

# MOSAIC CULTURAL MINISTRY

Reaching  
Unreached Peoples  
from  
where you live

John Chung

Bless the Lord  
Oh my soul  
Oh my soul  
Worship His Holy name



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# [ session 3: Worldviews and Mission ]

Lecture on Worldviews and Mission by Paul S. Chung PhD.

## Why is worldview important?

### Illustrate with examples:

1. Why was it difficult for many Indian scientists and doctors to convince many fellow Indians of the danger of water pollution in the Ganges River? Because in their worldview, the sacred waters of Ganges cleanses, and thus they found it difficult to understand that it could be polluted - this required them to distinguish between the “pollution” they were talking about, and the religious significance that the Ganges river had.
2. Why did schools for girls not get enough students in certain parts of the world many years ago? The developers ignored and failed to address the values, based on traditional worldviews about education and the role of women.



Worldviews are at the base of one's behaviors and culture

**Worldview → Values → Culture → Institution → Behaviours**

Thus, we cannot understand those of other cultures, without understanding the differences in worldviews.

## What is a Worldview?

“... a set of presuppositions (i.e. assumptions) which we hold about the basic makeup of our world.”

– James Sire–

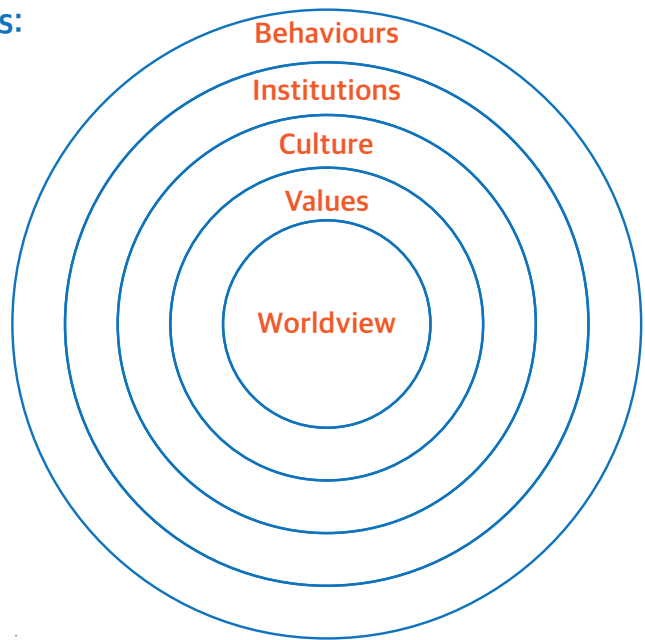
“... a model of the world which guides its adherents in the world.”

– Walsh and Middleton –

### Worldview is more than just a set of beliefs:

Ninian Smart identified “seven dimensions” of a worldview, for example.

1. Beliefs (Doctrines/Philosophies)
2. Narratives and Myths
3. Ethics and Laws
4. Rituals and Ceremonies
5. Experience and Emotions
6. Institution and Social
7. Material (Symbolic objects or places)



### Characteristics of Worldview: Worldview is...

#### 1. ... a Narrative (Everything is a part of this story, a story in which you live.)

This narrative answers the following questions:

1. What is the Prime Reality?
2. What is the nature of our world?
3. What does it mean to be human?
4. What happens at death?
5. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
6. How do we tell what is right and wrong?
7. What is history about? (James Sire)

Or more simply,

1. Who am I?
2. Where am I?
3. What's wrong?
4. What will make things better? (Walsh and Middleton)

## 2. ... Background set of beliefs through which you “see”

### Worldview serves as Framing Truth

1. Fits different facts, experience, insights, etc. into a coherent whole.
2. Fits new experience, etc. within itself.

### Worldview is shaped by what you “see” ( personal, communal, historical)

- What you learn, experience, come to conclude  
AND, worldview shapes what you “see”.



무엇이 보이는가? 무엇을 느끼는가?

E.g., The forest with a white tiger  
– depending on the worldview,  
what do you “see”? What do you “feel”?

1. Mysterious, sacred creature and place  
with spiritual significance?  
A sense of wonder?
2. Dangerous beast in the wild?  
A feeling of danger or threat?
3. Endangered species in an endangered land  
needing to be protected?  
A sense of sadness and loss?



### 3. ... an Interconnected Web of Beliefs

Beliefs in a worldview are not isolated, but interconnected that forms a whole.

( Example: For Christians, beliefs about Creation is connected with beliefs about science, and beliefs about scripture and what they say.)

Some beliefs in the network are more important and “core” than others.

- A. Core Beliefs
- B. Auxiliary Beliefs
- C. Periphery “Facts”

### 4. ... comprehensive

#### Worldviews

- A. Frames every field of knowledge
- B. Guides every aspect of living
- C. Shapes and expressed in the Arts

