C. Laine Branch

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ABSTRACT[1]

In 2019, the United States established the Space Force whose goal involved maintaining "field combat-ready forces." They required a resilient and ready force, one embracing innovation and emerging technologies for engaging in a new mission. What might field combat readiness involve in modern missions? As a veteran missionary, I have not always felt field-ready. What about national counterparts, those taking the Grand Narrative of Scripture to the final language groups yet to hear?

In this case study exploring the preparation of national workers for this task in a difficult field, I grapple with the concept of field readiness and needed competencies. Even though the national workers studied culture and worldview, Scripture, orality, security issues, and other subjects, both workers and trainers I interviewed did not feel pre-field coursework sufficiently equipped them for the struggles they faced. I propose a five-pronged course of action for succeeding in this sort of narrative warfare.

Introduction

It was the honor of a lifetime. Although I had worked in Asia for twenty-five years, what I witnessed in 2022 surpassed that privilege. I sat with young adults from three people groups. Operating in a fourth language, the national language, the group worked hard to decipher the language of an unreached people. Not yet possessing the skills to learn that unwritten language, two national workers sought the help of a colleague whose ministry uses a widely-used method of language learning – the Thomson's (n.d.) Growing Participator Approach (GPA).

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[1] Due to the sensitive nature of this case study, the author uses a pseudonym and protects the identity and location of those involved.

Well after pre-field training, these two young workers took a break from fieldwork to concentrate on learning the language of their audience. In 2022, they were painstakingly learning nouns and verbs, then beginning to form sentences and paragraphs – all so they might craft Bible stories, some songs of praise, and most importantly, a metanarrative of Scripture, (the Grand Narrative or C2C, Creation to Christ).

One lone speaker of the target audience traveled a great distance to act as an informant. Rounding out the setting, the facilitator, known as a nurturer, patiently facilitated their language learning using the Growing Participator Approach.

Why was I in that sacred room? I spoke none of the languages present. Instead, I spoke a different Asian language, one with a written script and millions of speakers. As a consultant, I interjected thoughts toward creating a contextualized Grand Narrative of Scripture. During the weeks together, they discovered their informant had no word for "God," no word for "heaven" or "hell," or so many other concepts necessary for sharing the Good News. When they could unearth no word for "heaven," I advised them to call it "God's home." Those who followed God became part of His family, and their names were written in God's "family book," something familiar in that part of the world. I prodded toward simplicity and understanding.

Over many days, they painstakingly formulated a song of praise to the Creator and Savior. The day they sang that short hymn I sobbed. For the first time that we knew, the One who had made that language was praised with it. To me, that was the honor of a lifetime.

One year later I returned to a different story. I happened to converse with a trainer of the two national missionaries and their counterparts. This experienced teacher's heart seemed heavy with all the group had experienced. Mostly a young cohort sent out by two's, some had been jailed; some had quit; and during imprisonment, one exposed names and locations so that the training needed to move. Trials abounded, but so did triumphs. People heard the Gospel, and some were saved. Some workers even met their future mates during training.

While exploring this case, I discovered a publication about the program. I cannot cite that text lest it endanger the work. The author, a trailblazer and visionary, faced difficulties just like those national counterparts. Like so many of us, that leader wanted to complete the Great Commission quickly.

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According to the book and my friend, over approximately four months, the group studied worldview, as well as Scripture and sanctification. They memorized God's Word and applied it to their lives. They learned to baptize and do the Lord's Supper, create a metanarrative of Scripture, and tell stories to oral learners. The training emphasized personal growth and discipleship while implementing all the students were taught.

After the workers arrived in their assigned villages, they faced various challenges. I already knew of one – how to learn a new language – prompting the scenario in 2022. Sometimes no common language could be found, so they encountered communication issues. Female workers sometimes faced harassment. Most workers lacked an identity to enter new villages and became suspect, a situation that stood in contrast to that of other colleagues with platforms of doing business as mission, but that was not their focus.

