

Honor and Shame

Unlocking the Door

Second Edition
2010

Roland Müller

Honor & Shame, Unlocking the Door

by Roland Müller

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The full text of this book has now been published in the middle section of “The Messenger, the Message and the Community.” The publishers have decided to release the central section of this book as a separate title (Honor and Shame) in response to several teachers who used the original book Honor and Shame as required reading in their course.

The appendices from these three books have been placed on the Internet: (<http://rmuller.com>) and are distributed on the CD-ROM version of this book.

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Acknowledgments

People are usually better resources than books. They are more current, personal, and can usually answer questions posed to them. In the CD version of this book and on the website is a bibliography of the related books that I have read. But this list pales in significance when I think of the many people with whom I have interacted and from whom I have learned as I researched the topics in this book.

So, in the beginning, I would like to acknowledge the many brothers and sisters laboring around the world who have shared with me their struggle to communicate the Gospel with those from a heritage other than their own. I would also like to thank all the missionaries, missiologists, and theologians who have given suggestions. So many things that they shared with me have become part of this book.

Special thanks, however, must go to a fellow church-planter: Kenneth Betts, a close friend, who spent many hours with me, talking through the issues that became fundamental to this book. Along with this he shared his own personal journey as a fellow cross-cultural church-planter. Without his insight and encouragement, this book might never have been written. Others, like Dr. George Kelsey, Dr. Mazen Hanna, Neil Krahn, Ken Guenther, Shane Cooke, Dr. Roger Sheehy and Ed Gruidier must also be thanked for the time they sacrificed and for all of the insights they shared from their own experience. Special mention must also go to Colin Bearup who faithfully labored through the manuscript, sharing from his years of experience, and challenging me to think more deeply and clearly on many issues.

Lastly, Daphne Spraggett, Bryan Wylie, Dorothy and Richard Wiman, John Lombard, Josiah Gibson, Keith Kline and my wife Maria must be thanked for the time they put into checking manuscripts and correcting my grammar. Without their help, the manuscript would have been unpublishable.

Other books by the same author:

- The Messenger, the Message and the Community
- The Man from Gadara
- Missionary Leadership by Motivation & Communication
- Missions: The Next Generation

Visit <http://rmuller.com> for more information or to leave comments and suggestions.

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Introduction

Every individual is different. He or she is a unique mixture of person, personality, religion, culture, and background. I strongly believe that there is no such thing as a generic key that will unlock the spiritual door to every person's life. Any missionary who dreams of saying the magic words that will suddenly open the eyes of an individual to the truth of the Gospel, is merely dreaming of a way to avoid the hard work of understanding, empathizing and effectively communicating the Gospel.

There are, however, special keys that we must hold and exercise if we are to do this work of understanding, empathizing and communicating to people in different cultures. Over the years missiologists have offered us a variety of these keys such as "redemptive analogies" and "chronological teaching." It is my belief that understanding "*common-ancestor worldviews*" is one of these important keys. Since the first publication of the book: *Honor and Shame, Unlocking the Door*, positive responses have poured in from all corners of the globe. Most of that material is included in this next section.

Explaining the Gospel to people who hold another worldview is never easy. If we are to be true cross-cultural communicators, we must endeavor to understand how the Gospel is applicable to other cultures.

In the first part of this book (The Messenger) we examined some of the qualities and philosophies that an evangelist/church planter must have if he is to be accepted by his target audience as a valid messenger. However, having gained a hearing, the evangelist or church-planter must be equipped to share a message that is culturally appropriate. This next section examines three common-ancestor worldviews and challenges the church planter to approach his audience in a culturally appropriate manner. I would encourage you to read through this section of the book even if you are familiar with the terms "worldview" and "culture." At the time of this writing, the materials and message found here are not presented in any other Christian book that I am aware of.

May God bless you as you read through these pages and may He give you the wisdom you need to discover what is relevant to the people God has placed in your path.

Chapter One

Worldview

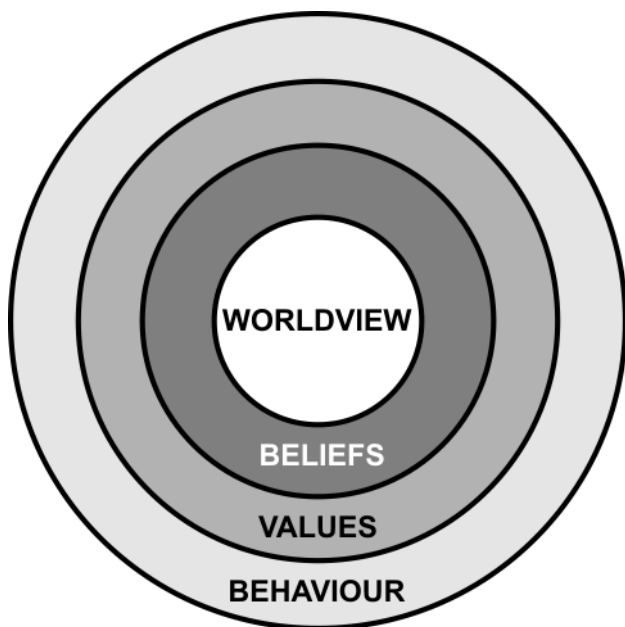
Being seen as a messenger is only the first step in sharing the Gospel and planting churches. Once have gained a hearing, it is important that we are able to share a message that is understandable and relevant to our listeners. If we are to be effective cross-cultural communicators, we must understand the worldview of our audience and be able to communicate effectively within that worldview.

In the last decade, the subject of worldview has become a standard topic of study in most Christian institutions. It has become a handy tool to explain why we Christians think and act differently from other people. Hundreds of popular books have come out on the subject, and Christians in North America and England have started to adopt the term “worldview” as if it were a biblical term. However, there are many models of worldview in existence and not everyone agrees what makes up worldview.

Definition

A worldview is simply a model of how a group of people live, think, and relate. Charles Kraft puts it this way: *“The worldview is the central systemization of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their value systems. The worldview lies at the very heart of culture, touching, interacting with, and strongly influencing every other aspect of the culture.”* (*Christianity in Culture*, Maryknoll Orbis Books, 1979, Pg. 53)

“Worldview, the deep level of culture, is the culturally structured set of assumptions (including values and commitments/allegiances) underlying how a people perceive and respond to reality. Worldview is not separate from culture. It is included in culture as the deepest level presuppositions upon which people base their lives.” (Kraft, Pg. 385)



Four-Layer Model, G Linwood Barney (1937)

Barney's Four-Layer Explanation

G Linwood Barney (1937) introduced the concept of four layers of understanding as one moves into the heart of analyzing another culture. When we first consider a culture we are initially impacted with people's behavior. Once we work through this, we are faced with their values and next the underlying beliefs that underlie these values. At the very heart of Barney's four layer model is worldview, as illustrated in the diagram right. However, it is at this level, the very heart of worldview, that sociologists have struggled to explain what worldview is. As a result a number of different scholars have presented various suggestions.

Origin of the term "worldview"

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) most likely coined the term "worldview". He was one of the foremost thinkers of the Enlightenment and is considered one of the greatest Western philosophers of all time. He introduced a number of concepts, among them the word *weltanschauung*, literally meaning "look onto the world". This term implied

all encompassing, unifying and underlying principles that define an approach to all aspects of life. Richard Kroner wrote a book about this term titled *Kant's Weltanschauung*. It was published in German in 1914 and in English in 1956. It was through this book, that the term “worldview” first came into more common usage in the English speaking world.

Kant however, did not really believe that everyone possessed a worldview, but rather that everyone was seeking a worldview.

Sigmund Freud summed it up this way: “Weltanschauung’ is, I am afraid, a specifically German notion, which it would be difficult to translate into a foreign language. If I attempt to give you a definition of the word, it can hardly fail to strike you as inept. By Weltanschauung, then, I mean an intellectual construction which gives a unified solution of all the problems of our existence in virtue of a comprehensive hypothesis, a construction, therefore, in which no question is left open and in which everything in which we are interested finds a place. It is easy to see that the possession of such a Weltanschauung is one of the ideal wishes of mankind. When one believes in such a thing, one feels secure in life, one knows what one ought to strive after, and how one ought to organise one’s emotions and interests to the best purpose.” (Lecture XXXV, *A Philosophy of Life*, 1932)

When Richard Kroner published *Kant's Weltanschauung* in English he brought the concept of worldview to the attention of philosophers, anthropologists, and missiologists all around the world.

Various types of worldview models

Here is where the confusion over worldview lies. No one has come up with a uniformly accepted set of criteria that must be dealt with when attempting to map what lies at the heart of worldview. Most Christian missiologists have simply defined worldview as a person’s view of reality. Paul Hiebert puts it this way:

“Worldviews are the most fundamental and encompassing views of reality shared by a people in a culture. The worldview incorporates assumptions about the nature of things – about the “givens” of reality.” (*Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, Baker Books, 1994 Pg. 38)

However, if worldview is simply tied to a single person’s view of reality, then everyone’s worldview would be different. It would fail to explain cultural

adhesion similarities found in radically different groups, such as Middle Easterners and North American native tribes.

Secondly, if worldview was simply attached to the basic assumptions that people make about the givens of reality, it would fail to explain how evangelical Christians in Africa, Asia and America have such radically different worldviews despite a similarity in theology.

As a result, a number of different models have been developed to illustrate how worldview works.

Nevertheless, it has been difficult for researchers to decide what factors should be considered when making up a list of issues for defining worldview. The problem is that different issues are important to different researchers, depending on the purpose of their model.

Another factor is the worldview of the researcher himself. Since the researcher is working from within the framework of his own worldview, that researcher defines what the important criteria are, based on his or her perception of what is important to worldview. For instance, someone with strong Marxist beliefs would include such things as class and class-struggle. Someone with strong evangelical beliefs would include issues like perception of God, sin, and salvation.

In actuality, these issues may have nothing to do with the actual worldview being analyzed. Thus researchers have produced many different models of worldview. Below are of some of these models.

The German Philosophic Model

This model was originally developed by Immanuel Kant and is taught in many universities. Webster's New World Dictionary (Third College Edition) defines worldview as "a comprehensive philosophy ultimately founded upon four institutions (i.e., established ideas or conceptions)." These four "institutions" (politics, economics, science, and religion) are supposedly the elements of all rational, intelligent thought. Thus, an individual's worldview is based entirely upon his inclusive perception of these four elements and upon his personal understanding of how society is best served by this perception. There are thousands of books and papers written on worldview using Kant's model.

Evangelical Models

In the 1970s Christian thinkers began adopting worldview vocabulary and thought. Over the following twenty years new ideas and concepts began to emerge as Christians wrestled with the question of what issues make up the heart of worldview.

1. Sire's Model (*The Universe Next Door, 1976*)

Sire defines worldview as “a set of pre-suppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world.” He begins by saying that our first assumption is to think that something even exists. We all assume that something is there, but we often disagree from here on in and don't necessarily agree what that something is. Some people assume that the only basic substance that exists is matter. Others suggest that there are two things: matter and non-matter (a spiritual realm).

Sire goes on to establish five questions as his criteria for examining someone's worldview. What is real? Who is man? What happens to man at death? What is the basis of morality? What is the meaning of human history?

He then divides the world up into a number of worldviews such as Christian Theism: a universe charged with the grandeur of God, Deism: the clockwork universe, Naturalism: the silence of finite space, Nihilism: point zero, Existentialism: beyond nihilism, Eastern Pantheistic Monism: journey to the east, and The New Consciousness: a separate universe.

Sire admits that his seven worldviews are not comprehensive. In essence, his worldviews are a very Western interpretation of what worldviews look like. On page 15 of the introduction to his book he admits, “*I have found it especially difficult to know what to include and what to leave out.*”

2. Geisler's Model (*Perspectives, Understanding and Evaluating Today's World Views, 1984*)

Geisler and Watkins define worldview according to how one sees the world in relation to God. Based on this one element, they deduce that the world can be divided into six great mega blocks of worldview. Theism: a world plus an infinite God, Atheism: a world without God, Pantheism: a world that is God, Pan-en-theism: a world in God, Deism: a world on its own made by God, and Finite Godism: a world with many Gods.

3. Olthuis' Model (*"On Worldviews."* *Christian Scholars Review* 14, 1985)

James Olthuis, a professor at the Toronto Institute for Christian Studies defines worldview this way: *"A worldview (or vision of life) is a framework or set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world, our calling, and future in it."* He comments: *"The vision may be so internalized that it goes largely unquestioned; it may be greatly refined through cultural-historical development; it may not be explicitly developed into a systematic conception of life; it may not be theoretically deepened into a philosophy; it may not even be codified into credal form. Nevertheless, this vision is a channel for the ultimate beliefs which give direction and meaning to life. It is the integrative and interpretive framework by which order and disorder are judged, the standard by which reality is managed and pursued. It is the set of hinges on which all our everyday thinking and doing turns. Although a [worldview] is held only by individuals, it is communal in scope and structure. Since a worldview gives the terms of reference by which the world and our place in it can be structured and illumined, a worldview binds its adherents together into a community."*

4. Nash's Model *Worldviews in Conflict, Choosing Christianity in a world of ideas* (1992)

Nash tells us that the major elements in defining a worldview are: God, ultimate reality, knowledge, ethics, humankind, and additional factors, which he declines to define.

As can be seen by these models, and others that **Dr. David Naugle** of Dallas Baptist University points out in his book: *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (2002), there is no universal agreement as to what constitutes the essential elements of worldview.

Do these evangelical models work?

Sire's worldview model (or derivatives) is taught in many different Christian colleges and seminaries in North America and England. Let's consider how a Muslim would answer Sire's five questions?

Sire's Worldview

Muslim Answer

What is real?	There is both spirit and matter.
Who is man?	A creature created by God.
What happens to man at death?	He faces judgment and then hell or rewards.
What is the basis of morality?	God's revealed message.
What is the meaning of human history?	A record of God's dealing with mankind.

According to Sire's model, Muslims and Christians should have quite similar worldviews. However, if we were to compare the worldview of a Middle Eastern Muslim and a Western Christian, we would find them almost diametrically opposed, even though they both agree in an all present, all powerful creator God who created the world and mankind, and has revealed himself through the prophets from Adam onwards. Even when they both agree that man will face God in judgment and that hell awaits the unbeliever, the two worldviews are actually in total opposition. On the surface their worldviews seem very similar. But when a Muslim and an evangelical are given time to talk, they seldom even begin to understand one another.

Thus it is my conclusion that worldview models based on religious criteria alone (such as God, man, and salvation) are models based on elements important to the worldview of the evangelicals developing the model and are not universal to everyone everywhere. Thus Sire's, Geisler's, Olthuis' and Nash's worldviews are useful in helping evangelicals understand others in comparison to their own religion, but they fall short of helping Muslims understand their own worldview. When Muslims are presented with the worldview models developed by evangelicals in the west they are often puzzled. Muslims have complained to me that these models do not really address the heart issues that divide us. In saying all of this, I am not saying that the worldviews developed by Sire and others are wrong. No, these worldview models are useful in themselves, as they help evangelicals understand why they are different from others. However, all these writers fall short of providing a model that people all around the world can identify themselves with.

Biblical Worldview

Discussing Biblical worldview has become popular in North America, and many books have been published on the topic. Missiologists such as Paul Hiebert (*Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, Baker Books, 1994) have tried to define Biblical worldview when he states that Biblical worldview defines for us the essential reality and history of the cosmos. This includes:

- God's superintendence of history
- God's creation of perfect humans and their fall through sin
- God's work of salvation within those who believe in Christ – God himself among us
- Christ's return to establish his kingdom of righteousness throughout the created universe" (pg 11)

The problem with this definition is that there are millions of evangelicals around the world, some Americans, some Asians, some Middle Easterners and so forth who possess radically different worldviews despite holding to the same tenants of evangelical faith. As I see it, each of these have a worldview that has been affected by the Bible, but is not in itself a "biblical worldview." That is why American preachers must spend so much time researching and exploring the historical setting that the Bible was written in so that Americans can understand it. On the other hand, many Arabs claim that they have a biblical worldview because their worldview seems closer to that of the New Testament. For instance, they actually have seats of honor in their living rooms and understand Jesus' teaching about not taking the seat of honor unless invited to. Most Americans do not relate to biblical passages like this, yet some still claim to have a biblical worldview. In much the same way, there are people who claim that there is a Muslim worldview. However, in my years of ministry to Muslims in many different settings, I have to conclude that while Islam affects people's worldview, the issue of worldview is much deeper than Islam or any religious system. It is my belief that there are several fundamental *common-ancestor worldviews* that must be understood. Charles Kraft refers to these in his book *Christianity in Culture*, (Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1979.) Kraft admits that he does not clearly understand common-ancestral worldviews, their origins or how they developed.

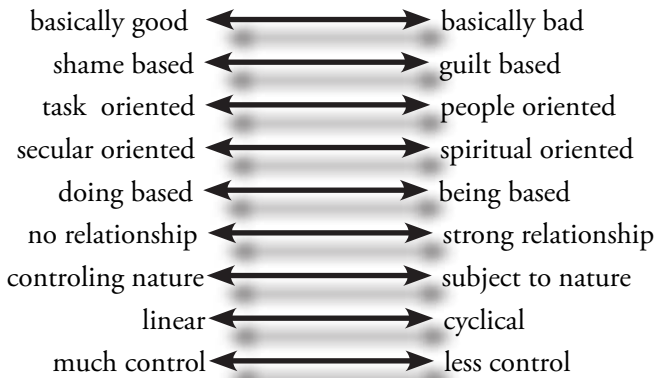
“The worldview of any given culture presumably originated in a series of agreements by the members of the original group conceding their perception of reality, and how they should regard and react towards that reality. This like all other aspects of culture, has undergone constant change so that it now differs to a greater or lesser extent from the original worldview and from other extant worldviews that have developed (in related cultures) from that common-ancestor worldview.” (pg. 53)

As a historian I am not aware of any time in history when a group of people sat down and made conscious decisions about their perception of reality. As an evangelical Christian I believe that the *common-ancestor worldviews* Kraft seeks for are found in the Book of Genesis. Unfortunately, Kraft goes on in his book to wrestle with worldview and cultural issues without first giving us a clear definition of how worldviews began and how they developed into the worldviews we have today.

The common-ancestor worldview model introduced in the following chapters is an attempt at understanding worldview from a Biblical perspective.

Dodd’s Model, *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*

Dr. Carley H. Dodd, professor of communications at Abilene Christian University, takes another track when developing his list of criteria that make up worldview (the center circle in Barney’s diagram.) Dr. Dodd uses continuums between two opposite extremes. Some of his criteria are:



Dodd's model has found much wider acceptance, especially in Europe, because his criteria are more globally applicable. I believe that Dodd's model is much closer to the truth of what we find in cultures all around the world. However, the question that must be asked when using Dodd's model is: Which of these criteria are more important within different worldviews? In other words, it is not merely the point along the horizontal continuums that must be considered, but also the vertical order of the continuums themselves. This radically varies from worldview to worldview.

Missiology

Evangelical missiologists all have different explanations of what is at the core of worldview. Kraft tells us that "Worldview, the deep level of culture, is the culturally structured set of assumptions." (Pg. 385, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 1998) Paul Hiebert however claims that "At the core of our worldview are our values" (Pg. 138 *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*.) Barney, however claims that behaviors, values and beliefs are all based on worldview. Sire tells us that worldview begins with our concept of what is real. Geisler claims worldview is founded on man's view of God. And so the list goes on, each person talking about worldview, but defining it in different ways. This illustrates the problems that missiologists have faced in defining worldview without first understanding what the *common-ancestral worldviews* were and how they developed.

It is interesting to note that modern missiologists such as Hiebert, Kraft, and Lingenfelter generally all use illustrations drawn from groups of people that have religious views far different from evangelicals. These authors all prefer such examples because the attention of the reader is captivated naturally by the radical differences. However, it would be more helpful to draw illustrations from religions that are similar to Christianity or even from evangelicals who hold different worldviews themselves. As we will see, this comparison will help us isolate and identify the real differences between various worldviews.

Conclusion

While the term worldview has become popular in the last few years, few

writers seem to agree on what criteria should be used when constructing a universal worldview model. When I first ventured out to the mission field several experienced missionaries told me not to figure out Middle Easterner's thought patterns, as it was obvious that they didn't think logically. Such statements irritated me, and motivated me to search for ways of understanding other people's thinking. Twenty years later as the pieces started falling into place I began sharing my findings with others. They were first published in *Honor and Shame, Unlocking the Door* (2000). Much of that same material is re-printed in the chapters that follow.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Have you studied worldview in another setting? Was it a secular or religious setting? Did the model you studied help you in understanding the world around you?
2. Have you been exposed to other worldviews before this? What worldviews have you interacted with? Do you still think in terms of the worldview you grew up with, or do you think that you have begun to understand and think according to other worldviews?
3. Sire's five questions have become very well known in some circles. (What is real? Who is man? What happens to man at death? What is the basis of morality? What is the meaning of human history?) How well would they help you in understanding the worldview of the people you minister among?
4. Discuss your target culture in relation to Dodd's continuums.

Chapter Two

The Eden Effect

In the beginning there was only one language and one worldview. Everything in the Garden of Eden was in harmony. Communication was clear between mankind, and also between mankind and God. If I were to ask you “Where did all the languages of the world originate?” most Bible believing Christians would point to the Tower of Babel as the source of the original language groups. These “common-ancestral languages” have fragmented down through history and continue to fragment and change even in our own time. But if I were to ask you, “Where did all the worldviews and cultures originate?”, most Bible believing Christians would likely be puzzled. Since the word *worldview* does not appear in Scripture, most Christians fail to think in terms of the biblical basis of worldview. We struggle to both define and model worldview in a way which can be universally applied.

One of the challenges I faced during my missionary career was developing just such a model that could be universally applied. I trust that what is presented below will be helpful to you.

The Biblical Bases for Worldview

There are three very basic worldviews presented in Scripture. The first two chapters of the Bible describe a worldview that is untainted by sin. While some writers have tried to imagine what it was like to live in the Garden of Eden and hold an *Edenic Worldview*, few of us can begin to imagine what this

type of worldview was like.

In the same way, the last two chapters of the Bible describe a coming world without sin. Someday, the followers of the Lord Jesus will enter into this state, where they will have known and experienced sin in the present world, but will live in a world without sin. This is what I call a *Heavenly Worldview*.

Between the first two and the last two chapters of the Bible we have what I call *Sin-Based Worldview*. All of us are living under the influence of sin.

Edenic Worldview → Sin-Based Worldview → Heavenly Worldview

It is important to grasp this larger picture in order to understand our own perspective on worldview. Every person on the face of this world is tainted by sin. Every one of us is affected by sin, and every one of us struggles to live in a world saturated with sin and the effects of sin. These are our first clues in identifying the *common-ancestral worldviews* found in the Bible.

A Missionary's View of Sin

The only reason that the Christian missionary enterprise exists today is because sin exists. Sin began in the Garden of Eden and has affected mankind ever since. The missionary enterprise of the church exists simply for the purpose of addressing sin and the results of sin among the peoples of the earth: communicating to people everywhere the Gospel of God's grace provided through the cross of Christ.

In much the same way, if there was no such thing as disease and everyone was healthy, then there would be no need for the health care industry. Doctors, nurses, medical technicians, pharmacists, administrators, and even the medical insurance industry would all be unnecessary. Just as disease is the very reason the medical industry exists, sin is the very reason the missionary enterprise exists.

