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Developing an Interdisciplinary Analysis and Application of Worldview Concepts for Christian Mission

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DEVELOPING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS AND
APPLICATION OF WORLDVIEW CONCEPTS
FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION

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by

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

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Title: DEVELOPING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION
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Problem

The Adventist emphasis on cognitive knowledge and behavioral change instead of

deep changes of worldview assumptions and allegiance is the main concern of the present

work. It is easier to emphasize cognitive beliefs and behavior than to do the difficult task

of working to change the underlying worldview premises that drive behavior. The

emphases on cognitive beliefs and behavior have frequently generated syncretism,

created loyalty based on surface advantage instead of deeper allegiance, and hindered the

Seventh-day Adventist Christian message from being adapted to different cultures.

Method

An interdisciplinary library research is conducted to establish the foundational

knowledge of worldview concepts providing the material for discussion and development

of worldview analysis and transformation. Based on these tools, a process of worldview

analysis and transformation is applied producing a small sample result.

Results

Worldview concepts are analyzed and described based on its historical

developments. Furthermore, stages human beings move through in worldview formation

are suggested recommending a Biblically shaped worldview process for worldview

transformation and, finally, implications of worldview studies for mission and ministry

are shown.

Conclusions

This study has demonstrated the role of worldview in enabling a person to see

reality and, at the same time, blinding a person from seeing reality fully leading to the

following conclusions; first, it is essential for missions that missionaries and ministers

undertake a personal worldview analysis that will enable them to perceive how their

worldview assumptions influence their beliefs, values, judgment, and behavior. This

evaluation will also help missionaries to detect areas of life in need of spiritual renovation

leading to a personal reencounter with God. Second, it is essential to conduct a thorough

worldview analysis of people in context. Careful worldview analysis determines the best

strategies for missions. The final goal of Adventist missions is worldview transformation

leading to a biblically shaped worldview. This will only be possible by understanding a

people's worldview and analyzing it under the light of Scripture that will indicate the necessary changes to produce shifts in allegiance without compromising the cultural essence.

To Lili;
always *junto*.

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A word of appreciation and love I give to my Liliane (wife) whose support, counsel, and patience pulled me through.

Finally, I acknowledge the Missionary God who provided every mean necessary to finish this project.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem

As the Adventist Church faces the twenty-first century, worldview becomes a key issue in ministry and mission. The distance between nations and ethnical groups has increasingly shortened bringing to the surface a knowledge about different ways of life never experienced in the known history of the planet. While this reality is exciting it is also challenging. The paradigm that the Adventist Church functions under in ministry and missions does not reflect the changes of the last century. Technology, communication, and transportation have changed the landscape of most nations, but the Adventist paradigm for ministry and mission often overlooks or, at least, displays an inability to face such changes.

The Adventist emphasis on cognitive knowledge and behavioral change instead of deep changes of worldview assumptions and allegiance is the main concern of the present work. It is easier to emphasize cognitive beliefs and behavior than to do the difficult task of working to change the underlying worldview premises that drive behavior. The emphases on cognitive beliefs and behavior have frequently generated syncretism, created loyalty based on surface advantage instead of deeper allegiance, and hindered the Seventh-day Adventist Christian message from being adapted to different cultures.

Task

The task of this dissertation is to analyze and describe the historical development of worldview concepts, to suggest stages human beings move through in worldview formation, to develop suggested approaches for biblically shaped worldview transformation, and to show the implications of worldview studies for mission and ministry.

Justification

First, in Seventh-day Adventist literature little has been written about worldview much less its implications for ministry and missions. It is imperative for Adventist missions to identify, evaluate, and shape the worldview of individuals as well as social groups in the process of discipling the nations for Christ. The emphases on changes in beliefs and behavior have contributed to lost members because such changes were often rather superficial. This dissertation aims to supply Adventist ministry and missions with an element to shape a renewed Adventist paradigm of ministry and missions for the twenty-first century.

Second, not communicating at worldview level can also lead to syncretism. When only the belief system is changed, the unaltered worldview is likely to takeover producing attitudes that are different from the belief system. In order to develop a true Christian identity changes must occur at the worldview level.

Third, being able to understand the people's context is as important as to know the biblical content. Worldview concept is important for Christian mission because any attempt to cross-cultural ministry will face the need of understanding the context where people live, how they think and behave, and why they do so. If the knowledge about the

people, one wants to minister to, is not correctly acquired, one may incur in the risk of miscommunication and the message may be rejected because of lack of efficient communication. Worldview studies allow gospel workers to understand the ways of thinking of the people as well as there picture of reality, then, this information will guide missionary and ministers as they define specific strategies to communicate at the worldview level.

Definition of Terms

The term mission (singular) is used in this work referring to the good news that God is in mission to save the world. The mission of the church is to follow the commandment of Jesus to preach the gospel of God's love to all nations and specifically to preach the everlasting gospel within the context of the three angel's message of Rev 14: 6-12.[1] Missions (plural) refer to the venture of the church participating in God's mission. Any particular form of participation in God's mission to save the world is the work of missions. These concepts underline the assumption of this dissertation that missions are done anywhere and everywhere in different formats. The paradigm of missions has changed from overseas missions to cross-culture missions. Modern communication, transport, and technology in general transformed the world into an urban global web. Missions today are cross-cultural instead of cross-country. Geographical barriers are falling and the mission field has come to the front door of Christian churches everywhere. As a reflection of this concept no distinction will be made between mission and ministry or missionaries and ministers. Ministers are missionaries and missionaries are ministers. When doing ministry one is involved in mission activities and when doing

missions one is ministering to people. Cross-cultural communication happens between

different generations, races, social economical classes, urban and rural, literate and

illiterate, ethnic groups, gender, etc. Based on this assumption, the differentiation

between ministry and mission is seen as artificial and therefore unnecessary.

Limitations

The multidisciplinary characteristic of missiological studies makes mission

research a difficult task. Parameters and limitations are essential boundaries that enable

the researcher to finish the task. This is the case with the present work and the following

are the limitations guiding the study.

First, this dissertation does not aim to provide a definition of worldview since it

has been sufficiently supplied.[2] These definitions are used to set the stage for the

discussions that contribute toward accomplishing the proposed task.

Second, this dissertation does not intend to be exhaustive rather, the material

researched is selected according to perceived relevancy toward the overall goal.

Third, this dissertation does not focus on any specific worldview. The focus is on

worldview concepts and how they can be applied for worldview analysis in different

contexts.

Fourth, the implications presented in the last chapter are partial and by no means

exhaustive. Each implication of worldview for missions provides enough material for

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[1]The *New International Version* of the Bible is used throughout this study.

[2]For worldview definitions see Michael Kearney, *World View* (Novato, CA: Chandler & Sharp, 1984), 41, and Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979), 53.

another dissertation. The goal of the implications section presented in this work is to raise awareness and foster discussion and further thinking.

A final limitation is the recognition that my worldview limits and shapes thinking and conclusions making this work a partial attempt to provide a discussion on worldview and its implications for Adventist missions.

Methodology and Assumptions

This study focuses on presenting the concept of worldview and drawing implications for Adventist missions. The current chapter presents the preliminary considerations setting the stage for the dissertation. Chapter 2 presents a necessary review of literature to accomplish a twofold task: first, to introduce essential literature in worldview studies. Because missiology draws from many different fields of inquiry, an introduction to the major ideas and players is necessary to guide missionaries through the process of understanding the tools other disciplines have to offer. Second, a review of literature presents the foundational knowledge one needs to advance one's understanding of worldview discussions.

Chapter 3 discusses worldview from different aspects. A clear understanding of what the characteristics and functions of worldview consist of is essential before one is able to use the concept in missions. Different disciplines have different concerns about worldview studies but it is cultural anthropology that has contributed the most for the use of worldview concepts in missions. How a worldview serves a person and how it is part of the daily life of peoples are some of the questions that chapter 3 addresses while chapter 4 deals with the process of worldview analysis and transformation. In chapter 4, worldview is presented as a tool for missions in order to communicate efficiently and

produce the intended impact. Worldview analysis is presented as the prerequisite for any attempt at mission work. Following worldview analysis, the chapter discusses the next step in missions, which is to produce worldview transformation. It is argued that the goal of Adventist missions is to produce worldview transformation in the direction of a biblically shaped worldview. This transformation aims to produce permanent changes in allegiance, assumptions, and premises that will lead to changes in behavior.

An analysis of the terms "Christian worldview" and "biblical worldview" are also presented to show their inaccuracy in favor of a better informed and more accurate terminology for worldview and Adventist mission.

The discussion in these chapters culminates with chapter 5, where some preliminary implications for Adventist mission are suggested. One of the greatest contributions missiology brings to theological studies is the awareness that although Christians must live by biblical principles, they also live in a defined context. This context places the Christian community in a historical time that is one of the forces shaping who they are. Although recognizing that Christians must live by the Word, the awareness that the context shapes the individual presents the pressing challenge of understanding the context as well as biblical revelation. A well-balanced missiological ministry must master the divine revelation but also understand people groups and their context.

On one hand, to rely only on biblical studies may lead to irrelevancy because mission strategies and methods may be out of touch with the needs of the people or their reality. On the other hand, a mission work based only on human studies and human needs may be at risk of becoming unscriptural. Doing missions in a technological

postmodern society, the Seventh-day Adventist Church must not be irrelevant or concerned only with social issues. A well balanced mission will be informed by Scripture, therefore, biblically rooted, and also informed by human studies, methods, and tools of research to understand the people in their context. Biblical studies and human studies supply the tools for better-informed mission work as illustrated in figure 1.

To apply our theological understanding to human contexts using human studies, tools, and methodology does not lower the biblical standards of Adventism. On the contrary, it revives the standards since they make sense to the context and are not foreign to the community surrounding the local congregation. Adventist ministry needs to be missional to produce stronger local communities of believers who can believe, live, and testify about Adventist understanding of biblical revelation without being extracted from their local context or community.
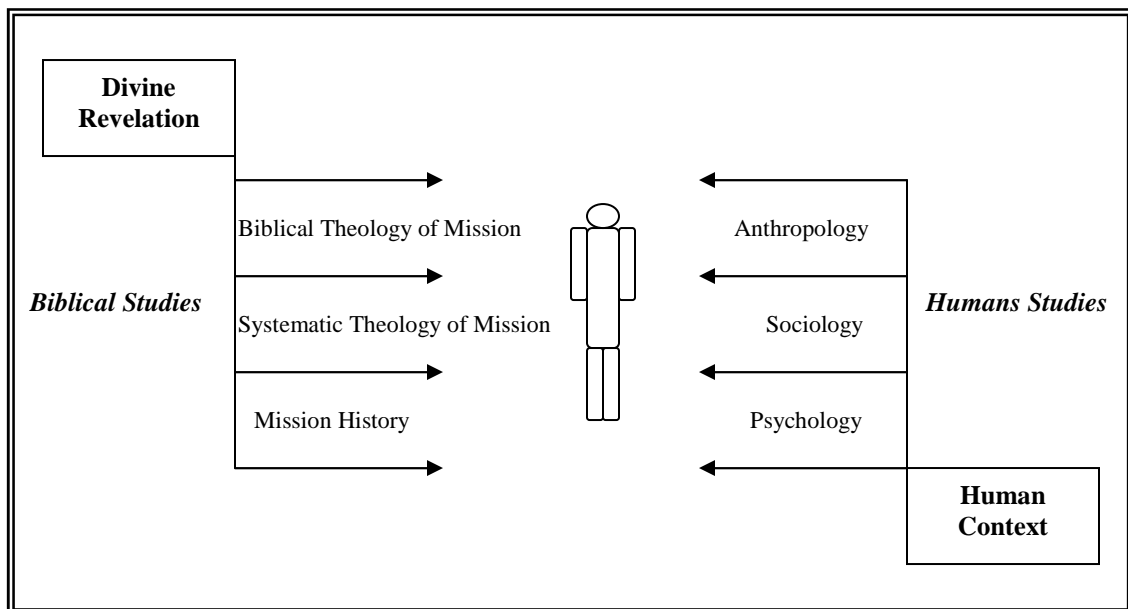
Figure 1. Missional Ministry. *Source:* By the author.

CHAPTER 2

WORLDVIEW CONCEPTS

History of Worldview

A foundational knowledge of worldview is necessary to formulate guidelines for

worldview studies. An introduction to worldview studies will be provided by reviewing

the history of the concept in different disciplines and its major influences. Furthermore,

special attention will be given to the field of cultural anthropology as the field that has

contributed the most to worldview studies in missions.

An Overview

In undertaking research on worldview concepts, it is important to understand the

historical background of its developments in academic literature. One of the expectations

from this work is to create, among Seventh-day Adventist missionaries, an interest in the

study of worldview and its influence on missions. One of the ways to demonstrate the

importance of the concept of worldview is to show how much interest this subject has

generated among the various disciplines. In this chapter, an overview of the history of

the concept as well as a related literature reviews will be presented to set out the

foundational knowledge concerning the concept of worldview. Furthermore, this chapter

will demonstrate the importance the subject has received from different disciplines.

Historical Development Among Various Disciplines

German speaking scholars have been the leading thinkers and writers about worldview as a concept.[1] The origin of the English word "worldview" is from the German word *Weltanschauung*.[2] This term was coined by Immanuel Kant in 1790.[3] Even though there is an interest among English-speaking scholars in several disciplines in worldview studies, no systematic work has been written about the development of the concept throughout the different disciplines until 2002, when David K. Naugle[4] published his significant work on worldview studies. Although worldview studies among religious

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[1]David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), xviii. Naugle refers to Albert Gombert, "Besprechungen von R. M. Meyer's 'Vierhundert Schlagworte,'" *Zeitschrift fur Deutsche Wortforschung* 3 (1902); Albert Gombert, "Kleine Bemerkungen zur Wortgeschichte," *Zeitschrift fur Deutsche Wortforschung* 8 (1907); Alfred Gotze, "Weltanschauung," *Euphorion: Zeitschrift fur Literaturgeschichte* 25 (1924); Helmut G. Meier, "'Weltanschauung': Studien zu einer Geschichte und Theorie des Begriffs" (Ph.D. diss., Universitat zu Munster, 1967) as some of the German scholars who wrote on worldview concept (Naugle, *Worldview*, 56). Another helpful discussion is presented by Albert M. Wolters, "On the Idea of Worldview and Its Relation to Philosophy," in *Stained Glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, ed. Paul A. Marshall, S. Griffioen, and Richard J. Mouw (Lanham, MD: Universtiy Press of America, 1989). Also, see page 5-7 for a more detailed discussion on German speaking thinkers and the concept of *Weltanschauung*.

[2]Under the word "worldview," we discover that it refers to the translation of the German word *Weltanschauung*. This word is a compound word from *Welt* meaning "world," and *Anschauung* meaning "view." Its English definition appears as followed: "a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint." Merriam-Webster Inc., *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2004).

[3]Immanuel Kant and Werner S. Pluhar, *Critique of Judgment* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 1987), 111-12.

[4]Naugle is a professor of philosophy at Dallas Baptist University in Dallas, TX. Even though he has written from a Christian perspective, his work goes beyond the evangelical scope because it is not limited to evangelical academia. He has written often on worldview from a philosophical and Christian perspective. For more of his written

groups have received increased attention in recent decades,[1] it has been the object of

research in secular disciplines for several centuries as it will be shown below.

Worldview and Philosophy

Philosophy was the earliest discipline to reflect upon worldview. The central

inquiry for philosophers is abstract ideas or thoughts rather than behavior as the product

of a personal worldview. Because of that some may argue that the discipline of

philosophy is irrelevant for missions since the latter is mostly interested in pragmatic

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works see his personal web site; http://www.Dbu.Edu/Naugle/Index.Asp (hosted by Dallas Baptist University, 2004, accessed 12 June 2004).

[1]Christians, in general, are awakening to the fact that explicit human beliefs and behaviors are mostly based and expressed reflecting a deeper level of assumptions about reality. Some of the main players in worldview discussion among Christians are Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, 5 vols. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982); Arthur F. Holmes, "Phenomenology and the Relativity of World-Views," *Personalist* 48 (1967); Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a World View*, Studies in a Christian World View; vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983); Arthur Frank Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 3d ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997); James W. Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984); Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, 1976); Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985); Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1994); Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (1997); Paul G. Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews, 2003," Manuscript, Deerfield, IL; Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1995); Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979); Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1989); Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996). Further discussion about Christian worldview is given in chapter 3.

phenomena instead of philosophical ideas. Two main rationales may properly present

two examples on how philosophy is important to mission studies.

First, the very idea about reality, which is worldview, is placed beneath culture

and is the major influence, which determines the daily behavior or phenomena of a given

culture. Therefore, the theory of worldview may help us understand the implicit motifs

directing daily human manners. Antony Flew, defining *Weltanschauung*, affirms that the

"term is applied to a philosophy affecting the practical (as opposed to purely theoretical)

attitudes and beliefs of its adhentes."[1] Second, philosophical ideas have proven to be the

very fuel of culture change. Philosophical theories primarily influence the intellectual

community, namely universities and other educational centers, which are often located in

urban centers that assimilate new ideas easier. As a consequence, the philosophical mood

will permeate society, producing transformations that are visible through social products

or behavior. The philosophy of the present will certainly shape future generations like

the past philosophies have influenced the present.[2]

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[1]Antony Flew, *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1979), s.v. *"Weltanschauung."*

[2]One of the great examples of how philosophies influence society is the "post-modern condition." The idea of Postmodernism was first launched by Friedrich Nietzsche late in the nineteenth century. But it was in the 1970s that, according to Grenz, a "full-scale frontal assault" happened. It "came from the rise of deconstruction as literary theory which influenced a new movement in philosophy . . . Philosophical Postmodernism" (Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996], 5). What was just a philosophical theory can be partially recognized today in a variety of phenomena, especially in American pop-culture. For the main proponents of postmodern philosophies, see Jacques Derrida and Peggy Kamuf, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge; NY: Cambridge University Press, 1991), which are considered by Grenz as the "central dictum of postmodern philosophy" (Grenz, 7).

The two examples above present a clear link between the philosophical ideas and daily social behavior.

The German branch of philosophical studies concerning the history of ideas was the first to systematize the history of *Weltanschauung*.[1] Naugle summarizes those ideas by saying that "from its coinage in Kant, who apparently used the term only once and for whom it was of minor significance, it evolved rather quickly to refer to an intellectual conception of the universe from the perspective of a human knower."[2]

From its first appearance in Kant's writings, *Weltanschauung* was adopted by one of his disciples, Johann Gottlieb.[3] In accordance with Kant, Gottlieb portrays *Weltanschauung* as "the perception of the sensible world."[4] It has to be pointed out that the term received no alteration in Gottlieb's writings. Another aspect of interest from a Christian perspective is that the term, at that point, was heavily related to theological concerns. Gottlieb, following the path of his predecessor, was developing Kant's theory of human moral freedom at a theological level. Holmes, commenting on Kant's argumentation of making room for "faith," concludes that by faith, Kant meant "a moral worldview."[5]

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[1]Naugle, 55-56.

[2]Ibid., 59.

[3]Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation*, trans. Garrett Green (Cambridge; NY: Cambridge University Press, 1978). It was originally published in 1792, just two years after Kant's first usage.

[4]Naugle, 60.

[5]Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God*, 118. Kant's postulate is that human "freedom is the precondition of morality" as presented by Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God*, 120. His final argument would be in favor of a moral deity or the postulation of the existence of

The real metamorphosis on the *Weltanschauung*, however, took place later with

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, as affirmed by Martin Heidegger.[1] In von

Schelling, the concept progressed to a more accurate definition as "a self-realized,

productive as well as conscious way of apprehending and interpreting the universe of

beings."[2] In the end, "worldviews themselves, if only tacitly, are a response to the

problem of the existence and meaning of the world, and at least sketch a subliminal

answer to the ultimate question of existence." From its birth with Kant to von Schelling,

"the term's primary meaning shifted from the sensory to the intellectual perception of the

cosmos."[3]

The concept experienced an escalated attention from this point forward. Naugle

captures its momentum in this description:

> At the opening of the twentieth century, the reputation of Weltanschauung reached a
> climax. Countless books and articles employed the word in their titles. . . .
> Weltanschauung captured the imaginations not only of the German intelligentsia, but
> of thinkers throughout Europe and beyond. The term's linguistic success is seen by
> how readily it was adopted by writers in other European languages either as a
> loanword, especially in the Romance languages, or as a calque (or copy word) in the
> idiom of Slavic and Germanic languages. Among the Germanic family of languages,
> Danish and Norwegian have *verdensanskuelse* as its equivalent, a term Wolters thinks

God who is the giver of a universal moral law and also a judge. Holmes continues
proposing that "the connection is that God is the only being in whom holiness (*supreme*
goodness) and self-sufficiency (*perfect* happiness) exist and are united. God is thus the
moral ideal, his will is moral law, and he himself is the only adequate cause of our
highest good–a happiness proportioned to virtue." According to Kant, "It is necessary to
assume the existence of God" and "what motivates the [human] will to act morally is the
belief that there is a judge of all things and an ultimate moral order in the universe."
Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God*, 123-24.

[1]Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Studies in
Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press,
1982), 4.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Naugle, 61.

may have been minted by Soren Kierkegaard . . . Swedish has developed *varldsaskadning*, Icelandic uses *heimsskodun*, and Dutch has employed the compound *wereldaanschouwing* or *wereldbeschouwing* . . . Afrikaans *wereldbeskouing* and the Frisian *wraldskoging* . . . Polish utilizes the word *swiatopoglad* and the Russian equivalent is *mirovozzrenie* . . . weltanschauung has made its way as a loanword into a number of philosophical dictionaries in French and Italian . . . it seems that worldview was indeed an idea with legs, migrating throughout Europe, where it found lodging in a variety of linguistic and cultural contexts.[1]

Its transcontinental influence also left its trace in the English-speaking countries. Even though there is a certain lack of reference to worldview as a concept in English encyclopedias and dictionaries of philosophy, "nonetheless, the frequent use of the term by numerous thinkers across the disciplines seems incongruent with its neglect by English-speaking philosophers."[2]

Worldview and the Natural Sciences

As we turn now to natural science, the central inquiry shifts from abstracts ideas and thoughts to questions on epistemology. The term epistemology means the "study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity."[3] The main question is what is knowledge and, further, it is the attempt to define what is true knowledge and what is false knowledge.

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[1]Ibid., 62-64.

[2]Ibid., 66. For a detailed discussion on worldview and philosophy, see Naugle, 68-186.

[3]*Merriam-Webster Online,* www.webster.com, s.v. "epistemology" (5 January 2005).

The first person to be focus on is the Jewish-Hungarian scientist Michael Polanyi who was frustrated with the so-called "destruction of European civilization."[1] Polanyi concentrated on the question of: why did we destroy Europe? He states that changes in the spiritual and intellectual realm resulted in the deterioration of the moral standards upon which Europe was established. As a result of this deterioration, many atrocities were inflicted against European civilizations. For Polanyi this lack of moral standards was the main element that led to the persecution of the Jews by Hitler. In the late stage of Polanyi's life he shifted from being one of the leading researchers in physical chemistry to being one of the leading philosophers in social concerns. His thinking was particularly associated with the atrocities during World War II. His conclusion was that the problem resided in an objectivist conception of science detached from a human and moral base. Polanyi suggests that the problem was not linked to "the advancement of technology," but was the very "effect of science on our world view."[2] Thus, he proposed an alternative ideal of knowledge that was set forth in his most influential philosophical works, *Personal Knowledge*,[3] which was written between 1951 and 1958 after his retirement. Polanyi defines his "Personal Knowledge" theory by arguing "that into every act of

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[1]Naugle, 188.

[2]Michael Polanyi, "Works of Art," (unpublished lectures presented at the University of Texas and the University of Chicago, February-May 1969), 30, quoted in Richard Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery: An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 5-6. Polanyi uses world view as two words while this work uses the term as one word. It makes no difference using one word or two and is left as a personal choice of writers. In this dissertation worldview is applied as one word but it may appear as two words in quotations in order to respect the choice of the cited writer.

[3]Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being

known, and that this coefficient is no mere imperfection but a vital component of his

knowledge."[1] The apprehension of this knowledge about the external world will

influence the person's worldview. In the formation of this worldview he adds that "we

must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it

in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any

attempt rigorously to eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world must

lead to absurdity."[2] Polanyi's idea reflected both a new approach to knowledge as well as

a critique on the modern scientific assumption of objective knowledge.

Polanyi first proposed a tacit dimension for human knowledge. He postulated that

the greater part of a person's knowledge is hidden beneath the surface. These hidden

aspects of propositional knowledge form a structure of thought. Thus, "we know more

than we can tell."[3] Second, Polanyi suggested that knowledge is personal in the sense

that it is obligated in character based on "the ancient Augustinian model in which faith

establishes the basis for knowledge."[4] He argued that in the fourth century St. Augustine

brought the history of Greek philosophy to an end, outlining the first post-critical

philosophy. His teaching basically articulated that all knowledge is a gift of grace,

"Unless ye believe, ye shall not understand."[5] With the Enlightenment, confidence in the

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[1]Ibid., xiii.

[2]Ibid., 3.

[3]Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 4.

[4]Naugle, 191.

[5]Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 266.

human rational and empirical elements as foundational for knowledge and science grew, overshadowing the doctrine of faith as a cognitive source. Modern critical philosophy was born. With Polanyi's critique of the modern assumptions, he calls us to "recognize belief once more as the source of all knowledge."[1] Third, he said that "because of the tacit dimension and fiduciary nature of personal knowledge, the task of truth seeking is always carried out in a circle, thereby entailing risk and inducing humility."[2] Humans have limitations and prejudices, which enable them to know things neither exhaustively nor objectively. And finally, Polanyi concludes that "because of the tacit dimension, fiduciary character, and circular nature of personal knowledge, it must be communicated by means of alternative pedagogies."[3] This alternative pedagogy is introduced as learning through example. The following quotation is the explanation of this process as described by Polanyi:

> To learn by example is to submit to authority. You follow your master because you trust his manner of doing things even when you cannot analyze and account in detail for its effectiveness. By watching the master and emulating his efforts in the presence of his example, the apprentice unconsciously picks up the rules of the art, including those which are not explicitly known to the master himself. These hidden rules can be assimilated only by a person who surrenders himself to that extent uncritically to the imitation of another. A society which wants to preserve a fund of personal knowledge must submit to tradition.[4]

A second person, who paid attention to worldview and natural science, is Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn's theory, which goes beyond natural science is very relevant to mission

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[1]Ibid., 267.

[2]Naugle, 192.

[3]Ibid., 194.

[4]Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 53.

studies because it is utilized by one of the most dominant missiologists of the last

century, namely, David Bosch in his *Transforming Mission*.[1] Bosch utilized Kuhn's

theory to propose paradigm shifts in theology and missiology. Bosch also develops the

emergence of a postmodern paradigm that has been used to redefine mission and

missiology, and consequently ministry.[2]

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Thomas Kuhn received his Ph.D. in physics from

Harvard University. Kuhn's most renowned work is *The Structure of Scientific*

Revolutions, which he wrote while a graduate student in theoretical physics at Harvard.[3]

The work is a direct attack on the traditional way of understanding authority, rationality,

and the nature of science.[4] His greatest contribution to worldview studies was to

recognize that scientific research, contrary to one of the premises of modern science, is

not objective rather "it is always conducted within the jurisdiction of a paradigm or

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[1]David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991).

[2]David Bosch's discussion is beyond the scope and intention of this dissertation. His work is here cited as an evidence of the influence of Kuhn's theory, which has been spread and has influenced several areas of inquiries including theology. For further information on Bosch's discussion, see Ibid., 181-511.

[3]Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Kuhn's work was first published as a monograph in the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*. Due to the massive interest and a good deal of controversy, it was published in book form by the University of Chicago Press in 1962. It is required reading in several areas of study such as education, history, psychology, research, and history and philosophy of science. It has been translated into sixteen languages and has sold some one million copies, which is remarkable for an academic work.

[4]Naugle, 196.

worldview." As Gary Gutting states, "to accept a paradigm is to accept a comprehensive scientific, metaphysical, and methodological worldview."[1]

The idea of paradigm shifts defended by Thomas Kuhn is, in fact, a conceptual framework providing values, standards, and methodologies in which science will be based in practicing scientific research. Kuhn's paradigm shift theory serves worldview studies because it introduces the idea of a set of assumptions that shape and gives limit to scientific practice. Kuhn's theory is relevant because, following this argumentation, science research cannot be without bias or prejudgments. The very atmosphere of the time will determine what acceptable science is and what it is not. Kuhn recognizes that the objective world that is out there to be known by science is actually partially shaped by the scientific mind conducting the scientific research. In the same fashion, Ruth Benedict[2] stated some fifteen years before Kuhn that worldview or "custom," as she called it, "did not challenge the attention of social theorists because it was the very stuff of their own thinking: it was the lens without which they could not see at all."[3] As a pair of glasses, the paradigm or worldview shapes and colors what scientists see.

Kuhn's paradigm revolution states that the scientific progress is not due to linear scientific achievements but a shift in paradigms. When a new theory, normally contrary to a traditional and established one is accepted, the new assumptions that come with the

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[1]Gary Gutting, *Paradigms and Revolutions: Appraisals and Applications of Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 12.

[2]Benedict is a notorious anthropologist that will receive detailed attention in the literature review later in this chapter.

[3]Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), 9.

new way of thinking and researching must be accepted instead of the former one. Thus, a new paradigm with a new set of assumptions will guide science from that point on causing a "paradigm revolution." Therefore, all sciences are "worldviewishly"[1] guided.

While Michael Polanyi is considered a pioneer and a "postmodern kind of thinker in the area of contemporary epistemology and the philosophy of science,"[2] Thomas Kuhn "is the contemporary thinker who has brought paradigms into prominence, and by implication worldviews."[3] His theory, to a certain extent, validates the concept that worldview is involved in shaping human thought, consciousness, and influencing academic, philosophical, and theoretical activities, including natural science.

Worldview and the Social Sciences

The social sciences deal with things related to human patterns of behavior. Their questions are different from the natural science, which are concerned with physical matters. The social sciences are concerned with the human psyche (psychology), society (sociology), and culture (anthropology).

The discussion here will be limited mainly to psychology and sociology showing how they have contributed to the theoretical discussion of worldview in missions. A separate section is dedicated to reviewing the relevant literature of anthropology.

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[1]David Naugle introduces this term that would nicely articulate what this dissertation is trying to accomplish. It is to practice mission "worldviewishly" (Naugle, xvi).

[2]Ibid., 206.

[3]Ibid., 205.

In Psychology

Psychology is divided into several sub-branches of study. Worldview has been the concern for psychologists in areas such as identity development, trauma, marriage, and the like.[1] It is beyond the scope of this overview to consider each aspect. Two of the most influential players in psychology will be highlighted for this discussion.

The first one is Sigmund Freud whom, although he denied that psychoanalysis could provide a complete worldview, assumed that psychoanalysis should accept the scientific one.[2] He declared that psychoanalysis is based upon the same set of assumptions as science. He described the scientific worldview in three arguments. First, modern science is anchored in naturalism, meaning that the only valid source of knowledge is the intellectual work of research. One of the premises of science is a "sharp rejection of certain elements alien to" it, which, according to Freud, are "revelation, intuition or divination."[1] Of course, one of his intentions was to present religion as superstition and categorize the religious worldviews as inferior to the scientific one. Second, to accommodate his statements concerning science with the nature of

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[1]The relationship of practical theology with psychology is notable. For more on worldview and psychology, see Bryce Bernell Augsberger, "World View, Marital Satisfaction and Stability" (Ph.D. diss., University of Denver, 1986); Devora Carmil and Sholomo Brenznitz, "Personal Trauma and World View—Are Extremely Stressful Experiences Related to Political Attitudes, Religious Beliefs, and Future Orientation?" *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 4 (July 1991); Carol C. Molcar, "Effects of World View on Purpose in Life," *Journal of Psychology* 122 (July 1988); L. J. Myers, "Identity Development and Worldview—Toward an Optimal Conceptualization," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 70 (1991); Anne V. Sutherland, "Worldframes and God—Talk in Trauma and Suffering," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 49 (1995).

[2]Sigmund Freud, "The Question of a Weltanschauung," in *The Concordance to the Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Boston, MA: G. K. Hall, 1980), 158.

psychoanalysis that may be considered a pseudoscience, he argued that the mental

aspects of human beings are the object of scientific study as well as nonhuman or

physical things. One may think that it was stretching things too much to compare the

study of human minds with disciplines such as chemistry or biology. But Freud insisted

that the psychoanalysis "contribution to science lies precisely in having extended

research to the mental field." Without this extension, science would be considered

incomplete.[2] Third, in his eyes, the scientific worldview is positivist and modern. Freud

believed that science was the hope for a better future. David Naugle precisely concludes

that "Freud's anxious longing and hope is that a scientific rationality will reign supreme

among human beings. The rule of reason, he believes, will guarantee nonetheless a

proper place for the affective dimensions of human life, and will serve as the rallying

point for the unity of the race."[3] Consequently, even though Freud consciously may not

have intended to create a psychoanalysis worldview, his propositions transmitted a set of

assumptions that would not just guide, but also would lay the foundation for his

psychoanalysis practice. In this way, he did develop a naturalistic and scientific

positivistic shaped worldview to be followed by future generations of psychoanalysts.

The second influential psychologist who used the concept of worldview was Carl

G. Jung.[4] He certainly is not as renowned as Sigmund Freud, but surely has his place in

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[1]Ibid., 159.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Naugle, 216.

