

Communicating  
the  
Gospel  
Cross-Culturally

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# 1. Communication

## 1.1 What is communication?



Communication is a process that allows us to exchange information by several methods.

Communication is usually described along a few major dimensions:

- ★ Content (what type of things are communicated)
- ★ Source (by whom)
- ★ Form (in which form)
- ★ Channel (through which medium)
- ★ Destination/Receiver (to whom)
- ★ Purpose/Pragmatic aspect (with what kind of results)

## 1.2 Why is Communication Important?

- ★ It is estimated that 75% of a person's day is spent communicating in some way.

## 2. Culture

*“Culture is an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society.”*

There are four aspects to what determines a person’s culture.

### **a) World View**

The way that people look at the world around them  
e.g. religious beliefs (Invisible)

### **b) Value System**

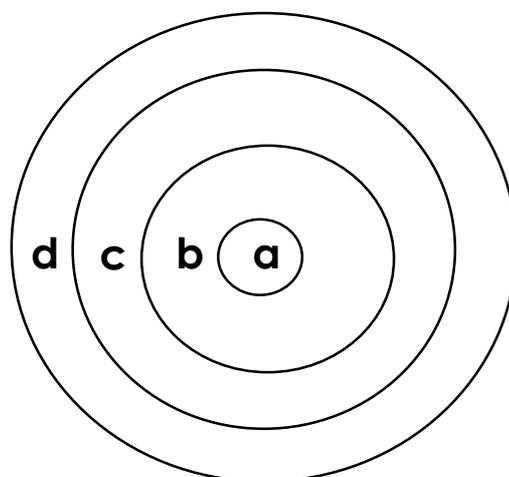
Things that are important to the person (Invisible)

### **c) Institutions**

Marriage, family, community, government, initiation into adulthood etc... (Visible)

### **d) Traits/Artefacts or Techniques**

Customs of death and burial, festivals, clothing, dance and music. (Visible)



### 3. World Views

*“Every person carries in his head a mental model of the world – a subjective view of reality”.*

*Alvin Toffler*

*A world view is a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world.”*

*James Sire*

*"A world view provides a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world."*

*Walsh and Middleton*

What is affected by our world view.....**EVERYTHING!**

World View = Glasses

We need a world view to:

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)

★ Do I have a 'World View'?

Things that try to determine our worldview:



### **3.1 How do we work out someone's World View?**

Questions to ask:

- i) Why is there something rather than nothing?
- ii) How do you explain human nature?
- iii) What happens to a person at death?
- iv) How do you determine what is right and wrong?
- v) How do you know that you know?
- vi) What is the meaning of history?

This will help them understand who they are!

### **3.2 Examples of World Views**

The most influential world views of the past and present are Christian Theism, Deism, Naturalism, Nihilism, Existentialism, Eastern Pantheism, New Age or New Consciousness & Postmodernism.

### **3.2.1 Deism**

A prominent world view during the eighteenth century, has almost entirely left the scene. The Deist believes in God, but that God created and then abandoned the universe.

### **3.2.2 Nihilism**

A more recent world view, is alive among many young people and some intellectuals. Nihilists see no value to reality; life is absurd.

### **3.2.3 Existentialism**

Is prominent and can be seen frequently, even among unwitting Christians. The Existentialist, like the Nihilist, sees life as absurd, but sees man as totally free to *make himself* in the face of this absurdity.

### **3.2.4 Christian Theism**

Let's return to the six questions we asked earlier and briefly see how the Christian Theist might answer them.

#### **3.2.4.1 How would a Christian answer the following questions?**

i) Why is there something rather than nothing?

ii) How do you explain human nature?

iii) What happens to a person at death?

iv) How do you determine what is right and wrong?

v) How do you know that you know?

vi) What is the meaning of history?

### 3.2.5 Naturalism

Most of us have been exposed to Naturalism through Marxism and what is called Secular Humanism.

What are the basic elements of this worldview?

- i) God is irrelevant i.e. not needed
- ii) Progress and evolutionary change are inevitable.
- iii) Man is independent - will save himself.
- iv) Education is the guide to life.

- v) Science is the ultimate provider both for knowledge and morals.

### **3.2.6 New Age Pantheism**

The basic elements of this world view are:

- i) All is one.
- ii) Since all is one, all is god.
- iii) Humans must discover their own divinity by experiencing a change in consciousness.
- iv) Humans travel through indefinite cycles of birth, death, and reincarnation in order to work off what is called "bad karma."
- v) They think in terms of grey, not black and white.

### **3.2.7 Postmodernism**

Postmodernism cannot be defined...only described.

*"I know less about postmodernism today than I did thirty years ago [1971], when I began to write about it. . . No consensus obtains on what postmodernism really means."*

*Hassan, Postmodernism to Postmodernity*

- ★ Disconnects from mainstream society
- ★ Antinationalism
- ★ Anti-Christianity
- ★ Opposes traditional moral law

**Postmodernism** goes against **Modernism**.

**Truth is relative**

*“The naturalists have their story, the pantheists theirs, the Christians theirs, ad infinitum. With postmodernism, no story can have any more credibility than any other. All stories are equally valid, being so validated by the community that lives by them,”*

James Sire

### **3.3 Pre-Modern, Modern & Post-Modern Thought**

#### **\* Premodern thought**

This is ruled largely by **theism** (the worldview centered on God as defining reality), addressed what is there.

#### **\* Modern thought**

This is ruled by Enlightenment **naturalism**, addressed how to know what is there (epistemology).

#### **\* Postmodern thought**

This is governed by pragmatism and **existentialism**, addresses how language functions to construct meaning itself.

In other words, a shift has taken place in “first things” from :

- \* **being** to
- \* **knowing** to
- \* **constructing** meaning

### 3.4 Overview

*"A world view provides a model of the world which guides its people in the world."*

- ★ Infinite-personal God = Christian Theism
- ★ Reject God = Naturalism
- ★ You are god = New Age Pantheism
- ★ Truth is relative = Postmodernism

They cannot all be true!

- ★ good life
- ★ hope
- ★ meaning

...only found through God's answers.

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."

Colossians 2:8

## 4. How do we lead an international student to Christ?

### 4.1 What is a Christian?

Someone who realises:

- i) They are a sinner
- ii) They need forgiveness
- iii) That Jesus is God
- iv) That Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for the sins and rose on the third day
- v) We can only be forgiven through Jesus
- vi) They need to turn from their old way of living and make Jesus their Lord and King.

★ Can anyone be Christian before believing all of these?

### 4.2 What questions would you ask an international to find out if they are a Christian?

Write a prayer for someone who you genuinely believe to have become a Christian to pray.

## 5. Giving Testimonies without using 'Christian Jargon'

What are some of the phrases that we use that are 'Christian Jargon' or only used in Christianity...or religions in general.

**Fill in the table below:**

<b>Jargon</b>	<b>New</b>