It is interesting to note that the medical industry treats disease very differently from the way the missionary enterprise treats sin. Medical researchers spend countless hours and billions of dollars studying disease and its effects so that they can discover adequate cures. However, in the missionary world, we already know that the cure for sin is found in Jesus Christ. As a result, few of us spend much time studying sin or the effects of sin. In neglecting the study

of sin we have neglected a critical element that is needed to clearly understand man, his worldview, and his spiritual condition.

Harmartiology

Since the missionary effort is so closely attached to sin, I believe it is important for us to have a clear understanding of how sin entered the world and the impact that this sin had on the human race. Unfortunately, most Christians know very little about sin, other than their struggle to overcome it. The study of sin is known as “harmartiology,” but very few theological institutes offer courses by this name. As I embarked on my study I came to realize how little I knew about sin and how it manifests itself in our lives. With that realization I began to study sin and its effects on mankind.

As mankind multiplied on the face of the earth, sin multiplied until today we have a world full of people, and thus a world full of sin and the results of sin. If we can understand the significance of what took place in the Garden of Eden, I believe we can also begin to understand the peoples of the world today in their various worldviews as they try to cope with sin its influences as sin is expressed differently through different worldviews.

I believe that whenever we set out to understand the mind set of a certain culture or worldview, we need to start in the Bible, with the Garden of Eden. It is my belief that if we can understand man in the Garden of Eden, then we can begin to understand how man’s thinking has developed in different directions since then.

The Results of Sin

When I ask most people what the results of sin are, they usually list things like: separation from God, pain, death, sickness, frustrating work etc. While these are true, they really aren’t the results of sin. Rather, they are the results of God’s punishment on sin. To find the results of sin on mankind you need to examine Genesis chapter three and discover what happened to Adam and Eve during the time between their sin and God’s subsequent judgment. That is the key to understanding what sin does to mankind. Once you understand what sin does to mankind, you can begin to understand how mankind responds and deals with the effects of sin. This response is fundamental to understanding

common-ancestral worldviews.

Guilt

In the Bible we find three specific ways that sin affected Adam and Eve in the garden. These three are found in Genesis chapter three. In verse seven, the scriptures tells us that Adam and Eve “knew” that they had sinned. This knowledge of sin is nothing other than our conscience speaking or the feeling of guilt. When Adam and Eve sinned, they felt the sting of a guilty conscience. For the first time they experienced knowing right from wrong through their conscience. This knowledge of good and evil is common to us today. While Adam and Eve were in a perfect state, they never felt their consciences condemning them.

The problem with conscience is that conscience is that with repetition of sin, conscience can be progressively silenced. However, even if this is the case and conscience is no longer operating, this does not mean that a sinner is not guilty. When Adam sinned he was guilty of eating forbidden fruit. In that one act guilt passed through Adam upon all of mankind, forever.

All of this, of course, is familiar territory for most western evangelical Christians. Every western book on Christian theology examines man’s guilt, which originated in the Garden of Eden. Guilt is then traced through the Bible, as God addresses guilt in the Old and New Testaments. Theologians are quick to explain things like the meaning of the scapegoat in Leviticus, the guilt offerings, and so forth.

This is all sound theology, but unfortunately some Christians and some Christian theologies stop at guilt, or rather, get so wrapped up with ‘guilt-based theology’ that they fail to notice the other results of sin.

The Western attraction to the guilt aspect of the fall and, consequently, the guilt aspect of salvation is due in part to Western preoccupation with guilt within Western worldview. Much of the English speaking world, and parts of Europe, possess worldviews that focus on this aspect of man’s guilt, and/or his freedom from guilt. This is what I will call “*guilt-based ancestral worldview.*” In chapters thirteen and fourteen we will examine the guilt-based ancestral worldview, how it came into being, and the impact it has had on Western Christian theology.

Shame

Guilt was not the only influence of sin in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve realized they had sinned, they immediately hid themselves (v. 8). Adam and Eve were ashamed. Shame had come upon Adam and Eve, but their shame was not for them alone. Shame, like guilt, passed upon mankind from that point on. As a result, man is not only guilty from this point on, but man is also in a position of shame before God.

It is interesting to note that the subject of shame is addressed in both the Old and New Testaments. You can find references to it in the imagery of the temple, in the messages of the prophets, and, more importantly, in the death of Christ on the cross. Shame is repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament, especially in the teachings of Christ in the Gospels.

Anthropologists and sociologists have pointed out to us that many cultures around the world place shame and honor at the center of their value system rather than right and wrong. Shame and honor are paramount to understanding their worldviews. The shame-based cultures of the world span an area from Morocco to Korea and cover much of what is known today in mission circles as the 10-40 window. They also include some of the aboriginal natives of Australia and North America.

In this book we will look at *shame-based ancestral worldviews* in some detail and consider examples from both Islamic and North American First Nations (aboriginal) cultures.

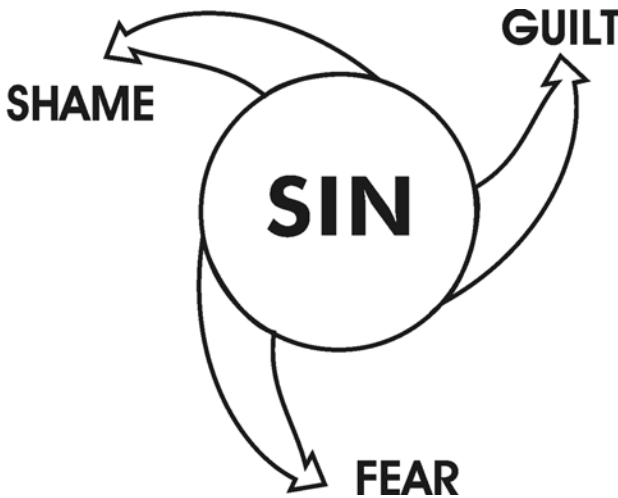
Fear

There was a third result of man's sin. When God came to speak to Adam and Eve in the garden, Adam told God that they had hidden themselves because they were afraid (v. 10). The third result of sin was fear; and fear came upon Adam and Eve as well as upon the whole human race. Before this, man enjoyed the presence of God. Now he cowered in fear, and fear passed upon all mankind. Many works of Christian theology omit this facet of sin even though missionaries have long talked about "fear-based cultures" that exist among animistic people.

From Genesis three we see that man is not only in a position of guilt and shame, but also in a position of fear before God. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the subject of fear is also addressed in the Old and New Testaments.

You can find it in the imagery of the temple, in the messages of the prophets, and also in the Garden of Gethsemane and the death of Christ. The New Testament further addresses the issue of fear with such comments as: “*You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons.*” Romans 8:15 (ESV) and “*There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.*” I John 4:18(ESV)

Anthropologists and sociologists tell us that many cultures in our world can be grouped together into what are known as fear-based worldviews. The focus of these cultures is often centered around fear of spirits and the supernatural world. The importance of fear is paramount to understanding their worldview. Fear-based cultures are found in Africa, Central and South America, and some islands in the Far East. We will look at the *fear-based ancestral worldviews* in chapter fifteen of this section.



Confusing Terms

In Western evangelical theology, Christians often confuse guilt and sin, freely interchanging them as if they had the same meaning. I would like to carefully distinguish between the two. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. It

can be a willful act, or something we fail to do. Guilt, shame, and fear, on the other hand, are the results of sin, as illustrated in the drawing above.

We will discover as we work our way through these topic that when the Gospel message deals with sin, it effectively deals with the guilt, shame and fear attached to that sin, but more on that later.

Common Ancestral Worldviews

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve experienced guilt, shame, and fear. I believe that these three responses to sin make up the basic building blocks that created mankind's *common-ancestral worldviews*. This situation is similar to the three basic colors that an artist mixes to make all the colors of the universe. On my computer, I can mix the three primary colors to make up 64 million other colors. That's the way it is with worldview. There are many different kinds of worldview, but when carefully examined, they can all be understood in the light of man's response to guilt, shame and fear.

In the Garden of Eden, man had one language, one worldview, and one culture. The Bible tells us that the languages of the world originated at the Tower of Babel, but where did all the worldviews and cultures of the world come from? I believe that worldviews are the natural outworking of wrestling with the three results of sin. Some, like Cain in Genesis 4:14 experienced events that filled their existence from that time onward with fear. Others, like Ham, the son of Noah (Genesis 9:21-25) lived under the stigma of shame. As people spread out over the earth, some of the cultures that emerged were more sensitive to guilt or shame or fear than others. And so today it is possible to classify many worldviews according to their common-ancestral worldviews.

C. H. Dodd list of critical elements that make up worldview (page 144) include continuums of guilt and innocence as well as shame and honor. I believe that the Bible clearly presents us with a third continuum, that of fear and power. Sociologists have used terms like guilt-based cultures and shame-based cultures for years. These are not new concepts. The Bible also talks about guilt, shame, and fear. They are also not new concepts to most of us.

What is new for most of us, however, is understanding how to share the Gospel with people whose *common-ancestral worldviews* are made radically

different from our own. If we come from a guilt-based worldview, our explanation of the gospel may have little relevance to their shame or fear based worldview.

If the Bible is what it says it is, (i.e. God's communication to mankind in every situation) then the Gospel should address each of these *common-ancestral worldviews* and speak specifically to them.

We must be careful, however, not to try and fit each culture into one specific category. As I stated, these *common-ancestral worldviews* are similar to the thousands of variations that can be created from three primary colors. How ratio of each primary color determines what the final color will be. In the same way, all three *common-ancestral worldviews* are present in all cultures and worldviews, but the amount of each one present determines the actual type of worldview that emerges.

Having recognized the particular mixture, one must then consider how members of a particular culture react to various issues. As an example, when Arabs are shamed, they often react by taking revenge on those who cause the shame, but when Japanese are badly shamed, they may react by committing suicide. So when we observe an action taking place in a culture that we do not understand, we must consider how these three *common-ancestral worldviews* influence that culture and thus bring about the specific. While observing worldviews and their subsequent cultures around the world I have come to the conclusion that it is possible to speak of three great mega-blocks of the world possessing similar worldviews. While this is a simplistic approach, it may help us see how guilt, shame and fear are major influences in our world today.

Where are the major blocks? Many Western nations (Northern Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand) possess worldviews that have dominant (but not exclusive) guilt-based characteristics. On the other hand, much of the 10-40 window (largely Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist) is made up of shame-based cultures. Most of the primal religions of the world (such as those who have emerged from tribes in the jungles of Africa, Asia, and South America) have dominant but not exclusive fear-based characteristics.

We face a problem when we want to simply label cultures under one of these three basic classifications. They do not all easily fit, because while they

may exhibit dominant characteristics, in reality all cultures are made up of blends of all three.

When analyzing a worldview, one must look for both the primary and secondary characteristics. For example, many North American First Nation (native) cultures consist of elements drawn from both shame-based and fear-based worldviews. When surveying individuals from North American First Nation peoples I discovered that some of them have adopted elements of guilt-based thinking, especially those influenced by Western Christianity. On the other hand, much of mainstream North American worldview has been made up of primarily guilt-based principles, although this has been changing in the last two decades.

In the material that follows I will use the terms guilt-based, shame-based and fear-based when describing worldview. By using these terms I simply intend that shame, guilt or fear, is the dominant characteristic. I am not attempting to make a statement of exclusivity, nor am I trying to downplay other criteria that are used when describing worldview or constructing ethnographic surveys. I am simply pointing out the importance of classifying worldview emphasizing guilt, shame and fear before moving on to other factors.

Missionary Efforts in the Past

Since its inception, the church has related well to guilt-based worldviews. The modern missionary movement has done well among some cultures but has related poorly to others. In the last two hundred years, the majority of missionaries have been sent out from guilt-based cultures into areas of the world that had worldviews focused on fear. In many cases they did reasonably well, as there was also an understanding of guilt in most of these cultures.

In the shame-based worldviews of the 10-40 Window, however, we have not done as well. Where there has been a blend of shame and fear-based worldviews, the church has advanced slowly, but in the various Muslim cultures which are primarily shame-based, the evangelical church has struggled to communicate the Gospel in an effective manner.

Since publishing the book *Honor and Shame, Unlocking the Door*, I have been greatly encouraged by the response of readers from all around the world. Missionaries working throughout the 10-40 Window, as well as those working

among the First Nations of the Western world, have all reported that the principles outlined in the book have helped them in effectively communicating the Gospel.

In the Middle East I have also observed missionaries using the principles outlined in the book. Such principals have helped unlock the riches of God's grace for those possessing a shame-based worldview.

Conclusion

When man sinned, three great conditions came upon mankind. By sinning man broke God's law and consequently was in a position of guilt. By sinning man also broke God's relationship and consequently was in a position of shame. Finally, when man sinned he broke God's trust and was from that point, in a position of fear.

Over the millennia that followed many different worldviews developed, all of them built around sin's effect on mankind. The worldviews that we experience today are all trying in some way to negate these effects. Thus it is unwise for missionaries to champion one worldview over others. As cultures and worldviews developed over the millennia, many gravitated towards one of the three perspectives of guilt, shame or fear. This polarization has created three mega-trends in worldview. While the majority of worldviews generally fit into these three classifications, there are many worldviews which draw equally from two or all three common-ancestral worldviews.

This mixing of worldviews is especially noticeable in South America where jungle tribes with fear-based worldviews have come into contact with both shame-based worldviews originating out of southern Spain and Portugal, and guilt-based worldviews brought by Western missionaries and Western business.

My goal in writing what follows is simply to introduce the guilt, shame and fear-based common-ancestral worldviews, and then to examine how the Gospel message might be best communicated in these contexts.

In order for us to examine these three worldviews, I start with a quick look at the Western guilt-based worldview. This is the basis for the culture that I was born in and one that claims me as its own. My study of this worldview has helped me understand my own culture and so we will start with guilt-based worldviews in the next chapter.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Describe some ways that the Edenic Worldview (Genesis 1 & 2) differs from the Heavenly Worldview (Revelation 21 & 22)
2. How do these differ from the Sin-Based worldview that we now possess?
3. Have you studied sin as part of your theological training? How did it impact your life and understanding of the Bible? Is dealing with sin a central part of your Gospel message?
4. Do you find yourself championing one worldview while marginalizing others? Why do you think this is?
5. What do you think is the difference between worldview and culture? Are some cultures or worldviews evil? How so?
5. Which of your core beliefs have been challenged or strengthened through reading this chapter?

Chapter Three

Guilt-Based Worldviews

Few of us live with exactly the same worldview. Worldview can vary from town to town, family to family and sometimes even from individual to individual. All of us are different. We come from different backgrounds and are changed by the different experiences that come into our lives on a day to day basis. Even those who try to define the wider concept of worldview struggle to know what makes up any particular worldview. ‘American’ or ‘Canadian’ worldview can only be addressed in vague generalizations. Americans come from all kinds of ethnic backgrounds and have all kinds of values. Some live in middle class housing, some in cardboard boxes on the street, and some in large impressive mansions. It’s hard to place categorizations and descriptions on people who are so diverse.

Despite this, there are some general characteristics or mega-traits that fit the majority of people in the Western world. Certain basic fundamental beliefs have molded Western civilization. These beliefs have laid the foundations upon which Western nations are built, and from which the fabric of their society has been formed.

One of these basic foundations is the belief in right versus wrong. The importance of right and wrong are so deeply ingrained in Western culture that most Westerners analyze everything from this perspective. There is a right way to do things. Other ways are not right, unless it can be proved that they are more efficient or beneficial. Most Western forms of entertainment are built upon “the good guys versus the bad guys.” This thinking is so familiar to Westerners that few question its validity. It is such an integral part of religion and society that Westerners often cannot imagine a world where ‘right versus wrong’ isn’t the accepted basic underlying principle.

“Right versus wrong” is the yardstick used in western worldview to measure most everything. Westerners talk about the rightness and wrongness of someone else’s actions. Westerners talk about things being “right for me.” They are obsessed with knowing their rights and exercising them. Many Western societies spend countless hours and billions of dollars debating the rights and wrongs of society. Is homosexuality right or wrong? Is spending billions on the military right or wrong? Is possession of drugs like marijuana right or wrong? How about possession of nuclear bombs or weapons of mass destruction?

Almost every major issue the West struggles with, involves an aspect of deciding whether something is right or wrong. Westerners arrive at this basic tension because almost everything in Western culture is plotted on a guilt-innocence continuum (innocence being something defined as being right or righteousness).



The pulls and demands of these two diametrically opposed forces dictate much of Western human behavior. Guilt can plague and haunt people, bringing fear and condemnation upon them. Many Westerners do everything they can to avoid being or feeling guilty. Psychologists spend a great deal of their time helping people deal with all sorts of guilt complexes.

Western evangelicals in particular, often live in circles that are governed by guilt principles based on the authority of the Bible. Outside of these circles, guilt is defined in other ways. It can be a sense of public disapproval, being in trouble with the authorities, or not being politically correct. However guilt is defined, and to what extent it influences a culture varies widely from location to location. No matter how it is obtained or experienced, the understanding of right and wrong has been instrumental in forming much of Western society.

On the other end of the guilt spectrum is righteousness, or innocence. This is the unspoken goal of much of Western society. “I’m OK. You’re OK” is the comfortable ideal that people seek. Many Westerners express their innocence with the statement that “they are as good as the next person.” If this is true, then they can get on with the business of pursuing happiness and pleasure within

the bounds of being OK and not feeling guilty.

Most Westerners do what they can to avoid feeling guilty and at the same time exercise their rights. This guilt-innocence thinking is so ingrained in Western society that most people have immediate reflexes to events that catch them off-guard.

Have you ever noticed what happens in the swimming pool when the lifeguard blows his whistle? Almost all Westerners will stop swimming to see who is guilty, and when they realize they are innocent will resume swimming. This is a normal scenario in the Western world, but it is not true in much of the Eastern world where whistle blowing does not produce pangs of guilt. When those in the Western world do something wrong, like unintentionally running a red light, they may feel guilty. This is also not necessarily true in the Eastern world. In the Western world, something as simple as beeping your car horn sends messages of guilt to others. In the Eastern world, guilt is seldom attached to the beeping of car horns.

Or how about this scenario? Imagine a classroom full of grade school kids. Suddenly, the intercom interrupts their class. Johnny is being called to the principal's office. What is the immediate reaction of the other children? In the West the immediate reaction would almost always be: "What did you do wrong?" By the time they are ready for school, most Western children will have adopted a worldview where they immediately assume guilt. In my seminars I have noticed that many Easterners respond in another way. They realize that the school principal would never publicly shame an individual, so their conclusion is that the principle was handing out rewards. Given the same situation, people from different cultures respond differently. Much of Western society conditions people to expect the worst, and they feel pangs of guilt.

When Westerners try to share the Gospel with people from their Western culture, they usually start from the premise of guilt as taught in Romans 3. All are guilty of breaking God's law. I've often noticed that Western people respond with statements such as: "Well, I think I'm as good as the next person" or "I'll take my chances." Even people on the street immediately associate the Christian religion with guilt. A mosque in Canada once displayed a sign: "We accept everyone, and tell no one that he is a sinner."

So much of Western thinking is wrapped up in guilt. Wars are justified on the basis of establishing guilt. During the opening days of the Gulf War, the American government spent many hours and millions of dollars determining if Saddam Hussein was guilty. Once they thought they had established that he was guilty of having weapons of mass-destruction and committing atrocities, they then had the right to take military action against him. Throughout the war, they continued to make statements about Mr. Hussein's supposed deranged mental state and irrational actions. All of this helped to justify the war. In fact, all during the history of Western civilizations, wars have had to be justified, and each side identifies the other as being the 'bad guys.' Wars have many triggers, but in the western world in almost every case right and wrong are invoked in order to justify action. This is not the case in the east, where loss of shame and restoration of honor are often invoked in order to justify action. We will address this topic more fully in a later chapter.

Westerners struggle with their obsession to plot everything on a guilt-innocence continuum. Some things however, are not easy to chart between right and wrong. Is a starving child who steals food guilty? Should he be punished for his hunger? These questions disturb Westerners because they feel that everything in life must fit somewhere between guilt and innocence.

In fact, Western association with guilt has gone so far as to provide an avenue for people to develop guilt complexes. They feel guilty for what they have done and also guilty for what they have not done. They even feel guilty for what others have done. People who struggle with a guilt complex can be overcome with embarrassment and feelings of guilt from the actions of others.

The flip side of guilt is innocence, righteousness, and exercising rights. As I mentioned, "I'm OK You're OK" is an important philosophy in Western culture especially among young. In order not to point a finger at others Western youth continue to expand the limits of what is acceptable activity. By making everything acceptable, guilt is denied and suppressed. In effect many western young people are accepting hedonism as acceptable as long as it doesn't hurt anyone. For instance, homosexuality is more acceptable because this helps thousands of people avoid feeling guilty. This alone is enough to convince many people in Western society that it's OK for people to participate in homosexuality. In fact, almost anything is tolerated as long as it doesn't hurt another person.

I have also been surprised to discover that many people in the Western world believe that our fixation with right and wrong is not only normal, but it is the only correct way to think. They assume that anyone who does not think in these terms does not think rationally or logically.

Furthermore, there are many Christians who believe that a worldview that is based on right and wrong is based on Judeo-Christian principles and therefore is correct. I've noticed that this objection is later withdrawn as people look into the origins of guilt-based worldview where they can honestly ask themselves if this is the only valid pattern set down in the Scriptures.

In order to understand guilt-based worldview we must go back to Greek and Roman times, examine the origin of this pattern of thinking, and discover how this has had an impact on the Western church and on their understanding of the Scriptures.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What are some of the ways that the guilt-based worldview is evident in western culture? Can you think of current issues that Western society is struggling with? What other expressions of guilt-innocence can you think of?
2. What are some of the things we do in order to not be guilty or to appear as not being guilty? What special precautions do people take?
3. Can you think of issues that Western society is grappling with, that are not easily plotted on a right – wrong scale? How does society around you deal with these ethics issues?
4. Are there things or instances where you may feel guilty and you should not? How is guilt transferred to you?
5. Can you imagine a world were right and wrong were not the basis on which decisions were made? How easily could you fit into such a world?
6. Read Joshua 2:4-6, Hebrews 11:31, & James 2:23-25 What do these passages tell us about lying? How do people deal with these verses in a guilt-based culture? Do you think that there might be other interpretations in other cultures? What might these be?

Chapter Four

The Roman Connection

The Roman Empire has come and gone, leaving us with a few ruined cities and a wealth of stories about conquest and heroism. While most of what the Romans accomplished has disappeared, there is one facet of Roman life that has impacted the West right down to the present. It is Roman law, or the '*pax romana*' (Roman peace), which was brought about by everyone obeying the Roman law.

Roman law introduced the concept that the law was above everyone, even the lawmakers. This idea was not totally new as Greek politicians had developed a similar concept with their city states much earlier. The Romans, however, perfected the system, and put it into widespread use. They developed a type of democracy known as the *republic*. They put in place a complex legal system that required lawmakers, lawyers, and judges. This Roman system of law left a tremendous impact on Western society. Even to this day, much of the Western legal system is still built around the basic Roman code of law.

Western civilization today is filled with references to the Roman Empire. Coins, architecture, and language have Roman roots. Legal and economic theories are so filled with Romanisms that Westerners no longer see them for what they are. They have become so much a part of Western mental furniture that few Westerners question them. As an example, Roman law during the Roman Empire assumed that the individual's rights were granted by the state (by government) and that lawmakers had the right to make up laws. Under

Roman law, the state was supreme, and rights were granted or revoked whenever lawmakers decided. This philosophy is sometimes called ‘*statism*.’ Its basic premise is that there is no law higher than the government’s law.

