MISSIOLOGY and the Social Sciences
Contributions, Cautions and Conclusions

Edward Rommen and Gary Corwin
Editors

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CONTENTS

PREFACE
David J. Hesselgrave 1

PART I  MISSIOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
1. Introduction: An Appeal for Balance
   Michael Pocock 7
2. Sociology and Missiology: Reflections on Mission Research
   Gary R. Corwin 19
3. The Contribution of Cultural Anthropology to Missiology
   Norman E. Allison 30
4. Prototype Semantics: Insights for Intercultural Communication
   K. A. McElhanun 47
5. Psychology and Missions: A History of Member Care in Cross-Cultural Ministry
   Brent Lindquist 75
6. The Contribution of Technology To Missiology
   Ron Rowland 84
7. Economics and Mission
   Andreas J. Köstenberger 102

PART II  USE AND MISUSE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
8. A Critique of Charles Kraft's Use/Misuse of Communication & Social Sciences in Biblical Interpretation & Missiological Formulation
   Enoch Wan 121
   Robertson McQuilkin 165
10. The Social Sciences and Missions: Applying the Message
    Paul G. Hiebert 184

PART III  CONCLUSIONS
11. Conclusions
    Edward Rommen 217
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This paper is written with a single purpose of providing a critique by answering the question whether Dr. Charles Kraft has used/misused the communication and social sciences in his biblical interpretation and missiological formulation.

Methodology

The generous cooperation of Dr. Kraft of Fuller Theological Seminary, in the provision of an updated comprehensive listing (see Appendix I for a sample of selected titles) of his published works, is gratefully acknowledged. His commitment and contribution to academic scholarship, missiological formulation, inter-disciplinary integration, etc. are much appreciated by many. In the last thirty some years, Dr. Kraft has written more than two dozen books (in areas ranging from linguistics, communication, missiology, to deliverance ministries, etc. with translations in Chinese, Korean, and German), and more than 120 articles, editorials and chapters in books.

Enoch Wan is Professor of Missions and Anthropology at Reformed Theological Seminary.
From the list of Dr. Kraft's publications, it is obvious that there are three major foci traceable chronologically to his personal interest and professional development. From 1963-1973, he published seven volumes on Hausa, a Nigerian language. Beginning in article format in the early 1970s, his focus of research moved from linguistics/Bible translation to interdisciplinary integration of linguistics, hermeneutics, behavioral/social and communication sciences, etc., resulting in the publication of the influential and controversial book *Christianity in Culture* (1979a). (In the same year, two other books were published, *Readings in Dynamic Indigeneity and Communicating the Gospel God's Way.* ) Since his exposure from 1982-1983 to demonology and deliverance ministries, by way of John Wimber's "Signs and Wonders" class at Fuller (Kraft 1987:122, 1989:6, 62) and his sub-sequent (or second, cf. Kraft 1979a:6-12 being his first) "paradigm shift" in 1984, his publications began to shift ("practice shift," 1987:127) towards that aspect of Christian ministries as marked by the publication of several titles of this nature: *Christianity with Power* (1989), *Defeating Dark Angels* (1992), *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing and Behind Enemy Lines* (both in 1994).

Of all the publications by Dr. Kraft, three books—i.e. *Christianity in Culture* (1979a), *Communication Theory for Christian Witness* (1983) and *Christianity with Power* (1989)—and several articles (see Appendix I) will be included as the most relevant and representative of his use/misuse of the communica-tion and social sciences in his biblical interpretation and mis-siological formulation.

Definitions of Key Terms

**Bible:** The inspired truth of the sixty-six canonical books.

**Biblical Hermeneutics:** The principles and procedures by which the interpreter determines the meaning of the Holy Scripture within the proper contexts.

**Culture:** The context/consequence of patterned interaction of personal Beings/beings, in contrast to popular usage of culture applying to the presumed closed system of homo sapiens. This de-definition of culture can freely be applied or referred to angelic (fallen or good) beings of the angel-culture and the dy-namic in-ter-action of the Three Persons of the Triune God in theo-culture (Wan 1982b).

**Ethnohermeneutics:** The principles and procedures by which the interpreter determines the meaning of the Holy Scripture, inspired by the Primary Author (Triune God within theo-culture) and inscripturated through the secondary authors (human agents of varied historico-culturo-linguistic contexts of homino-culture) for the recipients (of varied historico-culturo-linguistic contexts) (Wan 1994).

**Inspiration:** The divine way of revealing biblical truth (the Bible) to humankind.

**Interpretation:** The human way of reducing distance and removing difference to ascertain the meaning of the text at hand (Berkhof 1969:11).

**Linguistic and Communication Sciences:** Includes the study of descriptive linguistics, applied linguistics, proxemic and kinesic communication, etc.

**Missiological Formulation:** The formation and development of theory/methodology/strategy for the sake of mission (the divine Great Commission) and missions (the human ways and means to fulfill the mission).

**Social sciences:** Includes disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc. and the term is used interchangeably with "behavioral sciences" in this study.

**Scriptural:** That which is taught by the Bible and is prescriptive, principle and transcultural/eternal in nature as compared to biblical—that which is found in the Bible and is of descriptive, precedent and cultural/temporal in nature (Wan 1994).

