

Theological Research Methods II:

Designing Your Research

Dr Annang Asumang

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Learning Outcomes

1. Making detailed choices about Research Design
2. Relationship between Design and Methodology
3. Relationship between Methodology and Research Questions
4. Completing the Design & Methodology section of RP

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Nine Sections of the Research Proposal

1. Title
2. Background & Review of Scholarship
3. Research Problem and Questions
4. Research Objectives & Contributions
5. Research Design and Methodology**
6. Hypothesis
7. Structure & Timeframe
8. Bibliography
9. Ethical Clearance

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5.0 Research Design and Methodology

[Describe your research design and methodology here]

This should cover the following five sub-sections except where they are not needed:

- 5.1 Choice of Design and Justification
- 5.2 The Methodological Steps
- 5.3 Research Participants
- 5.4 Research Tools
- 5.5 Planned Research Analysis

Be as explicit as possible about how you will solve the research problem. (You may or may not find it necessary to divide 'design' and 'methodology' into two sections.)

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Organizing Your Research

Research Idea, Title & Concept ✓

Clarified Research Problem
(The What)

- Find the topic
- Narrow it down through reading
- Formulate Problem Statement
- Formulate Research Questions

+

Structured Research Plan
(The How)

- Research Design:
 - Empirical/Literary
 - Quantitative
 - Qualitative
- Methodology
- Methods

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Constructing Research Questions

- Turn Problem Statement into the Main Question if not already
- Decide the Steps of the Methodology you are going to use
- Break the Main Question down into sub-questions, each sub-question corresponding to each step of the methodology
- Often each chapter of thesis is governed by a sub-question, but occasionally, two sub-questions may be in same chapter.
- If a sub-question requires more than two chapters to answer then it must be broken down into two sub-questions.
- Questions may need adjusting to reduce scope and refocus on outcome as the study proceeds

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How might you design a study with the following topic: “An exegetical analysis of John 14:1-14 and its implication for evangelism in Ghana”

- **Step 1: My Problem Statement:**
 - Link between Jesus’ teachings in John 14:1-14 and evangelism in Ghana
- **Step 2: My Research Questions:**
 - Decide details of design and methodological steps to organize the questions

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Varieties Of Research Methods in Biblical Studies

- **Exegetical-Theological:** Disciplined exegetical analysis of the text with the intention of unveiling its historical meaning and theological significance for Christian doctrine and praxes. E.g., Exegesis of Matt 5:1-12
- **Historical-Critical Methods:** Variety of Methods which relate the text to the historical settings based on assumptions which have now become less utilized. E.g., Source, Redaction, Form & History of Religions
- **Narrative Methods:** Literary analysis of a storied text in its canonical form employing ideas from Narrative criticism such as plot, characterization, rhetoric and setting
- **Rhetorical Methods:** Examination of the strategies and mechanisms through which the text persuades its reader or hearer
- **Social Scientific Methods:** Analysis of the text from the perspective of social sciences and cultural anthropological insights of the world behind it
- **Discourse Analysis:** Linguistic and structural analysis of the text with interest in how the words relate to each other to form communicative units
- **Intertextuality:** Study of how one earlier biblical text is utilized by a later text and its implications for interpretations of both texts. For example Daniel texts in Revelation

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General Steps in Simple Exegesis

1. Context

- Of Book - authorship, date and audience (recipients)
- Socio-historical-cultural
- Occasion & Purpose
- Literary Context
- Pertinent theological themes

2. Meaning of Passage

- Text critical issue if relevant
- Translation if relevant
- Literary Analysis: Genre & Structure
- Grammatical Analysis: Verbal, Syntactical, etc
- Theological Analysis

3. Exegetical Synthesis

- Summary of key message and themes

4. Implications, Significance & Application

- Historical – Scholarly implication
- Theological - Doctrine
- Pastoral – Practice for Church, Society & Personal

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**Each Step of the process
should ideally be covered by one
Research Sub-Question**

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A Biblical Exegesis of Colossians 3:1-3 and its Significance for Christians in a
Postmodern-Post Christian Era

by

Paul Andrew Weaver

A Bachelor of Theology Honours Mini-Thesis

in

Biblical Studies

at the

South African Theological Seminary

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1.1. Title of Thesis

A Biblical Exegesis of Colossians 3:1-3 and its significance for Christians today.