Roman politicians were not the first to invent statism, but they did such an effective job of applying it that the Roman Empire has become the guiding star for politicians in the West. Statists see the “*pax romana*,” the period in which Rome dominated the Mediterranean world, as the golden days of statism. The Western world was “unified” and controlled by one large government. This unification was symbolized in Roman times by something known as the *fasces*. This was a bundle of wooden rods bound together by red-colored bands. In ancient Rome the fasces was fixed to a wooden pole, with an ax at the top or side. This symbolized the unification of the people under a single government. The ax suggested what would happen to anyone who didn’t obey the government. The Roman fasces became the origin of the word *fascism*.

During Roman times, *pax romana* (the Roman peace) meant, “Do as you are told. Don’t make waves, or you will be hauled away in chains.” Roman law was supreme. At the same time, there was freedom to act as you wished within the bounds of the law, giving people more freedom than living under the whims of a despot.

Life under a despot, whether king, tribal leader, or dictator was difficult. The word of the ruler was always law; but that law might change. The Babylonians tried to deal with this problem by writing down a code of laws, but in the end, the particular ruler at the time still had power to make and create laws. With the Republic, the Romans elevated the law so that it was above the ruler. Now everyone, even the emperor of Rome, had to obey the law. The law, not the ruler, determined if people were innocent or guilty.

It is interesting to note that as the early church developed and grew, Roman law also had an impact on Christian theology. Since Roman law interpreted everything in terms of right versus wrong, early Christians were deeply influenced by this thinking.

Early Church Theologians

Tertullian, the early church father who first developed systematic theology, was a lawyer steeped in Roman law. Using his understanding of law and the

need for justice, guilt, and redemption, he laid the basis for Christian systematic theology as it would develop in the West.

Tertullian was born shortly before 160 AD into the home of a Roman centurion on duty in Carthage. He was trained in both Greek and Latin, and was very much at home in the classics. He became a proficient Roman lawyer, taught public speaking, and practiced law in Rome where he was converted to Christianity. In the years that followed, he became the outstanding apologist of the Western church and the first known author of Christian systematic theology.

Basil the Great was born in 329 AD, and after completing his education in Athens he went on to practice law and teach rhetoric (the science of arguing the law). In 370 AD, Basil the lawyer became Basil the Bishop when he was elected Bishop of Caesarea. During his time as Bishop he wrote many books in defense of the deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Basil's training in law and rhetoric gave him the tools he needed to speak out in defense of the church.

Next came **Augustine** who was born in 354 AD into the home of a Roman official in the North African town of Tagaste. He received his early education in the local school where he learned Latin to the accompaniment of many beatings. He hated studying the Greek language so much that he never learned to use it proficiently. He was sent to school in nearby Madaura and from there went to Carthage to study rhetoric, or the art of arguing a legal case. He then taught legal rhetoric in his hometown and Carthage until he went to Milan in 384 AD. He was converted in 386 and became a priest in 391. He returned to Africa and became a prolific writer and bishop. No other Christian after Paul has had such a wide and deep impact on the Christian world through his writings as Augustine has.

Ambrose was born around 340 AD in Gaul. When his father, the prefect of Gaul, died, the family moved to Rome where Ambrose was educated for the legal profession. Later, he was appointed civil governor over a large territory, being headquartered in Milan. Upon the death of the Bishop of Milan in 374, the people unanimously wanted him to take that position. Believing this to be the call of God, he gave up his high political position, distributed his money to the poor, and became a bishop. In 374, Ambrose demonstrated his ability in the fields of church administration, preaching, and theology. But as always, his training in Roman law enforced his views of guilt and righteousness.

Have you noticed the impact that law and lawyers had on the development of the early church as they contextualized the gospel from its original Jewish setting into a Roman one? This legal trend did not stop with the early church.

Reformation Theologians

John Calvin was born in 1505 in north Eastern France where his father was a respected citizen. He studied Humanistic Studies at the University of Paris, and then law at the University of Orleans, and finally at the University of Bourges. Sometime between 1532 and 1533 he converted and adopted the ideas of the Reformation. The writings of John Calvin, lawyer and theologian, have had a tremendous impact on our society.

Calvin was not alone. **Arnauld Antoine**, the French theologian (1612-1694), studied at Calvi and Lisieux; first law, then theology. He was made a priest and doctor in 1634. Arnauld spoke out against the Jesuits, and his writings added to the impact of the reformation.

There are many more examples of theologians who were also lawyers, or who studied law (such as **Martin Luther**), but those listed here will have to suffice to point out that legal thought and expression had much to do with the development of the theology of the early Western Church and the Reformation. Each of these church leaders continued to develop the relationship between Christianity, as it was understood in the West, and the legal understanding of guilt, justice, and righteousness. These lawyers were concerned with establishing guilt or innocence, and they brought this emphasis with them into their theology.

In the ensuing years, new nations in the New World would be founded on the theological basis developed by these church leaders. The United States of America was founded on these principles. The American founders attempted to establish a nation built on the Roman principle of a republic, and on the early church's understanding of right and wrong.

Today, it is interesting to notice that there are many non-Western sources who also link guilt-based culture with Christianity. In October 1999, Isaiah Kalinowski, the Opinion Editor for the Jordan Times, wrote an article entitled "The Shame Culture that is Wabash." In this article he pointed out: "... *guilt culture is due largely to Christianity. A shame culture is one in which individuals*

are kept from transgressing the social order by fear of public disgrace. On the other hand, in a guilt culture, one's own moral attitudes and fear of retribution in the distant future are what enforce the ethical behavior of a member of that society."

From Kalinowski's perspective, guilt-based cultures are linked to Christian theology. This is an unfortunate misrepresentation, as the Bible speaks to all cultures and worldviews (as we will see later.) On the other hand, we as Christians must recognize the incredible impact that guilt-based worldview has had on our understanding and interpretation of the Bible in the Christian West.

The Eastern Church

Christianity in the east, however, developed differently. Eastern theologians did not use Roman law as a vehicle for interpreting the Gospel. Rather, the Eastern world was caught up in the shame-honor relationship that was prevalent in societies scattered from the Middle East to the Far East. Eastern Orthodox theology didn't deal directly with sin, guilt, and redemption. They dealt more with the issue of us being able to stand in the presence of God or not, and in our relationship with God and with others around us.

Irenaeus, born around 130 AD, lived during a time of expansion and inner tensions in the church. He mediated between various contending factions that were arising between the Eastern and Western arms of the church. He also spoke out against the Gnostic movement that espoused dualism. In many ways Irenaeus was the first great catholic theologian, the champion of orthodoxy against Gnostic heresy, and a mediating link between Eastern and Western churches. Although he was born in Asia Minor, he spent a great deal of his life as a missionary among the Gauls in Lyons, providing him with a background in both the Western and Eastern parts of the church. In his writings, Irenaeus never speaks about the Gospel in legal terms.

Origen, born around 165 AD, lived during many of the Roman persecutions. He spoke out against the Gnostics, and wrote several works, where he emphasized that man was continually moving forward, drawn by God's love. Salvation to Origen was more than attaining heaven, it was the restoration of all under God.

Athanasius, was born in Alexandria in 297 AD. As the bishop of Alexandria he spoke out against the Arians at the Council of Nicene. Besides his defense of the deity of Christ, he is known for preaching that the main vindication of the faith is seen in its practical results, not just a declaration of faith.

Ephraim of Syria was born in 306 AD in Syria, and is considered as the Prophet of the Syrians by the Syriac Church today. His preaching on judgment helped to evangelize Syria but his writings and homilies emphasized God's mercy and desire to raise his people up.

Chrysostom, the early church theologian for the Eastern Church, was born about 345 AD into a wealthy aristocratic family in Antioch. He was a student of the sophist Libanius who had been a friend of the Emperor Julian. This man gave him a good training in the Greek classics and rhetoric that laid the foundation for his excellent speaking ability. After his baptism in 368, he became a monk in the Eastern churches. Chrysostom rose to being an outstanding preacher, even winning the acclaim of the emperor. Today we have a record of around 680 of Chrysostom's sermons and homilies, and I am told that he never once preached on justification. In the end, he was banished because he spoke out sharply against the views of the Western theologians.

John Wesley was born in England in 1703, and became an Anglican priest in 1728. His contact with Moravian missionaries started him searching for truth outside of the Church of England. He read many of the Eastern Fathers, including Irenaeus, Cyprian, Clement, Macarius of Egypt, Origen, Athanasius, and Ephraim of Syria. These Eastern writers influenced Wesley's theology and preaching, causing him to express his faith in terms wider than the legalistic terms used in the West. In many ways he attempted to harmonize Western and Eastern thought into a synthesis of Christian thought.

Islam

Islam, which rose to prominence around 700 AD, was founded and developed within the shame-based Bedouin worldview of the Arabian desert. Muhammad's message to the Arabs was saturated with concepts drawn from a shame-honor based society. Principle to this was the teaching that God remains over all, and that law is in His hands, not the hands of lawmakers.

The Qur'an demonstrates this principle with the story of Pharaoh and how

he was shown Allah’s “mightiest miracle” which he denied and thus rebelled. Pharaoh quickly went away and summoned all his men and made to them a proclamation. “I am your supreme Lord.” The Qur’an then tells us that Allah ‘Smote him’ and goes on to warn: ‘Surely in this there is a lesson for the God-fearing.’

Therefore it would be unthinkable to a Muslim that a lawmaker could make a law that is over all. This is why Islam presents both a religious and a cultural pattern for people to live by. For Muslims, God dictates both moral and civil laws.

It is interesting to notice that both Islam and Christianity have roots in Middle Eastern shame-based worldviews. Islam, however, struggles to relate to the guilt-based cultures of the world, whereas evangelical Christianity has eventually become almost solely identified with guilt-based cultures. We will examine Islam in much greater detail in future chapters.

Biblical Perspective

It is important to realize that as Christians we must carefully examine our biblical perspectives. Certain passages of Scripture are very meaningful to us because they speak to our own worldview, but they may not be as meaningful to people from other worldviews. Sometimes we assume that because we are Christians, we have a “Christian worldview” rather than realizing that the Bible is speaking to us in whatever worldview we have. It is possible to be an American, hold an American worldview and be a Christian. It is also possible to be an Arab, hold an Arab worldview, and also be a Christian.

When we read our Bibles we should realize that certain parts of the Bible speak to different people because they hold a different worldview. Western Christians often quote John 3:16 as the verse that sums up the Bible, but this is quite a modern trend when considering the writings of the church fathers. Likewise, the problem of suffering (if God is a God of love...) was hardly discussed by anyone two hundred years ago. Similarly, when explaining the Gospel, Westerners often find Paul’s letter to the Romans most useful. However, we must think carefully about Paul’s intended recipients of the letter. Paul was writing to people living in Rome under Roman law. If Paul contextualized his message to the Greeks at Mars Hill as recorded in Acts 17:16-34, there is no

reason to think that he is not contextualizing his message to the Romans who lived under Roman law.

Living in a culture that has been greatly influenced by a guilt-based worldview, Westerners usually find the best biblical explanation of the Gospel in Paul's letter to the Romans. Perhaps this is because the book appeals to our guilt-based mind set. If you read Romans with a shame-honor mind set, you might understand it differently. There is nothing wrong with this. Westerners live under governments patterned after the Roman form of government, so their thinking and theology is very Roman in nature, and it is only natural that they will be drawn to Paul's letter to the Romans to find an explanation of the Gospel that is meaningful to them.

Once when presenting this material, I was asked by an American if I was saying that evangelical theology was wrong. I had to smile at this, as I realized that my listener was trying to fit the material I was presenting on a continuum between right and wrong. It sounded like I was criticizing my own Western Christian heritage and interpretation of the Bible, and thus saying that evangelical theology in the West was wrong. This is not the case. I am merely pointing out that the Bible verses Westerners find meaningful are influenced by their history and worldview.

The danger comes when we Westerners take their Roman understanding of the Gospel and attempt to apply it to those who do not have a Roman-based culture. They fruitlessly spend untold hours and incalculable amounts of energy explaining to someone that he is guilty of sin, and needs to be justified before God. The poor person, on the other hand, may not even have a proper word for sin in his language, and he may even be struggling with the concept of what sin is. He may also struggle to understand guilt and wonder why a person needs justification. This is not simply a blind-shot that people from another culture might have. It is a completely different way of looking at things. If a person regards guilt as something that happens when you are found out, and something that brings shame on his people, then he may happily say he is not guilty. So far he has not been found out, and his family name is still honorable. He may also regard declaring one's guilt as unthinkable, because it affects the honor of others.

When their listeners don't respond appropriately, the Westerner may label

them as resistant. He might even feel good about having presented the Gospel, because he is analyzing his efforts by the measuring stick of right and wrong. If he does all the right things in witnessing, and the people listening do not respond, then the listener must be at fault and therefore resistant.

The answer to this dilemma is quite simple. Either we must change our listener's worldview to be more like our own, or we must find a way to communicate the Gospel so that it speaks to the listener's worldview. There are a good number of Western Christian organizations that encourage their missionaries to spend hundreds of hours teaching their listeners so that they can comprehend the Westerner and his worldview and then correctly understand the Gospel as the Westerner understands it. This works fine if the listeners are prepared to sit for long lengths of time under Western teaching. This usually happens in situations where the people consider Western culture to be superior to their own. It seldom happens in situations where the listeners consider their culture to be better than the missionaries.

In the Muslim world, missionaries are fortunate to get a couple of hours with a listener. As a result, we desire to share the Gospel in ways that are immediately relevant to our listeners. In this case, Westerners must put their Roman, guilt-based understanding of the Gospel aside and strive to understand other worldviews and ways of thinking. They need to return to the Bible and discover ways of communicating the Gospel to a mind-set that is not pre-occupied with right and wrong or guilt and innocence. God's grace is equally applicable to every society and every worldview. It is the duty of the cross-cultural communicator to discover exactly how he or she can best communicate the Gospel. We do this so that others can understand God's grace offered to mankind in their own culture and worldview.

The Legal Model of Salvation

Western Christians have perfected the legal view of salvation. In saying this, I am not saying that they have entered into legalism, but rather that they usually express the Gospel message in legal thought and terminology. They talk about guilt and the need for redemption. They talk about breaking God's laws and being under condemnation. These are all legal (and biblical) concepts.

Expressing salvation in legal terminology is okay. It is perfectly acceptable

to draw out of Scripture the legal references to salvation and to express God's plan of salvation through them. Not only is it acceptable, it is probably preferred for those who live in a world that functions within legal paradigms.

Western church historians, from Tertullian to today, have worked hard at expressing theological concepts in a way that relates to Western culture. This is important, but the legal view of salvation isn't the only view of salvation.

In the West we have developed a number of popular methods of sharing the Gospel with people from guilt-based cultures. However, since they draw almost exclusively on legal concepts, they are difficult, if not impossible, for those living in a completely shame-based culture to understand.

One of these methods is called *The Romans Road*. It is based solely on the book of Romans and takes the audience through three short steps, showing them that they are guilty sinners, that God's penalty for sin is death, and that a person can escape God's wrath by saying a simple prayer and believing in his heart.

One of the limitations of this method is that it requires the hearer to have an understanding of the concept of sin and guilt and secondly, that it stops at the cross. There is little in *The Romans Road* to address the issues and problems that the believer will have after he confesses and believes.

A second popular method is known as *The Four Spiritual Laws*. Once again, this method of sharing the Gospel is based on a legal interpretation of the Gospel message and works well with people who have an understanding of guilt and innocence. I believe that this plan, like *The Romans Road*, has severe limitations for hearers in a shame-based culture. It requires an understanding of the concept of sin and guilt, and it fails to address the life of the believer after he confesses and believes.

These explanations of the Gospel seem to work in the West because most people understand that there are higher laws and something called sin. Secondly, most people in Western society live with a certain understanding of guilt, and so these two methods of expressing the Gospel help people deal with their felt sense of guilt.

The Western church has augmented these methods of sharing the Gospel with other avenues of teaching. Because of their simplistic explanation of the Gospel message, they expect that new believers will take discipleship lessons

so they can grow spiritually and come into a fuller understanding of what the Gospel is all about and what their simple prayer of accepting Jesus really meant.

Is it any wonder that many Western believers, when following the legal model of salvation, become content with having salvation, and seldom move onto deeper spiritual things? Once they have invested something in the “life-insurance” aspect of salvation, they are content to live their lives in comfort, as their view of salvation demands little else beyond confession of sin and acceptance of a Savior. Those who want more are often disillusioned with such a simplistic view of the Gospel.

Legal Issues

It is interesting to notice that the legal view of salvation spawns legal problems. Many of the issues that Western Christians face today stem from their legal perspective of the Gospel. These issues are then studied and debated in what amounts to “religious courts.” These debates require the services of spiritual lawyers and judges to argue the different sides. We often call these spiritual lawyers theologians, and in reality many of them function as lawyers who carefully debate the legal problems that arise from the legal model of salvation.

For instance, if a judge has pardoned you, are you pardoned for the past only or also for the present or even for the future? This legal question, often classified as eternal security, is primarily a legal question that besets those who follow the legal model of salvation. Another question that is asked is: Is it possible to reach a place where you do not continue to break God’s law and where you become a “law abiding citizen” in the Kingdom of God (sanctification)? This question requires that spiritual lawyers define sin and what it means to digress from God’s law. Even the keeping of the Jewish law comes into question. Were the laws in the Old Testament God’s eternal laws? If they are God’s laws, why don’t we follow them today? Did Jesus fulfill all the laws, including the health laws about eating pork meat? Did God’s law change?

This is just a sampling of the legal issues that spiritual lawyers spend countless hours and finances on. This action is not necessarily wrong; it is simply the natural outcome of a legal understanding of salvation.

My hope, however, is that western theologians will also wrestle with the

best way to communicate the Gospel to different peoples in different cultures. Some of this is starting to happen as African and Asian theologians are beginning to develop their own expressions of Christian theology. Shame-based cultures and fear-based cultures need other models for understanding salvation than the legal ones we have developed in the west, but we must work together to help balance and check one another, so that extremes can be avoided.

Conclusion

Just as an artist mixes colors of paints, basic worldviews are made up of a mixture of elements. Very few worldviews are made up of purely guilt-based thinking, and many of the classic guilt-based worldviews in existence today are moving away from the influences of guilt and innocence. Some sociologists describe these Western worldviews as being post-guilt or post-modern.

In the next chapter we want to explore the second primary *common-ancestral worldview*, that of fear. Once again there are few purely fear-based cultures in existence today. As the world becomes more global, the purely fear-based cultures are giving way to a more mixed variety. Nevertheless, by looking briefly at fear-based worldviews, we can begin to recognize them when they are mixed in with guilt or shame.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What did you learn from this chapter about the impact of Roman thought on our modern world?
2. Before reading this chapter, had you ever considered the impact that worldview had on the writers of early church theology?
3. Do you think that worldview also had an impact on the writers of scripture?
4. How many different worldview/cultures can you think of that affected the writers of scripture?
5. Have you been influenced more by western or eastern theologians (or African or Asian. etc.)?

6. Do you think that guilt-based cultures have come into being because of Christianity, or has Christianity penetrated guilt-based cultures?
7. What do you think about the statements made about Christian or Biblical worldview. What is meant by these terms? What is a Christian worldview or a Biblical worldview? How is it different from the worldview held by others? Is it possible to hold an Asian or African worldview and be a follower of Jesus?
8. What do you think is the meaning of the term “resistant people?” How might they be resistant? What would cause this resistance?
9. Think through a simple gospel presentation as is typically given in the west. What terms and concepts do western missionaries use that may not be clearly found in scripture? Is there a better way to express salvation?
10. What is the difference between sin and guilt? Can you express a salvation message without using the terms guilt, redemption and justification? These are all legal terms that may not be understood by your target people. How might you express the gospel in other ways?
11. Further studies: check out some missiological journals to learn more about African Theology, Asian Theology and South American Theologies. What are these people trying to express that they feel is lacking in our North American theology?

Chapter Five

Fear-Based Worldviews

As the missionaries drew near to the village, the sound of drums could be heard. Drawing closer, they could see a large group of painted people dancing and writhing. A man approached the missionaries and explained that they could not go further. The village was doing a sacred rite to improve the economy and bring more trade to the area. The missionaries were escorted away and not given an opportunity to share their Gospel presentation. Later the missionaries heard that a human sacrifice had been offered to the spirits that day.

In another situation missionaries arrived in a village when a rain-making ceremony was about to begin. They were invited to watch. A black bull was led to the edge of the village where it faced the direction from where the rain would come. The animal's throat was cut and it fell over on its left side, to the delight of all. This indicated that the sacrifice was acceptable. The men then cut up the meat and cooked it. As the meat was cooking, an old man began to shout out a prayer to the spirits for rain. Soon everyone joined in. After the meat was eaten, the shouting turned into dancing. The villagers danced all afternoon until the rain came. It rained so heavily that everyone had to run for shelter. Did the rituals bring the rain? To the natives, this was the obvious conclusion, and there was no way that the missionaries could convince them otherwise.

As these two stories illustrate, there are many people in the world today whose lives revolve around interaction with the spirit world. They believe that gods and spirits exist in the universe, and they must live in peace with these unseen powers either by living quietly, or by appeasing these powers.

Much of the missionary effort during this last century has been directed at reaching people who lived in areas of the world where elements of fear-based worldviews were strong. As missionaries entered the jungles of Africa, South America, and other places such as Borneo they were faced with people whose worldview had strong elements of fear. While beliefs varied from place to place and culture to culture, the underlying principles were the same, the universe was filled with things that brought fear, and one of man's chief goals was to find sources and methods of power to overcome or appease the source of fear.

Based on their worldview, these people viewed the universe as a place filled with gods, demons, spirits, ghosts, and ancestors. Since man needs to live at peace with the powers around him, he often lives in fear of disrupting that peace and bringing the wrath of some power against him.

This fear could be based on a number of different things. Foremost it may be man's fear of man. In the jungle, tribal wars are endemic, with captives becoming slaves or, sometimes, a meal for cannibals. Whenever these tribes encountered people from outside of their own group, they approached them with suspicion and fear. This fear of man can also be found in what we consider more advanced societies. It may be based on fear of a dictator, or even the fear of a ruling class of people.

A second factor is often fear of the supernatural. All around us events are taking place that might be seen as the supernatural world interacting with ours. If crops fail, then specific gods, demons or other forces are seen as responsible. If sickness comes, then other gods, demons or other forces are responsible. If a tribe fails in battle, it is because of the activity of a god or demon. Sickness is often viewed as a god reaping revenge. Everything in life, even romance, is somehow attributed to the activities of gods, demons or other forces.

The very fact that we have a word such as 'supernatural' should alert us to the fact that we have a particular worldview based on the natural laws of nature. Since Newton's formulation of this theory, most Westerners have become so used to thinking in terms of natural cause and effect that we cannot imagine what it is like to live with a worldview that rules nothing out, and in which nothing is truly predictable. We bring this Newtonistic view into Christianity, and try and explain everything in life based on immutable laws. Thus we struggle to understand people who live in an open universe not controlled by

comprehensible laws. For the animist, there is no clear distinction between the natural and supernatural. While we think in terms of science and psychology, the animist thinks in terms of the forces that affect their lives.

The struggle that these people face is simply one of needing power. Using their voodoo, charms, and other methods they seek to gain control over other people and over the controlling powers of the universe. The paradigm that these people live in is one of fear versus power. Everything is expressed in these terms, including moral issues which are expressed and enforced in terms of power.



