

VEE J. D-DAVIDSON

TRANSFORMING COMMUNICATION

PROGRESSING FROM CROSS-CULTURAL TO
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION OF CHRIST



A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN ACADEMIC

Transforming Communication

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ISBN 978-0-310-12441-7 (audio)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: D-Davidson, Vee J., author.

Title: Transforming communication : progressing from cross-cultural to intercultural communication of Christ / Vee J. D-Davidson.

Description: Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2022. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022009771 (print) | LCCN 2022009772 (ebook) | ISBN 9780310124382 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780310124399 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Intercultural communication--Religious aspects--Christianity. | Communication--Religious aspects--Christianity. | Evangelistic work. | Missions.

Classification: LCC BV2082.I57 D33 2022 (print) | LCC BV2082.I57 (ebook) | DDC 261--dc23/eng/20220330

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022009771>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022009772>

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Cover design: Lucas Art & Design

Cover photo: © Caner CIFTCI/ Alamy Stock Photo; Angelina Bambina / Shutterstock

Interior design: Kait Lamphere

Printed in the United States of America

22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 /TRM/ 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CHAPTER 1

Foundations for Communicating Christ

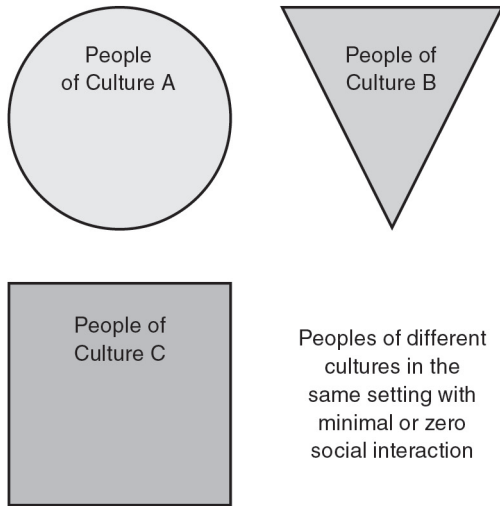


Figure 1.1: A Multicultural Society

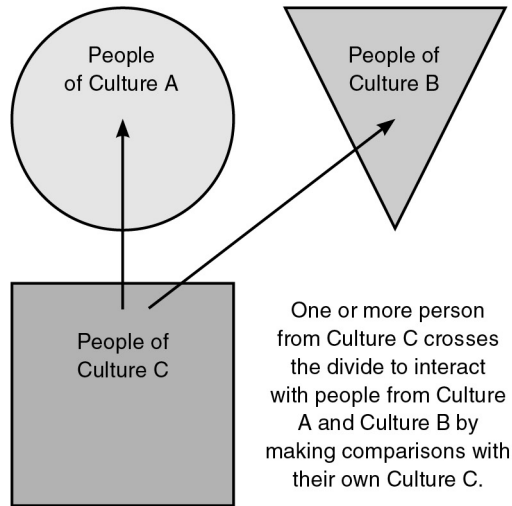


Figure 1.2: Cross-Cultural Interactions

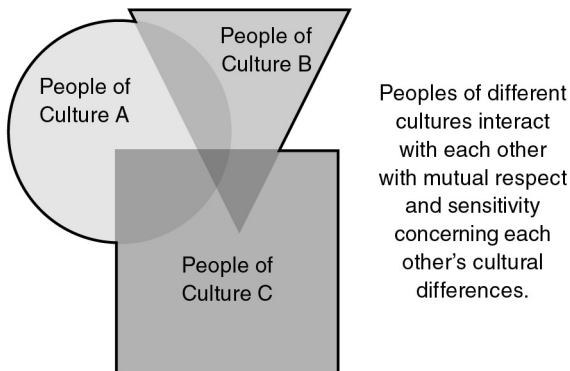


Figure 1.3: Intercultural Interactions

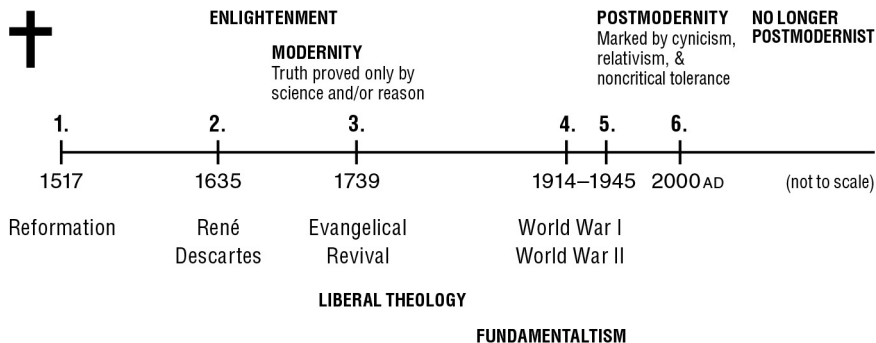


Figure 1.4: Timeline Showing the Emergence of Liberal, Evangelical, and Fundamentalist Theology

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, did my Chinese friend and I have a cross-cultural relationship or an intercultural relationship? What evidence do you have for your choice?
2. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, apart from my desire to escape from drinking the alcohol in the bottle gifted to me, how else might misunderstanding cause us embarrassment? How might we deal with these issues?
3. Consider colleagues, friends, or relatives from a different cultural background than you. How long have you known each one? Which relationships are multicultural, which are cross-cultural, and which are intercultural? Wherever you sense a lack of care for one of them, pray for insight into how you might deepen your relationship.
4. Consider the three essentials of the gospel message referred to in the chapter. Which of the three might you start from if you were sharing the gospel with an ex-drug addict who is overcome by guilt at having abused his body? Which would you start with if you were sharing the gospel with a young student who is passionate about the injustice of racism in society?

