



Todd Vanden Berg

# More Than You Think, but Still Not Enough: Christian Anthropologists

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*Historically, exclusionary dynamics within the discipline of anthropology have often discouraged Christians from entering this field of study. Christians, however, by fixating on these systems of exclusion, have themselves inadvertently been oriented toward the discipline in a manner that has not only contributed to a perception of marginalization, but also ignored Christian contributions within the discipline. This article will attempt to highlight this problematic orientation and push for a reorientation of Christian views of cultural anthropology with the goal of encouraging Christians to participate in the field in significant ways.*

What are the habits and perspectives of Christians that have limited their participation in the discipline of anthropology?<sup>1</sup> What viewpoints have contributed to a narrow understanding of Christian scholarship within the discipline? This article moves beyond describing the exclusionary mechanisms within anthropology that have created an unfriendly atmosphere for Christians, and will instead explore the dynamics that have led to current misunderstandings. The article will also suggest changes in perspectives that will hopefully increase the numbers of Christians involved in anthropology.

Quite a few scholars have considered the relationship between anthropology and Christianity. The majority of these scholars have been Christian anthropologists. Many of them have used missionaries as proxies for Christians in order to consider the interplay between anthropology and Christianity.<sup>2</sup> This literature has clearly articulated exclusionary dynamics within anthropology toward Christians and has shown the significant negative influence on Christian involvement within anthropology.

While this bias by many a-religious anthropologists toward Christianity generally, and Christian anthropologists more specifically, is clear, I believe that other factors have contributed to a perception of a small number of Christian anthropologists. These limiting factors have also prevented some Christians from becoming involved in anthropology. These factors can be witnessed through how Christians have both conceptualized and utilized anthropology.

All too often the perspective of both a-religious anthropologists and some Christian anthropologists has been that the discipline of anthropology, at its very core, is a-religious, and Christians who engage in anthropology are interlopers. While it is true that many a-religious scholars in anthropology

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have been less than friendly toward Christian anthropologists, this by no means speaks to the inherent nature of the discipline. Anthropology is the comparative study of human populations. An a-religious bias is not built into this endeavor. Those who practice anthropology, even if in the majority and at the center of power, may indeed be less than friendly to Christians in the discipline, but the discipline itself is void of this foundational orientation. The discipline of anthropology is not inherently antireligious simply because historically those in the mainstream have been so. I am aware that there are Christians—even Christians intimately involved in anthropology—who would not hold this view, but it is a view that I fervently hold and that informs the direction of this article.<sup>3</sup> In short, I hold to a reformed perspective on matters concerning the need for or “call to” Christian engagement in the academy—specifically, anthropology. This article assumes this perspective but will not be a defense of this perspective.

### Are There Few Christian Anthropologists?

Before I can outline Christian culpability for insufficient Christian involvement in anthropology, I feel compelled to scrutinize the common perception of many Christian anthropologists that there are few Christian anthropologists in the academy. An example of this opinion is the following statement by Darrell Whiteman: “Of the thousands of anthropologists, less than one percent would call themselves Christian.”<sup>4</sup> This is a dramatic claim echoing the perspectives of many Christian anthropologists, but it is a claim that, to my knowledge, is not empirically substantiated.

Certainly the historical tensions between a-religious anthropologists<sup>5</sup> and Christians are no doubt a significant contributing factor to the view that there are few Christian anthropologists: i.e., if the discipline is unfriendly to Christians, then Christians will not only be pushed away from the discipline, but will also choose to avoid exposure to this toxic atmosphere. Exclusionary dynamics within anthropology have had significant historical negative impact on Christian involvement that continues today. The result is that some believe that anthropology is, at its core, antithetical to Christianity.

Out of this historical understanding of the antagonistic relationship between a largely a-religious discipline and Christianity, more contemporary “evidence” of this view has supported the notion that there are few Christian anthropologists. What follows are four such arguments and my response to them. It is significant to note that all of the arguments flow from Christian perceptions of anthropology. Arguments by a-religious anthropologists for a dearth of Christian anthropologists would likely be quite different. I am focusing on Christian observations because they ultimately inform Christian participation in the discipline. I will simply consider the possibility that the assumption that there are very few Christian anthropologists may indeed be false. Just as the claim for a dearth of Christian anthropologists has no substantiating data, my counterclaim also has no clear, substantiating data. In the end, data will need to be gathered to determine the true number of Christian anthropologists. Ultimately, by calling these arguments into question, I will be making a case for a new, refreshed involvement of Christians within anthropology.

