger, vol. 12. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1967.

Toews, Paul. *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970*. The Mennonite Experience in America, ed. Theron F. Schlabach, vol. 4. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1996.

Tylor, Sir Edward B. *Anthropology*. 1881. Edited by Leslie A. White. Abridged. Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1960.

_____. *Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*. Vol. 1. Third American. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1889.

Van Engen, Charles. *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996.

Van Rheenen, Gailyn. *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1991.

Warren, Max, ed. *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971.

Wiebe, David V. *They Seek a Country: A Survey of Mennonite Migrations with Special Reference to Kansas and Gnadenau*. Hillsboro, KS: The Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1959.

Wiebe, Katie Funk. *Who Are the Mennonite Brethren?* Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1984.

Wilkens, Steve, and Mark L. Sanford. *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.

Wimber, John, and Kevin Springer. *Power Evangelism*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986.

Winick, Charles. *Dictionary of Anthropology*. Midcentury Reference Library, ed. Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956.

Wright, Christopher J.H. *Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006.

Wright, N.T. *The New Testament and the People of God*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

Young, W. John. *The Quiet Wise Spirit: Edwin W. Smith 1876-1957 and Africa*. Peterborough, England: Epworth Press, 2002.

Zahniser, A.H. Mathias. Symbol and Ceremony: Making Disciples Across Cultures. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1997.

Articles

Adeney, Miriam. "How to Study Women in Their Cultural Contexts." In *A Worldview Approach to Ministry among Muslim Women*, ed. Cynthia A. Strong and Meg Page, 23-32. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006.

Anane-Asane, Andrew, Timothy L. Eckert, Jason Richard Tan, and Robert Priest. "Paul G. Hiebert's 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle'." Trinity Journal 30NS, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 189-97.

Beattie, Warren. "Mission Possible or Impossible? Learning Lessons from Theology's Engagement with Globization." In *One World or Many? The Impact of Globalisation on Mission*, ed. Richard Tiplady, 213-28. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003.

Beekman, John. "Minimizing Religious Syncretism Asmong the Chols." In *Readings in Missionary Anthropology*, ed. William A. Smalley, 235-44. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974.

Brown, Rick. "Contextualization without Syncretism." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 23, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 127-33.

Buchler, Justus. "What Is the Pragmaticist Theory of Meaning?" In *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Philip P. Wiener and Frederic H. Young, 21-32. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952.

Burnett, David G. "Spiritual Conflict and Folk Religion." In *Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnette, Bryant L. Myers and Hwa Yung, 243-58. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2002.

Buswell, James O., III. "Anthropological Appraisal and Missionary Response." In *Current Concerns of Anthropologists and Missionaries*, ed. Karl Franklin, 67-79. Dallas: The International Museum of Cultures, 1987.

Cathcart, Rochelle, and Mike Nichols. "Self Theology, Global Theology, and Missional Theology in the Writings of Paul G. Hiebert." *Trinity Journal* 30NS, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 209-21.

Chang, Eunhye, J. Rupert Morgan, Timothy Nyasulu, and Robert J. Priest. "Paul G. Hiebert and Critical Contextualization." *Trinity Journal* 30NS, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 199-207.

Climenhaga, Daryl. "Review of Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues by Paul G. Hiebert." *Brethren in Christ History and Life* 19 (August 1996): 384-88.

Coggins, James R., and Paul G. Hiebert. "The Man, the Message, and the Movement." In *Wonder and the Word: An Examination of Issues Raised by John Wimber and the Vineyard Movement*, ed. James R. Coggins and Paul G. Hiebert, 15-22. Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1989.

Drake, Durant. "The Approach to Critical Realism." In *Essays in Critical Realism*, ed. Durant Drake, 3-34. New York: Gordian Press, Inc., 1968.

Fast, Heinhold. "Conrad Grebel: The Covenant on the Cross," trans. by Verlag C.H. Beck. In *Profiles of Radical Reformers: Biographical Sketches from Thomas Muntzer to Paracelsus*, ed. Hans-Jurgen Goertz and Walter Klaassen, 118-31. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982.