CHAPTER 2

Communication Theory and Models of Communication

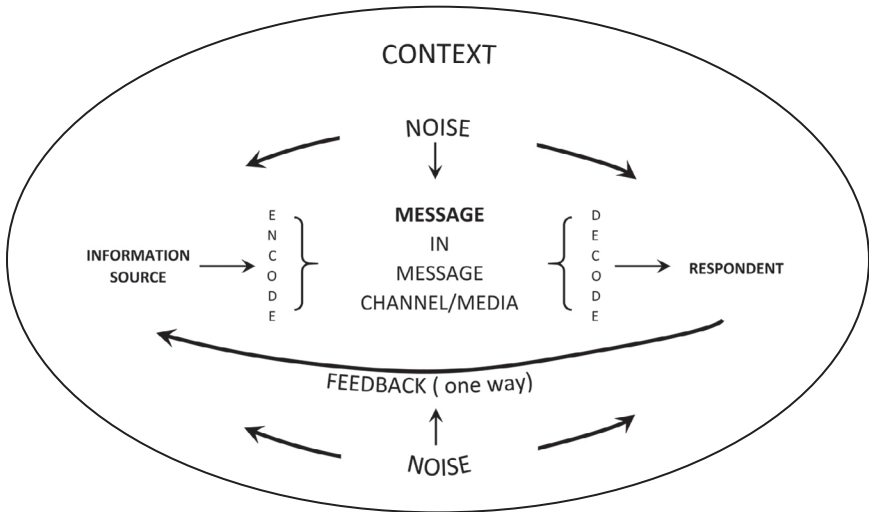


Figure 2.1: Shannon-Weaver Cybernetic
(CODE) Model of Communication

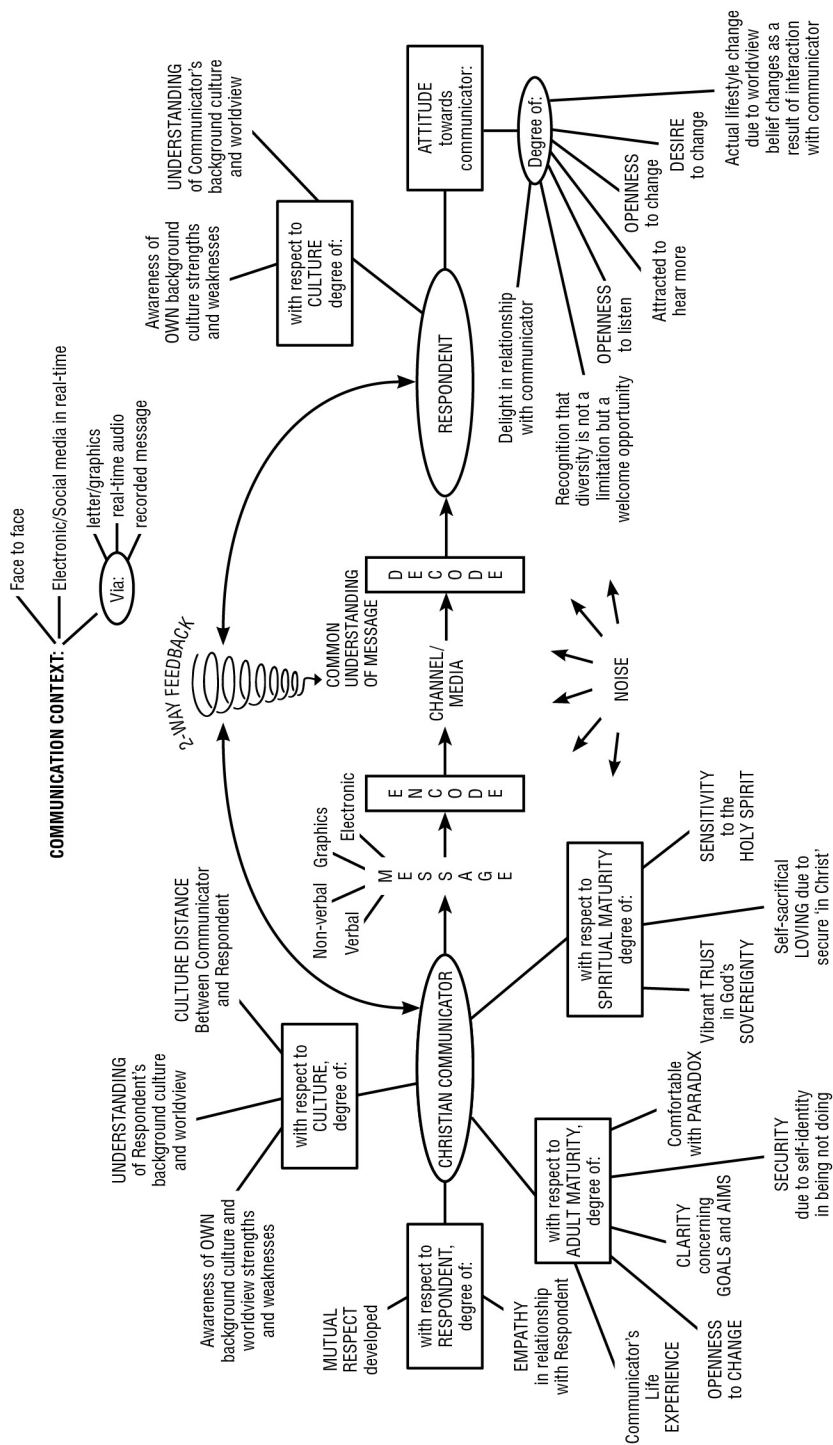


Figure 2.2: Christian Communicator's Model of Communication

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, where do you see evidence of both low-context and high-context communicators?
2. In the “As It Happened” scenario, where do you see the potential for communication misunderstandings due to inappropriate encoding and inaccurate decoding of messages? What changes would help?
3. Which physical characteristics or commonly used items are important in your background culture? How and when might you need to be careful to not let these biases influence your relationships with those of other cultures?
4. What aspects of kinesics (body language), haptics (touching), or proxemics (use of space) have ever caused you discomfort in communication with others? How might you overcome the discomfort in future experiences?

CHAPTER 3

Communication with Respect to Culture and Behavior

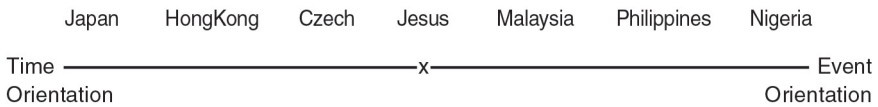


Figure 3.1: Spectrum of Degrees of Orientation: Time versus Event

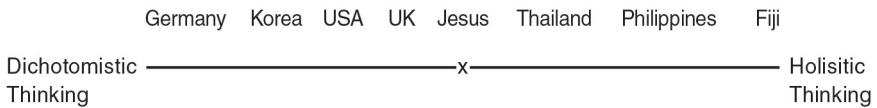


Figure 3.2 Spectrum of Degrees of Orientation:
Dichotomistic versus Holistic

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, which of the two pastors do you think was more shocked and overwhelmed by the British pastor arriving in Pakistan two weeks late? In relation to big-picture facets of culture, why was that pastor your choice?
2. Consider your background and upbringing in relation to the facets of culture described in the chapter. Identify your “cultural profile” orientation preferences. How do they compare to and differ from the big-picture orientation of your background culture?
3. Which facets of culture and worldview beliefs that are different to your own background and upbringing have caused you difficulties in cross-cultural communications? Which principles from the chapter will you now incorporate into a change of approach?
4. Considering the benefits and advantages of the different orientations concerning facets of culture, can you identify some of the disadvantages or challenges of your background culture? How will this affect your communication and behavior from now on?

CHAPTER 4

Communication in Relation to Cultural Aspects Pertaining to Societal Structures

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, what evidence is there that we were ministering in a community with collectivist assumptions? How was power distance played out, and what patron-client obligations could you detect?
2. This chapter describes facets of culture regarding relationships within structures of societies. Which aspects correspond to your background culture concerning the degree of individualism versus collectivism, the degree of power distance, and how social power is allocated? In your background culture, are patron-client relationships subtle or obvious? What examples of these facets of culture and worldview have impacted and influenced the being, doing, and life expectations of the person you are today?
3. Of the cross-cultural interactions that you have been involved in or hope to be involved in, which aspects of society structures are either most different or most similar to your own background? Where or how might there have been or might there be difficulties for you or your respondents?
4. In the “As It Happened” scenario, how do you think Dr. Co and I responded to the health official’s insistence that we were not allowed to leave the village area during the SARS virus epidemic? Why have you decided that way?