**KRAFT'S USE OF COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AS A CONTRIBUTION TO INTER-DISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION**

With the advancement of modern scholarship comes the necessity of division of labor for the sake of specialization and the reality of the compartmentalization of knowledge and disciplines. In addition to the challenge of interdisciplinary integration, Christian scholars have to take up the challenge of inte-gra-ting their Christian faith with their efforts of interdisci-
plenary integration without injuring the integrity of either Christian faith (dogmatics; cf. warnings by David Hubbard, Kraft 1977:170; and Robert McQuilkin, 1977), academic disciplines (academics) or practical application (pragmatics).

For decades, evangelical Christians, like Charles Kraft in *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theolo-gizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (1979a), have successfully strived for multi-disciplinary integration, covering a multitude of subject matters. Of those, like Kraft, who have received similar professional training and with similar ministry experiences, have tried to bridge similar disciplines and covering similar topics, there are many, e.g. Eugene Nida, Kenneth Pike, Alan Tip-pett, William Wonderly, Linwood Barney, James O. Buswell, III, David Hesselgrave, Paul Hiebert, etc.

However, Kraft's book (1979a) is unique in terms of the combination of the following characteristics: conceptually coherent/consistent with simplicity (some reviewers like Carl Henry and Edward Gross may disagree on this point; yet it can be demonstrated as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below), "well-documented and carefully organized" (Henry 1980:153), thought provoking (Adeney 1980:24), "creative ... challenging. Impressive ... admirable" (Saayman 1981:89-90), innovative in theoretical formulation, illustrative in field experience, practical in illustrations, comprehensive in coverage, etc.

I have come a long way (cf. previous review, Wan 1982a) and been a long time in coming to greater appreciation of this volume: in the formats of pre-publication mimeograph and later in published book form (as key reference or textbook) for a period of about twenty years in teaching ministries, testing it out in three continents. Even this semester, I am using it as a text for my ethnomethodology class in the Doctor of Missiology Program at the Reformed Theological Seminary. I share the assessment of reviewer Robert L. Ramseyer:

... a truly monumental attempt to show what cultural anthropology can do for our understanding of Christian faith and mission. As the most complete work in the field, *Christianity in Culture* is also the best example of the way in which our understanding of culture and the cultural process affects our understanding of Christian
Kraft's risk-taking, continuous searching, "open-minded development..." are encouraged to join me in the quest for greater insight (Kraft, 1979a:112; 1981:139), within the context of friendly and frank discussion (Genuine dialogue). Kraft’s perspective because the author is not afraid to follow his theological and missiological convictions. His predecessors were content to merely discuss, not consistently act on his understandings of society and culture. I felt strongly that this was the same time both the best book and the worst book that I had read on this subject (emphasis mine).

It is in the spirit of appreciation, at the invitation of Dr. I still feel that way (Ramsden 1983:110, 115) that the following comments are offered.

### FIGURE 2 - KRAFT’S INTER-DISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE/CATEGORY</th>
<th>EUGENE NIDA (R. PIKE, etc.)</th>
<th>[NEO-ORTHODOXY and NEW HERMENEUTIC]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISCIPLINE</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION and SOCIAL SCIENCES</td>
<td>[PHILOSOPHICAL and PRACTICAL THEOLOGY]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>linguistic and communication sciences</td>
<td>existential theology, Bible translation, hermeneutics, practical theology, missiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>translational grammar; and functional linguistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication theory and Bible translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>functional -ism; conceptual model and Christian model (2, 3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(relational theology) (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>revelation and hermeneutics (10-11)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>evangelism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>discipleship and church planting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASIC IDEA</td>
<td>form, function, meaning (4, 5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>three aspects: sender-message-receipient; communication with efficiency (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>human commons -lay and worldview (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incarnation (9) ethos -theology (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>receptor-oriented understanding (12-13); linguistic interpretation (7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;we all...to all...by all means&quot; (1 Cor 9: [f.103, 113, 128, 142, 154, 157, 230, 300, 400]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contextualism -trans- -forming culture with God (18, 19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY TERM</td>
<td>dynamic-equivalence (DE) / receptor-oriented (RO)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RO-principle/DE-principle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RO-communication and DE-translation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE-translation (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE-achememutization (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RO-revelation (9) DE-translation of the inspired Casebook (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE-conversion (1) DE-translation of the message (14)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE-churchness (16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: 1) ( ) chapter numbering in Christianity in Culture (Kraft 1979a); 2) concepts and terms in [ ] are logical derivations of Kraft’s consistent/coherent theoretical model; leaning towards theological deviation on Kraft’s part from the evangelical position as represented by “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics” (Geisler 1978).
KRAFT'S USE/MISUSE OF THE COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION AND MISSIOLOGICAL FORMULATION


The following discussion is organized in the format of answers to four questions:

1) Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his attempt of interdisciplinary integration? NO.
2) Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his biblical interpretation and missiological formulation in light of his theoretical and methodological root being a linguist/communicologist? NO.
3) Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his biblical interpretation from an evangelical perspective: 
   - based on "The Willowbank Report"? NO
   - based on "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy"? YES
4) Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his missiological formulation from an evangelical perspective: 
   - based on "The Willowbank Report"? NO

Based on "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy"?
YES

Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his attempt of interdisciplinary integration? NO.


