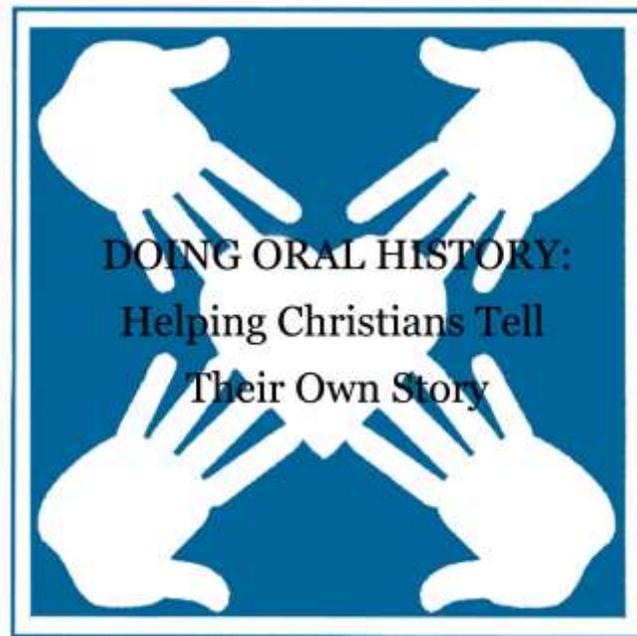


DOING ORAL HISTORY:
Helping Christians Tell Their Own Story
*Class Curriculum based on and revised from original work
by Dr. Jean-Paul Wiest*



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Introduction: *Oral History: Definitions, Uses, and Purpose*

What is oral history?

- A method for gathering historical information.
- A collection of oral testimonies collected in order to reconstruct the past
- Different from oral tradition (a community's cultural and historical traditions passed down by word of mouth or example from one generation to another)
- The basis of oral history is the interview

Uses and Purpose of Oral History

- Corrects distortions or gaps in collective memory
- Provides information when there are inadequate written documents or no documents at all
- Democratic view of history: takes into account those whose voice is absent in traditional historical accounts: eg voices of ethnic and religious minorities, women
- Complements, enriches, and deepens certain "received" understandings of history
- Illustrates the connection between Christian belief and practice

Why do church leaders and missionaries need oral history?

- In the Global South, where orality and oral culture are prevalent and written historical documents are lacking, oral history can serve to retrieve the memory of local events.
- If the goal of cross-cultural mission is to share the good news of the kingdom of God in a culturally appropriate way, then oral history is an essential tool that can be used to get to know the local culture and history of the people.
- In the formation of a local Christian identity that is culturally authentic, oral history can be used to document the local history both before the arrival of the missionaries and afterwards, when the Christian community is taking shape.
- Using oral history to understand local history will lay a foundation for creating contextualized theologies.

Lecture 1: *Toward a Christian History Relevant to Our Times*

Traditional Types of History

- **Chronicles**
Detailed accounts of events arranged in order of time with little or no analysis.
- **In-House Histories**
Written primarily to keep a community aware of its roots and development.
- **Official Histories**
Endorsed by whoever may have commissioned them and usually refer to works for public use.
- **Inspirational Histories**
Meant to edify the faithful, to arouse vocations, and to raise funds.
- **Secular Histories**
Consider the Christian phenomenon mostly as a religious manifestation of the socio-economic and political situation in an increasingly globalized world.
- **Academic Histories**
Meant to contribute to the academic knowledge of history. The researcher usually identifies their purpose and ideological bias which contribute to the “story” he/she chooses to tell.

Characteristics of a History of Christian Witness Relevant to Our Times

- **More Than a Secular History**
A relevant Christian history will include theological concerns such as the establishment of the Kingdom of God or the church's vocation to evangelize because these are the most important dimensions of Christian witness.
- **A Tool for Preserving Local Christian History**
Unless we tap the living memory of leaders and ordinary Christians, crucial information about the beginning and the development of a local church could disappear with their passing away.
- **A Tool for Evaluation**
In retrieving local Christian memory, we can learn from the successes and failures of the past. It is also a way to enhance or correct certain perceptions of the past.
- **A Service and a Step Towards Partnership**
A history of Christian witness should be as much the story of missionaries as the story of the beginning and development of a local Christian movement perceived in indigenous terms and motivated by indigenous considerations.
- **A Means for Building a Legacy of Understanding**
If the historian is a successful storyteller and a keen analyst, his/her images of the past and allotment of praise and blame will be appreciated by both missionaries and indigenous churches as a true measure of their common history and relationship.

Lecture 2: *Planning an Oral History Project*

Designing an Oral History Project

Stages in designing and carrying out an oral history project:

- Planning and preparation
- Conducting interviews
- Transcribing interviews
- Coding / Thematic analysis

Stage 1: Planning an oral history project

To plan an oral history project, one must take into account 6 basic questions:

- What? (defining the project)
- Who? (the oral history team)
- Where? (locations)
- When? (timelines)
- Whom? (interviewees/narrators)
- How? (carrying out the project)

In thinking about the context of the project, consider:

- The political climate and social unrest: Will the project put the local people at risk?
- Racial and ethnic differences: How might this affect the interviewer / narrator relationship?
- Religious context and identity: eg inter-denominational tensions
- Cultural issues: eg gender relations, literacy, language
- The impact of modernity: eg reaction to technology

Stage 1: Planning an oral history project

1) Defining the Project (the What?)

- Preparatory / background research: Consult newspapers, archives, histories, experts
- Define the project in 1 to 3 sentences. Elements to consider: purpose, scope (content, date range), audience (who is this for?), and the final product.
- Special considerations related to the context of the project

2) The Oral History Team (the Who?)

- Best to have at least 2 to 3 people working together, both men and women
- Cross-cultural settings: locals vs foreign members; question of language, translation, research assistants
- Funders / Donors included here (you need money for this project!)

3) Locations (the Where?)

- 2 locations: Yours / That of your narrators
- Reconciling the two: will you have to travel for the interviews?

4) Timelines (the When?)

- Yours: How much time do you have to do this project?
- The project's: What time period will you cover in your project?

5) The Interviewees or Narrators (the Whom?)

- The list of people to interview should be diverse and represent different perspectives, social standing, genders, positions of authority (eg in a church or institution), Christian vs non Christian), lay vs clergy, local vs foreign, young and old, friendly and hostile.
- Reliability: How will you cross-check information from various narrators for accuracy and bias?

6) Carrying out the Project (the How?)

- Questionnaire (s): see examples pp.12-16
- Categories /themes /ideas: see examples pp.9-11
- Financing
- Logistics: equipment, transportation
- Final product: will you adopt a thematic or a chronological approach? Who is your audience?
- Ethical issues: Respect for narrators and the community; giving back to the community who aided in the research

SAMPLE CATEGORY AND THEMES

DESCRIPTOR LIST

(NOTE: Capital letters = Main topics
Other entries = Sub topics)

ACCOMMODATION: Will include missionaries effort to adapt to another culture, climate, etc. (Interviewee's sensitivity and lack of sensitivity to a culture and the people of that culture.)