Other obstacles? When I sat with the two pioneer missionaries in 2022 and worked with other national partners, I noticed most were very traditional and tended to share a standard version of the Gospel with no contexualization. They did not seem to know how to adapt even after training; and like many other missionaries, they seemed to believe they grasped the Gospel, and there was no need to adapt it for understanding.

Both the book and my friend told of faithful people who shared God's great story far and wide, who took enormous risks with joy, and who persevered during trying situations. They also employed some oral strategies, such as Bible storying and sharing C2C (the Grand Narrative); however, I could see how further training and additional strategies could help.

My friend agreed the potential workers seemed young and inexperienced, a bit spiritually immature, and could have benefited from a longer training period. As I had watched the two learn a language from their informant, I agreed. They were easily distracted and seemed to lack the tenacity it takes to truly master a language. I hoped I was wrong and prayed fervently they would complete the task.

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I do not want to portray this case in a negative light. The work of these "called-out-ones" resulted in salvations. Mentoring the younger generation and launching them into ministry is critical. We should, however, want to learn from their experience. We want Majority World missionaries to take the Gospel to the remaining tribes and

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tongues. However, this task often occurs in hard places, as this case portrayed. In fact, Keyes and Pate believed workers to be headed into "a new world disorder" (1993, 198).

With missions increasingly becoming a "polycentric" endeavor, with more Christians living in the Global South (Johnson, Crossing, and Ryu 2004, 2), and more Christian leaders in the Majority World (Yeh 2016; Yeh 2024, 9; Zurlo 2021, 17), their training is our concern because "this surplus in numbers is not yet matched with opportunities to grow in depth (training, education, resources, discipleship, rather than evangelism)" (Yeh 2024, 10). Some time ago, Pate (1991, 60) also declared, "The rapid growth of the Two-Thirds World missions movement is creating an emergency need for adequate missionary training." To launch missionaries, much less Majority World missionaries, without adequate training is "disastrous" (Harley1995, 22).

Oral or connected learners comprise much of that final frontier for which Majority World missionaries are being trained (Thigpen 2020). The oral majority are "big picture learners" and need to hear a metanarrative of Scripture first (Steffen 2010). This audience might not be ready to read, but some are ready to hear. Taking the Grand Narrative to the front lines means this story must be contextualized for worldview and freely available, whether through social media or SD cards.

Secular research discusses this kind of "narrative warfare" and using "counter narratives" (Maan and Cobaugh 2018), but Christians typically do not. The frontline worker engages daily in spiritual warfare, confronting false narratives held by their audience. Echoing Lewis, McGrath (2019, 98) maintained, "To break the spell of one narrative, a better narrative needs to be told." On the field, this requires depth in language and culture acquisition. "One must get familiar with the narrative terrain in order to recognize a narrative and stories associated with it, particularly when it has culturally unfamiliar structure or content" (Maan and Cobaugh 2018). Some in this case study did not seem ready for this battle.

Competency-Based Training for Field Readiness

Taking the Grand Narrative to the final frontier requires special attributes and abilities. As mentioned in the abstract, even the United States Space Force requires "field combat-ready forces" (Department of the Air Force 2023). Given the level of spiritual warfare in hard places, field "combat" readiness seems critical. What tools do Majority World missionaries such as the ones in this case study need to engage in this kind of narrative warfare, to learn language and culture, and craft the Grand Narrative into an understandable and worldview-specific format? The following explores this question.

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Many of our predecessors knew how to persevere in hard places. Finn (1989, 69) maintained the early church "survived in Rome to a large extent because they developed a dynamic ritual process for the making of Christians." Deep, consistent training in community was key. Similarly, Bonhoeffer trained in difficult times. When a friend visited Finkenwalde and questioned the grassroots enterprise, Bonhoeffer took him to a nearby Nazi training facility and reportedly shared, "This must be stronger than that . . . Our formation has to be stronger than the formation of the world" (Tyson 2020, 12).