A careful study of Kraft's published works will show that his critics have misunderstood him very badly. In his writings, especially Christianity in Culture, he appears to be an anthropologist of the "functional" school and a theologian of "neo-orthodox" and "new hermeneutic" persuasion. He uses freely the terms and concepts of anthropological functionalism (e.g. "culture is an integrated system," "form and function," "equilibrium," "felt-need," "functional substitute," "efficiency," "impact," etc.); yet he never claims to be a "functionalist anthropologist." He employs with liberty the terms and concepts of scholars of "neo-orthodox" and "new hermeneutic" tradition (e.g. "continuous revelatory interaction between God and man," "revelation as a receptor-oriented communication," "the Bible as a case book of God's continuous dynamic interaction with man," "inspiration is an ongoing dynamic process of God's communication," etc.); he never identifies himself as a theologian. He is a linguist/communicologist by self-profession (Kraft 1977:165; 1987:133; 1983) and by practice par excellence.

For instance, it is generally assumed by Kraft's theoretical friends (Buswell 1986, Conn 1984, Saayman 1981) and foes (Dryness 1980, Heldenbrand 1986, Ramseyer 1983, Wan 1982a) that his model of ethnotheology (Kraft 1979a) is based on his choice of functional anthropological theory (e.g. Conn 1984: chapter 3), traceable to the British (Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, etc.) and American (Franz Boas, Talcott Parsons, Rob-
A Critique of Charles Kraft’s Use/Misuse

result” (Kraft 1979b, 1979e), or “ensuring the best return on the missionary investment” (Sanyman 1981:90), a rather pragmatic and programmatic motivation that is “biblical” like the recruitment pattern of the scribes and Pharisees of the biblical time (Mt 23:15); but not “scriptural” (i.e. in obedience to God and with compassion to and love for the recipients, Mt 9:35-38; 28:18-20; etc.)

Kraft has achieved what he planned to do in Christianity in Culture, i.e. develop a “cross-cultural Christian theology” by integrating “anthropology, linguistics, translation theory, and communication science on areas of life and thought that have ordinarily been regarded as theological” (1979a:13). Credit is due him for his successful interdisciplinary integration with clarity, coherence, convincing presentation, etc. and for his momentous accomplishment (Ramseyer 1983:110). Even one of his strongest critics (100-plus pages of negative remarks) complemented him on this volume as “one of the most important books yet printed dealing with the current contextualization debate” (Gross 1985:3).

Kraft’s model has been criticized by reviewer Ramseyer who said, “Christianity in Culture seems strangely unaware of confrontations and conflict in New Testament gospel sharing” (1983:112-113) on the basis of Kraft’s “naive attempt to apply insight from one particular kind of cultural anthropology (static functionalism) to the Christian mission” (1983:115). Providentially, Kraft in 1984 experienced a “second paradigm shift” (cf. Kraft 1979a:6-12 being his first) which gave him a “kingdom perspective” with a “warfare mentality” realizing the reality of the spirit world. His “practice shift” (Kraft 1987:127) moving into the Christian deliverance ministries is theologically supported by his research and publication of several books: Christianity with Power (1989), Defeating Dark Angels (1992), Deep Wounds, Deep Healing and Behind Enemy Line (both in 1994) and many articles.

Kraft began his research and writing in linguistics from 1963-1973, followed by his intensive study on and integration of anthropology, communication, translation, interpretation and contextualization in the 1970s with the resultant publication of Christianity in Culture in 1979. He then shifted his focus to the spirit world from the 1980s to the present. This pilgrimage of inter-disciplinary integration is similar to the wilderness experience of the Israelites due to his conception and
The dialectical logic of the Ameri-European culture can best be understood in light of the linear conception of time and monochronic time-management. . . The extensive use of the Aristotelian logic, especially the law of identity and the law of contradiction . . . leads to a deep-rooted perception of duality in reality and dialectical cognitive process in operation. It is axiomatic to categorize and classify everything in AE culture in terms of duality: e.g. ethically right or wrong, good or bad; cosmologically nature or culture, temporal or eternal, the city of God or city of man, heaven or hell; cultural or supercultural, absolute or relative; existentially compartmentalize life into public or private, profession or personal, departmentalize . . . soteriologically the sovereignty of God or the free will of man; christologically the divine nature or human nature in the person of Christ, the historical Jesus or Christ of the kerygma (Wan 1982b, 1995); epistemologically true or false; aesthetically beautiful or ugly, etc. The list of duality can be easily multiplied (Wan 1995:15).

A new definition and concept of "culture" is proposed as an alternative that would not presuppose humanity as a "closed system" (Wan 1982b), compartmentalized from angelic beings and the Divine Being (the Three Persons of the Triune God). This new model of reality will enable evangelical Christians to develop a "symphonic integration" that is multi-disciplinary (not just a "trialogue" of anthropology, missiology and theology as proposed by Conn 1984), multi-contextual (Wan 1982b, 1994), multi-dimensional (Holmes 1983), and multi-perspectival (Conn 1984:335-337, Poythress 1987). (See Appendix II—A Symphonic Approach to Interdisciplinary Integration: A Vari-dynamic Mod-el. This "vari-dynamic model" is to be "Trinitarian" in theology and epistemology, "incarnational" in anthropology and methodology, "contextual-interactional" in contextualization, multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary in demonology and deliverance ministries, family-focused in the practice of evangelism, discipleship, church planting, ethnore面前natically in theologizing which is biblically based,

Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his biblical interpretation and missiological formulation in light of his theoretical and methodological root being a linguist/communicologist? NO.