- Culture
- Custom
- Difficulties
- Language
- Sacraments
- Sensitivity Toward

AGRICULTURE:

- Cooperative
- Crops
- Dairy
- Failure
- Grain
- Irrigation
- Livestock
- Success

APPRAISAL:

- Agenda
- Catholic Church
- Maryknoll
- Mission Methods
- Mission Work
- Personal

ARCHITECTURE:

- Chapel
- Church
- Construction
- Convent
- Mission Compound
- Outstations
- Seminary
- School

ASSIGNMENT: (Use only when substantial information is given. See also

RESPONSIBILITIES)

- Development (includes Vocation office)
- Education/Formation
- Mission Region (name of)
- Parish, etc
- Social Communications
- SSU (Special Society Unit)
- Unit

BACKGROUND:

- Personal
- Family

COMMUNICATION:

- Daily
- Grape vine
- Letter
- Newspaper
- Periodical
- Publication
- Radio
- Television
- Dialogue

CUSTOM: (Give name of local custom being discussed. See also **ACCOMMODATION**)

- Marriage
- Polygamy

DESCRIPTION: (OF ABOUT WHOM listing, or of a place)

- Portrait
- Home
- Life
- Family
- Parish
- Mission
- Life style
- Town
- Village
- City
- Event
- Ordination

EDUCATION: (for Maryknollers, local clergy – religious, laity, etc)

- Religious Training
- Primary (Elementary)

- Secondary
- University
- Seminary
- Novitiate
- Self-study
- Mission Studies
- Mission Training
- Language
- Technical
- Fine Arts
- Orphanage
- Degree
- Illiteracy
- Leadership training
- School (kindergarten through university)
- Continuing Ed. (CPE, etc)
- Teaching

EVALUATION: (See **PLANNING**)

EVANGELIZATION: Spreading of faith. Refers only to Catholicism. For other religions, see

RELIGION. Also see **PARISH WORK**

- Vision (Rationale or theology)
- Method (Visiting or one-on-one instruction, etc)

- Program
- Conversion
- Catechumenate (includes instruction, baptism, etc)
- Leadership training (catechists, etc)
- Rural setting
- Urban setting
- Statistics

FINANCE:

- Poverty
- Prosperity
- Parish
- Salary
- Problems (with cooperatives, etc)
- Inflation
- Income
- Debt
- Expenses
- Donation
- Fundraising
- Credit Unions

GEOGRAPHY:

- Climate
- Earthquake
- Landscape
- Floods

Drought
 Typhoon
 Hurricane
 Map

GOVERNMENT: (see **POLITICS**)

HEALTH: (see also **MEDICINE**)

Abortion
 Alcoholism
 Birth control
 Birth defect
 Blind
 Burn Out
 Clinic (Subtopic 2 would be Safari, Suitcase, etc)
 Deaf
 Disease
 Drug abuse
 Epidemic
 Euthanasia
 Hospital
 Hygiene
 Leper colony
 Living conditions
 Mental Health
 Nutrition
 Nursing Home (for the elderly)
 Sickness
 Surgery
 Training
 Work

HISTORY:

Maryknoll
 Regional
 Diocesan
 Family
 Local (tribal)
 Personal
 National
 Folklore
 Mission

IMPACT ON US: (see also **COMMUNICATION**)

Movies
 Writings
 Attitudes
 Politics
 Development Dept
 Local (tribal)
 National

INCULTURATION: Will include all efforts – even basic efforts of simple acculturation – of the Church and its message into the cultural milieu of every nation and age) (see also **COMMUNICATION**)

Acculturation
 Ritual
 Christianity
 Liturgy
 Of
 Sacraments
 Translation

INDIGENIZATION: Refers to the missionaries' work toward establishing a native clergy and sisterhood, well-trained catechists and apostolic laity. (see also Leadership Training under **EVANGELIZATION** and **PARISH WORK**)

LAW and ORDER:

Banditry
 Crime
 Detention
 Lawsuit

Clan rivalry
 Injustice
 Piracy
 Riot
 Rebellion
 Repressive Measures
 Surveillance

LIFE STYLE: (see also **DESCRIPTION**)

Daily
 City
 Community (people brought together by a special bond, such as a religious community)
 Town
 Village
 Leisure
 Modernization
 Option for poor
 Support Group

MEDICINE: As a profession or a practice (see also **HEALTH**) Practice

OBJECTIVES: (see **PLANNING**)

PARISH WORK: (mainly nurture of Christians)

Vision (rationale or theology)
 Rural setting
 Urban setting
 Program (enter as Subtopic 2:
 Catholic action
 Youth club(s)
 Legion of Mary
 Marriage encounter, etc)

Home visits
 Retreat
 Evangelization (catechumenate outreach for non-Christians)
 Instruction (for people already baptized)
 Liturgy (sacraments, processions. Mass, etc)

Christian Life
 Local support
 Land purchase
 Lay leadership
 Leadership training (parish leaders, catechists, etc)
 Basic Communities
 Outstations
 Schools
 Statistics
 Sacraments
 Success
 Emphasis
 Reliance on
 Starting parish

PERSECUTION: Refers only to religious persecutions. For other types, see **LAW AND ORDER**

Demonstration
 Detention
 Arrest
 Martyrdom
 Intimidation

PLANNING

Environment
 Vision (rationale, theology or mission vision,)
 Impact of Vat. II
 Research

Objectives (long range, personal, Maryknoll, world, etc)
 Goals (short range)
 Directors
 Implementation
 Evaluation (statistics)

POLITICS: (see also **GOVERNMENT**)

Treaty
 Communism
 Marxism
 Capitalism
 Socialism
 Anti-foreignism
 Nationalism
 Problems
 Demonstration
 Involvement
 Arrest
 Detention
 Assassination

RELATIONSHIP: to be used in conjunction with the **ABOUT WHOM** listing. Between (implied "and")
 With

RELIEF WORK:

Food
 Clothing
 Housing
 Organization

RELIGION:

Catholicism	Protestantism
Islam	Pentecostalism
Buddhism	Ecumenism
Hinduism	Christianity
Folk	Veneration

Local Belief

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Assignment	Administration
Teaching	Regional Office
Parish Work	Evangelization
Special society unit	Chaplaincy (prison, hospital or youth)

SOCIAL QUESTION:

Moral issues
 Justice and peace
 Oppression Birth control
 Illiteracy Human rights
 Exploitation Refugee camp
 Community project
 Family problems
 Suppression
 Civil Rights Movement
 Migration
 Poverty

SPIRITUALITY: (see also **EDUCATION**)

Retreat
 Missionary
 Religious Experience
 Oath
 Personal
 Veneration

TRANSPORTATION: means of locomotion

Boat	Train
Bicycle	Plane
Foot	Bus
Motorcycle	Truck
Public	Automobile
Horse	Mule

TRAVEL:

Domestic (in country discussed)

Foreign (outside country discussed)
 Accident
 Difficulties
 Abroad
 Modernization

VISION: (see also **PLANNING**)

Personal (for personal vision/ideas about the future)

VOCATION:

Discernment (includes laity)
 Missionary
 Priesthood
 Religious (Sisters and Brothers)
 Recruitment