CHAPTER 5

Supracultural Perspectives on Communication, Personality, and Temperament

Melancholic	Choleric
Introvert	Extrovert
Task-oriented	Task-oriented
Intention: Get the task <i>done right</i>	Intention: Get each task <i>done</i>
Phlegmatic	Sanguine
Introvert	Extrovert
People-oriented	People-oriented
Desire: <i>Get along</i> with people	Desire: Be <i>appreciated</i> by people

Figure 5.1 The Four Major Personality Types in Diagrammatic Form

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, the two people (who are real, living intercultural missionaries) have the same major personality type in common but different minor personality types. Which major personality type do they have in common? What do you think their different minor personality types are? What evidence did you draw upon?
2. A respondent asks you, “How do you love God?” How might you best communicate your response according to whether the respondent’s

major personality type is choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, or melancholic? How would you vary the presentation of your answer if your respondent is major choleric and minor melancholic, major melancholic and minor sanguine, major sanguine and minor phlegmatic, or major phlegmatic and minor choleric?

3. Consider the ministry roles of Ephesians 4:11–12 in which “Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Which major personality types, with their associated God-given natural abilities, might also be the preparation ground for the spiritual roles in ministry of the Ephesians verses?
4. When you assessed your personality according to the characteristics in appendix 1, which strengths were you already aware of, and which strengths did you or others notice in you that you had not been as aware of? Similarly, which weaknesses were you able to recognize, and which weaknesses are you now also aware of that have the potential to hinder effective communication or slow your spiritual growth? What do you sense that God has specifically taught you through this chapter of the book?

CHAPTER 6

Communication and Conflict Due to Cultural Differences

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, the pastor begins to welcome the first of the team members as they enter his house having left their shoes outside. What do you think the big-footed team member did? What other options might have been suggested in order to resolve the conflict he was experiencing? What important cultural issues and priorities were at stake?
2. What other values and priorities do you suspect might cause further conflict amongst the team members in the “As It Happened” scenario? Analyze your culture’s worldview beliefs concerning varying standards of right and wrong: What is seen as impoliteness? What is seen as dishonesty? How do you understand and apply the concept of integrity? What differences are you aware of in your background culture compared to the values and standards of other cultures?
3. Consider the cross-cultural conflict issues you have already experienced (or if not, where there might be potential for cross-cultural conflict based on your worldview values and resulting cultural behavior). Identify the root of the problem. To what extent might your personality have affected the degree of conflict? Consider how you might adjust your attitude and responses (whether related to personality or background culture) to bring about conflict resolution. Be sure to differentiate between values, beliefs, and ideals that are negotiable and those that are definitely nonnegotiable for you.

4. Engage with the following scenario: Christian communicators in a cross-cultural ministry have been gradually deepening the relationship with their neighbors. One evening, the neighbors' son takes their son's mountain bike, rides to a nearby store, and takes some items without paying. Police come to the Christian communicators' house, accusing their son of the theft since their son's distinctive mountain bike had been seen at the store. How should they communicate with the police officers? How should they communicate with their neighbors? What options are there for handling this conflict? Who will be affected by each option, and what values or cultural expectations might also be affected?

CHAPTER 7

Cognitive Perceptions of Reality, Truth, and Epistemology

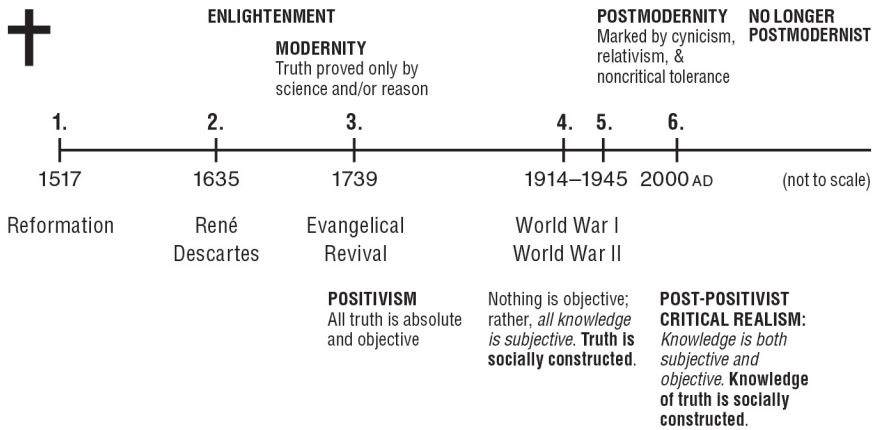


Figure 7.1 Epistemology's Historical Framework

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, what incorrect assumptions about understanding was the Christian communicator making? How might the communicator have identified and better handled these misunderstandings?
2. Recall the essentials of the gospel message of chapter 1 (i.e., who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and why Jesus did it). When you first heard these truths, consider how you derived meaning from them either in relation to the words used, the nature of Jesus, or your subjective experience.

Which aspect was most important for you and why? Discuss and compare your experience with that of a Christian from a different cultural background.

3. How might you respond to someone who tells you, “You say Jesus came to save people. Well, perhaps that’s true for you, but it’s not true for me”?
4. Of the cognitive approaches to reality, and taking postulated concepts, relationships, and intuition as possible starting points, from where might the thinking of the Old Testament Israelites have started? How about New Testament Jews? What might have been the preference of the Greco-Roman world, and what evidence is there of the influence that could have had on people of the territories that had been invaded? (Hint: Consider the New Testament Epistles.)

CHAPTER 8

Progress into Interculturality

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What does the scenario in the “As It Happened” section at the start of the chapter tell you about God’s grace to me during and after the bus trip?
2. Of Bennett’s stages in attaining intercultural competence, between which two stages is it probably the hardest to transition? Why?
3. Which interviews in the chapter seem to reflect high power distance nations? Which nations seem to have low-context communicators? Check your choices with the full interviews in appendix 2.
4. Read the Papua New Guinea interview in appendix 2. Based on the interview content given, do you agree with the interviewer’s comment in this chapter? Why or why not? From a technical perspective, which Bennett stage might the comment be reflecting?
5. In relation to current or potential future relationships, what is God saying to you personally about the reality of loss and exchange in interculturality?

CHAPTER 9

Christian Communicators and Contextualization

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, where do you think the mother might have learned those syncretistic ideas from? How would you advise the daughter? Who might be in the best position to advise the mother, and what do you think that person might say?
2. A Samoan student offered: “One of the biggest mistakes that missionaries have made in Samoa is to try to impose Westernism in Samoa. For example, they introduced and insisted on the use of a [neck] tie as a symbol of holiness. This comes from a theology greatly influenced by Western culture. It’s a big problem that missionaries do not let Samoan Christians create their own theology.” In this example (which appears to have been generalized to the whole of Samoa), what might be considered a form of syncretism? Where have biblical principles become confused with cultural ways? What is the Samoan Christian’s biggest complaint, and how might it be addressed?
3. If you were asked to advise an indigenous church that followed a custom of burning paper outside a new home in order to symbolically ensure God’s cleansing of the building, how might you use Hiebert’s five critical contextualization steps to address the issue? Which biblical texts might be included in step three?
4. What are the major universal obstacles to Christ transforming culture or cultures? How might Christians of different cultures interculturally be part of transforming culture for God’s glory?

CHAPTER 10

Communication in Relation to Biblical Interpretation

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, how do you suspect the American missionary responded to the Thai student’s interpretation of the text? What doctrinal issues were at stake, and how might the missionary have dealt with the Thai student’s alternative interpretation of meaning?
2. Which other aspects of the story of Jonah would you expect to have no compatibility with the rural China villagers’ context and life setting? What else do you think I might have done to help the villagers have a richer understanding of Jonah’s story from the perspective of their own context physically, emotionally, experientially, and spiritually?
3. Apply the code model and inference model to communicating the narrative of the wedding feast at Cana to Muslim teenagers for whom alcohol is forbidden. Be sure to identify the aspects of the narrative’s context for which the respondents are likely to need explanation and bring out potential inferences related to needs in relation to the physical, emotional, and spiritual realms.
4. What would be an appropriate response if respondents come up with a bizarre and inappropriate interpretation of a Scripture text’s meaning during a Bible discussion?

