

Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships

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- **Time v. Event**

Time Orientation	Event Orientation
1. Concern for punctuality and amount of time expended	1. Concern for details of the event, regardless of time required
2. Careful allocation of time to achieve the maximum within set limits	2. Exhaustive consideration of a problem until resolved
3. Tightly scheduled, goal-directed activities	3. A “let come what may” outlook not tied to any precise schedule
4. Rewards offered as incentives for efficient use of time	4. Stress on completing the event as a reward in itself
5. Emphasis on dates and history	5. Emphasis on present experience rather than the past or future

“we cannot plot God’s priorities on the matrix, since God’s priorities are not bound by space and time and God’s priorities for us meet us at our points of weakness and need.”

An important key to effective cross-cultural ministry is an incarnational attitude toward time and event—we must adapt to the time and event priorities of the people with whom we work.

- **Dichotomistic v. Holistic**

Dichotomistic Thinking	Holistic Thinking
1. Judgments are black/white, right/wrong—specific criteria are uniformly applied in evaluating others	1. Judgments are open-ended—the whole person and all circumstances are taken into consideration
2. Security comes from the feeling that one is right and fits into a particular role or category in society	2. Security comes from multiple interactions within the whole of society—one is insecure if confined to particular roles or categories
3. Information and experiences are systematically organized; details are sorted and ordered to form a clear pattern	3. Information and experiences are seemingly disorganized; details (narratives, events, portraits) stand as independent points complete in themselves

“A missionary entering another culture must realize that people evaluate others in different ways.”

“The way we think predisposes how we will judge others, Dichotomistic thinkers will reject the muddy ambiguity of their holist peers, accusing them of softness, lack of principle, and inconsistency. Holistic thinkers will reject the rigidity of the dichotomist peers, accusing them of legalist and callous inhumanity toward others. Such personal rejections, however, come only from limited perspectives.”

• **Crisis v. Noncrisis**

Crisis Orientation	Noncrisis Orientation
1. Anticipates crisis	1. Downplays possibility of crisis
2. Emphasizes planning	2. Focuses on actual experience
3. Seeks quick resolution to avoid ambiguity	3. Avoids taking action; delays decisions
4. Repeatedly follows a single authoritative, preplanned procedure	4. Seeks ad hoc solutions from multiple available options
5. Seeks expert advice	5. Distrusts expert advice

“If some people think in ways different from ours, we much learn to think as they think. If some people respond to crises and make decisions in ways different from ours, we must learn their crisis-management style.”

“Our goal must be to build up the unity and fellowship of the body of Christ...Our role is to be that of a servant.”

• **Task v. Person**

Task Orientation	Person Orientation
1. Focuses on tasks and principles	1. Focuses on persons and relationships
2. Finds satisfaction in the achievement of goals	2. Finds satisfaction in interaction
3. Seeks friends with similar goals	3. Seeks friends who are group oriented
4. Accepts loneliness and social deprivation for the sake of personal achievements	4. Deplores loneliness; sacrifices personal achievements for group interaction

“All of us who aspire to Christian ministry and service must seek to increase our concern for and interaction with others, or, in Paul’s words, we must seek to share our lives.”

“Clearly, the evidence from the life of Jesus shows us that people should take priority over task in ministry.”

• **Status v. Achievement**

Status Focus (Prestige is Ascribed)	Achievement Focus (Prestige is Attained)
1. Personal identity is determined by formal credentials of birth and rank	1. Personal identity is determined by one's achievements
2. The amount of respect one receives is permanently fixed; attention focuses on those with high social status in spite of any personal failings they have	2. The amount of respect one receives varies with one's accomplishments and failures, attention focuses on personal performance
3. An individual is expected to play his or her role and to sacrifice to attain higher rank	3. An individual is extremely self-critical and makes sacrifices in order to accomplish ever greater deeds.
4. People associate only with their social equals	4. People associate with those of equal accomplishments regardless of background

“This pursuit of prestige stands in opposition to the career of servanthood that God has for missionaries and for all believers.”

“God finds worth in us.”

“The missionary, then, has to recognize that self-worth comes through neither ascribed nor achieved prestige and that one must be a servant in the pattern set by Christ.”

• **Concealment of Vulnerability v. Willingness to expose vulnerability**

Concealment of Vulnerability	Willingness to Expose Vulnerability
1. Protection of self-image at all cost; avoidance of error and failure	1. Relative unconcern about error and failure
2. Emphasis on the quality of performance	2. Emphasis on completion of event
3. Reluctance to go beyond one's recognize limits or to enter the unknown	3. Willingness to push beyond one's limits and enter the unknown
4. Denial of culpability; withdrawal from activities in order to hide weaknesses and shortcomings	4. Ready admission of culpability, weakness, and shortcomings
5. Refusal to entertain alternative views or accept criticism	5. Openness to alternative views and criticism
6. Vagueness regarding personal life	6. Willingness to talk freely about personal life

“Christian workers, then, must be aware of their perspective with regard to vulnerability, the predominant values of the culture in which they work, and the orientation of each individual to whom they must relate. They must be keenly aware of the potential of each orientation for building up or tearing down the body of Christ.”