### Contemporary “Support” for Few Christian Anthropologists

#### *American Enterprise Poll*

The oft-cited empirical data supporting the notion of few Christians within anthropology is a survey, “Politics of the Professoriate,” published in *The American Enterprise*.<sup>6</sup> The survey is usually summarized along these lines: 65% of anthropologists in academic departments answered “none” when asked their religion. In other academic disciplines, 30% was the average of those who responded “none.” The disparity of response to this question between anthropologists and academics in other disciplines is certainly remarkable. However, if one goes back to the survey and considers the exact question, a slightly different story emerges.

The statistics for the 1991 article were gathered from data collected by Gallup from January through December 1984. The question asked in the Gallup poll was, “What is your religious preference?”<sup>7</sup> The survey question did not ask if a person was religious; rather, it asked if the person had a religious *preference*. This may sound like an all-too-fine distinction for some, but it may be significant for a culturally sensitive anthropologist. I grant that

for many Christians, a “spiritual” but not “religious” anthropologist may look no different than an active, engaged Christian. So let us consider the survey from another angle.

Even if the survey question were to be interpreted as a respondent having no religious beliefs when answering “none,” 35% of anthropologists in academic institutions polled did indeed have religious beliefs. Therefore, although the data did highlight that there are more agnostics, atheists, or a-religious people in anthropology than in any other discipline, did the survey also highlight a small number of Christian anthropologists? Consider the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in the context of this data. Although membership in the AAA does not represent all anthropologists in North America, it does serve as a good starting point for consideration. The AAA currently has a membership of just over 10,000.<sup>8</sup> Assuming that the response of anthropologists from twenty-five years ago (1984) would be similar today, 6,500 anthropologists might be considered a-religious, while 3,500 anthropologists would affirm some religious affiliation. Also, in a North American context, one could assume that Christianity would be the religious affiliation in the majority. Unfortunately, we have no data on the nature of the religious beliefs of these people. But to tacitly assume that few of these anthropologists are Christians seems improper and is unfortunate.

### Network of Christian Anthropologists

A second observation, supposedly in support of the notion that there are few Christian anthropologists, has been to cite the low number of anthropologists who attend the informal meeting of the “Network of Christian Anthropologists” at the annual AAA meeting.<sup>9</sup> The average number of attendants is between thirty and fifty.<sup>10</sup> The assumption of those who use this attendance to highlight the tiny number of Christian anthropologists is that all Christian anthropologists would choose to attend the informal meeting. It seems possible, however, that the low number of anthropologists attending the Network meetings simply means that few Christian anthropologists desire to attend the meetings. The attendance at the meetings cannot be inferred to be a measure of the number of Christian anthropologists.

There seem to be three possible explanations for this lack of attendance. First, the small number of

anthropologists at the meeting parallels the small number of Christians in anthropology. I do not support this possibility. The second and third explanations both support the possibility of larger numbers of Christian anthropologists. The second is that, for fear of being labeled as a Christian in the academy, many Christian anthropologists choose not to attend. This explanation seems entirely possible and would reflect the historical tensions between a-religious and Christian anthropologists. The third possible explanation could be that many Christian anthropologists perceive the meeting to focus on issues of little interest to them and so choose not to attend. I will get back to what this perception might be later in the article.<sup>11</sup>

### Few Applicants for CCCU Anthropology Positions

A third contention I have heard (and even used myself in the past) that seems to support the notion that there are few Christian anthropologists, involves the difficulty of compiling a suitable list of potential anthropology hires in institutions within the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). For some, this difficulty comports with the belief that there are few Christians in anthropology. A lack of applicants, however, only informs us that a small cohort of Christian anthropologists is interested in applying for positions at Christian undergraduate institutions; it does not more generally tell us that there are few Christian anthropologists. A possible explanation for the small pool of applicants for such positions relates to the third option in the previous argument, in that it also concerns perceptions of what interests Christian anthropologists. Again, I will consider this perception in more depth in a moment.

