



Claybury International

Growing the Servant Heart

Gaining Cultural Insight

Student Notes

*These notes accompany the **Leading with Insight – Gaining Cultural Insight**
on-line course module available at academy.christian-leadership.org*

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Objectives

These notes accompany the **Leading with Insight – Gaining Cultural Insight** module in the Growing the Servant Heart on-line course. This course is available free of charge at academy.christian-leadership.org

Previously in Leading with Insight we looked at the issue of insight into ourselves and into others so that we might choose, manage and improve how we relate to other people.

The issue of our national cultural background is also a significant factor in determining both how we understand and apply the Bible and how we relate to other people, especially in cross-cultural situations. Considering the nature of national cultures will also help us to understand how we relate to the “Kingdom’s culture” as we seek to live as Christians in the environment of our situations in the world.

As this lesson will show, the natural culture of our birth countries, and that of our parents, determines the way we look at the world and what we believe is an appropriate way of living. For the vast majority of people, wherever they live in the world, this influence is hidden in that we are brought up with cultural values which are so “normal” to us that we are completely unaware of them. Recall the Ladder of Inference and how values and beliefs of which we are unaware affect how we respond to situations and people; thus it is important to gain insight into the dynamics of national culture.

Our exploration provides the necessary groundwork that allows us to begin to understand the difference between how we think from the world’s perspective and how we should think from a Kingdom perspective. It will also help us see that the Biblical Kingdom perspective is quite different to any worldly culture. It will, therefore, help us apply what we are learning about leadership to ourselves and those we lead, in which ever country we may live.

It is highly likely that this exploration will challenge the way you think. Not so much because you understand the Kingdom better but because you better understand yourself and the world you live in, and how this affects what seems normal and appropriate.

Growing the Servant Heart is about gaining insight into the Kingdom of God and how leadership that is faithful to the Kingdom ought to work. The course content has been prepared with an international audience in mind and is derived from material used successfully around the world in many cultures. Because it is about modelling our leadership on the character of Jesus it has proven insightful and helpful. However, this is an on-line course with no direct human interaction which makes it more difficult to explore and work out the cross-cultural issues that are normally addressed through discussion. The hope is that this introduction to national cultures will, to some extent, make up for that lack and challenge you to think through these issues for yourselves in your daily life, as well as how to apply the perspectives on leadership being explored in Growing the Servant Heart.

At the end of this lesson, as the student, you will have:

- Been introduced to six factors that help describe human, national cultures.
- Considered these factors in comparison to the Kingdom of God.
- Been challenged to consider how this affects your leadership style as a Christian leader.

Prerequisites

Completion of **The Jesus Model** and **Leading through Insight** modules of the **Growing the Servant Heart** on-line leadership programme. These can be found at academy.christian-leadership.org

Helpful Books

Cultures and Organisations Software of the Mind: G Hofstede, G.J. Hofstede and M Minkov. (2010) McGraw Hill ISBN978-0-07-166418-9

This is fascinating, very easy to read book is essential reading. It considers the nature of national culture and examines 6 factors that can successfully be used to describe and compare them. The book is based on the outcomes of many sound, parallel research projects which are used to verify and expand our understanding of culture. The test is that as one reads the book, various aspects of national behaviour and cross-cultural interactions and attitudes begin to make sense. There are many of these “light-bulb” moments. Having said that one must remember it is a secular book and so it provides an accurate secular view of the world and how it works. It seeks to report not make judgements. Where it falls down is its lack of true spiritual insight and Biblical understanding of the world.

Its exploration of culture is foundational and is the basis for our study, which provides an overview of national culture and so really only scratches the surface. Reading this book is highly recommended. *It is available in Kindle format but I would recommend the normal book as you will want to move backwards and forwards at will to refer to the various tables of information, which is normally a difficult process in the Kindle format.*

Preparing a Baseline

- **Take a Moment:** Before we start, and before you read the book, please consider the following (*you will need to refer to your observations later, so please make notes*):
 - What is culture and what is a national culture?
 - How would you describe the culture of your home country?
 - How does that culture affect your values, beliefs and attitudes?
 - How does it affect your relationship to others in your society, from other cultures and the people you lead?
 - How does your culture affect how you interpret the Bible?

The Culture of the Kingdom

Based on the foundational work of Hofstede et al, we will be going to consider the nature and impact of national cultures alongside what the Bible has to say. As we do this, please keep in mind that Hofstede’s studies and findings on national culture are really secular observations about a secular, fallen world that does not operate according to God’s principles.

So, we have another factor to consider: What would a Kingdom culture be like?

Define a culture is a difficult thing to do but our initial study - **Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom** – will have given us some insight into the Kingdom. Beyond this, one other thing we can be sure of is that it is not like the world. In Romans 12:2 Paul urges Christians:

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Our embedded “cultural intelligence” - our conformance to cultural norms - is significant in determining what we believe is normal and acceptable and thus how we behave. So Paul is telling us that in order to behave in ways that are acceptable to God, the way we think must not conform to the way this world thinks. The Ladder of Inference gives us insight into how our values, beliefs and assumptions determine what we think and how what we think in turn affects how we behave.

This challenge to be different to the world is true for every Christian. So we are challenged to be transformed so that we are conformed to the Kingdom.

This does not mean we can dismiss national cultures because they are part of the reality of the fallen world in which we live, serve and lead. Also, the transformation process that Paul encourages is neither instant nor total while we live in this world. Thus we find ourselves to be a work-in-progress leading other Christians who are also on that journey of transformation, each of us in a different place.

As we look at each of the dimensions of national culture we will also consider what insights we can gain concerning it, and its Kingdom counterpart, from the Bible. These considerations are not intended to be complete, comprehensive studies but rather are their goal is to stimulate your own exploration, thought, further study and transformation.

Studying Cultural Differences

Geert Hofstede, from the Netherlands, began studying national culture in the 1980s. He worked for IBM, which at the time, as a multinational corporation had subsidiaries in about 50 countries. This provided a well-defined and well-controlled “laboratory” for gathering data on attitudes of people in these countries. These studies for IBM were the initial work which began Hofstede’s insight into national cultural differences. The IBM data collection has been since superseded by the World Values Study which regularly collects data from over 90 countries and is paralleled by other studies which investigate specific aspects of culture.