If one criticizes Kraft's ethnotheology from an anthropological perspective (as I did in 1982) one is overlooking his strength in consistent and creative, insightful and innovative interdisciplinary integration (see previous quote of Ramseyer, 1984). Attacking Kraft's view on “truth,” “revelation,” “interpretation,” etc. as presented in Christianity in Culture theologically without considering his theoretical and methodological base in linguistic and communication sciences, as did many of his critics (e.g. Carson 1987 and 1993, Conn 1978, Dryness 1980, Gross 1985, Heldenbrand 1982 and 1985, Henry 1980, Krass 1979, McQuilkin 1977 and 1980, Ramseyer 1983, Wan 1982a) is indeed a real mistake. Kraft has neither the intention nor the pretention to declare himself a theologian (whether it be an “evangelical” one or not is beside the point). On one occasion he expressed his frustration at being misunderstood, “it is unlikely that a ‘meddler’ (of theology) like myself could function competently as a theologian” (Kraft 1977:166).

He, (by confession “academically I am labeled an anthropological linguist,” Kraft 1977:165) is a linguist/communicologist/missiologist busying himself in his courageous venture into the hinterland of “cross-cultural theologizing” (sub-title of 1979a) dynamically (to be different from the traditional “static” approach, 1979a:32-38), “open-mindedly” (to break away from the “closed-minded conservative,” 1979a:39-41), cross-culturally (to swim against the current of mono-cultural theologizing of the regular practice of western theologians, Kraft 1979a: chapter 7), contextually (to avoid the pitfall of the old-fashioned “cultural imperialist”), progressively (termed “cumulative revelation information” of the Bible rather than “progressive revelation” of the closed-minded evangelical, Kraft 1979a: chapters 9-12), pragmatically (for “efficiency” and “impact”), communicatively (see Figure 3).

His strength in being theoretically consistent and coherent has misled him theologically (see [ ] items on the right side of Figure 2).

Kraft is to be praised for his courage to go beyond his linguist/communicologist predecessors, Nida, Pike, Smalley, Wonderly, etc. (cf. quote of Ramseyer 1983 previously), embarking on his journey of interdisciplinary integration of “cross-cultural theologizing” by way of communication (Kraft 1973d, 1974a, 1980, 1983), psychology (Kraft 1974b, 1986), anthropology (Kraft 1975, 1977, 1978b, 1980, 1985), theology (Kraft 1972a, 1972b, 1979a) and missiology (Kraft 1978a, 1978b). In Christianity in Culture, Kraft is charting a new path of multi-disciplinary integration and in the process he might have controversially attracted criticism on his theology by the well-intentioned “defenders” of the evangelical faith in the persons of Harvey Conn (1978), William Dyrness (1980), Edward Gross (1985), Carl Henry (1980), Richard Heldenbrand (1982 and 1985), and Robertson McQuilkin (1977 and 1980). Only a linguist/communicologist would be eager to develop a new “theology of communication” and make “biblical” but not “scriptural” statements as listed in Figure 4.

Kraft's best contribution to interdisciplinary integration is his insightful analysis of language, translation, communication and his masterful synthetic model of communication. Even his critics complement him: "[Kraft] has produced a book which contains a wealth of extremely helpful ideas and suggestions. He is at his best when he discusses language. Chapter 13 on the translation of the Bible is excellent" (Ramseyer 1983:115).
A Critique of Charles Kraft’s Use/Misuse of Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kraft’s theological assumptions</th>
<th>Kraft’s interdisciplinary integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God:</td>
<td>Assumption:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the REALITY, Originator of principle (215)</td>
<td>- God abide by the communicational rules he built into his creation; therefore “we can and should imitate God’s example” (218) - critical realism (223)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- God’s communication goal: personal relationship with man (20-22)</td>
<td>we learn from Jesus: (23-25) - personal participation in the lives of his receptors; - love = primary concern for receptor - respects, trusts and makes himself dependent on and vulnerable to receptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the MESSAGE of communication (58, 207)</td>
<td>communicator should:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- the Incarnation: (23-26)</td>
<td>- adopt the receptor’s frame of reference (culture, language, etc.) (41); - have relational and specific message (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- identificational communication (15)</td>
<td>message: (75-82) - interaction, multiple, irretrievable, complex, 6 types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Bible:</td>
<td>meaning exists: (109-133) - neither objectively (external) nor subjectively (in symbols); - is result of interpretation; thus receptor-dependent and is relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- record of the revelation of God’s message (215)</td>
<td>hermeneutics: (189-190) - interpreting the Bible = communication - interpreting the “truth” (interpretational reflex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- manual/case-book of communication (16)</td>
<td>relationship between that report and his ethnotheological model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- precedents and principles of communication (16)</td>
<td>However, implicit in Kraft’s model of ethnotheology in terms of biblical interpretation are two assumptions that are in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- inspiration of message extends to method (3)</td>
<td>- effective communication for deep-level change: worldview, value, commitment (221-224) - dynamic communication with efficiency and impact (48, 82-88, 238-240)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: ( ) page numbering in Communication Theory for Christian Witness (1983)

Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his biblical interpretation from an evangelical perspective:
- based on “The Willowbank Report”? NO
- based on “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”? YES

Dr. Kraft was one of the dozens of participants and presenters (Kraft 1980b) at the Consultation on Gospel and Culture held at Willowbank, Somerset Bridge, Bermuda from 6th to 13th January 1978, sponsored by the Lausanne Theology and Education Group. "The Willowbank Report" was published (Cote and Stott 1980:308-342) as the result of the gathering. His input at the consultation and the drafting of “The Willowbank Report” could be identified and there is no apparent conflict between that report and his ethnotheological model.

