# **Multicultural Church Theory and Practice**

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# **Frameworks**

## Ministerial mindsets are often shaped by dominant-culture dreams of assimilation.

### Assimilation

### Integration

### Cultural Pluralism

### Modified pluralism

## Pastors wanting to affirm cultural differences develop a framework for relating cross-culturally.

## The minister who expresses respect and esteem for other cultures sets the stage for people responding in trust.

## It is important not only to understand each culture but also what cultures interact with each other.

## Subjective views of culture, where each culture is considered unique, are useful if one is being immersed in a single culture.

## More objective views of culture are required for multicultural settings.

## Objective approaches stress the commonalities between cultures in their structures and processes. These do no homogenize cultures, rather they emphasize similar dynamics that allow us to compare and relate cultures.

## Multicultural ministry involves relating different cultures to one another.

## There are four basic frameworks

### Adaptation in cultural groups

### Analysis of cultural groups

### Communication patterns in cultural groups

### Patterns of attributional response

## Cultures become “ethnic” in a immigrant setting whether they want to or not. The dominant culture corrupts their customs and language

## There are four stages of adaptation to other cultures.

# **Adaptation of Cultures**

## Accommodation - giving up cultural features to gain rewards promised by the dominant group.

## Separation - closing itself to protect against full assimilation and to gain self esteem.

## Dialogue - regaining self esteem the cultural group engages the dominant culture for its rightful place.

## Institutionalization - Certain features of the adapting culture gain a permanent place in the dominant culture. A certain amount of assimilation has taken place but not at the expense of loss of identity.

## Different generations within the same cultural group may be a different stages of adaptation.

## Ministers need to identify what stage the group entering.

## Pastors also have to understand that groups are always moving and therefore they must be flexible in their approach.

## Groups tend to maintain their cultural distinctiveness in three areas.

### Identity

### Sources of moral authority

### Frameworks of meaning for explaining life

## Groups that are told they are inferior or deprived will cling to their distinctives all the more, since being labeled inferior is not a satisfactory alternative to being “ethnic.”

## The greater the affirmation of the distinctives the more relaxed the group will become in relationship to their ethnicity. This will create a greater environment for exchange and mutual ministry.

# **Cultural Characteristics**

## Immediacy: a culture can be viewed by high contact - standing in close proximity in eye contact, smiling, touching, conversation.

#### High Contact - South America, Eastern and Southern Europe, Arabic. and African

#### Low Contact North America, Western Europe and Asia

## Individual-Collectivism :How people live together, what they value and how they communicate.

### Most individualistic - US, Australia, Great Britian, Canada, and Netherlands.

### Most Collectivistic - Venezuela, Columbia, Pakistan, Peru, and Taiwan

## Gender: a masculinity index measured attitudes about strength, assertiveness, competitiveness, and ambition, while the femininity index measured affection, compassion, nurturance, and emotionality as values.

## High masculinity - Japan, Asutralia, Venezuela, Italy, Switzerland

## Feminine - Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland

## Power Distance: the degree in which power, wealth are equally distributed. High power distance cultures tend to concentrate these in the hands of the few, low distance tend to share these at a broad level.

## High - Philipines, Mexico, India, Singapore

## Low - Israel, Austria, Denmark, New Zealand Ireland

## Uncertainity: refers to the ability to tolerate risk, uncertainty. Catholic predominant countries are less tolerant of ambiguity.

## High tolerance - Singapore, Denmark, Sweden, Hong Kong, Ireland

## Low tolerance - Greece, Portugal, Belguim, Japan, Peru

## High and Low Context: High context cultures rely on the environment and social relationships to communicate, with less information explicitly encoded. Low context cultures try to provide most of the information explicitly.

## High Context - Asian, Native American cultures

## Low context - Northern European, North American

# **Communication Patterns**

## Relation of Language to Identity - talked to like a child or someone who is uneducated

## Relation of Non-verbal cues - Eye contact, physical proximity, touching body language.

## Relation of Speech and Silence - the alternation of speech and silence

## Relation of rules to communication - how to ask a question, how to say no

# **Attributional Response**

## Dispositional attributions: these explain why the other says and does what they do on the basis of personality, attitudes, social institutions of that group and beliefs.

## Situational Attributions: Are based on the context in which the communication occurs. If you are the in group or out group.

## A problem in intercultural communication is that this pattern of dispositional and situational attributions is usually reversed when the out group behavior is evaluated: if they did something well, it was because of the environment: if bad, it was their attitude.

## Pastors can overcome these problems by making in-group members more comfortable with out group members by getting to them tegether as individuals.

### Broadening the kinds and numbers of casual factors in the attribution process. The more people spend time with each other the less they attribute things negatively.

# **Community Responses**

## Acknowledge your ethnicity. Know differences and similarities

## Racism is an issue, experienced both at the hands of the dominant culture as well as the friction between cultures.

## Generational changes add another layer of complexity to the equation.

## Moving to personal not just group relationships is critical.

## Add a third cultural group to diminish singular focus

## Material for this presentation was adapted from

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