Modern missionary education differs markedly from that of the early church and Finkenwalde. I had several Master's degrees before going to the field but did not feel ready to learn language and culture deeply nor equipped to teach oral learners. Similarly, Bolsinger (2015, 11) declared, "Seminary didn't prepare me for this!" and wrote a "guidebook for learning to lead in a world we weren't prepared for" (13). While Western missionaries sometimes feel "inadequately" trained (Udall 2013, Whiteman 2008), national missionary training may equally suffer (Jung-Woon 2007). Lack of training can result in some high attrition rates (Brynjolfson 2004, Brynjolfson and Lewis 2006, Bloecher 2004, Taylor 1997), as "agencies with lower attrition have higher requirements regarding missiological training" (Bloecher 2013, 54).

Contrasting this case study with the experience of Gupta (and Lingenfelter 2006, 57), the latter launched church planters in India, but discovered "planting churches outside their own language area proved far more challenging than anyone imagined. Indians found cross-cultural evangelism in their own nation as difficult or more so than going to Europe or Africa," and that their "non-formal training for church planters working in their own cultures failed utterly to prepare cross-cultural missionaries." As a result, Gupta reworked training to include a process of phases with mentoring and experiential learning and progressively deeper study of topics such as cultural anthropology and cross-cultural communication. Like Hay et al. (2013, 183), they learned "missiological training appears to be more beneficial than theological training." Finally, the trainees learned to disciple peoples with no written language and no Christian resources. According to Lingenfelter (Gupta and Lingenfelter 2006, 75), they also learned they needed "more mature, well-educated Christians" for such arduous and crucial ministry. This decision contrasts with the sending of younger candidates in the case study I present.

Vermont (2020, 274) explored training for "frontier missionaries" and called for "accessible, phased, competency-based, culturally unbiased, hybrid, experiential, social constructivist courses" based on sound adult learning principles. Illeris (2016, 245) also maintained: "The competent person is able to act appropriately in specific

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areas or in specific kinds of situations, and this must be emphasised [sic] because it is a demand that clearly exceeds prevailing understandings of knowledge as the central aim of learn and education." Hibbert and Hibbert (2016, 138) also contrasted a "competency-based learning design and a knowledge-transmission model" and applauded the former.

One might attain the requisite amount of learning but still be unable to perform essential tasks. Understanding the Gospel, theological concepts, the content of Scripture, and theories surrounding anthropology and intercultural communication is not enough. The successful missionary must be competent enough to contextualize Scripture so the audience might understand, and the seed not be stolen (Matthew 13:19). Focusing on competencies solves that dilemma.

How might one organize the requisite competencies? Their focus cannot simply be cognitive. The traditional taxonomies list cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, the "head, heart, and hands." Parks (2016) shared a three-phase plan for a "trans-national, trans-organizational, and trans-denominational movement catalyst training process" focused on the same three dimensions. Witt (2023, 43) called this "relational missionary formation," while Wan and Hedinger (2017) and Wan and Nguyen (2014) used the term "relational missionary training." Brynjolfson and Lewis (2006, 28) referred to training that emphasizes the head, heart, and hands as "integral ministry training," "a holistic endeavor that the ReMAP studies found to improve missionary retention."

Witt (2023, 99-100) developed a questionnaire and researched "aspects of holistic training" needed: "detailed intellectual or mental preparation, spiritual or character development, psychological or emotional development, practical and personal training, relational development, physical preparation." Likewise, Kayser (1999, 428-430) discovered the following predictors of cross-cultural competence: 1) competency-related characteristics (learning oriented, other oriented, and action oriented), 2) spiritual dynamics, 3) social interpersonal skills, 4) personal growth, and 5) family life. Illeris (2007, 87-88; 2016) considered three dimensions of learning – content, incentive (emotion, motivation, and will), and social.