At the end of the 19th century, E. B. Tylor attempted to understand the difference in thinking between Europeans and peoples living in Africa and South America. In his writings he coined the word ‘animism’ from the Latin word *anima* for ‘soul.’ He saw the animistic worldview as interpreting everything from a spiritual philosophy rather than a materialistic philosophy. Many sociologists of Tylor’s era saw mankind moving from an ancient worldview based on the supernatural to a modern worldview based on science and reality.

Dave Burnett states in his book *Unearthly Powers*, that H. W. Turner later advocated the use of the term primal religion, meaning that “these religions both anteceded the great historic religions and continue to reveal many of the basic or primary features of religion.” This is a commonly held theory in many academic settings, although from the Bible we know that monotheism predated primary religions. (Romans 1:18-23, and Genesis 3-6) Almost everywhere you find animists or primal religions you find people living under the influence of a fear-power thought.

Burnett goes on to state, “Power can be understood in many ways: physical, political, economic, social, and religious. The secular worldview tends to regard all power as originating from within the material world ... in contrast, primal worldviews see such powers not only as being real within the empirical world but as having their primary origin outside the visible world.”

In this way, those whose lives operate in the fear-power paradigm often see themselves living in a physical world that coexists and is influenced by unseen powers. These powers may be present in people or animals, or even in

inanimate objects like trees or hills. In some cultures, powers may be perceived in personal terms such as we would use for living beings. These powers are often regarded as having their own particular character, feeling, and ability to relate to others, and often even have a will of their own. Like people, they may be angered, placated, or turned to in time of need.

Power is an important concept in fear-based cultures. In the Pacific Islands it is sometimes called 'mana,' while the Iroquois of North America called it 'orenda,' which particularly refers to the mystic power derived from a chant. The Inuit (Eskimos) have the notion of 'sila,' a force watching and controlling everything. The Chinese have the concept of 'fung shui,' or the powers within the earth and sea. In folk Islam the term 'baraka' (blessing) can embrace some of these concepts.

In most fear-power worldviews the main way of dealing with a power is to establish rules to protect the unwary from harm and procedures to appease those powers that are offended. These rules and procedures are generally referred to as taboos. Taboos come in the form of things like special people, forbidden or unclean foods, sacred objects, special acts or rituals, and special names. Appeasements are usually made in the form of sacrifice or dedication to the invisible powers.

In order to deal with these powers, rituals are established which people believe will affect the powers around them. Rituals are performed on certain calendar dates, at certain times in someone's life (rites of passage), or in a time of crisis.

In order to appease the powers of the universe, systems of appeasement are worked out. They vary from place to place. Some civilizations offer incense while some offer a chicken or even their children as sacrifices. However it is done, a system of appeasement based on fear is the norm for their worldview.

Wherever this system of appeasement comes into being, religious persons come to the forefront to control these systems. They are known as priests, witch doctors, shamans, or gifted people. Whatever their title, their role is the same. They are the ones who hold power. Often they are the only ones who understand the needs of the gods or demons, and they are the ones through whom the demons or gods communicate.

In every fear-based worldview, the pattern is much the same. The witch

doctor, priest, or shaman controls people through the use of fear. They are very effective in their roles, and as a result, whole cultures and people groups are held in their iron grip.

As missionaries have entered these areas, they have often found themselves involved in a power struggle. Shamans, priests, and witch doctors hold considerable spiritual power. It is real power, backed by the satanic world. Satan and his hosts are determined to keep fear-based cultures in their grip. In almost every case, a power struggle develops when missionaries confront fear-based worldviews.

In the past, many missionary have avoided power confrontations and have opted to preach a guilt-based Gospel message. In most of these worldviews there is some understanding of guilt, and so some people have responded to the Gospel. Often that response also includes an invitation to a better economic lifestyle, better education, or health care. In many African nations, there is only a small mix of guilt in people's worldview, and thus Christianity has impacted only a small part of the lives of those who follow Christ. One missionary described it this way: he said. "Christianity is very widespread, but only an inch deep." This is a typical situation that arises when people respond to only one aspect of the Gospel, in this case the guilt aspect of the Gospel.

Today Christian missionaries are learning to share the Gospel in ways that makes sense to those living in a fear-power based worldview. Missionaries are sharing stories from the Bible and are bringing people to the conclusion that the power available through Christ is greater than the powers of darkness. Missionaries are sharing from God's Word, demonstrating God's power, and living out their Christian lives for all to see. As they have boldly preached and confronted the powers of the enemy, people in these cultures have begun turning from darkness to light.

As a result, today in Africa, South America, and East Asia there are large numbers of people who have come to Christ from fear-based worldview backgrounds. However, as many African worldviews have a strong mix of honor and shame, the Gospel is still not addressing all of the areas of people's lives.

Fear-based cultures are not limited to the animistic areas of the world. As I have presented seminars in many countries, a number of listeners have responded enthusiastically to this part of my presentation. They have admitted

that even though they were raised in a Western culture, their coming to Christ had more to do with the fear-power paradigm than guilt and innocence. In our world today, many children grow up in an atmosphere of fear. A drunken father or an abusive parent causes them to live in great fear. One man told me that as a child he went to bed every night afraid for his life. His father used power and fear to control the home and would often come home drunk and beat his wife and kids. As a result, this man found that he did not so much relate to the guilt-innocence message of Christians but rather to Christ's work on the cross to deal with our fear. In this way, Christians have found that they can relate to those from abusive backgrounds or even those who have lived under the fear-power paradigm of communism.

Conclusion

From the Garden of Eden, we see that the influence of sin brought more than guilt upon mankind. It also brought fear. This fear is very real to many people in the world today. Some worldviews can be described as being almost totally fear-based. Other worldviews mix aspects of fear-based worldview with the other *common-ancestral worldviews*: guilt and shame. Some elements of fear-based worldview are even present in today's Western world where people live in an atmosphere of fear. It may be from an abusive parent or as a result of consulting psychics and dabbling in the occult. Many Westerners are very uncomfortable with breaking a mirror or observing a black cat crossing their path. To some people these are very serious events, while others laugh them off. While it may be unimportant to some, fear and power are fundamental to many people's worldview. They may live in fear of terrorists or local criminals. They may barricade themselves in their homes behind multiple locks, and keep guns or batons close at hand. While this may be necessary to live in their location, we as Christians have a duty to share the love and grace available through Christ in such a way that people in a fear based worldview can clearly understand them.

A missionary to Russia shared with me his concern for the Russian people. Back in history they lived with a strong mix of fear of the Tsar. This was replaced by a fear of the communists. Today they live with a fear of organized crime in Russia. While the exterior circumstances may change, their basic worldview remains the same. Wherever we serve, missionaries must be aware of the fear-

power worldview and be prepared to share a gospel message that not only speaks of our guilt, but also addresses people's needs, as they live in a worldview with a strong mix of fear.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Most fear-based worldviews deal with gods, demons, spirits, ghosts, and ancestors. List some ways that fear-based worldview has invaded western society?
2. Is there an aspect of fear-based worldview among the people you are ministering to? How is it expressed in their culture and actions?
3. Another aspect of fear-based worldviews, is fear of other people? How is this demonstrated in the culture around you?
4. Fear-based worldviews often give way to fatalism or fanaticism. If something fails it is because the spirit world is against you, or it is because you did not work hard enough at pleasing them. Is this expressed in anyway in your target culture?
5. What do people do to gain power over the things that bring fear into their lives? Is there a way that Christ answers or fulfills this?
6. What is the difference between the "fear of the Lord" and the fear in a fear-based worldview?

Chapter Six

Shame-Based Worldviews

The missionary's taxi screeched to a halt. Lying in the middle of the street was a teen-age girl, dying. She had been shot in the head four times. Just then her brother walked across the street with two policemen and stated, "There she is. I killed her, because she was in an immoral situation with a man." Under the laws of the country, the young man was innocent. He had not committed murder but had preserved the honor of his family.

In another case, a girl ran away from home. Later her family learned she had married someone from another religion. They were furious. The police imprisoned the girl so that she would be protected from her family. Elderly grandmothers taunted the brother and father. "How long do we need to keep our heads to the ground in shame? Won't you do something to cleanse the shame from our tribe so we can raise our heads and live in honor once again?" The family finally agreed to pay the police a \$50,000.00 guarantee that they would not hurt her and she was released into their custody. Within hours her father and brother shot her thirteen times. The entire family was pleased that honor had been restored.

When faced with such situations, many Western missionaries are exasperated. The people they are ministering to seem to have no sense of right and wrong. Murdering your own child seems incomprehensible to them. They fail to realize that ignoring the scandalous behavior of an immoral or defiant daughter is likewise incomprehensible to those in a shame-based worldview. The Western missionary may feel totally defeated if people don't feel they have broken God's law and thus do not feel any need for salvation or a savior. Christ's

death on the cross seems futile and meaningless. The Western evangelist, locked into his legal model of salvation, seems powerless to explain adequately the Gospel so that people like this will respond.

For many years, I was one of those missionaries. The guilt-innocence perspective dictated much of my thinking and actions. However, I soon discovered that not everyone in the world operates within this paradigm. As I mentioned earlier, while living in the Middle East I noticed that when the lifeguard at a swimming pool blew his whistle, the Westerners all stopped to see who was guilty, but others kept right on swimming.

As I observed this and other phenomena, I began to realize that Middle Easterners and Middle Eastern society were operating in an entirely different dimension. Guilt did not have the same power and influence as it did in the West. While they were aware of guilt, it didn't have the same strong connotations for them as it had for me.

If a policeman pulled me over, I would immediately feel guilty, thinking that perhaps I had done something wrong. But when my Middle Eastern friends were pulled over, they didn't display any sign of guilt. They talked boldly to the policeman, and even argued loudly with him over the issues at hand.

It was only after many years of living in a Muslim culture that it started to dawn on me that people around me were not operating on a level of guilt versus innocence. Nor were they operating in a fear versus power paradigm of which I had heard much from missionaries living in Africa. These concepts didn't seem to apply very much to the Arabs of the Levant. (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine) Rather, I discovered that these Arabs were living with a worldview where the dominant paradigm was shame versus honor.

shame ←————→ **honor**

Once I clued in to this, I began to explore this concept and tried to verify it on all social levels. I was amazed to discover what I found. When a young Christian lady who was very active in the church was asked why she was so dedicated, she said that she felt that God would shame her in front of people on the Judgment Day, so she worked hard in the church. I was appalled at first, until I recognized this same motivating factor at work in many situations.

When I would visit my friends, I would try to act correctly, and they would try to act honorably, not shamefully. I was busy trying to learn the rights and wrongs of their culture and explain these to new missionaries arriving on the field. But somehow my framework of right versus wrong didn't fit what was actually happening. The secret wasn't to act rightly or wrongly in their culture. It wasn't that there was a right way and a wrong way of doing things. The underlying principle was that there were honorable and dishonorable ways of doing things.

Every part of the Muslim culture I lived in was based on honor and shame. When I visited my friends I could honor them in the way I acted. They could honor me in the way they acted. Three cups of coffee bestowed honor on me. The first, called '*salaam*' (peace) was followed by '*sadaqa*' (friendship), and the third cup of coffee was called '*issayf*' (the sword). The meaning was clear in their culture. When I arrived I was offered a cup of coffee that represented peace between us. As we drank and talked, the cup of friendship was offered. The last cup, the sword, illustrated their willingness to protect me and stand by me. It didn't matter if I was right or wrong, they were bound by their honor to protect me.

Everywhere I moved in the Middle Eastern culture there were things that pointed to honor or shame. What chair I chose to sit in, who entered the door first, the way I expressed myself in Arabic, the very way I walked and held myself, all communicated to others around me 'my place' in the world. The cultures of the Middle East are filled with thousands of tiny nuances that communicate messages about shame and honor.

Shame is a popular topic today in Western society. Shame for us, however, is closely identified with a lack of self-esteem or feelings of guilt. For us shame often stems from some form of abuse where people, especially children who are violated, fail to learn trust.

This is quite different from the shame-based societies of the east where shame and fear of shame are used as controlling forces in people's lives (compared with right and wrong being used as a controlling factor.)

As parents, we teach our children to act rightly. If they don't, we teach them that feelings of guilt are the proper response. In a shame-based culture however, children are taught to act honorably, and if they don't, feelings of

shame are the proper response. But it goes farther than just feelings. Shame and honor are positions in society, just as being right and justified is a position in our Western culture.

In the West, young people are free to act as spontaneously as they want, as long as they are within the framework of right and wrong. They can be loud, boisterous and happy as long as they don't break things or abuse others. The rule in the West is "As long as you don't hurt someone else or their property, you are generally OK."

Young people in a Muslim setting are different. Wherever they go, they represent their families and tribes. Young people are not free to act as they want. They must always act honorably so that the honor of their family and tribe is upheld. If they damage someone else's property, it is bad because it brings shame on their own people, not primarily because it offends the victim. If no one knows who did it, there is no shame, or feeling of guilt. They feel guilt for bringing shame on their own people, but not for offending a third party.

And so it is when shameful acts are discovered the family or tribe will react. Shameful deeds are first covered up, then denied. If they can't be covered up, they are avenged. It is the unwritten rule of the desert. The whole concept of shame controlling society can be traced back to the early pre-Islamic and Nabataean culture which existed in Arabia long before Islam arrived. (Nabaioth was the eldest son of Ishmael. See the Internet site: <http://nabataea.net> for more information on the Nabataean people.) This shame based code of conduct, still much in existence today, affects not only the way individuals act, but also the actions of entire nations.

As I have visited with missionaries and nationals from non-Western countries, I have explored the concept of honor and shame in these other countries. It has helped me understand and communicate with people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, Japan, and Korea.

In fact, I have discovered that the concept of shame and honor makes a great discussion topic. I often ask people from shame-based cultures what things they consider to be honorable or shameful, and how does one tell if someone else is honorable. The discussion that follows is often highly stimulating, and usually reflects or contrasts similar attitudes right across the shame-based cultures of the world.

As an example, one Korean missionary mentioned that older Korean men were very quiet while their wives were the ones who usually talked. He explained to us that in Korea, men were taught to be quiet. I then entered the discussion and brought up the topic of acting honorably. The Korean man brightened considerably and began to explain how Korean men are taught to act honorably. One of the signs of honor is to hold off speaking until you have something wise to say.

He concluded that Korean women were freer to speak and thus they were the ones who spoke out, not their husbands. As a result, Korean women are the ones who usually learn foreign languages better. However, younger Korean men are usually less inhibited by the old honor code, and many are participating in open discussion much more freely.

A few weeks later I spoke with a medical doctor from Iraq and told her what I had learned from the Koreans. She immediately responded that in the older Iraqi culture this is true as well, especially among the older men. Honor is demonstrated by silence or by speaking only wise and careful things. Often the speech of wise people is full of proverbs and parables. The more proverbs a person knows, the wiser he appears in the eyes of others.

In some cases there are distinct differences between cultures. As I mentioned earlier, if someone is badly shamed in an Arab culture and the shame cannot be hidden or denied, then it is avenged, and the person responsible for the shaming is killed, or a payment of money is negotiated. In many Far-Eastern cultures, if a shame cannot be hidden or denied, the way out is suicide. While there are differences, there are also similarities. I have heard of a number of students in Jordan committing suicide because of their poor school marks, just as happens in Japan.

In order for shame-based cultures to work, shame and honor are usually attached to something greater than the individual. Honor is almost always centered around a group. This can be the immediate family, the extended tribe, or in some cases, as large as an entire nation, as was demonstrated in Japan during World War II.

In most Middle Eastern cultures, honor is wrapped up with one's tribe. Everyone grows up within a tribal concept. If someone is from the Beni Hassan tribe, he or she thinks, acts, and dresses as a Beni Hassan. Every action reflects

on the honor of the Beni Hassan tribe. If tribal members act honorably, the Beni Hassan tribe is honored. If they act shamefully, the whole tribe is shamed. If the act is vile enough, such as rejecting their religion, or if a girl becomes pregnant out of wedlock, the Beni Hassan tribe will react and execute the offender, even though he or she is a member of their own tribe, and perhaps even their immediate family. Thus the shame is removed and the honor of the tribe is restored.

Many years ago an Arab soldier's gun accidentally discharged and killed his companion in the army. After serving seven years, he was released on condition that he leave his country as the dead soldier's family threatened him, wanting revenge for their son's death. (Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, blood for blood) He lived for nearly twenty years in the West but one day decided to return to see his family. When it was learned that he had returned, several young people from the dead soldier's family, some of whom had not been born at the time of the killing, surrounded the house where he was and riddled his body with bullets. Their family honor was restored, and the shame removed.

If someone shames another tribe, tribal warfare could result, and often only the skillful intervention of a third party ends the strife. Arab lore is full of stories of how wise and skillful men have mediated in difficult situations. In fact, many national rulers gain their fame and reputation from their skills at ending tribal strife.

In the Middle East two methods are recognized. First, a skillful ruler, through diplomatic efforts and displays of great wisdom, can end disputes. Solomon's dealings with the two mothers who claimed the same baby displayed the kind of wisdom that Arabs appreciate and desire in their rulers. The second kind of ruler crushes all of the tribes and by force makes them submit to himself. Peace may then rule, but once the controlling power is removed, old animosities return. This was illustrated in the Balkans conflict where the domination of communism brought about a measure of peace. Once freedom returned, however, old conflicts and animosities flared again.

The storytellers who frequent the coffeehouses of the Middle East excel in telling stories of both kinds of rulers and heroes, especially heroes who can effectively deal with shame and restore honor. This is very different from the entertainment styles of the West where the hero determines who is guilty,

punishes him, and right and goodness are restored. This is because in the Western worldview, people try to hang onto the concept that “in the midst of a crooked and perverse world, right still reigns and has the upper hand.” Those from shame-based worldview, on the other hand, cling to the idea of maintaining honor in the midst of a shameful and alienated world.

For many Western people it is very hard, if not impossible, to try and comprehend a worldview that is based on shame, not right versus wrong. In the first section of this book, I gave a number of examples of how this affects the Muslim cultures of the Middle East. I would like to add the illustration of: ‘telling the truth.’

In most Western cultures, telling the truth is right and telling lies is wrong. In the Middle East, people don’t think of lies as being ‘right’ or ‘wrong.’ The question is, “Is what is being said honorable?” If a lie protects the honor of a tribe or nation, then it is fine. If a lie is told for purely selfish reasons, then it is shameful.

Thus, in the West we debate ethics by trying to determine if things are right or wrong. In the East, they debate ethics by trying to determine if things are honorable or shameful.

Shame in Western Culture

In the past, shame has played a role in Western culture. One has only to read Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*, or any of Shakespeare’s works to see the role that shame used to play. Shakespeare uses the word shame nine times as often as he does guilt. In the Western evangelical world, old Christian songs mention Christ’s death on the cross for our “sin and shame,” while many songs written during the twentieth century mention only our “sin and guilt.”

Why is this? I suspect that the popularity of Freud’s teachings is one reason. Sociologists generally credit Freudian psychology for the removal of guilt from Western culture. Since his teachings have become popular, in many universities, the concept of guilt has become unpopular and guilt has been assigned to others, such as our parents. Other factors, like the lack of responsibility within modern politics, have influenced young people today. Nixon and Watergate, Clinton and Lewinsky have illustrated to people today that “right versus wrong” is not the only way to think.

During the period of 1960 to 2000 Western civilization has begun a slow but steady shift away from the “right versus wrong” paradigm. Today, young people are very reluctant to label anything as right or wrong. Instead, things are assigned the label “cool.” In the eyes of many high school students, being cool is equivalent to being honorable. Those who are not cool are assigned terms such as “looser” or “nerd.” Being not cool is the equivalent of living in shame. Many young people choose their actions on the basis of honor and shame rather than on the basis of right versus wrong. I believe that this slow shift in worldview is responsible for many of the differences between boosters, boomers, busters, and Generation X’rs, and is also at the root of post-modern thinking that is growing in the Western world.

Shaming in History

While the Romans developed a legal system and made it universally applicable throughout their empire, they were still sensitive to the feeling of shame.

In republican Rome, criminals had the doors to their houses burned as a public sign that a criminal was living there. Those who had been wronged could legally follow the criminal around, chanting and accusing him in public places.

The concept of public shaming carried on into the Middle Ages, and even into Victorian England where criminals were put into stocks. These stocks were located in public places so that the criminal would be known and shamed before all. Pillories were rife during the Victorian Age when those who were pilloried had to endure the shame of publicly having rotten vegetables thrown at them. Branding criminals was practiced in England until the eighteenth century. Brands were often placed on the hands or face so that the criminals would be publicly shamed wherever they went.

The major difference between East and West is not the presence of the shame concept. In Rome and Medieval Europe shame was used in the legal process as a way of punishment. This is not the same as having a shame-honor mind-set. In the East shame rests on a person’s group rather than the individual. Since many Eastern societies function in a group setting, the whole group rather than an individual suffers. If the crime is bad enough, the group itself may oust or, for a severe offense, kill the offender.

In 1999 at least twenty-five women were killed to maintain the honor of their families in the country of Jordan. Many others were killed in countries like Egypt, Sudan, Syria, and Iran. On the positive side, prostitutes do not walk the streets of these countries, and most girls prefer to wait for marriage and restrict their sexual activities to within their marriage.

In many countries where shame-based culture is predominant, the names of criminals and those being ousted from their families for shameful activities are publicly printed in the newspapers. In Western countries we tend to isolate criminals from their surroundings and then determine if they are guilty. Criminals are then locked away out of sight, rather than publicly shamed in stocks in the public square.

It's interesting to notice that in the Crow First Nations culture (North American Indian culture), mocking of someone else's inappropriate behavior relates to shaming. This is sometimes called "buying-of-the-ways". If you imitate someone else's inappropriate behavior, you are "buying his ways." In some cases a person actually offers money to buy someone else's inappropriate behavior. This points out someone else's inappropriate behavior and brings shame upon them in an acceptable way to the rest of the tribe. In other words it is an accepted way of mocking shameful behavior.

In many shame-based cultures, rather than encourage, people criticize and question others. This is seen as positive, as it keeps them from becoming too proud.

Ken Guenther, in his paper *Pain in a Shame Culture, Help for the Filipino Pastor*, (a 1997 research paper for Dr. James Houston, Regent College) states: *"Because the pastor may be perceived as distant, his motives may be questioned, which is the most painful form of shame for the Filipino. Once the leader is seen to be going too far in his exercise of authority or to be too ambitious or proud, he is put down through the moral mechanism of shaming. The widely recognized "crab mentality" of Filipino culture is an illustration of this mechanism.... In a shame culture, however, mere success is not sufficient (it is not enough, for example, to know in your own mind that you are the best); public acknowledgment of one's superiority is essential."*

In the same way, Arabs are often quick to criticize leaders and pastors if they perceive that they are too ambitious or proud. They are sometimes publicly

questioned or shamed, and often they leave the ministry. If we do not like a pastor in the West, we usually quibble with his theology, and say he is not quite sound or we attack scholarship, or morals. We use different tactics because we live with a different worldview which demands different justifications. In the Middle East, new language students often experience that their neighbors are quick to point out that someone else speaks better than they do, or they are asked why they speak so poorly after being there for “a whole four months”! This criticism is often meant to keep them from being proud of how well they have done. Arabs understand that the criticism may be a compliment, but the poor Westerner is often crushed.