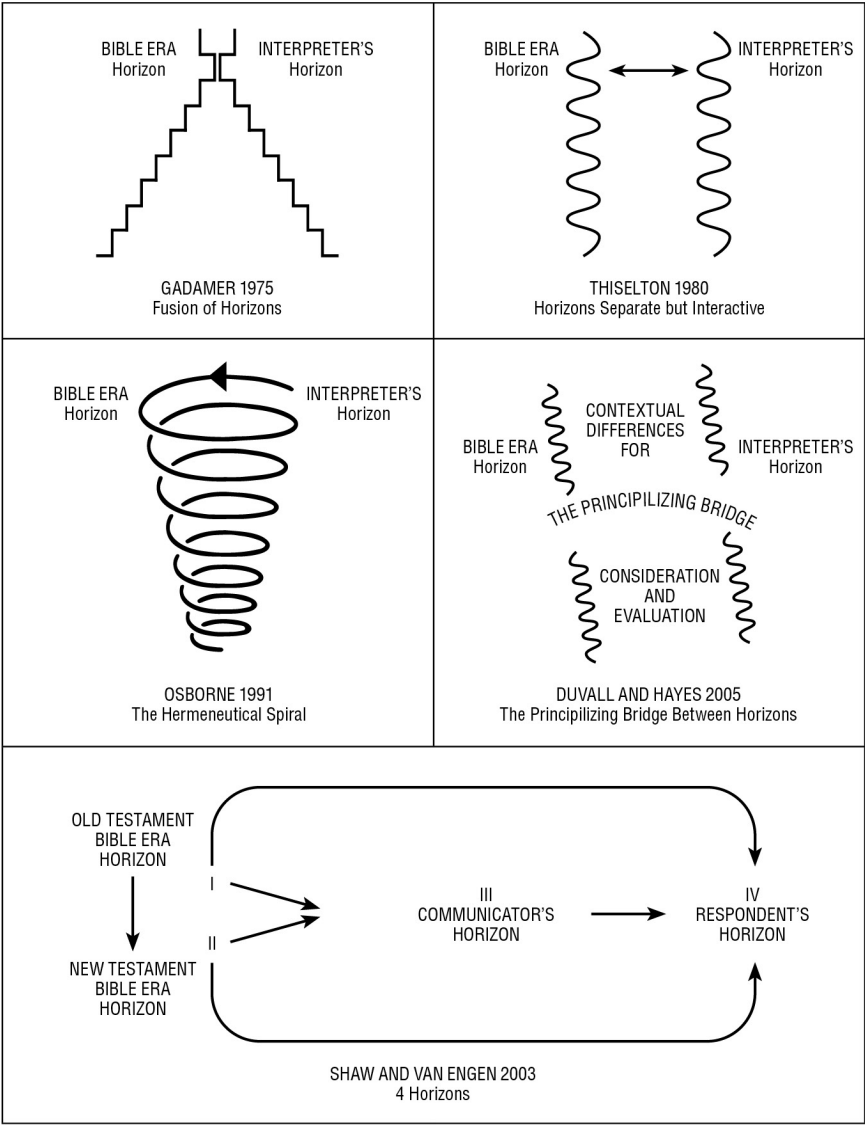


Figure 10.1: The Historical Progression of Attention to Horizons in Biblical Interpretation