[4]Carl Gustav Jung is one of the most influential theorists in psychoanalysis. He was born in July 26, 1875, in the small Swiss village of Kessewil. He developed a passion for ancient and contemporary languages. Primarily, his career choice was

worldview development. In one of his lectures, he developed an analysis of the

relationship between psychotherapy and worldview. It has to be pointed out that he had

considerable disagreement with Freud in accepting the concept of a scientific worldview

as the framework for psychoanalysis. While Freud "claimed strict scientificity for his

theories, Jung is much more receptive to the intangibles of psychotherapeutic practice."[1]

As Jones and Butman indicate, "the analytic approach of Jung is certainly more open to

the ineffable and mysterious than any other major approach to people-helping. Although

it embraces aspects of the scientific approach, Jungian thought refuses to embrace the

spirit of scientific objectification or reductionism. It repeatedly reminds us of mysteries

beyond our current comprehension and understanding."[2]

In *Psychotherapy and a Philosophy of Life*, Jung proposes five relationships

between psychotherapy and worldview. First, he claims that a successful handling of

psychotherapy analysis would take into consideration the deeper issues and questions

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archeology, but he graduated in medicine at the University of Basel. Further, working under the famous neurologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing, he decided on psychiatry as his career. Freud, at the time, was already a known psychoanalyst and most of his theories formed the theoretical background for Jung. Even though Freud's theories influenced him as well as their personal friendship, Jung divorced his theory from Freud's in several aspects. Carl Jung's great contribution is his theory of personality, which was initiated by questions raised during and mostly because of the First World War. The piece that is particularly reviewed in the present work is an analysis of the relationship between psychotherapy and worldview, which was originally an address given at the Conference for Psychology, in Zurich, 26 September 1942. It was translated and published under, "Psychotherapy and a Philosophy of Life," in *The Practice of Psychotherapy: Essays on the Psychology of the Transference and Other Subjects*, Bollingen Series 20 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).

[1]Naugle, 218.

[2]Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), quoted in David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 218.

about the meaning of persons and the world as a whole. A person must be analyzed as a whole, including their philosophy of life.[1] Second, in his model, the condition of the soul is determined by two elements, the physical and the mental. It means that there are some mental traits and ideas, such as ethical, aesthetic, religious, and others, that affect the person as do physiological causes.[2] Third, the suggestion is made that the psychotherapist "can expect revelations and discussions about one's philosophy of life to arise out of the . . . dialectical and contrapuntal structure of the soul."[3] He warns that in some cases the therapist will be led to have dialogue with the patient, driven by his philosophy of life, and vice-versa. The fourth element also points to the relationship between the two worldviews of the therapist and the patient. Jung advises that this kind of philosophical discussion should not just be expected to come up, but the therapist should expect that he may be asked to explain the bases for his recommendation or counseling.[4] Finally, Jung outlines a picture of worldview including its characteristics, functions, and difficulties.

> As the most complex of psychic structures, a man's philosophy of life [*Weltanschuung*] forms the counterpole to the physiologically conditioned psyche, and, as the highest psychic dominant, it ultimately determines the latter's fate. It guides the life of the therapist and shapes the spirit of his therapy. Since it is an essentially subjective system despite the most rigorous objectivity, it may and very likely will be shattered time after time on colliding with the truth of the patient, but it rises again, rejuvenated by the experience. Conviction easily turns into self-defence and is seduced into rigidity, and this is inimical to life. The test of a firm conviction is

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[1]Jung, "Psychotherapy and a Philosophy of Life," 76.

[2]Ibid., 77.

[3]Naugle, 219.

[4]Jung, "Psychotherapy and a Philosophy of Life," 78.

its elasticity and flexibility; like every other exalted truth it thrives best on the admission of its errors.[1]

David Naugle lists some elements that are significant in developing a definition of worldview in psychology. He says that (1) a worldview determines its holder's destiny in life, (2) it guides the life of the therapist, (3) it forms the contours of therapy itself, (4) it strives for objectivity but is essentially a subjective system of thought, (5) it may be shattered in confrontation with a patient, but will survive and even thrive as a result of the experience, (6) it can harden into a death-like rigidity, (7) it must develop the ability to bend, and (8) it must admit its mistakes and learn from them. "At the center, then, of life and therapeutic practice is an all-determinative *Weltanschauung*."[2]

In Sociology[3]

Sociology has been a fertile field for the worldview concept. Several leading sociologists have written about worldview or have contributed to worldview studies. Men such as Peter Berger, Talcott Parson, Thomas Luckmann, Karl Mannheim, and others have provided some useful information about the topic, even though other terms are utilized to refer to what we are here calling worldview. Terms such as ideology, social frameworks, background assumptions, paradigms, etc., are linguistic differentiations of a similar subject. The above concepts can especially be found in areas such as sociology of knowledge. For reasons of space I will concentrate on two works.

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[1]Ibid., 79.

[2]Naugle, 220.

[3]One insightful treatment of the contributions of the Social Sciences for missiology is found in Edward Rommen and Gary Corwin, *Missiology and the Social*

A third consideration will be given later in this chapter as we review the literature of

Talcott Parson.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's works are important contributions to

contemporary sociology.[1] They have influenced certain theories in sociology of

knowledge. The traditional models and methods are more concerned with theoretical

frames of intellectual history, thought, and ideas, but Berger and Luckmann's "view of

the sociology of knowledge is unusual."[2] The peculiar interest of these writers was to

understand the ways in which humans construct their realities. In *The Social*

Construction of Reality they argue that few people in a given society devote themselves

to theoretical thinking. To focus sociological studies on the history, thought, and ideas of

a people is to focus on the minority, consequently creating an unnecessary restriction.

They insist that the emphasis should be on the majority of the population, which reflects a

major collection of society's knowledge. In their own words, "The sociology of

knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people 'know' as 'reality' in their

everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words commonsense 'knowledge' rather

than 'ideas' must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this

'knowledge' that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could

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Sciences: Contributions, Cautions, and Conclusions, Evangelical Missiological Society
Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996).

[1]David Ashley and David Michael Orenstein, *Sociological Theory: Classical
Statements*, 2d ed. (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1990), 52.

[2]George Ritzer, *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, 3d ed. (New York: McGraw-
Hill, 1992), 249. In calling their view of sociology of knowledge "unusual," Ritzer is
offering a rather strong criticism of their theory, but at the same time praising them for
their work and recognizing them as leading thinkers among sociologists.

exist."[1] They propose that human beings participate in a constant process of

externalization, internalization, and objectification.[2] Before one can understand what

they meant, the meaning of the word *institutions* in their writing needs to be clarified. By

social *institutions* they meant the presuppositions that order a person's world and give

them meaning. They argue that these institutions "control human conduct by setting up

predefined patterns of conduct," but in fact these institutions are reification.[3] Berger and

Luckmann believed that "society is a human product, society is an objective reality, and

man is a social product."[4] They argue that sociology should focus on these elements that

govern everyday life. David Naugle admits that, "though they are unwilling to call such

a perspective a 'worldview,' nonetheless, what they are describing certainly sounds like

one. Defined more generally in this way, a 'worldview' becomes precisely what Berger

and Luckmann target for sociological understanding."[5]

Social science also has been concerned with the identification process of

worldview. Karl Mannheim, one of founders of the sociology of knowledge, was not so

much involved in providing a definition of worldview as he was involved in producing a

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[1]Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 15.

[2]Ashley and Orenstein, *Sociological Theory*, 52.

[3]*Merry Webster Online,* www.webster.com, s.v. "reify," "to regard (something abstract) as a material or concrete thing." The term is also used to identify realities that people create, and then, "forget," a human product to relate to as though it was sacred or something so established that it cannot be altered but accepted because it was there before.

[4]Berger and Luckmann, 61.

[5]Naugle, 232.

methodology that would help sociologists and others to assess worldviews.[1] His aim was

to find answers for question such as, "Is it possible to determine the global outlook of an

epoch in an objective, scientific fashion? Or are all characterizations of such a global

outlook necessarily empty, gratuitous speculations?"[2] Mannheim wanted to know if it

was possible to comprehend worldview scientifically and communicate it

theoretically. For him, the first problem with worldview studies is that it is a

pretheoretical phenomenon. It is *pre-thinking* and shapes abstract thought. Therefore, he

finds that the first answer is that worldview is not theoretically explained since it is

pretheoretical. From this basic point of view, Mannheim proposes the theory of

documentary method. By this he meant that all cultural products have traces of the

pretheoretical prepositions. These traces are called documentary or evidence, which are

the meaning that characterizes the culture.[3] Naugle compares him with Wilhelm Dilthey

who was the first to categorize worldview as pretheoretical. Whether Mannheim

succeeded with his complex and confusing methodology or not is still to be

demonstrated. However, his "understanding of Weltanschauung as presuppositional to

knowledge enterprises and cultural phenomena seems to be the position on worldview

adopted by James Orr, Abraham Kuyper, the Dutch neo-Calvinists, and various North

American evangelical thinkers."[4]

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[1]Karl Mannheim, "On the Interpretation of Weltanschauung," in *From Karl Mannheim*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 8.

[2]Ibid., 9.

[3]Ibid., 18-22.

[4]Naugle, 227.

Literature Review in Anthropology and the Social Sciences

Although the disciplines presented so far has influenced, at different levels, the study of worldview, the field of cultural anthropology has provided the most used framework for the current dialogue concerning worldview in missiology. From this field of inquiry, worldview migrated into mission studies as well as other branches of theology. The term has now become a "buzz" word and is widely used and sometimes misused for lack of understanding. The discussion below aims to draw insights especially from the field of cultural anthropology, in an attempt to provide foundational knowledge about worldview studies.

Franz Boas (1858-1942)

The first anthropologist to explore culture by looking for "patterns of beliefs and behavior that order human activities"[1] was Franz Boas.[2] He was born in Germany and became a professor at Columbia University in 1899. His description of culture and race had a great influence on his students and on future generations of anthropologists in the United States. He introduced the new concept cultural relativism into the body of anthropology theories. He stated that differences in culture are defined in terms of historical, social, and geographic conditions, and that all people groups have a complete and equally developed culture. This is also one of the basic assumptions in worldview

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[1]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 10.

[2]Some of his works are Franz Boas, *Kultur und Rasse*, 2 unverianderte Aufl. ed. (Berlin und Leipzig, Germany: Vereinigung Wissenschaftlicher Verleger, 1922); Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983); Franz Boas, *Anthropology & Modern Life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2004); Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict, *General Anthropology* (Boston, MA: D.C. Heath, 1938).

studies. Cultures are not ranked as primitive, developed, or sub-developed. They have

their peculiar worldview, which brings meaning to reality and is valid for them.[1] Boas

changed American anthropology by beginning a journey to understand the elements that

govern daily human behavior. That journey would not end with him.

<p style="text-align:center">Ruth Benedict (1887-1948)</p>

One of Boas' students, who followed in his footsteps seeking to identify

worldviews, was Ruth Benedict. Born in New York, in 1921 she began her studies under

the supervision of Franz Boas.[2] Deeply influenced by his concept of culture and after

doing field studies, she wrote *Patterns of Culture* in 1934, which became a classic in

cultural anthropological studies. Her work surveyed three tribes, the Pueblos of New

Mexico, the Dobu on Dobu Island in Melanesia, and the North American Indians who

live on the narrow strip of the Pacific seacoast from Alaska to the Puget Sound.

Benedict was convinced that there are "consistent patterns in accordance with

unconscious canons of choice that develop within the culture."[3] She looked through

people's songs, rituals, stories, religious practices, ceremonies, myths, and other cultural

elements to discern the deep patterns that would govern their daily behavior.

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[1]There is a question whether cultural relativism can be accepted and practiced by Adventist missions or not. In the next chapter, I will argue that all cultures have good and evil in their cultural elements. These elements must be judged by Scripture. When defined as evil, the cultural element should be shaped by biblical principles.

[2] Susan K. Hochman, "Ruth Fulton Benedict," in *Women's Intellectual Contributions to the Study of Mind and Society*, http://www.webster.edu/~woolflm/ women.html (27 August 2004).

[3]Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 48.

The time spent with the three tribes led her to identify what she calls "custom,

institutions, and ways of thinking."[1] These elements, she argues, provide people with a

defined set of presuppositions that conditions the way they see.

Benedict is one of the earliest anthropologists to look deeply at the integrating

structures beneath explicit culture. In her works she sought to give a feel of the different

cultures in terms of deep affective themes that shape the peoples' view of the human

order.[2]

Morris Edward Opler (1907-1996)

Morris Edward Opler developed a much more sophisticated understanding of

worldview in comparison with earlier writers such as Boas and Benedict. In his article

"Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture,"[3] he offered a dynamic model of worldview that

would change the way scholars look at worldview and provide the theoretical framework

for missiologists and ministers interested in culture change and conversion. He

introduced the notion of multiple worldview "themes."[4] These themes vary in their

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[1]Ibid., 2.

[2]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 12.

[3]Morris Edward Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," *The American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 3 (1945). Another important work by Opler is, "The Themal Approach in Cultural Anthropology and Its Application to North Indian Data," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 24 (1968), 215-27.

[4]Opler defines "themes" as "a postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society." He clarifies his position and makes it distinct from the "value attitude" concept of Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers*, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1937). In doing so, he admits that in some ways the first resembles the latter. Opler's "themes" are different also from Clyde Kluckhohn's

importance. The dominant themes are revealed in rituals that prescribe behavior and

etiquette. The dominant customs can be recognized easier than the less important, which

are not as visible, nonetheless they are still significant in shaping daily life. Opler saw

worldview, not as a fully integrated system, but as a system where there are tensions

among the themes, producing constant changes in society, culture, and worldviews.

Furthermore, he proposed that for a culture to survive it must prevent a theme

from becoming too powerful, leading the culture to chaos or extremes. To prevent such

extremes, he suggests the existence of counter themes that function as limiting forces,

preventing one theme from becoming too powerful. A good example of how these

counter balancing themes work in a practical way is given by Paul G. Hiebert:

> Individualism is a strong theme in main stream American culture, but carried to the extreme, this leads to loneliness and narcissism. Parents would not care for their children, communities for their people or the nation for its citizens. Consequently, people organize families, join clubs and churches, elect leaders and obey the laws of the society to build a sense of community. When themes run into conflict with counter themes, most Americans side ultimately on the autonomy and rights of the individual. A husband or wife can divorce the other without the consent of the other, children can leave their parents when they are grown to live with their spouse, and the people complain when the government interferes too much in their lives.[1]

The interrelationship between several themes and counter-themes constructs what

is called "structure."[2] Structure is not rigid, but finds its balance in these

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concept of "cultural configuration," which is outlined in "Patterning as Exemplified in Navaho Culture," in *Language, Culture, and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir,* ed. Edward Sapir and others (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), and Clyde Kluckhohn, "Covert Culture and Administrative Problems," *American Anthropologist* XLV, no. 2 (1943). Later it will be also called "postulates" by E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive Man: A Study in Comparative Legal Dynamics* (New York: Atheneum by arrangement with Harvard University Press, 1974).

[1]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews, 18.

[2]Ibid.

interrelationships, themes, and counter-themes, which are worked out by the people in specific situations. Worldview themes, then, are presented as mental guidelines used in social relationships recreated or modified in their expression depending on the social transaction. For instance, when Americans shake hands they are reinforcing a theme of greeting. Teenagers, however, instead of shaking hands may clap their hands in the air or bump their chests against each other. The theme of greeting is still reinforced, but the expression is modified.

It is important to keep in mind that Opler's emic approach analyzes the cultural themes from the peoples' perspective rather than imposing them from the outside.[1] It is also essential for this work to acknowledge that his approach is dynamic, leaving space for changes in the dominant worldview themes as well as establishing new themes that will be visible through cultural expressions or behaviors. In addition, he provides one of the earliest models for worldview analysis and transformation.

<center>Robert Redfield (1897-1958)</center>

Son of a noted lawyer, Robert Redfield was born in Chicago where he studied anthropology and received his Ph.D. in 1928.[2] He provides important reflections about worldview in his book *The Primitive World*, specifically in the fourth chapter "Primitive World View and Civilization."[3] There he pictures human beings as on a stage looking at

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[1]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 19.

[2]Nikki Akins, *Anthropology Biography Web*, http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/ information/biography/pqrst/redfield_robert.html (28 September 2004).

[3]Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1953).

the universe, classifying, and giving meaning to it. The standpoint of a worldview is the

"I" from whom the view is taken. One of his presuppositions is that all people look upon

the same universe,[1] and his aim is to find a pattern to determine the universal ways

people do it. He mentions research done by Yale University which found at "least 75

elements common to all known cultures."[2]

In an attempt to provide some reflections on what these universal worldview

elements would be, he lists the recognition of (1) Self, (2) Others, (3) selection that the

Self does in grouping people in categories, (4) usual ways of confronting inevitable

things such as causalities in life like death and birth, and (5) confrontation of the Self

with everything that is "Not-Man."[3] A final argumentation is the recognition of a

tremendous shift in thinking from what was then called primitive societies, to the modern

one in terms of worldview.[4] Redfield's analysis is based on comparison between two

cultures using the universal elements listed above. Thus, he provides a model to analyze

worldviews through comparison and contrast. Redfield contribution provides another

way to investigate worldviews and to find common features in different cultures, which

he calls universal worldviews,[5] which may be employed to assess worldviews.

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[1]His definition is similar to Polanyi's, "For, as humans beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse," (Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge; Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, 3).

[2]Redfield, 91.

[3]Ibid., 91-94.

[4]Ibid., 108.

[5]Ibid., 90

In short, all cultures have common elements of personality. Redfield defines worldview as "the way a people characteristically look outward upon the universe;"[1] specifically, how they relate to everything else.[2]

E. Adamson Hoebel (1925-1983)

E. Adamson Hoebel was deeply influenced by Opler's theory of themes. He defines human behavior as largely learned and the agglutination of these learned patterns is culture. When a group shares more or less the same behavior patterns (culture) they form a society.[3] He developed, then, the notion of themes and counter-themes but in legal terms, since he was a leader in the field of legal anthropology. Therefore, what Opler calls "cultural themes," philosophers and sociologists commonly call "values." Hoebel uses "postulates," "the propositions held by the members of a society as to the nature of things and as to what is qualitatively desirable and undesirable."[4] He draws a line to differentiate "jural postulates,"[5] or "existential postulates,"[6] which deal with the nature of reality, the organization of the universe, and the ends and purposes of human life, and "normative postulates"[7] that define the nature of good and evil, right and wrong.

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[1]Ibid., 85

[2]Ibid., 86

[3]Hoebel, 7.

[4]Ibid., 13.

[5]Ibid., 16.

[6]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 20.

[7]Hoebel, 15.

The normative is the custom, to use Benedict's term,[1] of a given culture. It is the

common sense of behavior in society: what the majority do, and what others should do as

well. The existential is the philosophical basis upon which society is formed. It is the

understanding of the big picture, explanations about the universe, reality, and human

origin, purpose, and ends. Following Opler, cultures are organized as multiple themes or

assumptions about the world. They are not static but dynamic in continuous

reinforcement, change, and transformation. The underlying integration of worldviews is

based on a rational structure with logical contradictions generating cognitive dissonances

or tensions that need to be resolved.

<div align="center">Clifford Geertz (1923-)</div>

Clifford Geertz, who is professor emeritus at the Institute of Advanced Study at

Princeton University, uses worldview as the basis to analyze societies. He makes a

distinction between worldview and ethos. Worldview,[2] for him, is cognitive

assumptions.[3] The "picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of

nature, of self, of society."[4] He says that it contains a people's ideas of order. These

cognitive elements can be understood also as the prepositions or "statements about a

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[1] Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 2.

[2] He writes worldview separated ("world view") as do other authors such as Michael Kearney and Redfield, but it does not make any difference in understanding the concept.

[3] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 126-27.

[4] Ibid., 127.

perceived truth, based on the logic of a particular culture"[1] and further they will help us

look inside worldview elements. Ethos, on the other hand, is evaluative, which also can

be described as affective assumptions.[2] It "is the tone, character and quality of" people's

"life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood; it is the underlying attitude toward

themselves and their world that life reflects."[3] Geertz sees worldview and ethos as

fundamentally congruent, complementing each other, although he didactically and

methodologically separates them.[4] In line with Redfield, he recognizes the dynamic

relationships occurring at the worldview level, which pushes worldviews to changes and

reinforcements.

<div align="center">Michael Kearney (1937-)</div>

Currently professor of the Department of Anthropology at the University of

California, Michael Kearney developed Redfield's worldview and states that "worldview

is a potential powerful tool for exploring the recesses of socially constructed human

consciousness, and thus has the potential–as largely yet unrealized for liberation in all

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[1]Bruce Bradshaw, *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002), 18.

[2]Even though Geertz uses the definition cognitive, effective, or evaluative description of worldview/ethos, it is really Parsons (*The Structure of Social Action: A Study in Social Theory with Special Reference to a Group of Recent European Writers)* and his associates that fully developed the *trio* understanding—cognitive, affective, and evaluative—of worldview and deeply influence Hiebert's model of worldview dimensions (Ian Grant, "Worldview Sourcebook." M.A. thesis [Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986], 8).

[3]Geertz, 127.

[4]Ibid., 303.

senses of the word."[1] Kearney does not completely follow Redfield's tradition, but he

repeatedly uses Redfield's theoretical framework throughout his works. He defines

worldview as the "basic assumptions and images that provide a more or less coherent, not

necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world."[2] The notion of a dynamic

worldview set is apparent when he reports that "it is unlikely that any world view has

ever been entirely consistent."[3] Redfield's model emerges clearly in his work when he

declares that worldview consists of (1) an image of self, (2) an image of all the others,

which is recognized as not-self, and (3) the relationship between them. Building on

Redfield's and Kant's platform, Kearney identifies seven universal worldview elements:

(1) self, (2) other, (3) relationship, (4) classification, (5) causality, (6) space, and (7) time.

These worldview assumptions are "systematically interrelated."[4] He argues that the

formation and development of these universals occurs through internal and external

causes based on daily life and socio-cultural/cultural behavior. Even though David

Naugle agrees that "as it stands, it is one of the most complete worldview models

available today in any discipline,"[5] it is important to note for the purpose of this

dissertation, that both Kearney's and Redfield's models are "essentially static leaving

little room to evaluate cultural systems as good or evil and changes in worldview level."[6]

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[1]Michael Kearney, *World View* (Novato, CA: Chandler & Sharp, 1984).

[2]Ibid., 41.

[3]Ibid., 53.

[4]Ibid., 36.

[5]Naugle, 244.

[6]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 16.

On the other hand, Kearney's model does provide a system for worldview analysis that I will come back to in the next chapter.

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979)

Talcott Parsons was a sociologist who was influenced by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski. Parsons taught sociology at Harvard from 1931 until his death and attempted to integrate all the social sciences into a science of human action. His great achievement was to construct a system or general theory of social action to include all its aspects, drawing on several disciplines and reinterpreting previous theories. Parsons led a group of top sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists such as, Edward Shils, Clyde Kluckhohn and others who developed a system approach to humans consisting of three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and evaluative,[1] which we will fully discuss in the next chapter.

Charles H. Kraft (1932-)

Charles H. Kraft is among the contemporary leaders in worldview studies. He is a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA. He defines worldview "as the culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments/allegiance underlying a people's perception of reality and their responses to those perceptions."[1] Kraft developed his worldview theories in recent decades and this dissertation will constantly be referring to him in the following chapters. Building on Redfield's and Kearney's worldview

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[1]Talcott Parsons, Edward Shils, and Neil J. Smelser, *Toward a General Theory of Action: Theoretical Foundations for the Social Sciences*, abridged ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2001). In this work they developed the three dimensional approach currently used by Paul Hiebert.

theories, Kraft looks deeply on the relationship of the theoretical frame and practices to expand the theories toward characteristics and functions of worldview.[2] He is one of the first to be concerned with worldview change,[3] which is directly related to his Christian commitment and involvement in mission studies, especially concerning Bible translation and the communication of the gospel.

<center>Paul G. Hiebert (1932-)</center>

Paul G. Hiebert is another contemporary scholar in the field of cultural anthropology. Currently professor of missions at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, he was a Mennonite missionary in India and professor of anthropology in the United States. He has pushed further into research and thinking on worldview and his training in anthropology gives him the advantage of bringing anthropological concepts to missions. Hiebert feels that Franz Boas' concept of "culture," gave birth to the concept of worldview in anthropology.[4] He states that "as anthropologists studied different cultures more deeply, they found that below the surface of speech and behavior are beliefs and values that generate what is said and done."[5]

Hiebert first defined worldview as the "basic assumptions about reality which lies

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[1]Kraft, Anthropology for Christian Witness, 52.

[2]Ibid., 55-63.

[3]Ibid., 65-67.

[4]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 10, and Kearney, *World View*, 26, imply the same understanding.

[5]Hiebert, 9.

behind the beliefs and behavior of a culture" in *Anthropological Insights for missionaries*.[1] Currently, drawing from Parsons, Shils, and Kluckhohn, he defines worldview as "the fundamental cognitive, affective and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people make about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives."[2] Building on Opler's model as a foundation for his thinking and Redfield's six categories of worldview, he goes further by interrelating and expanding these concepts. He states that in the new paradigm of post-postmodernism, worldview is the key issue.[3]

Summary

This chapter reviewed relevant literature, tracing the development of the worldview concept. There seems to be a cyclical attention and renewed interest on the topic through the years; from theological concerns in the nineteenth century to secular disciplines in the twentieth century, and now coming back to center stage in missiological circles in the twenty first-century.[4]

Worldview is a critical issue in contemporary missions, social development, cross-cultural communication, ministry, and several other areas as the core assumptions

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[1]Hiebert, Anthropological Insights for Missionaries, 45.

[2]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 10.

[3]This affirmation was included on a list of current issues in missions, which was on a handout as discussion material in Hiebert, "Issues in Contemporary Mission."

[4]Paul Hiebert proposes that "in the past in missions we have focused on religious behavior and beliefs." But, "in the 21st century the key issues will be worldview." (Paul G. Hiebert, "Issues in Contemporary Mission," [supplement to the course outline for DMIN 855A D.Min. Prolegomena for 21st Century Missions, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Trinity International University, Deerfield, IL, summer 2004]).

people use to make sense of their world as well as guiding and prescribing behavior in daily life. Even beyond the Christian scope, worldview is essential to international affairs, politics, and economy. There is a growing need for understanding different worldviews and being sensitive to the assumptions people make about reality when presenting the gospel message. In an era of pluralism and postmodern condition, managing worldview level transformation can be the great differential toward a truly converted church for the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING WORLDVIEW

Introduction

As demonstrated in the last chapter, worldview is recognized as the very element

that defines people's concept of life. Worldview is the silent force that explains, gives

meaning, and evaluates in order to produce behavior. It is fair to say that human beings

are captives to their worldview.

Before one can analyze people's worldview, it is imperative to acquire a deeper

understanding of it. Worldview is a very complex and abstract concepts in human studies

and is, therefore, difficult to grasp. One of the problems facing students of worldview is

what Mannheim calls *pretheoretical phenomenon*.[1] Worldview is not something that one

can sit down and write a list of one's own worldview assumptions, for they are abstract

concepts which are not clearly perceived and rapidly recognized. As a consequence of a

superficial understanding of worldview, some Christian writers have misled themselves,

thinking they are working with worldviews when, in reality, they are dealing with values.

For this reason, it is important to refer to Kraft's definition of worldview: "Worldview is

the central systematization of conceptions of reality to which the members of the culture

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[1]A discussion on this concept and the writings of Mannheim and worldview is
given in chapter 2, 20-21.

assent (largely unconsciously) and from which stems their value system."[1] Figure 2 helps

us to visualize the cultural levels in a basic way. As one can see, worldview is the very

foundation of culture. It is the deepest cultural level. From there, worldview will

influence the other levels of culture. Worldview makes its way up from the bottom

(unconscious level), determining the external behavior of the person. Values are not the

deepest level of culture and it is a mistake to see worldview as values. In fact, the value

system of a given culture will emerge from its worldview. Ultimately, as far as missions

is concerned, no permanent changes will occur if the worldview level is not touched.

To avoid such a mistake, special attention will be given to nature, characteristics,

formation, etc. of worldview before we can analyze people's worldview. This discussion

is essential in order to gain a precise perspective on worldview, which will be the basis

for studying worldview transformation and worldview implications for missions. The

last task of this chapter is to formulate a theory for worldview formation, providing a

framework for the ensuing study.

Toward a Definition of Culture

Any attempt to define culture is partial and difficult. Any attempt to study culture

will face obstacles to find conclusiveness and, although a renewed interest in the study of

culture has emerged in the last decades, the statement came as no surprise that, up to

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[1]Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979), 53.

1990, "there exists no single textbook that brings together examples of leading work" in

the field of culture studies.[1]
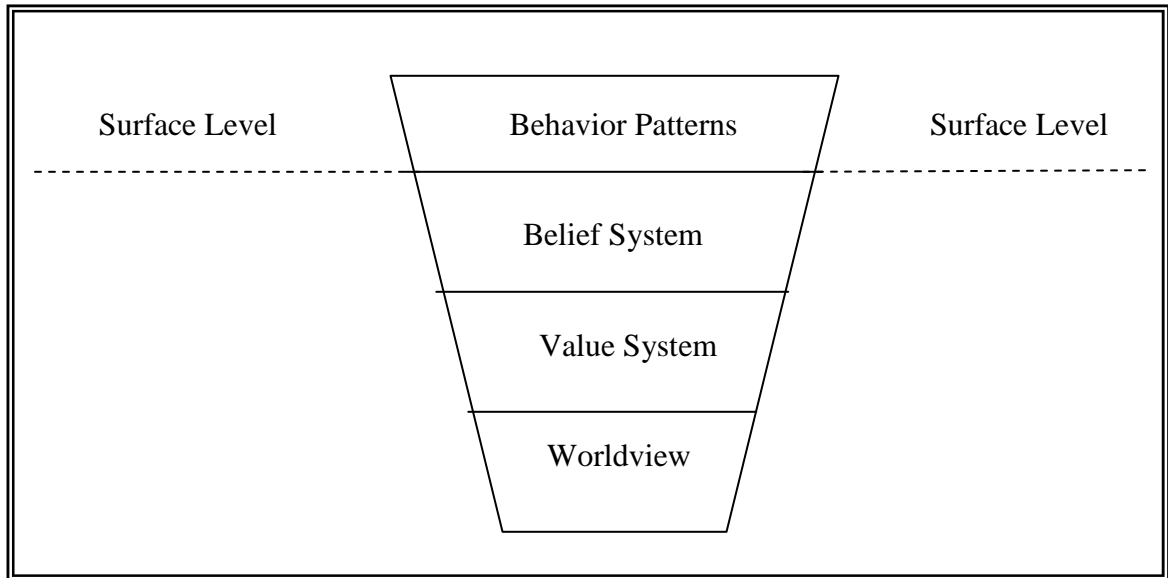
Figure 2. Levels of Culture. *Source:* Based on information from class notes, Applied Missiology for Pastors, M.Div. Andrews University, Michigan, Fall 2004; and Paul Hiebert, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (1997); 84.

Nonetheless, as the world increasingly becomes culturally diverse, successful

missions in the twenty first century will be largely defined by the missionary

understanding of culture. A poor conceptualization of culture has led missions to cross-

cultural confusion and ethnocentrism in the past.[2] An accurate theory of culture will

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[1]Jeffrey C. Alexander and Steven Seidman, *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), vii.

[2]*Cross-cultural confusion* is misunderstanding on the cognitive level, while *ethnocentrism* is misunderstanding on the effective level. On the cognitive level, it leads

inform the present and shape the future of missions toward effectiveness in

contextualizing[1] the gospel message. Increasing recognition of the necessity of

understanding culture has led Van Rheenen to propose a "Theology of Culture."[2] He

argues for a new understanding of anthropology and theology without a boundary

dividing them. This boundary is "artificial," according to him, "constructed by modern

thinking."[3] If his theology is correct it is still to be demonstrated, but he is right on target

by stating that "ultimately, missions seek to bring every aspect of culture under the rule

of God,"[4] and to accomplish this mission an accurate understanding of culture is

fundamental.

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to confusion and awkwardness as one misbehaves for lack of cultural understanding. On the effective level, it is the tendency to respond to other cultures with deep feelings of approval or disapproval based on one's own culture. For more see Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1976), 37-39; and *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 97-100; also Kraft, 49-52.

[1]Contextualization here is used in the sense of "taking the gospel to a new context and finding appropriate ways to communicate it so that it is understandable to the people in that context" as defined by A. Scott Moreau, Gary Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions: A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 12.

[2]Gailyn Van Rheenen, "A Theology of Culture: Desecularizing Anthropology," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 1 (1997): 33. In this article the author proposes the integration of anthropology and theology. He proposes (1) God as the creator and sustainer of culture; (2) Satan as the twister of culture; (3) Christ as God's anointed transformer of culture; and (4) humans as both rulers and innovators of culture.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., 38.

