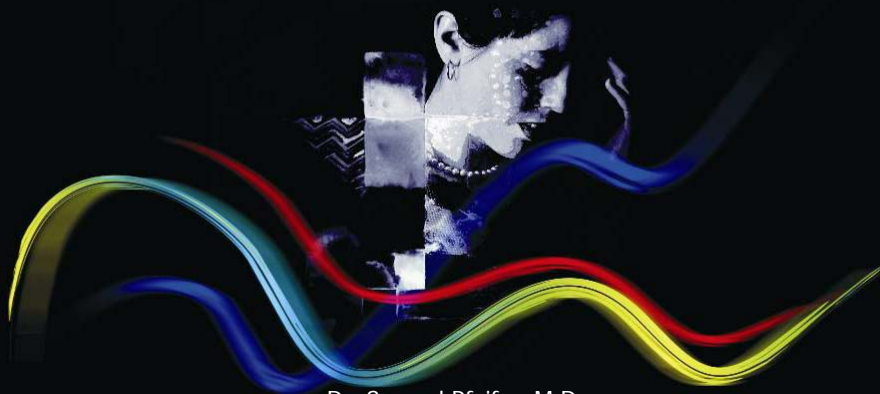


# New Frontiers in Selection and Screening



Dr. Samuel Pfeifer, M.D.  
Klinik Sonnenhalde, Riehen / Switzerland

## Biblical aspects of screening

- The halo effect of outer appearance
  - > But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1. Samuel 16:7)
- The challenge of practical considerations
  - > But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go."
  - > So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.
  - > The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others. (Judges 7:4-9)

## The Good Old Times

> 19th century:

- “Dear Mr. Hale: As a result of careful inquiries conducted on our behalf by Reverend Eliphalet Thorn, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is happy in the will of God to advise you that you have been chosen for mission duty in Hawaii. You and your wife will depart Boston on September first, 1820.”

James A. Michener - Hawaii

## Types of ministry

TYPES OF MINISTRY IN WHICH MISSIONARIES ARE INVOLVED			
Ministry	Overall %	OSC %	NSC %
Pioneer work	21	19	24
Church planting	20	18	21
National church	17	19	15
Relief	16	16	16
Local church	13	14	12
Support services	13	14	12
Total (=100%)	446	242	204

Pioneer work: Involved in pioneer mission work among unreached, unchurched people groups where there is little or no evangelical presence.

Church planting: Involved in evangelism and church planting in areas where the evangelical church has an established presence.

National church: Helping the national church through administrative, pastoral, teaching, theological training, and other support work.

Relief: Involved in relief and development or institutional work such as famine relief, hospital work, etc.

Local church: helping the local church through administrative, pastoral, teaching, theological training, and other support work.

Support services: Providing a support service for evangelism and church planting, such as Bible translation, aviation, literature, radio, etc.

Source: Too Valuable to Lose

## Categories of Attrition

OVERALL WEIGHTED REASONS FOR LEAVING THE AGENCY			
Reason	Overall %	OSC %	NSC %
Unpreventable	24	29	16
Personal	25	21	32
Marriage/Family	13	17	9
Society	12	10	15
Work-related	10	8	12
Team	9	8	10
Cultural	5	5	5
Other	2	2	1
Total (=100%)	13,302	8,270	5,032

Figure 6-5

Source: Too Valuable to Lose

## Personal Reasons for Attrition

- Immature spiritual life. Problems related to spiritual life such as unmet spiritual needs, lack of spiritual maturity, etc.
- Health problems. Problems related to mental or physical health.
- Inadequate commitment. Lack of understanding of the cost and commitment involved in long-term missionary service.
- Personal concerns. Problems related to low self-esteem, dealing with stress, anger, unrealistic expectations, the need to marry, loneliness, etc.
- Lack of call. Lack of conviction regarding a genuine call to missionary work, or loss of it.
- Immoral lifestyle. Immoral behavior, alcohol and drug abuse.

## Effects of personal problems

- „Their presence on the field is usually surrounded by contention, dissension, disagreements, and exhaustion on the part of other missionaries and field executives who try to support them emotionally and spiritually.“
- “Their families were disrupted, financial supporters disillusioned, field teams exhausted, and the mission financially stressed by the financial obligations of the emergencies.”