However, implicit in Kraft’s model of ethnotheology in terms of biblical interpretation are two assumptions that are in
conflict with "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy": i.e. his epistemological assumption is in conflict with Article III and his methodological assumption with Article V.

Firstly, in his reaction against the rationalist’s (like Carl Henry or Harold Lindsay) insistence on "propositional/objective truth" to be "static" and his avoidance of neo-orthodox’s (like Barth and Thielson) "subjective truth," he opted for Ian Barbour’s (1974) "critical realism" for the sake of being theoretically consistent to arrive at a "relational truth" (Walters 1962) which Kraft described as "receptor-oriented" understanding of truth (Kraft 1979a). The Bible being "God’s revelational information" is only "potential revelation" until the recipient’s proper understanding/interpreting to have the "meaning" (with the Holy Spirit as the activator). This is at variance with Article III of "The Chicago Statement," which states that "[w]e deny the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity" (Geisler 1980:494-495). John Dahms added to A. Holmes’ (1977:34-38) two-dimensional understanding of "truth" to be three: "in biblical usage truth is sometimes a quality of propositions, sometimes a quality of persons and things (especially a characteristic of ultimate reality), and sometimes a quality of conduct or action" (Dahms 1994:8). And the "unity of truth" is to be found in the Logos— the Word— Incarnated and inscripturated. See Appendix IV for the multi-dimensional, multi-level, multi-contextual understanding of God’s revelation that would allow a "symphonic multi-disciplinary integration" under the direction of the Triune God (i.e. the Father likened to the composer, the Son the music/theme and the Holy Spirit the conductor, using the same score—the Word Incarnate and inscripturated.)

Secondly, Kraft’s ethnotheology model has a methodological assumption that is not in accordance with Article V of "The Chicago Statement": "God’s revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive . . . deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings" (Geisler 1980:495). Kraft’s model is built on the "synchronic" dimension of "functional linguistics" and "transformational grammar" which would lead him to be devoid of the historical dimension of the Bible in his interpretation (e.g. "progressive revelation" and the Christian faith, e.g. Israel and the New Testament church as God’s covenant people, see Conn 1974:4; Dyrness 1980:40). His extensive, almost exclusive, use of the communication model and the emphasis on God’s "dynamic continuous interaction" with humanity would have similar effects of denying the closed "canon" of the Bible historically and thus confusing "inspiration" with "illumination," see Appendix III. Here are examples of Kraft’s "unscriptural" statements:

God has inspired and still inspires (Kraft 1979a: 205; 1987:126).

Yet in many ways tradition (’law’), tribe and ceremony in Hebrew culture were the functional equivalents of grace, freedom, and philosophizing in Greek culture. The latter are not necessarily superior ways of expressing the Gospel, just different culturally (Kraft 1979a: 232).

Yet I had concluded that a living God is a still revealing God (Kraft 1987:126).

The historicity and historical dimension of the Christian faith cannot and should not be lost by the indiscriminatory adoption of a mere synchronic/communicational/dynamic-interaction model of "time-zero" for the sake of emic-based understanding of "meaning" or efficient communication with impact, because these have ill-effects on his interpretation of the Bible and cross-cultural theologizing. Kraft’s "unscriptural" statements of Figure 2 (in [1]) warrant some comments here. God is not just the "MESSAGE" of Christian communication (Kraft 1979a:chapter 9; 1983:58, 207). Jesus, the Incarnate Word is not just the "master/effective communicator" (Kraft 1979a:chapter 6; 1983:23-34, 195-207; see Figure 1 and Figure 2). If "Jesus of Nazareth" (termed "form" in Kraft’s model to be considered "relative") should be separated from the"Christ of kerygma" (termed "meaning" in Kraft’s model to be "receptor-oriented/determined") as Kraft has done (e.g. "word/form" separated from "meaning" in linguistics and from "meaning/message" in communication) then this Christology of Kraft is no longer evangelical and this type of interdisciplinary integration (of linguistic and communication sciences with theology) is improper. The Bible, the inscripturated
Word, is neither just the “the measure of revelation” nor just “the record of the revelational information from God,” nor the “manual/case-book of communication” (Kraft 1979a:187-190; 1983:16, 215, see Appendix V). Carson (1977) criticized Kraft’s view of the Bible “as a casebook” and made some strong statements:

He treats the Bible as a casebook, in which different narratives or passages might reasonably be applied to one particular culture but not to another. It appears as if Kraft’s reliance on contemporary hermeneutics has simultaneously gone too far and not far enough. He has gone too far in that by treating the Bible as a casebook he does not ask how the pieces fit together. Indeed, he necessarily assumes that they do not. But he does not go far enough in that he fails to recognize that even basic statements such as “Jesus is Lord” are in certain respects culturally conditioned. “Jesus” is not an entirely unambiguous proper noun; are we referring to the Jesus of the Mormons, the Jesus of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Jesus of liberal Protestantism . . . of orthodox Christianity (Carson 1993:58-69).