Since missionary learning must address all of life, I expand the head-heart-hands components to include the spiritual (Holy Spirit) and the relational ("herd"), as Illeris advises. Wall (2015, 185) likewise stated, "I suggest that 'head-heart-hands' as it has been understood is not an adequate description of whole person learning." The life and work of the believer involves more than the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor

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dimensions. We are called to relate well to others and walk in the Spirit, two critical additional dimensions. Some make the social the arena, but for collectivistic cultures, the relational aspect looms large. Figure 1 depicts the head, heart, hands, "herd," and Holy Spirit learning components necessary in training for field readiness.
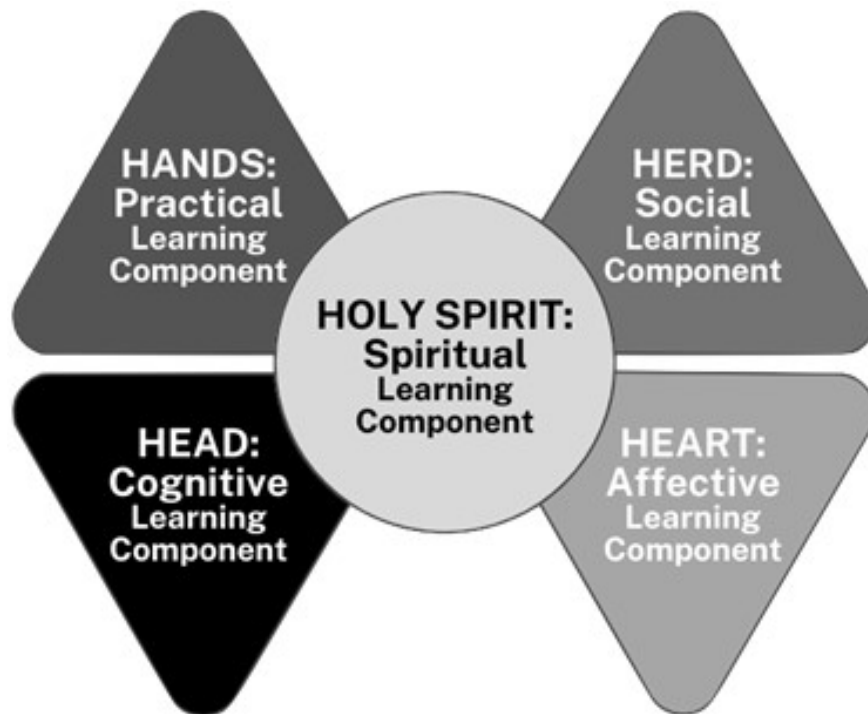

Figure 1. Learning Components for Field Readiness Training

Exploring relevant research and various agency best practices and benchmarks (Agron 2002; Allen, et al. 2009; Arnold 2023; Burns et al. 2013, 16; Brynjolfson and Lewis 2006, 13; Dagne 2022; Ferris 1995; Hoke and Roche 2007; Kayser 1999; Lee 2008; McBride 2021; Prinz and Goldhor 2023; Senanayake 2018; Tuggle 2019, 37; Vermont 2020, 212-221; Whiteman 2008; Wilson et al. 2007, 9), along with the author's long-term experience, a long list of competencies results. Table 1 represents the synthesis and organization of some competencies needed for field readiness according to the five learning components.

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Learning Component	Necessary Competencies The worker can do the following:
Head - Cognitive Readiness	*General Readiness to Learn* • Be involved in lifelong learning and be open to new ideas. • Have a growth mindset (versus a fixed mindset). *Scriptural Readiness* • Know the content of Scripture and how to teach it. • Create a metanarrative of Scripture with a specific theme. • Maintain a good theology for all areas of life. • Commit meaningful Scripture verses to memory. *Intercultural Readiness (Cognitive)* • Accomplish tasks using the language (through perseverance). • Learn language from any speaker. • Study worldview and cultural values (such honor/shame, collectivisim, etc.) and be able to explain them in technical terms. • Explore culture through ethnographic research and participant observation that seeks for emic understanding. • Understand the barriers and bridges of the target audience in regard to the Gospel. • Tell Bible stories in a way that builds bridges to the target worldview. • Create contextualized story sets and train others to do so. • Engage in narrative warfare with understanding, respect, and kindness. *Cognitive Readiness to Teach/Train/Equip* • Ascertain the learning style of a person/audience and adjust teaching methods (oral versus literate, for instance). • Evangelize, disciple, equip, train, and develop leaders in culturally appropriate ways. • Train others in evangelism and church planting. • Strategize in order to complete plans and goals. • "Pass the baton" of mission work to local believers.
Heart - (Affective or Emotional) Personal Readiness	*Personal/Emotional Readiness toward God* • Maintain a relationship with God – know, love, and relate well to Him. • Maintain a teachable heart. • Take a Sabbath rest. • Embrace obedience and faithfulness as a measure of success. *Personal/Emotional Readiness toward Self* • Maintain emotional health. • Balance work, play, and other life responsibilities. • Laugh at one's own mistakes (especially in language learning) • Monitor personal expectations. • Walk in joy and thankfulness, without complaining. • Persevere through difficult tasks with grit and self-control. *Emotional Readiness toward Others* • Walk in love and peace with a heart of forgiveness. • Be flexible and kind when changes take place or faced with obstacles. • Avoid ethnocentrism and racism. • Have a heart prepared for persecution.