Frykenburg, Robert Eric. "Paul G. Hiebert." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 31, no. 3 (July 2007): 128-29.

Geisler, Norman. "Response to Paul G. Hiebert 'The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization'." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 129-43. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

Gilbert, Pierre. "Further Reflections on Paul Hiebert's 'The Flaw of the Excluded Middle'." *Direction* 36, no. 2 (2007): 206-18.

Gill, Brad. "Lifting, Pushing, Squeezing, and Blending: The Dynamics of Ethnicity and Globalization." *Mission Frontiers* (May-June 2010): 8-10.

Graham, Bruce, Duane Frasier, Omid, Ralph Winter, Bruce Koch, and Steve Hawthorne. "Further Responses to Paul Hiebert." *Mission Frontiers* (May-June 2010): 16-19.

Hesselgrave, David J. "Preface." In *New Horizons in World Mission*, ed. David J.

Hesselgrave, 9-11. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979.

Hexham, Irving. "Review of Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices by Paul G. Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Titè Tienou." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43, no. 2 (June 2000): 358-60.

Higgins, Kevin. "The Key to Insider Movements: The 'Devoted's' of Acts." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 155-165.

Horst, Irvin B. "Menno Simmons: The New Man in Community," translated by Verlag C.H. Beck. In *Profiles of Radical Reformers: Biographical Sketches from Thomas Muntzer to Paracelsus*, ed. Hans-Jurgen Goertz and Walter Klaassen, 203-13. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982.

Howell, Brian M. "Contextualizing Context -- Exploring Christian Identity in the Global Church Through Six Contemporary Cases." In *Power and Identity in the Global Church: Six Contemporary Cases*, ed. Brian M. Howell and Edwin Zehner, 1-25. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.

Hughes, Robert Don. "Cross-Cultural Communication." In *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith and Justice Anderson, 278-300. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998.

Kietzman, Dale W. "Conversion and Culture Change." In *Readings in Missionary Anthropology*, ed. William A. Smalley, 124-31. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974.

Kietzman, Dale W., and William A. Smalley. "The Missionary's Role in Culture Change." In *Readings in Missionary Anthropology*, ed. William A. Smalley, 276-81. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974.

Kraft, Charles H. "Contemporary Trends in the Treatment of Spiritual Conflict." In *Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnette, Bryant L. Myers and Hwa Yung, 177-202. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2002.

_____. *Worldview for Christian Witness*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008.

Lea, Tommy D. "Spiritual Warfare and the Missionary Task." In *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith and Justice Anderson, 626-38. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998.

Lingenfelter, Sherwood G. "Review of Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies by Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* July 1997: 131-32.

Loewen, Jacob A. "Missionaries and Anthropologist Cooperate in Research." *Practical Anthropology* 12, no. 4 (July-August 1965): 158-90.

_____. "The Way to First Class: Revolution or Conversion?" *Practical Anthropology* 12, no. 5 (September-October 1965): 193-209.

Mahon, Dennis. "Cultural Anthropology." *Practical Anthropology* 13, no. 6 (November-December 1966): 277.

Moreau, A. Scott. "Gaining Perspectives on Territorial Spirits." In *Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnette, Bryant L. Myers and Hwa Yung, 259-75. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2002.

_____. "Paul G. Hiebert's Legacy of Worldview." *Trinity Journal* 30NS, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 223-33.

_____. "A Survey of North American Spiritual Warfare Thinking." In *Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnette, Bryant L. Myers and Hwa Yung, 117-26. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2002.

Muck, Terry C. "History of Religion and Missiology: Complementary Methodologies." In *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*, ed. Irving Hexham and Stephen Rost, Morehead, 63-89. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2004.

_____. Review of *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices* by Paul G. Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Titè Tienou. *Missiology: An International Review* 29, no. 2 (April 2001): 232-33.