1.2. Research Problem and Key Questions

Main research problem:

What is the significance of Colossians 3:1-3 for Christians today? **Main Question**

Key questions/sub-problems:

- What is the context of Colossians? **Context Question**
- What did Colossians 3:1-3 mean for its original readers? **Exegesis Question**
- What significance does Colossians 3:1-3 have for Christians today? **Analysis Question**
- How do Christians today set their hearts and minds on "... things above ..." and not on "... earthly things ..." (Col 3:1-3¹)? **Significance/Reflection Question**

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5.2 The Methodological Steps ✓

5.3 Research Participants ✗

5.4 Research Tools

5.5 Planned Research Analysis

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Good Talk on Best Bible Study Tools

<https://youtu.be/LVvmkh4xb3U?si=x-IJ3INBLqTPrkua>

Tools for Biblical Studies Research

- **Interlinear Bibles**
 - Hebrew/Greek/English
- **Bible Translations**
 - Distinguish “academic” from “devotional” translations
- **Dictionaries**
 - Theological Dictionaries; Specialized Theological Dictionaries
- **Encyclopaedias**
 - E.g., Encyclopaedia Judaica; ISBE
- **Commentaries**
 - Exegetical Language focused commentaries. Devotional commentaries
- **Online Resources**
 - Biblical Studies.org.uk
 - Bible Gateway
 - Blue Letter Bible
- **Software**
 - eSword
 - Logos Bible Software
 - Accordance Bible Software
 - Olive Tree Bible Software

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How might you design a study with the following topic: “Theological Significance of Music in Christian Liturgy”

Should this be a specific Christian tradition? Say, Pentecostal, Methodist, etc?

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The screenshot shows a Google Scholar search for "church music liturgy". The search bar contains the query, and the results page shows approximately 144,000 results. Several search results are highlighted with red boxes:

- perj Liturgy and church music** by J. Ratzinger, R. Richard. Sacred Music, 1995. media.musicasacra.com
- bookj Liturgy and music: Lifetime learning** by R. L. Weaver, J. A. Zimmerman. 1999. books.google.com
- bookj Exploring music as worship and theology: research in liturgical practice** by M. E. McGinn. 2002. books.google.com
- Healing liturgy: The role of music and singing** by C. J. Calitz. Verbum et Ecclesia, 2017. journals.co.za
- Related searches** including: practice of church music, church music theological problems, church music lens of performance, music in the modern church, church music twenty first century, interdependence of liturgy and music, catholic music worshipping church, healing liturgy music and singing.
- Devoational life in hymns, liturgy, music, and prayer** by G. B. Bogan. Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1950-1976, 2008. Brill.com
- The sacred bridge: the interdependence of liturgy and music in synagogues and church during the first millennium** by E. Wermer. 1959. books.google.com
- Liturgy and Music** by J. M. Jorreau. The Pontifical Liturgical Institute Handbook for ..., 2018. books.google.com

Other elements on the page include filters for "Articles", "Any time", "Sort by relevance", and "Include citations". A red circle highlights the search bar, and another red circle highlights the "perj scielo.org.za" link.

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Healing liturgy: The role of music and singing



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Calitz, C.J., 2017, "Healing
liturgy: The role of music and

Apart from all the other functions of liturgical singing and music, it also has a pastoral function or aim. Within the normal Sunday-to-Sunday liturgy, singing and music aims at promoting and restoring spiritual well-being. Within communities struck by disaster or grief, liturgical singing aims at healing people and processing their loss and ultimately promoting spiritual wellness by restoring or reshaping their picture of God. A brief look at liturgies in a lamenting congregation by means of an autoethnography illustrates the functional use of music and singing in the process of spiritual or emotional healing, thus illustrating the role of music in worship as an in-between experience: between laughter and lament.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: The article explores the role of music and singing in healing liturgy in a descriptive way, using ethnography and autoethnography to describe the process. Although the article refers to insights from pastoral therapy, it only makes suggestions for liturgy and in a lesser sense, hymnology.

