PPBC Missions Training Moment

In our last *Missions Moment* newsletter, we explored how Parkway Place’s Missions Team spends time learning to cross a culture. Crossing a culture starts with prayer and research, paying particular attention to how a culture views time, relationships, family, and status. In this edition, we’ll examine one of the keys to introducing Christ to a culture.

This may sound unusual at first, but one of the keys to introducing Christ to a culture is understanding how a different people group views guilt, shame, and fear. If you are reading this a native-born person of a Western society, you most likely have a guilt-innocence worldview. **Guilt-innocence** cultures are individualistic societies (again, mostly Western) where people who break laws are guilty and seek justice for forgiveness to rectify a wrong. An offense should be remedied by justice.

In presenting the Gospel, Westerners often use judicial metaphors to portray salvation as a courtroom scene – God is a just judge, we are guilty of violating the Law, Jesus paid our penalty and satisfied justice, we are forgiven and counted innocent. The gospel presentation booklet, *The Four Spiritual* *Laws*, developed decades ago by Campus Crusade for Christ (now Cru) reflects a legal framework for the gospel that works well in Western cultures, *but isn’t as effective in other societies*. So, what you do? Let’s look at other perspectives on guilt, shame, and fear.

**Shame-honor** cultures describe collective-oriented societies (common in the East) where people are shamed for not fulfilling group expectations and seek to restore their honor before the community. This type of culture values relationships and honor.

In presenting the Gospel to this type of society, consider using the story of the prodigal son. Show how the prodigal son’s descent into sin and shame alienated him from his father. Then his father – in his desire to have his son reconciled back to his family – went out and met this prodigal as he came back from his shameful exploits. The father covered his son’s shame and restored his son’s honor. He covered him with his favorite robe and have him a ring signifying his honored placed in the family. With outrageous love, the father restored the honor of his prodigal son.

**Fear-power** cultures refer to animistic societies (typically tribal) where people afraid of evil and harm pursue power over the spirit world through magical rituals. This type of culture seeks power and blessing.

In presenting the gospel to this type of society consider using descriptions and metaphors of combat and warfare. God is a sovereign King who created people to rule His creation and experience His spiritual blessings. But we rebelled against God’s rule and now live weak and afraid in bondage to an enemy – Satan. Jesus is the warrior who conquered Satan’s evil powers and we’ve been released from Satan’s dominion and invited back into God’s kingdom. You must know Jesus to access the Divine Spirit which restores God’s power and blessing to us. Jesus alone, not rituals or magic, provides us peace and protection.

Same message, different approach. Make a constant effort to respect other cultures (you’ll have the tendency to lean into your worldview too much) and the people to which God is calling you serve. Want to learn more? We’ll journey together in the next edition!