Popularly the use of the word "culture" is used to indicate the attitudes or

behavior of the rich and elite.[1] It refers to certain personal aspects such as cordial

behavior toward others ("a gentleman"), preference for classical musical, knowing and

practicing rules of etiquette,[2] or having academic education. Kraft refers to this view as

borrowed from the French, as "referring primarily to artistic or philosophical expertise or

even good manners and other accoutrements of the 'upper' social class."[3] After all, the

definition of the term culture finds its roots in the Latin word *cultus*, meaning the

development and training of the intellectual mainly through education in philosophy,

aesthetic, and moral.[4] In South America, for example, one would refer to a person with

such attributes as *culto*, or a person who has "culture." For those that do not display such

characteristics, one would refer to them as *sem cultura*, or a person who has no "culture"

at all. In this sense, one is equating culture to the behavior of the rich and educated and

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[1]Paul G. Hiebert, "Culture and Cross-Cultural Differences," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 367.

[2]Etiquette here must be understood in relative terms. Different cultures will prescribe different norms in what is considered appropriate for clothing or eating, for instance. As an example, in the United States a person will generally eat at the table using silverware. In other cultures, such as India, it would not be inappropriate to sit on the floor and eat with one's hand. The latter behavior, while considered unacceptable in the United States, is perfectly valid in India. Etiquette will vary as it interrelates to other culturally defined worldviews, values, and beliefs. It will depend on what is culturally accepted as clean or dirty, private or public, right or wrong, moral or immoral, beautiful or ugly, etc. (I am in debt for this example to Paul Hiebert's thoughts in class offered at Trinity Evangelical School, Deerfield, IL, Summer 2004).

[3]Kraft, 45.

[4]*Merriam Webster Online,* www.webster.com, s.v. "culture." Both Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, and Kraft identify the meaning of culture in English-speaking countries, as derived from the German *Kultur*. It is irrelevant to our discussion whether it is derived from Latin *cultus* or German *kultur*.

marginalizing the poor and oppressed. Further, the oppressed becomes the one with no

culture or identity. The elite and rich will be posted as the ideal model in gaining an

identity and receiving the status of respected persons. In this sense, the ideal model is the

model of the oppressor or the one that "has" culture or identity. This rational has lead

Freire to call today's oppressed as tomorrow's oppressor,[1] which is far from the ideal

biblical model of transformation of culture.

The assumption that other cultures are judged by ones' own has led missions to

become synonymous with colonization or Western expansion in the past.[2] Western

civilization came to understand itself as superior and more developed in comparison to

other cultures, which were regarded as inferior and primitive. As far as the church and

mission is concerned, they were driven by the notion of Christians and pagans. To do

mission was to Christianize and to Christianize was to colonize.[3] These assumptions

continued to influence missionaries until recent years when a new understanding of

culture surfaced.[4] Although the current academic understanding of cultures has changed,

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[1]Paulo Freire, *Pedagogia Do Oprimido* (Sao Paulo, Brazil: Editora Paz e Terra S/A, 1970), 31-4. For an English translation see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th anniversary ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000).

[2]For an enlightening discussion on mission and colonization see David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 302-13.

[3]This reality can be clearly observed in countries such as Brazil, where the historical places for the colonization process are largely chapels, catholic churches, and mission stations.

[4]This new understanding of culture in mission studies has been influenced by anthropological concepts of culture that contributed to mission theory and practice. Such contributions can be seen on works by Hiebert, Kraft, Hesselgrave, Bosch, and others.

the sense that cultures are to be compared in terms of better, complex, and developed

versus worse, simple, and underdeveloped continues to be the trend on the popular level.

Unfortunately, the popular view of mission work is still thought of as going to

Africa, South America, or some other exotic and poor places full of illness and wild life.

It assumes a movement from the superior to the inferior, from the sophisticated to the

wild, and from the Christian to the pagan.

<div align="center">Cultural Dimensions</div>

Another aspect of culture that is important to this study is the "dimensions of

culture." Hiebert presents three dimensions of culture that have the function of working

with cultural ideas, feelings, and values.[1] This theory was first developed by Talcott

Parsons and his colleagues in *Toward a General Theory of Action: Theoretical*

Foundations for the Social Sciences.[2]

Cognitive Dimension

The first dimension describes culture as it relates to ideas. According to Hiebert,

this is the aspect of culture that holds the shared knowledge of a society providing a

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[1]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30. Kraft criticizes Hiebert's dimensional model, arguing that it does not make clear distinction as far as person-structure tending to attribute worldviews to certain "personal" characteristics (Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996], 58). Later it will be argued that the present dissertation assumes Hiebert's argumentation without separating worldviews from the person. As stated before, people use culture, therefore, people use worldviews. People are the ones who have thinking, feelings, and evaluate things. They use worldview and cultural dimensions all together as tools to make sense of the world and to order their lives in a meaningful way. To understand worldviews as separated entities from the person who holds it is, to say the least, inaccurate.

[2]Parsons, Shils, and Smelser, *Toward a General Theory of Action*.

"conceptual content" for culture, informing people about what is real and what is not.[1]

This dimension contains the assumptions and beliefs about the nature of the world and how it functions. The cognitive dimension is the place where the common knowledge of a people is preserved and passed on to succeeding generations. This cultural information varies from survival techniques to religious belief. The information can be encapsulated in books, stories, proverbs, rituals, etc. It is important for Adventist missionaries to realize that not all cultures preserve information in the same way. To be open to different methodologies to communicate the gospel message in different cultures is vital in working cross-culturally. In a practical way, the gospel message can be communicated well through a lecture in one culture, but it may be necessary to use dramatization and music to communicate effectively in another.

Affective Dimension

The second dimension deals with cultural feelings and has to do with people's "notion of beauty, tastes in food and dress, likes and dislikes, and ways of enjoying themselves or experiencing sorrow."[1] This dimension influences all aspects of life and plays a major part in church life. This is the dimension people use for their preferences. Taste and preference is firmly linked to our cultural context in history more than to logical reasoning. If asked why you like something this way or that, most people would have no plausible explanation. It may be clearly seen in the disputes over music styles within the church, for it is not a matter of truth but of preference based on the affective dimension of culture.

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[1]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30-32.

Evaluative Dimension

The last dimension of culture is the evaluative dimension that provides evaluative service to the other dimensions of culture in terms of true or false (cognitive), judging emotional expressions, and reviewing values to determine right and wrong.[2]

For the purpose of this dissertation, the following definition of culture is understood as the best available: "The more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people who organize and what they think, feel, and do."[3] This definition implies some of the ground rules for making the case for studying worldview as it relates to Adventist missions: (1) all cultures are valid ways of living for the members of the given culture; (2) cultures must not be compared in terms of better or worse, but in terms of diversity in ways of living; (3) all cultures must be appreciated; (4) cultures are not neutral, they have good and evil that must be checked against the light of Scripture; (5) as we approach different cultures we must understand that God has been active in that culture before missionary arrival; (6) culture is the context where missions happen; (7) culture is the place for a theology in progress; (8) cultures are not to be replaced or rejected but

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[1]Ibid., 32-33.

[2]Ibid., 33-34.

[3]Ibid., 30. This definition is espoused by Kraft and represents the influence of the field of cultural anthropology informing theoretical thinking and practice in missions for the last thirty years or so. Both Hiebert and Kraft have been influenced by the concept of culture developed by the so-called Boasians. Boasians are those from the school of thought of Franz Boas who was introduced to this study in chapter 2, 29-30. Among others influencing this latest definition of culture are Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man: The Relation of Anthropology to Modern Life* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1949), Robert

embraced and shaped according to Scriptures; (9) all cultures can contribute to scripture hermeneutics dialogue; and (10) no culture should be imposed as the Christian default culture over other cultures.

The world is becoming more and more diverse and mission is always cross-cultural ministry. Mission must not be understood as crossing oceans and borders as a geographic movement, but as crossing minds, shifting the emphasis from territorial to personal. Geographic distances are rapidly losing meaning in a highly technological global society and mission follows the pattern. Mission now is not from western to non-western, from Christians to pagans, but from anywhere to everywhere. Mission frontiers are not out there anymore, but at the doorstep of Christian churches.

An accurate understanding of culture will help missionaries appreciate culture and be able to minister to various peoples. To learn how to recognize and do cultural exegesis is as important as mastering the biblical message the missionary wants to present. In the context where missions happen, cultural knowledge must inform theology and praxis. The importance of the context has been largely neglected among Seventh-day Adventists. This study contends that the framework that usually guide Adventist mission is the assumption that the biblical principals are universal, thus they must work the same way in any culture. This perception has led to the development of "one size fits all" mission models and mentality as well as ministry strategies which are becoming increasingly inefficient.[1]

Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1953), and others.

[1]Donald K. Smith, *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication Across Cultural Landscapes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992) advises, "What works in one place seldom will work as effectively in another place."

I turn now the attention to make explicit an important differentiation between personal and social culture as argued by Lingenfelter.[1]

Personal Culture

From birth, children are taught the way of life by their parents, and this teaching shapes experience and behavior. Beliefs, values, and behaviors will differ from family to family. What is first the parental relationship with the child will be expanded and altered by socialization and finally by personal judgment in accepting or rejecting these family cultural elements. In the end, each person is a unique individual with a personal culture. Later I will further develop the worldview formation process, but for now it is important to understand that, although unique, a personal culture will share a macro reality which is the social/historical cultural context in which the individual is located.

Frustration with this reality among Seventh-day Adventists has been expressed by Ron Gladden, "Paradigm Shifts in Evangelism Today," *Ministry International Journal for Pastors* (October 2003), calling traditional Adventist evangelistic strategies "too narrow." His description of the assumptions held by a church when it announces an evangelistic meeting seems accurate to me: (1) "we will host an event four nights a week for five weeks or so; (2) a professional will make the presentations, sometimes in person, sometimes via satellite; (3) the event will interrupt the life of the church; when it's over, we'll get back to doing church as usual; (4) we will spend a lot of money advertising to people whom we've never met; (5) we will measure success by the number of baptisms; and (6) it will appeal to an ever-shrinking minority in our community." His description pictures evangelism as predictable and undesirable mainly because it takes no consideration of the local cultural context, assuming that what worked in other places will certainly work again.

[1]Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin Keene Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 19-23. The next two paragraphs are based on his discussion on the topics.

Social Culture

Human beings are social beings that tend to organize societies. These societies are groups of peoples who share common beliefs, values, and a similar way of life. The common trends prescribe behaviors that are socially accepted and are taught and reinforced all the time. Societies share major assumptions which will determine the culture products. These products are the elements that make assumptions visible and recognizable to missionaries. Cultures also share a perception of the world that determines reality that will order and make sense of what is out there.

Perception of Reality

Culture and worldview studies are always closely connected to perception, for perception is reality. This statement may not be considered entirely wrong if taken from a person's point of view, but we must not forget that this reality is distorted by one's culture. Therefore, one's perception will always be partial. Worldview is the inside or personal view which will define one's (subject) relationship to the external world (object). Further, worldview provides the categories people use to organize and make sense of the world around them in terms of what is familiar or strange.[1] This personal reality must be understood as incomplete and not authoritative over other cultures since it is distorted by the cultural glasses through which people see their reality. The very lenses or glasses that color people's vision are their worldview. One should never assume that what one sees is reality in absolute terms. One's reality must be checked by others from different cultures who are able to see from different perspectives. What is perceived is

often counted as total reality from the perceiver's point of view, until that person realizes that other cultures perceive the same reality differently.

There is a third interposed element between the object and subject, namely, a cultural worldview which is informed by a historic conception that will transform perception into apperception which, in the final instance, will prescribe a response to the object. The discussion on Michael Polanyi's theory of *Personal Knowledge* presented in the last chapter comes into play here; he suggests that in "every act of knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known."[2] Cultural worldviews, then, define the relationship between object and subject, Self and non-Self.[3]

A case study may help us to see this abstract concept in action.

Case Study:

A team of agricultural facilitators encouraged the farmers in an Easter African village to try some innovations that would increase their yields of sorghum and maize by 30 percent. The farmers listened attentively as the agriculturalists told them about hybrid seeds, fertilizers, irrigation methods, and soil conditioning. The agriculturalists, however, were disappointed that only one farmer agreed to try the new methods, but they were content to begin their project with the one farmer, whose name was Mdumbwa. They assumed that the other farmers would follow his example after they saw his success, but they did not anticipate the manner in which the people perceived the influence of the unseen realm on the seen realm. As the agriculturalists expected, Mdumbwa's harvest increased, yielding six more bags of sorghum than in the previous year. The agriculturalists were delighted and expected the villagers to be also. Instead of approbation, however, the agriculturalists found suspicion. The other farmers suspected Mdumbwa of using a form of witchcraft

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[1]David G. Mandelbaum, "The World and the World View of the Kota," in *Social Structure and Personality: A Casebook*, ed. Yehud A. Cohen (New York: Holt, 1961), 300.

[2]Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), xiii.

[3]Marshall David Sahlins, "Colors and Cultures," in *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays* (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 174. It was first published in *Semiotica* 16 (1976): 1-22.

called *bukuzi*, which is used to steal crops from other farms. It is a belief based on the image of limited good, which implies that all agricultural production exists in fixed amounts, even before it is produced, so that farmers should get equal harvests unless they do something to upset the natural balance of agricultural distribution. The villagers explained any disparity in the farmer's harvest by witchcraft. Because witchcraft demands a sacrifice from the people who use it, the villagers watched Mdumbwa and his family in order to discover exactly what he had sacrificed to gain his harvest yield. When Mdumbwa's son became sick and subsequently died, the villagers believed they had found the true reason for his success. Some thought that Mdumbwa was aware of what he did; others believed he did not know that the foreigners used him to spread their witchcraft. In either case, Mdumbwa's son was dead, and the villagers decided that no amount of sorghum was equal to the lives of their children. The villagers had nothing to say to the agriculturalists after the boy's funeral. The agriculturalists were perplexed to learn that the villagers made a connection between the boy's death and their work. They believed their work was ameliorating the impoverished conditions of the village. How, they wondered, could the villagers believe that their work was making a bad situation worse? While the agriculturalists had explained the technical details of increasing the yield of a harvest, they neglected to speak about the spiritual dimensions of the new farming methods. As a result, the villagers suspected them of actually propagating witchcraft, because witches are always secretive."[1]

This case study exemplifies the influence of the worldview lenses distorting reality. In this case, two distinct groups perceived the same reality differently. A model of perception may be helpful to visualize the process (figure 3). "People are social beings" who are born, live, and die creating different forms of groups, institutions, and societies.[2] We are created for relationships which are the very interactions between the Self and Others.[3] These relationships are stimulated by events which are perceived in a

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[1]Bruce Bradshaw, *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002), 67-68.

[2]Paul G. Hiebert, "Social Structure and Church Growth," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 380.

[3]The *Others* is everything outside of the Self. It can be human or not. Everything that the Self contemplates in the world is *Others* and must be defined in order to prescribe the appropriate relationship/behavior with/towards it by the Self's worldview. I am following here the discussion on Self and Others by Redfield, *The Primitive World and*

process of capturing the external world and making sense of it by producing an internal

reality. The stimulus or events are perceived through different venues: through

interaction, taste, smell, sound, touch, philosophical data, biblical truths, scientific

experiments, power encounters, miracles, worship, and the like. People capture the

external world that Kraft calls *REALITY*.[1] This *REALITY* is something real and complete

or reality as God knows it. As this data is perceived, it is shaped by worldview that will

interpret that reality as though looking through a pair of glasses. The result of this

process is an internally shaped *reality* which is distorted by cultural worldviews and must

not be equated to *REALITY*.

This perception process is fundamental to understanding human behavior, which is the

material missionaries will use to hypothesize in worldview analysis. This process is

repeated thousands of times every day as people react to external stimulus. This daily

process is represented in figure 4, which shows the cyclical process of perception: (1)

external reality as the place where the stimulus/event comes from forcing the person to

(2) absorb the REALITY, (3) which is then redefined/shaped by a person's worldview

that will bring sense and order to what has been experienced, (4) followed by the forming

of an internal reality which is a distorted reality altered by the person's assumptions, and

(5) finally, based on this mental map which projects the now, perceived reality the person

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Its Transformations, 84-110, as he proposes humankind as the viewer in a stage
contemplating, organizing/categorizing, and making sense of the universe.

[1]Kraft, Anthropology for Christian Witness, 19.

will produce an action which is the product or behavior[1] which is the visible

manifestation of a person's worldview.
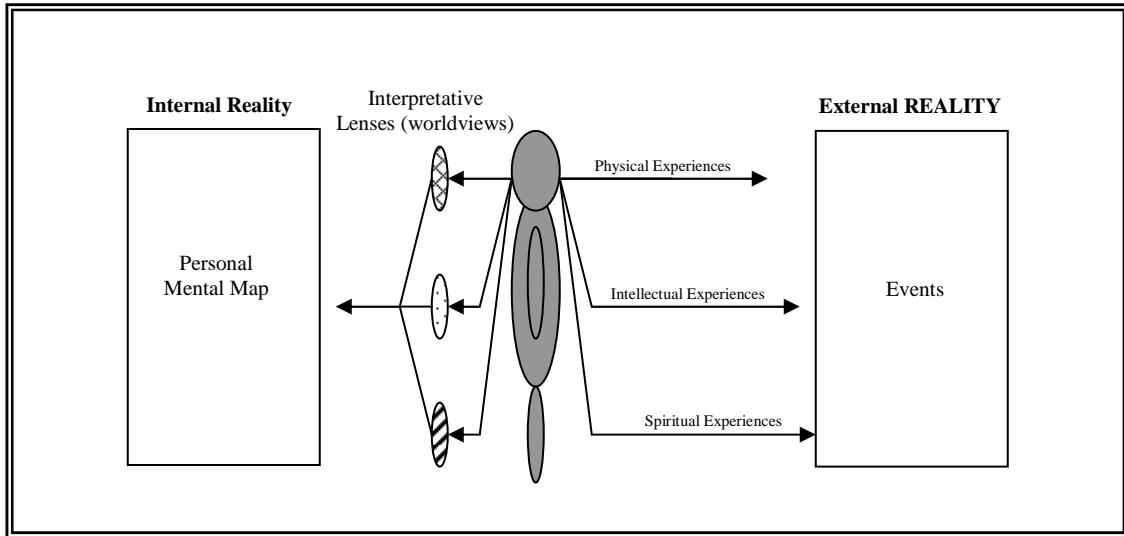
Figure 3. Perception Process Defining Realities. *Source:* Based on information from Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), 17-18.

There are several ways to deal with reality.[2] Doing mission is a constant attempt

to stay in balance. On the two extremes of the spectrum are the dangers of *naïve idealism*

(imposing the self-view of reality as an absolute that must be accepted by everyone else),

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[1]Paul G. Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews, 2003," manuscript (Deerfield, IL), 25, identifies products as *behavior products*. These are the actions of a person mirroring the internal reality which is shaped by worldviews. The product is the behavior prescribed by a person's worldview. A person's action or behavior is the externalization of one's worldview.

[2]Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms; A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974) proposes several ways of perceiving reality which is, in fact, an epistemological question. How we pursue knowledge will

or *critical idealism* (which makes everything relative to one's perception). Both are

dangerous ways of dealing with reality. Naïve idealism seeks to impose one's views on

others since what one sees viewed as total reality. Critical idealism denies any true
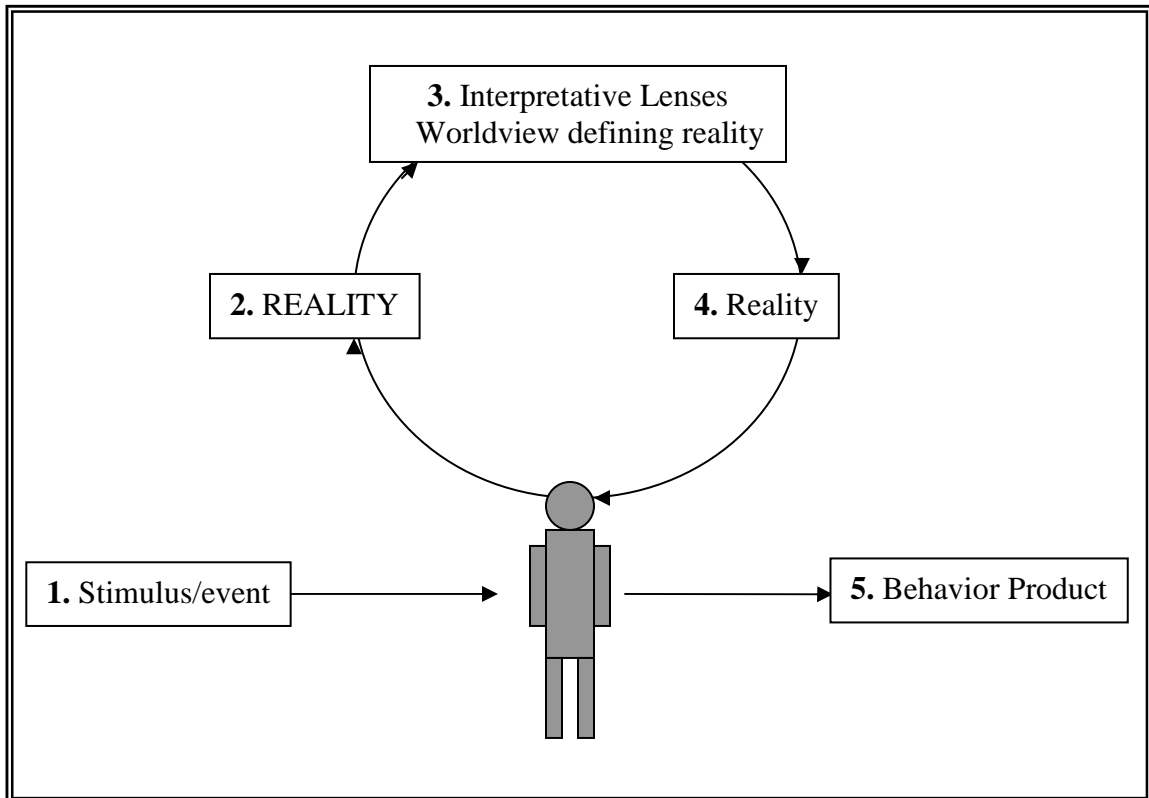
Figure 4. Perception Process. *Source:* By the author.

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largely define the way we deal with reality. In addition, see Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 22; Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 17.

knowledge about reality and would follow the postmodern approach to reality[1] which is totally pluralistic, denying a single world, and denying the possibility of finding true reality. Hiebert and Kraft suggest that mission should espouse *critical realism* as an epistemological approach to reality.[2] This view suggests the assumption that there is a world out there—REALITY—but it also recognizes that people's perception of this world is partial. Knowing others perspectives on REALITY one can adjust one's view of reality to approximate REALITY more closely. Critical realism would seem to be essential to survive in a cross-cultural experience.[3]

In conclusion, one's perception of the world (worldview) prescribes meaning to cultural forms, which then defines reality.

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[1]The postmodern approach to reality is a challenge to the Adventist model of missions and ministry. The latter tends to be apologetic, presenting truth in contrast with error. This model is followed in evangelistic approaches such as Bible series, public evangelism, and like. It follows the rationale that, based on the Bible, we can check reality and identify truth, or what is right and wrong. We have had success in the past with this approach, especially among Christian nations where other Christian denominations are confronted with the biblical reality in contrast with their teaching and doctrines. The postmodern mindset, however, denies such a thing as "a unified world as the object of our perception" (Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996], 40.) In this way, postmodernism eliminates comparison between perceptions in favor of acceptance of as many views and worlds as people can construct. This challenging posture toward reality led Marshall, Griffioen, and Mouw to wonder if "it is possible, that we are now on the threshold of the end of the age of worldviews" (Paul A. Marshall, S. Griffioen, and Richard J. Mouw, *Stained Glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, Christian Studies Today [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989], 12). A more detailed discussion on this question will be given in the last part of this dissertation when it will deal with the implications of worldviews to mission and ministry as it relates to the postmodern condition.

[2]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 24-26; Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 17-18.

[3]Charles H. Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness, October 2002," prepublication manuscript, chapter 3, 13.

Form and Meaning

A short discussion on form and meaning is helpful to understand how the process

of attaching meaning to a cultural form occurs and how it affects doing mission.[1] The

discipline of Semiotics has provided missiologists with much relevant information on the

topic,[2] for it looks into cultures by studying forms and meanings.

Forms or symbols are used to communicate ideas or meanings and are relevant for

those wanting to communicate cross-culturally. Forms and meanings are elements that

we use on a daily basis to organize our world and communicate effectively. An abstract

idea is only understood when encapsulated in a symbol that others can understand and

relate to. Forms or symbols in a culture vary tremendously. Some of the forms and

symbols found in cultures include language, color, dress codes, rituals, etc. forms are

what people use to make possible the process of transporting an idea which is located in a

person's (person A) internal reality map into another person's (person B) internal reality

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[1]For a more detailed discussion on form and meaning and missions see David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991); Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, chapter 6; Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, chapter 9; Smith, *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication across Cultural Landscapes*. Hesselgrave and Smith's works are saturated with form and meaning concepts and cross-cultural communication in missions.

[2]For an introduction to semiotic studies see Paul Bouissac, *Encyclopedia of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Paul Cobley, Litza Jansz, and Richard Appignanesi, *Introducing Semiotics* (New York: Totem Books, 1997), originally titled *Semiotics for Beginners*; Marcel Danesi, *Of Cigarettes, High Heels, and Other Interesting Things: An Introduction to Semiotics*, *Semaphores and Signs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); John N. Deely, *Introducing Semiotic: Its History and Doctrine*, Advances in Semiotics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); John N. Deely, *Four Ages of Understanding: The First Postmodern Survey of Philosophy from Ancient Times to the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, Toronto Studies in Semiotics (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2001); John Fiske, *Introduction to Communication*

map (figure 5). The aim of the communication process is to transfer the idea from person

A to person B without distortion. The meaning or the idea, then, needs to be

encapsulated into appropriated forms and symbols that best convey the idea. The

problem in communication is that person B, even though from the same culture as person

A, will have some differences in worldview (interpretative lenses as shown in figure 4)

that may attach to the form a non-accurate meaning which distorts the message. When

persons A and B are from different culture, the process becomes much more complex.

It is crucial to recognize, however, that forms are not neutral. They carry

meanings which are both positive and negative.[1] Take colors, for example. When one

says "red" it means "not orange, not pink, and not white."[2] The use of the correct cultural

symbols and forms is fundamental to creating understanding in cross-cultural

communication.

As missionaries attempt to establish trust and communicate the gospel message,

the process can be facilitated through worldview understanding. Recognizing differences

in worldview levels will help missionaries use forms that will convey the intended

message.

Studies, 2d ed., Studies in Culture and Communication (New York: Routledge, 1990),
especially chapter 3.

[1]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 38.

[2]Ibid.
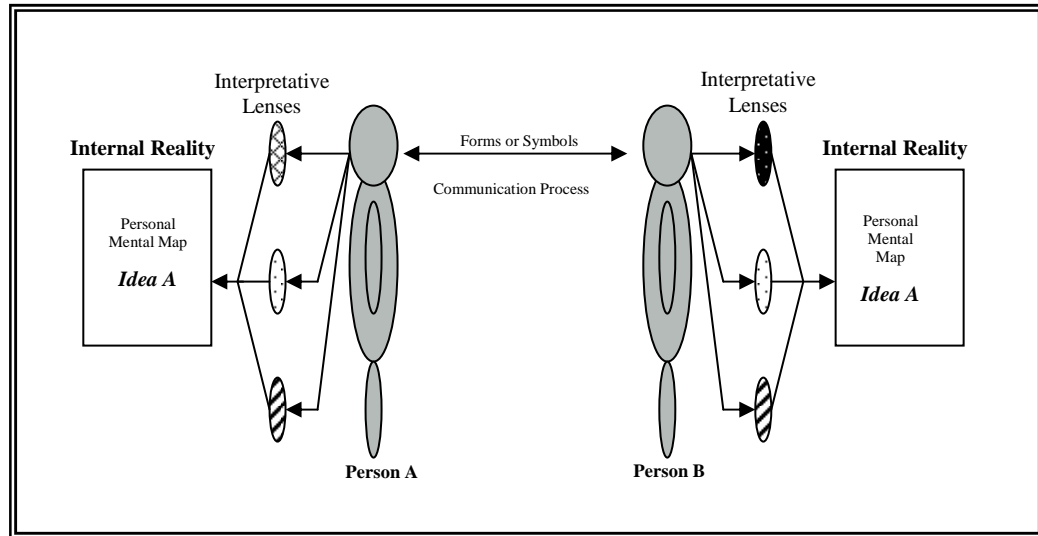
Figure 5. Communication Process Model. *Source:* Based on information from Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 39.

Cultural Contextualism[1]

At the conclusion of this section, Cultural Contextualism will be proposed as the ideal approach towards culture for Seventh-day Adventist missionaries. Cultural Contextualism stands between cultural relativism and objectivism and tries to harmonize indispensable elements from both views while still avoiding their pitfalls.

The relativistic approach to culture is defended by those who are "committed to the view that alien idea systems, though fundamentally different from our own, display an internal coherency that can be understood but cannot be judged."[2] This view denies

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[1]See page 25 for a full description of this concept.

[2]Edmund J. Bourne, "Does the Concept of the Person Vary Cross-Culturally?" in *Thinking Through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology*, ed. Richard A. Shweder

that there are absolute moral values or cultural standards. Therefore, absolute truth,

beauty, and morality are not absolute; they depend on the construction of reality of a

given culture. These standards are valid as long as the given society accepts them as

such. One important element in this view is the philosophical rationale that there are no

external standards by which a culture should be evaluated. Such things as morality, truth,

and beauty have no place in existence without human cultures. In other words, there is

no reality out there that can be used as a standard of morals or truth.[1]

Relativism, however, contains at least two ideas that could limit frequent mistakes

related to cross-cultural missions. First, it shows respect for others and other cultures,

avoiding premature judgment as well as ethnocentrism.[2] As Edmund J. Bourne declares,

"Relativists provide us with a charitable rendition of the ideas of others, placing those

ideas in a framework that makes it easier to credit others, not with confusion, error, or

ignorance, but rather with an alternative vision of the possibilities of social life."[3]

Second, relativism provides room to see truth and knowledge as possible in another

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(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 114. A similar definition is given by
Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 101, who states that cultural
relativism believes "that all cultures are equally good—that no culture has the right to
stand in judgment over the others."

[1]For further readings on relativism and social construction of reality see Peter L.
Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the
Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990); Jacques Derrida and Peggy
Kamuf, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press,
1991); Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon
Books, 1984); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3d ed. (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1996); Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

[2]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 101.

[3]Bourne, 121.

culture other than our own.[1] This latter contribution is central to the process of an

appreciation of cultures, providing the opportunity for a learning process where people

can learn from other cultures as well as teaching them. This process of learning from

other cultures will be essential in dealing with worldview analysis, for one must give

attention to people's stories in order to formulate worldview hypothesis.[2]

On the opposite side, relativism denies that there is such a thing as truth.[3]

Postmodern affirm that "there is no absolute truth; rather, truth is relative to the

community in which we participate."[4] Relativism says that truth is defined by a cultural

construction of reality, thus, there are as many truths as cultures can create. Accepting

such relativism implies a chaotic situation and allows such things as genocides, wars,

invasions, social oppression, and the like, to be justified.

Opposed to the philosophy of relativism is objectivism. This philosophical

framework "makes no allowance for the varied epistemological standards that back

beliefs and concepts in different cultures or modes of discourse."[5] Presenting the

taxonomy of various epistemological positions, Hiebert call this concept *naïve*

idealism/realism: "the external world is real. The mind can know it exactly,

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[1]F. Allan Hanson, "Does God Have a Body? Truth, Reality and Cultural
Relativism," *Man* 14 (1979), 516.

[2]The concept of worldview hypothesis is fully developed in chapter 4, 138-42.

[3]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 102.

[4]Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 8

[5]Hanson, "Does God Have a Body?" 516.

exhaustively, and without bias."[1] While relativism attaches reality to cultural knowledge

or creation of reality, objectivism understands reality as objective. Reality can be known

through scientific methods of investigation, therefore, all other cultures that use different

epistemological models other than science may be considered primitive and

underdeveloped and not able to define a clear picture of reality. Judgment of other

cultures, a sense of superiority, and ethnocentrism are some of the results of this approach

to cultural studies. This approach allows no participation in a mutual learning process,

leaving only a teaching process—the "superior" culture teaching the primitive one. Other

people are not taken seriously in their understanding of the world and other cultures are

considered inappropriate. Imposing one's own understanding of truth and reality on

everyone else is detrimental to any effort to communicate cross-culturally.

Conversely, objectivism brings back the emphasis on truth and standards for

cultural evaluation among cultures that relativism takes out of the picture. Christians

believe that there is a reality and that there are standards by which all cultures should

abide, and that this standard and reality is presented in Scripture.

Kraft contends that conservative Protestant Christianity has developed an aversion

to anything that resembles cultural relativism in ignorance.[2] However, I consider the

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[1]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 23.

[2]Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 79. Kraft argues, based on Eugene
Albert Nida, *Customs and Cultures; Anthropology for Christian Missions* (New York:
Harper, 1954), 48-52, where he develops the concept of a Biblical Cultural Relativity,
which is presented in threefold relativism concerning God's relationship to people in
culture: (1) relativity of the opportunity of the people (Matt 25:14-30; Luke 12:48); (2)
relativity in the amount of revelation material (Rom 2:14); and (3) relativity in cultural
patterns (Lev 25:39-46—acceptance of slavery). Kraft blames a confusion on the
understanding and differentiation between cultural and ethical relativism (Kraft,
Anthropology for Christian Witness, 79) as the cause for such aversion by Protestant

term cultural relativism too full of baggage while objectivism presents too narrow a view. Hence, both terms are inadequate cultural approaches to worldview studies.