WAR

WWI	WWII	Korea
Vietnam	Local fighting	

Descriptor List

FOR ABOUT WHOM LISTING

Aborigines	Orphans
Aspirants	Patients
Babies	Patients/Mental
Buddhists/Monks	
Buddhists/Nuns	People/Urban
Businessmen	People/Rural
Catechists	Postulants
Catechists/Female	
Catechists/Male	Priests/Native
Catechumens	Protestants
Catechumens/Female	Refugees
Catechumens/Male	Rice Christians
Children	Sisters/Maryknoll
Catholics	Sisters/Native
Communists	Soldiers
Deacons	Students
Doctors/foreign	Students/Catholic
Doctors/local	Superiors/Religious
Employees/Mk1	Teachers
Emigrants	US Military
Foreigners	Virgins
Landowners	Women
Government officials	
	Women/American
Hakka	Women/native
Immigrants	Youth (older, teens)
Infants/dying	Youth/female
Land owners	Youth/male
Lawsuit Christians	
Lay leaders	NOTE: This list is just an example. Any linguistic group or nationality can be entered. For instance, if the interviewee is talking about the Mexican people in general, "Mexicans" would be an appropriate entry. If he/she were talking about the Maya Indians in Mexico, "Maya" would be a better entry.
Lay Missionaries	
Lepers	
Local people	
Maryknollers (Frs	
Brothers)	
Merchants	
Migrants	
Military	
Missionaries /Catholic	
Missionaries/Protestant	
Non-Christians	Nurses
Novices	Officials

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRES & TOPICS FOR BROADLY-FOCUSED PROJECTS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

I. Portrait of the Missioner

1. Who were/are these Maryknoll men and women missioners?
2. Why were/are they there in your village/city?
3. What did/do they try to do?
4. How successful were/are they in doing what they tried/try to do?
5. How long were they in your area? What kind of influence or change did they bring about in your personal life as an individual and in the life of the village/region?
6. What was/is their lifestyle like?
7. How much have they become a part of the life of your village/city?
8. What were/are some of the difficulties in their adjustments to you way of life?
9. How much did they come to understand your people and your way of life? Do you recall any situation showing their understanding or misunderstanding?
10. Did the Maryknoll men influence the local men? The Maryknoll Sisters the local women? Did these men and women become better citizens, better parents, better husbands and wives because of that contact?
11. How much were/are the missioners, Maryknollers in particular, part of political upheavals?
12. What did/do the officials, Christians, and other people think of Maryknollers? What do you think of them?

II. The missioners' relationship with the local people

13. What brought you into your first contact with the Maryknollers?
14. What has been the nature of this relationship? [Was it similar to the relationship between employers and employees? Teachers and students? Benefactors and recipients? Co-workers or colleagues? Friend? Or ...?]* Did you feel that this relationship could be reciprocated?

Did that relationship change or evolve throughout the years?

* Questions in brackets should only be used as prompters if the interviewee is puzzled by the general question.

15. In what way did the work of the Maryknollers contribute to or affect your work or your role in your village/city?
16. For what did you feel you could depend on the missionaries? [Deepening of your faith? Financial or material support? Counselling on village or family affairs? Advice about work or business? Companionship? Others?]
17. Did you feel they had more material means, more power, more status or more knowledge than you did? In what ways?
18. Did you feel your relationship with these missionaries enhanced or hindered your relationship with your non-Christian friends and neighbors? Did your relationship with them bring about any changes in your life?
19. What did this relationship bring to you? [Sound and good spiritual values? A richer and broader view about things in life? More status? More money? A sense of authority and power? Others?]
20. Would you recommend or bring your friends or relatives into such relationships with these missionaries?

III. Establishing local churches

21. How did these missionaries go about establishing local churches? What worked? What did not work?
22. Who became Christians? From what social and economic background in your village/city did they come? Did you become a Christian? Why? How were you contacted and trained?
23. What did you learn from the missionaries about God? About Jesus? About the Church (The Pope, the universality of the Church, Rome etc.)? About prayer? What differences did their ideas make in your life? In your relationships with others?
24. How has your view about these ideas evolved over the years? What is your thinking on them today?
25. What were some of the ideas you found most attractive in the Christian religions?
26. Did you convert from a non-Christian religion? Did this result in any conflict in your family/community?
27. Was your relationship with other Christians in your family/village a determining factor in your conversion?
28. Did you become a priest? A sister? Why? How were you recruited and trained? What was your role in the local church with the Christians? With the non-Christians? With the foreign missionaries?
29. What was the Christian life of your parish, or "base community," like?

30. Describe your participation in the parish or “base community” life.
31. Do you recall some of the more prominent lay church leaders in you area? Who were they? How did they become such leaders? How did their roles evolve?
32. Describe the role of the catechist. How were they selected and trained?
33. Describe the catechists’ and other lay leaders’ relationship with the ministers and with the local people. Did they help to explain the missionaries to the local people or the local people to the missionaries?
34. Did you aspire to be a lay-church leader? Was it a role people in your community would want to cultivate?

IV. Mission Works

35. Describe the various types of work the missionaries established in the area where you lived: orphanage, dispensary, school, old folk’s home, refugee camps, etc.
36. What contribution did these make to the life of the local people in the village/city?
37. Are you part of a “base community?” What is the missionary’s role in relation to your “base community?”

V. General Evaluation

38. What are some of the lessons you learned from you association with the missionaries?
39. In your opinion, if the missionaries want to bring Christianity to your country, are small villages the right place to begin, or should the cities and their educated leaders be the primary targets? Is there any difference?
40. What was the more effective method? [Direct evangelization? Works of charity? Educational work? Presence? Embracing the cause of the poor and oppressed? Etc.]
41. What is your understanding of the Maryknoll missionary activities today?
42. Do you think that Maryknoll missionaries have a place in the future of the church in you country? If so, what method do you think they should use? What advice will you offer?
43. What do you think of the role of foreign missionaries in other countries today? Do you think they have a role in the future of the local church?
44. Do you think the institution of the Christian religion (i.e. the Roman Catholic Church) has a place in the future of you country”. In other countries and cultures?
45. Do you think that the Christian message and the values it presents has a place in the future of your country? In other countries and cultures? If so, what can be done so that it ceases to be a ‘foreign’ religion?

46. Did you ever put any of your reflections in writing or any kind of publication? If so, where can they be found?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONERS

I. The Missioner's enlistment, motivation and training

1. What was your reason for going into the Society and into mission work? Why did you go to your Region/Unit?
2. What was your education and formation prior to going overseas? What education and formation did you receive in your Region/Unit? How much study of language and culture? Were you able to read and write the local language? Fluently? Which dialect?
3. What (in your view) was the major motivation for the Maryknollers? [To save souls? To help people in need? To share American superior culture and religion? Other]*
4. What were your initial visions and goals of Maryknoll work in your Region/Unit before you arrived there? Did those visions and goals change?
5. Describe your personal experience with Maryknoll founders. What do you consider the founders' lasting influence on the Society? On you?
6. Who are the people that had a major influence on you during your training in the U.S.? Why?

II. Fathers' and Brothers' life and experience in their Region/Unit

7. What do you believe are Maryknoll's major goals for its work in your Region/Unit? What do you believe are the major issues, struggles, problems and decisions that Maryknoll has to make in your Region/Unit?
8. What were/are the most successful programs and work of Maryknoll in your Region/Unit? The least successful?
9. What were/are the specific tasks of Maryknoll Fathers? What were/are the specific tasks of Maryknoll Brothers? How did/does the work of the Fathers and Brothers correlate with the work of the Sisters?
10. Describe the daily life and work, the daily schedule of a) the Fathers, and b) the Brothers.
11. How did the life and work of the Fathers and Brothers change and develop through the years?
12. A basic task of Maryknoll was evangelism and establishing churches. What were the methods used? What worked? What did not work? What changes have taken place since Vatican II? Is Maryknoll's task different today? If so, how and why?
13. What lesson did Maryknoll learn from its experience in your Region/Unit?
14. What were the most satisfying and rewarding work experiences for you? What were the most difficult?
15. What were your relations with other religious societies (Both Catholic and Protestant)? With native religions?