Conclusion

While all worldviews have certain elements of shame, there are worldviews that are primarily built on the element of shame versus honor. Just as guilt, fear and shame came upon mankind in the Garden of Eden; guilt, shame, and fear exist in all worldviews today. What makes a shame-based worldview unique is that its people have a much greater mix of shame and honor in their worldview than guilt and righteousness or fear and power.

The question that we as Christians must ask then is: What does the Bible say about all of this? Does the Bible have a clear message of God’s grace that can be expressed with shame and honor terminology rather than with legal terminology? I strongly believe it does, and this is what we will look into in the next chapter.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Have you been raised to think that: “It doesn’t matter what people think, it only matters if it is right or wrong?” If so, how has this chapter challenged you? If you were not raised this way, how would you answer someone who applies this rule to most everything?
2. How do you think a western concept of shame differs from an eastern concept of shame?
3. Do you think people in your target group are bound more by religion or by culture? Why?
4. What happens in your culture when someone is badly shamed? Perhaps they fail a test, or perhaps they fail society; how do they and others respond?

5. If there is a measure of honor in your target culture, what does it center around? Eg. individuals, families, tribes, religion, nation, gender, politics?
6. In your target culture, if someone is in a place of dishonor, how can their shame be removed and honor restored? Give examples.
7. What sort of heroes are upheld by your target culture? Do they defend right, provide power, or restore honor? Give examples from famous stories and also modern entertainment.
8. Do people tell lies in your target culture? In what situations would lying be OK and in what situations is it frowned on?
9. Have you noticed honor and shame issues in the west? What are they and how are they expressed?
10. How are people publicly shamed for their bad behavior in your target culture? Are new Christians treated in a similar way? Why or why not?

Assessing Worldview

Use the following table of decision making issues to help determine worldview makeup. Remember that there are no *right* answers and no *better* answers. For each decision assess how much guilt, shame or fear thinking went into (or will go into) making the decision. The answers for each decision should add up to 10. For instance, a decision not to rob when money is need might be based on guilt/innocence - 7, shame/honor - 2, fear/power - 1. The total must equal 10.

Guilt-Innocence: Decision made on basis of right and wrong, or what felt right or seemed good. The decision may also be made on the basis of not wanting to do the wrong thing.

Shame-Honor: Decision made on the basis of building or protecting the honor of self, family or group, or avoiding shame to self, family or group. Decision was made with others in mind, and what they would think.

Fear-Power: Decision made on the basis of fear, or finding a way to overcome things you were afraid of. For example, perhaps you pursued a specific career because of fear of financial failure.

Add up the totals in each column. They should equal 100 when combined. The totals of each column represent the percentage of guilt, shame, and fear in the worldview being assessed.

Assessing Worldview

Major Life Decision	G/I	S/H	F/P
Which school to go to			
What subject to major in			
What career to pursue			
Decision not to rob when money is need			
Person to marry			
What to spend on			
Where to live			
Car to drive			
How/where to educate kids			
What to do with elderly parents			
Totals			

The above assessment form is only an approximation and is not intended to be a professional tool for analyzing worldviews.

Chapter Seven

Honor and Shame in the Bible

Mohammed worked for the Ministry of Information at our local post office in Jordan. His job was to read mail that came in and out of the country. After a while, he discovered that the mail that came to my post box was rather interesting and he put into motion a plan to meet the owner of the post box. One night he offered to relieve the guard at the post office door, and that evening he saw me take mail from my post box. The next day I returned, and Mohammed made his move. He approached me and asked me questions about quotations he had read in my mail. He wanted to know who Isaiah was. I explained that he was one of the prophets. Mohammed was surprised. He thought that all the writings of the prophets had been lost. It wasn't long before a friendship developed between us, and Mohammed was reading a copy of the Bible.

One night Mohammed arrived at my house, obviously agitated. After the traditional cup of tea, Mohammed closed the windows to my living room, and sat close beside me, speaking almost in a whisper. He was afraid and said that the "walls may have ears." As we huddled together he explained that he had a problem with a Bible passage. His reading of the Bible had progressed smoothly until he had arrived at I Samuel 2:8. It was Hannah's song of praise to God for giving her baby Samuel. When Mohammed arrived at verse 8, he found something that he couldn't cope with. Hannah said "*He (God) raises the poor from the dust and lifts up the beggars from the dung hill; He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor.*" (rendered from the Arabic Bible).

Mohammed threw the Bible down on the coffee table. "No," he said emphatically. "This cannot be true. A beggar is a beggar, a prince is a prince. This is garbage."

As I stared at Mohammed's face, I suddenly saw a truth I had never seen before. This wasn't garbage; this was the Gospel. I Samuel 2:8 described the Gospel in the terms of God taking us from the shame of sin and raising us to being joint heirs with Christ. I was only 22 years of age at the time and just beginning my ministry in the Middle East, but God used this incident to start me down the path of understanding His plan for mankind in the area of shame and honor.

Today Western culture has lost most of its understanding of shame and honor, but the Bible is filled with it. The Bible begins with man's fall into shame and ends with man being anointed with glory and honor at God's right hand.

All through the Bible, references are made to shame and honor in various forms. The Bible tells us to honor God, our parents, elders, Christian leaders, and government leaders. It even talks about certain things being more honorable than others. In all, there are more than 190 references to honor in the Bible, while the various forms of the word 'guilt' are mentioned only forty times, and only seven of these are in the New Testament.

The Bible also addresses shame, mentioning it over one hundred times, but simply counting the word 'shame' is not enough. There are many underlying principles in the Bible that deal with shame and honor, and these demonstrate how God moves us from a position of shame to that of honor. The whole point of mentioning these numbers is simply to illustrate that shame and honor hold a place in the Bible alongside teachings about guilt and righteousness.

The main reason God allowed His people to fall into slavery in Egypt was to demonstrate to all the people of the world with a shame-based worldview that Jehovah God could raise his people from a position of shame in Egypt to one of honor among the nations. Leviticus 26:13 states, *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high."*

This is the overall message of the Bible. It is not just the story of God redeeming His people (a legal thought), but it is also the story of God raising his people from a position of shame to the ultimately honorable position of joint-heirs with Christ.

In the following pages, I have outlined a series of topics from the Scriptures that teach us how God is moving us from a position of shame to that of honor.

The position of shame is described in the Bible in a series of ways: disgraced, defiled, naked, sick, poor, accursed, ignorant and so on. Each of these topics is a powerful illustration of God's desire and power to move us from shame to honor. The bible is rich with illustrations, typologies and teachings that speak clearly to those with a strong mix of shame and honor in their worldview.

Almost everyone in a shame-based culture knows of someone who is acting more honorable than he or she really is. People laugh at them behind their backs. At one time, I was told by friends that an acquaintance of mine wasn't as big a man as he made out to be. He drove a Mercedes car, dressed in fine suits, and had four boys. He walked the streets very piously and in an honorable fashion, but everyone knew he was just a little man, holding a minor government position and had no special position in his tribe. He was not the big man he made himself out to be.

And so it is that we come to the message of grace in the Bible. God is the one who can elevate people from a position of shame to that of honor. No one can elevate himself. This is the unwritten rule of the east. Everyone knows their place, and must stay in it. The message of the Gospel is that God has the power and the desire to elevate man from his lowly position to a place of great honor. *"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame."* I Peter 2:6.

Each of the topics mentioned below illustrates this point and has numerous Biblical references which are relevant. These topics make great conversation starters, Bible study material, or even sermon outlines. They are the kind of thing that those ministering to people from shame-based cultures must be well versed in.

God moves us from being defiled to being cleansed

Many Eastern religions concentrate on ritual washings. Before a man can enter a mosque to pray, he must remove his shoes and wash. His shoes are symbols of the dirt that contaminates his life by living and walking in a defiled world. He removes his shoes and washes according to the age-old traditions and teachings of Islam. Then he can approach God in prayer, without shame.

In Muslim culture, shame and honor are attached to places and locations as well as to actions. Some places are more honorable than others. Some are

more shameful. A man can pray at home or in the market, but it is better to pray at the local mosque as the mosque has greater honor. Holy sites have even greater honor, and the Ka'ba in Mecca is the most honorable of all.

Before picking up the Qur'an to read, a Muslim must wash. Living in an evil world defiles his hands. After washing, he has removed the contamination that disqualified him from reading and hearing from God. Now he is deemed worthy.

After having relations with his wife, a Muslim man must bathe in order to be clean. If he does not, the very ground he walks on will become defiled. Once again, after ritual washing, he can approach God, but not before purification has occurred.

In most shame-based cultures the Christian can make an immediate connection between defilement and cleansing and the grace of God as revealed in the Bible. The Old Testament is full of this imagery:

In Exodus 30 we see that Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands and feet whenever they entered the tent of meeting or approached the altar; otherwise they would die. Their actions portrayed a picture of what was to come in Christ, who provided cleansing through the washing of the blood.

Leviticus 13 & 14 are about the cleansing of a leper. Remember that lepers were in a tremendous position of shame, even to the point of being isolated and having to go around crying out, "Unclean, unclean." Yet, in Leviticus 14, God provides a way of cleansing at the instigation of the priest, not of the leper. It is possible to make many comparisons between the cleansing of the leper and salvation.

Also in the Gospels, Jesus turned to the lepers to heal them, demonstrating God's desire to reach out to those in a place of shame and restore them.

In the Old Testament, blemished or defective animals were not permitted for sacrificial use. Items used for worship had to be anointed or consecrated. Unclean animals could not be used. Jesus in Mark 7:18-23 challenged the Pharisees in their use and understanding of cleansing and dietary laws, affirming that man himself is unclean.

The issue of cleanness centers on man's basic condition. In the West, Christians list man's sinful condition with a variety of legal words. How many of us include in that list that man is in a position of defilement? The law was

put in place not only to point out man's guilt and need of a Savior, but to also point out man's defilement and need for a Cleanser. Just as the Old Testament offerings drew attention to man's need for a sacrifice for sin, the acts of cleansing pointed out man's need for washing and purification from defilement.

Just as Christ's work on the cross once and for all removed our sin, it also, once for all, removed our defilement. *"The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who were ceremonially unclean sanctifies them so they were outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God?"* Hebrews 9:13, 14

Cleansing is fundamental to understanding grace. Mankind is unclean. It is not just that man is totally depraved; mankind is totally defiled.

If you use this paradigm, then New Testament stories about the cleansing of the lepers (Luke 5:12-14) and the Gentile woman who was defiled in the eyes of the Jews (Matthew 15:21-28) and the Jewish woman who bled for 12 years and was thus unclean for 12 years and unable to enter the temple (Mark 5:25-35) will become part of your teaching. These are the kinds of verses that speak loudly and clearly to people living in shame-based cultures, who need a Cleanser, a Savior, and a Redeemer.

From Naked to Clothed

In reinforcing our message of God's provision for shame, the illustration can be used of how God covers our nakedness and clothes us.

In the Garden of Eden, man's shame stemmed in part from man's nakedness. The New Testament tells us that our proper clothing is eternal, and that we groan and long to be clothed with it (II Corinthians 5:1-2). When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their eternal life and immediately felt naked and exposed. Until we reach heaven and are clothed with our eternal clothing, we will be in a position of nakedness and shame. II Corinthians 5 is a very useful chapter in explaining the Gospel to those who are from a shame-based culture. Many of Paul's illustrations and the whole basis of his teaching in this chapter demonstrate to the reader how God will someday clothe us with immortality.

However you want to state it theologically, nakedness and shame go together and can be a useful tool to use when sharing from the Scriptures. The

story of our nakedness and shame must start in Genesis 3. Job tells us in Job 1:21 that we were born naked, and the picture can be drawn of our shame and nakedness right from birth.

The Old Testament law contains many references to nakedness and gives many rules concerning whom one could marry. From the Old Testament law it is obvious that there can be many shameful relationships between people. Leviticus 18 is full of references to shameful relationships that were forbidden among God's redeemed people. The word used all through Leviticus 18 is "nakedness."

Isaiah also says, "*I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*"

In the New Testament, Jesus told the story of the prodigal son who returned home full of shame for what he had done. When his father welcomed him home, the first thing his father commanded was that a robe be brought for his son (Luke 15:22). In the same way, the first thing God does for his returning children is to raise them from a position of shame to a place of honor by covering us with the robe of righteousness.

The ultimate picture of God bearing our shame is found in Christ who was stripped of His clothing when He was hung on the cross. Roman prisoners were often hung naked on a cross, exposed for the scoffers to see and ridicule. Consequently, even in this, Christ bore not only our sin on the cross, but also our shame. Once for all, Christ died on the cross, bearing our shame so that we might be freed from shame as well as guilt.

There are many more references to nakedness and clothing, but in the final pages of the Bible, we are told how the believers will be clothed in heaven. At the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, we will come forth in our wedding garments. Right from Genesis to Revelation we see the unfolding of God's plan for man, starting with his nakedness and shame and clothing him with animal skins which represented the grace that would be provided by Christ on the cross.

From Expelled (from Eden and God) to Visited by God

In shame-based cultures, everyone knows how important it is to belong

to a family or tribe. This is part of the 'group' mind-set. Your group provides you with what you need in life. Everything from fellowship, money, opportunity, education, a spouse, and security is obtained through the group. A man without a group is in an impossible situation.

A Jordanian television series several years back dealt with the issues that arose when a man found himself in the shameful position of no longer having a family. The very act of being thrown out of your family is considered the ultimate shame. It is worsened in many countries when the expulsion story is announced in the newspaper so everyone knows that the person has been shamed.

Man was shamed when he was expelled from the Garden of Eden. The very act of expulsion added to man's shame. He was cast out of his home and away from the presence of his Father.

All through history man has lived separated from God. Even the Muslim can tell you that you cannot go into the presence of God, because God is honorable and you are in a position of shame.

The whole message of the Gospel revolves around the restoration of the relationship between God and man. Man is not in a position to elevate himself. Only God can restore the one who is ousted. Second, God used a Mediator. Mediators must be able to speak on equal terms with both God and us, and so Jesus became human, in order to mediate between us. It is only through the person of Jesus that a way is made so that our relationship with God can be restored. Through Jesus man moves from being expelled to being accepted. We now have access to God's throne room. We are now called sons of God, and God even elevates us to the position of being a joint-heir with Jesus.

A friend in the Middle East once preached a sermon on John 17 where Jesus prays to the Father and says these amazing words: *"I have given them the glory you have given me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* He went on to explain that Jesus has bestowed on every believer the glory and honor that God the Father bestowed on his son Jesus. Our position now is that of a joint-heir. Once we are in heaven we will fully enter into our inheritance.

The congregation had many questions afterwards. They couldn't believe that this type of honor was possible. Sometime after this the pastor realized that he

needed to balance his teaching with Jesus' teaching on humility and preference for serving others, to keep his congregation from becoming too proud.

These concepts leave a powerful impact on those from a shame-based culture. People can accept that God honored Jesus, because He was the Son of God and sinless and thus deserved honor. But the Bible says that Jesus has also glorified us and has given us the same honor. This honor is ultimately demonstrated in heaven where we are rewarded, honored, even to the place of being joint-heirs with Christ. The heir always has the ultimate honor in any tribe, and we are included in this honor.

From Weakness to Strength

The Bible makes numerous references to weakness. Man is in a weak condition, and often unable to help himself. He easily succumbs to sin and falls quickly into temptation. Many people want to be stronger, but lack the will power.

As I have already mentioned, while traveling in taxis in the Middle East, the drivers would usually offer me a cigarette. I remember one occasion when I refused, the driver commented that I must be very strong to resist the pressure. This provided a wonderful opportunity to share about the one who makes weak people strong.

Isaiah tells us, *“He gives strength to the weary, and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”* Isaiah 40:29-31

Jesus, in his earthly ministry, displayed a kind of strength that is passed on to the believers. Jesus gives us strength to stand in the day of trial, strength to endure, and strength to withstand the enemy in Jesus' name.

Grace and strength are tied together in 2 Corinthians 12:9 when Paul says *“But he (God) said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.”*

Peter adds in I Peter 5:10 *“And the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”*

The message of God's grace includes the concept that God wants to move us from a place of weakness to a place of strength; not our own strength, but Christ in us, the hope of glory, who is our strength.

From sickness to being healed

Why did Jesus spend so much time healing the sick? Part of the answer lies in the picture we have in the Bible of God moving man from a place of sickness to wholeness.

Part of the curse in Genesis is man's physical death. As soon as he is born, man begins the slow process of dying, and part of the dying process is sickness.

In Exodus 23:25, God told the children of Israel that if they obeyed His commands He would bless them and take sickness away from their land. However, in Deuteronomy 28:58-61 God warns them that if they do not obey His commands then God will bring sickness upon them as a punishment.

Sickness is one of the results of man's shameful and sinful position. It is part of the judgment of God on the entire human race. But through the person of Jesus, God demonstrates His power over sickness. In the book of Revelation, God tells us that in heaven there will be no more sickness and pain, (21:4) for they are part of the former things. Isaiah 53:5 says of the Messiah: "by his wounds we are healed".

God's ultimate plan of salvation can be demonstrated through God's plan to bring us from a place of sickness to a place of being healed, not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well. That is why we read that in heaven there will be no more sickness and no more tears.

As you can see from the examples above, there are many ways of explaining the Gospel to people without using legal terminology. Instead of expounding on more topics, I will simply list a number of others that I have heard ministers from shame-based worldviews use to explain the Gospel message to their own people.

- From dying to being raised
- From a place that is far from God to being indwelt by God's Spirit
- From imprisoned in the flesh to being set free by the Spirit
- From spiritually poor to having riches in God
- From failure and falling short to being made complete in Christ
- From being illegitimate children to being children of God

- From ignorant to being taught of God
- From blind to seeing
- From darkness to being enlightened by God
- From stumbling to being strengthened & encouraged
- From accused to being exonerated-represented
- From cursed to being blessed
- From tiredness to being renewed
and finally...
- From guilty to being redeemed

Yes, we should not forget this one. Legal concepts should be explained using the legal terminology of the culture. If a redemption analogy can be found in the culture then it can be useful to help demonstrate how God provides an answer to sin through the substitutionary death of Jesus on the Cross. However, redemption is a legal concept and other analogies could be sought to also explain the gospel to those in shame-based or fear-based cultures.

Once the person has understood how God is moving us from a position of shame to a position of honor, he may be able to also gain an understanding of the expression of God's plan to move us from being guilty to a place of receiving redemption.

Conclusion

When working with people who do not have a clear understanding of guilt I have discovered that if I explain the Gospel in terms of God wanting to lift us from a position of shame to that of honor, I get an immediate response. I usually have had to explain that the Bible is talking of spiritual riches, not physical and that when the Bible speaks of God honoring us, he does not want us to be filled with pride. In fact, Jesus makes it plain in the Sermon on the Mount that God honors the humble, not the proud. If God honors the proud, they only swell with pride, but when the humbled are honored, they simply grow more humble and turn the honor onto the one honoring them.

When sharing the gospel with those from a shame-based culture or worldview, it is important to also explain what the Bible teaches about guilt. An example of this is found in the book of Leviticus. Starting in Leviticus 1, God begins to define what guilt is, and how presenting a 'guilt offering' can

make the person clean again. Many of us take the instructions in Leviticus for granted, but for those coming out of the Egyptian fear-power worldview, and living in the Semitic shame-honor worldview, clear instructions were needed to define guilt.

From the Scriptures we can see that God is not in the business of shaming his followers. Rather, He is in the business of exchanging shame for honor. King David discovered this and recorded those wonderful words in Psalm 3:3, “You are the lifter of my head.” Many well meaning Bible teachers from a guilt-based worldview have inadvertently put great fear into believers from shame-based worldviews by teaching about God’s judgment without mentioning that God will honor His children, and publicly condemn and shame those who have rejected Him. Romans 8:1 tells us that there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

We see in Isaiah 57:15 that God “*dwells in a high and holy place with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*” James continues this thought with, “*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.*” (James 4:10) God’s action of lifting the humble is all part of the outpouring of His grace. Grace is far more than forgiveness. It must also include God’s work of restoring the honor of His followers. This is the work of glorification that Jesus refers to in John chapter 17.

In the following chapter, I would like to examine what happens when worldviews clash. Then in later chapters I would like to look at Islam in the Middle East as a case study of how a shame-based culture works. Finally I would like to draw this section to a conclusion by examining what a clear presentation of the Gospel should contain if it is to address all three aspects of fear, shame, and guilt.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Read Leviticus 26:13. What do you think this verse would say to your target culture?
2. Is the concept of cleansing important to your target culture? What parallels could you draw from Aaron's need to wash in Exodus 30:17-21, or the cleansing of lepers in Leviticus 13 & 14? How could you apply Hebrews 9:13, 14?
3. How important is clothing in your target culture? What parallels can you draw between nakedness and shame, and fine clothing and honor? Use II Corinthians 5:1-2 and Isaiah 61:10, and the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32.
4. Is belonging an important part of your target culture? What stigma is put on people who are banished? What can you teach from this concept, using our expulsion from the presence of God? Use Genesis 3 and Ephesians 2:13.
5. Are there other ways you can think of illustrating the gospel truth that God wants to move us from a position of shame to a place of honor?
6. Which of your core beliefs have been challenged or strengthened though reading this chapter? Why?

Chapter Eight

Clash of Worldviews

In the last chapters we have been examining what I believe are the three *common-ancestral worldviews*. In each of these paradigms there is a basic tension between two extremes. The three paradigms are:



It is possible to define logical thinking using each of these paradigms. When analyzing a culture I have often used the question: “How are decisions arrived at?” as a useful tool for determining how much of each of these paradigms is operating in any given culture.

While it is possible to find all three dynamics in most cultures usually one or two are more dominant. Some cultures, however, operate almost entirely within one major paradigm. Additionally, cultures and worldviews are constantly shifting. The shift may be slow or fast depending on the events of history.

For example, in the western Canadian culture that I experienced in my childhood, guilt and innocence played an almost exclusive role. Almost everyone I knew made decisions based on right and wrong. Shame and fear played a very small role in our world. I believe that the roots of this worldview go back to the early pioneers. When the settlers arrived on the prairies of Canada, no one cared what family they came from. The desperately poor of Europe homesteaded beside families from well to do European backgrounds. None of that mattered in the harsh new world. Those that worked hard survived, those that did not,

died in the cold Canadian winters. This reality shaped a worldview where hard work, and doing things right were the most important elements. Family honor, old traditions, and fear of others were scoffed at. The harsh new world created a new man with a new worldview. But once a few generations passed, honor and shame began to grow in importance, although it still plays a very small role.

During the founding of the Roman Empire, the citizens of Rome operated almost entirely within a fear-power worldview, worshipping a pantheon of gods. As their civilization developed, they introduced the idea of law being higher than the emperor. With this one step they accepted the concept of guilt and innocence as an important element in their worldview. As their civilization developed, they moved almost completely away from the fear-power worldview. However, as their empire expanded, they also slowly introduced into it shades of the shame-honor worldview.

One only has to watch the Godfather movies to see how fear-power and shame-honor are the two paradigms that many Italians moved in during that era. South European culture had almost entirely lost its guilt-innocence perspective on life.

The Freudian question, “*Why do you have so much guilt?*” is not the question society is asking today. Now people are asking, “*Who am I?*” People are seeking to discover who they are, and want to find an identity because their worldview is in flux. Thus, many questions can consume us: “Who am I and how can I express myself?,” “How can I enjoy myself?,” “Am I fully exercising my rights?,” and “What are my options in life, and am I able to choose?”