### Lack of Impact on the Discipline

A fourth consideration that supposedly supports the idea that there are few Christian anthropologists argues that Christian anthropologists have not impacted the discipline in significant ways. Dean Arnold states that there “has been relatively little scholarship by Christian anthropologists directed to the academy.”<sup>12</sup> What does Arnold mean when he speaks about “Christian scholarship” “directed to the academy”? Does he mean *explicit* Christian scholarship that has theoretically impacted the discipline, or Christian scholarship that undermines a-religious biases against Christian anthropologists? This leads me to posit two questions relating to



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Christians and scholarship: (1) Who are Christian anthropologists? and (2) What does Christian anthropological scholarship look like? Answering these questions may give another perspective on just how many Christian anthropologists are in the academy.

### Who Is a Christian Anthropologist?

The anthropological component of the description “Christian anthropologist” can be easily defined: a degree (undergraduate/graduate) in anthropology. The other side of the description is more difficult to define and, to my mind, this has been problematic in Christian anthropological circles. In a North American context that is permeated by Christian influences, a separation between “nominal” and “devout” Christian could and indeed should be made. In this context, a series of twelve questions used by Gallup and Timothy Jones distinguishes “heroic and faithful” Christians from nominal Christians.<sup>13</sup> The intention of identifying heroic and faithful Christians is to more accurately differentiate the engaged Christian from the nominal Christian. Such an assessment would be useful in the context of this article but, to my knowledge, has not been applied to those who consider themselves to be Christians and are anthropologists. How the cohort of the 35% of anthropologists in the academy who have a religious preference in the “Politics of the Professoriate” article breaks down into these categories, is not clear from the data. We do not know the specific religious affiliation of this 35% or the strength of their religious beliefs and commitments. Such data need to be gathered in order to add to an understanding of Christians involved in anthropology. I fear, however, that it is often assumed within anthropological circles of the CCCU that the numbers are very small.

Without any clear descriptive data available, there have been two common and unfortunate approaches used to take a head count of Christian anthropologists. First, apply the description “Christian anthropologist” to those anthropologists who work at Christian institutions. Now, if this were the only place where Christian anthropologists were to follow their vocation, then it certainly would be true that there are few Christian anthropologists. Of the 105 institutions in the CCCU, there are only approximately thirty full-time anthropologists in undergraduate faculty positions. But how many Christian anthropologists are employed at institutions other

than those affiliated with the CCCU? Or, to repeat, how many of the 35% who claim a religious preference in the “Politics of the Professoriate” article could be described as “devout” or “heroic” Christians? Again, we do not know.

The second approach commonly used to “count” Christian anthropologists is to apply the description to those anthropologists whose scholarship is *explicitly* Christian. Let us now consider the issue of Christian anthropological scholarship.

### What Does Christian Anthropological Scholarship Look Like?

Nicholas Wolterstorff argues that some neo-Calvinists have it wrong when assuming that Christian scholarship will necessarily be different from non-Christian scholarship. Wolterstorff underscores the need to understand Christian scholarship through the lens of “faithfulness,” stating that “Christian learning [scholarship] is learning practiced in fidelity to the gospel.”<sup>14</sup> *Faithfulness* is the unique characteristic of Christian scholarship. *Difference* from non-Christian scholarship is not a condition of Christian scholarship (although it may be a consequence of faithful scholarship). Wolterstorff’s insights are helpful when considering the implicit and explicit nature of Christian scholarship.<sup>15</sup> The assumption of a polemic between Christian and non-Christian scholarship serves to prevent one from seeing “faithful” Christian scholarship and may serve to blind one to the Christian scholarship done in secular anthropology departments.<sup>16</sup>

In “The Elusive Idea of Christian Scholarship,” Michael Hamilton argues that Christians often do not view the notion of Christian scholarship in broad enough terms, and that the idea of “scholarship of discovery” often falls outside the boundary of Christian scholarship in Christian evangelical institutions. Hamilton states:

We also operate with a surprisingly narrow definition of what constitutes scholarship. I have found that people usually think that the term means scholarship that is explicitly Christian and distinctively Christian. They almost always believe that it must somehow look different than secular scholarship. The result of this narrow definition of Christian scholarship is

that we have built a wall of separation between Christian scholarship and research scholarship in the mainstream academic disciplines.<sup>17</sup>

The implicit nature of some forms of Christian scholarship is that God-honoring Christian scholarship may look no different than any other scholarship. What *motivates* the scholarship may be very different, however. A result of this is a schism between anthropologists who do explicitly Christian scholarship and/or work in Christian institutions, and those Christian anthropologists who do implicitly Christian scholarship and/or work in secular institutions.