* Questions in brackets should only be used as prompts if the interviewee is puzzled by the general question.

III. The Local Church

16. Describe the recruiting, training and assignment of local priests and sisters under Maryknoll administration. Describe your local colleagues. What was/is your relationship to them; what did/do they do? Did/do they have positions of authority and responsibility?
17. If you work in a parish setting, describe the Christian life of your parish (liturgy, catechetical training, etc.) Describe the special work of your mission station.
18. Describe the role of the catechists (men and women). How were they/are they selected and trained? How are they paid? What type of catechetical training did/do they give? Discuss the role of women catechists. Were/are there other local people employed by Maryknoll? What did/do they do?
19. Describe the selection, training and work of other Christian lay leaders.
20. Describe other work of your mission station, such as orphanages, schools, medical work, social work. How did this serve the primary goals of Maryknoll in your Region/Unit?
21. If you work in a non-parish setting, describe your work, your responsibilities and your relation to the local people. How do you characterize the involvement of the local people?
22. Are you in touch with basic Christian communities or similar emerging new forms of ecclesial life in your Region/Unit? If so, describe.
23. Who is the Maryknoll missionary that you admire most? Why? Who according to you is the greatest missionary in your Region/Unit? (He/she does not have to be a Maryknoller.)

IV. Relations with local people, politics and society

24. Do you feel you have/had close relationships with the local people? Did you understand their society and culture quite well?
25. Did you (or others) experience anti-foreignism: Anti-U.S. sentiments? Describe incidents. Do you remember anything that could be viewed as “cultural imperialism?”
26. Did/do you receive some orientation about the socio-economic and political struggles that were/are taking place in your Region/Unit? Prior to Departure? In the field? What were/are your views of those struggles? What is your understanding of the political and social situation? What newspapers and magazines did/do you read? What are your other sources of news?
27. Did/do you have any personal experience with civil unrest, bandits, etc.?
28. What were/are your relations with friends and colleagues native to your Region/Unit? Did/do you visit in their homes, have meals there and vice versa? Did/do you have close friends among them?

V. Influence of Maryknoll on American views of local Region/Unit

29. Did you write about your experiences? Are these writing available?
30. How did/do you and other Maryknollers influence American views of your local Region/Unit? Give examples.

Worksheet: Planning an Oral History Project

Defining your project: 1) Describe it in 1-3 sentences; 2) List sources of information for background research; 3) List any special considerations

Locations (2+):

Timelines (2):

People to interview:

Carrying out the Project: 1) List 4-5 themes you will flag in your project (see pp 9-11) ; 2) What will be your final product? Who is your audience?; 3) “Gift” of gratitude to narrators or community?

Lecture 3: *Pre-Interview & Interview*

Oral History Interview Checklist

Pre-Interview

1. Contact narrator, making certain that he or she fully understands the project. If possible, arrange a pre-interview visit so that you and the narrator may become personally acquainted.
2. Arrange with the narrator to have the interview in a quiet location where they will feel at ease. The use of recording equipment should be mentioned
3. Acquaint yourself with the general background of narrator.
4. Prepare a questionnaire or a list of topics for discussion.
5. Prepare the equipment to bring to the interview:
 - Recording equipment: digital recorder or video recorder
 - Recording accessories: e.g. microphone
 - Extra batteries or a “power bank” or solar power charger: There may not be easy access to electricity at interview site
 - Adapters for two-pronged outlets (if you absolutely need electricity)
 - Notebook (Steno type) and several pens and pencils
 - Camera (if desired)
 - Release forms to sign
6. Thoroughly check out equipment prior to the interview. An interview should not be an on-the-job training session.
7. Make certain you are interviewing in a room which will minimize external noise.

During the Interview

8. Label your recording: Identify yourself, the narrator, the date and place, the purpose of the project, and ask the narrator to agree to the project.
9. Make certain the recorder is recording!
10. During the interview, jot down proper nouns and other words with questionable spelling. Take notes about nonverbal cues or other details that will help in the transcription.
11. Insert verbal notes about visible details mentioned by narrator (Int: “as wide as this table”; You: “About 5 five feet wide?”)
12. Be sure to ask narrator about spelling and other questions which you may have concerning the interview.
13. Have narrator sign release form and/or record their oral permission to use the interview at the end of the recording.
14. Limit the interview to 90 minutes or less so that the narrator is not exhausted. Arrange for a follow up interview if necessary.

After the Interview:

15. Express your thanks to the narrator in some culturally appropriate way. Avoid giving gifts of money.
16. As soon as you can get to a quiet place, write down aspects of the interview that you think may be useful to future indexers and transcribers.
17. Make notes about aspects of the interview that may need verification for accuracy or bias.

Adapted from *Talking about Connecticut: Oral History in the Nutmeg State*.

Guidelines for Conducting a Good Interview

During the actual interview:

- Verbally label your tape
- Begin with “small talk”
- Use your questions as guide
- Use your listening skills
- Save difficult questions for later in the interview

What NOT to do:

- Do not force your beliefs or opinions on the narrator.
- Do not force responses to sensitive questions.
- Do not ask leading questions or closed questions (see examples in the charts below.).
- Do not draw attention to the recorder.
- Do not make a lot of noise.
- Do not argue with the narrator.
- Do not make the interview very long so you and the narrator get very tired.
- Do not dominate the interview by giving long answers to questions the narrator asks you.

Open-Ended and Closed Questions	
Closed	Open-Ended or Evocative
Where were you born?	What do you remember about the place you were born?
Where were your parents born?	What did your parents tell you about their lives?
Did your family have gatherings?	Describe you family gatherings.
What holidays did your family celebrate?	How were holidays celebrated in your family?
Was religion important to your family?	Tell me about the religious observances in your family.
Did you and your friends play games as children?	Describe some of the games you played as a child.
Were you in the service during World War II?	Tell me about your life during World War II.
Did you get a job after the war?	Tell me what you did after you got out of the service.
Did you like your job?	Describe how you felt about your job.

Examples of Leading Questions	
Leading	Neutral
You must have been happy on election night.	How did you feel on election night?
Do you have problems with Pastor John?	Tell me about your relationship with Pastor John.
Don't you think Mr. X was difficult?	Tell me what you think about Mr. X.
What do you think of Mr. Jones' outrageous behavior?	What did Mr. Jones do then?

Adapted from: Reimer, Derek. *Voices: A Guide to Oral History*. Victoria, BC: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1984.

Don't Do This!

This is an excerpt from an interview of a former Maryknoll associate priest who did much of his mission work in Peru. He now heads his own parish in the U.S., and has given his permission to us for use as a classroom example.

Interviewee : I was thinking wouldn't it be wonderful to sign a contract again (laughing), as they were doing it today. I am thrilled to see that there are 8 of them from 8 different diocese of the country, including Anchorage, Alaska! Obviously, it is getting the support of the Bishops of the country. I believe Maryknoll had only 5 ordinations of their own this year, but they've got 8 associates. So I see that as a very positive contribution, and I was telling them this afternoon. That's one of the reasons I'm down here now was to share my own experience. It was one of the most enriching phases of my life as a priest, to have come in to Maryknoll, to have had this world vision, to have learned a new language and a new culture, to go to another country. That has given a whole new dimension to my own priesthood, and I'm sure it will to these 8 men that are coming in now. And so I certainly see the program as an important ingredient to the Maryknoll apostolate in the world, and I think it enriches the life of the diocese. Of course Maryknoll was founded, well, by two diocesan priests.