Introduction

How might you design a study with the following topic: "Theological Significance of **Music** in Christian Liturgy"

Will a particular type of music be more specific? Say African, or Contemporary Music?

- **Step 1: My Problem Statement:**
 - "The theological role of contemporary music in Church liturgies is not clarified in contemporary theology"
- **Step 2: My Research Questions:**
 - Decide details of design and methodological steps to organize the questions

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Discipline of
Systematic Theology

Common Methods in Systematic Theology

1. Osborne's Method

2. Lewis and Demarest's Method

3. Historical Theological & Hegelian Methods

4. Philosophical Analytical Method

5. Contextual Theology Method

6. Biblical Theology Methods**

Osborne's Method

1. What have Theologians said? – **Historical Theology** of the Topic
2. What does the Bible Say? – **Biblical Theology** of the Topic
3. How might we formulate a theology of the Topic? **Systematic Theology**
4. What are the theological/practical implications? **Application**

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How might you design a study with the following topic: "Theological Significance of Music in Christian Liturgy"

- **Step 1: My Problem Statement:**
 - "....."
- **Step 2: My Research Questions:**
 - **Decide details of design and methodological steps to organize the questions**
 - **Main Research Question:?**
 - Sub-question 1: Historical Theology Question:?
 - Sub-question 2: Biblical Theology Question:?
 - Sub-question 3: Systematic Theology Question:?
 - Sub-question 4: Significance/Application Question:?

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Tools for Systematic Theology Research (Osborne)

- **Historical Theology Step**
 - Critical Review of specifically identified relevant theological works
- **Biblical Theology Step**
 - Identify the precise biblical Exegetical tools to be employed
- **Systematic Theology Step**
 - Conceptual and Analytical
- **Application**
 - Reflective construction of ideas and proposals

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How might you design a study with the following topic: “Influence of Church Infrastructure on Patterns of Sunday Attendance at in-person services in ABC Municipality”

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How might you design a study with the following topic: “Influence of Church Infrastructure on Patterns of Attendance at Sunday in-person services in ABC Municipality”

- **Step 1: My Problem Statement:**
 - The extent to which availability of infrastructure in Church premises impact patterns of Sunday in-service attendances in ABC municipality has not been determined
- **Step 2: My Research Questions:**
 - Decide details of design and methodological steps to organize the questions

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Discipline of
Practical Theology

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How might you design a study with the following topic: “Influence of Church Infrastructure on Patterns of Attendance at Sunday in-person services in ABC Municipality”

• Step 1: My Problem Statement:

– “.....”

• Step 2: My Research Questions:

– Decide details of design and methodological steps to organize the questions

– Osmer’s Method chosen to be modified**

– Main Research Question:?

• Sub-question 1: Descriptive Task Question:?

• Sub-question 2: Interpretive Task Question: (a)? (b)?

• Sub-question 3: Normative Task Question:?

• Sub-question 4: Pragmatic Task Question:?

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Mixed Qualitative & Quantitative Method

