

"A World of Difference"

A. The Concept of Culture

THE MEANING OF "Culture"- opera, linen table cloths, knowing what RSVP means

SO BASIC AND OBVIOUS / USUALLY GOES UNNOTICED

Ex. - Standing for the Doxology in church w/out thinking

ROOT OF WORD "Cultivate" - act of preparing soil for planting

MEANING - way society is structured by the community of man

MAN - image bearer of God / sinned against God

"language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, artifacts, technical processes, and values"

"a river is nature, a canal is culture;
a moan is nature, a word is culture"

PRODUCT OF THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF MAN

"what is the proper relationship between man and his environment?"

4 layer Model (World View, Beliefs, Values, Behavior)

FIFTH LAYER IS MOST IMPORTANT

Concept of World View

"the central control box in culture" - DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

B. Cross-Cultural Differences

Identify and Distinguish "form" and "meaning"

Ethnocentrism

Culture Shock

NATURAL PROGRESSION -

1) Euphoria - Africans are the greatest - at everything!

2) Discouragement - Africans are the worst - at anything!

3) Balance / Bi-Cultural - appreciate the good Africans and pray for those who are not

THE MISSIONARY SUGAR BOWL

1st Y - Ant in Bowl / THROW OUT Sugar

2nd Y - Pick Ant out of Bowl
3rd Y - Just EAT the ant for added protein

CULTURAL SHOCK - Remaining Discouraged - NEVER GETTING OUT OF IT

USUALLY CAN GET OUT OF IT - SOMETIMES NEED TO PACK IT UP
"either change yourself or change 17 million Ugandans"

Thoughts about Culture Change and the Church

What does our "Model" of the Church do to our Understanding?

1. EXPLAINS

WHO WERE THEY - THEY WERE THE PEOPLE OF THE LAW AND THE LAND

Deuteronomy 4:7,8 What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

Explain how and why things got to be as they are, why they change

COSMOLOGY - way one interprets the world as I sit in my pew, as I hear my Pastor speak, my choir sing

2. EVALUATES

What is "the good" - what is right and wrong

Acts 6:11 Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God."

"have heard" - NOTHING HE SAID THUS FAR WAS WRONG -
AUTHORITY OF LEADER GOES UNCHALLENGED

3. ENFORCES THE GROUP PSYCHOLOGY

Acts 6:9 Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)--Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These

•
men began to argue with Stephen

THESE MEN HAD BOUGHT THEIR FREEDOM - WERE FORMER SLAVES

RELIGION BOUND THEM TOGETHER - SOMETHING TO HOPE / LIVE FOR

4. INTEGRATES way we see things - systematizes and orders

PROVIDES AN OVERALL DESIGN - links our ideas with facts

PASTOR NEEDS TO WEAR A ROBE, STAND BEHIND PULPIT

DRUMS DO NOT BELONG IN CHURCH / DO BELONG

5. ENABLES us to ADAPT to Change

IT IS THE UNCHANGING ANCHOR WE HOLD ON TO IN THE STORM OF LIFE

PEOPLE BRING "Grandma" BACK TO Home Church for FUNERAL
they were here as Sunday school kids- no intention of coming back

CHANGE AT THIS CORE LEVEL GIVES US NOTHING TO HOLD ON TO

JEWS - the LAW and the TEMPLE

Acts 6:13,14 They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

HOW DO WE CHANGE THE CULTURE OF THE CHURCH?

1. We must understand the culture / thinking of the people?

PEACE CHILD - Sawi of Irian Jaya
HIGHEST VALUE IN CULTURE - BETRAYAL - JUDAS IS HERO OF GOSPEL

BRUTAL WAR STOPPED - child of one tribe given to opposition
AS LONG AS CHILD LIVED THERE WOULD BE PEACE
WORST BETRAYAL - betrayal of the "Peace Child" = JUDAS

Some PEOPLE ARE SHAME OF THEIR HOUSES - no home meetings

PEOPLE WHO COME FOR MIDWEEK ARE NOT SHAME OF THEIR HOUSES

DEEPEST PROBLEM - people need to fall in love w/ X and eachother

STEPHEN DEMONSTRATED A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF OT HISTORY
NOT A LACK OF APPRECIATION FOR GOD OF OT
Abraham - Joseph - Moses – David

2. Change must encourage a minimal number of CRITICAL CHANGES

TRADITIONAL Church at 11 am - Pastor wears a robe (UGANDA)

PREVIOUS PASTOR - REFUSED - MADE A JOKE OF ISSUE

MY FIRST SUNDAY HERE - WORE ROBE -
several cried tears of joy "now we have our church back again"

NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS

1) CONTINUED TEMPLE WORSHIP

2) CIRCUMCISION

3) PRACTICE OF SLAVERY

COMMON THEME OF SERMON

Acts 7:2 To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.