Esther Schubert: Personality disorders and overseas missions: Guidelines for the mental health professional. Journal of Psychology and Theology 21:18-25, 1993.

## Causes of Personality Disorders

- „I believe that the deterioration of the family in Western society, the erosion of stable traditions, and the frequency of child abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, alcoholic families and other dysfunctional families contribute to the marked increase in personality disorders seen in missionary candidates and selected missionaries.”

Esther Schubert: Personality disorders and overseas missions: Guidelines for the mental health professional. Journal of Psychology and Theology 21:18-25, 1993.

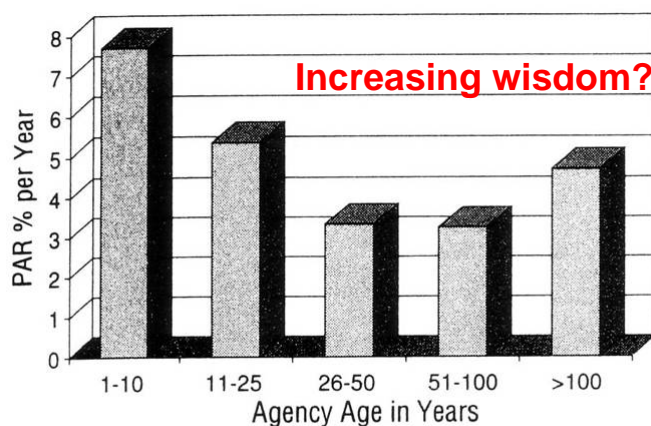
## Severity

- Every person is discovering some characteristics which are part of the description of personality disorders.

HOWEVER:

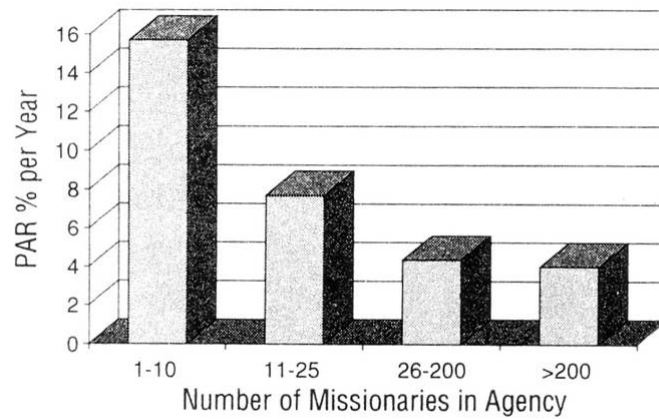
- “To diagnose a personality disorder, the pattern must be lifelong, pervasive, inflexible, and maladaptive enough to cause either impairment in interpersonal or occupational functioning, or subjective stress.”

## Preventable Attrition Rates (PAR)



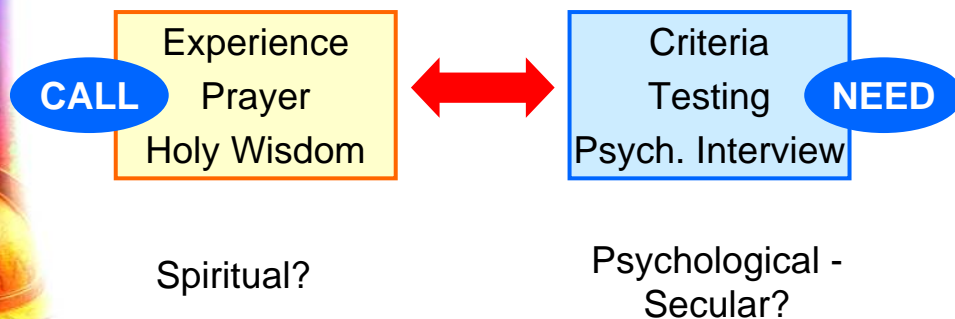
**Figure 7-5**  
**PAR as a Function of Agency Age**

## PAR: experienced agencies lose less



**Figure 7-3**  
**PAR as a Function of Agency Size**

## Models of evaluation





## Instruments to detect preventable attrition

REF	References
INT	Interview
HQ	Health Questionnaire
TEST	Psychol. Test
PSY	Psychol. Interview
OBS	Observations

## How to detect ...

PAR	%	REF	INT	HQ	TEST	PSY	OBS
Immature Spiritual Life	3.3	x	?				?
Mental / Physical Health Problem	7.2	x	x	x	X	X	?
Inadequate commitment	4.4	x	?				?
Personal concerns	4.9	X	X	?	X	X	?
Lack of call	4.1	X	?				?
Immoral life style	1.4	?	?				
Marriage / family conflict	3.3	?	?		?	?	?
Problems with peers	5.1	?	?		?	?	?