Interviewer: To represent the Church in America, diocesan clergy especially.

Interviewee: So I think it's wonderful., It certainly was wonderful in my own life (laughing), and having served 6 years the first time in Peru, and then 5 years here at Maryknoll, NY in a number of capacities for the Justice and Peace and the Center. I asked the Bishop, when my 6 years were up in the parish that I was in, for permission to return. And he didn't feel free to let my go, but I think that it's a marvelous program, and I certainly would like to see it grow and develop. And the fact that there are 8, is a

Interviewer: I know James Anthony Walsh, yes, he used to visit Maryknoll at Los Altos on his trips to the Orient. He went frequently to the Orient and would stop over, going over and coming back, and give a report to us. He always would report on his observations in the Orient, and of course he would speak, and was very, very inspiring. But the early Maryknollers too had the spirit, and we knew those people even better.

So now I'm anxious to try to get these things down just as the founders. James Anthony Walsh was great on history, and did a lot of wring and communications, and was tremendously interested in that field. And I'm enthusiastic about this work.

Interviewee: So you're putting together the history of the whole Bolivian region?

Interviewer: Yes, yes, the whole Bolivian region. We went there in '42, and we started a lot of things that have grown. Like the little dispensaries went on to big hospitals, two room school has gone into a complex, a grammar school and high school. And we started the cooperatives, we started this movement actually. We helped the priests from many diocese to get started. St, Louis, Lacrosse, Dubuque, well, I don't know how many others, but they showed interest at least, and many of them made a very positive contribution. St James Society was really inspired by the Maryknollers in Bolivia, and the Nuncio wanted to try to get priests, Maryknollers a bit hesitant, because they thought the Bishops would complain, but obviously (laughing) they didn't! Actually, they were against the idea for fear that it would work against Maryknoll, but then they soon came around.,

I know it was interesting for me because Ed Fedders had spoken to me about the possibility of receiving in the language school, where I was director '55, '56, '57. So I agreed to have one, I saw no difficulty, but then there was this problem of Maryknoll.

Interviewee: Oh, right off?

Interviewer: Yes, well, see it was in the making

END OF INTERVIEW

Doing Oral History with a Biography Focus: Writing Stories for the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*

Submission Requirements

The *Dictionary of African Christian Biography (DACB)* is a reference work available for general readers, scholars, and students on the Web (www.dacb.org), also available on USB drive or CD-ROM. The stories should be precise (providing specific dates and other facts) and concise (concentrating on what is important). The focus will be on a particular person's accomplishments, legacy, and historical significance in the development of African Christianity. Pejorative language, hagiography, and polemic are to be avoided. Articles should not follow the strict catalog format common in many biographical directories, where the focus is on listing all academic degrees, positions held, awards received, and so forth. Our aim with this dictionary is to encourage discursive and well-written biography that illumines the life and work of those who have played an important role in African Christian history. Each article should be accompanied by a brief bibliography and the names of oral information sources (e.g., persons interviewed). *A minimum of two sources is required for acceptance.*

Choice of Biographical Subjects

As you choose biographical subjects for your research, please take into account the following:

1. The *DACB* accepts multiple biographies of the same individual but *only on the condition* that the proposed article gives significant new material and insight. Therefore it is important to consult the *DACB* either online or at a *DACB* participating institution, to evaluate the content that we already have on the Web site.
2. Your subjects need not be confined to professional clerics, missionaries, or theologians, but might include laypersons from various walks of life whose stories are essential to an understanding of the church in Africa.
3. General suggested length: no longer than 3,000 words and no shorter than 500 words.
4. As the intent and purpose of the *DACB* is to record the history of African Christianity, we ask that you focus on writing the stories of **deceased** subjects.
5. It is currently the policy of *DACB* NOT to publish the stories of living subjects. Stories of living subjects will be kept on file in the *DACB* office for future use.

DACB Potential Subjects: Please submit names and basic information on potential subjects to be included in the DACB.

A “potential subject” is:

Anyone—African or missionary—who has made a significant contribution to African Christianity at local, national, regional, continent-wide, or denominational levels. This includes:

- Individuals from any denomination that defines itself as Christian—even those from sometimes controversial African Initiated Churches or heterodox organizations such as Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- Occasionally, non Christians whose impact aided the church in its birth or growth.
- NOT INCLUDED: Living subjects who are still in active ministry.

*Name	Church Affiliation	**Dates of Birth/Death	Country	***Sources

* Give full name, including African kinship names and baptismal names.

** Provide these dates if available. Otherwise, give approximate dates or the century or period during which they ministered.

*** If you are the information source or the author of a biography on this subject, list your name, email address, and institution with which you are affiliated. Also, give title of article, if published, and where it was published, etc. If written sources exist on the subject, please list publication information (author, title, publisher, place of publication, date of publication).

General Guidelines for Researchers and Writers

In preparing a biography for the dictionary, please include information on as many of the following categories as possible.

1. Given name(s) of the person. As necessary, provide explanations of these names.
 - Baptismal names
 - Kinship names
 - Nicknames
2. Family names. In cases where there is more than one spouse, list the children under the appropriate mother or father.
 - Father
 - Mother
 - Wife/Wives
 - Husband/Husbands
 - Children
 - Grandchildren
3. Ethno-linguistic group and kinship group
4. Life story
 - Date or approximate date of birth
 - Place of birth: village, city, province, nation
 - Unusual circumstances associated with birth
 - Formative experiences, such as illnesses, personal misfortunes, tragedies, and visions
 - Education, degrees and diplomas (including dates)
 - Conversion (including date, if applicable)
 - Calling and/or ordination to ministry (including date, if applicable)
 - Date, place, and circumstances of death
5. Nationality/citizenship
6. Languages, including first, second, third, fourth, fifth, etc.
7. Church affiliation
 - Roman Catholic
 - Orthodox; Coptic
 - Protestant (Conciliar, Evangelical, Anabaptist)
 - Independent (African-initiated, Spiritual, Pentecostal/charismatic)
8. Names, locations, and descriptions of churches begun or served by the subject

9. Ministry details: Where? How long? What happened? Short term and long term impact?
Please provide detailed information wherever possible, including anecdotes, stories, and hearsay.
10. Continuing influence and significance of the person
11. Publications, reports, writings, letters, musical compositions, artistic contributions by the person
12. Sources of information about the person

Unpublished Sources

Eyewitness accounts (give names and addresses of narrators who are or were eyewitnesses; include details of their relationship to the person)

Other oral and anecdotal accounts (give names and addresses of narrators whenever possible, and include details of their relationship to the person)

Published Sources

Include full bibliographic data whenever possible:

- Author of a book, book title, location, publisher, year of publication
- Author of chapter within a book, title of the chapter, title of the book, name of the editor of the book, full publication data
- Author of article in periodical, title of article, periodical name, volume and number of periodical, date of periodical, page numbers of article

13. Other pertinent information

More information and resources for writers can be found here:

<http://www.dacb.org/resources.html>

Three Examples of Interview Agreement Forms

A. Interviewer Agreement

This tape (or tapes) and the accompanying transcripts are the result of one or more voluntary interviews conducted by _____ with _____

Any reader of the transcript should bear in mind that s/he is reading a transcript of our spoken words, and that the tape, not the transcript, is the primary document.