Kraft’s use of the Bible to formulate his “theology of communication” and his application of the RO-/DE-principle in hermeneutics and cross-cultural theologizing is a violation of the general teaching (termed “plain meaning” or not being in “functional control of the Bible” by McQuilkin 1980). In simple terms, Kraft’s biblical interpretation and missiological formulation is “biblical” but not “scriptural.”

Since God’s revelation and our interpretation have multi-dimensional, multi-level, multi-contextual complexity, evangelical interpretation and cross-cultural theologizing (Conn 1978:44-45; Wan 1994) should not only be “biblical” but also “scriptural,” not individualistic but communal and complex (“convenantal community” in Conn 1984:231-235; “complexity and necessity” in Wan 1994; see Appendix VI and Figure 5 below).

A Critique of Charles Kraft’s Use/Misuse

FIGURE 5—THE REVELATORY AND HERMENEUTICAL CIRCLE

revealtory process A = Bible Author (the Triune God)
---(-> B = Bible Writers (Messes in
Apostle John)
A B Cor D C = Christian recipients/ Interpreter
/communicator
<---<--- D = Non-Christian Recipients/Interpreter
hermeneutical process

As one evangelical anthropologist observed, “Kraft has opened himself up to the charge of being too beholden to the ‘God of culture’ and a ‘high view of culture/low view of scripture.'” (Hesselgrave 1991:129).

Has Kraft misused the communication and social sciences in his missiological formulation from an evangelical perspective:
- based on “The Willowbank Report”? NO
- based on “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy”? YES

Kraft has not misused the communication and social sciences in his missiological formulation, from an evangelical perspective based on “The Willowbank Report,” but did so if examined on the basis of “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.” Implicit in his model of ethnotheology are two questionable assumptions: anthropological assumption cf. Article XIV and methodological assumption cf. Article XVIII.

In contemporary linguistic science, language is considered axiomatically to be “an arbitrary system for communication” that is relative in value and morally neutral. Kraft (following Nida, Pike, etc.) made use of the translation/communication model (i.e. the RO- and DE-principle, see Figure 2) and extensively applied it to transculturation, cross-cultural theologizing and evangelism, etc. The anthropological assumption is that “culture is analogous to language in that the relationship between cultural forms and the meanings which they convey is essentially arbitrary” (Ramskey 1983:111). Evangelical Christian anthropologists can neither assume “culture” to be morally neutral, presupposing it to be relative in value (i.e. human cultures approximate the “scriptural” standing in varying degrees), nor merely arbitrary (i.e. the image of
God, the fallenness of humanity, the transforming power of the gospel, etc., cf. reviewers: Adeney 1980:26; Henry 1980:157; Ramseyer 1983:110). The importance of the New Testament epistles in terms of fulfillment of the Old Testament books is based on the assumption of “the unity and internal consistency of Scripture” (Article XIV) and is not due to the cultural preference of monocultural Western missionaries and could not be opted out by any cultural groups because of cultural affinity to or preference for portions of the Bible (Kraft 1979a: chapters 13-15; cf. Carson 1987 and 1993).

“We affirm that the text of Scripture... de[n][e] the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing or discounting its teaching” is affirmed by “The Chicago Statement” (Article XVIII). It is at variance with Kraft’s methodological assumption which is communication-reductionist and instrument-teleological.

The term “communication” used by Kraft is frequent and fluid. For a communicologist like Kraft, everything is “communication.” Yet Kraft provided no specific definition of the term “communication” in either 1979a or 1983; the closest one of such is as follows:

The use of the terms preach and proclaim as virtually the only translations of kerysso and several other Greek terms suggest... In present day English, at least, such a term is readily at hand in the word communicate. I would, therefore, contend that the broad presentation of the gospel is intended by such Greek terms as kerysso, it would be more accurate to translate it “communicate (Kraft 1978:34).”

Subsequently, Kraft can include everything under the term “communicate.” According to Kraft’s theology of communication (see Figure 4): “God is the MESSAGE of communication,” “the Incarnation is identification communication,” translating and interpreting the Bible is “communicate,” etc. Thus “communicate” is a catch-all generic label (from God’s inspiration, redemption, and salvation to the Christian’s evangelism, theologizing, and church planting) that is so broad, so vague, so inclusive, etc. that it would confuse those who seek to communicate effectively and impactfully to use the term “communication” more carefully.

Kraft’s communication-reductionist model of the “RO/DE-principle” (see Figure 2) has a methodological assumption that evangelical Christians would question, including his methodology statement, “the inspiration of the Bible extends both to the message and the method” (Kraft 1983:3). Reviewer Ramseyer sounded the alarm:

In far too many cases, however, it has been assumed that the gospel is simply a message to be communicated and that whatever these sciences tell us about the communication of messages can be used to facilitate the communication of the gospel (Ramseyer 1983:108)

The gospel is not like any “message.” Evangelism is not like any communication (McQuilkin 1977:40-41). Conversion is not just “paradigm shift.” The Incarnation is not just “identification communication.” There are the divine dimension, the spiritual reality, the theo-dynamic and angelic contexts (see Figure 6). In all the examples listed above, “communication” is only “the necessary but not sufficient” factor and is only one dimension of reality. To be communication-reductionistic is to be simplistic in theory, “biblical” but not “scriptural” (see Appendix IV to Appendix VI), just communicational without commitment in “heart” and “life” (see Conn 1978:43 for discussion on John Calvin’s theologia pietatis of covenant witness with covenant life)