This dissertation proposes, therefore, cultural contextualism as a more balanced approach for Adventist mission for the twenty-first century. This concept is borrowed from F. Allan Hanson[1] and expanded to fit the purpose of Christian Seventh-day Adventism witnessing across cultures.

Hanson postulates that his model, cultural contextualism, takes the middle ground between relativism and objectivism: "It is one which, like relativism, allows that truth and knowledge may vary from one culture or mode of discourse to another, but which, like objectivism, maintains the notion that all people inhabit a single world which exists

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Christians to cultural relativism or anything that resembles relativistic ideas. Hiebert reminds us of the danger of missionaries embracing cultural relativism uncritically because they cannot deny the reality of culture diversities and the fact that different customs and behaviors make perfect sense to their people and produce a more or less coherent way of explaining and giving meaning to the world. The result, however, is the loss of absolute truth since, if a truth works for a given culture, which is truth for them (Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 101-103). For example, among some folk cultures in Brazil a person being victim of a car accident can be interpreted as *Mau Olhado* (bad eyes meaning jealousy) if the car is new and someone was jealous of the person having a new car. It seems clear that the missionary cannot accept that as valid reality when he knows that the accident may be caused by a mechanical or human failure or even a causality that could not be avoided. The question then is: How can one accept cultural diversity but still avoid premature judgment and ethnocentrism or accepting the relativity of moral and truth? Hiebert proposes the construction of a Metacultural Framework that enables us to compare and evaluate cultures based on Scripture as the real reality and absolute truth. Still, after all reasoning, the term relativism is packed with all kinds of prejudgment that may trigger rejection of the discussion altogether. After studying forms and meanings, it seems prudent to avoid misunderstanding and rejection because an inaccurate meaning might be attached to a form (language) due to ignorance or bad information. In this case, it will be proposed the adoption of Cultural Contextualism as a valid approach for Adventist missionaries dealing with cultures.

[1]Hanson, "Does God Have a Body?"

in determinate form and independently of what people say or think about it."[1] What is

missing in Hanson's model is a spiritual dimension or a standard of truth which is

external to all cultures. What he calls a "single world" is the very picture of reality. At

this point, this work suggests that Scripture fills this gap, providing an external truth,

moral, and ethical standards by which all cultures must be judged. God's revelation

supplies mission with an accurate picture of the world (single world). Cultural

contextualism, then, could serve as a model for Adventist cross-cultural mission because

it (1) provides a framework of thinking that is culturally relevant, (2) is informed by

human context, and (3) is informed by Scripture. Let's look at these three concepts.

First, cultures are constructed and used by humans; nobody lives without a culture

to make sense of human existence.[2] Cultures are historical mutants that change as

people do. There is a relationship between the reality perceived and the perception that

shapes reality. Therefore, culture shapes humans and humans shape culture. Cultural

contextualism takes the context where people live seriously. This context is not static

and neither is culture. People live in culture and cultures will change just as the observer

will historically be changed. This idea was developed by Jonathan Crary, professor of art

history at the University of Columbia, when he studied the ways people perceive art, how

the world changed in the first half of the nineteenth century, and how it determined

changes in culture.[3] The historical moment of the subject (person) or observer affects

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[1]Ibid., 517.

[2]Richard Handler, "Afterword: Mysteries of Culture," *American Anthropologist* 106, no. 3 (2004): 488.

[3]Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990). His concepts can be seen in

vision, and thus, perception and further reality. If a culture changes, people change the church, and in such situation mission must also change to avoid irrelevancy and to communicate the everlasting gospel to the contemporary world. A balance is needed in doing mission. On one hand, one must not identify totally with a culture toward syncretism, because this may lead to the lost of capacity or willingness to impact the culture toward biblical changes. On the other hand, one must not reject the surrounding culture because this may lead to ostracism and alienation. These two extremes may take missionaries into the path of irrelevancy and must be avoided.

The context is also the main informant for those intending to do mission. Communicators do not impose on the context, but instead they must let it speak to us. The cultural contextualism approach validates other cultures, which is an aspect of cultural relativism, but it also prevents missionaries from equating their culture with the culture of heaven or to the biblical culture. Furthermore, cultural contextualism constrains missionaries from taking their culture as biblical truth and imposing it on other cultures. Cultural contextualism emphasizes the importance of context and understanding people and their reality from their perspective and in their own terms. The concept of culture will determine the way missionaries do mission.

Second, missionaries need to be biblically informed. A successful ministry will depend largely on one's theology. Theology must be informed by context, but it needs to be rooted in the Bible. Cultural contextualism identifies Scripture as the element that

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parallelism with Redfield's approach to worldview. In Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, 86, he postulates that man, as in a stage set, categorizes the universe that he contemplates. In this case, man is an observer who absorbs what he sees, creating his personal understanding of the world (worldview) which will influence the reality that he sees because he interacts with it (see figures 2 and 3).

presents a clear picture of reality. This is an external reality that provides a means to evaluate cultures in terms of right and wrong. A culture is not judged by other culture's standards but by the light of Scripture. All cultures have good and evil; all cultures must be transformed as they are exposed to Scripture.

Cultural Contextualism has the potential to facilitate cultural understanding, and possibly facilitate the comprehension of cultural propositions (assumptions), essential for worldview analysis. The tools of worldview analysis may equip Adventist missionaries to identify those worldview assumptions that need to be changed and those that can be preserved. This process, hopefully, will shape a given culture into a biblically shaped worldview. The goal, at the end, is to have a Christian community that is biblical without losing its cultural characteristics. Worldview studies call for contextual transformation (changes in worldview levels) instead of extracting people out of their cultural settings.

Worldview, as the deepest level of culture, has several characteristics and functions. Before one can understand how worldview is formed on both the personal and social levels, we must understand its nature, characteristics, functions, and how worldview impacts people as they process a cultural event as it passes through the cognitive, affective, and evaluative filters. This process is very important to understand since behavior is the outward visible manifestation of worldview assumption and also process missionaries use in discovering, analyzing, and hopefully changing worldviews.

Nature of Worldview

Worldviews are invisible, abstract concepts about the world located in a hidden dimension of culture that are made visible through external manifestations such as behavior and speech (verbal and non-verbal manifestations). In the next chapter it will be

suggested methodological models for worldview analysis from the outside in. However, to explain the worldview level we also need to look from inside out (figure 6) at the hidden cultural dimensions to the visible cultural manifestations of worldview.

Differentiation is made between *worldview assumptions* and *worldview*. *Worldview assumptions* are single propositions about the world that are to be understood as "statements about a perceived truth, based on the logic of a particular culture."[1] *Worldview* is the totality of worldview assumptions. Both dimensions are important in discovering cultural propositions and producing changes. Missionaries have the goal to produce worldview level change. To be able to recognize and analyze worldview
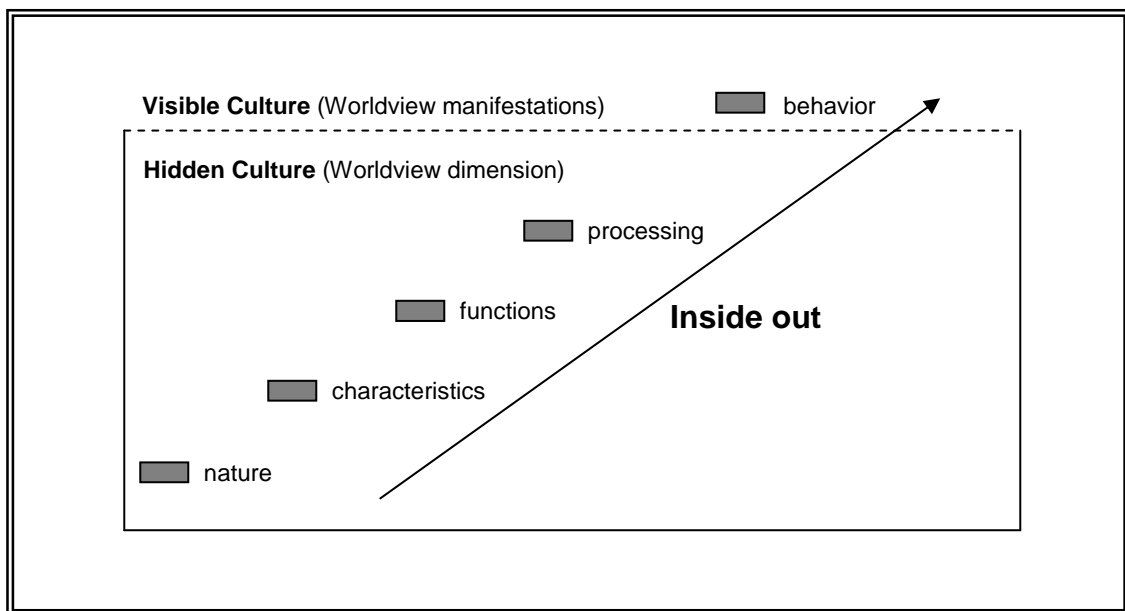
Figure 6. Worldview From Inside out. *Source:* By the author.

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[1]Bradshaw, *Change Across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation*, 18.

assumptions, evaluate them (in the light of Scripture), and produce changes toward a biblically shaped worldview, one needs to understand both the inside and outside aspects of worldview.

The Inside Outlook

From the inside out model of understanding worldview, single worldviews are the starting point. The work of some of the early American cultural anthropologists focused on the hidden dimensions of culture, looking for patterns by which people organize their world and which provide a basis for behavior.[1] Morris Opler expanded the early findings, refining the ideas to provide a more sophisticated model of worldview in *Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture*.[2] He presented a dynamic view of a culture's propositions. These propositions were interrelated and affected each other through their relationships, prescribing behavior, and functioning as constraints to each other. Opler calls them themes. Later, Kraft developed Opler's themes into two other sub-categories which he saw as "functioning internally as parts of worldviews"[3] and as the major internal mechanisms of worldview.

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[1]Presented in chapter two as one influential work on worldview is Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*. She helped develop a method of looking at culture to search for the best type of personality to represent a given culture. This theory became known as Modal Personality. In other words, Benedict's type of personality tried to describe what Kraft indicates as the National Character of a people (Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 12, 1). This approach to culture study became known as Configurationism. A more in-depth discussion of early configurationalist American anthropologists and their works and ideas is provided in chapter two of this dissertation.

[2]Morris Edward Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," *The American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 3 (1945).

[3]Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 12, 2.

Themes

Opler argued that human behavior is based on sets of basic assumptions, which he called themes. The term here will be used as developed by Opler to indicate "a postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society."[1] These themes are the worldview statements that people formulate to understand the world. A hypothesis of a North American worldview theme is given by Kraft which postulates that "money and/or material possessions are the measure of success."[2]

Worldview themes can be organized into five major universal categories that can help map worldview, facilitating its analysis in different cultures as well as using comparison to analyze worldviews. These categories will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, but mentioning them now will facilitate the process of understanding how the themes are divided or organized. This concept was first developed by Robert Redfield and later expanded by Michael Kearney.[3] The five categories are categorization, Self and Others, causality, time, and space.

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[1]Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," 198.

[2]Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 12, 3.

[3]Michael Kearney, *World View* (Novato, CA: Chandler & Sharp, 1984), 65-107, Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, 84-110.

Subthemes

A worldview theme will have subsequent propositions related to the theme. These sub propositions are called Subthemes.[1] One has to remember that worldviews are not stable and neat ideas. They are instable, dynamic systems[2] that should not be seen as equally divided territory in a person's mind, since they vary according to historical moments and context. There is flux in the worldview themes, a change from dominant themes and less dominant ones. This concept is especially important for understanding the process of worldview transformation, which will be discussed in the next chapter, since missionaries must aim to produce worldview level changes in a culture. It is not enough to produce behavioral change, which is one of the theses of this work, but worldview level change that leads to stronger and more permanent change. Worldview change could be called genuine change since it moves a person towards a biblically shaped worldview.

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[1]Kraft calls to our attention that worldview themes are the major elements inside of a worldview. Subthemes are added here to present the next lower level in an attempt to organize worldview in a visible and comprehensible way. Of course, it is a difficult task to attempt, but Kraft presents the beginning of the path looking at worldview levels which can take the researcher to deeper levels. How deep are the levels of worldview themes and its relationships with other themes is still a task to be done. I doubt if we can ever determine all the themes of a worldview, but certainly the main ones can be identified. At this point in the dissertation I want to add to themes the subthemes and paradigms, but I want to make clear that other levels can be detected. Kraft presents suggestions for further thought and research on worldview levels, describing the following possible subdivisions such as "models, metaphors, small picturings, analogies, and other smaller entities" (Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 12, 2).

[2]W. T. Jones, "World Views: Their Nature and Their Function," *Current Anthropology* 13 (1972): 80.

Paradigms

Under subthemes, Kraft presents another level of worldview calls paradigms that serve to present more specific information about behavior.

The following illustration (figure 7) can help visualize the subdivisions inside a single worldview as it depictures a North American worldview. The first level presents a proposition of reality. The subsequent levels unfold the idea as it relates to other aspects of life.

Levels	Worldview
1. Theme	• Money and/or possessions are the measure of success
2. Subtheme	• Time is money • More "education" (schooling) means more earning power • The more money one earns, the more prestige one has
3. Paradigm	• The value of a person can be calculated in terms of net monetary worth • Need to "keep up with the Joneses" in home, cars, clothes, etc. • Don't waste much time on non-monetary pursuits

Figure 7. American Worldview Theme, Subtheme, and Paradigm. *Source:* Charles H. Kraft, *Worldview for Christian Witness* (October 2002, Prepublication Manuscript, Chapter 12), 3.

These worldview assumptions are in constant overlapping relationships that both inform other premises as well as limit them from becoming too powerful (figure 8).

Back to figure 6, for example, the second assumption on the subtheme level is clearly in relation to another worldview category, namely, education. The two

assumptions may prescribe a behavior of obsession for higher levels of education. Not

achieving these higher levels of education may imply that a person will never be a

successful one because (1) higher education means more money, and (2) more money

equals success. Such comparisons between worldview assumptions and premises can

explain behaviors and indicate assumptions that may need to be altered in order to reflect

biblical principles. This analysis just sets the stage for the next chapter that will deal

more in depth with worldview analysis and change.
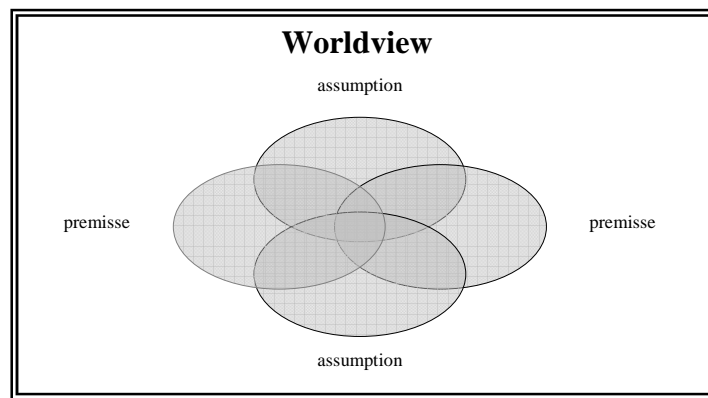
Figure 8. Overlapping Worldview Assumptions and Premisses.
Source: By the author.

Outside Outlook

Single worldview assumptions and premises all together will form what Hiebert

calls cultural integration.[1] The collection of these assumptions and premises about reality

forms a worldview (figure 9). When one talks about American worldview, one is making

reference to the constellation of assumptions of the individuals inside the United States

culture. However, variations among these assumptions will produce slight differences within the same culture. These differences are semantically divided as White Americans, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, etc. In addition, inside of each of these sub-cultures, other worldview variations may be observable due to differences in generations, for example.[2]

Hiebert illustrates the relationship of worldviews in the practice of sitting and sleeping and how it may help us to understand behavior.

Case Study;

> For the most part, North Americans try to avoid sitting on the floor. In an auditorium they find small platforms on which to sit. Latecomers who find no vacant seats stand along the walls or leave. At home, large amounts are spent to purchase special platforms suitable for various rooms and occasions: couches, recliners, rockers, dining-room chairs, bar stools, and lawn chairs. North Americans also try to avoid sleeping on the floor. When they travel, they are afraid to be caught at night without a bed in a private room. So, in addition to travel reservations, they make certain they have bookings in hotels. Interestingly enough, they make no such reservations for meals—they assume they can find food somewhere or, if necessary, do without. Caught in an airport at night, they try to sleep slumped in a chair rather than stretched out on the carpeted floor, since they would rather be dignified than comfortable. In short, platforms are seen everywhere in the United States. People sit on them, sleep on them, build their houses on them, store their goods on them, and even put fences around them for their babies. Why this obsession with platforms? Traditional Japanese sit comfortably on mats on the floor. And Indians know that all you need for a good night's rest is a sheet to keep you clean and a flat place to lie down—and the world is full of flat places; airport lounges, train aisles, side walks, and parks. Why then, do North Americans insist on sitting on chairs and sleeping on beds? Most of them have not given much thought to the matter. If they did, they might argue that these are the most "natural" and comfortable ways to sit and sleep. But this is not true. Rather, their behavior is linked to a fundamental attitude they have about floors,

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[1]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 42.

[2]For one of the most complete discussions on American generations, see William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Morrow, 1991).

namely, that floors are "dirty." And because dirt is bad, they must avoid contact with floors as much as possible.[1]

This kind of analysis helps to understand how worldview assumptions emerge from an unconscious position to day-by-day behavior.
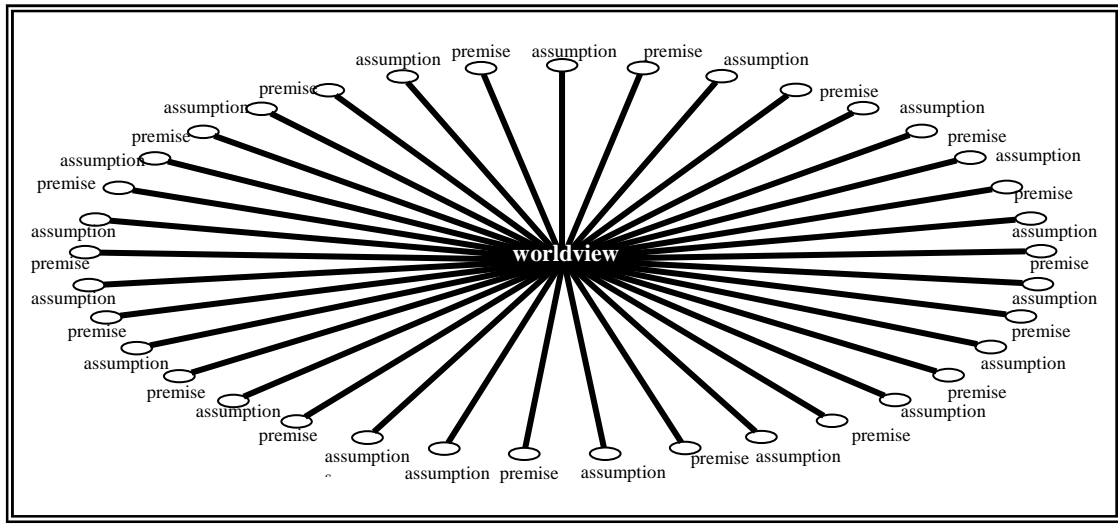
Figure 9. Constellation of Assumptions and Premises Equal Worldview. *Source:* By the author.

Characteristics of Worldview

The characteristics of worldview are as important as its nature. Kraft has systematized worldview characteristics in a didactic format of five main characteristics.[2] First, he states that worldview assumptions are not "reasoned out, but assumed to be true

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[1]Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 42-43.

[2]Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 55-58. The following discussion and next two quotes are taken from the same source.

without prior proof." As it will be seen in the last part of this chapter, worldview assumptions begin to be taught so early in life that they seem absolute and are rarely questioned. For example, I asked a North American teenager to describe an ideal church that she would enjoy being a part of. She looked at me with a confused look on her face and said: "There is no way to describe an ideal church; the church is to be what it is supposed to be." A pre-formulated model of church was communicated to her so early in life that she perceives church as an unchangeable organism limited by what it was "supposed" (pre-format) to be. Second, worldview assumptions provide people with interpretative cultural lenses, models, and maps that shape the way they perceive REALITY and interpret it.

Third, people will organize their lives in terms of worldview assumptions as integrated wholes, which will seldom be questioned unless something occurs that cannot be easily harmonized. Notice for example, the story narrated in John 9. The Jews believed that a person blind from birth was blind as a consequence of sin. The underlying assumption was that God would bless those that followed the law, and punish the unfaithful. When the punishment was inflicted from birth, it was because the person was receiving consequences from the sin of the parents. When the word came to the Jews that a blind person had received his sight back, they could not harmonize how healing could happen to a sinner. However, the experience was so powerful that it challenged their assumptions and forced their worldview to undergo change. When a question is posed (it may be through cognitive explanations but more powerfully through new experiences) that contradicts an established assumption, it will create instability and discomfort at the worldview level. This is when worldview assumptions will be

questioned and evaluated. However, many live their lives without ever questioning their assumptions.

Forth, worldview differences are the most difficult situations to deal with when different cultures come in contact with each other. Because worldview assumptions are not reasoned out, it seldom occurs to the members of a culture that there are people that have different assumptions. My sister-in-law provided me with a good example. Automobiles in Brazil have a feature that warns the driver when gasoline is needed. A light turns on as a sign indicating that you have to fill up the tank. This feature is standard on every vehicle. When she came to the United States she was driving my car. When I asked her if the car needed gasoline, without thinking she answered that the "yellow light" had not turned on yet. The assumption was that cars warn you before running out of gasoline. She never thought that my car might not have any yellow light to warn her and she almost ran out of gasoline. People assume that their reality is universal, and that everyone lives their lives in the same way they do. This characteristic is responsible for many cultural clashes and much stress.

Fifth, people and worldview function together. Cultural structures (worldview, beliefs, and values) are philosophical constructions to facilitate concept comprehension and the creation process of models of analysis. These cultural levels have no life by themselves and should be viewed as tools humans use to make sense of the world and derive meaning for their existence. To talk about cultural structures of any kind is to talk about a person who does things.

Worldview serves people in different ways. Didactically, the various ways are called functions of worldview.

Functions of Worldview

Many have attempted to define functions for worldviews.[1] No matter how various authors define the function and the details of their models, three points seem to be part of all models. Worldview serves a person to explain, evaluate/validate, and integrate culture.[2] I will get back on these functions and expand on them as we look into the worldview process later in this paper. For now, it is enough to introduce the following basic worldview functions that people use daily.

Explanation

Maybe the most fundamental function of a worldview is to explain. This function supplies people with the cognitive material to create a system of explanations that supports a people's belief system. This cognitive explanation will be used to provide emotional security based on the beliefs. Going back to the discussion on reality, worldview is made of assumptions upon which people construct reality. Different worldview assumptions lead to different conclusions about the same matter because they explain it differently. But they all provide emotional stability and comfort.

Validation/Evaluation

People rely on their worldview to validate their deepest cultural norms. It is the material people use to evaluate experiences. Worldview shapes external events according

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[1]See Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 48-49; Jones, "World Views: Their Nature and Their function"; Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 58-63; James H. Olthuis, "On Worldviews," in *Stained Glass: Worldviews and Social Science*, Paul A. Marshall, S. Griffioen, and Richard J. Mouw ed. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 29, for more on worldview functions.

[2]Synthesis based on Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 48-49.

to the cognitive information that explains the world and how it functions. The evaluation

process prescribes meaning to the cultural forms. It is important to understand here that,

in doing missions, the most important reality is not the missionary's but the people who is

constantly evaluating and prescribing meaning in order to make sense of what is

happening. One should keep in mind that other cultures have different explanations and

they may not come to the same conclusion as the missionary. This point will be revisited

as the discussion advances to worldview analysis in the next chapter.

Integration

Worldview integrates culture as a whole. As Hiebert states, "It organizes our

ideas, feelings, and values into a single overall design."[1] It creates images which are

more or less accurate pictures of the world, "images that mirror the world."[2] These very

images, although not totally accurate, are used to guide action.

Monitoring Change

Worldview has the function of monitoring cultural change. As stated before,

worldview is not static, it is composed of dynamic assumptions that are constantly

confronted and challenged by new information and experiences coming from one's own

culture or from other cultures. These new assumptions may be contrary to an existing

assumption or just slightly different. In both circumstances, when a worldview is

challenged instability is created at the worldview level, producing discomfort. This

tension will disrupt the worldview task of integrating culture. Thus, because of the

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[1]Ibid., 48.

[2]Kearney, *World View*, 5.

internal contradiction, related worldview assumptions will be used to produce an explanation that evaluates and validates one or the other assumption with the intention of reducing the tension and discomfort. The final product of this process may be a gradual change in worldview. Many people, however, may never be aware of the worldview transformation that took place.

Worldview as Process

During this chapter ideas that help understand worldview have been discussed. An integration of the separate elements of this chapter into a functional model showing the movement or the work of a person using worldview is the next step.

A word of caution must be stated at this point. The two most prominent thinkers on worldview among missiologists hold shared ideas but also critiqued each other, helping both to refine their understanding as well as their models of worldview. Both have produced many of the models currently used by missionaries and educators as well as agencies around the globe. Paul Hiebert sets forth a model that looks at worldviews through the three dimensions presented at the beginning of this chapter, namely, the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of culture. Charles Kraft criticizes this idea, arguing that Hiebert presents worldview as if it has a life of its own. In his own words, Paul Hiebert "holds that worldview (not simply people) consists of cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions."[1] Later Kraft calls Hiebert's perspective confusing.[2] Although disagreeing with Kraft's interpretation of Paul Hiebert's model, it

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[1]Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 58.

[2]Ibid. I have never understood Hiebert's discussion the way Charles Kraft perceives it. Maybe it is the very demonstration of different worldviews at work

seems wise to state clearly that a worldview is never detached from a person's

perspective. Worldviews do not stand by themselves. People have worldviews,

therefore, when talking about the worldview dimensions or cultural dimensions the

thinking is in terms of people who function that way. When talking about functions of

worldview, it is about how people use worldview in this or that way. Worldview, then,

serves people to make sense of the world and to give meaning to their lives.

This attempt to present a unified view of worldview process will continue using

Hiebert's model of worldview dimensions and Kraft's detailed discussion on the process.

By combining these two perspectives, the hope is that the process of thinking and

behaving, which is guided by worldviews will become clear. Furthermore, this

discussion supplies the last element in this chapter before formulating a hypothesis on the

process of worldview formation in a person.

<div align="center">Worldview Through Cultural Dimensions</div>

In figure 4 the concept of the Interpretative Lenses that shape the external reality

to fit the assumptions already established was presented. It was discussed what these

worldview assumptions do, but the discussion did not look inside of them to see how the

process of interpreting reality happens. The aim of this section is to look inside

worldview, and try to map the process that occurs many times during a single day.

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prescribing meaning to a text. In his writing or in his class, Hiebert always presented his
perspectives in terms of worldview as it relates to people. Moreover, the goal of mission
is to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). The focus and all the efforts of
missiologists in dealing with other disciplines of studies, drawing insights that can be
used in missions, is to advance the cause of mission and accomplish the mandate of the
Lord. It seems inconsistent to interpret Hiebert's idea of cultural dimension as detached
from a people context.

Hiebert's model of dimensions of culture will be one of the two pillars for this discussion. As presented before in this chapter, cultures may be divided into three dimensions, namely, cognitive, affective, and evaluative. Below, in figure 10, these dimensions are placed as in a three-dimensional image with the worldview as the foundation of culture. In short, external events are experienced by a person simultaneously through the two dimensions of cognition (beliefs) and affection (feelings). Cognition checks if what has been experienced is in accordance with the established assumptions; affection will react based on the feelings perceived by the experience. If the perceived experience agrees with the established worldview assumptions, the feeling dimension will experience certainty; but if the perceived experience disagrees with the worldview set, instability and discomfort will be the reaction. These two dimensions communicate their information to the third level of culture, evaluative, which will evaluate if what is experience is valued and at what level of priority or value. Based on the communicated information, the person will make a decision that will generate a behavior or a cultural product.

Charles Kraft, looking at Hiebert's three dimensions, proposes a more detailed discussion on the process of worldview processing. Figure 11 expands the work of worldview dimensions, illustrating the discussion and focusing on the results of worldview processing, namely, behavior or cultural product.
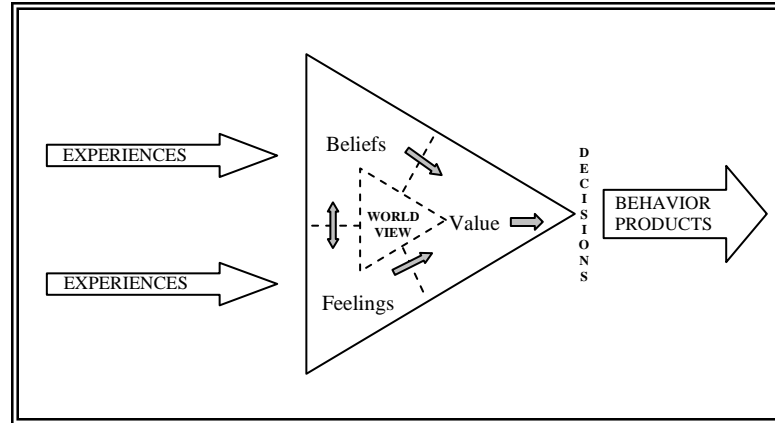
Figure 10. The Dimensions of Culture at Work. *Source:* Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews* (Deerfield, IL; Manuscript, 2003), 25.

Worldview Through Cultural Product

The first set of information that helps locate the worldview level deals with the deep structuring or "patterns underlying primary behavior."[1] According to Kraft, at this basic level of worldview a person "will"/choose, express emotions, and think/reason. At this level, socially accepted ways of willing and choosing are taught. The taught worldview will guide the individual in what to will and how to choose accordingly.

A second aspect is the pattern of the use of emotions which will guide the individual on how and when to use or show emotion. Each culture will have different levels of emotional openness or closeness. Often there will be differences in males and females and other limiting aspects that are actually other worldview premises which create the complex web of cultural behavior patterns.

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[1]Ibid., 58-63; Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 7. The subsequent discussion is based on the same reference.

A third aspect is the pattern of thinking. Different cultures will use different logical systems that are based on underlying worldview patterns to will guide individuals to come to conclusions based on their logical system. Multi-cultural contexts face difficulties in coming to conclusions mostly due to different worldview assumption in the way people think or reason.

Fourth, there are worldview assumptions that affect motivations. Some motivations are biologically based, such as the need for food, water, rest, and sex; others, such as comfort, wealth, marriage stability, and formal education are socially suggested based on underlying worldview patterns. Lastly, expressions of predispositions are also patterned by worldview assumptions. Peoples' attitudes (pessimism or optimism) are largely defined by patterns in worldview level.

The use of this set of worldview assumptions will help in interpreting and assigning meaning and evaluating. The previous discussion on form and meaning informed that people assign meaning to cultural symbols ("pattern of meaning assignment"). These meanings will be defined by the set of worldview assumptions held by the individual. The figure above details what I am calling the worldview as process, resulting in cultural manifestations (behavior) prescribed by the worldview process of shaping what is reality and what is the most culturally appropriated response. The external manifestations of this response are cultural products that become the very material missionaries will use to create a worldview hypothesis.[1]

The intention here is to paint a picture of the filtering process through worldview. When a person acts, the result of the person using worldviews to interpret, assign

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[1]Worldview hypothesis is dealt with in the next chapter under worldview analysis.

meaning, evaluate, and then prescribe adequate responses is seen. The adequate response is manifested in a behavior or cultural product that reflects the process and the worldview level. Therefore, worldview is the basis for behavior (act or speech).

One of the questions that emerge through the discussion in this chapter is how worldview is formed. The process of worldview formation may have implications in the curriculum of Adventist schools, for example. Through a theory of worldview development it may be possible to find stages of human development when the person is more likely to be shaped by the biblical message. The information may inform the preparation of Sabbath school quarterlies in terms of methodologies and content to increase the potential for biblically shaped worldview formation. The final task of this chapter, therefore, is a tentative effort to provide a theory on worldview formation.

Worldview Formation

The understanding of worldview development theory may supply the tools to shape worldview formation and transformation using biblical principles. In mission worldview formation is also spiritual formation. One of the responsibilities of Adventist mission is to nurture Christians through spiritual formation and transformation that they may become spiritually mature. Another responsibility is to foster permanent changes at the worldview level (conversion). The Three Angels' Messages rightly calls all nations to "worship him who made the heavens, and earth, the sea and the springs of water" (Rev 14:7). Allegiance is at the heart of the Adventist message. A spiritual battle for the minds is at stake and only spiritual formation and transformation at the worldview level can create such allegiance.