I hereby permit the Maryknoll Society History Program and all researchers approved of or associated with the Society History Program full use if this interview and full use of all other materials I donate to the Program.

_____ Signature of Interviewer	_____ Date
_____ Signature of Narrator	_____ Date

B. Interview Agreement

Date: _____

I, _____, give permission for my interview with _____ to be used by individuals engaged in writing the History of the Maryknoll Mission Community in Brazil. I further permit these materials to be donated to the Maryknoll Society History Program of the Center for Mission Research and Study and the Maryknoll Archives in order for my thoughts and ideas to be available to future researchers.

_____ Signature of Narrator	_____ Date
--------------------------------	---------------

C. Narrator Agreement *(To be used only in the event of a restriction)*

I, _____, make the following contributions to the Maryknoll Society Program, and through it, to the Maryknoll Mission Archives, and wish to place the following restrictions on the interview materials:

Signature of Narrator

Date

Acknowledgement

The Maryknoll Society History Program gratefully acknowledges the above contributions to the Program.

Signature of Research Director

Date

Lecture 4: *Transcription*

Transcripts

- Each recording file and transcript should be clearly labelled with narrator's and interviewer's name and date of interview
- Keep a list of correct spellings
- Regulate style points
- Be specific about deadlines
- Discuss costs before you begin
- Use red ink to edit transcripts
- Do an audit/edit of each interview (if possible)
- Standard estimate of the time it takes to transcribe a one hour interview: between 24 and 32 hours (6 to 8 hours per 15 minutes).

Resources for transcription:

- Makes the transcription process easier by using online tools: <https://transcribe.wreally.com/>

Lecture 5: *Thematic Analysis*

Thematic Analysis / Coding:

A classification of your data from the interviews according to a system that corresponds to your need and purpose and that is as efficient as possible within the limitations of the budget and equipment at your disposal.

Location Discussed

TANZANIA

Vicariate/Diocese

Musoma

Parish/Institution

Kigigi

Main Topic	Subtopic 1	Subtopic 2	About Whom	Years-From/To	S	O	C	PG	#PGS
Accommodation	Custom		Casper, John	49-52				1	1
Description	Parish		Casper, John	49-52			C	2	4
Education	Primary	by Maryknollers	Casper, John	49-52		O		6	2
Evangelization	Method		Catechists	49-52	S			8	3
Relationship	between	Maryknollers	Tanzanian Priests	49-52	S		C	11	5
Health	Disease		Infants	49-62				16	2
Health	AIDS		People/rural	85-00	S			19	3
Health	AIDS		People/Urban	85-00	S			19	4
<hr/>									
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TANZANIA			MUSOMA	49-				LUBAKA	
				-00					

INDIVIDUAL REPORT FOR: ROBERT E. LEE

MAIN TOPIC	SUBTOPIC 1	SUBTOPIC 2	About Whom	Years - From/To	S	O	C	Pg	#Pgs	Location	Vicariate/ Diocese	Parish/ Institution
Agriculture	Crops	Chicle		1943-			C	6	1	Mexico	Yucatan	
Architecture	Construction	Slow / of church	Verhagen, Norbert	1948-	S			7	2	Mexico	Mexico City	Arinal
Description	Portrait		Morrison, John					22	1	Mexico		
Description	Portrait		Walsh, James E.					21	2	Mexico		
Description	Town	Carillo Puerto		1943-1944				24	2	Mexico	Quintana Roo	Carillo Puerto
Description	Town	Mexico City		1938-				23	2	Mexico	Mexico City	
Description	Town	Name changes		1943-				5	2	Mexico	Quintana Roo	Carillo Puerto
Education	Seminary	Life	Lee, Robert E.	1939-1949				3	1	USA		
Evangelization			Youth	1989-				11	2	Mexico	Mexico City	
vangelization	Parish work	Turning over	Maryknollers	1943-1989		O	C	18	2	Mexico		
Geography	Climate	Hot/humid		1943-			C	5	1	Mexico	Yucatan	
Geography	Earthquake		Lee, Robert E.	1985-				23	2	Mexico		
Health	Sickness	Cancer / Stroke	Lee, Robert E.	1970-				14	3	Mexico	Mexico City	
History	Personal	Family	Lee, Robert E.					1	2	USA	Brooklyn	
Life Style			Maryknollers	1943 - 1989			C	25	2	Mexico	Quintana Roo	Carillo Puerto
Persecution	Intimidation	Mexican army	Maryknollers	1943-			C	6	3	Mexico	Yucatan	
Persecution	Intimidation	Mexican army	Maryknollers	1948-				24	1	Mexico		
Relationship		Lay missionaries	Priests / Maryknollers	1989-				17	2	Mexico		
Relationship		Seminarians	Lee, Robert E.	1939 - 1943				3	2	USA		
Transportation	Horse		Lee, Robert E.	1943 - 1944			C	25	2	Mexico	Quintana Roo	Carillo Puerto
Vocation	Discernment		Lee, Robert E.	1932 - 1937				1	2	USA	Brooklyn	
War	WWII			1948-	S			7	2	Mexico	Yucatan	

Donna Bonner Interviews with J. P. Wei

DB: This is Donna Bonner, November 1, 2000, and I'm interviewing J. P. Wei. Well, first off, if you could tell me how you come to Christianity. Was your family Christian or did you have a conversion experience?

JP: Well, this very long story. Our family has been Christian for many generations. I remember when I was a little child, my grandfather talking about how his great grandfather had been converted and that was during the time of the Kang Xi Emperor so must be 300 years ago that missionaries from the West, I think you call them Jesuits, came to China and brought the Gospel to Beijing. And our family at that time was pretty well off, and so my great great great great-grandfather happened to be an official in the city and was converted by the contact with the Jesuits. Then when he retired and came back to our village, he was the first that introduced Christianity to our village. So we could say that our village was converted not by a missionary, but by a Chinese—my great great great great-grandfather.

DB: And did your family as far as you know remain with that Christianity for all those years, or is it something you've come back to more recently?

JP: In our village, we have three main families or clans. Our clan is the Wei Clan, but then you have the Lee Clan and the Wu Clan. And through marriage, the Lee Clan—another person in the Lee Clan also became Christian.

DB: Through marriage with your family?

JP: By marrying within our family and so on. But somehow in the Wu Clan, those people had an alliance with another village and they intermarried with people from the other village and so we had good relationship, but they never, only with a few exceptions, they never became Christians. And so in our village, there was a strong, let's say all together there was about 7 to 900 people who were Christians, and we had the main church in our county. Our village was the main parish. The elder in my family was always what we call the Hui Zhang, meaning the head of the Catholic Church, like the head catechist for this area. So yeah, I am very proud of this long Catholic tradition in our family.

DB: So your village and your clan must be heavily associated with Christianity. Christianity must be a part of the identity of your village and your clan?

JP: It is but we feel that also we are kind of isolated. We don't know. We have our Christianity, our beliefs, the way it was brought in by my great great great great-grandfather and then by some missionaries that were passing from time to time in our village but we don't have much contact with the rest. So we are proud of being Catholic but sometimes we feel we don't know much of what it means to be Catholic in union with others.