### Why do we need to understand other worldviews for Mission?

#### Without understanding Worldviews...

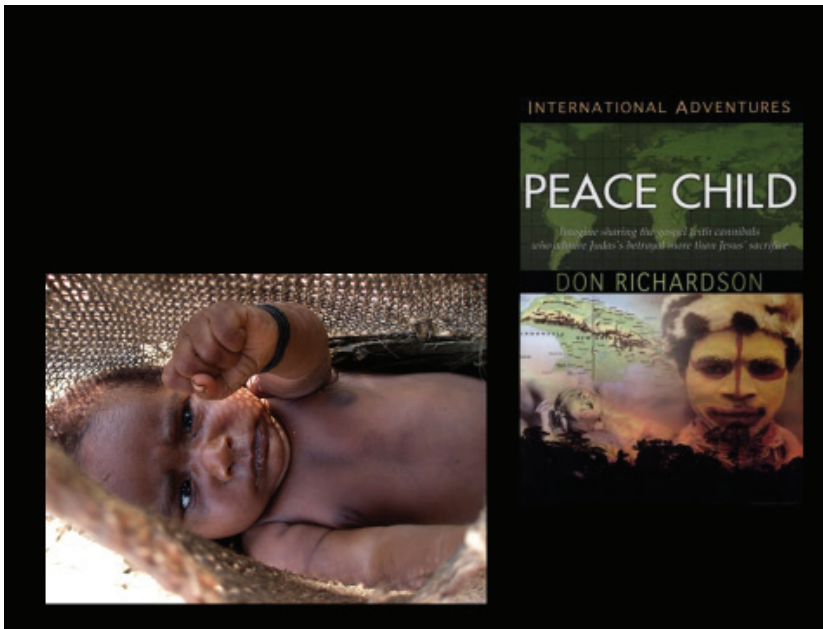
What we say may not be what they are hearing.

They may understand, or respond, in ways we do not intend.

#### We won't understand why...

1. they do what they do
2. believe what they believe.
3. they have problems with the Gospel

... or even what their problems really are!



## Important Example

### Peace Child by Don Richardson

“As [Don Richardson] learned the language and lived with the people, he became more aware of the gulf that separated his Christian worldview from the worldview of the Sawi:

“In their eyes, Judas, not Jesus, was the hero of the Gospels, Jesus was just the dupe to be laughed at.” Eventually Richardson discovered what he referred to as a Redemptive Analogy that pointed to the Incarnate Christ far more clearly than any biblical passage alone could have done. What he discovered was the Sawi concept of the Peace Child.”

(Ruth A. Tucker, Missionary Historian)

## Difficulty in understanding Other Worldviews

### Different Worldviews are Incommensurable

- Differences in the Whole set of interconnected beliefs
- Disagreement about the Whole

### Differences in

1. ... Language and Concepts used to mediate Reality. (Same Words MEAN DIFFERENT THINGS)
2. ... Reasons and Standards for why we should believe. (Same Facts MEAN DIFFERENT CONCLUSIONS)

### Differences in the “Framing Belief ” Mean

1. Differences in how to understand Everything
2. Differences in how experience, fact, etc. fits.

### This can lead to hostile reaction to others' worldviews

1. Perception of Hostile Difference → 2. Failure to Understand
- 3. Wrong and Hostile Understanding → 4. Hostile Response to the Other Side
- 5. Other side responds with hostility
- 6. Confirmation that Other Side is "Evil," or "Foolish," etc. → 7. Go back to #1

### How do we converse about our beliefs with those who hold other worldviews?

#### Difficulty: Relativism

People's beliefs are relative, so we cannot convince anyone from other worldviews or religions

#### Proposed Solution 1: Reality and Truth

Science, Reason, Experience etc. show that things are True regardless of our beliefs

Problem: BUT, most rival worldviews do claim that their belief is Truth. The problem is how do we proceed from there and argue for one's own truth?

#### Proposed Solution 2. Common Ground

Reason, Science, etc. as common, universal truths we can agree on

Problem: Common grounds are insufficient. It is how agreed facts, reasons, etc. fit into the whole that causes the problem.

**For example:** There are atheist and Christian scientists, who accept same scientific theories (Big Bang, evolution, atomic theory, etc.) but one side believe God.

**Dylan Evans vs Justin L. Barrett** (Both are cognitive scientists of religion)

- Barrett is a Christian who discovered HADD (Hyperactive Agency Detection Device), and believe that people naturally seek God
- Evans believe that HADD disproves God



### Proposed Solution 3: Coherence and Consistency

Does the other Worldview make sense in its own terms? Is the worldview consistent and coherent?

Problem: Each worldview considers itself consistent. Since worldview beliefs are composed of interconnected core, auxiliary, and periphery beliefs, any “errors” or “problems” in beliefs can be corrected without having to abandon or change the core.

### How do one make compelling case for one's beliefs to other worldviews

#### Question: Who are often named as influential apologists and theologians?

St. Augustine, C.S. Lewis, or Alister McGrath, etc.

All three were previously non-Christians (atheists) who converted to Christianity

The key therefore is in what happens in Conversion

#### In the scriptures, the most well known convert is Apostle Paul

##### 1. Paul's speech at the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 22:1-21)

##### 2. The Speech at Athens (Acts 17:16-34)

#### Story of Conversion

1. Story of why I believed what I believed
  2. What caused me to change my mind
  3. Why I now believe what I believe
- “I see what was true before, and what was inadequate.”

The conversion story is effective to those who previously belonged to the worldview but converted - as they can tell the above most effectively.

#### Transformation of the Worldview

... When we are led to imaginatively recite the story of how I would, in that given worldview, be transformed and brought to Christ. It also means I really do know what it is like to have that worldview, believe and defend it sincerely.

The story of this conversion does two things (from the example of Apostle Paul).

1. Begin the story from the perspective of the other worldview, keeping in mind
  - (A) their ultimate end,
  - (B) their past and current journey to those end.
2. Present a transforming narrative in which their journey is given greater meaning and understanding because of the Gospel / Christian narrative.

## Implication

The reason why the CMCA partners with leaders and churches of the cultural community it seeks to reach is that those who were in that community and became Christians are usually the ones best equipped to understand why the Christian Gospel is significant and compelling to those who belong in their previous worldview.

**Also: Those who want to reach out to those in the other worldviews...**

1. ... listen before talking
2. ... learn before teaching
3. ... form relationship before sharing.