## Development of the Swiss model

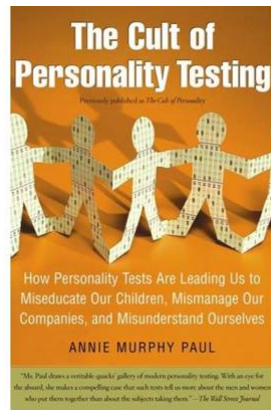
- Desire to have a better predictability of mission performance and a reduction of PAR.
- Desire to have a comparable standard across agencies.
- Two camps:
  1. *Comprehensive testing and psychological screening.*
  2. *Common sense, spiritual guidance, and tradition.*

## Development

- Working group of personnel directors of major sending agencies.
- Discussions of the pros and cons of testing:
  - *Cost of psychol. screening*
  - *Psychologizing - Stigma*
  - *Efficiency of psychological screening*
  - *Value of experience of administrators*
  - *Discussion of failures to predict PAR: some were lost despite psychol. testing; others were lost because relevant information was not taken into account.*
- Secondary motives:
  1. *Insecurity: Desire for more security on the side of the sending agency.*
  2. *Failures: Some shocking failures in agencies which had relied on common sense and spiritual guidance alone.*
  3. *Order: Swiss like orderly, effective and cost-efficient instruments.*
  4. *Democracy: Swiss love democratic procedures, bringing together the best from as many camps as possible.*



## Test criticism



A. Murphy Paul:

*The Cult of Personality Testing: How Personality Tests Are Leading Us to Miseducate Our Children, Mismanage Our Companies, and Misunderstand Ourselves.*

Free Press 2005



## Benefits of Psychological Evaluations

- Help identify people who would be ineffective or detrimental to the work.
- Help prepare missionary candidates by identifying personal issues and areas in which they need to grow in order to be most effective.
- Help making placement decisions.
- Identifying core areas to work on in the process of ongoing sanctification at their area of assignment.
- Team compatibility.

David L. Wickstrom

## Development of the Swiss model

- Wide variety of procedures
- Interview with a member of the board
- Interview with the HR officer
- Medical exam (primarily physical health)
- Practical observation during a candidate camp
- Interview with a psychologist
- Should all go through psychological testing and an in-depth interview with a psychologist / psychiatrist?

## Assessment Criteria

- Personality
- Mental Health
- Vocational Interests
- Cultural Adaptation Skills
- Marriage and Family
- What are the best ways to assess these factors?