## Anthropology in the CCCU

We have explored possible explanations as to why so few Christian anthropologists attend the informal meeting of Christian anthropologists, why applicant pools for CCCU anthropology positions are shallow, and why there is a perception that Christian anthropologists have little impact on scholarship. I have exposed an unhealthy and narrow understanding of who might be a “Christian anthropologist” and what “Christian scholarship” might look like, and I have outlined my assumption that there may be more Christian anthropologists than previously believed. In the remainder of this article, I will argue how growth in the numbers of Christian anthropologists has been hindered at CCCU institutions.

This narrow understanding of what defines a Christian anthropologist has had a substantially negative influence on Christian undergraduate institutional commitment to anthropology. A feedback loop of sorts has served to perpetuate this unhealthy dynamic at CCCU institutions. It is to this issue that I now turn. Let us first look at the data, and then I will make my argument. What follows is a brief overview of how anthropology has been utilized at CCCU institutions.

The AAA data shows a significant growth in undergraduate anthropology majors in the USA over the last few decades. In 1966, there were 1,250 BA degrees granted in anthropology. In 1986, 3,490 degrees were granted. In 2006, 10,863 anthropology BAs were granted.<sup>18</sup> This growth has not been paralleled at CCCU institutions. Of the 105 institutions in the CCCU, only five institutions have what can be considered stand-alone anthropology majors: Biola University, Eastern University, Lee University, Vanguard University, and Wheaton College.<sup>19</sup>

Compare this statistic to data compiled from the top twenty-five undergraduate schools in the 2007 *U.S. News and World Report* rankings of the best liberal arts colleges.<sup>20</sup> The average undergraduate population in the top twenty-five schools is 1,903 compared to 2,857 in the CCCU. Of these top twenty-five schools, twenty-three have an anthropology major.<sup>21</sup> The contrast between these two groups of schools is substantial and dramatic.

Concerning the number of faculty per institution, excluding instructors, visiting professors, and emeriti, the average number of anthropology professors employed at the top twenty-five liberal arts institutions approaches five (4.8). As for anthropology faculty in CCCU institutions, I have compiled a working list of full-time anthropologists employed at the 105 CCCU institutions ([www.calvin.edu/go/anthrodir](http://www.calvin.edu/go/anthrodir)). At the time of publication, thirteen institutions employ full-time tenure-track anthropologists: Bethel University (2), Biola University (6), California Baptist University (1), Calvin College (2), Eastern University (3), Houghton College (1), Lee University (2), Messiah College (1), Oklahoma Baptist University (2), Seattle Pacific University (1), Vanguard University (3), Westmont College (1), and Wheaton College (2). The total number of full-time tenure-track anthropologists at these institutions is twenty-seven. The average number of anthropologists per institution at CCCU institutions is 0.26. These disparate figures of anthropology major programs and faculty are sobering and merit explanation. The data suggest that when it comes to anthropology, there is an unfriendly or unwelcoming environment at CCCU institutions.

## Beyond Historical Factors—The Hindrance of Missions and an Anthropological Tool Kit

Now it is certainly true that historical dynamics have had a negative impact on Christians participating in anthropology. They may also have served to keep Christians who otherwise would be interested in anthropology from becoming anthropologists. At the same time, they may have predisposed others to think of anthropology in negative terms, for example, as an a-religious, relativistic discipline. These may well be significant factors that have hindered the growth of anthropology programs at CCCU institutions.

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Such a perception of anthropology I have personally witnessed. In the summer before I came to Calvin College to teach cultural anthropology, I was mowing my lawn when a fellow Calvin College professor and neighbor came walking by. He greeted me, welcomed me to the neighborhood, and, knowing my new position at Calvin, proceeded to ask me if it were not oxymoronic to be a Christian anthropologist. Uncomfortably, I smiled and laughed with him at his witty comment—becoming painfully aware that Christian anthropologists are often in uncomfortable relations not only with a-religious anthropologists but also with Christian colleagues. Charles Kraft makes a similar observation in *Anthropology for Christian Witness*.<sup>22</sup> Christian anthropologists frequently hear such comments. Without doubt, there are those Christians who believe that the discipline of anthropology is antithetical to Christianity. This may well be a limiting factor in the growth of anthropology programs at CCCU institutions.