Dr. James Houston of Regent College in Vancouver, Canada, thinks that in our post-modern North American culture, guilt is being replaced by shame. As I mentioned earlier, the concept of something being “cool” or “not cool” seems to have many similarities to shame and honor-based thinking. Others that I have spoken with feel that American culture is moving more towards including a greater mix of fear-power based culture. I believe this is illustrated by the award winning American documentary “Bowling for Columbine” and in the American reaction to the destruction of the World Trade Centre.

We must be careful here not to try and make all cultures fit into one of the three categories: guilt, shame, or fear. Cultures are made up of a mixture of

all three common ancestral worldviews. Individual families and even individual people may identify with a different mix of worldview.

As an example, in one family you may have an individual who is an evangelical Christian with strong traditional roots. This person may relate much of life to guilt-innocence thinking. A teenager in the same family may not quite see everything as so black and white and may be reluctant to accept things as being right or wrong. Rather, he or she wants to be seen as cool and desires to act and dress as cool. To be anything less would be humiliating. At the same time, a third member of the family may be into the occult, psychics, and horoscopes. He or she may see life as being influenced by the stars and occultic powers. Thus, in one family, you may have people who have been differently influenced by the three common ancestral worldviews.

Digging deeper, we may find that these people do not hold strictly to one or the other of these mega-trends, but that they have adopted some of each of them into their lives.

This can be illustrated by looking at culture among North American First Nations. Most of these cultures are made up of a mixture drawn from shame-honor and fear-power common ancestral worldviews. One North American native I spoke to seemed to be torn between seeking revenge against someone who had shamed him, and wanting to pray for him in the Indian sweat lodge.

The sweat lodge and the shaman religious leaders point us towards the fear-power based worldview of the native peoples. However, the tradition of honoring or shaming people through songs at tribal powwows can help us see the importance of honor and shame in their society. As I have read about aboriginal culture and history, and as I have interacted with missionaries working among North American First Nation people, I have been amazed at how clearly these cultural traits are part of everyday life.

Likewise, Hinduism and Shintoism are mixtures of shame-honor and fear-power paradigms. Even Russian culture is a mixture, one part being the shame-honor worldview of the East and the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the fear-power worldview of tsars and later the communists.

Clash of Cultures

In many cases where guilt-innocence cultures have contacted shame-honor cultures, they have clashed. As an example, the early settlers in North America could not understand or appreciate the North American First Nations perspective on life. In the end, many First Nations people chose to die rather than face the shame of living on a reservation.

In North America in 1889, a young Paiute prophet known as Wovoka gave a message from his home in the Nevada desert. His disciples sent it to all the First Nations peoples across Western America. The message from their prophet simply urged the Indians to “Dance everywhere. Keep on dancing. You must not ... do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always.” Soon village after village of Sioux began to perform his “Ghost Dance” with its promise of a return to the old ways in a world from which whites would have been erased by a flood.

The dancing appalled and frightened whites and they wired to Washington for protection. Army troops fanned out to round up the Ghost dancers and to settle them on reservations. Among the last to be caught was a group of about 350 Sioux under Chief Big Foot. They were led to a military camp at Wounded Knee Creek where they set up camp under a flag of truce. An incident triggered gunfire. When the firing ended, more than 150 First Nations people, men, women, and children, lay dead. Others fled or crawled off wounded. Chief Red Cloud said of the incident, “We had begged for life, and the white men thought we wanted theirs.”

The guilt-based values of the settlers dictated that First Nations people must obey the law and live on special reservations. Fear-Power based values of the natives said that the Ghost Dance would change the situation. Sadly, it ended with a massacre.

It is said that the Nez Perce tribe could boast that since Lewis and Clark first encountered their friendliness in Oregon country, no Nez Perce had ever killed a white man. Even when their treaties were broken and settlers crowded into their lands, they avoided retaliation. In 1877 they were given thirty days

to move to a distant reservation in Idaho. Hoping to escape, they began an epic flight to Canada. They were caught 40 miles from the border and turned back.

In this case, shame-based cultural values clashed with guilt-based values. Being cooped up on the reservation was a terrible shame and the ultimate humiliation for Indian chiefs. Leaving the reservation was breaking the law.

In 1878 a band of northern Cheyenne left the reservation to return to their old lands “where their children could live.” Overtaken by soldiers, a chief said, “We do not want to fight you, but we will not go back.” Clearly the shame of living on the reservation was too much for them. As they had broken the law by leaving, and now refused to return, the troops opened fire. Some Indians escaped and continued their journey. They met up with soldiers at Fort Robinson where they faced an ultimatum. “Go south or go hungry.” Court records tell us what happened next. *“In the midst of the dreadful winter, with the thermometer 40 degrees below zero, the native peoples, including the women and children, were kept for five days and nights without food or fuel and for three days without water. At the end of that time they broke out of the barracks.”* Troops hunted them down. They chose death over returning to the shame and humiliation of reservation life. Today many natives still feel the sting of shame. Many have turned to the numbing effects of alcohol, and others have immersed themselves in their native religions as they seek answers to their problem of self-esteem.

Western civilizations have now turned their attention to more global issues. Global travel and trade have forced the west into a position of trying to understand people from different cultures.

When researching the material for this book, I became aware of the large number of books in print in the Western world that deal with the Muslim or Arab mind-set. These books exist not only in the religious sector but also in the political and business sectors. Westerners, for whatever reason, struggle when they encounter Arabs and other Muslims. Western businessmen struggle to know how to do business in the Muslim world. Western politicians are often confused and unprepared for the actions and reactions of Muslim leaders. Political misunderstandings and blunders have created hardships and even wars. Christian missionaries have not fared much better in their efforts to communicate the Christian message.

Throughout the history of Christian outreach to the Muslim peoples

of the world, Christians have faced tremendous struggles in knowing how to communicate clearly the Gospel message. Most of the church's efforts at communication have been received like water off a duck's back. The message is proclaimed, and the hearers are completely indifferent, sometimes resistant, and occasionally hostile.

Over the years, countless misunderstandings have developed between Christians and Muslims. Muslims often view Christians as immoral idolaters and blasphemers holding to old documents of untrustworthy heritage. Many Christians are suspicious of Muslims, viewing them as dangerous and unpredictable. Some go as far as thinking that all Muslims are violent and oppressive.

The battle lines have been drawn. Many believers in the Lord Jesus find missionary work among Muslims undesirable, a waste of money, and perhaps even offensive.

The secular world has had its fair share of troubles. Political tensions and issues create misunderstandings on both sides. Many Muslims view Western countries as expansionist and threatening. Many Western nations view Muslims as terrorists and their governments as oppressive. The average Western person reacted very negatively to leaders such as Ayatollah Khomeini, Muammar al-Qaddafi and Saddam Hussein. Oil-rich Arabs are viewed as a threat to the economic stability of the West. Desperately poor and oppressed Arabs such as the Palestinians are looked upon as terrorists. On a political level, Muslim nations and Western nations have fared no better than Muslim and Christian clerics in understanding one another.

As a consequence of such misunderstandings over the years, Westerners have tried to understand the Arab Muslim mind. This is why there are many books and articles currently in print on the topic of the Arab mind.

Everyone realizes the importance of this topic. A St. Louis Post Dispatch revealed some of the US military thinking when it stated "Pentagon Threat-Assessment Officer Major Ralph Peters believes intelligence officers must set aside their preoccupation with numbers and weaponry. Instead, he says, they must start reading books that explain human behavior and regional history."

The religious world has reacted much the same way. Theologians from all backgrounds are now crying out for a greater effort at understanding each

other's view points, and for a renewed effort in accepting one another's views.

The problem of understanding one another is not easy. When we meet another person whose system of beliefs is different, we tend to interpret that system according to our own framework of understanding. It can take months and even years of living in another culture to begin to understand that culture, but not everyone reaches a point of understanding. Many Westerners living in an Arab culture simply define the worldview around them according to their own understanding and perspectives. They assume that the other person thinks in a similar pattern as they do. They then try to understand the culture from their own framework, based on their own worldview. Years ago I started out this way, but soon realized that I could not fit everything into neat packages. There was something about Arab society that I did not understand.

My wife and I entered the Arab culture when I was a twenty-two year old student. At that point I had read many books about Arab culture and thought. My move to the Arab world was not so much a conscious decision to understand them as it was a conscious decision to become part of their culture and worldview. I initially concentrated on language learning and cultural adaptation. We began by living among the Arabs in the Levant. After two years, we moved to the edge of the Empty Quarter. Several years later we moved to what was then the Yemen Arab Republic. Many years later, we returned to the Levant and made our home there. Our last years in the Middle East were spent living among a nomadic Bedouin tribe. All together we have spent more than thirty years either immersed in the Arab culture while living in the Middle East or living in the west and doing research into Middle Eastern topics.

I say this only to point out that our personal experience with the Arab world has been based on a wide variety of exposures over a long period of time. Along with our personal experience, we have cultivated friendships with foreigners and nationals living in a host of other Muslim countries, stretching from North Africa to Indonesia, and have spent several years traveling and teaching seminars on shame-based cultures.

During our years in the Middle East, I was involved in various types of employment and mixed with different levels of society. I have visited the marble palaces of oil-rich Arab sheiks. I have also sat in the tents of the poorest Bedouin Arabs. I worked for a number of years as a liaison officer for a Western

organization, interacting with varying levels of government in the Yemen Arab Republic. In the Levant, I worked with charities reaching out to the poor and handicapped. As a rule, we have made our home in lower to middle income neighborhoods.

In whatever situation we have found ourselves, we have endeavored to understand and communicate our beliefs to those around us so that they could better understand us, our religion and the society we come from.

One of my initial personal goals was to discover how the Arab mind worked. And so, with my Western training ingrained in my thinking, I started asking, "What is going on now?" That seemed to be my favorite question, and for many years I was curious to know what was going on in my neighborhood, in my city and in my nation. I even wanted to know what was going on in my neighbor's head.

During all of these years, I began to notice patterns emerging. The oil-rich Arabs of the Gulf, the mountain people of Yemen, the Bedouin of the desert, and the city dwellers of the Levant all held similar codes of conduct. While each region had its peculiarities, there was an overall pattern of similarity between the cultures.

These patterns, however, were not always clearly noticeable. Often there were many confusing and seemingly contradictory events. It was hard to work out what was happening, but in time, I moved on from trying to understand *what* was happening to trying to understand *why* what was happening was happening. I refused to believe that people acted and reacted unpredictably. In fact, the longer I lived in the Arab world, the more I recognized the predictability of the Arabs. During the Gulf War years I was able to predict certain events in the war days and sometimes weeks, before they happened. I found the Gulf War tremendously stressful. Watching Western news, I could understand the actions and re-actions of the Western nations. Having lived in the Middle East, I could understand the actions and re-actions of the Arab nations. On one side was Western understanding, and on the other was Muslim understanding, and in the middle was the yawning chasm of misunderstanding. As a result, countless millions of people paid the price with their lives, their wounds, and tremendous economic loss.

It was during this time that I began to realize how far apart Western and Muslim thinking patterns really are. The West sees events and interprets them one way. The Arabs see events and interpret them another way. It isn't that one was right and the other was wrong. Thinking in terms of right versus wrong is a Western thought pattern. During the Gulf War, Western governments poured their resources into proving to their citizens that they were on the side of right, and that Saddam Hussein was on the side of wrong. Numerous instances were relayed to the Western public to prove the wrongness of the Iraqi leaders. The people of the West watched their TV's and interpreted the news according to rightness and wrongness, with the majority supporting their government's actions.

In the Middle East, the situation was less clear. Many Arab nations initially supported Saddam Hussein, and only in the face of tremendous Western pressure did they start to withdraw their support. Almost all of my Arab friends told me that Saddam Hussein acted predictably and strove manfully to protect his honor and the honor of his nation. Not one of them ever discussed the rightness or the wrongness of the war.

And so, my study of the Arab Muslim mind became more intense. What was it that made this mind-set so different from my own? During this process, I also wrestled with the concept of cross-cultural communication. My role in the Middle East has always been that of a cross-cultural communicator of the gospel. I have always sought to find ways of clearly presenting the message and teachings of the Christian Church as found in the Bible.

As I wrestled with Muslim thought patterns, I began to question my own culture. How did we develop our own thought patterns? Were they right? Is my own culture "balanced" in its view of life on planet earth? During the course of history, what forces have molded my own worldview? I spent many hours studying history in order to understand how events in history molded our Western thinking and also Muslim thinking.

Eventually I arrived at conclusions that have been helpful in aiding me in communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those with a Muslim mind-set. As I shared this information with other missionaries in other settings, they reacted positively, and began to contribute ideas from their cultural setting. Eventually I was asked to speak in a variety of settings taking me from Asia

through Europe and eventually to the First Nation people of my native land. Having said this, I also realize that worldviews are changing. As the world is impacted by globalization, people with very narrow or simplistic worldviews are being challenged. This clashing and altering of worldviews is leaving many people uncertain and afraid because many of the foundational principles of their lives are being challenged.

This is happening on every front. Traditional Islam is being challenged. Islam in the West is struggling to find bridges between Western cultural norms and the Muslim mind-set. In my interaction with Muslim clerics in Britain and North America, I have been amazed at their reinterpretation of certain verses in the Qur'an. These Muslim clerics have arrived at these new interpretations because new interpretations are necessary if Islam is to have any real impact on Western guilt-based society. But Western culture is also changing as it adapts to the pressures of globalization.

In the next two chapters we will look at shame and honor in Arab Muslim culture as a case study of how shame-based cultures operate. In doing this, I will not deal with the typical parts of Muslim culture that are often addressed. I will not dwell on, "How much coffee goes into the coffee cup?" nor "How many times it should be served?" We will not look at body language, rules of etiquette, nor the unspoken rules of the desert. These are all part of culture and vary from setting to setting. In these chapters, however, I want to go deeper and look at the basic fundamental mind-set of Muslims. I want to examine the issues that are most important to the Muslim worldview and upon which their cultural is built.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Most people's worldview is changing, especially now that globalization has brought about massive changes in every part of the globe. Do the Worldview Analysis (chapter 16) for your target culture or have a national brother or sister fill it in. You may have to explain the three common-ancestral worldviews to them before they do the analysis. If you have time, have both young people and older people fill one in. What do you think is changing in the culture? What is being reduced and what is being added in terms of guilt, shame and fear?
2. If you are a North American, view the movie "Bowling for Columbine" and then discuss how you feel American and Canadian cultures are changing.
3. Think about some of the clashes your target people group have had with other people groups. How much of this was influenced by a clash of worldviews? Are these wounds still felt in their society today? How can you speak to them or minister through them?
4. Today Muslims are often not only misunderstood but their character is also maligned. How is this manifested in your situation, or in your extended family or church? Are the accusations fair? How much of this is due to a clash of worldviews?
5. Does the exposure to teaching about guilt, shame and fear based cultures make it easier or harder to live in today's world? Explain your thoughts.

Chapter Nine

Case Study: Islam and Shame

“Arab society is a shame-based society,” says Dr. Sania Hamady, an Arab scholar and one of the greatest authorities on Arab psychology. “There are three fundamentals of Arab society,” she goes on to state, “shame, honor and revenge.”

A few years ago, Arabs were loath to talk about their culture. Most Arab people had never interacted with outsiders to the degree that they would start to examine their own and the others’ cultures. That has changed, and today you will find Arab psychologists and Arab media speaking out about their own culture. There are a number of issues that they raise as being important to them.

Group Mind-set

Arabs have always lived in groups and they tend to do everything from a group mind-set. The larger extended family makes up one’s group, and the gathering of all of one’s relatives makes up the tribe.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this book, Arabs have defined their relationships with others in terms of near and far. Those who are related to you by blood are near, and those from other tribes are far. People can be brought into a near relationship through marriage or adoption. If a foreigner is adopted as a “son of the tribe,” a great honor has been bestowed upon him.

Arabs usually demand a high degree of conformity from those who are near to them. This conformity brings honor, social prestige and a secure place in society. The individual who conforms to the group has the advantage, in that all the members of his group are bound to demonstrate concern for his interests, and they will defend him unquestioningly against “outsiders.”

Relationships

From top to bottom, Arab society is permeated by a system of rival relationships. This is because in the Arab value system, great value and prestige are placed on the ability to dominate others. In the constant struggle to dominate and to resist domination, the rivals of a given group quickly seize on any “shame” that can destroy the other group’s influence. Isolating a target and thereby destroying it often achieves this, as an individual could not survive in the desert outside of the group setting. If one tribe insults the honor of another tribe, the entire tribe will respond in order to protect their place of honor.

Arabs fear isolation because in their view an individual or small group can only function effectively when he or it is identified with a group or a large body that can offer support and protection. This fear of isolation can be attributed to the fear that the Bedouins had of being isolated and left as individuals or small groups to fend for themselves in the harsh, hostile desert environment. Isolated individuals could easily be taken as slaves by other tribes and could spend the rest of their lives in low and mean positions. By sticking together, individuals could offer each other protection. Thus family units and firmly established relationships became paramount in knowing whom you could trust and who would stand by you if an outside force attacked you. Proverbs 14:28 shows similar thinking when it states: “A large population is a king’s glory, but without subjects a prince is ruined.”

Shame

There are many types of shame in Arab society. For an Arab, failure to conform is damning and leads to a place of shame in the community. This is often hard for Westerners to understand. We in the West value our individualism, but Arabs value conformity. The very meaning of Islam is to conform to the point of submission. The object of public prayers and universal fasting is to force conformity on all. There is an Arab proverb that can be translated, “Innovation is the root of all evil.” If one fails to conform, he is initially criticized. If he continues to refuse to conform he is put in a place of shame by the community.

Shame can also be brought on by an act. Raping one’s sister is considered

by all as a shameful act. However, few things are considered right or wrong.

Right and wrong in Islam are usually defined in terms of what is forbidden by the Qur'an. But the Qur'an doesn't provide a nice list of rights and wrongs, so Muslims often talk about society. Society dictates what is acceptable and unacceptable. If you act against society, you may be acting shamefully, but not necessarily wrongfully in God's eyes. After all, the Qur'an tells them that God created good and evil.

Muslim men use this rationalization when living in what they consider an immoral Western nation. They can drink alcohol and partake in sexual escapades because the society they are living in doesn't define this as shameful. Something may be shameful at home, but when in different circumstances, the Arab may react differently. There is a proverb that states, "Where you are not known, do whatever you like."

Beyond this, shame is not only an act against the accepted system of values, but it can also include the discovery, by outsiders, that the act has been committed. Dr. Hamady puts it this way: "He who has done a shameful deed must conceal it, for revealing one disgrace is to commit another disgrace." There is an Arab proverb that says, "A concealed shame is two thirds forgiven."

A Syrian scholar, Kazem Daghestani, tells of an Arab husband who caught his wife in bed with another man. He drew a gun and pointed it at the couple while addressing the man. "I could kill you with one shot," he said. "But I will let you go if you swear to keep secret the relationship you have had with my wife. If you ever talk about it, I will kill you." The man took that oath and left and the husband divorced his wife without divulging the cause. He was not concerned about the loss of his wife or her punishment but about his reputation. Public shaming and not the nature of the deed itself or the individual's feelings had determined his action.

The story is told of a sheik who was asleep under a palm tree. A very poor Arab saw him and stole his expensive cloak. When he awoke the sheik was angry and his family hunted down the thief and brought him to trial. When asked for an explanation, the accused said, "Yes, I did steal this cloak. I saw a man asleep under a tree, so I had sexual relations with him while he slept and then I took the cloak." The sheik immediately asked to reexamine the cloak. After quickly looking it over he replied "This is not my cloak," and the thief went free.

The possibility of failure in some way also fills Arabs with dread, as failure leads to shame. Often an Arab will shrink from accepting challenges or risk when others are observing him. However, when away from his family this can change drastically. A meek Lebanese businessman at home can become a shrewd risk taker in the middle of Africa.

When there is failure, often outside forces are blamed. Anger, resentment, and violence are focused on outside elements in order to shift the blame to them.

In the case of other Orientals with similar shame-honor type cultures, failure is often focused on the individual. For example, a Japanese businessman may take his life when faced with tremendous shame. In an Arab situation, the Arabs will assign blame to someone else and react violently towards him.

As a result, it is easy to unintentionally offend an Arab. They have a very detailed code of conduct, and breaking that code can result in offense. This can be as simple as pouring too much coffee in a cup, making your visit too short, or serving unequal amounts of cold drink in visible clear glasses.

Shame can also result when each Arab is not treated as a special case. He expects rules to be bent to suit his convenience. He expects to be the favorite, and his friends have to constantly assure him that he counts more than others.

For example, when interviewing a number of businessmen, each interview should be conducted exactly the same length of time. I once heard of a man who accused an interviewer of spending five more minutes with the previous man. The interviewer got out of the situation by explaining that the extra time was necessary because the previous man could not express himself as eloquently and therefore took longer.

There are lots of little things in Arab culture that matter greatly. Everything in the culture has meaning, and an action as simple as stretching the left hand towards a person's face, as a Westerner might do in casual gesticulation, could be tantamount to telling many Arabs that he has the evil eye and that your hand was used defensively against it.

It is important to realize that shame is not attached to all of the actions that we would call wrong. While raping one's sister is a very shameful act, things like lying can be either shameful or honorable, depending on the circumstances.

Al Ghazali, the medieval Muslim theologian stated: "Know that a lie is not wrong in itself, but only because of the evil conclusions to which it leads

the hearer, making him believe something that is not really the case. Ignorance sometimes is an advantage, and if a lie causes this kind of ignorance it may be allowed. It is sometimes a duty to lie... if lying and truth both lead to a good result, you must tell the truth, for a lie is forbidden in this case. If a lie is the only way to reach a good result, it is allowable. A lie is lawful when it is the only path to duty... We must lie when truth leads to unpleasant results, but tell the truth when it leads to good results.”

The rule for telling the truth, or not to, is bound by honor and shame. If shame can be avoided, or honor obtained, then lying is more honorable, and therefore the thing to do.

Shame as part of culture

The most common Arabic word for shame is “ayb”. It is used repeatedly in child raising and usually means “shameful.” In most cases it is not applied to very young children, because it implies a degree of prior knowledge and instruction that should have been followed. Older children who have disobeyed or have behaved disrespectfully are usually given a lecture which begins and ends with “ayb” or “shame.”

The instruction about shame is not restricted to just relatives. Almost anyone can instruct children, telling them that what they are doing is shameful, and usually the children will respond positively, not negatively. The power of the negative use of shame enforces positive reactions in people’s lives. Children learn very early on that their personal behavior represents a part of the whole of family honor. Once this sense of honor is acquired, it remains with the person throughout life.

Sometimes when greeting an Arab and asking, “How are you?” one gets the answer “mastur al-hal” or “the conditions are covered.” This means, everything is all right as all shame is covered.

On the other hand, there are many ways of evoking violent reactions from others, using verbal abuse. This verbal abuse usually insinuate something shameful about a family member and thus evoke violent reactions from the listeners. This can result in bloodshed if someone does not intervene. In many ways it is similar to the old American West where the gunfighter exclaims, “You called me a liar! Those are shooting words.” He pulls his gun and kills the person

who implied that he was a liar. People in the old American West determined whether this was right or wrong if the other man also had a gun on his body. If he was armed but slower, it didn't matter. The fact that he carried a gun made it "alright" for the offended person to kill him.