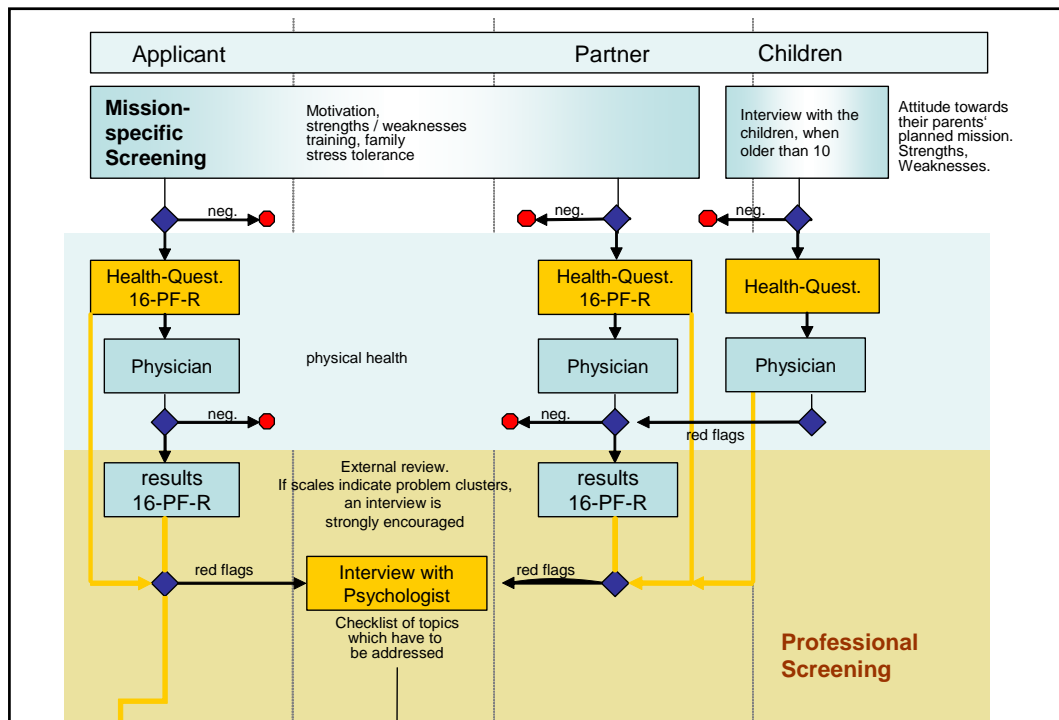
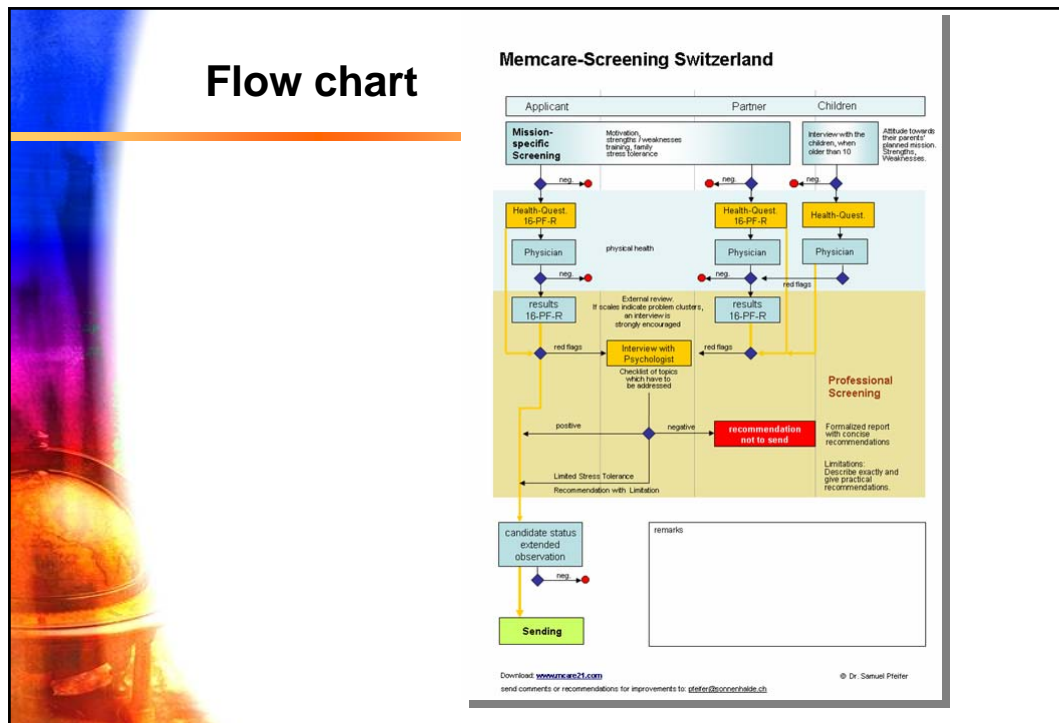
## What would we look for in candidates?