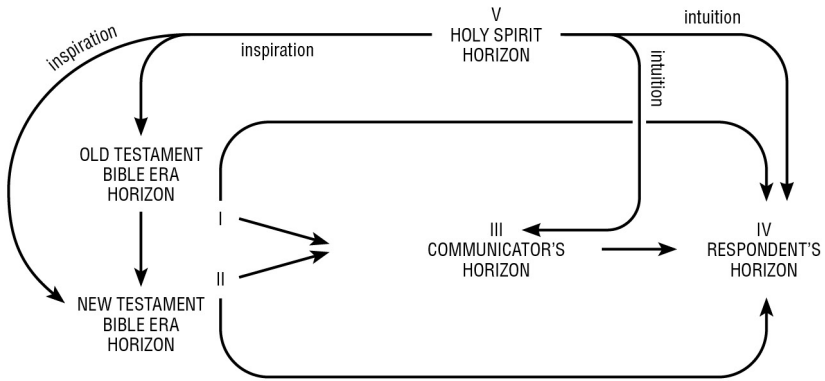


Figure 10.2: Five Horizons United in the Holy Spirit

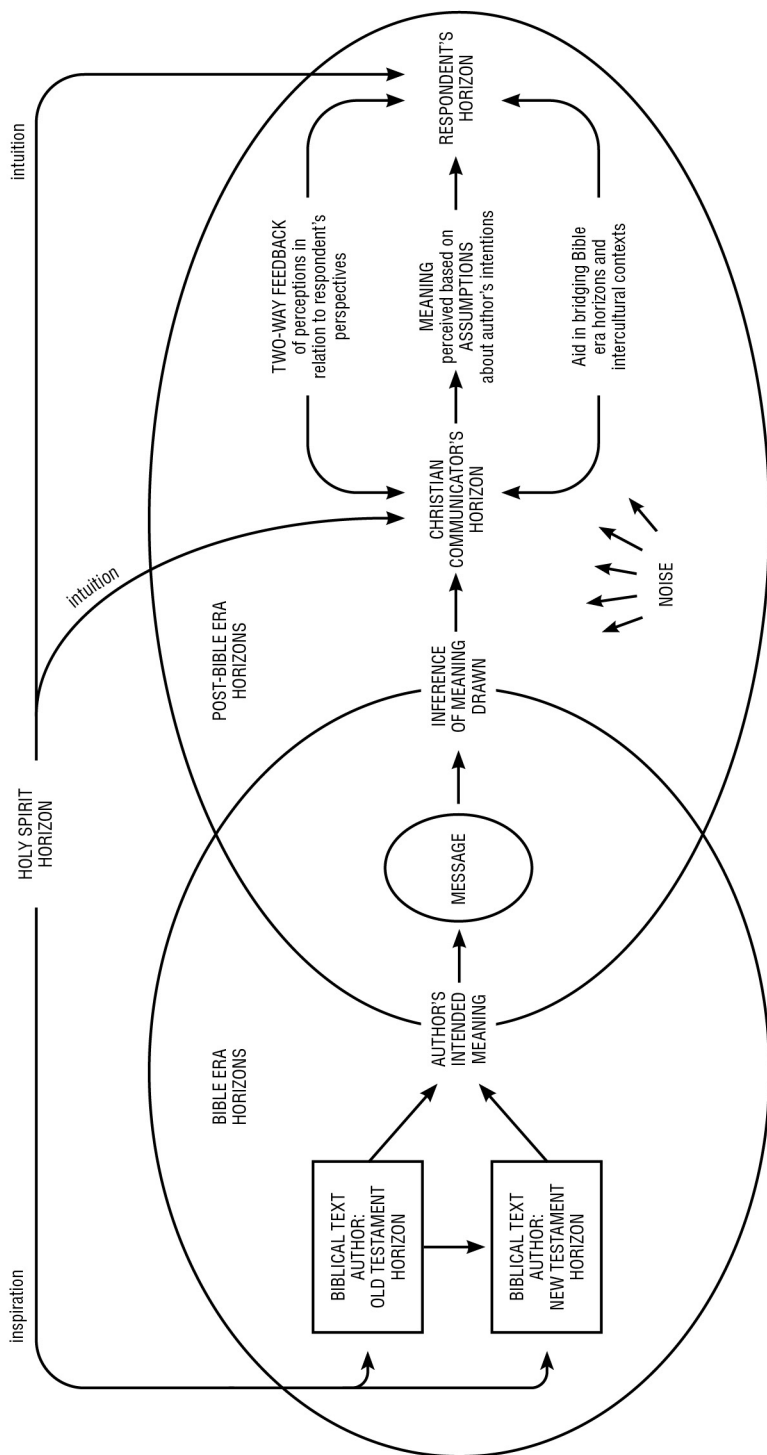


Figure 10.3 Five Horizons Inference Model of Communication

CHAPTER 11

Communication and Spiritual Growth: Teaching and Learning in Cultural Perspective

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, where can you see examples of misunderstanding between the teacher and student? What aspects of miscommunication can you detect in relation to the teacher’s and student’s cultural backgrounds and preferred approaches to teaching and learning? What clues are there to suggest the teacher might be task oriented? How might the teacher have spoken to display some empathy?
2. Consider the following statements in response to someone’s communication:
 - “I *hear* what you are saying.”
 - “I *see* what you mean.”
 - “I *think* I understand the point being made.”
 - “I *feel* like I understand, but I might still be missing something.”
3. Regularly referring to hearing, for instance, may indicate a cognitive learning style that prefers aural learning, while regularly referring to seeing may indicate a learning style that aligns with visual reception. Similarly, for verbal communication that regularly refers to either thinking or feeling, can you see the potential link with personality? Which of the responses can you personally relate to? Being aware of our own response styles can help us as ongoing learners. Importantly, listening to how our respondents communicate can help us teach and

communicate according to their preferred approaches to learning and bring enhanced understanding.

4. Engage with the following scenario: An international, intercultural church congregation also has multiple-culture groups for children's ministry. The group for seven- to nine-year-olds is run by a female Korean teacher. Several non-Western children have told their parents they don't like the group and don't want to attend because the Western children in the group are rude and interrupt the teacher. You have been asked to help resolve the issue. Analyze the scenario. What is the underlying problem? Suggest different solutions that might help resolve the problem. Evaluate each option and decide which will bring the greatest benefit. What communication is required, and thinking creatively, how might you be able to bring even greater benefit in resolving the issue?
5. Which aspects of your worldview beliefs had to change when you became a Christian? Reflect on how the change came about. What other aspects of your current lifestyle and habits are you aware of that still need changing? In a time of quiet, ask God to show you his desires for your life in Christ, and what steps and choices you need to take to cooperate with him so that the necessary changes can come about.

CHAPTER 12

Communication and Spiritual Growth: Communicating for Spiritual Maturity and Multiplication

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In the “As It Happened” scenario at the start of the chapter, if the young boy had asked you the question he asked his church youth group teacher, how would you have replied before studying this chapter? How would you reply now?
2. Here are two pairs of Scriptures from which you might teach that there is equality regardless of any cultural values concerning power distance when it comes to praising and worshipping God: Luke 2:8–20 with Matthew 2:1–12; and Galatians 3:26–4:7 with Revelation 7:9–17. For people from which kind of backgrounds might each set be initially more helpful? Why?
3. For developing our intercultural relationships, what can we learn from Jesus about obedience that is not merely based on earthly, culturally bound expectations, such as the expectations that result from patron-client relationships? How might you present Jesus’ perspectives on obedience for those who began as something of a patron in relationship with you? Would your presentation need to differ with those who began as clients in relationship with you? Why or why not?
4. Why might the question of how God’s sovereignty appears to work out cause disagreements? In which areas of your life are you currently

or might you soon need to be trusting him in new ways? How can you prayerfully resist any unresolved issues or uncertainties from impacting your potential for living increasingly fruitfully and keeping your heart at home in Christ?

APPENDIX 1

Personality Analysis Tool

Tick the adjectives that really do describe you. Total your scores for each column. The highest score will likely reflect your major personality type. The next highest, which may be a combination of types, will likely reflect your minor personality type. Be aware of both your strengths and weaknesses, especially when involved in conflict.

1. CHOLERIC: Extrovert and task-oriented	2. MELANCHOLIC: Introvert and task-oriented
<i>Strengths:</i>	<i>Strengths:</i>
Natural leader	Conscientious
Visionary	Very intelligent
Hardworking	Loyal
Practical	Serious
Optimistic	Attention to detail
Courageous	Quietly sensitive
Very active	Self-sacrificing
Decisive	Very orderly
Self-confident	Hardworking
Efficient	Creative
Determined	Thinks a lot
Independent	Self-disciplined

Weaknesses:	Weaknesses:
Demanding	Critical
Insensitive	Moody
Inconsiderate	Pessimistic
Unsympathetic	Inflexible
Severe	Legalistic
Hostile	Unrealistically perfectionistic
Sarcastic	Vengeful
Tough	Unsociable
Unforgiving	Judgmental
Domineering	Negative
Opinionated	Isolationist
Prejudiced	Picky
Cruel	Persecution prone
Strong-willed	Moralistic/preachy
3. PHLEGMATIC: Introvert and people-oriented	4. SANGUINE: Extrovert and people-oriented
Strengths:	Strengths:
Good listener	Lively
Encourages harmony	Avoids detail
Sympathetic	Enthusiastic
Supportive	Stimulating
Easygoing	Talkative
Respectful	Carefree
Caring	Generous
Loyal follower	Very, very friendly
Agreeable	Spontaneous
Comfy to be with	Enjoys variety
Conforms to rules	Compassionate
Patient	Optimistic

Weaknesses:	Weaknesses:
Reluctant leader	Exaggerates
Stingy (mean)	Disorganized
Lazy	Manipulative
Selfish	Unproductive
Dislikes change	Over-excitabile
Stubborn	Undependable
Indecisive	Egotistical
Avoids conflict	Easily distracted
Spectator	Talks endlessly/Shows off
Easily embarrassed	Spiteful
Dependency-prone	Negligent
Self-protecting	Restless
Lacks self-confidence	Loud
Fearful of being disliked	Distracts people

Note: It can be more helpful to just total the strengths scores as we are often less willing to acknowledge weaknesses and/or may not be aware of them!

If you are uncertain in discerning your major personality type from the scores, then ask: Am I more introvert or more extrovert? Or more task oriented or more people oriented? Asking someone who knows you well to look over how you have assessed yourself can also be helpful to get a more accurate picture.

APPENDIX 2

Owned Characteristics of Multiple Different Cultures

The following material was acquired through cross-cultural and intercultural interviews as referred to in chapter 8.

BHUTAN

The majority of Bhutan are Buddhist. It will be great if Christian communicators can learn the local language, Dzongkha. If missionaries can converse in Dzongkha, Bhutanese will be impressed, and they will be interested to talk to you, and you can easily develop the friendship. But you have to build a strong relationship and a deep trust before you share the gospel because it is illegal to share the gospel. In Bhutan, we have everything we need, like English lessons and medical care, and they're free, so Christian communicators have a hard time coming to my country. If they come using their profession, they end up not being able to share the gospel because they're scared of becoming blacklisted. When they try to build relationships, they're not able to focus on their work properly. Bhutanese Christians who share the gospel can get stripped of their citizenship.