People in the Western world seldom realize the powerful reactions that public shaming invokes in shame-based cultures. When President Bush Jr. of the USA called a number of nations the "Axis of Evil", those nations reacted very violently, even to the place of starting to produce nuclear weapons. The leaders of those nations felt that they must do something. They had been publicly shamed by the most powerful man in the world. If they did not react in a face-saving manner, they would lose the respect of their own people. So massive reactions took place in Iraq, North Korea, and Iran. Much of this was lost in the Western media reports that focused on the alarming character of their actions rather than realizing what sort of offense took place.

In Arab culture, shame must be avoided at all cost. If it strikes, it must be hidden. If it is exposed, then it must be avenged. At all costs, honor must be restored, even if it means the loss of one's own life in the attempt.

Fear of shame among Arabs is so powerful because the identification between the individual and the group is far closer than in the West. Because Arabs think in a group mind-set, the importance of the group outweighs the importance of the individual. If an individual is in a position of shame, he loses his influence and power, and through him his entire group will similarly suffer, perhaps to the point of destruction.

Revenge

Shame can be eliminated by revenge. This is sanctioned by the Qur'an (Sura 6, 173). "Believers, retaliation is decreed for you in bloodshed."

It may also be eliminated through financial payment by fellow kinsmen in their group, or by the public treasury. In the case of a killing, the price of the blood must be settled between whatever groups are involved.

This need for revenge is as strong today as it ever was. In Egypt in 1972, out of 1,120 cases of murder, it was found that 25 percent of the murders were based on the urge to "wipe out shame," 30 percent on a desire to satisfy "wrongs", and another 30 percent on blood-revenge.

In the small country of Jordan, honor killings (killings to preserve honor) have come to public attention. The Jordanian penal code in the 1950's stated: *"He who discovers his wife or one of his female relatives committing adultery and kills, wounds or injures one or both of them is exempt from any penalty."* Some years later a penalty of one year imprisonment was instituted as many murders were being classified as honor killings.

In January 2000 the Jordanian government rejected a bill that would increase the punishment for someone who commits murder because of protecting the honor of the family from one year to life imprisonment. Then in the opening months of 2000, members of the royal family in Jordan joined a demonstration of young Arabs protesting the laws and attitudes about honor killings. Growing numbers of Jordanian young people are being educated in the West, and Western thinking and culture is beginning to clash with traditional Eastern thinking and culture.

Peace

In traditional Arab culture, peace is a secondary value when compared to the degree of feelings that shame and revenge invoke. This has led to the Western impression that peace in the Arab context is merely the temporary absence of conflict.

In Arab tribal society where Arab values originated, strife was the normal state of affairs. In the past, the ideal of permanent peace in Islam was restricted to the community of Islam and to those non-Muslims who accepted the position of protected persons and paid tribute to Islam. On the other hand, Islam instituted jihad (holy war) as the accepted relationship with non-Muslim states and made no provision for peace with them as sovereign states. Only a truce was permissible, and that was not to last for more than ten years.

This form of thinking then influences all aspects of life. As it has commonly been stated: "There is honor within Islam, shame without."

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Do your target people have a 'group' mind-set? Do they make decisions in groups or as individuals? Who is included in the group or in the decision making process?
2. How important are relationships for your target people? On what basis are most relationships formed? Eg. Blood lines, common allegiances, religion, culture, common interests, politics, etc.,
3. Are people outside of the group treated as outsiders or in some way alienated from the decisions the group makes?
4. Do individuals in the group have enemies because they are perceived as enemies to the group in general?
5. Do people in your society fear isolation? Why or why not?
6. In what ways is shame brought upon people in your target group? Think about things such as bad acts, being different, failure, etc.
7. When people are away from their group, do they act differently? How much does the group affect how they act and react when they are with others of the group?
8. What vocabulary or proverbs do your target people have that focuses on shame and honor? How are these concepts expressed? Is there a rich vocabulary or set of proverbs?
9. Are there acts or words that cause people to react very strongly?
10. What are some of the ways that you see perceived shame being hidden in your target culture?
11. If a major shame cannot be hidden, how do people react in your target culture?
12. How do the local religions deal with the shame-honor issue? What do they teach?
13. List some of the characteristics of Jesus that would demonstrate that he was an honorable person.

14. How did Jesus confront the shame – honor system of his day? What did he teach?
15. The Bible challenges the way people consider honor and cultural honor systems. What does the Bible say should be the basis of esteeming honor rather than simply adhering to an honor system?
16. Should missionaries focus on destroying the honor-shame basis of culture, or should they seek to address what gives honor, and any abuses that may arise from the current system?
17. Do guilt based cultures have abuses, follies and vices? Is this cultural system any better or worse than shame-based cultures?

Chapter Ten

Case Study: Islam and Honor

“Honor is understood in a complex way as the absence of shame, for honor and shame are bound to one another as complementary, yet contradictory ideas.” (Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Islamic Values and Social Practice*, 1994.)

The other side of shame is honor, and every Arab desires and strives to be and become more honorable. The relationship between shame and honor has long been recognized by sociologists of Arab and Muslim cultures and has also been attributed to the generalized Mediterranean social complex.

In many cases the absence of shame conveys the idea of honor. Many times I have heard Arabs describe their families as being honorable because they don't do or act as others might. Conforming to social mores is of utmost importance to maintaining one's honor.

Honoring Elders

Arab storytellers tell the story of a father who is working in the hot sun with two of his sons. When he needed a drink, he asked the older of the boys to get him some water. “No, I will not,” the elder son replied. The father then asked his younger son who said “Yes, certainly father,” but he did not get the water. At this point the storyteller always asks his audience, “Which is the better son?” To give the wrong answer would be shaming, but the storyteller knows that his listeners will give the correct answer. The younger son is the better of the two because he had saved his father's face by not defying him.

In the West we would point out that both boys were wrong. This answer does not make sense to the Arab. What he regards as wrong is determined differently, i.e. in terms of shame and honor. To say no to your father's face

would be to dishonor him, so that would be utterly wrong. To agree with him while in front of him is to honor him and that is good and right. Only one boy has done wrong according to this thinking. When Jesus told a similar story in Matthew 21:28-32, he added that the first son, who refused, later went and did what the father asked. In this way he restored honor by obeying his father. Jesus used this illustration to show that repentance covers shame. He also contrasted their behavior with worldly honor and those without worldly honor in response to God's message given through John the Baptist. That must have rankled some of his listeners.

Honorable acts

If there are shameful acts in the Arab culture, then what are the honorable ones?

In most Muslim cultures, hospitality is one of the most important ways of demonstrating honor. Hospitality honors the guest and the host alike. When you visit an Arab home, great effort is made to be hospitable. Rather than shame you, Arabs try very hard to honor you with hospitality. Everything is done to honor the guest and to present an honorable image of the Arab family.

The reverse is also true. If you don't want someone to visit you, simply talk to him or her outside your door, where everyone will see that they are not invited inside. They will immediately feel shamed and will never return to your home.

If hospitality is first, then flattery must be second in the Arab way of honoring someone. Arabs are often quick to flatter people they suspect are honorable. It is a way of pouring extra honor onto a person while demonstrating to others within earshot that they are honoring that person.

Third, if you admire something in an Arab home, they will be quick to insist that you have it as a gift. Even if you do not admire something, they will offer you gifts, demonstrating their willingness to honor someone else with a gift.

As the above three demonstrate, a visit to an Arab home is full of expressions of honor. Where you sit in the room, how you are fed, what you are fed, the hospitality shown, the flattery expressed and the gifts that are offered all express various levels of honor.

Moreover, the reverse is true. If someone visits your home, you are obliged to be warm and hospitable. It is even expected that you will be overly hospitable

to the point of demanding in your insistence that your guests eat, drink and accept your gifts. You must insist that people eat your food. Small friendly fights break out over food, and guests must demonstrate their appreciation for the hospitality that is shown.

Honor is attached to your family and your history

As long ago as 1377 Ibn Khaldun wrote: “One feels shame when one’s relatives are treated unjustly or attacked, and one wishes to intervene between them and whatever peril or destruction threatens them.” He continues, “The affection everybody has for his allies results from the feeling of shame that comes to a person when one of his neighbors, relatives or a blood relation in any degree is humiliated.” In other words, Arabs are drawn together when defending the honor of the group, be it a neighbor, relative or any blood relation.

An Arab proverb states: “Learn as much of your pedigrees as is necessary to establish your ties of kindred.” Another adds: “Many a trick is worth more than a tribe.”

This is the reason that Arabs strive so hard to maintain the honor of the tribe. It is the duty of the eldest son of each family to maintain the honor of the family. If someone greatly offends the tribe, he will be the one to oust them, or, in the case of irreparable damage, execute them.

Nowhere is the honorable status of family and tribe more evident than in the differences between religious beliefs. During the Yemeni War (1962-1965), two Egyptians, a Coptic Christian and a Muslim, both members of well known and upper class families, had been lifelong friends. They were wounded in the same action; the Muslim in the arm and the Copt in the leg. Disabled, they lay awaiting treatment and removal from the battlefield. A half-empty truck arrived and picked up the Muslim, but left the Christian despite his desperate pleas for help. The truck crew had orders to collect the Muslim wounded before the Christian wounded. One word from the wounded Muslim friend could have saved the Copt. It was never uttered and the Coptic Christian died on the field, probably slaughtered by Yemeni tribesmen. The wounded Muslim soldier refused to acknowledge before others his friendship to the Christian, who would have been considered from a lower class.

Education

Education bestows honor. If a man gains a doctorate degree, he receives a great deal of honor in an Arab society. It is for this reason that Arabs strive to gain high educational standing. Many poor families sacrifice almost everything and work very hard to help an elder son make it through higher education. The elder son will work hard to honor the family. In the end, his achievements will raise the entire status of the family, and ultimately that of the tribe as well. What is valued is the awarding of the degree, not the hard work, ability or intellect involved in the process of gaining the degree. Because honor is so highly valued, cheating is often seen as dishonorable only if one is caught. Attaining the degree and its status is what is sought rather than competence gained through study.

Marriage

A young man has little status in his family until he is married. Suddenly he gains status and has a voice in tribal affairs. Once his first son is born, his status rises even further. An Arab proverb states “A man’s wife is his honor.” While this sounds like a compliment, the opposite can be true. If a man’s honor is injured through his wife’s misbehavior, swift judgment will come upon her.

Language

Albert Hourani, one of the great modern Arab scholars has said that his people are more conscious of their language than any people in the world. This consciousness is obsessive. Language is everything to the Arab. It is a divine expression and stems from the pre-Islamic era where Al-Kutbi was the god of writing. Today, classical Arabic is considered the language that God speaks, and those who speak it well are more honorable than those who do not. Language in the form of local dialects also separates those who are near and far. It separates the educated from the uneducated. It is an art form and for centuries was the sole medium of artistic expression. Every Arab tribe had its poets, and their unwritten words “flew across the desert faster than arrows.” In the midst of outward strife and disintegration, these poems provided a unifying principle. Poetry gave life and currency to the idea of Arabian virtue. Based on the tribal community of bloodlines and insisting that only ties of blood were sacred, poetry became an invisible bond between diverse clans and formed the basis

of a larger sentiment. It was poetry, the ultimate Arab art form, which bound Arabs together as a people rather than a collection of warring tribes.

When it becomes apparent that a young person is gifted as a poet, neighboring tribes gather together to wish the family joy. There are feasts and music. Men and boys congratulate one another, for a poet is a defense to the honor of the entire tribe and “a weapon to ward off insult from their good name, and a means of perpetuating their glorious deeds and of establishing their fame forever.”

It is interesting to note that traditionally Arabs only wish one another joy, on three occasions: The birth of a boy, the coming to light of a poet, and the foaling of a noble mare.

The Arabic language is so powerful that Arabs will listen intently to someone speaking well, whether he speaks the truth or not. “I lift my voice to utter lies absurd, for when I speak the truth my hushed tones scarce are heard.” Abu alAla, Syrian poet, 973-1057 AD.

Anyone wanting to understand Arab history and culture must be a student of Arab poetry. Arab poetry is full of glory. The poets glorified themselves, their brilliant feats, their courage and resolution, and their contempt for death. The Arab hero is defiant and boastful and when there is little to lose he will ride off unashamed, but he will fight to the death for his women and the honor of his tribe.

An example of the ideal Arab hero is Shanfara of Azd. He was an outlaw, swift runner, and excellent poet. As a child, Shanfara was captured by the Bani Salman tribe and brought up among them. He did not learn of his origin until he was grown up. He then vowed vengeance against his captors and returned to his own tribe. He swore that he would slay a hundred men of the Bani Salman and he had slain ninety-eight when he was caught in an enemy ambush. In the struggle, one of his hands was hewn off by a sword stroke, but taking the weapon in the other, he flung it in the face of the Bani Salman tribesman and killed him, making his score ninety-nine. He was then overpowered and slain. As his skull lay bleaching on the ground years later, a man of his enemies passed by and kicked it. A splinter of bone entered his foot; the wound festered, and he died, thus completing Shanfara's hundred. All of this is told in wonderful poetic language, skillfully blending the use of poetry with the honor of the hero.

Money

Arabs have a tremendous respect for wealth. Down through history, most honorable Arab leaders have been wealthy ones. Even Mohammed, the founder of Islam, rose to a position of great wealth. His use of wealth to help the poor and the masses is seen as very honorable and is often portrayed in Arabic literature and stories. Wealth allows the leader to be hospitable and generous, two elements that are extremely useful in obliterating shame and building honor. A wealthy leader can throw money around, gaining respect and covering a multitude of sins.

Heritage

Arabs are keenly aware of their heritage. Some can trace their heritage back to Mohammed, some back to other great leaders. Every tribe has stories of how individuals in their tribe achieved great honor or displayed honorable characteristics. Shameful figures in the tribal background are expelled or killed and ultimately forgotten in order to preserve the tribe's honorable heritage.

Wisdom

Arabs respect age and wisdom. Elders are listened to with respect. The language elders use is often more formal and elevated than young people are capable of. Elders are looked to for their wisdom, as they know all the old stories and can often give wise and good counsel. Elders often have more money and may have demonstrated their wisdom in acquiring riches or maintaining the tribal lands and tribal honor.

Charisma

Certain individuals have charisma. They are good looking, have a confidence about them, and carry themselves with honor. Often they have accomplished something of note and have been able to capitalize on it. Many times they are good at communication and at politically finding honorable solutions to problems.

Physical Strength

Arab lore is full of heroes who display tremendous physical strength. Most Arab boys are brought up to think highly of being manly and strong. Physical

strength, as well as charisma and financial strength are a winning combination in Arab culture.

Alliances

Many Arabs look to leaders who have formed strong alliances. Since strength and riches are often found in a group setting, someone with strong alliances can rely on the combined strengths of many groups. Most political leaders in the Arab world use their alliances with tribes and families to put them into political power.

Bravery

Every Arab boy knows stories of Arab heroes who faced overwhelming odds. Whether he overcame or not is not the issue. The act of bravery, in itself, is very honorable. If one sits in an Arab coffeehouse and listens to the storytellers, or if you visit neighbors and ask, you will hear stories of brave Arab heroes.

Loyalty

Loyalty to the family tribe is considered paramount to maintaining honor. One does not question the correctness of the elders or tribes in front of outsiders. It is paramount that the tribe sticks together in order to survive. Once again, Arab history and folklore are full of stories of heroes who were loyal to the end.

Violence

Dr. Sania Hamady, one of the greatest authorities on Arab psychology and herself an Arab says: "Life is a fearful test, for modern Arab society is ruthless, stern and pitiless ... It honors strength and has no compassion for weakness."

In Arab countries between 1948 and 1973, a mere quarter of a century, no fewer than eighty revolts occurred, most of them bloody and violent. No wonder the West has a negative view of Arabs and Islam.

Violence in Arab history has been part of demonstrating one's honor and in removing shame from the tribe. "*With the sword will I wash my shame away. Let God's doom bring on me what it may!*" was written by Abu Tammam, a ninth-century poet in Hamasa.

You can see from the list of characteristics above why Arabs have a hard time recognizing Jesus as an honorable person. He did not display the

usual characteristics that identify a person of honor. There is, however, one characteristic of honor that Jesus exemplified. Some Arab heroes demonstrate their honor by reaching down and helping people in need; people who don't deserve it.

If Jesus' character becomes an issue in discussion, then one needs to share about servant leadership and how Jesus displayed incredible honor by reaching down into our situation to help us and honor us.

For those Europeans and North Americans who criticize Middle Eastern culture for its views on honor and shame, I must remind them that western history only a few hundred years ago was filled with honor and shame. The "high" French and German culture of the 18th and 19th century gave rise to dueling which carried over to the gun fighters of the American West. In Europe, a culture of honor survived for many years among the military and military families. These events are often forgotten as we tend to view history through the filter of our own current experience.

Conclusion

Honor in an Arab society is understood, in a complex way, as the absence of shame. Honor and shame are diametrically opposing factors, and the fundamental issue that defines society. In most shame-honor-based societies, people accept that everyone has to deal with a measure of shame. The question is, "How is shame dealt with?" Few families or tribes can escape the birth of a handicapped child. The question then arises, what should be done with this child? Should the child be hidden away? Should it be killed? Should it be neglected, so that it eventually goes away? Is it more humane to quietly give it to an institution?

In some shame-honor based cultures, Christian societies have reached out to handicapped children in crisis, attempting to assist families that are reeling from the shame of having birthed such a child. Sometimes handicaps are not so easily noticed. The child grows and becomes a part of the family fabric. Then disaster falls when it becomes increasingly obvious that the child is deaf or has some other handicap that was not immediately noticeable. The discovery of such handicaps can crush whole families as they lose their place of honor in the community.

We encountered this in our own family situation. Our eldest son has cerebral palsy, and his presence in our family was of particular interest to our Arab friends as they tried to assess what this meant in regards to our honorable status, both in the church and in the community.

The question that always troubled me was, “Can a person move from a position of shame to a position of honor?” Arabs have trouble with this one. Almost all agree that someone can honor you, but you cannot honor yourself. However, people with honor seldom honor others without cause.

This is where we must be bold in proclaiming the Gospel. The Gospel that Jesus brought is simply this: God wants to lift man from a position of shame to a position of honor. When Jesus said, “I am the way,” this is what he was referring to. Jesus is the only one who can bring us into the presence of God the Father. This is why Jesus had to be God. No one else would do. Only God could reach down to mankind. Jesus Christ was God displayed in the flesh, bringing us the message of reconciliation, a message of hope. God was providing a way to lift us from our place of shame to a place of honor.

Jesus taught us that the man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. He went on to say that “whoever serves Me must follow Me, and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.” (John 12:25-26) Jesus clearly taught that it is God who gives honor, and he gives it to those who renounce worldly honor by dying to self and following Christ.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Who does the Bible teach us to honor?
2. What acts bring about honor in Christian circles?
3. How do these differ from those of your target culture?
4. Is education a way to gain honor in your target culture? How does education affect people? How much emphasis is put on trying to do well in studies?
5. Does marriage bring honor or status to a young man? Why?
6. Does marriage and children bring honor or status to a young woman? Why?
7. Is there a way to tell an honorable person from an ordinary person through the use of language? Are there special ways to address honorable people? Is there special language that honorable people use?
8. Does money bring honor among your target people, even if it was gained dishonestly? How can you explain this?
9. How important are family lines, or family heroes? Does honor or shame extend along family lines, and is it passed down from generation to generation?
10. Are wise people looked up to? How does one identify a wise person? Are they partially identified through their use of language, proverbs, stories etc?
11. How can you express or bestow honor on others, such as the elders in your community?

Chapter Eleven

The Three-Fold Message of Salvation

Many times over the years I have asked myself, “How does one effectively communicate the Gospel to people from another worldview?” As I have pondered this question, I have broken it down into two questions. First, what is the Gospel message, and second, how is it best communicated to those who live in another culture than mine, such as the shame-based cultures of Muslims in the Middle East?

Review

In order to communicate the Gospel to all cultures and worldviews, we need to first accept that the Bible deals with God’s answer to sin in a way that is applicable and understood in all cultures and worldviews. Sin, as we have seen, has three profound effects on mankind: guilt, shame, and fear. These three effects are dealt with throughout the Scriptures. We in the West have taken the guilt theme and have traced it through the Bible. We have formed our understanding of the Gospel and our systematic theology around this theme. In the Garden of Eden, the Bible tells us that Adam and Eve became guilty and that all mankind after this is in a position of guilt before God. From the book of Genesis we can trace God’s plan of salvation, to free man from guilt, right through the Bible. This is the standard Western way of explaining the Gospel.

The Bible also tells us that Adam and Eve were ashamed and hid themselves. This is the beginning of shame. And the theme of God’s dealing with the shame

that came on mankind runs throughout the length of the Scriptures. Along with this, Adam and Eve were afraid when they heard God's voice in the garden. The theme of God dealing with our fear also runs through the entire Bible.

So today these three reactions to the sin brought on by Adam and Eve's first sin form the basis for three common-ancestor worldviews and all subsequent worldviews that developed down through history. Shame and honor form the basis of the worldviews that span from Morocco to Japan. It is almost exactly the same area as is covered by the 10-40 Window. As the Church in the West became more preoccupied with guilt-based thinking, it struggled in its ability to understand and relate the Gospel to those living with shame-based worldviews. This struggle is so pronounced that the church has made little impact on those parts of the world.

Missionaries have worked for the last two hundred years in fear-based cultures such as are found in Africa and South America and other areas. Many of these missionaries have reported their frustration that the Gospel does not seem to penetrate very deeply into the lives of the people that they work amongst. These missionaries report that the worldviews among these same people is made up of mostly of shame and fear based thinking. The Gospel seems to have penetrated people's lives only as much as there is a mix of guilt-based thinking in their culture. On the other hand, Western Christian workers who have majored on fear-power teaching have had amazing appeal and response from these same people.

This should challenge us to reconsider the makeup of the Gospel message that we are preaching. As I have said before, when man sinned, three great conditions came upon mankind. When man broke God's law, he was in a position of guilt. When man broke God's relationship, he was in a position of shame. When man broke God's trust, he was in a position of fear.

Guilt is more than a sense of having done something wrong. It is a position we fall into when we break a law. Fear comes when we become afraid of a consequence. You might be afraid because of an action or even an inaction. Shame, on the other hand, is more than the feeling of embarrassment or a sense of unworthiness. It is a position we enter into because of our wrong doing or sin. Salvation has to do with saving us from God's judgment, restoring our relationship with God, and rebuilding trust between us and God.

The Holy Spirit

A question that we will have to ask ourselves near the beginning of our discussion of the Gospel message is: “What is the work of the Holy Spirit?”

Jesus tells us: *“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.”* John 16:7-11

What does it mean to reprove the world of sin? The word reprove is *elegcho* or *el-eng’-kho* in the Greek and means to admonish, convict, convince, rebuke, reprove, or expose. Those from a guilt-based worldview often think of the work of the Holy Spirit only in the light of conviction. Those from shame-based cultures often think of the work of the Holy Spirit in terms of exposure. John 3:20 (NIV) tells us: “Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”

While all of us are affected by exposure, conviction and rebuke, those from some specific worldviews have stronger reactions to some of these aspects than others. Sometimes missionaries from one worldview expect to see a specific reaction to the message of salvation, and are disappointed when it is not forthcoming. I believe that this is because we are pre-conditioned to certain sensitivities, and thus while some feel guilt, others feel shame or fear or a combination of these.

The Holy Spirit may be at work in the lives of our listeners, reproofing them of sin, but they may not be feeling conviction of the guilt of their sin.