Neely, Alan. "Missiology." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, 633-35. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

Neumann, Mikel. "The Incarnational Ministry of Jesus: An Alternative to Traditional Apologetic Approaches." In *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*, ed. Irving Hexham and Stephen Rost, Morehead, 25-41. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2004.

Nida, Eugene A. "Are We Really Monotheists?" In *Readings in Missionary Anthropology*, ed. William A. Smalley, 223-28. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974.

_____. "Missionaries and Anthropologists." *Practical Anthropology* 13, no. 6 (November-December 1966): 273-77, 287-88.

_____. "The Role of Cultural Anthropology in Christian Missions." In *Readings in Missionary Anthropology*, ed. William A. Smalley, 307-13. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974.

Oosterwal, Gottfried. "Review of Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies by Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses." *Missiology* 26, no. 2 (April 1998): 207-08.

Pocock, Michael. "Response to Paul G. Hiebert "The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization"." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 103-13. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

Pollard, Ruth. "Jesus Among the Alternative Healers: Sacred Oils, Aromatherapists, and the Gospel." In *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical*

Approach, ed. Irving Hexham and Stephen Rost, Morehead, 261-78. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2004.

Priest, Robert J. "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Moral Roots of Conflict." In *Current Concerns of Anthropologists and Missionaries*, ed. Karl Franklin, 13-40. Dallas: The International Museum of Cultures, 1987.

_____. "Paul G. Hiebert: A Life Remembered." *Trinity Journal* 30NS, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 171-75.

Rockrohr, Carl. "Are Lutherans Ready for 21st Century Ministry and Mission? Understanding Folk Religion." *Missio Apostolica: Journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology* 8, no. 2 (November 2000): 88-93.

Salamone, Frank A. "Missionaries and Anthropologists: An Inquiry Into Their Ambivalent Relationship." *Missiology* 14, no. 1 (January 1986): 55-70.

Schreiter, Robert J. "Anthropology and Faith: Challenges to Missiology." *Missiology* 19, no. 3 (July 1991): 283-94.

Shaw, R. Daniel. "Contextualizing the Power and the Glory." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, no. 3 (July-September 1995): 155-60.

_____. "Myth, Mythology." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, 668-69. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

_____. "Ritual and Ceremony." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, 836. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

Sills, M. David. "The Great Commission and Intercultural Communication." In *The Challenge of the Great Commission: Essays on God's Mandate for the Local Church*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Thom S. Rainer, 79-92. Pinnacle, 2005.

Smalley, William A. "Review of Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues by Paul G. Hiebert." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* April 1996: 93-94.

Smith, Donald K. "Rites of Passage." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, 836. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

Smith, Ebbie. "Culture: The Milieu of Missions." In *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith and Justice Anderson, 260-77. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998.

Stetzer, Ed. "Responding to 'The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization'." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 154-63. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

Stipe, Claude E. "Criticisms of Missionaries: Anthropological Versus World-View Issues." In *Current Concerns of Anthropologists and Missionaries*, ed. Karl Franklin, 55-66. Dallas: The International Museum of Cultures, 1987.

Sutlive, Vinson H., Jr. "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Eternal Enemies or Colleagues in Disguise?" In *Missionaries, Anthropologists, and Cultural Change, Vol. 1*, ed.

Darrell L. Whiteman. Studies in Third World Societies, vol. 25, 55-90. Williambsburg, VA: Department of Anthropology College of William and Mary, September, 1983.

Taber, Charles R. "The Missionary: Wrecker, Builder, or Catalyst?" *Practical Anthropology* 19, no. 4 (July-August 1972): 145-52.

Taylor, Harold. "Contextualized Mission in Church History." In *Encountering New Religious Movements: A Holistic Evangelical Approach*, ed. Irving Hexham and Stephen Rost, Morehead, 43-60. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2004.

Terry, John Mark. "Indigenous Churches." In *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, 483-85. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

Thomas, I'Ching. "Cross-Cultural Challenges." In *Beyond Opinion: Living the Faith That We Defend*, ed. Ravi Zacharias, 209-28. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2007.