Bhutanese are event oriented—most of the church services start on time, but overall people will not come on time. We love to spend time with people even if we haven't finished scheduled work.

Generally, people are holistic thinkers as they tend to be more flexible in the way they handle things or in organizing events, but we have a more dichotomistic church culture concerning rules to follow.

High respect is shown to authority figures. When it comes to exposing vulnerability, we are perhaps more likely to do so with foreigners that we've made friends with than with our own local people.

CHINA (MAINLAND)

There are many different tribal groups, and there can be tension between Han Chinese and minority groups. Family and relationship with people are the most important things for the Chinese people; as of Confucianism, parents should be respected and obeyed. When the children get married, they will move to another house but always close to their parents. When parents grow old it is the responsibility of the children to take care of and pay for their parents' expenses.

In the cities, time is very important, but in the countryside, village people will meet on the street and will talk for an hour.

When there is a wedding in a village, everybody will participate and cooperate somehow. In the city, people will be more task oriented, but if I ignore the needs of people, I might lose my friends. Chinese are holistic thinking people because of China's social structure. The economic development is changing the society; in my opinion, development is polluting Chinese society.

Many of the people in my city will prepare their house before the rain comes. Also they will save their money in the bank for future needs, and this provides some peace of mind and security for the family. We would always prefer to conceal our vulnerability. Chinese value appearance; even if they don't have money, they will pretend that they have money. It is very hard for people to admit failure. Chinese culture values personal achievement, and there is a lot of competition between young people. We seek the opinions of family members and the people around us before making decisions. It's a high power distance culture, and communism demands that all its citizens listen and obey. This mentality has crept into the church authorities. Communication is high-context: people prefer indirect interactions and avoid criticizing others in public, even if they want to confront someone. We have to use a very nice way of saying no.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic is one of the most homogeneous countries in Europe. There are few foreigners living in the Czech Republic (around 600,000, less than 5 percent). Czech people are friendly, but they keep their private lives to themselves until they get to know you better. To communicate effectively, you must learn the language. To get closer to individuals, you have to accept cultural differences, customs, and traditions.

Czech Republic is geographically divided into Bohemia and Moravia. Members of the Moravian church, the oldest known Protestant denomination in the world, had to flee to exile because of persecution in the eighteenth century. Moravian brothers were united in Herrnhut (Germany) and sent hundreds of missionaries to different parts of the world. Yet today, Czech Republic is one of the most unreligious nations in the world.

Czech people are a mixture of personalities, but generally speaking, they are more time oriented than event oriented. They are more people oriented than task oriented, and they are crisis preventative. Czechs are not willing to expose vulnerability. It is considered a weakness. There is a saying, "Real men don't cry." Dichotomistic thinking is more prevalent than holistic thinking.

Czech culture has low power distance, so students do not have a problem interacting with their teacher during class sessions. But in terms of interaction with superiors in the workplace, they are more restrained. They are individualistic in their decision-making process.

In general, Czech people have low context communication. They always speak their minds and they are not intentionally wanting to offend.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Generally, like the Filipinos, our people are not on time because we were all colonized by Spaniards. We take our time. We prefer to focus on the event that is happening and consider the hospitality and the comfort of our guests. We are people oriented. We like to engage, relate to each other, and talk.

We respect our elders' decisions. The oldest man holds authority, makes public decisions, and is responsible for the welfare of the family. The oldest married woman commands her household, delivers the more private decisions, and nurtures the family. Married sons and their wives and children are part of the extended family and have a strong allegiance to their fathers. Married daughters become part of their husbands' families. Dominican Republic is very collectivistic in the sense that individuals go to their community or family to ask for help if needed and they will not make important decisions on their own; they will always take into consideration the opinion of close friends and family around them. Outlook is more holistic. People are open to debate, and they tend to see things with an open perspective. They like to hear others' opinions to make decisions. Society has low power distance because everyone can approach and talk to each other regardless of their social or financial status. Society is marked

by low-context communication because our people are very open to say no. They don't have trouble speaking the truth, and they communicate what they think or want without having any real issue in this. They are straightforward; they speak their minds and their feelings even if they offend people; to be honest is a strength, and the opposite is seen as a weakness or miscommunication.

Our people who have an education are more crisis preventative; they have foresight before a problem occurs. However, in the village people are more non-crisis preventative, and those who are not very well educated tend to be non-crisis oriented. Self-image is important, but when vulnerabilities are exposed, people don't try to hide them; they will share their problems with the community and seek help among other families. They are very open also to help others; this is a characteristic of most of the Latin-American cultures. Moreover, they are not afraid to share their personal situations; this is a strength for them.

INDIA

India is a big country. It's divided in two main parts, north and south, and has twenty-eight states, each of which has its own culture and traditions, so the rules are different from place to place. Eighty percent of the country is Hindu. India follows the caste system, but it's changing. For example, I have friends in every caste, and in my state, which is Christian, we don't see castes discrimination. In churches we have people from every caste. I think Indian people are more people oriented, but maybe it's changing because of Western influence. Often people will trust white missionaries more than local pastors, but they can't hold authority; you have to work under the pastor. Timewise, services or other events will start whenever people show up. The tendency is toward collectivism because it's a very family oriented and extended family society.

Society is very much characterized by high-context communication because people don't say directly what they want or mean. Confrontation is indirect and even carefully sarcastic. We are not very open to discuss our problems and vulnerabilities because of the potential for shame.

JAPAN

Japan is mostly Buddhist, but there are many traditional customs like Shintoism too. Maintaining harmony is very important. People are very

shy; most people do not want to communicate with people of another country. They are not very open to showing feelings, and they try to always be kind and have a smile on their faces even though they might be going through difficult situations. Showing emotions and vulnerability is considered a weakness.

Japanese are very time oriented. Since we value manners and etiquette very much, punctuality is very important; people will even arrive ten minutes ahead of an appointment. Although community and relationship are important, Japanese can be very task oriented and also value personal space. People like to focus on their goals, on the things they need to accomplish, and they will work and focus on their appointments until they finish all their work. Japanese people don't want to fail because that brings shame and a bad reputation within the community.

Japan is high power distance with clear hierarchy, and respecting those in authority is very important. To greet a person that is in a higher position than you, you must bow instead of shaking hands—the angle of the bow depends on the level of authority; the higher the ranking, the deeper the bow.

Communication is high-context and non-direct. The phrase “I'm sorry” means a variety of things, including “thank you” or “excuse me,” so it looks like Japanese are always apologizing or afraid to offend another person. Japanese are dichotomistic thinkers which is seen in the importance of following rules and being highly organized, and they always think ahead and try to handle the crisis long before it happens. They will sacrifice time, enjoyment, or rest in order to have everything under control or to avoid future crisis.

In general, Japan exhibits a collectivist culture, but sometimes the senseis and others in authority make their own decisions based only on what they think. Japanese culture includes the public bathtub. For instance, all ladies will be naked in one bathtub and enjoy talking together while they bathe.