Hofstede carried out a statistical examination of the results of the surveys, seeking to identify factors which were statistically related. That is they changed together either in the same way (positive correlation) or in opposite ways (negative correlation). Using this evidenced-based approach Hofstede identified, by observation from the data, a number of factors which described culturally determined attitudes and which were consistent across all the countries in the survey. It’s important to note that they were not devised from some kind of theory for which corroborative data was then sought. So we can be confident that the identified factors do substantially reflect the real world and are thus useful to our consideration of national cultural characteristics. The book explains how the data was obtained and analysed.

Hofstede initially identified four factors that he labelled:

- Power Distance
- Individualism
- Masculinity-
- Uncertainty Avoidance

Following the work of others he later added:

- Long-Term Orientation
- Indulgence

Software of the Mind

Culture is a collective phenomenon not an individual one. In other words, whilst it cannot predict exactly how any given individual will behave it will predict in general terms how a group will behave.

Culture is learned from our parents, our friends and our general situation. Most of what is described as national culture was established in our minds by the time we were 10 or 12 years old. When we are older we do learn the cultures of the groups and organisations to which we belong, e.g. our church, our employer our sports club etc.

The things we learned about our national cultures tend to be hidden from view. No-one said “Today you will learn about your national culture.” Rather we absorbed it from our parents and families. That means that normally we are. For this reason Geert Hofstede calls it the “software of our minds” because he sees it as analogous to being programmed.

It is different to human nature which we inherit, we are all humans and, allowing for the variance between individuals, at that level we are all the same. From the Biblical perspective this is called the flesh and we inherit it from our forebears all the way back to Adam.

Culture is also different from our personality which is specific to us as an individual and is part inherited and part learned.

Culture is both learned and specific to the group to which we belong. If you recall when we looked at organisational culture in **Reflections on Leadership**, culture was described as “the way we do things around here”. It’s still the same but “around here” is not limited to the organisation but belongs more broadly to our people group.

The Cultural Onion

For Hofstede the scope of culture is covered by the combination of four concepts: symbols, heroes, rituals and values. These can be envisaged as the layers of an onion with symbols at the outside and values at the heart.

- **Symbols:**
These are images, words, gestures or objects that carry a meaning only recognised by those who share in the culture. For instance particular words in language of a nation or jargon

belonging to a particular group. These are easily learned, adapted, changed, exchanged, lost and replaced and so they are the most superficial elements of culture.

- **Heroes:**

These are the people and characters who exemplify the culture, having characteristics that are highly prized. They may be alive, dead or even imaginary. Imaginary heroes for instance include Snoopy in the United States, Winston Churchill in the UK, Nelson Mandela in South Africa and many other places, and so on.

- **Rituals:**

These are collective activities within the culture that are considered socially essential however they are “technically superfluous”. In other words they are not essential to our daily lives, they include greeting styles, social ceremonies and the like.

- **Values:**

These are the core of the culture onion. They are the roots of the attitudes which are important to how the society “thinks and operates”. They define the preferences of the society in question and are deeply embedded, establishing the cultural norms regarding issues such as:

- Good/Evil
- Dirty/Clean
- Dangerous/Safe
- Forbidden/Permitted
- Decent/ Indecent
- Moral/Immoral
- Ugly/Beautiful
- Natural/Unnatural
- Normal/Abnormal
- Irrational/Rational
- Paradoxical/Logical

- **Practices:**

Symbols, Heroes and Rituals are designated as practices, all of which can be seen by an outsider but their real cultural significance is hidden to all except the insiders.

We each belong to a culture and have its set of values “programmed” into how we think. This means that when we look at another culture we judge it according to the values of our culture. This can make us sensitive to aspects of that other culture which never even occur to the people who are its members, for instance what is ugly and what is beautiful, and more controversially, what is moral and what is immoral or what is good and what is evil. For instance, some things that are considered to be human rights issues by one culture may simply be seen as the appropriate response to disloyalty to the group in another.

One service that the Bible does for us is to set out God's absolute standards which are independent of the world, provided that our understanding is not determined by our own cultural programming. We also have the Holy Spirit, who reveals to us God's perspectives and aligns our thinking with Him. Thus we need to evaluate our cultures and our attitudes in the light of God's teaching.

However, we must ask ourselves how much of what we think is determined by the cultural values embedded within us as opposed to God's Kingdom principles? As we consider our walk as Christians, let alone Christian leaders, because we are normally unaware of our cultural attitudes we must be challenged by this question, never mind when we are working cross-culturally.

Cultural Layers

Culture belongs to groups and every group has a culture. As most people belong to several groups at the same time we are inevitably under the influence of several cultures at the same time. This can of course give rise to internal conflicts for the individual and the society.

The most significant layers of culture result from:

- National influences – there may be more than one when individuals migrate from one country to another.
- Regional, ethnic, religious and linguistic affiliations.
- Gender.
- Generational separation between children, parents and grandparents.
- Social class and educational level.
- Organisational culture of one's employer.

These layers lead to all kinds of cross-cultural issues within a country as well as between people of different countries.

Dimensions of National Cultures

As we have seen, the studies by Geert Hofstede and colleagues have identified six independent dimensions of national culture. It's worth stressing again that these have emerged from the analysis of data from over 90 countries. The recommended book explains exactly how the data was gathered and the analysis undertaken. *It's worth noting also that it is very readable book that outlines the analytical process rather than getting stuck in the statistical details.*

The resulting six dimensions effectively describe the core values of national culture and explain observed behaviours. They are called dimensions because, as you will see, each one represents a range of strength of cultural characteristic between two extremes. Each country sits somewhere between these extremes for each dimension.

The dimensions are not absolute measures of culture but are relative comparisons. Thus they are useful for positioning countries relative to each other. That is: country A is more like this than Country B. From a statistical perspective the dimensions describe the general behaviour of a nation as whole. However, no specific individual can be expected to behave exactly as described in the dimensions. They will broadly think and behave in line with their culture but they are also individually affected by human nature, personality and upbringing as already discussed.

The Dimension of Power Distance

This is defined as

“The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.”

Large Power Difference

A Large Power Difference would typically mean that the less powerful members have little or no say in decision making and the exercise of power and they are compliant with the demands of the powerful. Might is considered right and so whoever holds the power is, by definition, right. Power is based on tradition, family and force. Political change arises from revolution. Typically privilege and wealth accompany power and that inequality is also expected and accepted by all. Status and position are important along with their symbols. Decisions are passed down and so there is a high level of dependence upon “superiors”. This dependence polarises emotionally between those who prefer it and those who only passively accept it. There is also a high reliance upon formal rules and the person considered to be a good boss is seen as a benevolent autocrat or “good father”.