The methodological assumption in terms of instrumental/teleological presupposition/preoccupation (Wan 1994) is a serious problem from an evangelical perspective. Conn (1978:42; 1984:192-205) wrongly identified McGavran’s attempt to reduce the gospel to a “core” of threefold affirmations for evangelization as the result of Cartesian rationalism and stated that “the simple gospel is never that simple.” (A better option is to have a “center set” of approach that is theo-dynamic, Christocentric, scripturally sound and culturally sensitive, Wan 1982, 1994). Kraft’s model of ethnotheology shared the same instrumental/teleological presupposition/preoccupation with suc-
cess, efficiency and impact. (Even more alarming is the “functional Trinitarian” view of God embraced by both Nida (1959:53) and Kraft (1979a:195). This would explain his readiness to propose his felt-need, non-combative, receptor-oriented approach for “minimal dislocation,” and maximum efficiency in his contextualized Muslim evangelism (Conn 1984:192-195; Heldenbrand 1982, 1985; Kraft 1982b; McQuilkin 1977:40) (See Figure 6).

For evangelicals the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation” (Ro 1:16-17) and theo-dynamic. Evangelism is different from other kinds of communication; similar to incarnation, illumination for it is theo-dynamic in nature, Christo-centric, multi-contextual, multi-dimensional, multi-individual (the Triune God, the Bible-writer, the human messenger/evangelist, the receptor, etc see Appendix IV and Appendix V). It is not human-centered, not merely message/meaning/means-based, not receptor-dependent alone, not outcome-determined. In Christianity, “the means” and “the messenger,” are also determined by the “message” of God-revealing truth, God-redeeming power, and in a God-character way. Following Nida’s lead on “supracultural/cultural, absolute/relative” principle, Kraft credited God with being the only “absolute”; everything else is relative, cultural, functional, adaptable, etc. was for the purpose of building a biblical basis for his pragmatic/functional/relative/teleological way of theoretical formulation and missiological application.

“Scripturally” speaking, evangelism is not just a Christian’s effort to minimize the negative elements of the gospel to “market it” for effective membership recruitment for a “Christian club.” It is a divinely motivated/enabled/guided Christian’s effort to make committed disciples (not just communicating the gospel message to appeal to the “felt-need” of the receptive recipient) whose transformed lives should be nurtured in the Christian fellowship of the church—an organism, not a social aggregate of individuals with “paradigm shift.”

However, Kraft’s most recent “paradigm shift” (1989:82-85) and “practice shift” (1987:127) have shown a very healthy and scriptural shift from this methodological presupposition and preoccupation with “gospel-marketing,” receptor’s felt need, consumer orientation for success, efficiency, etc. His articles (1986a, 1987b, 1991, 1992) have repeatedly emphasized “allegiance encounter,” and “truth encounter” (as suggested by

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**FIGURE 6. WAN’S ANALYSIS OF KRAFTS (1983) MODEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KRAFTS MODEL</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION CATEGORY</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION PATTERN</th>
<th>CHRIStIAN EQUILIBRIUM</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>pragmatic</em></td>
<td>spiritual/venery of form and function</td>
<td>reception-oriented communication</td>
<td>efficiency and impact</td>
<td>DE-Christian group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>functional</em></td>
<td>spiritual/venery of form and function</td>
<td>reception-oriented communication</td>
<td>efficiency and impact</td>
<td>DE-Christian group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>paradigmatic</em></td>
<td>deep-level, paradigm shift</td>
<td>deep-level, paradigm shift</td>
<td>deep-level, paradigm shift</td>
<td>DE-Christian group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>teleological</em></td>
<td>deep-level, paradigm shift</td>
<td>deep-level, paradigm shift</td>
<td>deep-level, paradigm shift</td>
<td>DE-Christian group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

In this study, Kraft's contribution to inter-disciplinary integration by using the communication and social sciences has been analyzed and recognized. His use/misuse of the communication and social sciences in biblical interpretation and missiological formulation have been examined and critiqued. A new concept and definition of "culture" has been proposed as a constructive suggestion for the improvement of Kraft's theoretical and theological (evangelical) approach. This new "vari-dynamic model" will lead to a "symphonic approach" (not just dialogue or triologue) of multi-disciplinary, multi-level, multi-contextual, multi-dimensional integration. Kraft's recent shift from reductionistic, non-dichotomistic, non-evangelical and "unscriptural" approaches of inter-disciplinary integration is most encouraging.

It is high time for Dr. Kraft to revise his influential yet controversial book Christianity in Culture (1979a) incorporat-
A Critique of Charles Kraft’s Use/Misuse


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APPENDIX I: PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES H. KRAFT

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APPENDIX II - A SYMPHONIC APPROACH TO INTER-DISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION: A VARI-DYNAMIC MODEL

THEO-CULTURE (theo-dynamic context)
- trinitario-dynamics: Trinity, Christology, pneumatology, covenant, etc.
- Inspirio-dynamics: inspiration, illumination, etc.
- Soterio-dynamics: predestination, atonement, etc.

ANGEL-CULTURE (angel-dynamic context)
- theophano-dynamics: theophany, vision, dream, etc.
- Angelo-dynamics: angiology, deliverance, etc.
- Satano-dynamics: demonology, power encounter, etc.