Thompson, LaNette W. "How Will They Hear? Reaching the Muslim Women of Sub-Saharan Africa." In *A Worldview Approach to Ministry Among Muslim Women*, ed. Cynthia A. Strong and Meg Page, 109-27. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006.

Tienou, Titè, and Paul G. Hiebert. "From Systematic and Biblical to Missional Theology." In *Appropriate Christianity*, ed. Charles H. Kraft, 117-33. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2005.

_____. "Missional Theology." *Missiology* 34, no. 2 (April 2006): 219-38.

Tippett, A.R. "Parallaxis in Missiology: To Use or Abuse." In *Missionaries, Anthropologists, and Cultural Change, Vol. 1*, ed. Darrell L. Whiteman. Studies in Third World Societies, vol. 25, 91-152. Williambsburg, VA: Department of Anthropology College of William and Mary, September, 1983.

Vanden Bery, Todd. "Contextualization from the Ground: Longuda Lutherans in Nigeria." In *Power and Identity in the Global Church: Six Contemporary Cases*, ed. Brian M. Howell and Edwin Zehner, 55-79. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.

Van Der Geest, Sjaak. "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Brothers Under the Skin." *Man* NS 25, no. 4 (December 1990): 558-601.

Whiteman, Darrell L. "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World." In *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, 52-69. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

_____. "Response to Paul G. Hiebert 'The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization'." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 114-28. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

_____. Review of *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* by Paul G. Hiebert. *Missiology* 25, no. 2 (April 1997): 234.

Willis, Avery T., Jr. "Response to Paul G. Hiebert 'The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization'." In *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, 144-53. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010.

Winter, Ralph D. "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. Fourth, 244-53. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.

Yoder, Michael L., Michael H. Lee, Jonathan Ro, and Robert J. Priest. "Understanding Christian Identity in Terms of Bounded and Centered Set Theory in the Writings of Paul G. Hiebert." *Trinity Journal* 30NS, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 177-88.

Yung, Hwa. "A Systematic Theology That Recognizes the Demonic." In *Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*, ed. A. Scott Moreau, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnette, Bryant L. Myers and Hwa Yung, 3-27. Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2002.

Zehner, Edwin. "Beyond Anti-Syncretism: Gospel, Context and Authority in the New Testament and in Thai Conversions to Christianity." In *Power and Identity in the Global Church: Six Contemporary Cases*, ed. Brian M. Howell and Edwin Zehner, 155-83. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009.

Internet

Allison, Norm. "My Indebtedness to Paul G. Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Branner, John. "The Professor/Anthropologist with a Sense of Humor" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Coates, Paul. "Sense-Data" [on-line]. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed 13 October 2010. Available from http://www.iep.utm.edu/sense-da/#H7; Internet.

Cook, Charles A. "Quintessential Global Soul" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Covell, Ralph. "A Renaissance Missiologist. [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

"Denver Seminary Statistics. [on-line]. Accessed 30 December 2010. Available from http:// www.denverseminary.edu/about-us/denver-seminary-statistics; Internet.

"Dr. T.V. Thomas. [on-line]. Accessed 3 January. Available from http://www. revivalfellowship.com/team_tvthomas.html; Internet.

Dougherty, E. David. "A Tribute to Paul Hiebert: Scholarship with Impact and Influence" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http:// ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Gilliland, Dean. "Retracing the Memory Path" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Goshen College. "The Mennonites" [on-line]. Accessed 16 July 2010. Available from http://www.goshen.edu/aboutgc/mennonites.; Internet.

Grant, Paul E. "Paul Hiebert: A Tribute" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Jason Hall. "Akin Lays Out Axioms of Great Commission Resurgence" [on-line]. Accessed 30 December 2010. Available from http://www.sebts.edu/news-resources/headlines/articles/axioms_gcr.aspx; Internet.