Small Power Difference

A Small Power Difference means that the powerful are close to and accessible by the less powerful who are expected to critique and influence the powerful. The use of power must be legitimate and follow the criteria of “good and evil”. Power is based on formal position, which is there for convenience, expertise and rewards. All have equal rights and political change arises from the evolution of rules and elections. There are fewer supervisors and lower levels of dependence with less reliance upon superiors and formal rules, for instance managers will solve problems with the aid of their subordinates who expect to be consulted. There is less inequality due to position, so pay ranges between the top and bottom of organisations is less than with large Power Differences. The privileges of rank and status symbols are frowned upon.

Cultural Contrasts

Small Power Distance	Large Power Distance
Inequalities among people should be minimized and all should have equal rights.	Inequalities among people are expected and desired and the powerful should have the privileges.
Less and more powerful people should be independent.	Less powerful people should be dependent.
Power is based on position and the use of power should be legitimate and good.	Power is based on family, tradition or charisma. Might prevails; whoever holds the power is, by definition, right.
The less powerful are comfortable with independence.	The less powerful are polarized between those who happily accept it and those who don't like it but go along with it.
As they grow up children are treated as equals by parents.	Children taught obedience by parents.
Children have no role in the old-age security of parents.	Children are a source of security to parents in old-age.
Teachers are treated as equals by students and Educational quality is dependent upon two way communication.	Teachers are respected by students, even outside of class, and educational quality is dependent upon teachers' excellence.

Teachers expect initiative from their students.	Students expect teachers to take all the initiative.
Teachers are experts who transfer knowledge.	Teachers are gurus transferring wisdom.
The views of less educated people are more authoritarian than the more educated.	Both more and less educated people have equally authoritarian views.
In organisations there are fewer supervisory personnel and subordinates expect to be consulted.	In organisations there are more supervisory personnel and subordinates expect to be told what to do.
Privilege and associated status symbols are frowned upon.	Privilege and associated status symbols are normal and popular.
The ideal boss is the clever and resourceful democrat.	The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat, a father figure.
Manual work and office work have the same status.	Office work is more highly valued than manual work.
Political change is by organised process, step by step.	Political change is by revolution.
Scandals finish political careers.	Scandals are covered up.

Rankings and Comparisons

According to the indexes the countries with the equal largest Power Difference are Malaysia and Slovakia and the smallest are Austria and Israel. The European Union countries and the United States are in the lowest third. India, Singapore, West Africa, the Arab countries, China, Russia and much of Central America are in the largest Power Distance third.

The rankings for all the dimensions are contained in the recommended book but it is possible to examine the rankings of an individual country alone or in comparison to another on-line, free of charge. Go to <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html> and select the country of interest from the drop down list at the top of the page. This will not only provide the rankings but also a summary of the country's cultural characteristics based on its dimensional scores.

If you have an Android or Apple smartphone or tablet you can download an app which performs a similar function. <http://geert-hofstede.com/mobile-apps.html>

Reflections

- **Take a Moment:** Considering the national culture to which you belong:
 - Where do you feel that it fits with the cultural dimension of Power Distance and why?
 - How well or not does your nation's culture fit with what the Bible has to say on the issues concerned with the dimension of Power Distance?
 - In this light, what are the challenges of being a Christ-centred servant leader in your country's culture?

A Kingdom Perspective

As Christians our concern is not to conform to the world but to Christ's character and God's ways not the world. So our first question about national cultures must be do any of them conform to God's way? They may have been influenced by Christianity but are they entirely God's way?

When considering what we learn from the Bible regarding the issues addressed by each of the dimensions, one thing becomes plain; the dimensions are of the world and we find that the Bible does not align well with them. In terms of cultural dimensions, if it were possible to identify them from the Bible, they would be significantly different to those identified by the researchers.

Considering Power Distance, the Kingdom has two different perspective at the same time. On the one hand our relationship with God and the other our relationships within the church.

Relationship with God

God is the sovereign creator God and stands apart from man in that God is uncreated and everything else is created by him. God is eternal throughout all time, existing both before and after Creation whereas man is not, although man is eternal going forward in terms of eternal life or eternal damnation.

God is working out a plan and purpose which is good (Ephesians 1:11) which he shares with us but we have not been involved in its determination. Through Isaiah he tells us:

“I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’” Isaiah 46:9&10

This was part of the prophecy, made some 300 years beforehand, concerning Cyrus returning the Jews from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem and Judah. The fact that this was fulfilled underlines the truth of God’s words.

God’s sovereign authority suggest a large Power Distance, however the gospel, a measure of God’s grace and mercy which are not necessarily characteristics of any regime in a Large Power Distance country, is the means of completing our eternal existence in the presence of God or in hell.

God, unlike leaders in any country, is perfectly holy, righteous and good, and relates closely to man. Thus the negatives aspects of a Large Power Distance do not exist with him.

Relationships in the Church

The church is the manifestation of God’s Kingdom on earth and it is organic rather than a hierarchical organisational.

Paul talks about the church in terms of a body and a family, with Christ as the head. The Bible has little to say on organisational issues, but as we have seen it has quite a bit to say about the nature and behaviour of Christians, the church and leadership (see **Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom**). The Christ-centred leader is modelled on Christ’s sacrificial servant character and this gives rise to the seemingly paradoxical description of the Son of God as the “Servant King”. Jesus plainly teaches that leaders are not to be centred on status and power but upon servanthood, serving those that they lead. Reflecting this, Paul tells Christians to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21). There is no room for exercising power over others in that statement.

Also God is accessible to everyone through the indwelling Holy Spirit and prayer. He is as likely to direct one as another, whether they are leaders or not. This makes leaders in the church equal with those they lead. This supports the assertion that leadership in the Kingdom is not about position,

power and status but functional roles, each with the appropriate authority to fulfil their function. Each member of the Kingdom is equally important with an equal relationship with God but is called to different tasks.

The Dimension of Individualism

Individualism and Collectivism are the opposite ends of a cultural spectrum and together form a dimension labelled Individualism.

Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are very loose: everyone is expected to look after themselves and their immediate family.

Collectivism pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive groups (technically called in-groups) which throughout people's life time continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

Collectivist and Individualist Countries

The majority of the world's population live in countries where the interests of the group outweigh the interests of the individual. These are labelled Collectivist. Countries where the opposite is true are labelled Individualist.

Collectivist Cultures

Culturally, collectivism is not about political power of the state over individuals put the power of the group. The most dominant group in collectivist countries is the family. Mostly this includes the extended family in close proximity: parents, children, uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents and servants. Children grow up to think of this family as part of the "we" group. Technically it is called an "in-group" and is the source of the child's identity. The "we –group" is distinct from everyone else who form the "they-group" (technically called the "out-group"): WE do this THEY do that. In English often seen as "Us" and "Them".