If we ask ourselves, ‘What is the role of the Holy Spirit?’ then we must also ask ourselves “What is the role of the evangelist?” Does the evangelist have to work hard to evoke certain emotional responses, or do these responses come from the working of the Holy Spirit in people’s lives? If the evangelist puts someone on a guilt-trip, shame-trip, or a fear-trip it is an emotional challenge, but not the same as happens when the Holy Spirit is poured out. Manipulation is not the work of the Holy Spirit. Conviction is, but what is conviction?

What happens if God is already revealing their sin to them in the form of feelings of shame or fear but the evangelist is looking for feelings of guilt?

During the work of the Holy Spirit, guilt, shame and fear often blend to become something we call *conviction*. What that blend is made up of depends largely on how much of each of the three common ancestral worldviews make up worldview of the listener. We must be careful to understand that sin is the real problem not guilt, shame or fear. These are only the results of the problem, not the problem in themselves. Over the years however, many Christians have been conditioned to understand that salvation has exclusively to do with removing guilt, but the Bible speaks in much wider terms than this.

Our Position

It is important for us to realize that we are dealing with the topic of position here. Guilt is a position before God. (Imagine a man who does something bad, is caught and then taken to court and found guilty. He is then taken to jail where he meets some inmates who are Christians. They witness to him, and he asks God for forgiveness and becomes a follower of Jesus. What is this man's position? He may be forgiven in the sight of God, and perhaps even by those he harmed, but he is still deemed guilty by society and he must serve his jail time, even though he knows he is forgiven. It is also this way with shame. Society may still consider us with disrespect, but we know that in God's eyes we have been raised up to a position of honor. God has lifted our heads, even though we continue to suffer contempt by those around us. In the book of James, the writer points out that Christians in churches should not consider some more honorable than others. (James 2:1-9) We are all sinners, cleansed and raised by the work of God. The brotherhood of all believers should include forgiveness, honor, and empowerment, as these things not only demonstrate to the world what has happened to us when God removed our sin, but are the tangible effects that result when forgiven people get together.

One plan or three?

If the work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal sin to people, and the results of sin are guilt shame and fear, are there three plans of salvation in the Bible: one each for guilt, shame and fear? No! The problem is not our guilt, shame or fear. The problem is **sin**. We must never lose sight of this. The Gospel is all about how sin can be removed from our lives.

What is the Gospel?

The question that faces us is simply, “Are there three or more models that we can use to explain the Gospel?” Should we adopt one model for one setting and other model for a different setting? When working among guilt-based cultures, should we stick to our legal model of salvation? Do we develop a power model of salvation for use among the fear-based cultures of the world? Is there a special shame-honor model of salvation that we should use among the shame-based cultures of the world? What about cultures that demonstrate combinations of these three? Do we develop other models?

I think not. I don’t believe there are separate models of salvation that we are to use in different settings. The Bible gives us no clue that God ever intended this to be. Rather, the three themes of salvation are woven together in the Scriptures to present a complete picture of what God wants to do with mankind.

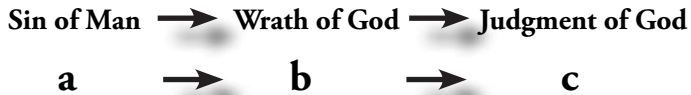
I believe that every presentation of the Gospel should address sin, not just the three subjects of guilt, shame, and fear. In the Bible these are three specific topics that God uses to help us understand his dealing with sin. These three are: Propitiation, Redemption, and Reconciliation.

Propitiation

The word ‘propitiation’ is a theological term that refers to the act whereby someone’s anger is either averted or satisfied. In the case of someone’s anger being averted, propitiation results in mercy. In the case of judgment, propitiation provides the requirements of the law, which is then satisfied. The three verses below speak to us of propitiation.

- Romans 3:25 Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood...
- 1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.
- 1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

If propitiation has to do with the wrath or anger of God, then it could be charted this way: The sin of man causes the wrath of God which results in the judgment of God on mankind.



The verses below illustrate how the Bible ties these three topics together. Follow the ‘a’ which leads to ‘b’ which leads to ‘c’ in the verses below.

- Exodus 22:22-24 (a) You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you do afflict them, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry; (b) and My wrath will burn (c) and I will kill you with the sword and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.
- Deuteronomy 6:14-15 (a) You shall not go after other gods...(b) lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you (c) and He destroy you from off the face of the earth.
- Ezekiel 8:17-18 (a) Is it too slight a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they should fill the land with violence, (b) and provoke Me further to anger?... Therefore I will deal in wrath, (c) My eye will not spare, nor will I have pity.
- Zephaniah 1:17-18 I will bring distress on men... (a) because they have sinned against the Lord... (b) In the fire of His jealous wrath, (c) all the earth shall be consumed.
- Ezekiel 7:3,8-9 Now the end is upon you (b) and I will let loose My anger upon you, (c) and will judge you (a) according to your ways; (c) and I will punish you (a) for all your abominations.
- Numbers 16:41 (a) They murmured before the Lord so that ... (b) wrath has gone forth from the Lord, (c) the plague has begun. (The Israelites’ murmuring kindled God’s anger against them and, as a result, a plague came upon them which killed 14,700.)
- John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but (a) whoever rejects the Son (c) will not see life, for God’s wrath (b) remains on him. (NIV)

The anger of God rests upon all of mankind. Subsequently, the judgment of God is currently being poured out upon both individuals and groups of men and women whether in tribes, cultures or nations. We need to communicate that

the work of Jesus Christ satisfies the anger of God and removes His judgment from us. This topic of wrath, anger, and the fear that we should live in is an important topic for many worldviews. There are many people who feel this in their lives, and when the Gospel is preached from a fear - power paradigm they understand and respond.

Sacrifice is God's answer to propitiation. God's wrath was poured out on the sacrifice. If propitiation is the removal of wrath by the offering of a sacrifice, then propitiation can be explained in terms of God's wrath being removed by Jesus' work on the cross. This concept is easily understood in most fear-based cultures.

Redemption

In the Western mind, redemption has to do with payment for our sin and clearing our guilt. This is also true in a shame-based culture, where redemption has to do with a mediator working out payment to cover our shame and to redeem the honor that was lost. In either case, God has been offended, and a payment must be made to restore the relationship between mankind and God. Most Westerners think of salvation in terms of redemption, where redemption has to do with guilt and the payment required by the law. Since we cannot pay our own debt, a mediator has worked out payment to cover the penalty of sin (death). God has been offended and Christ is our mediator. Since we cannot pay the price, the Mediator chose to pay it for us.

Once again, sacrifice is God's answer to redemption. The laws of God have been broken. We are pronounced guilty, but God has provided a Redeemer, (someone to pay our penalty). The work of Jesus on the cross fully paid the price. We are redeemed, not through our own works, but through the blood of Jesus. We have been bought with a price. (I Corinthians 6:20)

Reconciliation

This is the act of restoring the relationship between man and God. It is more than the legal action of removing guilt. It is the act of God bringing us into a personal father-son relationship with Himself. Reconciliation is all about wholeness. Shame is removed, and honor is restored. Fear is removed, and acceptance and love replace it. In this case a Mediator has interceded on our behalf in order to reconcile us with our maker.

Once again, sacrifice is God's answer to reconciliation. We cannot restore the old relationship that was broken in the Garden of Eden. We cannot forge a new relationship. We are 'far' from God. Only the cross can bring us near.

Propitiation → **God's Wrath** (fear - power paradigm)

Redemption → **God's Justice** (guilt - innocence paradigm)

Reconciliation → **God's Honor** (shame - honor paradigm)

All aspects of propitiation, redemption and reconciliation are dealt with through Christ's work on the cross as a sacrifice for sins. If God has done all this for us, then what is our part?

Repentance

This is the act of coming to God and accepting His way over our way. Repentance can be viewed in various ways. It is more than just turning from sin. It is turning from pursuing one's own honor, one's own innocence, or one's own power and accepting what God has done for us. It is also turning from a life of fear, guilt and shame to a life where one is trusting in Christ's victory on the cross to defeat the enemy.

Sacrifice

Christ's sacrifice on the cross deals with our sin. When sin is effectively removed, our shame, guilt and fear are dealt with. The answers to all three lie in Christ's sacrifice on the cross to deal with our sin. Satan however, tries to convince the believer that he is still suffering from the consequences of sin, in order for us to doubt the work of God.

Where to start

The secret to sharing the Gospel, if there is such, is to use one or two of the three *common-ancestral worldviews* as the initial expression of the Gospel as it correlates with the worldview of the culture you are dealing with. If you are working in a guilt-based culture, there will be a felt need to deal with guilt. If you are working in a shame-based culture, there is a felt need to address shame. The same goes for a fear-based culture, needing to address fear.

It is important to look beyond the general culture to try and understand

the person you are dealing with. On one occasion I and a fellow missionary were trying to share the Gospel with a Bedouin in his tent. After our first visit we realized that this man was struggling with a very acute sense of fear. He feared demons, the evil eye, and curses. When we returned to share the Gospel with him, it was in the form of God being able to overcome those things that we are afraid of.

Several miles away we were visiting another man and his family. This man had stooped to the place where he began to market his wife as a prostitute. As a result he was held in low-esteem in the community. This man had seen the Jesus film, and was attracted to Jesus who sat with prostitutes and sinners. In this case we started sharing the Gospel from a shame and guilt viewpoint. What we shared wasn't a "different Gospel" but rather the same message tailored for the felt needs of the listener.

I believe that the methods of the church around the world must be flexible enough to change depending on the culture that is being addressed. We have done an excellent job in communicating to the Western world that the church offers God's forgiveness for sin. In an Eastern setting, the church needs to communicate the message that God is offering respect and worth to those in a position of shame. In a fear-based culture, the Church must communicate the message that God offers freedom from the bondage of fear. In every case, however, we must not limit our message to just the one facet.

As I have traveled in North America, I have tried to concentrate my preaching around the fact that God not only offers forgiveness of sins, but He also offers freedom from fear, and wants to restore our worth and value. I have been amazed at the positive response to this message. People have come to me telling me that they have asked for forgiveness for their sins, but they still carried shame. Others are stricken with anxiety and fear. Our focus in the West on guilt has left us with only a partial understanding of the Gospel, and some Christians are suffering because they are still bound by shame or fear.

We who communicate the Gospel message must share the full three-fold message of salvation. It is like a braided chord or rope. The three parts wrap around each other, strengthening each other. All three should be present in our Gospel presentation. Which one will be our starting point in sharing the Gospel will depend on the culture in which we live.

In an animistic culture, it is natural to begin our message of salvation with something that focuses on fear. Man fears because man rebelled and did his own thing, and the result of this action is fear. We have a message of hope for those living in a world of fear. This message of salvation would not be complete, however, without fearful people learning to understand that Christ came to remove our guilt, and also that Christ came to lift us from shame. Once someone understands all three views, they have a fuller understanding of what was involved in the removal of sin through Christ's work on the cross.

In the same way, those living in shame-based cultures need to have a complete view of salvation, but the door through which they will most easily come will probably be one that starts with man's shame in the Garden of Eden. This is the world they understand. Shame comes when people get found out. We are all exposed to the eyes of God, and thus in a position of shame. Every time we fail, we continue in a position of shame, because God's eye is upon us. Those that pursue the honor of the world have a false or shallow honor. The only honor that counts is honor before God. God calls us to repent of seeking worldly honor and to turn to him to have our shame removed. Even though we start with how God deals with shame, we must also go on to share the full message of salvation, explaining how God deals with our guilt and fears. All of these are accomplished through the removal of sin through the work of Christ on the cross.

Paul was fully aware of this when he wrote about making the message understood to the Jews, the Greeks, and the barbarians. Even in Paul's day, the world was split into three great worldviews. The Jews were a Semitic people who lived in a shame-based culture. The Greeks were the ones who were developing a guilt-based culture, and the barbarians were those who lived in fear-based cultures.

Paul did not preach three separate messages of salvation. He preached only one. Paul, however, used different techniques when addressing different people. In his letter to the Romans, he speaks to people who lived in a more or less guilt-based society. In his letter to the Romans, he addresses man's guilt as a result of man's transgression of God's law. On the other hand, when Paul was on Mars Hill, he addressed the Greek's who had a pantheon of gods. He drew their attention to the unknown god and to Christ's resurrection from the

dead as demonstrating that God was dealing with the human race differently. God was setting up a new order that started with the resurrection of the man who would judge all men. (Acts 17:1-34). Just as Paul used different starting points, we also should be sensitive to our audience, and start with things that are familiar to them in order to bring them to the message of the cross and the resurrection.

In Romans 1:16-17 Paul describes the Gospel message in light of these three aspects when he states: *“I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (no discrimination or position of shame) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The righteous shall live by faith.”* (ESV) In this passage the Gospel is not described in terms of guilt, shame, and fear, but rather by using their counterparts, power (fear), righteousness (guilt), and no discrimination (shame).

Paul goes on to tell us about our new bodies that will be given to us in the resurrection from the dead (I Corinthians 15:42-43 KJV). *“So also is the resurrection from the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. (from guilt to innocence). It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory (from shame to honor). It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.”* (from a position of fear to a position of power). The glorious future that we look forward to is expressed to us clearly in terms of guilt, shame and fear. Once sin is defeated, we will be raised innocent, honorable, and powerful. Our innocence will be God’s innocence placed upon us. Our honor will be God’s honor raising us up. Our power will be God’s power living through us. The message of salvation in the Bible is clearly expressed to us in terms of God dealing with guilt, shame and fear, as He effectively frees us from the hold and bondage of sin.

Cross-cultural contextualization of the Gospel is simply knowing how to start the Gospel message from a place of common understanding with our audience. It is knowing how to relate the Gospel message in a language and form that is meaningful to its listeners. Finally, it is knowing how to bring the person to a full understanding of Christ’s work on the cross.

In many cases, new believers drift away because they have not grasped a complete picture of salvation. They need teaching in order to grow because

they have responded to only one of the aspects of salvation and may see the work of Christ on the cross in a very limited way.

It is the responsibility of the person sharing the Gospel to address all three aspects of guilt, shame, and fear, tracing God's message of salvation throughout the Bible. It is there. It is clearly demonstrated in the Garden of Eden. It is pictured in the various acts of worship in the Temple. It is addressed by the prophets and is clearly presented in Isaiah 53. The three-fold message of salvation is seen in the work of Christ at Calvary. It is present at Pentecost and in the daily empowering of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Finally, it will be addressed with the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will experience it personally at the resurrection of the dead and ultimately in our position and experience in heaven.

Unfortunately, all too often, missionaries from guilt-based cultures have busied themselves with pointing out the sins of people living in shame-based cultures, but the people they are addressing never feel guilt. They may, however, feel that the missionary is shaming them by drawing attention to these areas of their lives. Missionaries can go even further, unintentionally shaming people by asking why they weren't in church and encouraging them to attend. In the end, it may cause them to attend, but they may do so simply out of a desire not to shame their missionary friend.

Many of our well-meaning Western ways of ministering can be taken wrongly in other cultures. There are cultural "mine fields" that must be carefully negotiated, as we challenge people with the claims of the gospel. It isn't enough to have the right consumer approach, we must also be aware that we are calling them to go against the flow in whatever cultural setting they live in. There is always a point of conflict as the gospel challenges all worldview systems.

I trust that through the message of this section, you have been challenged to dig more deeply and learn more effectively how to share the Gospel with people from other cultures. I have not attempted to explain everything. The purpose of this book is simply to unlock the door and open a world of new understanding when it comes to sharing the Gospel with people from other cultures.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Go back and view your answer in chapter five about what you would include in presenting a gospel message. Would you change your answer after reading this chapter? Why or why not?
2. How can we get people to see that sin is a major problem that needs to be dealt with?
3. “If people cannot see their sin, they will not have a need or desire for Jesus” Is this true or not? Why?
4. How do people feel or experience sin in their lives? How can we show them that they have sin?
5. Read John 16:7-11. What is the work of the Holy Spirit?
6. Are feelings of shame, fear and guilt the exposing work of the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?
7. What is conviction?
8. What is the role of the evangelist and of the Holy Spirit? Who does what?
9. If guilt is a position before God, are shame and fear also a position?
10. How does salvation change our position before God?
11. Does salvation change our position before society? How?
12. Does salvation change our position before the church?
13. Should fear be a part of our salvation message? Is God only love or can an element of fear also be involved? Deuteronomy 6:14-15, Zephaniah 1:17-18, John 3:36. How does this fit into your salvation message?
14. Can you find a local illustration where someone’s anger was averted because of something that was sacrificially given by someone else?
15. Can you find a local illustration where something was redeemed or paid for through the sacrifice given by someone else?
16. Can you find a local illustration where a relationship was restored through the sacrifice given by someone else?
17. What does repentance mean? How can this be illustrated in your target culture?
18. Think of a person wrestling with a shame-based issue. How would you go about sharing the gospel with them?
19. Think of a person wrestling with a fear-based issue. How would you go about sharing the gospel with them?

Chapter Twelve

The Continuing Story

In this section (The Message) we have discovered that when building worldview models we should consider the three common ancestral worldviews as described in the Bible. Understanding these three fundamental building blocks will help us understand the foundation upon which worldview is built. As a worldview model is then constructed, many of the actions, values and beliefs of people can be better understood and appreciated.

Over the last three thousand years of history, great historical periods have come and gone. In the years before Christ, the world was torn apart by competing armies. The Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and others vied for power. Vast armies moved back and forth over the world with first one, and then another civilization becoming dominant. Despite their linguistic and cultural differences, most of these civilizations held a similar worldview. Gods and demons controlled their universe, and man lived in fear of these powers, doing what he could to appease them. The first chapters of civilization on earth were in the hands of those who lived in cultures built upon fear and power.

However, by the time of Christ, guilt-based cultures had risen to power, and they strove to take over the western world. First Greek and then Roman armies marched across this part of the world, seeking to subject everyone to their worldview. While their civilizations still had many fear-based qualities, their new emphasis on the law helped them develop the first great civilizations based on using guilt as a controlling factor. The millennium following the birth of Christ belonged to these guilt-based cultures. These civilizations were known as the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Empires. While these empire ruled

around the Mediterranean, they were continually challenge by huge shame-based empires to the east.

In the last days of the year 999, civilization was following a clear course. The future of world politics lay with Islam. It seemed an unstoppable force that would eventually control much of the world, including whatever parts of Europe they chose to occupy.

The Muslims had energy, confidence, and imagination. Their society was now far superior to that of Europe. Bernard Lewis, the renowned historian of Islam, has written that the Muslims of those days “*neither feared nor respected the barbarous individuals of northern and Western Europe, whom they saw as uncouth primitives.*” Islam at this stage was probably the most sophisticated and cosmopolitan civilization in the world.

So, how did it happen that Christian Europe and the colonies it established in America eventually dominated the world? What started out as Islam’s millennium, became Europe’s, in the end. Islam grew until 1669 when the Muslim Ottoman Empire, after a long war, took Crete from the Venetians. That turned out to be Islam’s last acquisition. Fourteen years later it became obvious that history was reversing itself. In 1683 the Muslim Ottomans, after trying to conquer Vienna for 60 days, withdrew in disarray. The fighting that followed destroyed much of their army and crippled the military wing of Islam.

A Polish man named Kulyeziski had been instrumental in defending Vienna and for his efforts he was rewarded all the coffee the Turkish army left behind. Gifted in the ability to capitalize on things when the opportunity presented itself, he opened a café in Vienna and commissioned a baker to create a unique new pastry to accompany the coffee as a way to celebrate the great victory over Islam. The baker produced a crescent shaped pastry that the Viennese could eat to celebrate the defeat of Islam. It was called the croissant.

From the Muslim perspective, however, Europe soon ceased to be an invasion target and became an alien force whose armies and cultures began to trespass on Arab lands. A key year in European history was 1492. The date is well known as the year when Columbus arrived in the Americas. In January of that year, Granada, the last Islamic city in Spain, surrendered to European armies. Before the year was over, Columbus had arrived in America and Europe

started its great expansion Westward across the Atlantic.

Islam now turned its attention to the shame-based cultures of the East, reinforcing its position as far as Indonesia, Malaysia, and deep into China. In the south, they began moving against the fear-based African cultures, penetrating deep into Africa. However, by 1918 the Muslim caliphate collapsed, and virtually the whole Muslim world experienced some form of colonization. It has only been since the 1970s that Islam started recovering as a political entity.

Over the course of time, history has moved from the early civilizations that were fear-based (BC), to the rapid expansion of the guilt-based cultures (100 BC -900 AD). During the next millennium from 900 AD till 1500, shame-based cultures seem to have had the upper hand. After this the ball was passed to the guilt-based cultures of America and Northern Europe.

At the end of the second millennium, a new force had grown on the face of the world: the evangelical church. By the end of 1999, evangelicals were the fastest growing religious force in the world. They had penetrated almost every country of the world and today continue to grow rapidly in many third world countries.

Patrick Johnstone, in his book, *The Church is Bigger than You Think*, tells us that evangelicals are growing at over three times the population rate and are the world's only body of religious adherents growing rapidly by means of conversion.

The question remains, will the next millennium belong to the evangelicals? Will we be able to relate to all worldviews? All of the great civilizations of the world have failed to move out of their particular worldview with any success. Islam is struggling to move out of a shame-based world into the western one. They are working on it, and are making certain advances. Christianity, on the other hand is struggling to relate to those in the shame-based world. However Christianity was not birthed under one worldview.

It was not by mere chance that Jesus was born into a stable in Bethlehem, and that his death on the cross took place in the city of Jerusalem. The cross of Christ stands firmly at the crossroads of the world. To the west are the guilt-based cultures of the world. To the south are the fear-based cultures, and to the east the shame-based cultures. And in the midst of all of them, the cross of Christ

stands as a strong bold message of peace on earth and good will to all mankind.

The Church of Jesus Christ has the message and the methods to relate to every worldview and every culture in the world. In this book I have simply attempted to unlock the door to our understanding of guilt, shame, and fear-based common ancestral worldviews. It is my hope and desire that soldiers of the cross of Christ will open the door, and with the Bible in one hand, and the Holy Spirit guiding them, they will enter into a world that few soldiers of the cross have entered before. The millennium that might have belonged to the shame-based cultures is now over. Evangelicals must struggle to understand and relate to all worldviews; and secondly to battle secularism that rides fast behind every kingdom advance.

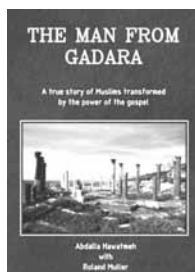
It is now your duty, as a servant of the Lord Jesus, to explore further and discover that the fields are indeed white unto harvest, but the laborers are few. May God bless you as you labor in his harvest field.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Summarize in a couple of sentences what you learned in the “Message” section of this book.
2. Are there any new skills you would like to practice?
3. What core beliefs have been challenged or strengthened through this section?
4. What do you want to change or address in your life or ministry?
5. What fears do you have?
6. What is one main goal you want to work on after reading this chapter?
7. Are there issues your team should address? Which ones?
8. How will you go about working on this as a team?

The Man from Gadara

True stories of Muslim lives changed by the power of the gospel.



by Abdalla Hawatmeh
with Roland Muller

The true story of Abdalla, a Muslim student from the historical city of Gadara, where long ago Jesus cast demons into swine. Abdalla wins a scholarship to study in America, and eventually finds Jesus before returning to his home country in the Middle East. But can Abdalla's new faith survive in this tough new environment? Discover how God uses this young man to start planting churches in the heart of the Muslim world. Thrill to the stories of lives that have been transformed by the power of God. This book offers Christians hope and understanding of how God is planting his church around the world. In doing so, he is using people like the Man from Gadara.

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