Method	Purpose	Advantages	Challenges	Resources/Capacity Required
Questionnaires, surveys, checklists	When need to quickly and/or easily get a lot of information from people in a non-threatening way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can complete anonymously Inexpensive to administer Easy to compare and analyze Can administer to many people Can get lots of data Can be adapted into many forms (online, paper, verbal) Many sample questionnaires already exist (but you may still need to adapt them) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Might not get careful feedback Question wording can bias respondent's answers Are impersonal Doesn't get the full story Adapting existing surveys takes time 	Low
Interviews	When want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about their answers to questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get full range and depth of information Develops relationship with stakeholders Can be flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can take much time Can be hard to analyze and compare Can be costly Interviewer can bias responses 	Moderate-High
Document review	When want impression of how strategy operates without interrupting the strategy; is from review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get comprehensive and historical information Doesn't interrupt strategy or stakeholder's routine in strategy Information already exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often takes much time Info may be incomplete Need to be quite clear about what looking for Not flexible means to get data; data restricted to what already exists. 	Moderate
Observation	To gather accurate information about how a strategy actually operates, particularly about processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View operations of a strategy or PSC activity as they are actually occurring Can adapt to events as they occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors Can be complex to categorize observations Can influence behaviors of strategy participants Can be expensive 	High
Focus groups	Explore a topic in depth through group discussion, e.g., about reactions to an experience or suggestion, understanding common complaints, etc.; useful in evaluation and marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quickly and reliably get common impressions Can be efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time Can convey key information about strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be hard to analyze responses Need good facilitator for safety and closure Difficult to schedule 6-8 people together 	Moderate-High
Case studies	To fully understand or depict stakeholder's experiences in a strategy, and conduct comprehensive examination through cross comparison of cases (if cases are comparable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully depicts stakeholder's experience in strategy input, process and results Powerful means to portray strategy to outsiders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually quite time consuming to collect, organize and describe Represents depth of information, rather than breadth 	High

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Sampling Techniques

- Representative subset of a population to study
- Probability Sampling:
 - Simple Random Sampling:** Each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.
 - Systematic Sampling:** Individuals at regular intervals from a list or database.
 - Stratified Sampling:** Population is divided into strata and randomly selected
 - Cluster Sampling:** Groups (clusters) of individuals selected instead of individuals
- Non-Probability Sampling:
 - Convenience Sampling:** Accessible individuals selected to represent population
 - Purposive Sampling:** Using specific criteria to select individuals to represent population
 - Snowball Sampling:** Recruiting participants through referrals from pilot participants.
 - Quota Sampling:** Selecting individuals to match certain quotas such as race, gender, income etc

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Transcribing Interviews

- Transcribe by typing words spoken by the participant.
- May employ Software to transcribe (e.g., nVIVO)
- Timestamps to mark the beginning and end of segment.
- Edit the transcript for accuracy and readability.
- Identify themes and patterns in the transcript that are relevant to the research question. Use highlighting to mark key phrases or concepts.
- Examine the relationships between different themes.
- Consider how the results relate to the research objectives and how they can inform practical applications and theological reflections.

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Transcribing Outcome from FGD

- **Transcribe data:** audio or video recording into a written format.
- **Identify key themes:** for patterns in the data, such as recurring topics, ideas, or experiences.
- **Code data:** assigning labels or categories to each segment of data to help organize and analyze the data.
- **Categorize data:** by grouping similar codes together to identify broader themes and patterns.
- **Analyze data:** by examining the relationships between the codes and categories for connections between different themes or patterns
- **Interpret results:** by drawing conclusions based on the findings.

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Statistical Package for Research in Social Sciences (SPSS)

- Software package used for statistical analysis in research.
- Provides a range of tools for data analysis, data management, and data documentation.
- Enables statistical tests, create graphs and charts, and conduct data manipulation.
- May be used to test hypotheses and present findings in a clear and organized manner

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From Interview to Thesis: The Process

1. **Transcription:**
 - Audio and Visual material are transcribed verbatim into written format.
2. **Coding:**
 - Transcripts are coded to aide analysis
3. **Data Analysis:**
 - Coded data is analyzed to identify relationships, patterns, and insights for answering research questions.
4. **Interpretation:**
 - Researcher interprets data and draws conclusions
5. **Writing:**
 - Findings presented in a well-structured and coherent manner
6. **Editing and Finalization:**
 - Final thesis presented according to academic or professional standards.

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How you will use Osmer's Methodology to Design Research for the following Problem Statement

"How can the impact of short-term missions on the spiritual growth of tertiary students in selected University of Ghana campus ministries be improved?"

1. Descriptive Task

–?

2. Interpretive Task

–?

3. Normative Task

–?

4. Pragmatic Task

–?

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Questions?

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