The in-group is the only source of security and protection and so one owes a lifelong allegiance and loyalty to that group. Being disloyal to one's group is the worst thing one can be.

Exclusionism is tendency of collectivist groups. This means they treat people on the basis of their group and reserve favours, services and privileges for the group(s) to which they belong. Thus outsiders are excluded from deserving any consideration. A goal is harmony within the in-group but this can generate disharmony, indifference and sometimes hostility with respect to the out-groups.

Individualistic Cultures

Here children are normally born into nuclear families which comprise only of parents and children while they remain at home. Other relatives are much more loosely associated and normally don't live close by.

Children in these families grow to think of themselves as "I", not "We" and choose friends on the basis of personal preference not because they belong to the same group. Being distinct from other people they are classified as themselves (I) and not part of a group (We). Growing up, parental guidance and education is about establishing people who can "stand on their own two feet" and will leave the parental home maintaining only loose ties thereafter. In Individualistic societies one is supposed to be able to look after one's self and not be dependent upon others.

Individualistic cultures tend to a behaviour referred to as Universalism as opposed to Exclusionism. This means that people are treated mainly as individuals regardless of group affiliations. Thus one of the most important individualistic values is respect for others.

Communication Style Differences

The anthropologist Edward Hall identified two styles of communication from a cultural perspective which he called “High Context” and “Low Context”.

High context communications assumes that much of the knowledge and background (context) needed is already known or evident to all parties because it is inherent in how their society works. Thus little has to be said or written because most of it is already known. This is typical of collectivist societies.

In Low Context communications it is assumed that little of the required knowledge or background is known and all of the necessary information must be communicated, none is assumed. This is the tendency for Individualist cultures. It is observed that, for this reason, American contracts are far longer than Japanese contracts for instance.

Cultural Contrasts

Collectivist	Individualist
A tendency to be introvert, i.e. people are an energy drain and solitude is energising.	A tendency to be extrovert, i.e. people are energising and solitude is an energy drain.
Showing sadness is encouraged and signs of happiness are discouraged.	Showing happiness is encouraged and signs of sadness are discouraged.
Harmony is to be maintained and conflict avoided. At work the direct appraisal of subordinates spoils harmony.	“Speaking one’s mind” is a valued characteristic of an honest person.
Offences and failings lead to shame and loss of face (honour and respect) for self and by implication one’s whole group.	Offences and failings lead to guilt and loss of self-respect.
People with disabilities are a shame on the family and should be kept out of sight.	People with disabilities should participate in normal life as much as possible.
The social network (i.e personal contacts) is a primary source of information.	Media is a primary source of information.
Students speak up in class only when sanctioned by the group.	Students expected to individually speak up in class.
Hiring and promotion decisions take the in-group into account.	Hiring and promotion decisions are based on skills and rules.
Opinions are predetermined by the group.	Private opinions are expected.
Collective interests prevail over individual interests and resources should be shared with relatives.	Individual interests prevail over collective interests. Resources are owned by the individuals – even for children.
These tend to be economically poorer countries.	These tend to be economically richer countries.
Laws and rights differ by group.	Laws and rights are supposed to be the same for all.
Lower human rights rating.	Higher human rights rating.
Patriotism is the ideal.	Autonomy is the ideal.

Rankings and Comparisons

The most individualist country is the United States where as the most collectivist country is Guatemala. Nearby is much of northern South American and Central America. China and S.E Asian countries tend to be in the most collectivist third, along with Africa and Pakistan. Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Mexico are in the middle third, balancing individualistic and collectivistic characteristics along with Arab and Middle Eastern countries. Russia, the Baltic States and many of ex-soviet Eastern European countries are spread throughout the range. The English speaking and European Union countries, Scandinavia and Baltic States tend to be in the most Individualist third.

The majority of the world's population live in countries where the interests of the group outweigh the interests of the individual.

Reflections

- **Take a Moment:** Considering the national culture to which you belong:
 - Where do you feel that it fits with the cultural dimension of Individualism?
 - How well or not does your nation's culture fit what the Bible has to say on the issues concerned with the dimension of Individualism and Collectivism?
 - In this light, what are the challenges of being a Christ-centred servant leader in your country's culture?

A Kingdom Perspectives

The Biblical model of the church is that of a body and of a family (Ephesians 1:22 &23, 2:19, 4:15&16, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27) to which Christians have individually become members.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.
1 Corinthians 12:12-27

It's God's intent that there be no division in the body but its members should have the same care for each other (1 Corinthians 12:25). We also read that we are to have the same mind as each other which has Christ Jesus as its source (Philippians 2:2&5)

Christians are not to think more highly of ourselves than is appropriate (Romans 12:3). Jesus gives a new commandment to model ourselves upon him and love one another as much as he loved us (John 13:34). That leads to our modelling his sacrificial servant heart which is not exclusive of those outside of our in-group.

In Christ there is to be no in-group/out-group attitude. He tells us that the world's dichotomies no longer apply: Jew and non-Jew (Greek¹), male and female, slave and free. But there is a unity in the body that supersedes the world's view of in-group and out-groups. (Galatians 3:28.)

Then, in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19&20) Christians are instructed to not be exclusive but to go into the whole world to share what Christ has given us. This was emphasised through Peter's

¹ Literally "Greek". In New Testament times Jews (the in-group) used "Greek" to designate the out-group of all Gentiles, i.e everyone who was not Jewish. Thus the phrase "Jews or Greeks" covers very person in the world.

experience when his thinking was challenged through the rooftop vision when he was prepared by God to go to the Gentile, Cornelius (Acts 10).

So as Christians we are called upon to be functioning parts of the body and the family, collectivist notions. However, neither the exclusiveness nor the partiality of collectivist cultures, as seen in the world, are to be seen amongst us. God's righteousness, justice, truthfulness and holiness also precludes the oppressiveness that is seen in the world. We are to work for the benefit of each other such that God is glorified (Romans 15:1-7).

The problem with individualism is that preference for self is at the heart of sin and thus separation from God.

Again we see a reflection of God's desire for us in the concepts of Individualism and Collectivism but they are sadly corrupted versions of what we read in the Bible and learn from the character of Christ.

The Dimension of Masculinity

Masculinity is the label given to a cultural dimension about the clarity of gender roles in a society. Masculinity and femininity are the opposite ends of the behavioural spectrum to which this label is assigned.

A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive tough, focussed on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life.