- A teachable attitude
- Adaptability
- Interpersonal relationships
- Authority relationships
- Personal autonomy
- Personal stability
- Single or married adjustment

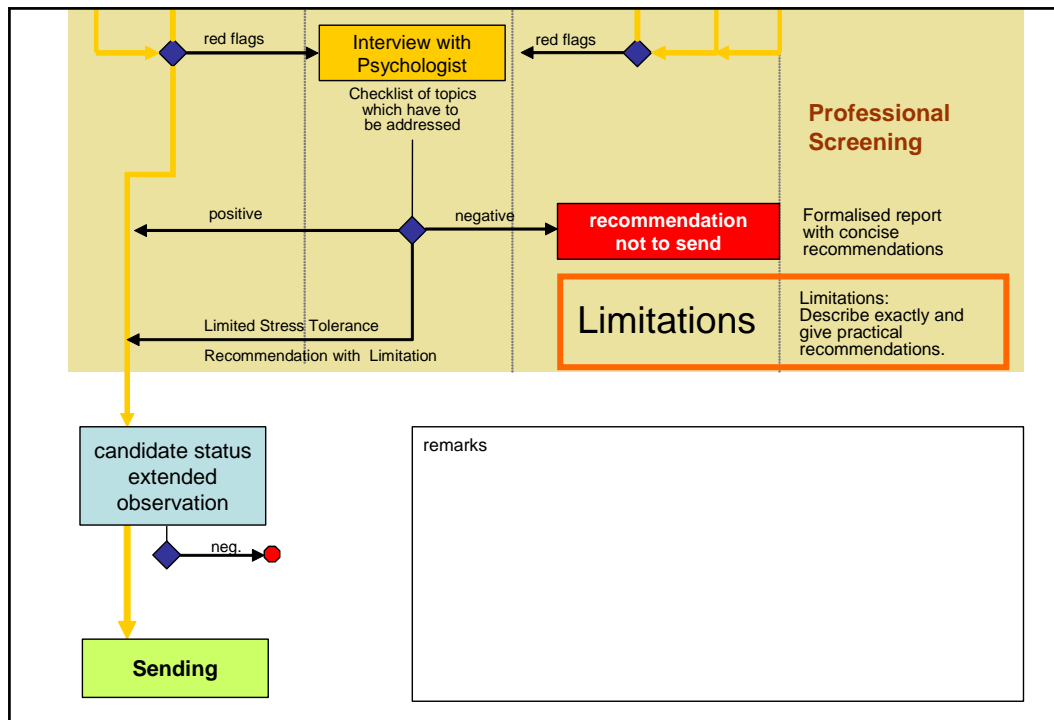
Perry Draper, quoted by Wickstrom

## Some Features

- High Emphasis of the practical experience of the Interviewer / HR officer / Home Office Administrator
- Health Questionnaire
- Descriptive Psychological Personality Test (16-PF)
- Optional: Psychological Interview
- Observation of Candidate Behavior
- Inclusion of the Family
- Cost issues



## The challenge of screening in Member Care



## Which tests are useful in Screening?

- There is no test that reveals hidden traits which would not come up in an extended observation of behavior and interpersonal functioning. – However, do we have the time and the opportunity to really observe a person long enough?
- 16-PF-R (descriptive personality test)  
*16 Personality Factors (Catell)*
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- MMPI-2 (directed at severe psychopathology)
- Intercultural Competence Scale

## Limitations of Test Psychology

- What are tests revealing that we cannot detect in direct conversation with the applicant?
- Are tests really revealing the hidden weaknesses we are looking for?
- How do we interpret “deviant” test results?
  - > Is a person who is high on “Independence” in the 16-PF really “pathological”?
  - > Is a person who is high on “Traditionalism” in the 16-PF really “pathological”?
- What are the costs of testing?

## How reliable are tests?

- Excellent study by Dr. Esther Schubert
- MMPI-Scores of 129 missionary units, taken before going to the field were compared with their actual field success 6 – 20 years later.
- Double blind: the rater of the MMPIs did not know the person and did not know the outcome.
- What would be the predictive validity?

Schubert E. & Gantner K.: The MMPI as a predictive tool for missionary candidates. Journal of Psychology and Theology 24:124-132, 1996.



## Predictive Reliability of the MMPI

### CONCLUSIONS

- MMPI test interpretations were 69 % accurate in prediction of performance. (one third not correct!)
- “yes” predictions were accurate 77 % of the time
- “No” predictions were accurate 71 % of the time
- “Maybe” predictions divided into 58 % successes and 42 % failures.
- This preliminary research indicates that the MMPI is inadequate as a sole evaluation of missionary candidates yet has a high potential for use with some other basic tools, especially Life History Questionnaire and Autobiography.

