

# INTRODUCTION TO CULTURAL LEADERSHIP 2020

1-1

WEEK 3

CULTURAL FORMATION

CULTURE AND THE KINGDOM

## 1. CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IMPACTS KINGDOM WORK

It is important for ministry teams to recognize that cultural perspectives, cultural biases, and personal worldviews of team members have the potential to impact the successfulness of team ministry.

*For instance, task-oriented, performance-based cultures might clash with relational, social sharing.*

We find that cultural communication involves considering (1) cultural value patterns, (2) the process of crossing intercultural boundaries, (3) verbal and nonverbal communication, and (4) intercultural–interpersonal relationship development.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. NON-VERBAL AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN MULTI-CULTURAL CONTEXTS

In multi-\_\_\_\_\_ teams it is important to make it a practice of both studying and reflecting upon how you are engaging with others. Individuals communicate both verbal and \_\_\_\_\_. We do it both consciously and unconsciously.

*For example, have you taken time to consider if others are positively (or negatively) responding to your verbal (speech) and non-verbal (gestures)?*

Non-verbal communication can impact our ability to share concepts and interests to cultures other than our own. For example, hand and body gestures could be interpreted differently in various cultures.<sup>2</sup> Participating in discussions with one's hand folded could be seen as non-agreement or unwelcoming; while others may disregard the action.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stella T. Toomey and Leeva C. Chung. *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2012, xx.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 141.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 141.

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Understanding how to show hospitality by welcoming gestures are encouraged when communicating the gospel to others (1 Pet. 4:8-9).

In addition, when hosting some cultures, a hospitable way of building trust would be to welcome guests into a room reserved for greeting visitors.<sup>4</sup> Silence can be seen as a \_\_\_\_\_ clue or signal that one is considering the message presented; whereas, other cultures may view silence as concern or confusion.

### **3. DISCERNING PERSONAL BOUNDARIES IN MULTI-CULTURAL CONTEXTS**

Possessing both the skill and tact for learning how to flexibly interact in multicultural engagements is important.<sup>5</sup> Knowing how to adeptly handle the interpersonal boundary of another's personal space is also important to proving a welcoming and non-threatening environment.<sup>6</sup>

Some cultures may prefer empty seats between parishioners to feel comfortable while worshipping. Other cultures welcome close and intimate gatherings.

Those sharing the gospel with others should also be aware that their ability to meaningfully communicate the gospel involves correctly interpreting non-verbal behaviors such as \_\_\_\_\_ expressions and vocal cues.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Stella T. Toomey and Leeva C. Chung. *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2012, 141.

<sup>5</sup> Edgar Schein. *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Stella T. Toomey and Leeva C. Chung. *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2012, 146.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

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## 4. FLEXIBLE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IS NEEDED FOR MULTI-CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Flexible \_\_\_\_\_ requires 1) an approach to intercultural communication, (2) the ability to recognize separate, ethnocentric realities that divide individuals and groups, (3) the willingness to suspend evaluative, snap judgments concerning culture-based verbal and nonverbal style differences, (4) the skill to deal with ambiguities and paradoxes in uncertain inter-cultural situations, and (5) the capacity to communicate appropriately, effectively, adaptively, and creatively through the use of a variety of constructive verbal and nonverbal communication skills.<sup>8</sup>

Leading others from differing cultural traditions in differing contexts by building flexible intercultural communication patterns. Firstly, we must consider how individuals communicate both verbal and non-verbally. Secondly, we should understand flexible intercultural communication practices.

## 5. ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR MULTI-CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Leading others from differing cultural traditions in differing contexts by building flexible intercultural communication patterns. We must consider how individuals communicate both verbal and non-verbally. Secondly, we should understand flexible intercultural communication practices.

Miscalculation of cultural preferences can become more evident once Christian fellowships or teams that grow past a certain threshold.

*In fact, cultural differences can impact the ministry and team growth.* We must not overlook conflict and challenges that will arise, but we must try and understand one another's cultural biases and practices.<sup>9</sup> Leaders should be prepared to incorporate cultural traditions and values of members.

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<sup>8</sup> Stella T. Toomey and Leeva C. Chung. *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2012, 45-46.

<sup>9</sup> Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 16.

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## 6. BUILD COVENANT-TRUST RELATIONSHIPS

Leaders should aim to build covenant \_\_\_\_\_ in a community of trust.

When we gather groups of different cultures, we each bring a worldview of how to lead based on cultural traditions.<sup>10</sup> This may lead to organizations operating from a ‘default culture.’

Leaders should be intentional when preparing to minister the \_\_\_\_\_ across diverse cultures as each of us brings our own ‘default’ cultural and theological assumptions to ministry engagements.

How we \_\_\_\_\_ to authority and theology is notably impacted by our culture.<sup>11</sup>

For example, there may be cultural preference for leading with a “patron-client” model of power and dominance.<sup>12</sup> This model of unilateral decision-making and “positional leadership” often undercuts the decisions of subordinate team members in an effort to maintain dominance and control. In ministry contexts, this type of is unacceptable.

Ministry leaders who adapt to a more flexible “power-giving” model seek to equip and empower others *versus* dominating over them.<sup>13</sup>

In conclusion, we must first consider the worldviews of team members. Secondly, we should aim to understand how cultural values impact kingdom work. Lastly leaders should develop a covenant community to override the default culture and build covenant trust relationships.

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<sup>10</sup> Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 16.

<sup>11</sup> Richard J. Mouw and Eric O. Jacobsen. *Traditions in Leadership: How Faith Traditions Shape the Way We Lead*. (Pasadena, CA: De Pree Leadership Center, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 145.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.