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Learning Component	Necessary Competencies The worker can do the following:
Holy Spirit – Spiritual Readiness	*Spiritual Readiness: Inner Life* • Maintain a consistent and vibrant spiritual life in prayer, fasting, worship, and study of Scripture. • Maintain a rhythm of spiritual disciplines for spiritual formation. • Engage in spiritual warfare through prayer and with discernment. • Demonstrate love and thankfulness to God. *Spiritual Readiness: Outer Life* • Walk in the gifts, fruit, and power of the Spirit. • Maintain an obedient and growing stance toward God and His will. • Hear the voice of God and receive direction to make wise decisions.
Hands - Practical Readiness	*Life Skills* • Learn new skills required for daily life. • Balance a budget and live within one's means. • Care for basic medical issues and emergencies (first aid). • Maintain a healthy physical lifestyle. • Maintain good time management. • Maintain and use local modes of transportation. • Adapt to standards of dress and etiquette according to culture. *Security Skills* • Provide a simple truthful statement of identity and purpose and maintain that identity and platform. • Navigate security issues. *Technical Skills* • Engage in participant observation. • Implement GPA language learning techniques. • Write unknown sounds using the International Phonetic Alphabet. • Learn new technical skills as needed (especially for recording and analyzing new languages). *Pastoral Skills* • Perform baptism and the Lord's Supper (and teach to do so). • Engage in "narrative warfare" using truth to combat lies.
Herd - Relational Readiness	*Relational Readiness: With the Body of Christ and with its Head* • Relate well to local and home congregation and leadership. • Create a prayer network and communicate regularly. • Pray in community, with and for others. *Relational Readiness: Field Community* • Seek and cultivate opportunities to share the Gospel, including hospitality. • Approach language learning relationally. • Cooperate and communicate honestly, kindly, and effectively. • Deal with conflict and criticism. • Maintain healthy family relationships, including child discipline. • Operate according to biblical ethics and integrity. • Respectful and loving toward all (genders and cultures). *Relational Readiness: Leadership* • Walk in humility whether serving or leading. • Submit to godly authority. • Delegate responsibility as needed. • Equip others to do ministry.

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Head Preparation and Cognitive Readiness

What cognitive competencies are needed to take the Grand Narrative to the final frontier? Missionaries should be adequately trained in Scripture, and that cognitive element is usually the focus to the exclusion of many others in Table 1. However, we also find the need for a general readiness to learn, scriptural readiness, intercultural readiness, and readiness to teach/train/equip. It is beyond the scope of this paper to cover all of these, but some merit discussion.

I came to the mission field knowing Scripture but had little training in exploring culture, in engaging in "human exegesis," as Hiebert (2009, 12) advised. After over a decade of ministry, I pursued further studies to rectify my lack. Among the most valuable things I learned were how to conduct ethnographic research and participant observation, how to explore cultural values, such as honor/shame, and how to deal with animism. "One of the most critical components of missionary preparation is intercultural readiness" (Lee 2019, 248).