DB: Right. So is it a concern with being in union or is it a concern with the specifics of ritual?

JP: Well, one of our main problem is we have our form of devotions. We have morning and evening prayers. We are still very rural, farming community therefore, we get up very early in the morning and one of the first things we do is for a short prayer in the church before going to the fields. In the evening, up until recently. I would say modernization creates some problems. The coming of electricity and TV and now people in the evening feel like staying home. Previously, there was not electricity so at dusk everybody will finish their meals and wash up, and then go to church for evening prayer. Finally everybody would go to bed. Now, the form of devotions and so on are changing because of modernizations, that has impacted us in the morning prayer because people stay up late to watch TV, so they don't feel like getting up for the morning prayers. But I'm so sorry; I have not answered your questions. I don't remember your question.

DB: No, you're doing fine. Tell me about the devotions and tell me more specifically how they have changed? It is just that people aren't showing up or are they changing with the modernizations? So how do you remember them then and how do they seem now different?

JP: Well, there has been a big change in our village since the new regime in 1950, the take-over of our country by the communists. Formerly the missionary was coming to our village about once a month. Usually coming in the afternoon, any day in the afternoon, not necessarily Sunday, but the next morning we would have mass. That would be our monthly mass—very important. People would come from all over, from the other villages. We being the central village, so the first afternoon, when the missionary arrives that was greeting of the missionary and then, our Catholic tradition that was a time of confessions when people would go to confessions. After that, we would have a big meal prepared by the people of our village for all those that had come. Also, a nice gathering where people you had not seen for the whole month would exchange conversations and so on. That was the time where the young people would meet that was the time where preparation for possible betrothals or marriages were being made, then our church would serve as the sleeping place for those people that have come from the neighboring villages. Then the next morning we will have mass for everybody, usually 5:30 a.m. mass because everybody gets up early and then by 9 or 10 a.m., people would get back to their villages so that was the kind of devotion we had. Really once a month there was a very big gathering. Now with the communists, everything was disturbed and forbidden. You have heard about persecutions, priests being placed in jail and in labor camps and for a while, it seemed like things might go well in the 1960–1965s. Then we heard about the Cultural Revolution and the Red Guards came to our village and completely destroyed our church. So we don't have a church right now. We are trying to get some money from the government. They have promised us some money to rebuild the church, we don't have it and our priest is very old. Finally, he was released from the concentration camp. Now he is 86 years old and cannot not move much. Therefore he can't go to other villages. He stays in the home of his relatives in our village and can say mass from time to time for us. This is our present situation, so you can see how it changed a lot.

DB: Was there any possibility to have any kind of secret devotions outside of the church building itself during that persecution?

JP: Well, I hear that when missionaries were ejected from China in the 1950's, they said that is the end of Christianity in China. Then China slowly reopened and had a little more freedom in 1980, they were surprised to find out there were more Christians in China than when they had departed. Uh, I don't want to accuse them of being mean or persons of little faith, but we kept the faith especially within our family. My mother and grandmother not only them, but the other families' mothers and grandmothers were the people that kept the faith and kept on teaching us about what it means to be a Christian and how to be a Christian. That is how we continue to survive and prosper.

DB: We should stop.

Jemina Oluoch Interview With Mrs. Arao

Interviewer: I am interviewing Mrs. Arao, a well-known woman activist who is very much involved with working in women's relief in the Dubb Refugee Centre. Mrs. Arao, your involvement and work among refugees in Dubb Refugee Centre in Kenya is well known. However, the details about what you actually do are a bit hazy. Could you describe to me what your work actually involves?

Mrs. Arao: Thank you for the question. As we were saying the other day, I think— I tried to introduce the topic, but I did not give you the detail. Hm! When I found out that the women refugees and the children are suffering so much I had to come. I decided to talk to some women to think what could be beneficial to them. So we started a project of making baskets. The reason why we did that instead of them being idle and not having food for the families we wanted to start a project, which can bring some kind of income. And, huh, by the way it is working and the women seem to be happy. Not just because they are getting the little money, but because they had become stimulated in doing something for themselves, instead of waiting for the hand-outs from .huh, maybe the Kenya government or some of the NGO's who takes food there.

Interviewer: What are some of the challenges you face there?

Mrs. Arao: Yah, the challenges are many, but because we are determined we are able to do it. We're having refugees coming from different countries. The cultures in those countries are different from each other, and of course some of those who still have their husbands with them they felt that they did not want the wife to be involved with the other women. I think they thought they would be misled. They did not realize that they were getting help from each other. So those are some of the challenges. And of course, at the beginning we did not have much money. We did write a proposal and we got some money—that is how we started. The income was not that much, but after some time, now about a year and a half we are beginning to reap the fruits of our labor.

Interviewer: When you say we, whom do you mean?

Mrs. Arao: I mean the women who are involved in that project.

Interviewer: So what have the women been able to achieve since the start of the project?

Mrs. Arao: One, they are able to get some money to feed the children. They are able to also send the children to school, but the beginning of this year we are thankful to the Kenya government who is allowing the children to go for free. Primary education is free. So, at least that is a big improvement. And, we hope that after some time I would like to organize with some of the other NGO's if those women can be trained to uplift their standards.

Interviewer: Don't you think you maybe more effective in encouraging by starting some work among the men too?

Mrs. Arao: That is really true. But, you are African aren't you. [Laughing] African men they don't want to be led by a woman. I would like to see that they come to accept what their wives are doing. Then, maybe eventually they will accept to join us. We can start a project for them. Maybe what I would do is to talk to some of the men to find out exactly how we can help them.

Interviewer: Where do you market your products?

Mrs. Arao: Well, we are associated with a group in U.S. where we send out baskets. It has been very helpful. Actually they helped us to put that information on the Internet so people can read what we are doing on the Internet.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mrs. Arao, for giving me so much information. I hope to maybe call upon you sometime again when you are free to let me know more about what you are doing in the field.

Mrs. Arao: Thank you! I would actually like to invite you to come and see the center of production. To see for yourself, just to confirm that what I am telling you is what is happening.

Oral History Project: “Conversion Among African Muslims”

Interview between Robert Adamou Pindzie, from Cameroon, and Chong Soo Lee, interviewer.

Soo: Okay. Your name is Pindzie.

Robert: Yes.

Soo: Seems to me it has something special meaning in your name. Please tell me...a...your... what does your last name mean.

Robert: Okay, thank you. My name, Pindzié, is a Bamoun name which is my tribe. It's my family name, and it means “Go ahead and proclaim.”

Soo: Mm hm. Okay. Thank you. Okay, I forgot to record the thing. Okay. Okay. Today is September 26, 2007. My name is Soo Lee. I'm going to interview Mr. Pindzie who came from Cameroon. I'm interviewing with him about conversion among the African Muslims. He will be at the OMSC Great Commission Hall at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. *(pause as Soo shuffles her papers)* Okay. I would like to ask you: What do you remember about the place you were born?

Robert: Oh, good. I'm born in central Cameroon, in the center province, and my town is called Mimbe. It is ...ah...in a kind of midway between the forest and the savannah. Yah, it's tropical season.

Soo: Okay. So...What about your parents? What did your parents tell you about their life?