Hedlund, Roger and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj. "From India with Appreciations: A Tribute to Paul Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http:// ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Hesselgrave, David John. "A Tribute to My Colleague, Paul G. Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Hirst, Jon. "Shining a Light on Truth," Through the River Blog, entry posted June 21, 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 21 June 2010. Available from http://throughtheriverbook. blogspot.com/2010/06/shining-light-on-truth.html; Internet.

Jaffarian, Michael. "Thanks to Paul Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Meneses, Eloise Hiebert. "Missions and Anthropology" [on-line]. Accessed 6 July 2010. Available from http://www.eastern.edu/academic/cas/depts/missions_and_ anthropology/home.html; Internet.

Meye, Mary A. "Remembering Fran Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Mohler, Albert. "From Megacity to 'Metacity' -- The Shape of the Future" April 22 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 6 July 2010. Available from http://www.albertmohler. com/2010/04/22/from-megacity-to-metacity-the-shape-of-the-future; Internet.

"Obituary" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs. globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Payne, J.D. "C5 Contextualization: Coming to a North American People Group Near You" 25 June 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 25 June 2010. Available from http://www.jdpayne. org/2010/06/25/c5-contextualization-coming-to-a-north-american-people-group-near-you; Internet.

Patterson, Elizabeth. "My Tribute to Fran Hiebert" [online]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/ view/37; Internet.

Shaw, Georgia R. Grimes and Enoch Wan. "Tributes to Fran by Her Friends" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Shaw, R. Daniel. "A Tribute to Paul Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Sills, David. "Reclaiming Contextualization" 3 June 2009. Baptist Press. [on-line]. Accessed 20 June 2010. Available from http://www.reachingandteaching.org/ downloads/reclaimingcontextualization.pdf; Internet.

Sills, Michael David. "Christianimism: Catholic Syncretism in the New World" [on-line], accessed 20 June 2010; http://www.reachingandteaching.org/downloads/ christianimism; Internet.

Speri, Alice. *Voodo Rite Draws Haitian Faithful Praying for Comfort*. Yahoo! News. [on-line]. 18 July 2010. Accessed 20 July 2010. Available from http:// news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20100718/lf_afp/haitiquakereligionvoodo; Internet.

Stelle, Terry. "A Life Well Lived: My Reflections on the Life of Dr. Paul G. Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http:// ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Stetzer, Ed. "Calling for Contextualization: Part 1" 21 June 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 21 June 2010. Available from http://www.edstetzer.com/2010/06/calling-for-contextualization.html; Internet.

_____. "Calling for Contextualization: Part 2, The Need to Contend and Contextualize." 28 June 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 28 June 2010. Available from http:// www.edstetzer.com/2010/06/calling-for-contextualization-1.html; Internet.

_____. "Calling for Contextualization, Part 3: Knowing and Making Known the Gospel" 20 July 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 20 July 2010. Available from http:// www.edstetzer.com/2010/07/calling-for-contextualization-2.html; Internet.

_____. "Calling for Contextualization: Part 4, Untangling Cultural Engagement" 11 August 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 29 August 2010. Available from http:// www.edstetzer.com/ 2010/08/untangling-cultural-engagement.html; Internet.

_____. "Calling for Contextualization, Part 5: Indigenization" 23 August 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 29 August 2010. Available from http://www.edstetzer.com/ 2010/08/calling-for-contextualization-3.html; Internet.

_____. "Calling for Contextualization: Part 6, Loving and Hating the World" 30 August 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 15 September 2010. Available from http:// www.edstetzer.com/2010/ 08/calling-for-contextualization-4.html; Internet.

_____. "Calling for Contextualization: Part 7, The Contextualization Spectrum" 14 September 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 15 September 2010. Available from http:// www.edstetzer.com/ 2010/09/calling-for-contextualization-5.html; Internet.

_____. "Calling for Contextualization: Part 8, Ruining and Recovering Relevance" 18 October 2010 [on-line]. Accessed 19 October 2010. Available from http:// www.edstetzer.com/ 2010/09/calling-for-contextualization-6.html; Internet.