In addition, I found one of the critical activities in which missionaries engage daily – working in a second language – was overlooked in our training. Most workers are surprised by the amount of work it takes to learn a language, according to Sawin (2013, 6). The second ReMAP ("Reducing Missionary Attrition Project") study (Bloecher n.d., 2) found organizations that prioritize "continuous language and culture studies" had greater retention of personnel. Communicative competence in the language is directly associated with being comfortable in the new setting and developing friendships (Dewey, et al. 2015, 104). "Deeper relationships may lead to conversations that require higher levels of language proficiency, as feelings, opinions, abstract topics, etc. are discussed" (Dewey, et al. 2015, 103). See also Thigpen's (2023) ethnoscopic analysis.

As a former language and culture coach, I found Thomson's (n.d.) Growing Participator Approach (GPA) effective for learning a language and uniquely formatted to help learn unwritten languages, such as the national workers in this case study. Others, such as Dagne (2022, 144) and Sawin (2013, 435) agreed. In addition to GPA, the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NCSSFL-ACTFL 2017) provide "can do" statements for each level of language learning. Learners can readily assess progress and competency by completing activities.

Learning to do ethnographic research in the language made all the difference in my ministry. Equipped with that tool, I explored deep worldview issues. In the case study, knowing the language informant might be animistic, I asked questions about his

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experience with the spirit world. Where once he seemed bored, his face lit up while telling the story of meeting a spiritual being at night on a lonely road. His worldview exposed, I challenged the two national workers to contextualize their Grand Narrative, but my words fell on deaf ears. Instead of making animism a bridge to help them know more about the power of God, the workers slipped back into a general, traditional presentation. Here, they failed at narrative warfare, as I did many times before. According to the research of Allen et al. (2009, 118-119), fruitful workers know how to "use a variety of approaches in sharing the Gospel," and they do so "in ways that fit the learning preferences of their audience."

Also in the cognitive arena, I needed to learn more about orality, as did those in this case study. Johnson, Crossing, and Ryu (2004, 3) stated, "By 2024, nearly 1 billion people will still be illiterate, underling the need for audio-visual communication." The tools for engaging in effective narrative warfare lie in the field of orality. Workers must be trained to meet the needs of non-readers, to create contextualized metanarratives of Scripture and teach using stories, songs and other applicable formats, along with audio and video resources. Although more could be discussed about this, we move to the heart and personal/emotional readiness.

Heart Preparation and Personal and Emotional Readiness

Personal/emotional readiness toward God, toward one's self, and toward others can result in character shaped to persevere. The list of related competencies may seem daunting but not impossible. Since "the goal of our instruction" is not cognitive, but rather "love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5 NASB), the affective element looms large. Here we take cognitive learning and apply it to our lives to live holy before God, walk rightly with our neighbor, and learn to appreciate culture, while avoiding ethnocentrism and racism, "the refusal to love others in their difference" (Shorter 1999, 78).

One's cognitive beliefs might be strongly held, but when emotions suffer, living overseas can become difficult. Two notable secular researchers have explored what it takes to succeed. One researched grit and self-control, the other mindset. Their work directly applies to missions.

Just as those with outstanding scores do not necessarily graduate from rigorous training institutions such as West Point (Duckworth 2016, 14), not all missionary candidates "make it." Duckworth (2016, 17) researched those who succeed despite opposition and measured "grit," "the tenacious pursuit of a dominant superordinate goal despite setbacks" (Duckworth and Gross 2014, 319), or "perseverance and passion

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for long-term goals" (Duckworth et al. 2007, 1087). Besides grit, Duckworth and Gross (2014) found self-control to be another predictor of success. "Self-control entails aligning actions with any valued goal despite momentarily more alluring alternatives" (Duckworth and Gross 2014, 319). The Grit Scale appears useful for surveying potential missionary candidates.

Along these lines, Dweck and Yeager (2019, 484) found, "Mindsets can play a role in the desire for challenging learning and in the persistence of that desire even in the face of obstacles or failures." A growth mindset is critical for persevering through language acquisition. This research seems to say if missionaries engage in character formation that results in grit, self-control, and a growth mindset, they are more likely to succeed.