## 16-PF

Raymond Cattell's 16 Personality Factors (16 PF)

Descriptors of Low Range	Primary Factor	Descriptors of High Range
Impersonal, distant, cool, reserved, detached, formal, aloof (Schizothymia)	Warmth (A)	Warm, outgoing, attentive to others, kindly, easy going, participating, likes people (Affectothymia)
Concrete thinking, lower general mental capacity, less intelligent, unable to handle abstract problems (Lower Scholastic Mental Capacity)	Reasoning (B)	Abstract-thinking, more intelligent, bright, higher general mental capacity, fast learner (Higher Scholastic Mental Capacity)
Reactive emotionally, changeable, affected by feelings, emotionally less stable, easily upset (Lower Ego Strength)	Emotional Stability (C)	Emotionally stable, adaptive, mature, faces reality calmly (Higher Ego Strength)
Deferential, cooperative, avoids conflict, submissive, humble, obedient, easily led, docile, accommodating (Submissiveness)	Dominance (E)	Dominant, forceful, assertive, aggressive, competitive, stubborn, bossy (Dominance)
Serious, restrained, prudent, taciturn, introspective, silent (Desurgency)	Liveliness (F)	Lively, animated, spontaneous, enthusiastic, happy go lucky, cheerful, expressive, impulsive (Surgency)
Expedient, nonconforming, disregards rules, self indulgent (Low Super Ego Strength)	Rule-Consciousness (G)	Rule-conscious, dutiful, conscientious, conforming, moralistic, staid, rule bound (High Super Ego Strength)
Shy, threat-sensitive, timid, hesitant, intimidated (Threctia)	Social Boldness (H)	Socially bold, venturesome, thick skinned, uninhibited (Parmia)
Utilitarian, objective, unsentimental, tough minded, self-reliant, no-nonsense, rough (Harmia)	Sensitivity (I)	Sensitive, aesthetic, sentimental, tender minded, intuitive, refined (Premia)
Trusting, unsuspecting, accepting, unconditional, easy (Alaxia)	Vigilance (L)	Vigilant, suspicious, skeptical, distrustful, oppositional (Protension)

## Important MMPI Scales

- Dependency (Dy), indicative of marital interaction and health.
- Prejudice (Pr) shows rigidity in thinking.
- Status (St) shows the need for recognition, opportunities to better oneself and a desire for nice things.
- Low back (Lb) may reveal a friendly façade with underlying conflict or irritability
- Control (Cn) may help predict the individual's capacity for controlling negative impulses.

Schubert E. & Gantner K.: The MMPI as a predictive tool for missionary candidates. Journal of Psychology and Theology 24:124-132, 1996.

## Areas of the Psychological Interview

- INTRO: confidentiality, supportive, warm attitude
- AREAS to cover:
  - > Current interests and concerns
  - > Relationships
  - > Family History
  - > Clinical Problems (cf. Health Qu.)



Source: modified from K. & M. O'Donnell

## Clinical Problems

- Is there any past or current history of any of the following?
  - > Depression (significant times of feeling worthless, helpless, discouraged).
  - > Anxiety (excessive concern about a person, event, situation).
  - > Phobias (unusual fears of people, objects, experiences).
  - > Bulimia / Anorexia
  - > Suicidal ideas
  - > Sexual addictions (pornography, compulsive masturbation)
  - > Substance abuse / addiction (incl. Internet Use)
  - > Gambling addiction / poor money management
  - > Delusions and hallucinations (significant problems in the way a person thinks or perceives the world – feeling persecuted or followed, exaggerated sense of importance, grandiosity).