	PERSONAL BEHAVING	CULTURAL STRUCTURING
S U R F A C E	**Behaving** *Habitual Behaving* 　Overt (doing, speaking, emoting) 　Covert (thinking, feeling) *Creative Behaving* 　Overt 　Covert	**Behaving** *Habitual Behaving* 　Overt (doing, speaking, emoting) 　Covert (thinking, feeling) *Creative Behaving* 　Overt 　Covert
D E E P	**Assuming** (Usually habitual, often creative) *Primary-level assuming* 　Willing (choosing) 　Emoting 　Reasoning 　Assuming Motivations 　Assuming Predispositions *Assigning Meaning* 　Interpreting 　Evaluating *Responding to Assigned Meanings* 　Explaining 　Committing/Pledging Allegiance 　Relating 　Adapting 　Seeking Psychological Reinforcement 　Striving Toward Integration/Consistency	**Patterns of WV Assumptions** *Patterns underlying Primary Behavior* 　Willing (choosing) 　Emoting 　Reasoning 　Deciding Motivation 　Being Predisposed *Patterns of Meaning Assignment* 　Ways of Interpreting 　Ways of Evaluating/Validating *Patterns of Response to Meaning* 　Ways of Explaining 　Ways of Committing/Pledging Allegiance 　Ways of Relating 　Ways of Adapting 　Ways of getting Psychological Reinforcement 　Ways of Integrating/Attaining Consistency

Figure 11. Surface and Deep, Personal and Cultural. *Source:* Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY; Orbis, 1996), 59.

Spirituality is a hidden dimension of Self and is often described as within or deep in the Self. When a worldview is biblically shaped, ordinary daily activities take on a whole new level and the person becomes a spiritually sensitive human being. As a result, "a meal becomes a time of forgiveness. A day of leisure becomes a day of contemplation. An illness turns into an experience of solidarity with the poor. An occupation becomes a vocation. Giving becomes an expression of gratitude. A burial

becomes a time of thanksgiving."[1] The formation of a biblically shaped worldview or transformation is only possible through shaping the deeper worldview level.

Although anthropologists seldom speak in terms of the worldviews of an individual because they are more concerned with wider cultural phenomena, individuals are the ones who hold worldviews. The anthropologists surveyed in the second chapter often approach worldview as looking for the organized conceptions of a group of people and how they look at the universe.[2] A successful construction of the process of worldview formation would also be concerned with individuals rather than just groups, recognizing that there are slight differences between the worldviews of individuals worldview inside the same culture due to differences in family, religious affiliation, social group, etc, but still the people share the major worldview themes which defines the culture at large (American, Brazilian, Japanese, etc.). It is an impractical task to try to discover the worldview of individuals due to the infinite variety that are possible. The most accurate methodology, then, seems to be delineating the formation of a worldview in terms of a people group or the cultural personality.[3]

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[1]Dorothy C. Bass, *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 8.

[2]See, for example, the discussion on Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations*, 85.

[3]It is never too much to emphasize that, even though one looks at people and culture in general to create worldview theories, the individual is the focus since they are the ones who hold worldview assumptions. Culture is a concept not a concrete reality. Culture is what people share in common. Therefore, a person is always the central point when dealing with worldview.

Stages of Human Development and Worldview

Worldview is the deepest element of a culture. Other elements include beliefs,

values, and behaviors.[1] The process of worldview formation is similar to the process of

culture learning or acculturation. To discuss worldview formation, then, is to talk about

the very formation of culture and personality.

The discipline of psychology has devoted a great deal of effort understanding

human behavior and the personality formation process that can help formulate a theory of

worldview formation.[2] Worldview scholars point out that the psychological field of

culture and personality theory has much in common with worldview theory.[3] Relevant to

this study is the fact that psychology theorists have developed "stage theories of human

personality and development." Sigmund Freud and Erik Erickson are two of the most

influential theorists in stage development. Anthropologists interested in the

psychological aspects of culture developed the discipline of psychological anthropology.

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[1]See figure 2.

[2]Anthropology has developed its own area of studies in human psyche called
Psychological Anthropology (for examples of psychological anthropological literature
see Philip K. Bock, *Rethinking Psychological Anthropology: Continuity and Change in
the Study of Human Action,* 2d ed. [Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1999], and
Robert Cushman Hunt, *Personalities and Culture; Readings in Psychological
Anthropology* [Garden City, NY: Natural History Press, 1967]). A distinction needs to be
made since a missiological approach to worldview studies is more in line with
anthropology than with psychology. Nonetheless, anthropologists as well as
missiologists will find overlapping areas between the two disciplines. Missiology
borrows from psychology, as anthropology does, to study the relationships between
culture and individuals.

[3]Victor Barnouw, *Culture and Personality*, 4th ed., The Dorsey Series in
Anthropology (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1985), 3; Kearney, *World View*, 29.

In this area of inquiry anthropology and psychology come together[1] in a way that is relevant to this study for it brings worldview concepts from the general (society) to the particular (person). The goal is to see how society and culture influence the individual who grows up in that particular culture. The development process is the very process where worldview is formed. A brief description of Freud's and Erickson's theories will provide the basic material for developing a theory of worldview formation.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Sigmund Freud developed his *Psychosexual Stages of Development* based on the idea of sexual desires as the formative drives, instincts, and appetites that "naturally" prescribe behavior and beliefs. The sexual drive or *libido* is so strong that it manifests itself from birth and will influence the individual during his or her entire life. Freud says that there are five stages of human development or formation. The first stage is the oral stage/phase which refers to childhood when pleasure and self-gratification are obtained through the mouth. At this stage the main relationship is between the child's mouth and the mother's breast. The second stage is the anal stage/phase which has the focus of pleasure around the holding or elimination of human waste. This stage marks the beginning experience with the external world and with external forces that regulate internal instinctive impulses. The third stage is the phallic stage when the focus turns to the genital area. This is the stage of discovering and classifying the self and others. Relationships follow the pattern of differentiation and exploration of self and other (human and non-human). At this point, Freud introduces his famous concept of the

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[1]Barnouw, *Culture and Personality*, 3

Oedipus complex.[1] The fourth stage is the latency stage. This is the point when the child

begins to explore the deeper oceans of social life by starting to attend school. The

relationship now is between the self and the vast world of social interaction and learning

process. The focus shifts from sexual obsessions toward parents to tasks such as social

interaction and learning process. Becoming a social being is the most important aspect;

nonetheless, the sexual interest is alive and manifests itself through masturbation and

other sexual excursions in search for pleasure. The last of Freud's stages is the genital

stage. The child is caught up in a transition between childhood and adulthood identified

as adolescence or teenage years. At first, the homogenous group becomes a peer pattern,

then comes the establishment of relationships with the opposite sex. At the end, "the

person becomes transformed from a pleasure-seeking, narcissistic infant into a reality-

oriented, socialized adult."[2]

Erick Erikson (1902-1994)

As a student under Anna Freud, Erik Erikson absorbed many features of the

Freudian approach based on sexuality, but rejected Freud's tendency to describe

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[1]"The Oedipus complex is named for the King of Thebes who killed his father and married his mother" (Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, "Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality," in *Personalities and Cultures; Readings in Psychological Anthropology*, ed. Robert Hunt [Garden City, NY: Published for the American Museum of Natural History by Natural History Press, 1967], 27). It defines the behavior of the child, normally from three to five years old, as oriented towards emotional energies of loving for the parent of the opposite sex and, on the contrary, hostile emotional energy directed towards the same sex parent. In other words, "The boy wants to possess his mother and remove his father, the girl wants to possess her father and displace her mother" (Lindzey and Hall, "Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality," 27). According to Freud, although the Oedipus complex reaches its climax at the ages of three to five years old, it remains a crucial element throughout human life.

[2]Lindzey and Hall, "Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality," 29.

personality formation totally in terms of sexuality. Erikson is more society and culture

oriented, identifying his theory as Psychosocial Stages of Development.[1] He believed

that individuals continue to experience personality changes affected by society even after

puberty vis-à-vis Freud. Therefore, he includes three more stages of development,

making his model an eight-stage process. The first stage (infant) is trust vs. mistrust. It

is an oral sensory stage during the first year to year and a half. The goal is to establish

balance, learning to trust but not eliminating the capability of mistrust. The most

significant relationship at this stage is with the mother. The second stage (toddler) is

called autonomy vs. shame and doubt. The child begins to experience the world and to

develop autonomy. This stage is identified as the anal muscular stage when the child will

try to be autonomous minimizing shame or doubt. The parents are still the main focus for

all relationships.

The third stage (preschooler) is identified as initiative vs. guilt. It is also known

as the play age or genital locomotor stage when the child will try to develop initiative

without too much feeling of guilt. Influential relationships are extended from parents to

family. The fourth stage (school age child) is industry vs. inferiority. The sense of

accomplishment (production/industry) is very important in avoiding a sense of inferiority.

This is the time for learning experience and school is added to the home world as an

amplifying version of it. The circle of relationships keeps getting larger, and now it

includes neighborhood and school as significant influential focus of interaction.

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[1]It is described mainly in two works: Erik H. Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968); Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993). The latter was first published in 1950.

The fifth stage (adolescence) is identity vs. role. Beginning at puberty, this phase asserts personal identity and has a sense of uniqueness in order to avoid role confusion. This was the stage that triggered Erikson's theory. Studies on adolescence led him to the other stages[1] where relationships expand to peer groups and role models. The sixth stage (young adult) is intimacy vs. isolation. Commitment to others (friends, lovers, etc.) becomes important to develop a sense of intimacy and social participation, and a way to avoid isolation. Relationships are made with friends and partners.

Erikson's seventh stage (middle adult) is generosity vs. stagnation. The balance between generosity, which is the concern about love for the future and future generations (this stage normally is marked by the raising of children), and stagnation, which is self-absorbing, is the goal for this stage. Relationships fluctuate between household and workmates. The last stage (old adult) is integrity vs. despair and indicates the development of integrity with a minimal of despair.

Although they have differences, the two theories above agree on the basic assumption that there are stages in the development of a person. It is important to this work to try to formulate and understand worldview formation by individuals in a society. Worldview is often understood as the pattern shared by a people within a given group. However, worldview assumptions differ within a social group from individual A to individual B. This study will look at the individual level and his development within any given social group and will follow the stages identified by psychology theorists to infer the different stages or steps involved in the formation of a worldview.

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[1]C. George Boeree, "Erik Erikson," in *Personality Theories*, 1997, 2006, <http://www.ship.edu/%7Ecgboeree/erikson.html> (12 December 2005).

Stages of Worldview Formation

Needless to say, any attempt to formulate a theory is always tentative. It must

also be acknowledged that this tentative theory is written based on a Western perspective.

This work recognizes that this model should and will go through alterations as one

expands the understanding to include non-Western worldviews. This seminal idea is not

unique in the sense that others have developed stage theories for worldview formation.[1]

However, their orientation is toward a specific worldview feature, such as faith (James

W. Fowler) and identity (Linda J. Myers) development. My intention is to provide a

framework that can be used to fit any given worldview one may want to analyze. I

believe that both faith and identity are part of the overall worldview formation process,

and that they grow together with all other worldview propositions about reality as seen

before in this work as vectors[2] or themes.[3]

Worldview formation is defined through a series of stages marked, for example,

by such elements as total dependence, partial dependence, and independence from

parents. For roughly the first six years of life, most children will experience near total

dependence on parents.[4] During this period a worldview is imposed upon the children of

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[1]Examples of theories on worldview formation can be found in James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1981), and Linda James Myers, *Understanding an Afrocentric World View: Introduction to an Optimal Psychology* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1988).

[2]Jones, "World Views: Their Nature and Their Function."

[3]Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture."

[4]Lingenfelter and Mayers, 19.

a society through familiar processes of teaching and learning[1] which Clyde Kluckhohn

calls the regulatory process of cultural teaching and learning.[2] Regulatory refers to the

learning of manners that create cultural harmony. The goal of the regulatory process of

teaching and learning is to minimize the nuisance value of the individual, to prevent them

from disturbing others, thus avoiding cultural disharmony. Another aspect of this stage is

the exposure and interaction to experiencing the world. Every time children gradually

expands and interacts with humans and non-humans, their individual mental reality map

is shaped. Parents are essential during this period because they are the ones who

prescribe meanings to what is being experienced. Therefore, at first parents are the main

channels for communicating worldview assumptions. This six-year phase is what this

work is calling school age. A whole new universe is encountered, beginning the process

of independence and conscious awareness. During this time period the most important

and common question is "Why." A person begins to reason, initiating a process of

individualization. In the final analysis, the worldview formation process is a lifetime

process of formation and reformation. In anthropological terms this process is called

enculturation.[3]

As stated before, worldviews are taught, are communicated, and are reinforced by

means of human interaction.[4] The rational in constructing this theory is that the

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[1]Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 53.

[2]Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man: The Relation of Anthropology to Modern Life*, 178.

[3]Lingenfelter and Mayers, 20.

[4]John B. Harms, "Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge and the Interpretation of Weltanschauungen," *Social Science Journal* 21 (1984): 35.

relationships between the Self and Other are experiences that shape the personal picture

of reality, and this internal reality map (worldview) prescribes how the person should

relate to the perceived reality. From birth, a person is gradually exposed to the world

through interactions with humans and non-humans, first inheriting (unconsciously), and

then later in life developing (consciously) worldview assumptions from these

interactions. These interactions will prescribe what is acceptable according to the

culture; they begin with a process of not reasoning at the early stages to reasoning at the

later stages of worldview formation. Each stage, then, will represent the steps taken in

the process of knowing as the individual grows older.[1] Figure 12, at the end of the

discussion, summarize each stage.

Stage 1: The Age of Unconsciousness

In the first stage of life a person will have his interactions restricted almost

exclusively to interactions with the parents. Total dependence will characterize the first

months of life and everything that the child will know is what the parents introduce. The

universe is limited to the family's house with limited excursions to the outside world.

Interaction is negotiated by communication codes. A relationship of codes will guide

parents and the child into a world of communication that mostly no one else can

understand. Parents will know when the child is crying from hunger, thirst, pain, or just

asking for attention. At this stage the worldview assumptions are determined by the

parents, who will teach the child what is culturally acceptable. Anthropologist

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[1]Many implications for mission and ministry in forming biblically shaped worldviews can be identified through the following stages. However, a discussion on the implications will take place in the next chapter when I will be dealing with worldview transformation toward a biblically shaped worldview.

Kluckhohn introduced the idea that there are two kinds of cultural learning in human development, namely, technical and regulatory.[1] Stage one is the age of regulatory teaching while technical teaching, which is the teaching of skills, will be left to subsequent stages.[2] An absence of conscious awareness is the main characteristic of this stage and the prescribed reality and regulatory teaching is accepted without judgment.

Parents often underestimate the capacity of a child to learn at this stage, for the age of unconsciousness is when the formation of core assumptions will begin to take place. The example of how a building is constructed is relevant here. The foundation is the most important element of any construction, for it will hold the rest of the building together. At stage one, the first blocks of a worldview are established. Because of the overlapping interaction of worldview premises and assumptions, and because culture aims for stability, any new core assumption proposed to the individual must agree with the already established ones or challenge them. In short, the shape of a worldview will largely be defined by the foundational core assumptions placed in an individual unconscious in this first stage. Logically, then, the first worldview assumptions should be considered the most important because, theoretically, they are the strongest ones.

Stage 2: The Age of Discovery

The second stage of worldview formation only lasts for a very short time. From seven to nine months humans experience the beginning of an individualization process

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[1]Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man: The Relation of Anthropology to Modern Life*, 178.

[2]Although Kluckhohn emphasizes that regulatory teaching is likely to be taught at home and church, and technical by schools, he understands that, in fact, they overlap; home and church also teach some skills and school does teach manners.

that is marked by the beginning of crawling, and in some cases walking, when the child experiences the first sensations of independence from its parents. The child is now able to reach things and places not possible before. This stage is a time of discovery when the child begins to experience the world, thus, reality. This reality will be largely interpreted via the parents who will prescribe the cultural meaning for what is being experienced. However, a significant change in their world occurs at this stage. In the first stage, the child experienced and related only to what or who the parents introduced to the child. Through the development of the ability to craw or walk, the child expands the interactions, which first was totally dependent on the parents, to whatever the child can reach; objects, animals, and other people. Still, parents play a major role in regulatory teaching. The process of teaching and learning what is good and bad (such as putting fingers in outlets) is already in place.

At this stage a slight change occurs in a child's world because they are not limited to what is introduced to him/her by the parents. By crawling and taking the first steps, the child is able to reach some of the things the eye sees. But the world still is mostly concentrated inside of the home with limited excursions to the outside-world. The child, although beginning to experience some individualization, still is totally dependent on parents.

At this stage the child is not reasoning. The process of worldview formation continues through parental orientation with the final result being a shared legacy of society "designed to lead us into seeing things as the adults of our society see them."[1]

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[1]Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 3, 13.

Stage 3: The Age of Language

This is the most important stage in worldview formation. From ten months to five years a child will acquire two of the most important aspects of life. First, the child will master the motor coordination enabling it to fully explore the world. Second, the child will learn the communication skills called language. The latter aspect is the most important part of this stage because language mediates the meaning of the external world and is the most precise element in constructing reality.[1] Language is the single most important element in forming a worldview because it is believed that "language structures the world in a particular way for its speakers,"[2] and because it opens channels for parents and others to share stories/narratives that provide answers to ontological questions.

The power of language in forming a worldview should not be underestimated. Language has the capability of transporting philosophical formulation and abstract ideas or ideologies into daily acceptable behavior, attitudes, social beliefs, etc. One of the great examples is the rise of postmodernism. While it was just a philosophical idea in the past, now it can be clearly perceived in the American pop culture, even though many have never come in contact with the writing of postmodern philosophers.[3] It is clear that language shapes reality more than any other cultural aspect.

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[1]A. I. Hallowell, "Cultural Factors in the Structuralization of Perception," in *Social Psychology at the Crossroads*, eds. John H. Rohrer and Muzafer Sherif (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 170.

[2]Barnouw, *Culture and Personality*, 171.

[3]This assertion has been also pointed out by Kleber de Oliveira Goncalves, "A Critique of the Urban Mission of the Church in the Light of an Emerging Postmodern Condition" (Ph.D. diss, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; 2005), 117. He presents a discussion on several cultural manifestations where the postmodern worldview

Although one cannot deny the classical affirmation that by the time a child "can talk, he is the little creature of his culture"[1] (considering the first two stages as the period before a child can talk), the first two stages will lay down only the foundations for worldview. But it is the language that will open wide the door for sharing the narratives that will largely form the worldview of a given individual. Narratives are the "stories that govern our lives."[2] Narratives are the stories that show the ways a culture interprets and explains the world. Since ancient time stories have been used to explain the questions of life; Who am I? How did the world come about? Where did I come from? Who created the animals and plants? What is the purpose of life? What happens after death? These narratives are ontological in nature. Through acquiring language the child is able to receive the cultural heritage of what reality looks like. One should not forget that worldview is formed under different circumstances, such as nationality, historical moment, political atmosphere, and other elements that confine worldview to an era[3] that will stamp their mark on the formation process of worldview, but it will mostly be done by language. Through language the world is now an idea and imagination rather than just concrete elements. It takes the "world" to a whole new level for the child; now philosophy as well as experience supplies the materials to explain it.

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has made its impact and can be clearly recognized, such as music, art, cinema, religion, and others.

[1]Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 3

[2]Bradshaw, *Change across Cultures*, 20.

[3]Wilhelm Dilthey, *Dilthey's Philosophy of Existence: Introduction to Weltanschauungslehre: Translation of an Essay* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), 27.

These very abstract concepts become the basis for the development of reasoning. Therefore, the age of language also marks the transition from not reasoning to reasoning. The child begins to ask "reasoning" questions every time a new worldview assumption is presented that challenges or agrees with the established foundational worldview. Later in this stage the development of reason will be noted by the constant questioning of "Why." The reasoning is based on the necessity of the person to understand cause and purpose in life[1] and makes the struggle to achieve stability at the worldview level explicit. When a child reasons out that such and such makes sense, it actually affirms that it agrees with the pre-established worldview. If the child finds something that is nonsense it is because it finds no reasonable explanation in its worldview structure.

Language, as the most powerful element in worldview formation, will provide the step needed for the next stage the Age of Schooling.

Stage 4: The Age of Schooling

This stage is popularly known as puberty. However, for worldview formation it is the stage that indicates the beginning of technical teaching and a shift from near total parental worldview formation to the school's involvement in shaping worldview. The level of parental dependence is considerably altered. A child experiences a progressive sense of individualization and autonomy. This stage is a changing period and should not be considered as independence from the parents, but rather the beginning of a gradual

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[1]Dorothy Lee, "Being and Value in Primitive Culture," *Journal of Philosophy* 46, no. 13 (June 1949): 99. It is true especially in Western societies since there are other cultures where the question is not why but what.

process of individual choice. In addition, a child at school will experience another major shift in the process of knowing the world. The introduction to all sorts of symbols and logic will reshape and expand the child's worldview.

Another aspect of the Age of Schooling is that a child's social activities change from heavily home oriented to school oriented, giving the opportunity for expression of personality attributes never perceived before. School age provides the opportunity for the development of peer groups. Parents will be surprised to find certain behaviors and expressions that they never taught the child, and parents often have no idea where such expressions came from. These are the first signs of peer and school influence on worldview formation. Worldview transformation will be experienced for the first time at this stage when the level of influence of the parents will gradually give place to other influences, such as teachers, church, peer groups, media, and all sorts of influence from the world.

This stage will set the mood for adolescence and all the struggles for self knowledge which, from a perspective of worldview formation, is the process of discovering assumptions about the reality of Self and Other, that will often be defined by the ontological narratives established during the Age of Language.

This stage also marks an increasing level of consciousness and the development of the believe system. Values will also become clearer at this age but again, all new elements involved in cultural formation will be based or at least monitored by the existing worldview.

Stage 5: The Age of Affirmation

From thirteen to eighteen years old a person will go through a period called adolescence. Adolescence is not an age of trouble but an age of worldview affirmation. All the physical and mental developments of puberty call attention to the self. Since there are definitions of the self at the worldview level an adolescent will visit and review the worldview inherited and go through a process of accepting or rejecting explanations about the Self and Others (human and non-human). With reason now in place, the individual will develop a certain level of consciousness that will help to define which assumptions, passed on by the parents, school, peer groups, etc., will be accepted and which ones will be rejected or changed. This process generates levels of discomfort that will be dealt with differently by each person. In general, instability at the worldview level will be worked out internally but with external manifestations that will be socially classified as upheavals, aggressiveness, rebellion, and the like.

Worldview instability and conflict will happen throughout adult life but in less intensity compared to adolescence. How well the person negotiates the resolution of worldview conflicts in this stage will largely set the pattern to be followed throughout the adult life in negotiating and solving the constant worldview instabilities.

At this age influence shifts from mostly parental to peer groups or friends. It is common to experience family conflicts at this age because the child is questioning the worldview, beliefs and values inherited from its parents. The world seems complex and difficult to understand. For many, this is the age of idealism when young people believe they can change the world. The learning process also shifts from mostly regulatory to technical. Parents now are perceived not as educators, but friends. Some parents insist

on continuing regulatory teaching at this stage but will find increasing resistence to doing

so. Some individuals at this stage have more conflicts due to the difficulty their parents

have in accepting or even understanding this shift in relationship.

At the worldview level, some assumptions will be rejected and others reinforced

at this stage. A pattern will be established by this very process. In adult life, worldview

will be constantly under pressure and instability. The goal of a worldview is to maintain

cultural stability and that is by rejecting, accepting, and changing worldview

assumptions. A study published in 2003 aimed to test the hypothesis about personality-

relationship transactions in adolescence.[1] The study was based on the premise that

individuals develop through dynamic, continuous, and reciprocal transactions with the

environment.[2] This premise agrees with the assumption of this theory of worldview

formation that worldview assumptions are formed through interaction between the Self

and the environment, meaning human and non-human interactions. The study concluded

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[1]Jens B. Asendorpf and Marcel A. G. van Aken, "Personality-Relationship Transaction in Adolescence: Core Versus Surface Personality Characteristics," *Journal of Personality* 71 (2003). The premise that guide studies as such are related to the understanding that personalities are not totally culturally shaped but, on the contrary, strongly genetically based. The difference and individual traits in personality will affect their relationships and well as interactions. I cannot disagree that personality is formed based on genetic material; on the other hand, it seems clear that environment will also shape the individual. An anthropological/missiological point of view personality is individual but there is also what is called a cultural personality largely shared by a group of people. This cultural personality is defined in terms of common assumptions underlying daily behavior, belief, and values. Therefore, Asendorpf and VanAken's study helps us to understand the different levels of cultural personality (worldview) and how it affects individuals in society as well as their movement as instable and stable cultural assumptions. Last, although this study was done in German with 230 participants age 12 to 17, we believe that, regardless of cultural and economical differences with other cultures, its result applies universally, as worldview is applied universally, restricted by its differences in cultures.

[2]Ibid., 629-630.

that there are core and surface personality characteristics. The core characteristics are

unlikely to suffer radical influence or transformation, and thus are classified as stable.

The surface characteristics are more susceptible to social influence, thus are classified as

unstable. This again illustrates the power of the first stages in worldview development.

The core or the central assumptions are more likely to be stable and less likely to be

altered in the adolescence stage. In revising their worldview during the stage of

adolescence, people will transform some aspects of their worldview, but rarely are the

core assumptions or the ontological assumptions that were taught in the stage of

unawareness and accepted as being true without questioning them. The implications of

this concept for missions will be presented later.

Worldview formation in the Age of Affirmation is the process of owning the

worldview inherited from the cultural influences of the previous stages.

**Stage 6: The Age of Continuous
 Accommodation**

After eighteen years of age a person has acquired a more or less integrated

worldview. Through the confusing days of adolescence the end result is a revised and

more or less coherent view of Self and Others. A person is much more stable due to a

more stable worldview. From this point on a person is considered an adult. It does not

mean, however, that core assumptions will not continue to change. Worldview

assumptions are dynamic in nature and, although all previous stages of worldview

formation are crucial in the process of forming it, a person will always experience

instability at the worldview level leading to worldview change. No one is locked into a

set worldview after a certain age.[1] It is a mistake to think that worldview will ever be totally stable or coherent. All individuals remain in a learning process throughout their whole life. Worldview assumptions will always be challenged, reinforced, and changed as one grows older.

At this stage, the person will have a worldview that will serve him throughout his life to analyze, interpret, and prescribe an adequate answer to events. Relationships are now somehow balanced between family and friends. The nature of relationships is altered to a more mature relation among equals. Learning takes place through experiences and philosophies that will be tested by reason, which is filtered by the established worldview.

Summary

Worldview assumptions are the very propositions about reality that define our relationship with others. These prepositions, mostly shared through ontological narratives, are taught through a process of interaction between the Self and the Others, forming a more or less coherent view of the world. Despite cultural differences, the worldview of any given culture defines reality and has the responsibility to explain and evaluate events by the established worldview prescribed by a particular culture to the individual. Therefore, behavior, in all its formats, is the external manifestation of the deeper worldview assumptions and premises.

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[1]This has been demonstrated, for example, through the work of John P. Gillin, "Ethos and Cultural Aspects of Personality," in *Social Structure and Personality: A Case Book*, ed. Yehudi A. Cohen (New York: Holt, 1961), 297.

	Age	Interaction	World	Learning	Psychological Characteristic
Stage 1; The age of Unconsciousness	0-7months	Mostly parents	What parents introduce to the child	Regulatory through parents	Unawareness/unreason
Stage 2; The age of Discoveries	7-9months	Mostly parents and Contact with things, animals, and humans By crawling or walking	Mostly home Limited excursion to external world	Regulatory through Parents and experiencing objects, animals, other humans	Unawareness/unreason
Stage 3; The age of Language	10months-5years	Mostly parents but with gradual larger contact with environment (human and non-human)	Objective as well as subjective Experience and Philosophy (narratives)	Regulatory through Parents, some technical	Transitional; Unreason to reason Unawareness to awareness
Stage 3; The age of Schooling	6years-12years	Parents, teachers, Pastors, peers, and natural world not Experienced before	Great expansion both objective as well as subjective	Regulatory through Parents, and church Technical mostly by School and extra activities	Transitional; Growing reasoning Intensified self awareness in relation to others
Stage 4; The age of Affirmation	13years-18years	Parents, teachers, Pastors, but Increasingly peers and friends.	Becomes too complex and difficult to understand.	Shifts from mostly regulatory for more emphasis on technical	Redefining self and others; Some confusing awareness due to rapid changes, reason, critically revisiting worldview to redefine self and others
Stage 5; The age of Continuous Accommodation	After 18years	Family and Friends	More or less Integrated worldview	Experience and relational based on awareness and reason	More or less coherent view of self and others More or less stable worldview

Figure 12. Worldview Formation Development. *Source:* By the author.

As the deepest assumptions about reality, worldview should be the focus of any mission. Mastering the message or tools of mission is not enough to produce deep changes in allegiance. A classic example is Paul and Barnabas' visit to Lystra (Acts 14: 8-20). The message and the miracles were interpreted according to the local cultural worldview. The result was catastrophic for the gospel and for the mission of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra. There is no subsequent story of the same nature, which may indicate that they learned that people will interpret events according to their worldviews. The relevant question is whose reality counts in doing missios? The discussion in this chapter makes it clear that the perceived reality of the people is what counts.

The questions that become pertinent are: How can we identify worldviews? How can we bring about worldview changes or transformation? What is an ideal worldview? These are some of the questions to be answered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

WORLDVIEW ANALYSIS AND TRANSFORMATION

Communicating at the worldview level where the presenter of the gospel seeks to know and understand how the audience interprets reality should be a major concern of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in mission. To communicate effectively across cultures is fundamental in any attempt to do missions.

One of the difficulties of this study has been to research worldview in general and not in particular. Some Christian scholars have undertaken worldview studies in a particular context or culture with relevant results.[1] On the other hand, studies on

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[1]Most of the work in worldview analysis or worldview studies in general has been produced by the School of International studies at Fuller Theological Seminary mostly under the supervision of Charles H. Kraft and Paul G. Hiebert. Lately, some work has come from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School under Hiebert. Mark W. Anderson, "An Investigation of Particular Worldview Elements as Found in Six Professional People of Lower Normandy and the Impact of These Elements in Individual Response to the Gospel" (D.Miss. dissertation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1999), Peter Changwoo Bai, "An Etic Worldview Study on Bicultural Korean Americans: Toward Identifying and Resolving the Group's Worldview Conflict" (M.Th. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies, 2001), Akumla Longkumer, "Bodo Culture and Christian Mission: A Study in Transformational Culture Change" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of International Studies, 1998), Harold Robert Thomas, "Cultural Themes, Worldview Perspectives, and Christian Conversion among Urbanizing Evangelical Aymaras" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies, 2003). Other published materials on worldview analysis are Bruce Bradshaw, *Change across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2002), James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

worldview in general have not received the same attention.[1] Among Adventist scholars

specifically, virtually no work has been published giving close attention to either general

or a particular worldview.[2] Consequently, implications for Adventist mission have not

been sufficiently assessed.

The rational behind this chapter is that worldview analysis is fundamental for

relevant Adventist missions and that worldview transformation toward a biblically shaped

worldview is the goal of any mission. This chapter is organized in three parts. First,

essential elements for worldview analysis are discussed and relevant models presented.

Second, a worldview transformation process is introduced. Third, a case for the use of a

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[1]Most of the current books and articles on worldview are based on the theoretical framework provided by Christian anthropologists such as David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991); Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1976); Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985); Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994); Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979); Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996); or Christian philosophers such as Arthur Frank Holmes, *Contours of a World View*, Studies in a Christian World View; v. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983); Arthur Frank Holmes, *Fact, Value, and God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); Sire, James W. Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

[2]Although books, articles, or any other published material dealing specifically with worldview concept among Adventist writers could not be found, good worldview chapters were found on Kleber de Oliveira Goncalves, "A Critique of the Urban Mission of the Church in the Light of an Emerging Postmodern Condition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2005); Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003); Gan-Theow Ng, "Religion, Culture, and Modernity: Some Missiological Implications of the Process of Secularization in East Asia" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1991); Juan Carlos Viera, "Worldview and Mission: Suggestions for a Mission Theology," (lecture presented at the annual council of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists, 3 October 1995, Washington, DC: 1995).

"biblically shaped worldview" as a preferable term instead of the most popular "biblical worldview" or "Christian worldview" will be argued. The thesis of this chapter is the firm belief that the final purpose of Adventist mission is to create a biblically shaped worldview in any given cultural context.

The Quest of Worldview Analysis

Before going any further, a word of caution to the reader is required. Studying the field of worldview analysis has been a unique experience. Many will live their lives unaware of their worldview. In fact, as Kraft declares, it is "comparatively irrelevant whether or not we are conscious of the rules and patterns that govern our lives"[1] in the sense that our worldview will play its role anyway. In terms of missions, awareness of one's own worldview and others' worldview is as essential as having biblical or theological knowledge. There is a reality that "outsiders consistently misinterpret the phenomena of cultures exotic to them in terms of the implicit categories of their own culture"[2] and it is here contended that the same is true for missionaries. The difference is that for the latter the consequences may be rejection, distortion, or inappropriate understanding of the gospel message as well as other problems such as equating cultural aspects as biblical revelation leading to syncretism.

Furthermore, to study another culture's assumptions is to expose one's own culture. It is like holding a mirror that enables the person to see its own assumptions,

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[1]Kraft, Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective, 47.

[2]Richard Handler, "Afterword: Mysteries of Culture," *American Anthropologist* 106, no. 3 (2004): 490.

prejudgments, and flaws. When studying other cultures' worldview one face differences

that challenge one's own basic postulates and raise important questions about the

methods and models one use to go about life.[1] In short, when dealing with worldview

analysis the first worldview to be analyzed is one's own. This process may be painful but

necessary in order to check the missionaries own culture. In fact, how can a missionary

challenge other culture's assumptions with Scripture if he/she is not willing to challenge

its own? In this trip into one's own self, it is beneficial to keep in mind Geertz's advice

that cultural concepts are semiotics; therefore, it is a searching for cultural meaning.[2] It is

not a search for rigid cultural laws but meanings. These meanings of one's own

worldview, provides with a system that will be reflected in one's values and behavior.[3]

Still, another reminder comes from Bryant Myers who works and writes from the

perspective of development and urban mission: "we must begin where we are, with

ourselves. 'Know thyself' is a useful reminder . . .Work spent articulating one's

worldview, one's assumptions about how the world works, why it is as it is, and what

might improve it is work worth doing. It . . . should make us more effective."[4]

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[1]Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 363.