However, I believe that a lack of anthropology programs at CCCU institutions can be explained by another factor. Ironically, part of the culpability lies with those Christians who were often the first to become involved in anthropology—Christians who have pushed for the use of anthropological perspectives in explicitly Christian contexts—historically, Christians involved in missions.<sup>23</sup> For such Christians, anthropology is often not valued as a discipline, but rather it is valued for a certain set of tools or perspectives. This viewpoint is problematic, and the results are manifested in a number of ways.

A narrow perception of who Christian anthropologists are and what they do connects directly to the historical relationship between anthropology and missions. Anthropologists have historically been closely tied to mission efforts,<sup>24</sup> and this association has left a significant and negative impact on Christian perspectives of anthropology in two significant ways.

The first of these has influenced perspectives on what Christian anthropologists do. This early form of applied anthropology at Christian institutions has contributed to the skewing of anthropology toward a stress on anthropology as a missions vocation. As frequently happens, some Christians who have gone on to receive PhDs in anthropology have done so because they see anthropology as a tool—a tool by which one can be a more effective,

culturally nuanced missionary.<sup>25</sup> They often either return to the mission field, or continue in missions via teaching anthropological perspectives to those who aspire to go into missions. Brian Howell states,

Anthropology has found a peculiar niche in evangelicalism among the missions departments of seminaries. A number of gifted anthropologists hold these important posts, yet struggle against a perception that their role is primarily in training—preparing the troops for the field.<sup>26</sup>

The scandal of the evangelical mind appears to apply in a unique way to anthropology.<sup>27</sup>

Further, because many Christian voices in anthropology have come out of a missiological context, students of anthropology who are Christian see Christian scholarship in anthropology almost exclusively from a missiological perspective. For example, Eugene Nida's classic text, *Customs and Cultures*, begins by stating, "Good missionaries have always been good anthropologists."<sup>28</sup> Charles Kraft's *Anthropology for Christian Witness* elaborates on the theme:

One of our major aims in this approach to the study of anthropology is to learn to protect the people of other societies from our own inclination to make them like us. It is a sad fact that, though Paul learned from the Holy Spirit to be a Jew to Jews and a Gentile to Gentiles, many of today's cross-cultural witnesses have not learned that approach. We pray that the Holy Spirit will use anthropological insight in our day to show us how we are to go about adapting ourselves and our presentation of the message of God to those immersed in other cultures.<sup>29</sup>

While anthropological insights are an important element in the understanding of missions, I fear that this is the dominant way in which Christian undergraduates are exposed to anthropology. As Dean Arnold states,

Christian anthropologists ... tend to see their scholarship through American cultural glasses. This perspective emphasizes pragmatism and utility ... and focuses on the traditional mission of the church ... [It] fails to see scholarship as a stewardship of one's mind, and as an activity that simply brings glory to God regardless of its utility.<sup>30</sup>



Christians who believe anthropology to be antithetical to Christianity exacerbate the situation. If this is the overwhelming perception of anthropology, then it is understandable why these Christians do not want to support wholehearted involvement in the discipline, and why they may well be inclined to use the tools, approaches, or strengths of the discipline for non-anthropological ends.

A second negative impact of the historical tie between anthropology and missions in Christian circles relates to how Christian institutions have utilized and promoted anthropology. The strong historical tie between anthropology and missions has ultimately hindered the growth of Christian anthropology by unintentionally, but nonetheless significantly, limiting the growth of anthropology programs at CCCU institutions. Interestingly, it is common for Christian anthropologists to critique a-religious anthropological biases against Christianity by focusing specifically on the treatment of Christian missionaries, inadvertently supporting the notion that Christian anthropology *is* missions.