According to Bloecher (2013, 47), in 1993 national missionaries in Brazil lost 75% of their counterparts in their early years," so the World Evangelical Alliance launched a study and found most left the field for the following reasons: "lack of missionary's commitment, moral failure, lack of spiritual and financial support, health problems, doubt about calling, conflicts with co-missionaries, disagreements over policies, lack of supervision, project end, spiritual immaturity, relational problems with local leaders at the place of service." Brynjolfson (2004, 74-78) also learned workers wanted holistic training and listed the top reasons for attrition being conflict with peers, personal concerns, lack of commitment, spiritual immaturity, lack of cultural adaptation, and inappropriate training.

Holy Spirit Preparation and Spiritual Readiness

Our battle is not with flesh and blood but is a spiritual one (Ephesians 6:12). According to Allen et al. (2009, 118), fruitful workers abide in Christ, have a vibrant prayer life, and "persevere through difficulty and suffering." In Table 1 two elements emerge here – spiritual readiness concerning the inner life and spiritual readiness that manifests in outward practices. Kayser (1999, 445) also found, "Spiritual dynamics are of greater importance than any other single dimension for cross-cultural competence." As Willard (1993) noted, "The goal of Christian spirituality is conformity to Christ – not togetherness, or meditation, or acceptance. The issue is discipleship. Discipleship is learning from Jesus Christ how to live my life as He would live it if He were me." One cannot succeed without growth in this area.

Hand Preparation and Practical Readiness

We might divide competencies dealing with practical readiness into life skills, security skills, technical skills, and pastoral skills. Ranging from being able to use chopsticks to

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being able to baptize someone, this preparation can be as vital as any. For instance, in the case study, some entered remote villages where there was no common language. In that case, they could have used recording devices to record snippets of the language for later comparison and a bank of various languages recorded so villagers could listen for comparison.

In such pioneer work, one would benefit from training in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), to learn to write sounds that cannot be written in the local script. Finally, oral Bible translators (Floor 2021, Cleaver 2023) are making headway in creating an oral Grand Narrative for the remaining minority languages by using software such as Render (Zylstra 2016). This endeavor requires a high degree of language acquisition and a willingness to complete the task (grit), as well as longevity. Explore Table 1 for further competencies.

"Herd" Preparation and Relational Readiness

The final necessary element in training pioneer workers is social, the "herd" element, or relating to God's flock and others. Dividing those competencies, we see relational readiness in three areas: with the Body of Christ and with its Head, with the field community, and with leadership. Even competencies listed with the cognitive, affective, or practical might be found here in their relational form. For instance, language learning involves more than memorizing words or phrases. It should be highly relational, with missionaries leaving their classrooms and studies to interact with others.

Returning to the discussion of Bonhoeffer's training at Finkenwalde, Johnson and Larsen (2013, 169) felt like failures in creating koinonia at church after studying Bonhoeffer's legacy and confessed, "What I did not understand was that it ["the big narrative of the gospel"] needed to be reinforced with a new ritual, a counter liturgy that encompassed the entire community." Given that many cultures around the globe are collectivistic, competencies in this area could strongly affect one's witness. Moon (2018, 278), in his insightful chapter entitled "Chicken Theology," proposed understanding the communal nature of our audiences and encouraging group learning holistically. Finally, "issues of character and relationships" often send workers home (Brynjolfson and Lewis 2006, 28).

Mathew (2020, 44) wrote his dissertation on "persistent pioneers," missionaries to unreached people groups in India. He maintained those pioneers needed to learn to lead without explicit authority in the villages where they went. Their authority manifested

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in humble servanthood. In that vein, McCullough (2017, 2) explored "global humility," and advised, "Pride and mission are polar opposites."