A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life.

Thus, this dimension is not about the biological and physiological statistical differences between men and women but their social roles.

In the studies this was the only dimension in which men and women showed a systematic difference in their answers to the questionnaires used.

Societies recognise different social roles for men and women but which belongs to each gender differs significantly by society. The example of this distribution given by Hofstede is that women dominate as doctors in Russia, dentists in Belgium and shop keepers in parts of West Africa. However there is a core element which is common to all cultures

Masculine Cultures

Men are supposed to be more concerned with achievements outside the home while. In what are referred to as "traditional" societies men are concerned with hunting and fighting and in so called "modern" societies they engage in the economic equivalent. Men are supposed to be assertive, competitive and tough. Male achievement reinforces assertiveness and competitiveness.

Women are supposed to be the tender home-makers and carers and the practice of predominantly female care strengthens this female concern for nurturing and relationships.

The degree to which this is true depends upon the country and according to the variations it gives a different characteristic to a nation's society.

Feminine Cultures

In feminine cultures men are also more concerned about caring, nurturing and relationships both inside and outside the home. Women are also seen in roles traditionally the preserve of men, especially in the so called modern societies. However, feminine societies are not about the toughening up of women but more about men being concerned about areas that would traditionally be the preserve of women.

Cultural Contrasts

Feminine	Masculine
Relationships and quality of life are important.	Challenge, earnings, recognition and advancement are important.
Both men and women should be modest.	Men should be assertive, ambitious and tough.
Both men and women can be tender and focus on relationships.	Women are supposed to be tender and take care of relationships.
In the family both fathers and mothers deal with facts and feelings.	In the family the father deals with facts and the mother with feelings.
Parents share earning and caring roles.	The father earns while the mother cares.
Women's liberation means that men and women take equal shares both at home and work.	Women's liberation means admitting women to positions normally only occupied by men.
The average student is the norm, praise is used to encourage weak students.	The best student is the norm; praise is for excellence.
Students underrate their own performance: ego-effacement.	Students overrate their own performance: Ego-boosting.
Women and men teach young children.	Women teach young children.
Women and men shop for food and cars.	Women shop for food, men shop for cars.
A welfare society is the ideal, leading to help for the weak.	A performance society ideal leading to support for the strong.
A more permissive society.	A more corrective society.
International conflicts should be resolved by negotiation and compromise.	International conflicts should be resolved by a show of strength or fighting.
In Christianity, more secularisation; stress on loving one's neighbour.	In Christianity, less secularisation and stress on believing God.

Rankings and Comparisons

In the index the most masculine country, by some distance, is Solvaka, followed by Japan. The most feminine country is Sweden which is in a cluster of the Scandinavian and Baltic countries. Interestingly Russia is not too distant from them at the feminine end of the rankings. The Far Eastern and Central and South American countries are spread throughout the rankings. Middle Eastern, Arab countries, Africa and Pakistan tend to rank in the middle third. Northern European and English speaking countries tend to the masculine end of the spectrum.

Reflections

- **Take a Moment:** Considering the national culture to which you belong:
 - Where do you feel that it fits with the cultural dimension of Masculinity?
 - How well or not does your nation's culture fit what the Bible has to say on the issues concerned with the dimension of Masculinity and Femininity?

- In this light, what are the challenges of being a Christ-centred servant leader in your country's culture?

Kingdom Perspectives

A key element of the Masculinity cultural dimension is about the degree to which both men and women are "*modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life.*"

In Biblical terms this concern can be seen as the outworking of agape-love, which we saw in **Exploring Leadership in the Kingdom** was to be a key motivator in the servant character of the Christian leader. John, in his first epistle, explains that showing sacrificial agape-love to others is a hallmark of being a Christian (1 John 4:7&8).

*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.
1 John 4:7-8*

This has led to Christians coining the phrase "one anothering" which means that we each show concern for the wellbeing of each other.

Paul teaches that in humility we are to set aside selfish ambition and consider others at least as significant as ourselves, looking equally to both their and our own interests (Philippians 2: 4&5). Writing to the Romans he encourages them to outdo one other in showing honour to others because we are to love each other with brotherly affection (Romans 12:10).

Paul also gives more insight when writing to the Corinthians about the collection they are taking up for the Christian's in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 9:1-15). In this he shows that a fundamental aspect of the Christian way is a practical concern for the wellbeing of others and that God abounds in the wealth that he gives to his people so that in turn they can abound in good works. So care and concern for the wellbeing of others is not optional but foundational and brings glory to God.

The Bible is also quite distinct on God's views on how gender roles work out, although this is controversial in some parts of the world. Could this controversy be because we judge God's Kingdom culture against the values of our inherent national cultures? If so, is that actually the right way round?

We see that in the Kingdom we are called to be modest, tender and concerned for the life-situation of others. However, there are aspects of both poles of this cultural dimension of masculinity which are contrary to the Kingdom e.g. amongst other issues the feminine cultures tend to be more sexually permissive whereas the masculine cultures tend to be more exploitative of women, both of which are contrary to the Kingdom.

The Dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance

The dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance is about the way a culture deals with the threat of the unknown. It is defined as follows:

Uncertainty Avoidance is a measure of the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.

Uncertainty Avoidance is an emotional issue about the level of anxiety that the people in a culture feel when faced with an uncertain future; extreme ambiguity generates intolerable anxiety. This outlook leads to an inherent level of stress and tension because in reality every next second represents the unknown.

The Nature of Uncertainty Avoidance

At higher levels of uncertainty avoidance people will avoid creating uncertainty for themselves. For instance, there is adherence to rules at all levels, even if there may be a good reason to break the rule (often rules are arbitrary conventions not moral essentials). This is because breaking the rule generates an unknown situation outside of normal conventions and behaviours, so how will others respond? Similarly, people will avoid changing employers because it represents a step into the dark unknown.

Anxiety is not fear. Anxiety is about being “uneasy or worried about what may happen” but it has no specific focus. Fear, on the other hand, has a specific focus, one is afraid of something definite e.g the presence of a spider.

Uncertainty Avoidance is not the same as risk avoidance. A risk is a definite, definable thing which can be mitigated to some extent, if not altogether. Mitigation of risk is the focused process of planning and executing that plan to reduce or remove the risk. Uncertainty Avoidance is an ill-defined feeling or foreboding with no focus.

The sociologist sees that technology, law and religion are ways that uncertainty can be avoided. Technology helps us deal with the natural world, making it more certain, compare a hunter/gatherer life style to that of an agricultural society. Laws and rules define how people are to behave so we know what others will do in the many situations for which there are laws and conventions. The sociologist sees religion as the means of coping with the situations against which there is no other defence.