## Areas of the Psychological Interview

- INTRO: confidentiality, supportive, warm attitude
- AREAS to cover:
  - > Current interests and concerns
  - > Relationships
  - > Family History
  - > Clinical Problems (cf. Health Qu.)
  - > Previous Help / Treatment
  - > Work Performance
  - > Stability in single or married status
  - > Personal Characteristics, openness / insight
  - > General impressions during the interview

Source: modified from K. & M. O'Donnell

## CAVEAT: The job of a missionary is different

- The “job analysis” of a missionary varies somewhat from the traditional job analysis found in personnel selection literature.
- Missions employment differs:
  - > It is an around-the-clock 24/7 job, rather than 9 to 5 job.
  - > Many aspects of the work environment (e.g. the streets of Afghanistan) cannot be controlled, because there are too many variables to predict.
  - > It is a representative job, in that the person functions as a representative of God in his or her context.
  - > It requires a cross cultural transition.

Lewis Hall & Sweatman 2002

## When is Testing Detrimental?

- Untrained Administrators or Interpreters.
  - > “It is vital that professionals communicate test results as completely and accurately as possible in their findings and recommendations.”
- Lack of Psychological Interview.
  - > The professional must review the test results with the candidate and draw on other data such as references and life history questionnaires.
- Candidate draws erroneous conclusions
  - > “This is the way I am, and I’ll always be this way.”

## Erroneous Expectations

- When Leadership in the office or on the field is expecting someone either to be a problem or a “shining star” because of statements made in a report.
- Warnings of potential problems lead to looking for the problem.
- Too high expectations from those who have had a good report, leading to Burnout.
- If the candidate fails after a few years, the leadership might want to know, if there were indications in the test to predict difficult behavior (instead of situational difficulties).

## Some legal issues

- How far are we allowed to pry into the private life of a person?
- Are we allowed to assess the personality?
- Solution: “Job-related aptitude screening”
- What about questions regarding sexual topics?

## Case study: Angela, 25 y

- History: Oldest of three children of former missionaries who had served in a remote tribal area. The family had to move several times, experienced tribal wars, and had to send their children to a boarding school from an early age on. Angela spent the first 13 years of her life in this remote area, before the family returned to Germany;
- Angela trained as a nurse, and planned to return to the mission field herself. She was described as a strong, balanced and out-going person with firm family ties and a deep spiritual desire to serve the unreached of this world. She attended a two-year Bible college.
- In the process of screening she went through interviews by her sending agency including the 16-PF-R.

## Angela's 16-PF Results

High values on the following scales:

- Emotional stability (C): Emotionally stable, adaptive, mature, faces reality calmly
- High Super Ego Strength (G): Rule-conscious, dutiful, conscientious, conforming, moralistic, staid, rule bound
- Traditionalism (Q1): Traditional, attached to familiar, conservative, respecting traditional ideas.
- Group adherence (Q2): Group-oriented, affiliative, a joiner and follower dependent
- Low Ergic Tension (Q4): Relaxed, placid, tranquil, torpid, patient, composed low drive

GLOBAL SCORES:

- Q VI: Independence (vs. Accommodation)
- QV: Tough-Mindedness (vs. Receptivity)

**Discuss!**



## Problems...

- Test misinterpretation – No psychological interview.
- Four months before departure: Unexplainable fatigue and deep-rooted fears (“despite my strong faith and calling”). Failed Exams. No Counseling.
- Two month before departure: Increased fears - traumatic childhood experiences in the country that she was to return to as a missionary - suicidal ideas.
- It was only now that the mission required her to see a doctor and finally me as a psychiatrist.
- Even now she was very reluctant to yield information on her condition. It became clear that the “stability” on the personality test also served as a rigid form of not acknowledging deep pain and hidden fears.

## Angela - Conclusions

- What went wrong?
  - > Test misinterpretation – no psych. Interview
  - > Rejection of Christian psychological counseling.
  - > Spiritual cover up of more severe problems
  - > Health exam did not ask for psychological problems. – Fatigue and fears were not adequately interpreted.
- What helped?
  - > Mission agency was sensitized through the process of developing the flow chart.
  - > Problems became big enough before departure.
  - > Angela and her family were strongly advised to see a doctor.


## Final remarks

- Adequate screening of missionary candidates is a highly important calling.
- Experienced Administrator and Personnel Officers are of great value which should not be neglected.
- Health Questionnaires have to include mental health history and “soft signs” of psychological well-being.
- Testing alone is not sufficient – there is the possibility of “false negative” results.
- The stigma of a psychological interview is still a major obstacle.
- Candidate observations in preparation courses and field situations may be a very important piece of the puzzle.
- Candidate evaluation has to be an ongoing vision on the field in order to secure good functioning and adequate support for personnel development.