Ideally, the whole process of implementing training in field readiness should look like Figure 2. After being armed with Scriptural knowledge, with spiritual formation, practical and relational skills, along with grit and self-control, the worker can begin to learn language deeply to engage in cultural studies, all focusing on developing oral and narrative resources (especially the Grand Narrative) that are worldview-specific.
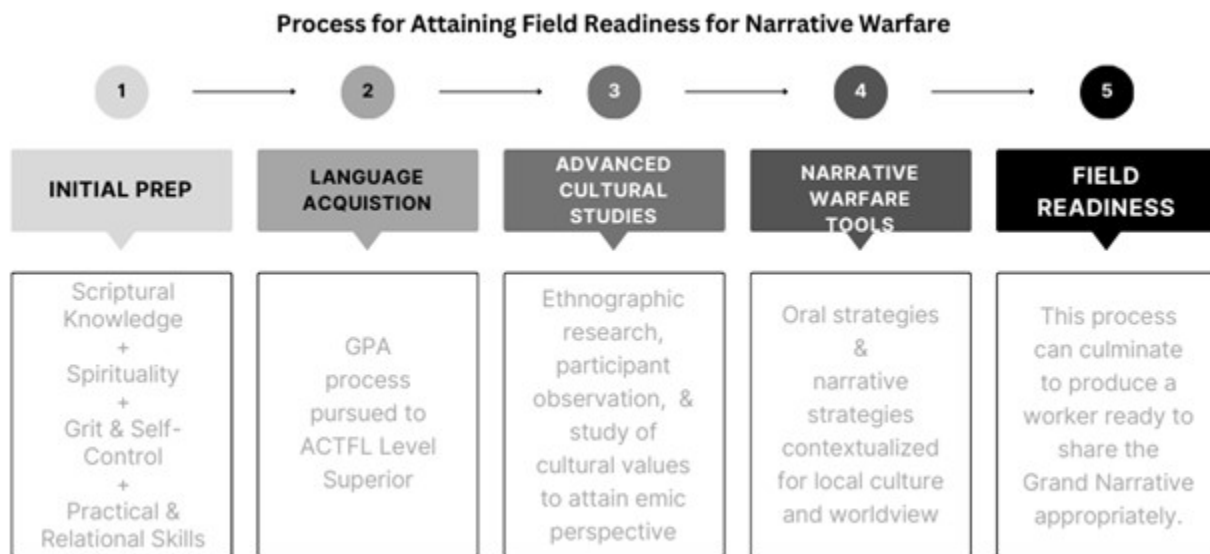
Process for Attaining Field Readiness for Narrative Warfare

① INITIAL PREP	② LANGUAGE ACQUISTION	③ ADVANCED CULTURAL STUDIES	④ NARRATIVE WARFARE TOOLS	⑤ FIELD READINESS
Scriptural Knowledge + Spirituality + Grit & Self-Control + Practical & Relational Skills	GPA process pursued to ACTFL Level Superior	Ethnographic research, participant observation, & study of cultural values to attain emic perspective	Oral strategies & narrative strategies contextualized for local culture and worldview	This process can culminate to produce a worker ready to share the Grand Narrative appropriately.

Figure 2. Process for Attaining Field Readiness for Narrative Warfare

Conclusion

Missions has moved from the West as center to polycentrism and "everyone everywhere," so a desperate need exists to equip co-laborers with tools and training to reach the final frontier. After examining a case study of national missionaries working in a hard place, I proposed a five-pronged approach to competencies they need, an approach that not only touches the head, heart, and hands, but also emphasizes the social/relational aspects of the task, the "herd" or flock, and the spirituality (from the Holy Spirit) needed to be field combat ready for the spiritual warfare in which we are engaged. Some of the most essential competencies for field readiness in pioneer situations include grit, self-control, spirituality, the ability to learn an unwritten language to explore culture deeply, understanding orality, and embracing new

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technologies. All these serve to make the cross-culturally worker ready to craft a worldview-specific Grand Narrative of Scripture. As Adams (in Eenigenburg and Burkholder 2023, xii) explained:

What cross-cultural workers face is not an issue of geography, personalities, or people groups, but rather a war of cosmic proportions, a spiritual war beyond our full comprehension and for which we mortal humans need grit and grace.

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