[2]Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.

[3]Lloyd E. Kwast, "Understading Culture," in *Perspective on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 364.

[4]Bryant L. Myers, Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 59.

Worldview as Public and Private

Reading worldview research may cause one to be confused by where the dividing

line is between the private/individual and the public/cultural shared worldview. This

confusion can be identified in the previous chapter where a struggle to draw the line is

apparent. However, it can be said that in the previous chapter the discussion was more

concerned with the study of the nature of worldview and its relationship with the

individual. This chapter, on the other hand, shifts the focus from the previous attempt to

find ways to analyze worldview assumptions as public/cultural. The final goal, however,

is two fold. First, it looks at the private, personal worldview assumptions since the goal

of Adventist mission is to biblically shape each person's assumptions. Second, it looks at

the public aspect of worldview assumptions since producing individual worldview

transformation may also promote public/cultural changes. The ideal of any mission work

is to have the biggest impact in shaping a culture and moving it towards becoming a

biblically based culture. This is the responsibility of the Christian church as coworkers in

the divine process of redemption and salvation. Perhaps the dividing line between the

private and public worldview is artificial and perhaps there is no such dividing line. At

least, that line may not be as sharp as one may expect.

The rational for the quest of worldview analysis, which is the prerequisite for any

attempt to influence at the worldview level, is that there are common worldview elements

throughout the different cultures. This idea assumes that humans, even though living and

thinking differently, must have a core set of answers that will explain and make sense of

the world. When this work refers to core set it is relying on the concept of worldview universals introduced by Robert Redfield.[1]

Redfield's idea of worldview universals was later expanded and redefined by Michael Kearney.[2] The idea of universal worldview assumptions touches the dilemma of private and public. In the last chapter, in the attempt to construct a theory for worldview formation, my western shaped worldview pushed to a more or less defined line separating private and public life.[3] However, a recognition that in other societies such as tribal societies where the boundaries between private and public are less sharply defined, the theoretical rational developed needs to be reevaluated. On worldview analysis, however, it seems that the boundary is much clearer. In one sense, people foster worldview, it happens, it is geographically placed within each person, and works to prescribe meaning to a person exposure's to Self and external events. In this sense, Sire is right to claim that

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[1]Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1953), 84-110.

[2]Michael Kearney, *World View* (Novato, CA: Chandler & Sharp, 1984).

[3]The methodological approach to develop the theory of worldview formation, in the last chapter, was based on the interactions between the Self and the Others (human and non-human). The gradual exposure of an individual to the world produces explanations about that reality being experienced or faced. The sharp line that I am talking about is my western assumption of family and community life. Although a western may find no problem to understand my approach, a member of a rural or tribal society may find it at least not well informed. I described the gradual process of individual exposure based on a western assumption of private life (home) where the interactions are limited, at least as it relates to humans, to those part of the family or very close friends. In a western society the privacy of the home is treasured. Entering a house without permission or an invitation is often perceived as invasion of privacy. On the other hand, in tribal societies or some rural ones, the sense of privacy is much different and the dividing line between private and public life is not sharply defined, to say the least. The difference is due to an individualistic approach to life versus a community one. Consequently, if my theoretical framework presented in the previous chapter would

worldview is private.[1] Therefore, in searching for worldview assumptions one will mostly observe, question, search, listen, and learn from individuals within a social group. The public arena comes to the scene because assumptions, although private, also share common assumptions that compose a culture set or worldview. That is the reason for such terms as modern, postmodern, Western, and Eastern worldviews. Worldviews can also be identified as American or Asian. In this sense, worldview is public.

<p style="text-align:center">Worldview Universals</p>

As noted before, Redfield was the first to enunciate the idea of worldview universals. However, it was Kearney that coined the term "universal." Kearney developed Redfield's concept into a more sophisticated model indicating the process of categorization or classification that an individual does by looking at the universe from a certain point of view. This model has been called the best model of worldview analysis currently available.[2] Although this can be debated, there is no doubt that it is one of the most helpful treatments on the theme.

The discussion of worldview universals follows the rational that there are basic categories of assumptions that every people group needs to deal with. The application of universals to every people group helps outsiders see their assumptions, values, and

be used in a nonwestern society, some revisions must be made changing the basic assumption about private and public life in order for the model to be effective and useful.

[1]Sire, Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept, 107.

[2]David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 244.

commitments in this exact order.[1] Redfield presents the idea that worldview is a point of

view or a stage set.[2] On the stage is the Self and Others that can be human or non-

human. The question that Redfield pursues is the question of what is common to all

people, what are the share commonalities that would help in the process of comparing

cultures, not in terms of better, but in terms of how culture A responds to such and such

an issue and how it differs from culture B in the same point. For example, concerning

demons Americans are often unaware of their influence in daily matters. For them, the

world is influenced and guides by laws of politics, economics, and probabilities.

Spiritual powers have very little to do with daily events in the mind of many Americans.

In contrast, for South Americans, the awareness of the influence of spiritual powers such

as demons is a constant. Rituals of purification and prayer and chants are common

cultural elements to protect from evil influences. Worldview universals provide tools for

worldview analysis and comparison. Since the goal of worldview universals is to

facilitate analysis and comparison, one requirement is that it must "be applicable to any

human world view without greatly distorting it."[3] How medical doctors work illustrates

this point. A doctor works in terms of a set of core assumptions so that even though he is

confronted with different patients those common elements will guide him in his

diagnosis. His analysis is based on blood pressure, pulse, respiration, etc. He will pay

attention to these vital signs and will reach different conclusions for different patients.

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[1]Charles H. Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness, October 2002," prepublication manuscript, chapter 8, 1.

[2]Redfield, The Primitive World and Its Transformations, 86.

[3]Kearney, *World View*, 65.

On the area of worldview universals this principle seems to be also true. It is the sets of commonalities common to all cultures that make analysis and comparison possible.

As stated in the previous chapter, worldview formation is based on relationships.[1] An understanding of the world that surrounds the person as well as an understanding about other human beings is essential to human life. From birth, encounters with external realities need to be understood in order to give meaning to life. The need for such an understanding comes from the interaction of the Self with everything that is not Self.

It is the assumption of this paper that although Kearney's model is not the final word on worldview analysis it is certainly the most comprehensive material published so far. In addition to that, two of the leading scholars on anthropological mission studies have used and followed both Redfield and Kearney's model of worldview universals, namely, Kraft and Hiebert.[2] Worldview universals provide the starting point to begin the task of analyzing a people's worldview. Therefore, the quest for worldview analysis begins with a clear understanding as well as with the capacity of identifying universal worldview assumptions in different cultures.

Each of the following assumptions is believed to be present in any given culture. They are ontological in nature and form the basic framework of thinking for human beings. The core assumptions are at the bottom of the pyramid of cultural integration of thought. Further, they are the terms that impact relationships and communication, and that play an essential role in interactions among themselves.

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[1]Based on Redfield, The Primitive World and Its Transformations, 86.

[2]Both authors have made some modifications to Kearny's model. I will be presenting the original model with modifications that may be relevant to make it easier to

In the previous chapter a methodology was used called inside out in order to understand the nature of worldview. In this chapter, the opposite approach will be taken in assessing and analyzing worldview assumptions. Assumptions emerge from a hidden dimension inside of the Self and are made manifest through cultural products or behaviors.[1] Behavior, as well as other cultural indicators such as the stories of a people, gives the information necessary to create hypothesis. Hypothesis may be the most important word in worldview analysis for it involves the process of observation[2] that generates hypothesis to be tested in order to discover assumptions. In this way, we make our way from outside in, from worldview manifestations or visible dimension to the worldview level or invisible dimension (figure 13).

Let's turn now to worldview universals as a way of beginning to map worldview assumptions. This concept is based primarily on Kearney's six worldview universals, but input from other authors will be made as necessary to facilitate comprehension.[3]

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understand the topic. References for additional elements for Kearney's model will be given.

[1]John B. Harms, "Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge and the Interpretation of Weltanschauungen," *Social Science Journal* 21 (1984): 35.

[2]Ethnology as a sub-discipline under Anthropology provides much help in recording, classifying, and analyzing data from observation, interviews, and other cultural research techniques. For further readings see Michael Agar, *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*, 2d ed. (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1996); Charles L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*, Studies in the Social and Cultural Foundations of Language; No. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays*; James P. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979); James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980).

[3]As stated before, Kraft and Hiebert have follow Redfield as well as Kearney framing their thinking and writings. They have altered here and there Kearney's models and as far as it is relevant to the understanding or expansion of worldview universals as

Visible Culture (Worldview manifestations)　🔲 Behavior

🔲 Beliefs

🔲 Values

Outside in

🔲 Worldviews

Hidden Culture (Worldview dimensions)
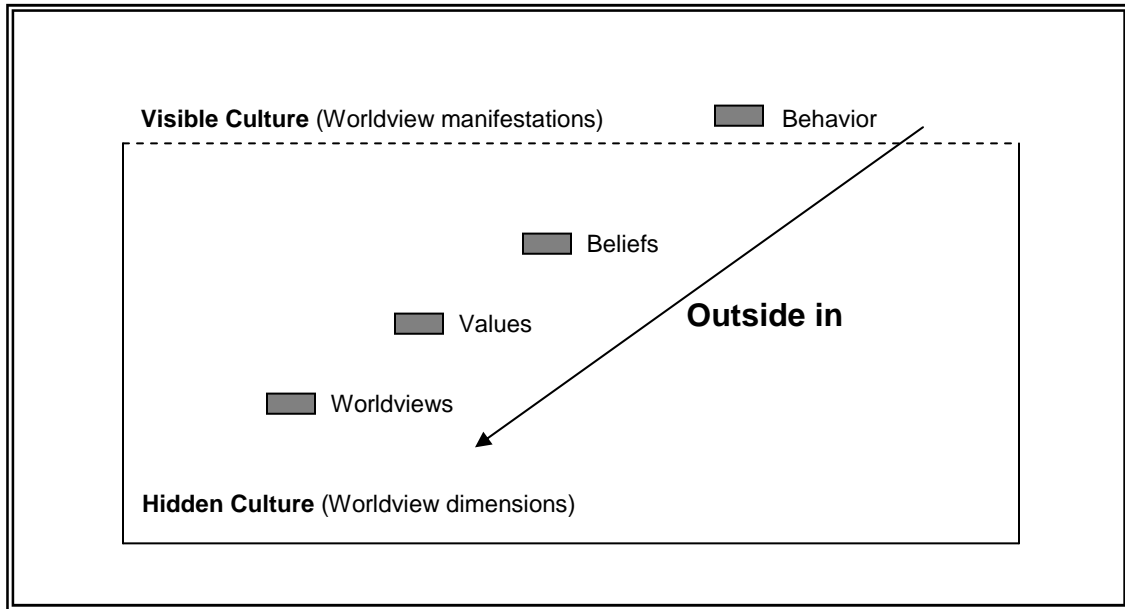
Figure 13. Worldview Analysis from Outside in. *Source:* By the author.

Classification

The most basic concept of life is the way people classify perceived reality into categories. This idea goes back to Redfield who stated that worldview is like a stage set from where people look upon the universe and begin structuring things as they become aware of them.[1] In a practical way, all cultures name reality (objects, social categories, people, animals, supernatural entities, etc.) dividing them into categories. Any attempt to analyze worldview will largely deal with the "major categories of reality recognized by a people and the criteria by which they group the contents of these categories together."[2]

model of analysis, their ideas will be incorporated to the discussion. It does not, however prevent this study of using other works as long as they are pertinent.

[1]Redfield, The Primitive World and Its Transformations, 86.

[2]Kearney, *World View*, 78.

The classification of the world into categories is necessary to give order to the universe. Hiebert calls this the cognitive "dimension of worldview" that is responsible for the categorization process or the production of mental map categories based on the logic system thinking of a given culture. "It provides," he writes, "a culture with the fundamental mental structures people use to define and explain reality."[1] However these categories are largely arbitrary and serve as a framework for analysis. They provide us with a starting point for analysis to solve the problem of mapping cognitive structures, but they are hypothetical in nature even though they are empirically testable.

Many of the categories or domains, as Kearney refers to them, are better perceived in contrast: for example, domains of real/unreal and natural/supernatural as they relate to "European thought: one is the province of science (originally called natural science), the other of religion and witchcraft. For some people, atheists perhaps, this distinction corresponds to the real-unreal. For others, these two dichotomies are cross-cutting. For example, one who is otherwise imbued with a 'scientific' outlook on life might have a traditional notion of God as able to perform miracles that contravene natural laws, yet this same person might reject as fanciful a belief in ghosts."[2] The interaction between the two domains is represented below in figure 14.

Kearney's premise for examining worldview assumptions is that there are two types of information providing insight about worldview: the contents of the domains and the criteria or attributes. The contents appear in figure 14 as God, ghosts, dreams, and dogs.

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[1] Paul G. Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews, 2003," Manuscript, chapter 1, p. 42-43, Deerfield, IL.

[2] Kearney, *World View*, 81, 82.

The criteria or attributes are the actual qualifications make it possible the classification of

each element in analysis. The contents of worldview may be the same in different

cultures but it is the attributes that will determine in which category each will be placed.

For the purpose of analysis, it is not enough to know that a people believe in God

(content). On the other hand, if people place God in the category of superstition or a

human creation serving social oppression then more insight into the worldview level and

its effects are known. The attributes bring light on how cultures use, perceive, and relate

to the given content. The attributes shape the meaning of the content helping

missionaries develop an accurate picture of culture or worldview.

	Real	Unreal
Supernatural	God	ghosts
Natural	dogs	dreams

Figure 14. Interaction of Domains. *Source:* Michael Kearney, *World View* (Novato, CA; Chandler & Sharp, 1984), 82.

Another venue of gaining insight into worldview assumptions is language. Kraft

articulates that "English and many other languages classify most nouns as either singular

or plural. Many languages mark nouns as masculine or feminine. Many sort nouns into

even more categories than that. The Bantu languages of Africa, for example, may show

as many as fifteen or more 'genders' called 'noun classes.' In the West we ordinarily

divide time into past, present, and future. In contrast, many Melanesian peoples divide

time into 'now time' and 'myth time.'"[1] Language projects worldview's hidden

dimension towards concrete ideas in the form of linguistic symbols. For example,

English vocabulary and speech is filled with words "such as better, bigger, inferior,

average, normal, equal in relations to, etc. showing that we constantly are passing

judgment according to a comparative standard,"[2] namely, the worldview standard.

Language is a fruitful cultural symbol system that gives clues about worldview

assumptions.

It seems obvious enough that domains are limiting forces constraining worldview

to become coherence as much as possible. The discussion of worldview limiting forces

and their relationships will follow Opler's[3] model of analysis, but will be dealt with in a

later discussion. I return now to the next worldview universal.

Self

The second worldview universal that helps to assess a people group's worldview

is the concept of Self. Self is the most necessary and basic concept of life, therefore, the

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[1]Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 8, 4.

[2]Dorothy Lee, "Being and Value in Primitive Culture," *Journal of Philosophy* 46, no. 13 (June 1949): 97. For further readings on language and worldview see A. I. Hallowell, "Cultural Factors in the Structuralization of Perception," in *Social Psychology at the Crossroads*, ed. John H. Rohrer and Muzafer Sherif (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 170-75; Edward Sapir, Leslie Spier, A. Irving Hallowell, and Stanley S. Newman, *Language, Culture, and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983).

[3]Morris Edward Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," *The American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 3 (1945).

"first requirement of a world view" is a view of the Self.[1] Self reflects the human quest

for the true nature of human beings. The necessity for a stable image of Self pursues

people throughout life producing disturbing moments, for example during adolescence.

A balanced Self image is acquired through processes of maturation as well

as constant adaptation and redefinition as social status and relationships change during

one's lifetime. In the process of worldview formation the most dramatic struggle in

defining a sense of Self is called adolescence. The awareness of the existence of the Self

coupled with a less than coherent understanding of it, as well as the relationship of the

Self to the external world reaches such a level that explanation is demanded. It has long

been perceived that the worldview of Self is dependant upon its relationship with the

external reality of the Other.[2]

In a broad cross-cultural perspective, questions concerning the Self tend to orbit

around the locus of the Self. This definition depends and varies greatly across cultures

because it is based on an ontological dilemma.[3] The locus of the Self will be shaped by

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[1]Kearney, *World View*, 68.

[2]The worldview universals "Self" and "Other" are normally discussed together due to their interdependence. Nonetheless, I decided to separate them having the concept of Self followed by the concept of Other. The idea of the relationship of the concept of Self and Other is identified as early as 1955 by A. Irving Hallowell, "Cultural Factors in Spatial Orientation," in *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*, eds. Janet L. Dolgin, David S. Kemnitzer, and David Murray Schneider (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 133.

[3]It seems that a definition of Self in different cultures will depend mainly on the philosophical/religious orientation of a given culture. In this sense one may categorize scientific reason as religious since it provides ontological questions. In the past philosophy and theology was considered to be one discipline or at least closely related. Science as provider of a philosophy of life and theories for understanding the universe may be argued to be a religion. In this sense a western scientific shaped worldview will define the Self as the result of the process of evolution. It defines the person as the

how culture explains such dilemmas. For example, Kearney relates to the Spanish use of

the "reflexive-verb construction such as 'my tooth hurts me,' or 'my body does not wish

to heal itself'"[1] as manifestation of a worldview of the Self. It implies that the Self is

within the body but somehow with a separate existence. This concept may be explained

by the popular Catholic teaching that man is composed by body (matter) and spirit. This

dichotomy is also shared by mysticism and spiritism that see the spirit within the body as

an independent Self. In this sense, the body is not the Self but the shelf for the Self. For

cultures with this understanding stories of extra-corporal experiences are common and

provide missionaries material to identify the idea of the Self in those cultures.

Generating hypothesis about the Self is a primary step forward in assessing worldview

assumptions in the worldview universal categories.

Charles Kraft replaces Kearney's Self with person/group.[2] The present work find

it useful as an alternative perspective on the topic, even though it still follows Kearney's

Self for Adventist mission since different cultures have different points of reference

towards individualism or group orientation. In classifying the worldview of a person we

may well be classifying the worldview of the group and vice versa. Any attempt at

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superior mind and also classifies different cultures in terms of advanced or primitive, technological or Stone Age, complex and simple, etc. Self is perceived as autonomous individual living according to reason and scientific facts. A Biblically shaped worldview would see the Self as created by God for a defined purpose. A holistic view of man as creature of God created in His image. It presents the Self as whole not separated entities but total unity of physical, mental, and spiritual. Hindus would perceive the Self as three bodies; physical, moral, and spiritual. The person will collect a *Karma* which are moral consequences of good or bad and it will determine the results for after life and the process of reincarnation. Clearly different cultures will have different views of the Self that must be analyzed toward clear and effective communication.

[1]Kearney, *World View*, 69.

[2]Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 8, 1.

missionary communication must be done in terms of a people's worldview of the Self. In

addition, missionaries must bring place that concept under the light of Scripture to see if

the cultural view of the Self is according to biblical revelation. Through this

methodology, we begin to define also a contextualization process that aims to bring

supra-cultural biblical elements into a given cultural context in order to biblically shape

it.

Other

The notion or perception of Other is the third element in a list of worldview

universals. The term is used here not with the usual English meaning, but as a term to

indicate everything that is not Self. Other may be human or non-human and the concept

of Other functions as "a complement to the Self"[1] since the Self attain his/her identity in

relationship with the Other. This relationship is understood to be positive, negative, or

neutral. Kearney explains this interdependent relational characteristic of Self and Other

by analyzing a child's relationship as follows: a "child soon comes to realize that the

sources of pleasure and pain originate to some degree from the Other. When such aspects

of the Other as food, mother, warmth, physical contact are present, the Self experiences

pleasure; when they are absent for some time, it experiences pain, which it may also

come to associate with such aspects of the Other as cold, loud noises, or not mother. It

learns then that both pleasure and pain emanate in part from the Other."[2] The idea that

Self and Other relationships may be perceived as negative, positive, or neutral has far

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[1]Kearney, *World View*, 71.

[2]Ibid., 73.

reaching impact on the worldview formation process as discussed in the previous

chapter.[1]

The concept of Other can be used to define what kind of relationship people will

have. For instance, the relationship of a person with family members and strangers is

defined by the worldview definition of social life. People learn to love family members

and keep a safe distance from strangers. Another example, people learn how to relate to

co-workers in an ethical way that may give the appearance that the workers know each

other very well when, in fact, there is a "professional relationship" with clear boundaries

for those involved in that relationship that often keep them from personally knowing their

co-workers. In essence, we learn how to classify Other in groups and worldview

prescribes how to treat each type.[2]

Causality

Causality follows Self and Other as a worldview universal because it is

dependante on the previous two. As Kearney points out, Self and Other as universals are

the "back bone of an world view."[3] As a person grows older the more he/she will

differentiate the Self from Other. Causality is related to what is commonly known as

cause and effect. Causality seeks to understand the power or powers behind events and

seeks answers for such questions as: "what causes things? And what power lies behind

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[1]See the discussion of worldview formation in chapter 3, 95-107.

[2]Charles H. Kraft, *Culture, Communication, and Christianity: A Selection of Writings* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 110.

[3]Kearney, *World View*, 88.

such causation? What forces are at work in the universe?"[1] Important for mission work is the fact that Scripture provides material to answer all ontological questions that are asked concerning causality. The missionary task is to engage in the ethnological practice of observation, intentionally looking for ways to understand people on their own terms. The idea is to see the world through the eyes of the local people. In this way, insights will be gained for developing strategies to communicate efficiently cross-culturally.

Causalities are perceived to be powers behind events. Again, different cultures will have different ways to answer questions of causality, and these differences often appear in a people's narrative. It is important to point out at this time that worldview assumptions provide purpose for life, explain the past (events), provide meaning for the present (moment), and offer guidance for the future. Herein lays the importance of worldview assumptions and the answers that explain the powers behind the events of life.

It may be helpful to illustrate how different worldviews assign different causes for the same event. Take for example the Tsunami that killed thousands of people in South Asia in December of 2004. Westerners are likely to attribute the disaster to the laws of the natural world. Science offers an explanation for the powers controlling nature and how it affects humanity and how humanity influences nature. Westerners rely on science to explain that a powerful earth movement occurred on the ocean floor dislocating enormous amounts of water causing the formation of giant waves called tsunami. According to this explanation, there is nothing that can be done. A second group of Afro-religionists called *Umbanda* on the north east coast of Brazil pay close attention to the

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[1]Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 9, 6. For helpful discussion see Jean Piaget and Rolando Garcia, *Understanding Causality* (New York: Norton, 1974) for enlightening discussion.

spiritual entities and their relationship to human beings. For them, *Iemanja*, a goddess, is believed to be the spiritual entity that controls the oceans. For these people, the tsunami may be caused by the wrath of *Iemanja*; therefore, she is the power (cause) of such upheavals. According to this explanation, such events may be prevented by offerings such as watermelon and coca-cola that will satisfy the goddess and cause her to leave the oceans in peace.

A final example is Western Christians who perceive the world in a similar way with the first group (Westerners). But because of their biblical approach to life they see God as the ultimate power. Therefore, even though they may agree with the scientific explanation of the movement of the tectonic plates at the bottom of the oceans, their worldview prescribes that God is the one who has ultimate controls over nature. To harmonize the two worldview assumptions lead many to believe that God was the power behind the movement of the tectonic plates. Other Western Christians may believe that sin and Satan are the causes of such disasters, while still others may affirm that such disasters are judgments from God.

The point of the illustrations above is to show how differences in worldview assumptions explaining causalities will influence the way people think and ultimate relate, often through behavior, to the reality perceived. This illustrates why it is imperative for missionaries to obtain a deep understanding of a people's worldview on causality.

Time

Humans share the notion of time; therefore, it is classified as a worldview universal. Things are located in time; people live in a temporal context.[1] The notion of time, however, will vary depending on the culture. In the West people see time as daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, seasons, etc. Time is considered to be divided as past, present, and future. Other cultures, however, may see time in different ways. As a consequence, they will behave and believe differently according to their view of time.

Consider, for example, how Brazilians and Americans see time. Suppose a meeting is set at seven o'clock in the evening. Americans will consider being on time as five minutes before or after the designated time. Being later than that implies rudeness, carelessness, irresponsibility, and lack of respect. An American will expect an apology and maybe an explanation for being late for a meeting. Brazilians, on the other hand, see meetings as having fuzzy boundaries. They see time as a frame that can be flexible which may be due to a more laid back lifestyle so they would probably not be offended if someone came fifteen to twenty minutes late. A great deal of conflict may be generated when Americans and Brazilians meet. The American will perceive the Brazilian as irresponsible with no sense of time. On the other hand, the Brazilian will perceive the American as too rigid with no sensitivity towards human relations. The same example may be expanded to church meetings or special church programs. Americans will approach a church event as beginning on time with a planned sequence of presentations, and ending on time. Brazilians will often approach church events as beginning when the guests arrive, followed by a sequence of presentations, and the end will depend on the

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[1]Kearney, *World View*, 90.

beginning point as well as the progress of the presentations. Brazilians perceive events as more or less as open ended or at least not set in rigid time frames while Americans approach events in a rigid manner in regards to time.

These differences may be explained by two different assumptions concerning time. Americans would say that *"time is money,"* thus, anything other than strict time management is considered a waste while Brazilians will say *"nos temos todo tempo do mundo"* ("we have all the time in the world"). Cross-cultural misunderstandings and conflicts may be avoided by simply understanding differences in connection with time. Paul Hiebert, in developing Edward Hall's idea of time presents an interesting chart of cross-cultural differences dealing with worldview assumptions of time (figure 15).[1] Failing to understand these differences often leads to judgment, premature conclusions, ethnocentrism, and the like.

Space

Time and space mirror the virtual inseparability of Self and Other as presented above and are largely related or co-related. The definition of space, according to Kearney, is broader than just geographic measurement. In the same way that time indicates measurement as well as an abstract philosophical concept, space, deals with the

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[1]Edward Twitchell Hall, *The Silent Language* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990). first published in 1959. Another excellent treatment of time is Edward Twitchell Hall, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*, 1st ed. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1983). On the latter he states that "some things are not easily bent to simple linear description. Time is one of them. There are serious misconceptions about time, the first of which is that time is singular. Time is not just an immutable constant, as Newton supposed, but a cluster of concepts, events, and rhythms covering an extremely wide range of phenomena" (Hall, *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time*, 13.). He goes on affirming that the way Westerns perceive time as a single entity is incorrect,

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Views of Time

1 - Uniform Linear Time
- Has a beginning and end
- All units are of equal duration and value
- Is non-repetitive, does not repeat itself
- Tells a unique story
- Modern scientific time

2 – Cyclical Time
- Repeats itself in cycles of life, seasons, years
- Has no beginning and no end
- Renewed by return to origins in a "rebirth" or new beginning
- Commonly associated with agricultural societies and fertility cycle

3 – Pendular Time
- Oscillates moving forward and backward
- Moves slower and faster
- Comes to dead stops

4 – Critical Event Time
- Is linear, has a beginning as end
- Different types of time with different value and duration
- Time is measured by sequence of events
  (breakfast time, work time, sleep time)

5 – Dream Time
- Has a beginning and end
- All units are of equal duration and value
- Is non-repetitive, does not repeat itself
- Tells a unique story
- Modern scientific time

Figure 15. Worldviews of Time. *Source:* Paul Hiebert, *Tranforming Worldviews* (Chicago, IL, Manuscript, 2003), 44.

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but admits that it is just the way they see it (Ibid). He describes nine views of time such as biological, personal, physical, metaphysical, clock, sacred, profane, and on.

relationship between the "environmental space of people and its image of it."[1] As

illustrate above in figure 14, a people's worldview assumptions concerning space can be

read back, according to the outside in model of phenomena observation from daily life

elements such as "settlement patterns, house construction, architecture in general, the

arrangement of furniture, folk dances, and so forth."[2] Analyzing similar manifestations

of worldview assumptions of space, Hiebert observes that people have mental maps about

the world around them and view space as sacred places in different cultures as follows;

> This view of geography as sacred space is widespread around the world. For the
> Muslims the center of the world is Mecca. For Hindus the gods reside in the
> mountains . . . for Indian villagers the major geographical features around them
> have mythological stories associated with them. In societies such as this, space is
> more important than time. Time separates past from present. Space brings them
> together. This land was bought by our ancestor who is now buried under the tree.
> In Palestine we can sit at Jacob's well. Four thousand years ago—but right here,
> Jacob dug the well. Two thousand years ago-but right here we can touch the well
> where Jesus talked with the woman at the well.   It is modernity that shifts the
> priority to time over space.[3]

The notion of space clearly influences other worldview categories such as family

life and expectations. For instance, cities in the United States are largely divided by

blocks which are divided into small lots owned by families. Each family is expected to

have their own space/place. Further, it is expected that when two people become a new

family through marriage they will establish a new household separate from their families.

Their new home will become their private place. In areas of Sudan, on the contrary,

when two people become a family through marriage, the bride's father will construct an

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[1]Kearney, *World View*, 92.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," chapter 1, 49.

addition to the family's house. The husband and the children will become part of the

extended family living on the same propriety.[1] In Brazil, it is not uncommon that the

parents of the new couple will built a *puxadinho* (an addition of one room, bathroom, and

kitchen or, sometimes, just a room) to help the new family achieve financial

independence. These contrasting examples expose the influence of worldview

assumptions of space into family affairs. Not submitting to the cultural worldview may

disrupt the stability about what is considered "normal" if a couple in the United States

wants to move in with the parents or if the parents in Sudan or Brazil do not provide

space for the new family as an economical aid during the first years of marriage.

Assumptions about space are also concerned about the cosmos. Kraft labels such

views of the cosmos as "macrospace" and "microspace."[2] The first relates to conceptions

about the world, sun, stars, moon, space, and the universe in general. The latter relates to

building space, relationship space (extended and direct family, close friends and friends,

co-workers and buddies, and the like), demarcations such as eating areas, sleeping space,

etc. Assumptions about dirtiness and cleanliness are closely related to space assumptions

as well. For example, the floor is considered dirty in Western societies; therefore, one

should sit on a chair which is clean enough to sit on but not to put food on; food should

be placed on a plate.

From a missiological point of view, worldview assumptions about space have far

reaching consequences in the way we construct buildings and infuse theological

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[1]Arabela Okum, Sudanis refugee in the United States, interview by author, Richmond, VA, 5 July 2003.

[2]Kraft, chapter 10, 10. In addition see Hall, *The Silent Language*, 158-180, for an insightful treatment of worldview assumptions of space.

meanings to secular/material and sacred/spiritual places. Then there is the space notion

of heaven, the location of angels in relation to humans, and so on. The notion of space

needs serious attention in cross-cultural mission because space plays a defining role in

the integrated worldview system.

Mission theologians could help with the task of determining biblical truth in

connection with each of the worldview universals. In doing so, they may provide the

basis for determining what is biblical truth and what is cultural interpretation of truth. A

meta-cultural systematic theology is a task that is waiting to be accomplished by

Adventist mission theologians. Once the universals of a culture are identified they can

determine what must be changed or shaped according to Scripture.

Worldview universals are the most likely starting point for any attempt at

worldview analysis. The next step in analyzing worldview assumptions would be to

determine the relationship of worldview categories and universals. It would be naïve to

assume that if the worldview universals described above are discovered for a particular

culture then the missionary has mastered a people's worldview. In reality, worldview

universals present just an initial point for worldview analysis helping to touch the surface.

The theory of themes and counter-themes will expand the horizon in any worldview

analysis.

Worldview Themes, Counter-themes, and Integration

The theory describing the role of worldview themes and counter-themes as the

process of worldview integration has been the most influential aspect in my worldview

thinking process. This theory looks directly into the incoherence of worldview

assumptions that are perceived on a daily basis, and then articulates an explanation for

such incoherence. This explanation is the most important stage of worldview analysis as far as mission is concerned for it forms the basis for worldview transformation. The goal of mission working at the worldview level is to be able to shape worldview assumptions, transforming them into biblically shaped worldview assumptions leading to conversion. Without Opler's,[1] model worldview could be wrongly perceived as continuing in a static state with no space for change, thus, leaving no relevance for missiology.[2]

The concept of worldview themes was briefly described in chapters 2 and 3, but in this chapter I want to approach it from the perspective of using this concept for worldview analysis leading to worldview transformation. While worldview universals are major categories that we use in everyday situations, Opler's themes take one step further in the quest to materialize/verbalize on worldview propositions. Propositions are the hidden assumptions of truth that are seldom articulated or evaluated by a person, but which define one's view of reality and prescribes actions/behaviors based on cultural codes between the Self and Others.[3]

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[1]Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture."

[2]This perception of worldview as static was popularized among anthropologists through the influential work of Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934). A word of limitation is due here. Another attempt to create a theory of dynamics of the culture was intended by W. T. Jones, "World Views: Their Nature and Their Function," *Current Anthropology* 13 (1972). His model, however, is more complex but not more efficient than Opler's. In fact, the first resembles the latter in many ways and although I recommend as an excellent treatment of the topic and I will be using him in several occasions, I am still inclined to see Opler's model as the most helpful. What I found is that using both papers, reading Jones' in the light of Opler's, a much better understanding of the topic was possible.