I can relate anecdotally my personal graduate school biases, as well as opinions that were widely held in graduate school, on the relationship between anthropology and missions. I relate the following confessionally: While preparing to do fieldwork for my PhD in Adamawa State, Nigeria, I struggled with how people would perceive my work. The Christian Reformed Church in which I had been raised has a long history of sending missionaries to Nigeria, and I felt that I would invariably be associated with doing missionary work. Although I was clearly in graduate school to receive a PhD in anthropology and obviously not in seminary, I feared others would assume that my anthropology degree was simply a stepping-stone to the mission field. My fears were confirmed on more than one occasion. For example, upon informing an acquaintance that I was getting a PhD in cultural anthropology and was about to do fieldwork in Nigeria, I was asked what mission work I would be doing. At the time I thought such a question was based on geography—Nigeria. I assumed that people from my church denomination associated Nigeria with missions, but I now believe the question was based equally on Christian perspectives on anthropology. It seems that if a person is a Christian and an anthropologist, then, for many Christians, he or she must also be a missionary. My “fears” and my acquain-

tance’s question both support the assumption of a connection between anthropology and missions.

I believe that students at CCCU institutions are not consistently taught to think of anthropology as a valid self-contained discipline within which to pursue faithful Christian scholarship. Because of this bias, few Christians initially pursue anthropology for the sake of anthropology. There seems to be a significant break between those who see anthropology as a set of perspectives and those who see it as a primary arena for Christian scholarship—the latter being clearly in the minority.

I suspect that many Christian anthropologists do not attend the informal meetings at the AAA annual meetings because of this understandable but misplaced perspective. They may perceive those attending the meetings as being interested in missiological issues. This bias informs me that somewhere along the line many people have come to feel that Christians who are anthropologists, more often than not, are involved in missiology. Dean Arnold has noted that the initial meetings were indeed focused on anthropological issues relating to missions.<sup>31</sup> I also suspect this bias explains why CCCU anthropology positions are hard to fill. Christian anthropologists at CCCU institutions are commonly and narrowly associated with missionaries. Anthropology is understood, often accurately, to be a service discipline to other major programs or to wider college agendas such as increased global sensitivity or cross-cultural engagement. For some Christian anthropologists, this is not how they feel called to serve in the discipline. Using anthropology exclusively for the furtherance of missions or of wider college goals (e.g., cross-cultural engagement) limits the breadth of possibilities that Christians can have in pursuing Christian scholarship in anthropology.<sup>32</sup>

Apply a reductionist approach to anthropology and you are left with only a grab bag tool kit: cultural relativism, concept of culture, importance of historical context, holistic approach in time, space, content, and so forth. You are left with nothing but secondary or latent functions of the discipline of anthropology. The discipline itself is left void, hollow, and with no intrinsic value. The paltry number of anthropology programs at CCCU institutions reveals this to be the case. This approach toward anthropology at CCCU institutions has negatively impacted the number of Christians involved

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in anthropology as well as the diversity of that involvement.

How do we as Christian scholars correct this problem? First, and I am sad to have to say this, Christians need to know that anthropology is not anti-Christian. Some anthropologists may be, but the discipline is not. Second, as a cohort, CCCU member institutions need to develop anthropology major programs. Anthropology can never be an equal player if sociology departments subsume it. I say "as a cohort" because institutional size, financial constraints, and other limitations prohibit many or most CCCU institutions from developing majors in anthropology. Third, Christian anthropologists with missiological backgrounds who teach at CCCU institutions need to consciously seek to widen their students' understanding of the diversity of Christian scholarship within anthropology. Fourth, beyond anthropology and following Wolterstorff and Hamilton, CCCU institutions need to underscore the breadth of Christian scholarship possible for its faculty. Fifth, following the preceding recommendations, would-be Christian anthropologists need to be trained to exert an influence on anthropology well beyond the boundaries of CCCU institutions.<sup>33</sup>

Christians, I believe, need to make a concerted effort to improve the possibility for growth of Christian scholarship in anthropology. The trajectory of anthropology in the CCCU is not encouraging. Few Christian institutions have witnessed a growth in anthropology on a par with the growth of anthropology at secular institutions. CCCU institutions should continue to use the discipline of anthropology to prepare students to be effective, informed, and sensitive Kingdom workers in broad terms—including training Christians to be influential scholars in the discipline of anthropology.

