In *Introduction to Missiological Research Design*, Edgar J. Elliston introduces the reader to the process of designing missiological research. He contends that missiology, besides being a full-fledged academic discipline, is also complex; and as such, no single disciplinary approach, or a combination of disciplinary approaches adequately address the issues related to research methods in mission. However, because the specific focus of missiology is on what God has done, is doing, and intends to do to accomplish his purpose for human beings, other academic disciplines such as anthropology, communications, economic, history, sociology, history, and many others undergird missiological research.

The twelve chapters of the book are structured in two main parts: the first part of seven chapters outlines a step by step process of doing missiological research, and the second of five chapters focuses on how other academic disciplines such as biblical theology of mission, education, communication, history, sociology, and their research methods contribute to missiology.

*Introduction to Missiological Research Design* is a rich resource of collective insights from scholars from different academic backgrounds and is characterized by numerous strengths. The book also argues in favor of missiology being viewed as a full-fledged academic discipline that ranges across the physical, socio-cultural, and spiritual environments in which people live. As such, it necessarily calls for the insights of all those disciplines related to human life. Also, because of the dynamic human situa-
tions, a combination of views is essential to deal with the complexities of
the discipline of missiology.

Identifying and focusing the central research issue is often the most
difficult yet the most important part of any research project. Fortunately
this easy-to-read book explains in detail all the steps involved in a research
process from the research topic selection, the description of the context of
the research project, the purpose, goals, significance, and scope of the re-
search.

Selecting an appropriate research method or methods is crucial for
successful research. The author simplifies this difficult task by dividing
research methods into three broad categories: descriptive, experimental,
and evaluative research, noting that it is the descriptive and evaluative
research methods that are used extensively in missiological research. By
further dividing research methods into qualitative and quantitative ap-
proaches, the author makes it even easier for researchers to narrow their
focus for in-depth study.

On reporting research findings, the author does well to stress that re-
searchers must be objective enough to report both negative and positive
results even if this does not support their assumptions, hopes, or hypoth-
eses. On writing the conclusions and recommendations of a study, the
general principles outlined in this book are timely as they help avoid the
tendency to hastily state conclusions and recommendations in other sec-
tions of the study rather than at the end of the research.

The tables, figures, graphs, and appendixes in this book are a tremen-
dous help in staying focused on the goals of the study. One other major
strength of this book is the skillful combination of the author’s vast experi-
ence (he has been a missionary and has coached more than 200 doctoral
dissertations related to missiologically-focused education of students
from more than eighty countries) with the contributions of other authors
who are also well versed in specific areas of expertise. The author suc-
cceeded well in showing practical ways whereby the discipline of misiol-
ogy gains by incorporating other academic disciplines. This gives a wider
authority to the discipline of missiology as it seeks to holistically address
the needs of human beings.

Besides the above area of strengths, this book like any other good book
has other areas that need revision or further attention. The table of con-
 tents mentions “Part II” but leaves out “Part I.” The second part consists
of five chapters not four as mentioned on page xxi. Figure 7 on page 78
gives a good summary on how to evaluate a research process. But using
numbers (1 to 9) in the chart and the same type of number (1 to 9) in the ex-
planation of the chart without these numbers matching each other makes
it difficult to fully understand the chart. Data collection and analysis is
central to any research project. The author describes in details the means of data collection (observation and questions, interviews, focus group) but did not give examples on how to practically and systematically analyze the data collected. The quality of this book’s binding is very poor. Despite careful handling, the book falls apart before one gets to the end. Its wonderful content deserves a better binding.

These concerns aside, this is a landmark work in missiological research and education that ought to be read by all mission professors, missionary practitioners, and students focusing on missions and intercultural studies.

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