[3]Missiologists have used different methodologies to discover worldview themes even though they often use different terms for it. One great example of worldview analysis is Bradshaw, *Change across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation*. He approaches the topic of community development from a worldview

Opler's thesis is that a "limited number of dynamic affirmations," which he calls

themes, "can be identified in every culture and that the key to the character structure, and

direction of the specific culture is to be sought in the nature, expression, and

interrelationship of these themes."[1] The identification of these themes is the aim of

worldview analysis. The visible manifestation of themes is the window through which

one may see and identify worldview themes; therefore, worldview manifestations are

called *expression of themes*. This is illustrated in figure 16 where themes are located in

the invisible worldview dimension, while expression of themes is located in the visible

worldview dimension. Opler contents that there are several observable manifestations of

hidden worldview themes. He suggests, however, that "expressions of a theme are not all

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perspective accepting that "people construct the cultures that comprise the *kosmos* according to the values their narratives contain" (Ibid, 13, emphasis on the original text). He attests that people's narratives, which are the stories that govern their lives, encapsulate their worldview. Therefore, "The central issue for Christians is discerning what that narrative is" (Ibid, 17). His suggestion to discover those worldviews is to listen to "stories people tell about themselves, to read novels about the culture, and to understand folklore and religious beliefs" (Ibid, 243). In the same vein, Charles Edward Van Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), 44-68, challenges us toward an interrelationship between narrative theology and mission theology because of the holistic potential of narratives. Mary Thiessen, "When We Are Dying in the City: Three Sources of Life," in *God So Loves the City: Seeking a Theology for Urban Mission*, ed. Charles Edward Van Engen and Jude Tiersma (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1994), 93, expresses her frustration that "too often others have attempted to describe and interpret the experiences and inner thoughts of those in the city. Instead of listening to and inviting persons from the city to tell their stories, to share their insights and observations, to express their hopes and desires, researchers, visitors, and even missionaries have been guilty of describing the city and its people from the perspective and with the words of the outsiders" (Ibid, 93). Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* looks at belief systems attesting that they "make explicit the implicit assumptions of the worldview within which they function and apply these assumptions to beliefs and behavior" (Ibid., 37).

[1]Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," 198. He declares that his use of *themes* is in a "technical sense to denote a postulate or position declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society" (Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," 198.).

of one piece."[1] They are like puzzles where pieces must be place together to form a complete picture. Being able to observe and consider these expressions may expose worldview themes. The question then is: What are the observable pieces of expressions of a theme?

An answer to this question can be articulated in terms of cultural phenomena. These are cultural manifestations of themes that should be the focus of missionary observation. Cultural phenomena vary among cultures, but they are the system by which worldview assumptions are made explicit. In many non-literate societies, for instance, phenomena such as religious rituals, social traditions, songs, proverbs, fables, riddles, stories, myths, popular beliefs, and the like must be the focus of missionaries' observation.[2] On the other hand, societies with printed literature supply a whole new universe of worldview manifestations that can be observed in their written materials. Furthermore, other ways of perceiving worldview assumptions include politics, economics, patterns of relationships, etc. Lately, technological societies have opened yet another window for observation through their musical CDs, internet, video clips, DVDs, TV programs, etc. Although different names can be used to describe the different venues of worldview manifestation, they are in fact, the pieces of information that form a worldview puzzle and that unveil the hidden dimension of worldview themes that people in a given culture use to explain the world and create their picture of reality. Through

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[1]Ibid., 199.

[2]For an in depth discussion on such cultural manifestations see Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 13, 6-22.
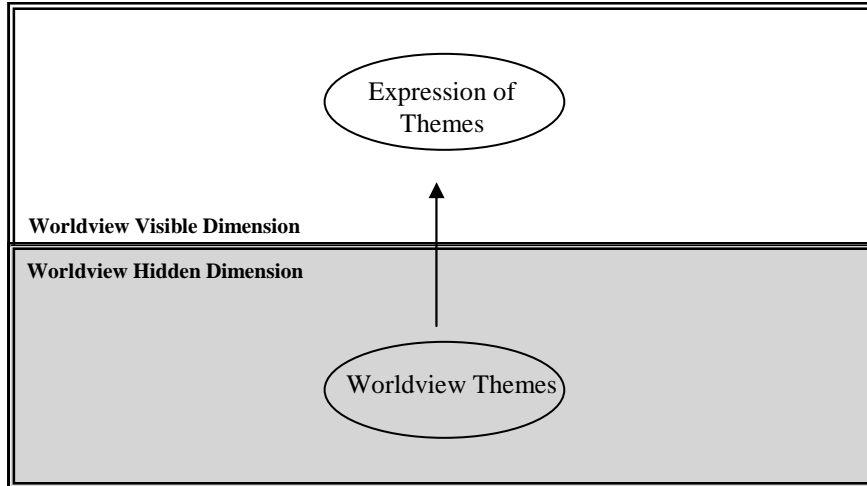
Figure 16. Visible and Invisible Dimensions of Themes. *Source:* Based on information from Morris E. Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," *The American Journal of Sociology*, November 1945.

observation of these cultural expressions of themes missionaries can discover worldview assumptions.

Another aspect of these themes must be stressed. Due to their relationship, themes act as determiners of beliefs, values, and behavior but also as a restraint to other themes. When a theme is functioning as restrainer it is defined as a *counter-theme*.[1] Opler's suggests that "often the existence of other opposed or circumscribing themes and their extensions . . . control the number, force, and variety of a theme's expressions."[2] This understanding of limiting forces is believed by Opler to be the key to understanding how equilibrium or integration is achieved in a culture.[3] The goal of the themes and

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[1]Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," 202.

[2]Ibid., 201.

[3]Ibid.

counter-themes at the worldview level is to reduce the possibility that one theme might become so powerful as to disturb cultural harmony. An example of this idea can be seen in Western worldviews in the area of individualism. Other worldview themes such as a sense of community, patriotism, and the notion of citizenship that is perceived as belonging to a commonwealth serve as counter-themes to restricts individualism from becoming so powerful as to lead to chaos and social disintegration. Counter-themes, in a sense, reshape other themes. Thus, when analyzing a worldview's themes and counter-themes the same level of importance should be given to both.

The next step in worldview analysis is to be able to begin mapping the worldview themes, sub-themes, and paradigms, as described in the previous chapter, as well as identifying the role they play as themes and counter-themes. Further, this mapping may help to identify behaviors that are linked or directly prescribed by the worldview assumptions at each level. Both Opler and Jones agree with the analysis from outside in (figure 12) and suggest that worldviews are expressed in visible ways.[1] The question, however, is how to materialize[2] worldview propositions/assumptions through the observation of the expression of these themes and how to make sure that our description is in reality accurate. Perhaps the most important concept at this point is the idea of creating hypothesis.

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[1]Jones, 82; Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," 199.

[2]The materialization of worldview themes is the tentative step of putting worldview assumptions into words that can be evaluated and tested. Examples of this idea will be given later in this chapter.

Creating Hypothesis

The question of hypothesis must be addressed to avoid imposition by one's own

distorted ideas. Through hypothesis a tentative conclusion based on personal

observations and logical rational concerning phenomena is suggested. The hypothesis

may be right or wrong, so to find out its true nature one must test it by using hypothesis

In doing so, missionaries may be prevented from being determinists in their worldview

analysis where they would create a "reality" that is not there. If that happens, chances are

the decisions and strategies following that particular hypothesis may be very wrong or at

least distorted. Generating hypothesis is always tentative. There are many examples of

the misinterpretation of cultural phenomena by outsiders due to the drawing of

conclusions based on their own set of assumptions and superimposing them on the

observed material.[1] A harsh judgmental attitude and the imposition of one's own cultural

worldview as the biblical model for the church everywhere are some of the challenges of

this area.

Knowing how to suggest hypothesis is a must at this point to illustrate how this

theory works in a practical way. For this purpose, Marguerite Kraft is one of the best

examples of materializing hypothesis.[2] She studied the worldview of the Kamwe people

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[1]Handler, "Afterword: Mysteries of Culture," 490.

[2]Marguerite G. Kraft, *Worldview and the Communication of the Gospel: A Nigerian Case Study* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1978). For additional reading see Morris E. Opler, "The Themal Approach in Cultural Anthropology and Its Application to North Indian Data," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 24 (1968) for his own application of his theory where he lists eleven themes found in North India, and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyennes; Indians of the Great Plains*, Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology (New York: Holt, 1960), 98-99, where he classifies sixteen themes under his own term "postulates" (E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Law of Primitive*

in Nigeria for the purpose of communicating the gospel. Her goal was to understand how

Christianity was heard and interpreted in that culture. Furthermore, Kraft aimed to

develop an "effective hearer-oriented communication" process that she believed was the

basis for "strategizing for presenting the Gospel as well as effectively nurturing the

Christians."[1] Later, her husband, Charles Kraft, reorganized the data she collected on the

Kamwe's worldview in the format of themes, sub-themes, and paradigms by following in

a modified way Opler's model (figure 17). In a cascade fashion Kraft identified the

worldview themes and organized other assumptions under the same category as linked or

influenced by the theme. Kraft was able to link behavior with particular worldview

themes as the force prescribing certain behavior.

Testing the Hypothesis

The creation of hypothesis will largely depends on the observation and creativity

of the observer. Testing worldview hypothesis, on the other hand, will depend on the

application of tools of verification to define whether the hypothesis is true, false, or in

need of adjustments. Jones points to two main ways of checking hypothesis. First, ask

questions. After formulating your hypothesis about a given behavior, ask insiders

questions about our formulation.[2] Second, since worldviews are integrated influencing or

overlapping each other, look for other behaviors that may shed light to confirm or not the

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Man; a Study in Comparative Legal Dynamics (New York: Atheneum by arrangement
with Harvard University Press, 1974), 13-14.

[1]Kraft, Worldview and the Communication of the Gospel: A Nigerian Case Study,
4.

[2]Jones, 80.

Kamwe Worldview

Worldview Theme: Belief in the supernatural

    Worldview Subtheme A: The universe includes invisible as well as visible
                    beings in constant interaction with each other on
                    the same plane (cosmology)
  Paradigm 1: There is a high God
    Subparadigm a: God is good but distant
    Subparadigm b: He is a person, a protector, very kind, never to
               blame for evil, dependable but never interfering
               and not to be called on except when desperate
  Behavior associated with paradigm 1:
"God is called on not only in times of great need: planting, marriage, birth, sickness, etc., but also in times of great thankfulness: harvest, health and recovery after a long Illness, etc. This ritual of thanksgiving may be by the household unit under the Leadership of the chief and the elders" (

    Paradigm 2: There are good and bad spirits plus ancestral spirits in addition to
       God

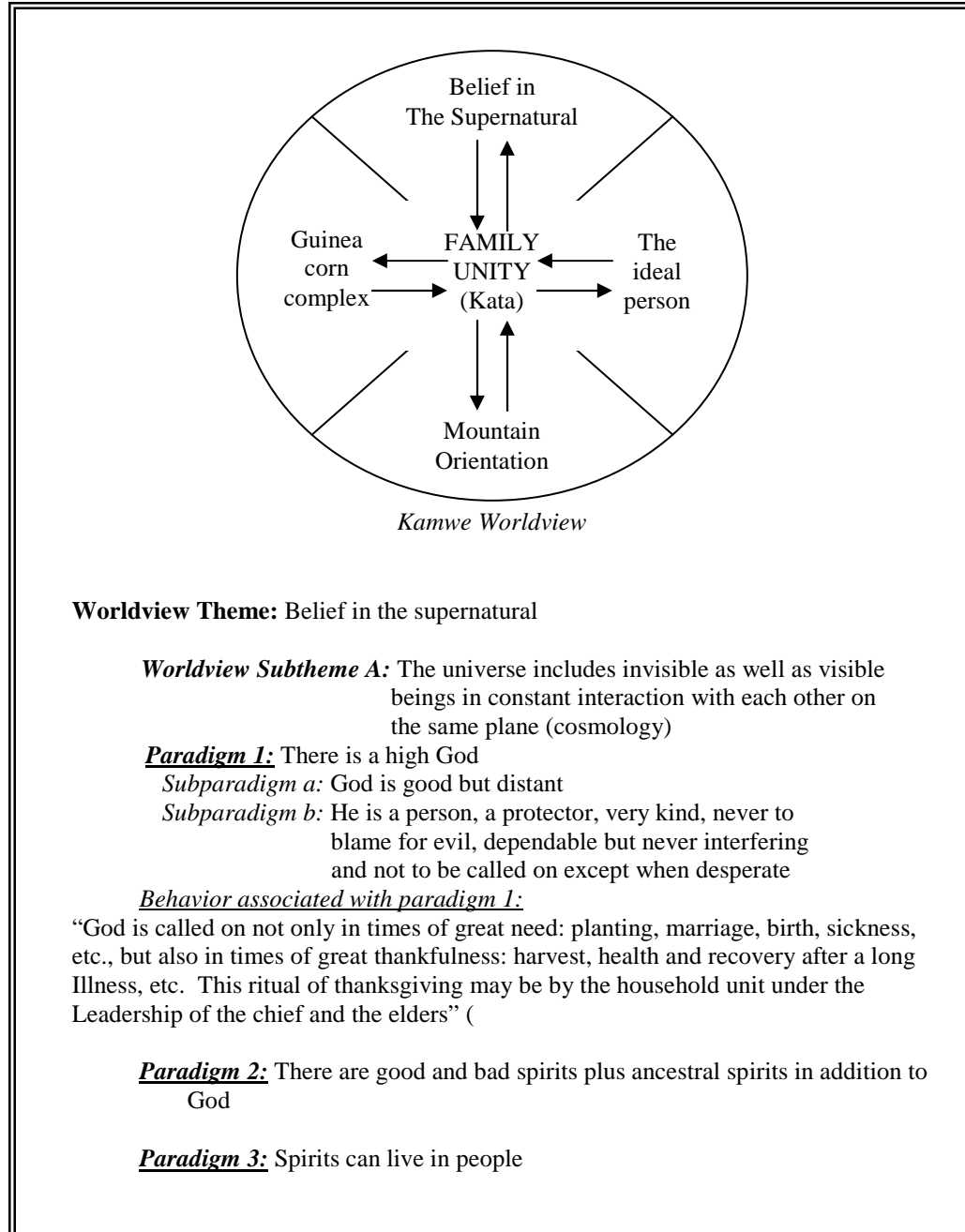   *Paradigm 3:* Spirits can live in people

Figure 17. Kamwe Worldview and Worldview Theme Hypothesis/Mapping Process. *Source:* Adapted from Marguerite G. Kraft, *Worldview and the Communication of the Gospel: A Nigeria Case Study* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1978) 14, 42-51; and Charles H. Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness, October 2002," prepublication manuscript, chapter 12, 11.

hypothesis,[1] or, as Opler places, it must be compared with other themes.[2] The following

example of how Jones tested his hypothesis may be helpful;

> After I have framed my hypothesis that the man drank orange juice because he thought it was good for him, I can test it by asking, "Do you believe orange juice is good for you?" If he replies, "Yes," this tends to confirm the hypothesis. But it only *tends* to confirm it: he may have misheard me and thought that I was asking whether he liked *café au lait*; he may be excessively polite and desirous of agreeing with strangers. But suppose he responds by saying, "No; I drink it because God commands me to." If I take this reply at its face value, I must abandon my hypothesis. On the other hand, I may discount the explanation he has offered me; perhaps he was sarcastically telling me to mind my own business. In any case I shall begin to look for other behavior, booth overt and verbal that would tend to verify or refute the hypothesis.[3]

Although one should be ready to doubt the answer, honest answers will often be

found if the observer has developed significant relationships with the insiders who will be

serving as the cultural informants. In addition, participation in the culture may provide

the capability of perceiving the world through the worldview lenses of that culture. In

such a case, the observer may be more certain of his hypothesis.

In the final analysis, worldview themes are integrated and may be tested either by

comparison or counting the expression of themes throughout the culture. The

overlapping nature of worldview assumptions help to see how the assumptions influence

each other as themes and counter-theme (figure 18). It may also be helpful to define

other themes by listing assumptions already perceived and tested in the worldview,

looking for possible related themes, keeping in mind that each worldview struggles to

keep everything as integrated as possible to maintain cultural stability. Cultural

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," 200.

[3]Jones, 80.

integration, however, does not mean that there is total integration but each culture works

toward the goal of being fully integrated. Worldviews are internally inconsistent and

contradictory at times.[1]
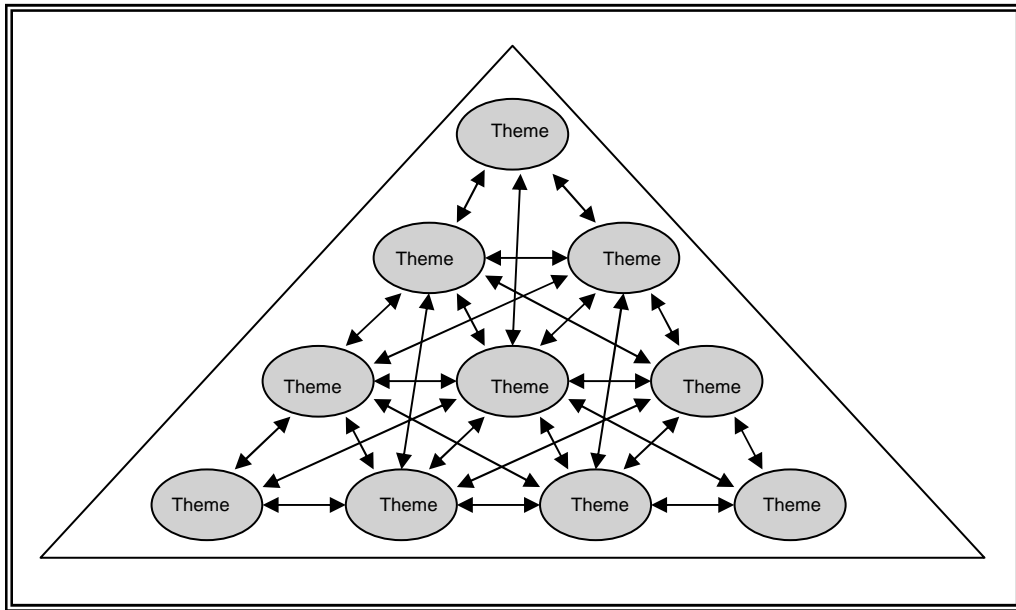
Figure 18. Worldview Integration. *Source:* By the author.

Worldview Analysis: Other Relevant Models

Other models of worldview analysis have surfaced that have achieved valid

results. They will be here presented so that readers may have other options concerning

methodologies on worldview analysis. These methods may vary according to person's

field of expertise and/or academic interest. There are different valid approaches and the

reader may decide which model is the best.

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[1]Kearney, *World View*, 135.

The first model this work is calling the *Philosophical Approach* that was
developed by James W. Sire on his work titled *"The Universe Next Door."*[1] First
published in 1976 the book is now required reading for anyone interested in worldview
studies. The author sets the stage by defining worldview as "a set of presuppositions
(assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold
(consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of
our world."[2] Then, he develops a set of seven philosophical questions that when honestly
answered, will grant the researcher the opportunity to contemplate the worldview of a
culture.[3]

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[1]Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. Sire published a
second book later that expended his thoughts on worldview and is helpful as well (see
Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*).

[2]Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 16.

[3]Ibid.,17-18. The seven questions are as follows; (1) *What is prime reality—the
really real?* To this we might answer God, or the gods, or the material cosmos; (2) *What
is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us?* Here our answers point to
whether we see the world as created or autonomous, as chaotic or orderly, as matter or
spirit; or whether we emphasize our subjective, personal relationship to the world or its
objectivity apart from us; (3) *What is a human being?* To this we might answer: a highly
complex machine, a sleeping god, a person made in the image of God, a "naked ape"; (4)
What happens to a person at death? Here we might reply personal extinction, or
transformation to a higher state, or reincarnation, or departure to a shadowy existence on
"the other side"; (5) *Why is it possible to know anything at all?* Sample answers include
the idea that we are made in the image of an all-knowing God or that consciousness and
rationality developed under the contingencies of survival in a long process of evolution;
(6) *How do we know what is right or wrong?* Again, perhaps we are made in the image
of God whose character is good, or right and wrong are determined by human choice
alone or what feels good, or the notions simply developed under an impetus toward
cultural or physical survival; (7) *What is the meaning of human history?* To this we
might answer: to realize the purposes of God or the gods, to make a paradise on earth, to
prepare a people for a life in community with a loving and holy God, and so forth.

The use of this model of analysis may serve several purposes such as contextual worldview analysis, worldview change, formation, and self-evaluation. As mentioned before, the first step toward worldview analysis is to analyze and be aware of one's own worldview assumptions. In the end, "we will live either the examined or the unexamined life,"[1] and either way worldview assumptions will continue to direct our way of thinking and behaving.

Second, there is helpful material for worldview analysis and change of identity development called *"Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development"* (OTAID).[2] The so called *Optimal Theory* was first articulated by Linda J. Myers.[3] In an article published with other authors, Myers (and co-authors) expands optimal theory towards a system that can be applied to analyze worldview levels. This theory uses worldview analysis to identify and foster worldview level changes to self identity.[4] Their goal was to promote a holistic worldview concerning the identity of Self. The authors state that "to attain this holistic worldview, the individual embarks on a journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance."[5] The developmental phase of an optimal identity is particularly interesting

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[1]Ibid., 18.

[2]Linda J. Myers, Suzette L. Speight, Pamela S. Highlen, Chikako I. Cox, Amy L. Reynolds, Eve M. Adams, and C. Patricia Hanley, "Identity Development and Worldview-Toward an Optimal Conceptualization," *Journal of Counseling and Development* no. 70 (1991).

[3]See her book on the topic; Linda J. Myers, *Understanding an Afrocentric World View: Introduction to an Optimal Psychology* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1988).

[4]Myers, "Identity Development and Worldview." The whole article is saturated with worldview elements and language.

[5]Ibid., 59.

for it presents, step by step, the process of worldview analysis as a case study.[1] This

theory could assist the reader to see how worldview analysis/change processes occurs in a

real life situation.

Ravi I. Jayakaran calls attention for another model of worldview analysis which is

called *Holistic Participatory Learning and Action* (PLA).[2] His greatest contribution is to

bring PLA to the mission realm by including a spiritual dimension. Jayakaran affirms

that it is critical to comprehend "a community's view of reality," and that Christians have

"fallen short of learning from others the crucial need to understand the spiritual reality of

communities as the community sees it."[3] Jayakaran's approach to worldview analysis

using PLA strategies is relevant for worldview analysis and worldview change.

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[1]Ibid., 59-60. The phases are: (Phase 0) Absence of Conscious Awareness; (Phase 1) Individuation; (Phase 2) Dissonance; (Phase 3) Immersion; (Phase 4) Internalization; (Phase 5) Integration; (Phase 6) Transformation.

[2]Ravi I. Jayakaran, "Holistic Participatory Learning and Action: Seeing the Spiritual and Whose Reality Counts," in *Working with the Poor: New Insights and Learnings from Development Practitioners*, ed. Bryant L. Myers (Monrovia, CA: World Vision, 1999), 31-37. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is one of the terms used by community developers for methodologies and approaches aiming to help communities to learn about their needs and opportunities, and the necessary actions/steps required to achieve them. Other terms includes Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Participatory Learning Methods (PALM), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Farming Systems Research (FSR), Méthod Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative (MARP), and others. For further research see resources such as: http://www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla_notes/index.html; http://www.rcpla.org/; Robert Chambers, *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*, 2d ed. (London: ITDG Publishing, 1997); Robert Chambers, *Participatory Workshops: A Sourcebook of 21 Sets of Ideas and Activities* (Sterling, VA: Earthscan Publications, 2002); and Somesh Kumar, *Methods for Community Participation: A Complete Guide for Practitioners* (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 2002). This approach has its own universe and one can begin to search at http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/index.html.

[3]Jayakaran, "Holistic Participatory Learning and Action," 31.

Worldview analysis per se is limited to understanding or describing worldview level. Its potential, however, is greater than just acquiring the perception of insiders or describing a given culture's worldview themes. Anthropologists usually limit themselves to understanding the culture and are not interested in changing it. Missiologists, on the other hand, want biblical principles to change cultures so that they have a biblically shaped worldview. It is to this task that I now turn my attention.

The Quest for Worldview Transformation

Worldview analysis makes no sense from a missionary point of view if the only purpose is to describe the major worldview themes of a group of people. The goal of missiology is to produce permanent change in the deep levels of allegiance to Christ and his revealed will in Scripture. There is a danger of being satisfied with superficial changes. As Jayakaran warns, "communities that claim to be Christian, but have not had their worldviews transformed, are likely to forge deities to address their vulnerabilities or try to twist God to fulfill a utilitarian role."[1] The danger that I have seen in my own experience is that assumptions at the worldview level are not altered. As result, a person may follow the "churchy" new behavior or belief for a period of time, but sooner or later the untouched worldview assumptions reassert their pull on the life and the person reverts back to the old ways of living. Another result is a masquerade of behavior but with an underground reality of life that has nothing to do with the new Christian way. In the

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[1]Ibid., 33.

same vein, Shenk warns that "superficial cultural changes leave undisturbed the issues of allegiance and Christin identity."[1]

The questions concerning worldview change, then, are: is it possible to change worldviews? Can we choose a worldview? What would be the best worldview from a Adventist Christian perspective? How do worldviews change? What is the process? Based on the last chapter's discussion on worldview, it suggested that the process of worldview transformation occurs by creating instability at the worldview level, providing new explanations, and, as result, a new cultural integration occurs that will incorporate the new worldview assumptions with the rest of a person's assumptions, shaping the new worldview and restoring stability.[2] In addition, it is suggested that a new experience is the most powerful way to produce worldview change. Therefore, Adventist mission must find a balanced use of experience as an agent of worldview transformation.

At this point, it needs to be reminder that worldview has no life in itself. There is a tendency to perceive worldview as if it is all powerful and that there is nothing Christian mission can do about it. Although worldview has a prescriptive nature and in certain ways captivates its holder, its power and hold on a person only remains as long as the person consciously or not commits to the established worldview. As people are raised in certain cultures, worldview assumptions are taught, socially enforced, and then

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[1]Wilbert R. Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from the Non-Western World," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (July 2001): 99.

[2]Kraft, "Worldview for Christian Witness," chapter 15, 4, argues that the keys for worldview transformation are "will, knowledge, experience, and the abiding grace and encouragement of God." While I cannot disagree with him, I believe that different ways of looking at the same issue may contribute to each other. It is clear to me that these keys work all together in an interdependent fashion. One may not incur in the error of

reinforced. It is true that most people have no awareness of their worldview but they still agree to their cultural way of living. On the other hand, those that reject certain aspects of the culture often suffer ostracism and peer pressure, two elements of social control used to maintain cultural stability. However, when the occasional individual rejects a commonly held worldview assumption that person shows that people have the power over their worldview and that they can change assumptions. Thus, worldviews can be changed and can be transformed.

Worldview Transformation Monitored by Scripture

Another question that needs to be asked is concerning the level of transformation a worldview needs to undergo in order to become Christian. Kraft is skeptical about the possibility of changing an entire worldview.[1] I agree that wholesale change does not happen. However, there are a group of scholars who feel that the goal of Christian mission is to develop biblical worldview. But based on the idea that a worldview does not change entirely, the aim of exchanging one worldview, whatever it may be, for a biblical worldview seems at the very least to be inaccurate.[2] When this work refers to

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thinking that one of this keys will work by itself, no. Most likely, they work simultaneously.

[1]Ibid., chapter 15, 9.

[2]The tendency among worldview authors is to classify worldview by its strong themes that are more explicit in a culture. For example, Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* proposes a catalog of worldviews using the major philosophic themes that answer ontological questions to label entire cultures as: Deism, Naturalism, Nihilism, New Age, Postmodernism, etc. He labels each one of these a worldview. In this sense it seems fair to conclude that moving from a Nihilistic view to a Christian perspective is to exchange a worldview. It seems inaccurate and, as it will be demonstrated later in this chapter, even when the major philosophic themes of a worldview are transformed, often other themes will remain influencing the outcomes of the culture. A Christian coming from a Buddhist background may still, in times, function

worldview change or transformation it means changing worldview themes and consequently shaping the worldview as a whole instead of totally switching from one worldview to another.

The danger of approaching worldview change from the premise of switching worldviews is that one culture may be superimposed on the other. This occurrence in the history of missions is closely related to imperialism, something that is totally unacceptable today. In particularly among Seventh-day Adventists there appears to exist a perception that Western Christianity (Adventism) is the "right" way of doing church, and rarely are efforts made to develop local cultural ways of expressions that are relevant churches. Instead, the Western church model, music, strategies, clothing, administration, etc., are assumed to be part of the gospel message with the result that the church is perceived as foreign. Local cultural elements are often rejected as non-Christian or as not compatible with Adventist lifestyle, even if they do not go against biblical principles.

The solution is to allow Scripture to be the judge of all cultures. Worldview assumptions must be checked under the light of Scripture to define which worldview themes need to be changed and which ones may remain. Adventist mission theologians still face the challenge and task of clearly determining the biblical truth about each of the worldview universals. If that was completed the Adventist mission could provide the basis for what is biblical truth versus what is a cultural interpretation of truth. A metacultural systematic theology is a task still needing to be accomplished by Adventist mission theologians to help the process of determining what must be changed or shaped

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in terms of his Buddhist worldview. I find Sire's terminology didactically helpful to describe or classify worldviews, but inaccurate to be used by the Adventist church as a worldview change process.

according to Scripture in a given culture. Such a theology would help to produce local

Adventist churches that respect cultural differences but which would still maintain unity

with the worldwide church.

When Adventists from a certain culture are exposed to different forms[1] of

Adventism, there is often a tendency for ethnocentric judgment to occur. For example, a

Brazilian Adventist frequently refer to North American Adventist churches as apathetic,

cold, lacking enthusiasm, secular, liberal, too traditional, and the alike. Many of the

labels are based on an ethnocentric approach and that is the reason they are contradictory.

Worldview transformation must be guided by Scripture to avoid superimposition from a

self-proclaimed "superior" culture to an "inferior" culture or, in the Adventist context,

from a "right" Adventism to a "wrong" Adventism. In this sense, a Mongolian Seventh-

day Adventist will be as Adventist as an American Seventh-day Adventist.

Creating Worldview Instability

The most basic step for worldview transformation is to create instability.

Instability may occur naturally or intentionally. The process of human maturation creates

worldview instability as part of the process. As people move through the various phases

in life certain worldview assumptions will be challenged and other reinforced naturally or

unconsciously. The birth of a child will automatically pose questions and changes will

happen at the worldview level in the minds of the new parents. A new twist at reality is

experienced and certain worldview assumptions no longer work and have to be changed

in order to provide suitable explanations for the new situation. However, natural

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[1]When I say other forms of Adventism I am referring to differences within the
Adventist organization and not other Adventist movements.

instability has no specific direction, and although it serves both culture and individuals in their process of maturation, it does not help missiologically in the process of changing a culture toward a biblically shaped one. The intentional and calculated act of creating worldview instability is the goal of Adventist mission. Even without outside pressure worldview undergoes constant stress and must try to achieve and maintain a certain level of logical integration among its themes.[1] However, the flux or a dynamic that points to opportunities for change is indicated. Intentional instability that aims to direct worldview changes, then, may be created mainly in two ways.

First, instability is created whenever a worldview theme contradicts another theme. Cultural integration depends on the harmony among the worldview themes that inform the individual about reality. When an established worldview theme is challenged by another worldview theme, adjustments automatically are made to integrate the dissonant assumption. These adjustments may mean rejection of a less powerful worldview theme or transformation of such a theme to accommodate or terminate the instability. Therefore, creating instability may work in our advantage if we know, through worldview analysis, which of the worldview themes need to be replaced (based on Scripture) and what themes will need to be established (based on Scripture).

Second, instability may be triggered when an established worldview theme no longer satisfactorily explains reality. Great stress and confusion occurs when a worldview does not explain reality any longer. For instance, Bradshaw tells a story of a

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[1]Kearney, *World View*, 110.

village that believed that a certain piece of land was under a curse.[1] Hypothetically, the belief was based on two worldview assumptions that affirmed: (1) "Witchcraft is a powerful spiritual tool to manipulate evil spirits," and (2) "evil spirits dwell on a piece of land." These worldview assumptions prescribed that no one should walk on the cursed land. Disobedience would cause death. When Christian developers began to build a road through the cursed land, the villagers expected that they would die. But when they did not, instability at the worldview level resulted because the people's worldview no longer provided an explanation for what was happening. Building a road on cursed land "challenged the villagers to transform their worldview."[2]

One characteristic that is clear on these two examples on how to create worldview instability is that it brings worldview assumptions from the unconscious to conscious levels to be evaluated. To create instability, therefore, is to force the worldview theme to emerge, to be analyzed, and finally rejected, altered, or reinforced. In the first case, a new worldview assumption will have to take the place of the old one because culture will not live in a vacuum. If altered, the worldview theme may undergo changes in its sub-themes or paradigms as it pursues integration and harmony. In the latter case, the worldview theme may be reinforced empowering the worldview theme to become even more influential.