Robert: Oh, good. Euh. My father was a chief and my mother a homemaker. So, euh, my father traveled a lot in Africa, and mostly in Cameroon before he was chief in our town and then he practiced Muslim Islam as a religion. My mother also. We were born in that.

Soo: Ah. Okay. So your family are Muslim?

Robert: Yes, my tribe is 90% Muslim.

Soo: Okay. Alright. Ah what about...tell me about your own family.

Robert: Oh, my own family. Yes. I'm married. My wife is seven years younger than me and we have four children. Three boys and one girl. My eldest son is 26. Three of them are at the university and the youngest one is in high school. Yah. I have a grandson also.

Soo: Ah? Grandson, too?

Robert: Yah. Okay.

Soo: Wow. Okay. So your family is a Muslim background. Do you have only one wife?

Robert: Oh! *[surprised]* Euh...I converted to Christianity since 1971 so that makes me a good Christian and--something particular: my father was a Muslim but he was not polygamous. Only my mother was his wife and we are born twelve. So I grew up in a nice milieu, you know, any problem with polygamy.

Soo: Thank you for sharing. And then...Describe your family gatherings. How do you spend the holiday times, or gatherings? Do you have something special, too?

Robert: Okay. I will talk about this in two parts. My family, because we are in the African setting, my family is also the larger family. It means my father, my mother, my uncles, my aunts, cousins and nieces and nephews and then my own littler nuclear family which belongs to me. Therefore, in my greater family context we have a New Year celebration which brings all people together because Muslims and Christians celebrate this together. And then we have another celebration in my tribe that's traditional celebration in the month of November or December, depending on time. They call it *Gwe* (?). It is a celebration about harvest and then more than 300,000 will celebrate it for two days. In one place. So those are the things which regard the larger family. And when my greater family meets together for the Muslim feast, we also join them. We do that because they are our family, even though they are Muslims. And when we also as Christians we celebrate Christmas and Easter they join us as...they come to our homes because we are first... We have a saying in my language: "We are Bamoun first before becoming Christian and Muslim."

Soo: Wow.

Robert: So Islam or Christianity should not divide anyone. We must consider ourself Bamoun first. So even our kin who is a paramount king for one million people has to go to Christian church on Christmas and Easter. He goes to the Catholic and then to the Protestant, being a Muslim. He gives also thanksgiving. Yah.

Soo: Hmm. Very interesting. Ah I see. Okay. So, is that your family background, I mean, the religious background? Do you have some more to tell me about that one?

Robert: Oh yeah. What I can say here is we have certain rites which we practice. For example, when a child is born, we have to give him a name and that is given in the house of the chief of the family, be he a Muslim or a Christian. They have to bring him and the elderly person who has the _____ power has to give him a name of one of the members of the family, either a person who is dead or a person who is still alive. Then we have another celebration which is for shaving the first hairs of a baby after four months. All the family has to come together. When they shave it, they will give gifts to people, give food, and there is a lot of dancing also. That is very good. Then we have some...at Christmas and when Ramadan comes we share also gifts. We will give gifts to members of families and friends. Okay. Sometimes when a member of a family—let's say a Muslim—has to go for pilgrim in Mecca, in Arabia, all the family has to give him gifts. That was the same thing for me when I was ordained as a pastor. Three of my brothers who were Muslims, they had to come to church and give money for my ordination. They are my brothers.

Soo: Ah. Very interesting story. I see. Thank you for sharing. And then, last, I would like to ask: how did your formal education end?

Robert: Okay. How did it end? I went to school and finally, when my father died, I could not continue to university because there was nobody to support me.

Soo: I see. Okay. Thank you for sharing.

Robert: Thank you.

Lecture 6: *Review and Suggestions for Writing*

REVIEW 1: Before the interview

1. Consider from the beginning of the project the range of anticipated users.
2. Familiarize yourself with the significant literature in the field.
3. Limit your project to the number of interviews you can reasonably handle from researching to processing.
4. Research thoroughly the specific individual and incidents you expect to cover in the interview.

REVIEW 2: The interview itself

1. Identify both the narrator and the interviewer at the beginning of the recording and make sure both sign a deed of gift, specifying the conditions under which the interview may be opened for research.
2. Always listen to what the narrator is saying.
3. Be prepared to follow-up on unexpected information gained from the interviewee.

4. Don't be afraid to admit you didn't know something and ask for clarification.
5. Don't settle for a single session interview unless you are convinced the person has exhausted the subject.

REVIEW 3: After the Interview

1. Begin processing the interview immediately after it is conducted.
2. Transcribe whenever possible.
3. Index the transcripts.
4. Preserve the recordings and transcripts under optimal conditions.
5. Publicize the existence of your interviews as widely as possible.
6. Regularly evaluate your interviews and work to improve your interviewing techniques.

Oral History Related Resources

Guides and Tutorials:

Baylor University Institute for Oral History: “Introduction to Oral History”:

<http://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/index.php?id=23566>

“Oral History Workshop,” a document (download) developed by Paul Ortiz, Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, University of Florida, March 26, 2014:

<http://oral.history.ufl.edu/files/2014-Oral-History-Workshop.pdf>

“8 Steps to Doing Oral History,” by Paul Ortiz.

<http://oral.history.ufl.edu/files/march-2014-8-steps.pdf>

Other tutorials and resources from the website of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program:

<http://oral.history.ufl.edu/research/tutorials/>

“The Use of Oral Sources in African Church History,” by Dr. Philippe Denis, University of Natal:

<http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/oralsources.htm>

Web Guides to Doing Oral History from the Oral History Association:

<http://www.oralhistory.org/web-guides-to-doing-oral-history/>

Examples of Oral History Projects:

Maasai Oral History Research Project:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0YP_-6MJR8

Tibetan Oral History Project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGj5AWXadLA>

The Canaan Hymns (documentary 50’):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xal saiWejjo>

Books:

Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software

A list of open source and proprietary software options can be found at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer-assisted_qualitative_data_analysis_software

Free / Open source software (from Wikipedia, with links):

- **Aquad** (GPL licence, since version 7) (Windows): www.aquad.de/en/infosandfeatures/

- **Cassandra** (Java-based), French language website: <http://www.cassandra.ulg.ac.be/>
- **Computer Aided Textual Markup & Analysis** (CATMA) (GPL v3 license) (Java-based desktop version for Windows, Mac OS, Linux): <http://www.catma.de/>
- **Coding Analysis Toolkit** (CAT) (web-based): <http://cat.ucsur.pitt.edu/>
- **Compendium** (Windows, Mac OS, Linux): <http://compendiuminstitute.net/>
- **ELAN** (Java-based for Windows, Mac OS, Linux): <https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/>
- **FreeQDA** (GPL2, Java-based): <https://github.com/produnis/FreeQDA/downloads>
- **LibreQDA** (AGPL3 license) (web-based): Spanish language website: <http://www.libreqda.edu.uy/>
- **QDA Miner Lite**, proprietary license, free version with reduced functionality (Windows): <http://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/freeware/>
- **RQDA** (Windows, Mac OS, Linux): <http://rqda.r-forge.r-project.org/>
- **TAMS Analyzer** (Open source, Mac OS): <http://tamsys.sourceforge.net/>
- **Transana** for audio and video data (GPL2, release packages for purchase) (Windows, Mac OS, Linux (partially)): <http://www.transana.org/>

Resources for transcription:

- Makes the transcription process easier by using online tools: <https://transcribe.wreally.com/>