Cultural Contrasts

Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
Uncertainty is a normal feature of life and is accepted as it comes. What is different is curious.	Uncertainty is an inherent, continuous threat that must be fought. What is different is dangerous.
Generally there are lower levels of stress and anxiety.	Generally there are high levels of stress and anxiety.
People should avoid being aggressive and showing emotions.	It is permitted to show emotion and vent anger at the proper time and place.
People are generally comfortable with ambiguous situations and unfamiliar risks.	People accept familiar risk but are afraid of ambiguous situations and unfamiliar risks.
There are fewer people who feel unhappy and there are fewer worries about health and money.	There are more people who feel unhappy and there are more worries about health and money.
More people have heart attacks.	Fewer people have heart attacks.
Teachers are allowed to say they don't know and will more readily involve parents.	Teachers are supposed to know and tend to inform parents.
People are happy to buy used cars and engage in “do-it-yourself” home repairs.	People buy new cars and employ expert tradesmen for home repairs.
At work there should be no more rules than	At work there is an emotional need for rules

necessary.	<i>even if they do not work!</i>
People work hard only when needed.	There is an emotional need to be busy and work hard.
Top managers are concerned with strategy.	Top managers are concerned with daily operations.
Generally laws and unwritten rules are few or general in nature.	Lots of precise laws and unwritten rules.
Citizen protest is acceptable.	Citizen protest should be repressed.
Citizens are interested in politics and there is a high level of involvement in voluntary associations and movements.	Citizens are not interested in politics and there is a low level of involvement in voluntary associations and movements.
Liberal societies with less perceived corruption.	Conservative society, law and order is important but there is more perceived corruption.
Tolerance, even of extreme ideas; ethnic tolerance.	Extremism and repression of extremism. Ethnic prejudice.
Defensive nationalism and lower risk of violent intergroup conflict.	Aggressive nationalism and a higher risk of violent intergroup conflict.
Nobody should be persecuted for their beliefs.	More religious, political and ideological intolerance and fundamentalisms.

Rankings and Comparisons

The nation with strongest (highest) Uncertainty Avoidance index is Greece² and the weakest (lowest) index is Singapore. Most South East Asian countries have a low index but Japan and S. Korea are quite high. Russia is high and the Eastern European countries are evenly spread through the high two thirds. Northern Europe and the English speaking countries are in the lower two thirds while Southern Europe is in the higher third. South and Central America are also spread throughout the higher two thirds of the index. The Arab countries and Africa are in the middle third.

Reflections

- **Take a Moment:** Considering the national culture to which you belong:
 - Where do you feel that it fits with the cultural dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance?
 - How well or not does your nation's culture fit what the Bible has to say on the issues concerned with the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance?
 - In this light, what are the challenges of being a Christ-centred servant leader in your country's culture?

Kingdom Perspectives

The sociologists consider that the function of religion is to remove uncertainty regarding things about which we have no control.

In one sense this is true for the Christian because God is The Sovereign God as we saw earlier when we looked at Isaiah 46:9 & 10. Here God declares that he is the only God and his purposes will be fulfilled. However, it can be perceived that because God is sovereign and his purposes will be fulfilled that any sense of control that man has is an illusion. Therefore, everything in this world is

² Consider for a moment the unrest that was generated in Greece by the austerity measures enforced in response to the post "Credit-Crunch" economic crisis.

uncertain, apart from God. So again we see the world echoing Kingdom realities but not accurately representing them.

For sure, Christians have a certainty concerning our eternal future in the presence of an eternal, sovereign God. Jesus tells us that His people know him and will never perish or be snatched away (John 10:27-29). This certainty has been a comfort to many who have faced a martyr's death, refusing to renounce their faith because of the true certainty of an eternal, living God.

However, the Bible is full of role models of people who willingly faced uncertainty in this world in order to serve God. Serving God inherently includes uncertainty as can be seen by examining the lives of the Apostles for instance:

John was placed in exile on Patmos because of his service of the Lord (Revelation 1:9), would he remain there till he died or would he be executed? What was happening to the Church he loved so much?

Paul declared his readiness for imprisonment and death, but he did not know which. When he returned to Jerusalem he was arrested but what would happen to him? He faced assassination attempts, would his enemies succeed? Then he undertook his journey to Rome in which he was shipwrecked, would he survive? Would reach Rome? (Acts 23 -28). And we could go on.

The key to dealing with uncertainty is faith which provides an assurance from God despite facing unknown and unmeasurable uncertainties:

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1*

Addressing anxiety figures large in the New Testament. In Philippians 4:6&7 Paul provides instruction how to defeat anxiety by exercising faith in God.

*...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6&7*

Jesus counsels the disciples on dealing with uncertainty and anxiety in Matthew 6:25-34 and declares that its antidote is to "Seek first the Kingdom of God" the result being God's provision to counter all those uncertainties and anxieties. This is counter-intuitive because Jesus is saying we are not to focus on the things that cause the uncertainties, as would the world, but we are to focus on serving the Kingdom. From the perspective of the world this would be to invite more uncertainty, but it is here that we see God at work in response to our faith.

*Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat..... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
Matthew 6:31-33*

In the Kingdom we are not to focus on and chase after the things that directly concern us but to focus on seeking God's Kingdom way and in faith, leave the uncertainties to him. When we face anxiety we can turn deliberately facing it and then resting in God's faithfulness.

In the description of the Uncertainty Avoidance cultural dimension there are many excesses and corruptions of Godly attitudes on both sides of the equation. These quite plainly have no place in a Kingdom inhabited by God’s righteousness.

The Dimension of Long Term Orientation

Long and short term orientation are opposite poles of the dimension of Long Term Orientation:

Long Term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues orientated toward future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift³.

Short Term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and the present, in particular respect for tradition, preservation of “face” (respect and honour) and fulfilling social obligations.

This dimension is a strong factor in the oriental, Far Eastern cultures and is reflected in Confucian philosophy but it shows itself quite strongly in other cultures too.

Long Term Oriented Cultures

In Long Term Orientated cultures the family is very important. There are strong “senior/junior” relationships based on mutual obligation e.g. father-son, ruler-subject. Virtue is based on the “Golden Rule”: treating others as one would like to be treated. The acquisition of education and skill, diligence, hard work, thrift and perseverance are also important characteristics. Interestingly this culture seems conducive to excellent mathematical and science skills.