If we can accept that Christian anthropologists are found in significant numbers at secular institutions, then we can also accept that such scholars are doing Christian anthropology. If this occurs, not only does the discipline look less unfriendly (there are Christian anthropologists at secular institutions), but the interaction between Christian anthropologists doing implicit or explicit scholarship is possible. If CCCU institutions expand their understanding of anthropology beyond a service discipline and begin to develop stand-alone major programs, then even more Christians will pursue

anthropology as a sphere of faithful service to God.<sup>34</sup> \*

### Acknowledgment

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This article will focus on the sub-discipline of cultural anthropology rather than on the entire discipline.

<sup>2</sup>Roland Bonsen, Hans Marks, and Jelle Miedema, eds., *The Ambiguity of Rapprochement: Reflections of Anthropologists on Their Controversial Relationship with Missionaries* (Nijmegen: Focaal, 1990); Ernest Brandewie, "Ethnology and Missionaries: The Case of the Anthropos Institute and Wilhelm Schmidt," in *Missionaries, Anthropologists, and Cultural Change: Studies in Third World Societies* 25, ed. Darrell Whiteman (Williamsburg, VA: College of William and Mary, 1983), 369–86; Robert Priest, "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Moral Roots of Conflict," in *Current Concerns of Anthropologists and Missionaries*, ed. K. J. Franklin (Dallas, TX: The International Museum of Cultures, 1987), 35; Robert Priest, "Missionary Positions: Christian, Modernist, Postmodernist," *Current Anthropology* 42, no. 1 (2001): 29–68; Frank Salamone, "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Competition or Reciprocity?" *Human Organization* 36 (1977): 407–12; Frank Salamone, "Epistemological Implications of Fieldwork and Their Consequences," *American Anthropologist* 54, no. 81 (1979): 46–60; Claude Stipe, "Anthropologists Versus Missionaries: The Influence of Presuppositions," *Current Anthropology* 21 (1980): 165–8; Frank Salamone, ed., "Missionaries and Anthropologists," in *Studies in Third World Societies* 26 (Williamsburg, VA: College of William and Mary, 1985); George Stocking Jr., *The Ethnographer's Magic* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); Vinson Sutlive Jr., "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Eternal Enemies or Colleagues in Disguise?" in *Missionaries, Anthropologists, and Cultural Change*, 55–90; Sjaak van der Geest, "Anthropologists and Missionaries: Brothers under the Skin," *Man, New Series* 25, no. 4 (Dec. 1990); Sjaak van der Geest, "Missionaries," in *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology* 3, ed. D. Levinson and M. Ember (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1996), 797–800; Darrell Whiteman, "One Significant Solution: How Anthropology Became the Number One Study for Evangelical Missionaries. Part I: Anthropology and Mission: The Incarnational Connection," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 20, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 34–44.

<sup>3</sup>See Jenell Williams Paris, "A Pietist Perspective on Love and Learning in Cultural Anthropology," *Christian Scholar's Review* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 371–85; and Todd Vanden Berg, "A Reflection on Jenell Williams Paris's 'A Pietist Perspective on Love and Learning in Cultural Anthropology,'" *Christian Scholar's Review* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 387–93.

<sup>4</sup>Darrell Whiteman, "One Significant Solution: How Anthropology Became the Number One Study for Evangelical Missionaries. Part II: Anthropology and Mission: The