Acts 7:9 "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him

Acts 7:30,31 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice:

Acts 7:48-50 "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: {49} "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? {50} Has not my hand made all these things?"

Acts 7:56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

GOD IS NOT IN A BOX - CONFINED TO THIS LAND - CHURCH - PROGRAM

JOSHUA SAW COMMANDER OF LORD'S ARMY WITH DRAWN SWORD

"Are you for us or our enemies?" NEITHER

TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES - YOU ARE STANDING ON HOLY GROUND

3. CHANGE MUST BE MADE BY OPINION LEADERS

OLD WOMAN IN KOREAN VILLAGE - led to X - the village came too

CHIEFESS KAPIOLANI - defied Pele - brought many in Puna/Kau to X

THEN SHE CAME TO HELP WORK AT HAILI

STEPHEN WAS REJECTED BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS

RECEIVED BY MANY PEOPLE

Acts 6:7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

8.1 INCLUDING SAUL OF TARSUS

4. CHANGE MUST BE ADVOCATED BY GROUPS

GET THE CHOIR TO DO IT - HAVE THE DEACON BOARD PUSH THE IDEA

THE DEEPEST RESPONSE LEVEL "Core" of World View = HEART

Acts 7:54 When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

TWO UNCHANGING TRUTHS

1) GOD WILL NEVER LEAVE HIS PEOPLE

2) GOD WILL ALWAYS BLESS HIS WORD

CHARLES SIMEON - Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge

C. The Nature of Culture

1) GOD THE CREATOR

"This is My Father's World, O let me never forget, that though the wrong seems oft' so strong,
God is the ruler yet"

Psalms 24:1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

Psalms 108:3-5 I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. {4} For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. {5} Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.

GOD IS BOTH NEAR AND FAR - TRANSCENDENT AND IMMANENT

Jeremiah 23:23,24 "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

CALLS FOR AN ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN EVERY SPHERE OF THE WORLD

1 Timothy 4:1-3 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

1 Timothy 4:4,5 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.

THIS DIMENSION ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH – Christ – in - or – of - Culture

M.M. Thomas "Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance"
Hinduism purified itself as it met the Gospel of Jesus

Raymond Pannikar - mother Hindu, became Jesuit RC Priest - "Unknown Christ of Hinduism"
Christ unknown but present in Hinduism / Hindu saved by X through sacraments of Hinduism

SIMILAR IDEA AMONG SOME HAWAIIANS - MORMONS?

2) GOD THE JUDGE

Neutrality of Culture - THERE IS NO SUCH THING - PRODUCT OF MEN

HENRY VAN TIL - sees culture as a MANDATE

"Culture is any and all human effort and labor expended upon the cosmos (world), to unearth its treasures and its riches and bring them into the service of man for the enrichment of human existence unto the glory of God...man as creature is coworker with God the Creator in bringing the creation to fulfillment. Yet, due to the fall of man into sin, he is no longer willing to admit the claims of his creator or to serve God...it is because of man's fall that his culture is apostate and in the state of continual crisis"

Genesis 3:17-19 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." •

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. •

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD works out everything for his own ends-- even the wicked for a day of disaster. KJV "even the plowing of the wicked is sin"

CULTURE IS MORE THAN JUST SINFUL IT IS APOSTATE - open rebellion
CHRIST IS NEITHER AT HOME NOR WELCOME

John 15:18,19 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have • chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

John 15:22,23 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. John He who hates me hates my Father as well. •

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, {2} in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the • air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. {3} All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and • thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole <duty> of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

3) GOD THE REDEEMER

Taking Possession of Culture - "Possessio" - J.H. Bavinck

WE ARE NEITHER AT HOME NOR WELCOME - BUT WE ARE CALLED INTO WORLD

John 17:14,15 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

BIBLICAL TENSION OF BEING IN WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. {4} The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. {5} We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

1 John 3:1-3 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2} Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. {3} Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

1 Corinth 10:11 us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

Heb 6:5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age

DIAGRAM

NOW	NOT YET
promise	fulfillment

Revelation 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."