HOMINO-CULTURE (homino-dynamic context)
- Christo-dynamics: incarnation, missiology, etc.
- Missio-dynamics: missio dei, possessio, elenctic, etc.
- Culturo-dynamics: enculturation, assimilation, westernization, etc.
- Socio-dynamics: socialization, system theory, structural analysis, etc.
- Psycho-dynamics: cognitive analysis, worldview studies, etic/emic, etc.

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*The "vari-dynamic model" (as in aero-dynamic or thermodynamic model) includes the various dynamic systems within the model.*
Behavioral-dynamics: reciprocity, kinesics, proxemics, etc.
Linguistic-dynamics: descriptive linguistics, semantics, etc.

### APPENDIX III - A SYNOPTIC OF REVELATION, INSPIRATION AND ILLUMINATION

(Wan 1994:6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Revelation</th>
<th>Inspiration</th>
<th>Illumination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>What is communicated?</td>
<td>How is it communicated? the method of recording</td>
<td>the practical and spiritual enlightenment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who</strong></td>
<td>the revealer, the author</td>
<td>the instrumental Bible writers the complete infallibility of God's message through man</td>
<td>the receiver of the message man through the Holy Spirit (1Co 2:13,14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>the communication of God's message to man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective / Subjective</strong></td>
<td>objective disclosure</td>
<td>objective disclosure and/or subjective appreciation (1Co 2:10, 12, 25, 40)</td>
<td>subjective apprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject</strong></td>
<td>the self-revealing God past historical fact: special revelation e.g. incarnation and inspiration present continued effects: creation and conscience</td>
<td>God's chosen few past historically terminated event: inspiring Bible writers by the Divine Author (Rev 22:16,19)</td>
<td>all God's children present process of conviction and conversion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Term(s)</strong></td>
<td>Special revelation: i.e. redemptive revelation both in Christ the living Word (incarnation Heb 1:1; Jn 1:14) and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inscripturation: the process of the inspired truth as infallible and authoritative truth of faith and practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Catchy Phrase**
- inspiration without revelation as in the Book of Acts (Ac 1:4)
- inspiration including revelation as in the Apocalypse (Rev 1:1-11)

**Inerrancy: the trustworthiness and truthfulness of God's inspiration**
- Plenary inspiration: all parts of the O.T and N.T. are inspired and infallible

**Similarity**
- All dealing with God's interaction with humans in terms of the Scripture leading to a better knowledge of God and his plan of salvation for humanity
### Appendix IV

Contextual Interaction of the Triune God's Revelation to Man

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### Appendix V - God's Revelation to Man (Wan 1994:7)

(multi-dimension, multi-level, multi-context)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension Category \</th>
<th>The Word (Incarnation)</th>
<th>In the Word (Inscripturation)</th>
<th>Through the Word (Interpretation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATURE OF TRUTH</td>
<td>essential and efficient</td>
<td>essential: being God's Word</td>
<td>efficient: becoming God's Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESENTATION OF TRUTH</td>
<td>personal and propositional</td>
<td>propositional</td>
<td>personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSPECTIVE - CHRISTIAN</td>
<td>objective and subjective</td>
<td>objective</td>
<td>subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>historical and historic</td>
<td>historical</td>
<td>historic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESS</td>
<td>completed and continuous</td>
<td>completed</td>
<td>continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK / LEVEL</td>
<td>divine</td>
<td>the Christ: perfect God</td>
<td>H.S.: Author, inspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>human</td>
<td>the Jesus: perfect Man</td>
<td>Bible writers: inspired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCT</td>
<td>divine-human Perfect: Being</td>
<td>divine-human perfect Book</td>
<td>imperfect efforts need divine aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
<td>historic-cultural</td>
<td>past</td>
<td>past -&gt; present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dual level: theo-culture homo-culture</td>
<td>multi-faceted: Jew - Ish/Hellenistic /Aramaic/Roman</td>
<td>multiple in no. and variety of cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>linguistic</td>
<td>heavenly/Gk./Aramaic/Hebrews</td>
<td>multi-lingual: Heb/Gk./Aramaic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>many contemporary languages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VI - THE TWO QUESTIONS: BIBLICAL? SCRIPTURAL?
(Wan 1994:12)

----> ≠ ---->
biblically based    scripturally sound
<---- == <----

-descriptive
-precedent
-cultural/
temporal

-prescriptive
-principle
-transcultural/
eternal

9

USE AND MISUSE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: INTERPRETING THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Robertson McQuilkin

As the new executive director of the Evangelical Missiological Society, it might be helpful in getting acquainted to describe my pilgrimage in regard to our theme for the year, "Evangelical Missiology and the Social Sciences." After the personal pilgrimage, let me suggest some principles for doing our missiology under the authority of Scripture. Only as we carefully identify the meaning intended by the Bible authors will we be able to use the social sciences with profit and avoid having our missiology skewed by some naturalistically-based theory.

INTRODUCTION: MY PERSONAL PILGRIMAGE

When getting my education in the forties, anthropology was not part of the missionary's preparation, so I got special permission from the seminary dean, Harold Lindsell, to take some of my electives at the nearby University of California at Los Angeles. The only courses available were marginal to my purpose, though they did introduce me to the discipline which I sensed could be helpful to an aspiring missionary. In the fifties I subscribed to Practical Anthropology and bought everything published by Eugene Nida. This was getting closer to what I had in mind, but I still lacked the foundations, so in the late fifties I ordered basic anthropological textbooks and conducted my self-

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Robertson McQuilkin is president emeritus of Columbia International University.