Short Term Oriented Cultures

The family is less important in Short Term Orientated cultures but serving others is important. There is a desire for quick results and there is a strong social pressure towards spending money now as opposed to being thrifty and prudent. There is typically pride in one’s country and family and tradition is important. Face, i.e. the respect and honour of others, is important. Interestingly mathematical and science skills are weaker.

Cultural Contrasts

Short-Term Orientation	Long Term Orientation
There is social pressure towards spending and producing quick results.	Thrift and careful use of resources are key alongside sustained and persistent work towards slow results.
Social status and obligations are important and “face” (respect and honour amongst others) is also important.	People are willing to subjugate themselves for a purpose. There is a sense of shame instead of face.
Respect for tradition.	Respect for circumstances.
Living with in-laws is trouble.	Living with in-laws is normal.
Only women have to be humble.	Humility is for both men and women.
Main work values include freedom, rights, achievement and thinking for oneself. It’s important to have leisure time.	Main work values include learning, honesty, adaptiveness, accountability, self-discipline. Leisure time is unimportant.
Meritocracy with rewards according to ability.	It is undesirable to have wide social and economic differences.

³ The quality of using money and other resources carefully and not wastefully OED

People are concerned with possessing the truth and there are universal guidelines to define good and evil.	People are concerned to respect the demands of virtue and what is good and evil depend upon the circumstances.
Truth is mutually exclusive so a truth and its opposite cannot be true.	A truth and its opposite can simultaneously both be true.
Matter and spirit are separated.	Matter and spirit are integrated.
Analytical thinking.	Synthetic thinking.

Rankings and Comparisons

The country with the strongest Long Term Orientation is South Korea⁴ and the country with the strongest Short Term orientation is Puerto Rico. Taiwan, Japan and China head the Long-term orientation after South Korea. Russia and the ex-Soviet countries occupy the strong Long Term Orientation half of the rankings. South America, the Middle East, Arab countries and Africa occupy the less Long Term Orientated half of the table and Europe, Scandinavia and the English speaking world are spread throughout the stronger two thirds of the rankings. Interestingly Great Britain and the USA, normal very close together are well separated being 41st and 71st out of 93 countries respectively.

Reflections

- **Take a Moment:** Considering the national culture to which you belong:
 - Where do you feel that it fits with the cultural dimension of Long Term Orientation?
 - How well or not does your nation’s culture fit what the Bible has to say on the issues concerned with the dimension of Long Term Orientation?
 - In this light, what are the challenges of being a Christ-centred servant leader in your country’s culture?

Kingdom Perspectives

Plainly the Kingdom of God has the ultimate long term perspective because it is dealing with the infinite eternity of God (Romans 16:25-27) and from the spiritual perspective of man’s eternal destiny (Matthew 25:46). Paul commends the Thessalonians for having this eternal perspective as they await the Lord’s return (1 Thessalonians 1: 9&10).

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

However, in Matthew 6:34 Jesus counsels that we should not be worried about tomorrow (long term things) because the troubles of today are enough.

Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Matthew 6:34

⁴ Consider the sinking of the ferry in South Korea – April 1014 – which involved more than 300 students from one school, most of whom tragically died. The Korean captain of the ferry, who left the vessel, was widely reported as saying he felt “deeply ashamed”. See Long Term Orientation characteristics.

As we have already examined regarding the masculinity/femininity dimension, because agape-love is at its root, the Kingdom is strong on service and care for others which is a characteristic of the Short Term pole of this dimension.

Thrift and prudence are characteristics that belong to the Long Term side of the equation. This has certain echoes in the Bible. For instance in 2 Corinthians 12:14 Paul refers to the responsibility for parents to save up for their children and not the other way round. In 1 Corinthians 16:2 he speaks of saving up money to give as aid to others outside of the immediate community. He also encourages Christians to work (especially those who previously stole) to save up in order to share with others. (Ephesian 4:28). Proverbs 21:20 is also an injunction to use ones resources wisely and not waste them and in Proverbs 6:6-8 the ant is cited as an example of prudence and industry.

Thus we see in the Kingdom culture a mix of characteristics belonging to both Long Term and Short Term Orientations. So we can conclude that whilst this dimension may reflect things from the Kingdom it is not aligned with Kingdom values.

The Dimension of Indulgence

This dimension was derived from the quest to understand why some nationalities seem subjectively happier than others and it focuses on the degree to which cultures gratify behaviours which are perceived to be reflected in the subjective sense of happiness. The two poles of the dimension, Indulgence and Restraint, are defined as follows:

Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun.

Restraint reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms.

In essence this dimension is about the degree to which people in a nation, feel that they can act as they please; spending money and engaging in leisurely fun pursuits and this resulting in subjective happiness. In opposition to this is the sense that such free and unstrained behaviour is wrong and needs to be restrained. Indulgence is equated with gratifying desires and thus enjoying life resulting in subjective happiness not simply gratifying human desires.

Indulgent Cultures

The Indulgent culture claims a higher number of people who subjectively feel that they are happy and have sense of control over their lives, have lots of leisure time and feel that friends are important and thrift is not. There is more participation in sport. These cultures are more positive and optimistic and also feel healthier (even if they are not) and are notable for lower levels of cardiovascular disease. They tend to lack moral discipline and have less strict sexual norms.

Restrained Cultures

The Restrained cultures have lower percentages of subjectively happy people. They tend to lack a sense of control over life and with that have a higher sense of helplessness. They are more pessimistic, friends are less important and thrift is more important, and there is less participation in sport. Fewer people feel healthy (if even if they are) and the levels of cardiovascular disease are higher. There are higher degrees of moral discipline and stricter sexual norms.

Cultural Contrasts

Indulgent	Restrained
There are higher percentages of very happy people.	There are lower percentages of very happy people.
People possess a sense of being in control of one's life, leisure and friends are important, thrift is not. Active involvement in sport.	There is a sense of lack of control and helplessness, leisure and friends are less important, thrift is important. People are rarely involved in sports.
People are more likely to remember positive emotions and have a positive attitude and optimism.	People are less likely to remember positive emotions and be cynical and more pessimistic.
There are more extroverted personalities.	There are more neurotic personalities.
Generally there is a positive attitude.	People tend to be more cynical.
There is less moral discipline.	There is moral discipline.
More people feel healthy and there are lower cardiovascular disease related death rates.	Fewer people feel healthy and there are higher cardiovascular disease related death rates.
Higher birth rates in countries with well-educated populations.	Lower birth rates in countries with well-educated populations.
Higher levels of approval of foreign music and films.	Lower levels of approval of foreign music and films.
People enjoy a more satisfying family life.	Family life is less satisfying.
Partners should share household tasks.	Unequal sharing of household tasks.
Less fish is consumed but more beer and soft drinks are consumed.	More fish is consumed but less beer and soft drinks are consumed.
There is a higher percentage of obesity in wealthy countries.	There is a lower percentage of obesity in wealthy countries.
Loosely prescribed gender roles and less strict sexual norms in wealthy countries.	Tightly prescribed gender roles. Stricter sexual norms in wealthy countries.
Freedom of speech is relatively important and maintaining order is not a high priority. Lower number of policeman as a percentage of population.	Freedom of speech is not a primary concern and maintaining order is a high priority. Higher number of policeman as a percentage of population.
Smiling is the norm.	Smiling is suspect.