"Steven J. Strauss" [on-line]. Accessed 3 January 2011. Available from http://www. dts.edu/ about/faculty/sstrauss; Internet.

Strauss, Steve. "Fond Memories of Paul Hiebert from a Grateful Disciple" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/ index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Tabor College. "History" [on-line]. Accessed 16 July 2010. Available from http:// www.tabor.edu/ about-tabor/history; Internet.

Thomas, T.V. "A Mini Reflection of Fond Memories" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/ view/37; Internet.

Tienou, Tité. "A Tribute to Paul G. Hiebert, Professor, Colleague, Brother, Pilgrim" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology. org/index.php/english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Van Rheenen, Gailyn. "From Theology to Practice: The Helix Metaphor" [on-line]. Monthly Missiological Reflection 25. Accessed 24 November 2010. Available from http://www.missiology.org/mmr/mmr25.htm; Internet.

"Vision/Mission" [on-line]. Accessed 30 December 2010. Available from http://www. southamericamission.org/?page=ABOUT+SAM; Internet.

Wan, Enoch, Editor. "Tributes to Paul in E-Mail Format" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/ issue/view/37; Internet.

Watson, Jude Tiersma. "Tribute to Paul and Fran Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/ english/issue/view/37; Internet.

Waybright, Greg. "Remembering Dr. Paul Hiebert" [on-line]. Accessed 22 October 2010. Available from http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/issue/ view/37; Internet.

"What is *Direction*" [on-line]. Accessed 27 October 2010. Available from http:// www.directionjournal.org/about/#history; Internet.

ABSTRACT

MISSIOLOGY MEETS CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY:
THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF PAUL G. HIEBERT

Philip Wayne Barnes, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011
Chair: Dr. M. David Sills

This dissertation examines the relationship between missiology and cultural anthropology in the life and published works of Paul Gordon Hiebert. Chapter 1 introduces the overall research question which investigates the interface of cultural anthropology and missiology. Key terms are introduced and defined in order to provide clarity for the remaining work.

Chapter 2 starts the body of the work with a short biography of Hiebert. The biographical section starts before Hiebert's lifetime with an investigation of his denominational and familial background. Hiebert's childhood as missionary kid in India demonstrates how those experiences affected his later education and missionary career. A survey of his education, professional career as a professor of missions and anthropology, and writing career demonstrate Hiebert's commitment to the missions task and to the integration of missiology and cultural anthropology.

Chapter 3 identifies and traces the development of Hiebert's six seminal ideas in his published works. Chapter 4 examines how Hiebert's six seminal ideas introduced in the third chapter apply to some questions being dealt with in contemporary missiology. This investigation takes the form of a research question associated with each idea.

Chapter 5 investigates the influence of Hiebert's six seminal ideas on current missiology. His influence is demonstrated through a survey of a representative sample of Evangelical missiologists in order to reveal how Hiebert's seminal ideas have been in

their own missiological thinking and teaching. Additionally, a limited survey of secondary sources will show that Hiebert has often been cited in order to support various missiological ideas and positions.   An evaluation of whether these ideas are legitimate or illegitimate extensions of Hiebert's ideas is given.

Chapter 6 concludes the study through a reflection of Hiebert's legacy in terms of his personal impact on students, colleagues, and others with whom he came into contact.

VITA

Philip Wayne Barnes

PERSONAL
>
> Born: March 1, 1977, San Antonio, Texas
> Parents: Richard and Mary Barnes
> Married: Laura Helene Thompson, December 20, 1997

EDUCATIONAL
>
> Honors Diploma, Franklin High School, 1995
> B.A., Samford University, 1999
> Advanced M. Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004

MINISTERIAL
>
> Director, Mission Birmingham, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Birmingham,
>   Alabama, 1998-2000
> ISC Missionary, Central Asia, 2004-2006
> Associate Pastor, Rolling Fields Church, Jeffersonville, Indiana 2008-

ACADEMIC
>
> Garrett Fellow, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009-2011

ORGANIZATIONAL
>
> Evangelical Missiological Society