Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Title: Missionary Family Transition and Chaos Theory

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This study seeks to articulate a research paradigm for exploring missionary family transition dynamics. Research is needed in order to improve missionary family education and care, yet researching missionary families is made difficult by the innumerable variables involved in such complex, living systems. Missionary families traverse the normative transitions as other families do but also undergo the additional transitions of cross-cultural moves and the intense, multiple, and pervasive adjustments cross-cultural living requires. In the search for a conceptual model capable of explaining the transition dynamics missionary families exhibit, two theories were explored: transition theory and chaos theory.

Transition theory defines transitions as a qualitative reorganization of the inner and outer life. Transitions can be triggered by external circumstances, internal perceptions, normative life events, or non-normative crises. Because families are dynamic systems, they are transitioning as a whole while each individual family member is also transitioning. Describing such complex systems requires a model that can account for all the nonlinear relationships and continuous change they exhibit.

Chaos theory describes the nonlinear patterns of change in complex, living systems. Natural systems from the weather to animal populations can exhibit the dynamics of deterministic chaos. Chaos theory has given rise to concepts such as the butterfly effect (large results from small inputs), bifurcation (the rapid change from one state to another), critical moments (points where the system is prone to bifurcation), iteration (incorporating feedback into a system), and self-organization (the ability to spontaneously
generate order out of disorder). When applied to social systems, chaos theory concepts provide potent metaphors for explaining the dynamics of complex, living systems.

As a conceptual model, chaos theory supplies an explanatory system useful in interpreting data on missionary family transition. Because families are dynamical systems, patterns of interactions, response to change, and family outcomes can only by assessed over time. Longitudinal research offers the most likelihood of identifying critical moments in missionary family life, bifurcations in family patterns, nonlinear feedback loops in family interactions, self-similarity and self-organization in the family system. Understanding missionary family transition dynamics better has the potential of improving missionary education, care, and, ultimately, effectiveness.

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Title: Developing an Interdisciplinary Analysis and Application of Worldview Concepts for Christian Mission

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The Adventist emphasis on cognitive knowledge and behavioral change instead of deep changes of worldview assumptions and allegiance is the main concern of the present work. It is easier to emphasize cognitive beliefs and behavior than to do the difficult task of working to change the underlying worldview premises that drive behavior. The emphases on cognitive beliefs and behavior have frequently generated syncretism, created loyalty based on surface advantage instead of deeper allegiance, and hindered the Seventh-day Adventist Christian message from being adapted to different cultures.

An interdisciplinary library research was conducted to establish the foundational knowledge of worldview concepts providing the material for a discussion and development of worldview analysis and transformation. Based on these tools, a process of worldview analysis and transformation is applied producing a small sample result.

Worldview concepts were analyzed and described based on their historical development. Furthermore, stages human beings move through in worldview formation were suggested recommending a biblically shaped worldview process for worldview transformation and, finally, implications of worldview studies for mission and ministry are shown.

This study has demonstrated the role of worldview in enabling