- Incarnational Connection," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 81.
- <sup>51</sup>I need to acknowledge that a-religious anthropologists do not hold a monolithic opinion of Christians.
- <sup>6</sup>Although the data is twenty-five years old, this survey continues to be cited in recent publications. "Politics of the Professoriate," *The American Enterprise* (July/August 1991): 86–7.
- <sup>7</sup>Responses were coded with the following options: Protestant (includes Baptists, Christian Church, Episcopal, Jehovah Witness, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.), Roman Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox Church, Mormon (include the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), Muslim, Hindu, Other, None, and Undesignated.
- <sup>8</sup>[www.aaanet.org/history.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/history.htm)
- <sup>9</sup>Dean Arnold, "Why Are There So Few Christian Anthropologists? Reflections on the Tensions between Christianity and Anthropology," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 58, no. 4 (2006): 266–82.
- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 268.
- <sup>11</sup>A reviewer of this manuscript added that a fourth possibility could be competing events that may be deemed to be more important for personal and/or professional reasons.
- <sup>12</sup>Dean Arnold, "Why Are There So Few Christian Anthropologists?" 267.
- <sup>13</sup>See Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2005); John G. Stackhouse Jr., "What Scandal? Whose Conscience?" *Books and Culture: A Christian Review* (July/August 2007): 20–1, 41–2.
- <sup>14</sup>Nicholas Wolterstorff, "On Christian Learning," in *Stained Glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, ed. Paul Marshall, Sander Griffioen, and Richard Mouw (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 57–80.
- <sup>15</sup>See also Wolterstorff's understanding of "control beliefs" in Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason within the Bounds of Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978).
- <sup>16</sup>For example, the work of E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Victor Turner, and Mary Douglas could be discussed in this context.
- <sup>17</sup>Michael S. Hamilton, "The Elusive Idea of Christian Scholarship," *Christian Scholar's Review* 31, no. 1 (2001): 16.
- <sup>18</sup>Data provided by the AAA.
- <sup>19</sup>Eastern University has a missions and anthropology major. I would not be inclined to consider this major as a "stand alone" anthropology program save for the fact that Eastern offers fully eleven anthropology courses. A similar dynamic holds for Bethel University—it offers a blended anthropology and sociology major. One could argue for or against the notion that Bethel University has enough anthropology courses to be considered a "stand alone" anthropology major—I would say no.
- <sup>20</sup>[http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/brief/tllibartco\\_brief.php](http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/brief/tllibartco_brief.php) (accessed May 2008).
- <sup>21</sup>Six of these schools have a joint sociology and anthropology major but have sufficient anthropology courses to be considered legitimate majors. Of the two schools that do not have anthropology majors, Harvey Mudd College focuses on math, science, and engineering while Claremont McKenna College stresses business and public affairs.
- <sup>22</sup>Charles Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 2.
- <sup>23</sup>The stress on using anthropology for missions has a more contemporary compatriot—International Development Studies. At Calvin College, both cultural anthropologists are involved in the International Development Studies Major.
- <sup>24</sup>Darrell Whiteman, "One Significant Solution: Part I."
- <sup>25</sup>Empirical data need to be gathered here to support or deny this claim. I am interested, for example, to know how many PhDs in anthropology who teach at CCCU institutions have ties to missions.
- <sup>26</sup>Brian Howell, "The Anthropology of Christianity: Beyond Missions and Conversion—A Review Essay," *Christian Scholar's Review* 34, no. 3 (Spring 2005): 354.
- <sup>27</sup>A theme of Noll's book considers an evangelical Christian's disinterest in the life of the mind. Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994).
- <sup>28</sup>Eugene A. Nida, *Customs and Cultures* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975).
- <sup>29</sup>Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 2. In response to this quote, I would add that anthropological insights might also be used by Christians in the West to accept the forms of Christianity that are emerging in other parts of the world independently of Western influences—influences that might come either from Western missionaries or indigenous leaders who are Western educated. The challenge for many in the West is to understand that Christianity on a global scale is no longer European in nature. The reflexive nature of anthropology should allow for such cultural self-awareness.
- <sup>30</sup>Dean Arnold, "Why Are There So Few Christian Anthropologists?" 278.
- <sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 267.
- <sup>32</sup>I want to say that I am ever thankful to Calvin College for allowing me the freedom to pursue my calling and my interest in anthropology in the ways that I have seen fit.
- <sup>33</sup>My graduate school experience tells me that there are more sincere Christians involved in anthropology at secular institutions than one would believe to be the case, especially considering the historical animosity of a-religious anthropologists toward Christians. An interesting arena of research would be to set out the character of Christian scholarship in anthropology for Christians within secular as well as at evangelical institutions.
- <sup>34</sup>I acknowledge that CCCU institutions are not the only institutions where Christians can pursue anthropology.

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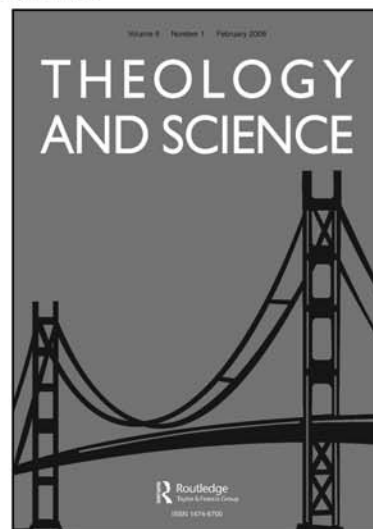
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