MONGOLIA

Mongolians have a nomadic culture, and we have a direct character. This direct character means that we can be quite direct in speaking. Like Westerners, the people of Mongolia are also quite dichotomistic in thinking. Some might misunderstand and think that we are very proud and unfriendly, but actually we just want to say what we feel and what we want

directly. We do not just keep quiet and obey other people. In addition, the people of Mongolia want freedom and independence. Church starts on time, but people come whenever they want.

We are crisis preventive in some aspects but flexible in others. We have a very cold climate in our country, so it is already a common practice to prepare everything ahead because we can see that problems might happen in the future. We more prefer to conceal vulnerability, but it depends on your trust level in relationships. We're low power distance, so Global North Christians get on well with us, but Koreans have a hard time.

MYANMAR (FORMERLY BURMA)

In my county we have eight major tribes that speak different languages, plus 135 other official languages, but the main language, Burmese, is what children learn in school. Burmese worship deities and evil spirits, and life is based on rituals including animal sacrifice. Only 7 or 8 percent of Burmese are Christians.

We are more people oriented than time oriented, and we will wait for our friend even if he is two hours late because he is more important than the waiting time. Burmese don't bother about future crises; they will start preparations when the rain starts and not before. We tend not to think about the future. In our mindset, everyone wants money but only just enough to live by. Friends are like gold, and people will ask not how much money you have but how many friends you have.

We tend to be dichotomist, perhaps because we like to follow rules. We have something called "habhab" in the church: if someone does something wrong, the pastor will just tell the wrongdoer to get out of the church without offering explanation. There are special ways of showing respect in interacting with different age groups, especially to honor the elderly.

Usually people will hide problems and not want to show weakness; if you are not part of the family, you may never know what is really happening in their lives. Because of this, strong relationships should be built with the people, and this takes time.

Burmese society is characterized by high power distance and great respect for authority figures. Religion and military control are not separated. Worldview beliefs include the need to respect or else something bad will happen. We usually consult the opinions of others and make decisions collectively. Communication is high-context, especially to avoid offending anyone; people will always make up excuses before saying "no."

NAIROBI

We don't do "on time"; we love events and love connecting with people. It is not about finishing the services, even in church, but more about fellowshiping, not thinking of the time. We're more non-crisis. We avoid taking action and rely on the head of the village to make decisions when crisis arrives, and we're very much people oriented. We prefer to conceal vulnerability. Many Kenyans believe that the spiritual realm affects the natural realm supernaturally. There is a saying, "I am because you are!" Things are not done individually. Group effort is important. "Ubuntu" means group work in a village.

NEPAL

The majority of the people in Nepal are Hindus, and there is a caste system that's more obvious in villages. There are many tribal groups in the countryside, with millions of people who remain unreached by the gospel.

Nepalis are people oriented and basically very friendly; we like to have visitors and will treat the visitors very warmly, especially in the villages.

We love gathering together and live an event oriented, collectivist community lifestyle. Church does not usually start on time, and the way we organize events is pretty flexible. We tend to take things very easy. People don't arrive on time. These days, Nepali people tend to save money and be prepared for the future: the most important thing for us is to have a concrete house.

Some people still practice animism; for example, some building contractors will secretly perform human blood sacrifice and practice rituals as they believe the project will move on smoothly. Jesus is perceived as one of the lower caste "gods."

I suppose we are dichotomist thinkers because we tend to think in one way or another without considering much the aspects around us. Some think this way because they have not been trained to critically consider the circumstances for themselves before making a decision, so they just follow the others.

Our culture is male dominated, and we tend to conceal vulnerability, especially women. People don't freely talk about problems other than with people that they deeply trust. We generally won't take up projects that we might fail in.

NIGERIA

Nigerians in general tend to be event oriented. It's normal not to keep time. We have what we call "African time," which can mean two hours later than the agreed set time. Events like weddings won't start on time, usually because the bride comes late.

Generally, we tend to be more dichotomistic than holistic. Older traditional Nigerians especially see things as black and white. For example, things like homosexuality are considered evil, and that's it—no reasoning or explanations necessary. Businesses have rules and principles that must be followed, and they come with various consequences. Most people are not open to alternative views and ideas; instead, they stick to what they already know.

Nigerians don't prepare ahead for crises. For example, there are no warning systems for natural disasters; we just deal with what comes. There are not enough quality healthcare facilities. Immigration failed to detect Ebola coming in because they were not trained to detect the symptoms of the virus. For financial planning, most people have no knowledge about insurance or investments. Cars are the only item insured, as it is required for getting a car permit.

Nigerians are generally people oriented and value relationships because these are more valuable than completing tasks. The public sector work culture is generally laid-back, with people having entitlement mentality and not exerting themselves on the job. A typical Nigerian is always more interested in rewards than assigned responsibilities. In this case, relationship can be abused. In workplaces, employees generally prefer a leader who is warm and supportive of subordinates over a leader who is highly authoritative.

Nigerians generally do not like exposing their weaknesses and failures as they want to create the impression that everything is fine in their lives. In church, people are willing to share spiritual aspects of life but using other people's life examples rather than their own. Depending on the closeness of relationships, they don't usually easily share their problems with each other because they want to protect their self-image.

Nigeria is high power distance. Everybody has a place in the hierarchy which needs no further justification. Students highly esteem their teachers and usually do not raise questions. The male elders in the family usually make decisions for the clan and do not necessarily ask the approval of their members. Emphasis is placed on full obedience without explanation.

Nigerians are typically collectivist in culture. They make decisions as a unit, like as a family, for example. Loyalty knits together each member of the family, extended family, or extended relationships. Life is communal with a collective effort that allows communal ownership of resources and effort. Trust and loyalty are very important.

Communication is very high-context: There is more beyond what is said. The listener must be discerning of what the real meaning is. For instance, if someone invites you to a meal, they are not always *really* inviting you to a meal, often it's just polite talk. Mothers speak to children often and continually through the day as a means for communicating expectations and teaching correct behavior. Usually, Nigerian parent-child interactions and speech more closely resemble teacher-pupil talk.

PAKISTAN

Islam is the state religion, and around 95 percent of Pakistanis are Muslims. You need to know the history of Pakistan. Pakistan was part of India and also has castes. Christianity is a religion of the low caste people; that's why now, most of the churches are among poor people.

Pakistanis do not keep to time. Most people come one hour behind schedule. They do not place an emphasis on time; they are event-oriented people, even in churches. In offices there is a huge lack of commitment; for example, the officers will feel proud if they deliberately arrive late because that gives them the sense of power. But a recent president is changing society toward more time consciousness, even in churches.

In the workplace, whether government servants or private companies, there are always two kinds of people: one is very committed and one is just very lazy. Pakistanis can be pretty disorganized. Overall they follow holistic thinking, are more relaxed, and take life very easy. They give priority to friends rather than their unfinished tasks. Family, relatives, and friends are important to them. Every year, there is flooding in Pakistan, yet people never take any advanced preventative action; they do not anticipate and prepare for future events because people believe they cannot control their fate. Pakistanis are very flexible, and they can find a solution for every problem.