*Thank you !*

Download:

[www.mcare21.com](http://www.mcare21.com)



# The hardy personality

The following pages are inspired by a lecture given by Dr. Laura M. Gardner of Wycliffe International



## The hardy personality

- Definition: positive traits that will enable the cross cultural worker to serve God joyfully and be productive under difficult situations; i.e. to retain and maintain emotional, physical and spiritual health.
- Lack of any of these traits is an indicator that growth is needed, not a cause for guilt or shame. The greatest missionary of all acknowledged his weakness (II Cor. 12:9-10), and his sinfulness (I Tim. 1:15-16), but endured crushing experiences (II Cor. 4:7-10; II Cor. 11:23-28) and drew his strength from Christ (Phil. 4:12-13). So may we.

## Features of the Hardy Personality

Pain, Pleasure and Deprivation	Pain is not something to be shunned at all cost, nor is pleasure something to be sought at any cost. Both are simply part of life, not its main focus
Balance	This individual shows balance in his emotional, spiritual, physical, relational and professional life.
Leadership	Team player. Leadership is neither something to be sought nor something to be feared. He is willing to lead or to follow
Perspective	The hardy person is not narcissistic, knowing “the plot doesn’t revolve around me; the story doesn’t begin or end with me-
Self-Knowledge	He knows his strengths and weaknesses and is comfortable with these.
Accountability	A hardy person does not tolerate known sin in himself. He “keeps short accounts”, forgiving offenses as they occur, asking for forgiveness when appropriate.

## Features II

Responsibility	He understands that wherever he is, he is making something better or worse.
Generosity	A hardy person lives life richly--giving love, energy, resources, time.
Gratitude	The hardy person walks in gratitude. He believes that “we are...mutually dependent on one another”
Hope / Joy	The hardy person is not habitually pessimistic, critical, or easily discouraged His hope frees him to experience joy in his daily life.
Resourcefulness	The hardy person is innovative and creative. His approach to problem solving is “Let’s see what I can do”.
Flexibility	A hardy person is able to enjoy second choice.
Sense of Humor	He can laugh at himself, does not take himself too seriously, is not easily offended if someone laughs at him.

## Features III

Sense of Humor	He can laugh at himself, does not take himself too seriously, is not easily offended if someone laughs at him.
Rejection	He learns from his mistakes. He has the ability to pick up the pieces and restart after a failure.
Courtesy	A hardy person knows that the lubricant of life is good manners, a respectful awareness of others.
Use of time	A hardy person is a self-motivated starter when necessary. He can reframe boredom into productivity.
Support	He can develop healthy relationships in a group (family, church, mission, neighborhood, etc).
Learning	A hardy person is open to new ideas and ways of doing things.
Conflict Resolution	Hardiness can withstand attack and face confrontation without a loss of inner balance. Willing to change where necessary.

## Personal inadequacy and God's sufficiency

- While it is possible for a non-Christian to be emotionally hardy, the godly person brings to all of life
  - > an acknowledgment of personal inadequacy and of God's sufficiency, and
  - > a compassionate awareness of human frailty in self and others.
- So for the godly person, hardiness does not replace dependence on God, or do away with a sense of weakness
- Dependence on God is the source of hardiness and the strength of weakness.
  - *All glory belongs "...to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy..." (Jude 24).*



## Growing strong

---

- “We pray that you’ll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul -- not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable and spills over into joy, thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that He has for us” (Col. 1:11-12 The MESSAGE).



## Compassion vs. Responsibility

---

- Compassion would suggest an extended effort to work with the person in the field environment. However, chances are low to achieve change in due time within an overseas framework.
- Compassion is also necessary for the rest of the team: The work, the other missionaries, the nationals, and the field leader suffer immense pain.
- “I contend that we must not send our psychological wheelchair cases to the spiritual battlefield overseas. When we do, we compromise the work and expose the individual to unnecessary failure.

Esther Schubert: Personality disorders and overseas missions: Guidelines for the mental health professional. Journal of Psychology and Theology 21:18-25, 1993.