Rankings and Comparisons

On the Indulgence v Restraint dimension the most indulgent and least restrained country is Venezuela followed by Mexico, Puerto Rico and then El Salvador and Nigeria. The most restrained and least indulgent countries are Pakistan and Egypt with the Baltic States and ex-communist Central Europe and Russia and Iraq, Hong Kong and Bangladesh close by. All of the ex-Soviet states in the survey are in the lower two thirds tending to Restraint. Africa, Middle East and Arab countries are spread throughout the range with Saudi Arabia in the middle. The majority of the English speaking countries and Europe are in the more indulgent half of the rankings. Sweden is the most indulgent and Great Britain is more indulgent than the USA, which is about in the centre of this cluster.

Those who have sought to study subjective happiness directly have discovered that by their measures, the happiest countries (those with the highest percentage of happy respondents) tend to be amongst the least wealthy. They are Nigeria, Ghana, Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia and Venezuela.

Reflections

- **Take a Moment:** Considering the national culture to which you belong:
 - Where do you feel that it fits with the cultural dimension of Indulgence versus Restraint?
 - How well or not does your nation's culture fit what the Bible has to say on the issues concerned with the dimension of Indulgence versus Restraint?
 - In this light, what are the challenges of being a Christ-centred servant leader in your country's culture?

Kingdom Perspectives

At first sight the Christian may align with the Restraint end of the dimension because the latitudes of indulgence are obviously about self and are allied with lack of moral discipline. In this light restraint seems more virtuous. However, from on reflection it can be seen that it is equally indulgent to simply engage in the “negative virtues” of restraint. The Bible shows us that feeling pessimistic, lacking joy unduly and living with anxiety and a legalistic outlook are as much indulgences of the flesh as immorality.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. Ephesians 2:1-3

In Ephesians 2:3 Paul describes the world as indulging the passions of the flesh, the desires of the body and the mind, reminding his readers that before they were Christians they once lived that way, but no more.

The worldly implication of Restraint is the application of moral codes but Paul teaches that as Christians we are not be controlled by law and such codes because righteousness cannot come through adherence to them (Galatians 2:20&21). In fact adherence to rules is as much of the flesh as is indulgence.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. Galatians 2:20-21

The Bible's teaching is that we exchange the deluded ways of the world for something entirely different, not simply restrain them. It is a positive, not negative exchange that works on a completely different plane to that of indulgence and restraint, namely that of living by faith and grace. In doing so we embark on an entirely new and different way, leaving behind the ways of the former life; it being transformed into Christ-likeness which centres us on Godliness and honouring God (Ephesians 4:17-23)

But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:20-24

In Ephesians 4:16-24 Paul teaches that it is the Holy Spirit who transforms our characters so that they are reformed to be Christ-like and holy. In this case neither conforming to the world's indulgence nor its forms of restraints; both are of the former life and are thus corrupt.

It is the positive action of the Holy Spirit, not the negative action of rules and laws that leads us to behaviour that honours God, neither indulging nor being restrained in terms of the cultural dimension in question. The Holy Spirit leads us to delight in things which honour God, which is an entirely positive motive quite contrary to both these ideas of indulgence and restraint.

The Kingdom counterpart to the worldly search for happiness is joy and ironically this is not about whether we indulge ourselves. Paul writes to the Romans *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”* (Romans 14:17) Rather it is about seeking God's kingdom which requires sacrifice but results in joy. As we saw, Jesus teaches this in the parables of the hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great of Price (Matthew 13:44-45). His challenge is *“Seek first the Kingdom.....”*

Summary and Conclusion

- **Take a Moment:** Review what you have discovered in this module.
 - What are the key take home points for you?
 - Compare the view you now have of your national culture with what you noted in the first exercise of this lesson.
 - How do your own overall cultural beliefs, values and attitudes compare to what you have seen about the Kingdom of God?
 - Considering the Ladder of Inference, how do your cultural beliefs, values and attitudes cause you to react and respond to the situations that you face each day?
 - How will you apply what you have learned to your daily leadership situation?

The goal of this lesson was to introduce the idea of cultural dimensions and cause you to think about the beliefs you have that arise from you national culture. Because of how we absorb and develop our cultural identity you will have undoubtedly been completely unaware of many of the ways they affect how you think and respond. They will even affect what you consider to be the right way to interpret the Bible.

The next goal was for you to develop the internal challenge to *“no longer be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Romans 12:2)

The third goal was to give you insight and prepare you to look at how you lead with different eyes. Then to prepare you to develop your own insight in to the approaches to leadership we have already considered and the practical approaches that are still to come. You will need to assess for yourselves

just how much they belong to the Kingdom; how you would use them with people of the Kingdom of God and with people who still have your national culture well and truly embedded in their thinking. Also you will, from time to time, need to lead people who are of a different national cultures.

This whole module is about Leading with Insight, about self-awareness, others-awareness and understanding how to be flexible in you leadership style as you work with others. As we have seen our national cultures have a massive impact upon this.

Action Plan

Take time to reflect on what you have learned and identify what actions you need to take as a result in order to develop your own cultural-awareness for yourself and others.

Further Study

To consider the traits of your national culture you may need to use the on line tool available at to <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html> to understand the rankings of your country. Identify the key features and investigate what the Bible has to say about them.

Using Hofstede's web site, choose another country and compare its culture to the culture of your own country. How would the differences affect how would you lead people from that other country? If you are already leading people from another country choose that one for your comparison.

Next

There are two important aspects to be considered when a leader leads others. The first is the essential leadership practices that the leader must exhibit; the second is the needs of the people in the team being led. "**Leading through Others**", the next module in the **Growing the Servant Heart** programme examines both these areas from the Christ-centred servant leadership perspective. They are equally applicable to church and Christians enterprises.

Bibliography

Books

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