People in lower social positions don't make eye contact with the people in higher positions. The higher-level person expects that the lower-level person will greet them first. Communication is high-context: nonverbal communication and the tone of the voice influence meaning.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

It is important that you speak Pidgin, which is our national language. Knowing how to speak Pidgin would bring acceptance, especially in the villages. If you plan to reach the university students then there is no need to study the Pidgin language. We are more people oriented and very event oriented. If you organize an event in a community, the people will attend anytime they want, and if the meeting extends that is okay, no big deal, the people will stay until the whole event is finished. Church services usually start on time, but the majority of the people can arrive late to the service and it's acceptable. We don't like being controlled, but we're collectivist: one cannot make any decision about events that will affect people unless he discusses with the whole group that he belongs to; in the villages there are committees to help with the resolution of village problems. When there's a problem, they confront it and deal with it immediately. We're not crisis preventative. We don't plan much or think ahead; we wait for things to happen before taking action, and the community helps together. People talk quite directly and express their real situations and feelings freely. There's a big gap between the few rich people and the poor, but every individual is respected equally regardless of their social status.

SAUDI ARABIA

Islam and Allah are the center of everything: society-influences, law, cultural behavior, and both collective and personal dealings. The people are people oriented and event oriented, collectivist and dichotomistic. Social norms prevent interaction between sexes, especially unmarried men and women. The people of Saudi Arabia are unwilling to expose vulnerability. High power distance is seen through great respect for authority. Communication by authority figures is low context—what they say is exactly what they mean. Wealth brings both privilege and community responsibility.

THAILAND

Ninety-five per cent of the population is Theravada Buddhists. Buddhism is embedded in Thai identity and culture with a lot of idols too. The majority of Thai do not speak English, so missionaries have to learn the local language to communicate effectively. Thai people are people oriented and friendly, and they love to have gatherings and a community lifestyle. To be

honest, they are not very open to outsiders; they also tend to group among themselves.

Thai are event oriented: churches don't start on time, and a meeting scheduled from 5 pm to 7 pm can last until 11 pm. They won't take on any project where they lack confidence that they can do it successfully. They are holistic, not dichotomistic; for instance, they're not so strict and organized in lifestyle. They are flexible and always just "go with the flow." Thai people are largely non-crisis preventative, and when they do not agree on something, they will not voice it out, even in a formal meeting, but they will complain after the meeting because this allows them to avoid confrontation. Communication is high-context: many times what we say we do not actually mean.

Thai culture is based on the shame-honor principle, so we are afraid to lose face in public. As in Buddhism, we see that everything revolves around karma: life goes on in a circle, so there are no extremes. Decisions are made collectively with the family and authorities. This has made Thailand a nationalistic country. This factor has also impacted our religious decisions. It is understood that to be Thai is to be Buddhist.

TURKEY

Turkish people highly value hospitality, respect, and morality. It is largely a Muslim country. Turkish people tend to be more event oriented. For example, at the small church we attended in Istanbul, rather than starting at the "agreed upon" starting time, we would wait to start until everyone was there.

Authority figures and elders are highly respected. Most parents prefer an authoritarian, disciplined classroom (which is a contrast from the common parenting style, which tends to be very permissive). Students do interact with teachers but must show respect—coming late to class is very disrespectful. Religious authority is respected as well. Most imams do not appreciate being questioned about doctrinal issues—it probably puts their authority and expertise into question.

Turkey is more of a collectivist culture. Maintaining the status quo and going along with the family/community consensus is valued. Communication is high-context: People will rarely give a direct "no." Life is "*Inshallah*," "if God wills it," which provides an ambiguous non-committal response to any question or issue. People tend to be honor/shame oriented. Telling "white lies" to "soften" the truth is justified as better or more loving

than to be accurate or honest. Deception is only a problem when it is exposed, thus “shaming.”

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The culture is more people and event oriented, though they also have a slave mentality. People tend to be non-crisis oriented: they react rather than prevent. It is a shame/honor society. Only those very close to you will expose a vulnerability. However, they may share their problems with a deeply-trusted foreigner more than with a relative or someone from their own culture. They tend to be dichotomistic: there's a black/white tendency although the culture is not logically based—they compartmentalize and seem to have truth boxes that can contradict each other. They also quickly believe conspiracies; something is generally believed to be true until proven false.

Generally there is high power distance; however, a local student has a higher level than a foreign teacher. Nationals, whatever their position, are higher than any foreigner. In the workplace if a foreign boss wants to dismiss a local for failing in his job, it is not the local who will most likely end up being dismissed!

In general they are collective decision-makers rather than individualistic, though that may be changing due to social media amongst the young. They tend to say what will please you. However, if they ask you to do something then you are expected to carry out that request regardless of whether you think it is a good idea or not. Rulers like to be obeyed and not to have thinkers around them. The people worship money. How much one earns is more important than of what faith one comes. The richer one is, the more status one has.

In the past, missionaries have made the mistake of seeing people as objects rather than as people and trying to use methods that appeared to have worked in one area in another. Just because the environment looks modern and Western, the culture is not, and that trips up foreigners.

Foreigners can quickly become influenced by materialism and get drawn in by its deception. They may feel like they are being treated like a paid slave in the workplace and get frustrated.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

People often think Americans are just white and rich, but that is not so. For instance, there are also African American, Chinese American, and Latin

American communities. White Americans are generally time-oriented people. Being on time shows politeness and respect and means being a good steward of time for the right purposes. Church services, professional meetings, and business meetings start on time. Except for occasions like parties, where time can be flexible, Americans regard time as precious. Even casual meetings amongst friends happen at the agreed upon time.

Typically, Americans tend to be more dichotomistic in outlook. They would debate the two sides of an issue but still, after discussion, can be very divided in their opinions. To consider many people's opinions about an issue would be very troublesome.

In general, Americans are crisis-preventative. They like saving things for different seasons to prepare for the future. Most people at least have savings for anything that may suddenly come. In school, they have fire drills, lockdown practices, and earthquake drills to prepare children for if calamities come.

The working culture of Americans is very task oriented. Companies and businesses focus on numbers, money, and achievement. However, outside the workplace, Americans value relationships and are delighted in spending time with their families and friends.

Most Americans do not want to show their weakness or failure as it is embarrassing. However, they can share lesser problems. For instance, they will openly share that they are having difficulty maintaining a Bible-reading plan, but not perhaps that they are having marriage problems. When they are having troubles, they tend to withdraw from social groups. Americans can pretty much share their feelings without difficulty.

American culture is a low power distance culture, and there is not much of a hierarchy in society. Students can express their opinions and ask questions in the classroom. They are not being rude as they do so because they are taught to ask questions in a polite manner. People call each other by first names as well. They regard everyone equally, with respect. Parents allow their children to choose what they want to do in the future. At eighteen years, the children can be independent, have their own jobs, and take care of themselves. This way, they learn to live on their own and become mature enough to deal with life.

Typically, Americans tend to be individualistic. They make decisions for themselves on their own. They value other people's opinions as well, but it does not mean they agree with them. Sometimes they voice their own opinions, but they cannot tolerate other people's opinions toward them.

Communication is usually very low context. What they say is what

they mean. Americans are very explicit and direct except for some areas in the Midwest, where people are a bit more laid back and less direct.

VIETNAM

Vietnam is a communist country. We are not time conscious at all. If you are invited to a party at 7 pm then you can arrive at 9 pm, and we'll wait for everyone to come before the party starts because we are more event oriented and are very much people oriented. Even if the task is not done, as long as you can fellowship with people, that's fine. Vietnamese are more dichotomistic in thinking than holistic. An example is that during the war, they would view people as either friends or enemies. Even in this generation where preaching the gospel is not totally free, one should be careful in their behavior so as not to be labeled as an enemy. We conceal vulnerability and cover up the mistakes of others because it is a shame-based culture. If a family member does wrong, the family will cover up for the other, especially if there is a foreigner involved.

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