One should not underestimate the task. Worldview transformation is not easy and the results are not totally controllable. Worldview transformation needs to be done in a

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[1]Bradshaw, *Change across Cultures: A Narrative Approach to Social Transformation*, 126-27.

[2]Ibid., 127.

careful and prayerful manner. But, by exposing worldview assumptions to the worldview holder, the person will probably evaluate the worldview and may become open to new explanation.

Providing New Explanations

The task of providing new explanations is a task of reshaping reality. The goal of mission working for worldview changes is to biblically shape how a person sees reality. This means that new explanations must come from Scripture in order to provide a reshaped framework of thought. New explanations may be communicated through different methodologies.

Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventists have used propositional truths as a way of giving new explanations. This approach has come from systematic theology that sees God's revelation in the form of a system. This methodology has been used around the world in Bible study guides and evangelistic materials. This method is shaped by the Western logic of organizing ideas in an orderly or sequential pattern.

Lately, missiologists have given attention to narrative theology that may be considered as an alternative to the traditional model of propositional truths.[1] It seems that

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[1]Eugene H. Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 6 emphasizes the use of narratives to create images and metaphors that shape reality. For narrative theology and mission see Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology*, 65-68 and Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 153- 173 for helpful narrative theology discussion. For additional reading and introductory texts on narrative theology see Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative: A Critical Introduction*, 1st Trinity Press International ed. (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991); Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989). In addition, Charles Edward Van Engen and Jude Tiersma, *God So Loves the City: Seeking a Theology for Urban Mission* (Monrovia, CA:

narrative theology is much more suitable to postmodern Western minds as well as to people in other cultures that sees stories as containers for propositions of truth. Osborne, arguing for preaching in narrative forms, contends that narrative preaching using narrative biblical stories places biblical truths in "life situations."[1] Charles Van Engen affirms that "narrative reading of Scripture also has transformational power."[2] Narrative theology seems to be an effective way to provide new explanations. Concerning postmodern minds, Goncalves suggests that narratives may challenge personal and local stories and touch them where propositional cognitive statements of truth may have been rejected.[3] Being a storyteller is, perhaps, a new requirement for missiologists or anyone wanting to produce deep changes in worldview in the postmodern setting. There is, however, an almost forgotten element for Adventists that may combine to create instability and give a new explanation at the same time, namely, experience.

The Power of Experience in the Worldview Change Process

New experiences may also help produce both instability and provide new explanations at the same time. Experience is a powerful tool mainly for three reasons. First, experience is more effective in working with illiterate people groups. Literacy is a very important ingredient for propositional truth communication, but is not necessary for

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MARC, 1994) is a very helpful book that has been written based on narrative theology as well as developed through storytelling methodology and is certainly worth reading.

[1]Osborne, 173.

[2]Engen, *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology*, 60.

[3]Goncalves, "A Critique of the Urban Mission of the Church in the Light of an Emerging Postmodern Condition," 253.

experience.[1] Second, the postmodern Western mentality works more in terms of experience than through discourse/cognition.[2] Postmodernism indicates the beginning of a new way of looking at reality.[3] Third, there are many differences in logic systems. Due to these missiological issues, using experience in cross-cultural mission provides an advantage over cognitive propositional discourse.

The Bible is full of stories on how God used experience to challenge the people of Israel. In bringing Israel out of Egypt, through the desert, and in the conquest of Canaan, God used experience to provide new explanations and change worldview assumptions. A quick search through the pages of the New Testament shows to the same pattern. It is true that Jesus identified false prophets as those who perform signs and wonders (Matt 13:22; 24:24), but on the other hand, He also indicates that there would be signs following those who believe (Mark 16:17, 20). The signs that followed the Christians at the first century cannot be overlooked. They were powerful experiences that challenged worldview level assumptions and provided new information. In the same way, the beginning of the Adventist Church was also marked by signs. The power manifested in the life of Ellen G. White is one of the greatest examples showing how God still uses experience to convince.

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[1]A fact to keep in mind is that a great number of peoples of the world are not literate. For example, China has about 18.5 percent of illiterate. It may seem a small number but when demographic data is observed it means 233,573,005 million were illiterate in the year 2000 (Patrick J. G. Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 21st century ed. (Gerrards Cross, UK: WEC International, 2001), 159.

[2]For an introductory discussion on the shift from cognitive to experience see Goncalves, "A Critique of the Urban Mission of the Church," 206-210.

[3]Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 39.

In spite of these biblical and historic examples, the power of experience has not been perceived as a primary option for communicating new explanations by Seventh-day Adventists. Adventists have mostly neglected experience as a valid way of producing change or as a tool for the proclamation of the message. It seems that the Adventist worldview has been shaped by scientific thinking that views experience as a myth or non-rational, disqualifying it from the list of methodologies useful in missions. As a result, there is a lack of understanding and even belief that such things as healing and other spiritual experiences are godly or even possible in contemporary times. Many Adventist members lack faith in prayer, behaving more like Deists than Christians. Coming from a South American context, I am well aware of the dangers of excessive use of experience in Christianity. Pentecostals and Charismatics have misused and frequently abused the power of manifestations in their methodologies creating a kind of aversion to such practices by Adventists in some places. The church, in those places, has made an effort to distance itself from experience-based churches and anything that resembles their practices. The down side is that the power of experience among many Adventists has been overshadowed or even denied. In a worldview transformation process experience must be used, and a biblical use of spiritual power must find a place in Adventist mission practices.

Integrating Worldview Transformation

The aim of culture is to maintain integration as much as possible, therefore, after instability occurs and after new worldview explanations are provided the culture will automatically strive for integration. As illustrated in figure 19, the process of worldview transformation goes full circle in a constant process of stability-instability-stability.

Each time a worldview undergoes the transforming process, it is shaped by the

new explanations it receives. Below is a case study that describes the process above.

This case study satisfactorily demonstrates that worldviews can be biblically shaped and

that the results are of interest for Adventist mission.
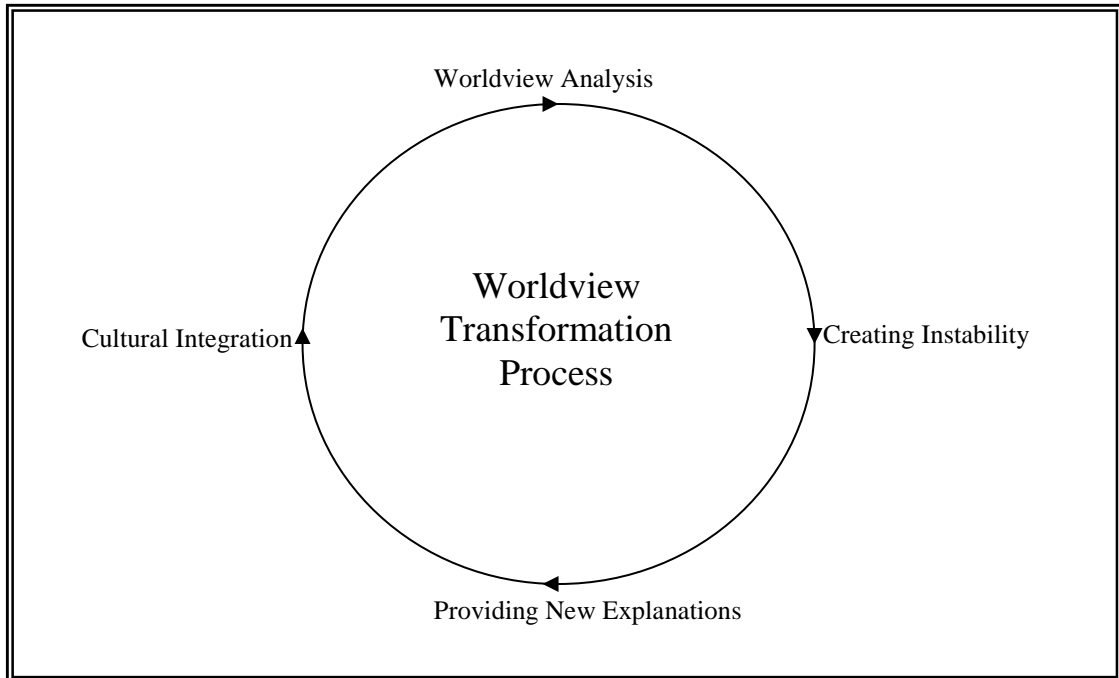

Figure 19. Worldview Transformation Process. *Source:* By the author.

A Case Study

Working with youth is always challenging. This case study will show how

working in this area of worldview change can produce desired changes.

Defining the Problem

As I started a youth Sabbath School in the church that I attend, I quickly found that the youth showed little interest in anything related to the life of the church. I tried to motivate them in various ways without success. They were apathetic towards any attempt to involve them in discussions on biblical principles. I decided to think in terms of worldview and conducted a worldview analysis to identify the worldview assumption that was causing their apparent apathy.

Doing Worldview Analysis, Hypothesis
Creation and Testing

I started asking questions and listened, looking for clues about their worldview. The fist clue came when I asked the following question; "What would you like to change in your church?" One of the girls, who was very talkative, answered; "There is nothing to be changed, the church is what it is supposed be anyways" (displaying an expression of confusion). Her response provided the first clue into the worldview of the youth group that then led to the formulation of the following worldview hypothesis: "Church is a static entity and that does not change because of ones' opinion about it." A second worldview theme or sub-theme was clearly linked to the first assumption by the youth saying: "You conform to the church the way it is and join in or you disagree with it and leave." I had also heard from one of the youth that as soon as he leaves for college he would not be involved with the church anymore. Additional information came almost by accident and provided another piece of the puzzle that enabled me to find the worldview assumptions that were causing the apathy. In a meeting for the youth worship team I asked who could offer his/her house for our next meeting. Since nobody volunteered, I

asked one of the girls if it would be possible to schedule to have the next meeting at her house. She looked totally confused and one of her friends quickly came to her rescue and answered; "That is not her house, it is her parents' house. So, how can she make the house available for the meeting?" The answer hit me for in Brazil, where I come from, everything that belongs to the parents also belongs to the entire family. Therefore, a youth would consider the parents' home his/her house as well, giving him/her some autonomy or at least the right to participate in the decision process within the family unit. In the United States, however, the family house is considered to be the parents' for they pay the bills. In general terms, children have a passive role until they are old enough to work and have "their own place." I checked my insight, contrasts, and hypothesis with several of the youth and their parents and the conclusions were confirmed supporting the hypothesis as accurate.

Based on the acquired information, I was able to create another and final hypothesis to explain the apathy of the youth group toward the church. By comparison and contrasting, the following conclusions were developed. The youth have a passive role in their family life. The parents decide how the family must function and the children must comply with the parents' decisions as long as they are under the parental financial support. Many family aspects are prescribed rather than decided through negotiation. The power children have is almost inexistent and changes suggested by them are unlikely to happen. The same worldview is transported to the life of the church since it has a strong emphasis on church as the family of God. Every Sabbath mourning the church sings; "I am so glad I am part of the family of God." In the case of the youth group I hypothized that the passive role experienced in the family setting was transferred

to the church since the church was described as a family. The same worldview was used

to explain family and church, but with different final outcomes. That would explain the

first answer from the talkative girl that the church is supposed to be what it is and there

was nothing to be changed. As at home, they felt they had no right to make any changes

to the established way the church functioned and that the only way was to conform to it

until they would be independent enough to leave it or join it.

I tested my hypothesis by sharing it with several members of the church and with

several parents. They confirmed the information I had and agreed that my hypothesis

made sense.

Creating Instability and Providing
New Explanation

A process for changing the worldview of the churchs' youth was needed to help

transform their apathy behavior. I shared my ideas with the church leaders and asked

them to allow the youth to coordinate one Sabbath per month. Youth Sabbath would

include giving them the authority to chose songs, sequence of church service, present the

sermon (or message using drama, music, etc.), singing, and being responsible for the

entire service.

The openness of the leaders of the church surprised the youth group and the

process of creating instability at the worldview level began. Their ideas, input,

preferences, and particular needs suddenly began to have value forcing them to revaluate

their assumption. At the same time, I started to present new information about the family

of God. The new cognitive information coupled with the experience of the monthly

youth Sabbaths and other youth programs created contradictions in their worldview. The

main point was to show them that the family of God was not equal to the North American family model. In the family of God all are equals and have the same right to make suggestions about the life of the family.

Cultural Integration Towards a
Shaped Worldview

The result was a marked change on their behavior. Today the youth are active in the life of the church and the church as a whole has experienced changes in style and other areas because of a change in the attitude of the youth. I believe that worldview was shaped more towards a biblically shaped worldview concerning the youth's view of the local church.

This dissertation contends that this case study confirms the process of worldview analysis and worldview transformation as presented in this chapter. The question that remains to be answered is the question of a Christian worldview.

A Case for a Biblically Shaped Worldview

Christian writers who write about worldview often use two terms, Christian Worldview and Biblical Worldview.[1] Both terms aim to define what would be an ideal Christian view of the world.

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[1]For example Stuart Cook, *Universe Lost: Reclaiming a Christian World View* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1992); Natun Bhattacharya and Tom Eckblad, "Towards a Biblical Worldview: Reflections of a South Asian and a North American," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, 2 (1997); Michael D. Palmer and Stanley M. Horton, *Elements of a Christian Worldview* (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 1998); Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984); Hans M. Weerstra, "Christian Wordview Development: Part II," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, 2 (1997); Hans M. Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, 1 (1997).

Those arguing for a Christian worldview often approach it from a philosophical

perspective, constructing the philosophical, intellectual, or cognitive information that

should be present in an individual's life to consider him/her a Christian. Those proposing

a biblical worldview claim to develop a worldview from scripture rather than

philosophy.[1] However, it is not uncommon to see authors using both terms

interchangeably which leads me to conclude that in fact they refer to the same

understanding of worldview.[2] In spite of this conclusion, I will be dealing with the two

terms so that separately so that I can question and challenge them in order to propose the

term Biblically Shaped Worldview as more accurate and preferable for Adventist

mission. A short discussion of the terms, Christian and Biblical Worldviews is needed to

present the contrast with the term I am proposing.

Flaws Using the Term Christian Worldview

It is recognized that, among Protestant thinkers, the process of developing a

description of Christian worldview finds its roots in the writings of James Orr (1844-

1913).[3] Orr affirmed that "Christianity is neither a scientific system, nor a philosophy, it

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[1]For works on biblical worldview see Eckblad, "Towards a Biblical Worldview: Reflections of a South Asian and a North American"; James B. Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988).

[2]For an example of using both terms at the same time see Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development," 3.

[3]James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1989), first published as James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World as Centring in the Incarnation* (New York: Scribner, 1897) is credited to be a seminal thought on Christian worldview.

has yet a world-view of its own, to which it stands committed."[1] Another early Christian

worldview thinker was Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) who defended Calvinism as a

worldview[2] and others such as Carl F. H. Henry (1913-2003)[3] and Francis Schaeffer

(1912-1984).[4]

In the context of missions some questions need to be posed to current scholarship

concerning the term "Christian worldview." For example, are Christian worldview

thinkers dealing with beliefs and value systems instead of worldview assumptions? Do

they have a holistic approach to human beings in culture?

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[1]Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*, 9

[2]Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University under Auspices of The L. P. Stone Foundation* (1931; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 1994). There are similarities between Kuyper and Orr that suggest an influence from the latter over the first (Peter S. Heslam and Abraham Kuyper, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism* [Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1998], 93-96). In his series of lectures at Princeton, Kuyper used the term life-system to refer to worldview. He explains his choice, affirming that although worldview was more commonly used in Europe, he was informed that in the United States that the same concept was translated as life-system. Therefore, to fit better the framework of thought of his audience he preferred to use life-system instead of worldview (see footnote on Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University under Auspices of the L. P. Stone Foundation* [Grand Rapids, MI: Associated Authors and Publishers, 1898-1980], 8.) but in essence, when he writes life-system he meant worldview.

[3]Carl F. H. Henry, "Fortunes of the Christian World View," *Trinity Journal*, no. 19NS (1998). Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6 vols. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1999) originally published as Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976). Other works are Carl F. H. Henry, *The Christian Mindset in a Secular Society: Promoting Evangelical Renewal & National Righteousness* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1984); Carl F. H. Henry, *Gods of This Age or God of the Ages?* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994).

[4]For a complete reading of his writing on worldview see Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, 5 vols. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982).

Contemporary writers on Christian worldview concentrate on the philosophical approach to worldview.[1] For instance, Moreland and Craig affirm that "Philosophy can help someone form a rationally justified, true worldview, that is, an ordered set of propositions that one believes, especially propositions about life's most important questions."[2] One of the problems with formulating and defending a Christian worldview is the tendency to confuse beliefs and values with worldview assumptions. One example is found in the following paragraph:

> In a training exercise we recently held for future missionaries, 28 people were divided into four groups of seven and assigned to a representative cultural group. Each group represented a different region of the world with a list of values that were associated with that region. One group valued change while another valued tradition. One cultural valued being masters of the earth's resources while another group took on the value of being in harmony with the earth. Each of the representative groups was given seven values to assimilate in their thinking and then they were asked to view video clips from different parts of the world and project their values into interpreting the video. In other words, they were to change their worldview while seeing the video. It was a very difficult exercise.[3]

This dissertation has suggested that worldview is the deepest cultural dimension, is deeper than values, and is the foundation of what produces beliefs and values rather

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[1]See John MacArthur and others, *Think Biblically! Recovering a Christian Worldview* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003); James Porter Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); John P. Newport, *The New Age Movement and the Biblical Worldview: Conflict and Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*; Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*; Walsh and Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View*.

[2]Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 13.

[3]Eckblad, "Towards a Biblical Worldview: Reflections of a South Asian and a North American," 87. Another evidence is found in Holmes, *Contours of a World View*, 31-32 where he states that "the genesis of a world view is at the prephilosophical level. It begins, without either systematic planning or theoretical intentions, with the beliefs and attitudes and values on which people act."

than being the beliefs and values themselves.[1] Mission work can be compromised if only

values are changed instead of worldview assumptions for sooner or later, the unchanged

worldview assumptions will prevail and will alter the values. This is the very reason why

an accurate understanding of worldview and worldview change is essential for Adventist

mission because "some discipline processes only change behavior; others change

behavior and beliefs, but leave the worldview unaltered. By default, the worldview

becomes the overriding dominating influence,"[2] and that is something that we cannot

allow anymore in the twenty-first century. Shaping worldview assumptions is the way

for introducing more permanent change in missions.

A second concern with the idea of a Christian worldview is that it implies a

change from one worldview to another and that does not happen.[3] This study has shown

the contributions anthropology has made to missiology. One of these contributions is the

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[1]Weerstra, "Christian Worldview Development," 9. One good exception to this condusion is found in Darrow L. Miller, "Worldview Development and Discipling the Nations," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, no. 2 (1997) who displays a very accurate understanding of worldview. He says: "A person's worldview is based on the god that person worships. Our worldviews are the prescription lenses of the mind through which we see the world. The predominant worldview within a culture establishes that culture's principles (the values and moral order) that will be used in forming institutions and social structures. A worldview shift brings a values shift, which ushers in a shift in our concept of everything: in areas of family, education, health, economics, governments, etc. All of this brings a corresponding shift in the way we live our lives (Miller, "Worldview Development and Discipling the Nations," 97).

[2]Jayakaran, "Holistic Participatory Learning and Action," 33.

[3]This idea of switching worldviews is impregnated in Christian worldview writings. See W. Andrew Hoffecker and Gary Scott Smith, *Building a Christian World View*, 2 vols. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1986); Holmes, *Contours of a World View*; Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University under Auspices of The L. P. Stone Foundation*; MacArthur and others, *Think Biblically! Recovering a Christian Worldview*; Walsh and Middleton, *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View*.

clear notion that worldview assumptions are not individual packages where a person chooses to have one or the other. A person's worldview is determined by an intricate process of cultural communication, heritage, and a struggle for balance among many worldview assumptions. It is this process that will shape what a worldview is or is not. Of course one can choose to analyze and pursue worldview level changes, but it is a gradual process that will shape the existing worldview. The idea of shifting worldview assumptions is apparently based on a philosophical approach that takes in consideration limited, although important categories of philosophy and religion in a worldview. Another explanation may be that those dealing with the idea of a Christian worldview may be confusing assumptions for beliefs, therefore, if one decides to change the basic beliefs that explain the world one can do so, but it is beliefs that are changed and not necessarily worldview assumptions. Worldview includes a plethora of assumptions that are seldom, if ever just for a limited time, coherent and stable. Ontological beliefs are essential but they are not the deepest level of a culture. It appears that the efforts to construct a Christian worldview are located at the belief system level rather than at the worldview level. Perhaps this helps explain the claim that people must change their worldview in order to be considered a Christian.[1] To assume that one can shift from a naturalistic worldview to a theistic worldview is just to describe the changes in what one's beliefs are, or at the best deals only with a limited category that can be turned around and changed by other worldview assumptions.

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[1]This claim is mostly implied and sometimes explicit as in Donald Anderson McGavran, *The Clash between Christianity and Cultures* (Washington: Canon Press, 1974), 8-9.

A more accurate understanding of worldview and worldview change may prevent

Adventist missions from living with the illusion that Adventist missionaries are changing

worldviews when they are really only introducing change at the belief and behavior

levels and are not touching the worldview assumptions. The task of Adventist missions

must be one of producing transformation at the worldview level of any give culture.[1]

Note that transformation takes place within an existing worldview, then shaping a culture

with the everlasting gospel, and not replacing it.

The result of a bad formulation of worldview theory and practice may be found in

the following case presented by Jayakaran:

> In Dighori village in the Nagpur region, we assumed the community, since it was
> predominantly Neo-Buddhist, would have a Buddhist worldview. To the contrary, we
> found that the gods and spirits that influenced the lives of community members were
> the ones that controlled the community's areas of vulnerability—the gods that
> controlled rainfall, disease and wild animals. Buddha, the god they professed belief
> in, only influenced their "peace of mind" . . . Thus even communities that claim to be
> Christians, but have not had their worldviews transformed, are likely to forge deities
> to address their vulnerabilities or try to twist God to fulfill a utilitarian role. Some
> discipling processes only change behavior; others change behavior and beliefs, but
> leave the worldview unaltered.[2]

The case for using the term Christian worldview is flawed because it deals with

beliefs and values instead of working at the worldview level and by creating a false peace

of mind that worldview assumptions were replaced when it did not happen even though

the professed belief system was altered. Beliefs and values changes are superficial

changes that may be reversed over time. On the other hand, those advocating the use of

the term Christian worldview have produced an excellent source of material to define

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[1]Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, 349.

[2]Jayakaran, "Holistic Participatory Learning and Action," 33.

what an ideal belief system would look like according to Scripture. Such useful material

should be used by missiology to inform the kind of assumptions that need to be changed

in any worldview transformation process.

Flaws Using the Term Biblical Worldview

Many Christian writers have proposed the term Biblical Worldview as the supra-

sumo view of reality.[1] But there are problems with this term also. First, who will decide

what a biblical worldview is, an then what worldview of the Bible will be used as the

biblical worldview? Second, biblical worldview writes find themselves trapped in the

same errs of those advocating the use of the term Christian worldview, for they mistake

beliefs for worldview assumptions and seem to assume that worldviews can be

exchanged rather than transformed.

Everyone has a worldview and therefore any attempt to formulate a biblical

worldview will be impacted by the worldview of those involved in the process. Those

arguing for a biblical worldview say that the "Biblical worldview is not given to us in the

discursive and analytical language of philosophy and science, but in the rich and compact

language of symbolism and art."[2] The problem is who is going to interpret the symbols,

art, or narratives of the biblical account. What biblical worldview writers apparently

ignore is that their own personal worldview shapes the outcome of their theological work.

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[1]For a biblical worldview introduction see Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World*; N. Allan Moseley, *Worldviews at War: The Biblical Worldview and Its Place in Society* (Yorba Linda, CA: Davidson Press, 1999); N. Allan Moseley, *Thinking against the Grain: Developing a Biblical Worldview in a Culture of Myths* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2003). Among Adventist writers see Gulley, *Systematic Theology*, 387-453.

[2]Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World*, 1.

To say that the worldview of the scholar will shape the outcome of his/her work does not mean that we should embrace a pluralistic view of biblical truth. An international and multicultural dialogue can shed light on the blind spots of biblical interpretation, but what is of greatest concern about accepting the term biblical worldview is that it can create attitudes of superiority, ethnocentrism, judgment, and the superimposing of one's point of view on others based on purely cultural elements.

Another flaw in using the term is that a biblical worldview as well as a Christian worldview merely calls for a change at the belief system level and not the assumptions level. Norman Gulley has written a magnificent work on systematic theology, presenting the Adventist academy with the view of the cosmic controversy as the biblical worldview.[1] Although one cannot deny that the cosmic controversy is fundamental for Adventist theology and a basic truth assumption about reality, but it can never be understood as a complete worldview. It needs to be understood as one important assumption to shape other assumptions. The popularization of the term worldview as referring to belief among Adventist scholars, pastor, and members in general may damage the real work to be done at the worldview level. Again, the wrong use of terms may create the false sense that deep allegiances have been changed when in reality they are not.

Distortions by use of popular notions about worldview can damage the real anthropological meaning and nature of worldview that is so useful for missions. What follows is an attempt to clearly define worldview theory and practice providing a better term that encapsulates the real work to be done in worldview analysis and transformation.

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[1]Gulley, *Systematic Theology*, 387.

A Biblically Shaped Worldview: the Goal of Adventist Missions

Those defending the terms, Christian or biblical worldview have developed great systems of beliefs and values which cannot be overlooked or undervalued. The critique that this dissertation presents is not to say that their work is not valuable, but rather to emphasize that the light provided by anthropological studies, especially cultural anthropology, supplies holistic information about worldview and how it works on a daily basis. The vast material developed over the decades by scholars of biblical studies provides the basis needed to check cultural incoherence as far as Scripture is concerned. Christians from the entire world are called to develop a biblically oriented life that does not just impact their belief system, but is deeply rooted in their worldview assumptions. The goal of any mission effort, therefore, is to allow the biblical message to transform any culture. The term biblically Shaped Worldview is preferable and more accurate for several reasons.

First, it better fits the cultural anthropological theory of worldview that sees worldview as core assumptions and premises. It is more accurate to talk about a biblically shaped worldview that maintains certain worldview assumptions while changing those elements that go against biblical principles. This term still allows the culture to live through other worldview assumptions that do not go against Scripture. In this sense, the goal is to see a biblically shaped American worldview as well as a Brazilian, Japanese, Australian, and so forth. The idea of a biblically shaped worldview allows culture to continue to have its particularities. Biblical unity is achieved while preserving diversity. In celebrating both, unity and diversity, Adventist missions engages culture to transform it with biblical message.

Second, this approach allows the church to remain native and not foreigner,

relevant and not alienated; the church belongs to the culture and is not imposed on from

anything outside except for Scripture. No culture should be rejected, but all cultures must

be evaluated under the light of Scripture with only those worldview assumptions that are

contradictory to revelation needing to be transformed based on biblical truth. In this way,

cultures are shaped instead of dominated by foreign elements. Cultures are

reformed/restored and that is one of the purposes of the Christian church, which is to

restore the image of God in his creatures. A biblically shaped worldview provides both

theoretical accuracy and well informed practice.

Third, this approach shows that Adventist missions are not in the business of neo-

imperialism. In the past, the Christian church, in general, has taken part in the process of

imperialism or colonization[1] that has left permanent negative impressions in some places

where Christianity is perceived as a negative imperialistic power. The idea of a biblically

shaped worldview that accepts and shapes culture frees Adventist missions from the

perception of being an oppressor. Missions become less threatening because it does not

call for the denial of one's culture: instead, it calls for transformation.

Finally, this term is more accurate because it deals with worldview assumptions

and not beliefs and values that are not the deepest dimension of culture. Worldview is

the deepest level of culture that influences all outcomes including one's belief and value

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[1]Bosch argues that the very history of the term "mission" relates to the "West's colonization of overseas territories and its subjugation of their inhabitants" (David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991], 302-303).

systems. When a worldview is biblically shaped a change in allegiance happens and that is true *metanoia*.

There is a task for mission theologians to clearly determine the biblical truth about each of the worldview universals as presented in this chapter. In doing so, Adventist mission may provide the basis for what is biblical truth versus what is cultural interpretation of truth. A metacultural systematic theology is a task that still needs to be accomplished by Adventist mission theologians. Once the cultural universals are identified, it can be determined what must be changed or shaped according to Scripture.

Summary

In this chapter different ways in which worldview can be analyzed and transformed was presented. The goal of Adventist mission is to biblically shape any given worldview. This theory frees the church in various cultural settings to be united in Christ, but still maintain its cultural identity and peculiarities. The richness of humanity is protected in this process and the superimposition, the process of extracting people from their cultural settings in order to become a Christian, alienation, and the perception that the church is foreign is avoided.

This chapter continues to present information regarding worldview studies and practice in mission context. Several implications for Adventist mission flows from the considerations presented in this study, and it is these implications that will be dealt with in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER 5

WORLDVIEW IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVENTIST MISSION

Introduction

Worldview studies have many implications for Adventist mission. To have an

awareness of the impact of people's worldview in their perception of reality is overdue.

The fact that there are assumptions and premises that shape people's perception of

everything they say and do lead to questions about current strategies, methodologies,

curriculums, and church models that Adventists are currently using. In an enlightening

reflection on his long term missionary experience, Clifton Maberly provides an account

of applied theories, practices, and results of doing mission informed by social sciences

that challenges current strategies and methodologies.[1] Doing missions based on people's

perception of reality is not business as usual and, as Maberly recognizes, there is a "need

for much more missiological training among local leaders of the church."[2] Van Engen

says that "mission calls us to radical reexamination,"[3] and worldview studies call

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[1]Clifton Maberly, "Using the Social Sciences in Mission and Ministry: Reflections of a Returning Long-Term Missionary." In *Mission: A Man with a Vision: AFestschrift Honoring Russell L. Staples*, Rudi Maier, ed.. Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission, Andrews University, 2005; 248-70.

[2]Ibid., 265.

[3]Charles Edward Van Engen, *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), 80.

Adventist mission to radical reexamination of the impact of a people's worldview as the

Church seeks to accomplish its mission.

This chapter will reflect on some of the implications of worldview studies. The

impact of worldview on missions is extensive and a comprehensive discussion of the

topic would require more time and space than is available in this dissertation. Therefore,

the discussion that follows just touches the surface, aiming to foster new thoughts and

direction.

Worldview Implications

The worldwide Adventist Church believes that its mission is to "communicate to

all peoples the everlasting gospel of God's love in the context of the three angel's

messages of Revelation 14:6-12, and as revealed in the life, death, resurrection, and high

priestly ministry of Jesus Christ, leading them to accept Jesus as personal Savior and

Lord and to unite with His remnant church; and to nurture believers as disciples in

preparation for His soon return."[1] At the beginning of the Adventist movement, this

mission was understood to be specifically toward Christians. Today Adventist

missiologist, John Dybdahl, recognizes that "mission is to a pluralistic world often

dominated by non-Christian religions.[2] The rapid cultural shifts the world has

experienced in the last century call the Adventist Church to reevaluate the paradigm it

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[1]General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists Executive Committee. "Mission Statement of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church." April 1993 <http:/// www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/main_stat1.html> (28 April 2006).

[2]John L. Dybdahl, "Doing Theology in Mission," in *Faith Development in Context: Presenting Christ in Creative Ways*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission Andrews University, 2005), 11.

uses and one of the main topics contributing to the emerging new Adventist mission paradigm is worldview and its implications. Perhaps the first implication for Adventist mission is the recognition of the need for deep cultural analysis.

Worldview and Cultural Analysis

Cultural understanding must be the first step in any attempt to do mission in any context. Cultural analysis permits missionaries to understand the context where they seek to make an impact. The methodologies developed to reach a people group will be based on knowledge of the culture and its worldview and, therefore, these methodologies will be more suitable to the listener. Again, the question is: Whose reality counts? Translating a sermon does not mean that we provided the best opportunity for acceptance of the message. Cross-cultural communication is not established just by language translation because language is imbided in local meaning that is not always translatable. The worldview assumptions of a people will determine the overall meaning of what is being heard. To communicate the gospel message through the local language involves more than mastering grammar and idiomatic expressions: as Legrand says, "sharing the language of the nations meant also communing in their *Weltanschauung*."[1]

Cultural analysis is the first step in communing with a culture, understanding its worldview assumptions, and then prayerfully developing strategies to facilitate the process of missions.

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[1]Lucien Legrand, *The Bible on Culture: Belonging or Dissenting*, Faith and Cultures Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 132.

Worldview and Conversion

Worldview is also crucial in the process of conversion. "A configurational understanding of the nature of worldviews helps missionaries and Christian leaders understand the nature of Christian conversion."[1] Worldview studies impose serious questions on the view of conversion. The practice of the Adventist Church and the popular understanding of conversion is to equate conversion to Christianity with acceptance of the twenty eight fundamental beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, or the public confession of a belief system.[2] Such an assumption shifts the focus of change from the inner person to what is external and sub-culturally acceptable. The question then is: What are the signs of conversion?

Generally, the acceptable signs of conversion are changes in one's belief and behavior. This understanding leads the church to see conversion based on superficial changes rather than changes in the heart/mind/inner being. Changes in the inner being are the changes or conversion required in the Bible (Rom 12:2), whereas changes only demonstrated in a person's beliefs and values are shallow and easily reversible. Worldview assumptions are the elements that prescribe cultural behavior[3] and those assumptions must be the focus of mission and not just beliefs or behavior. If the

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[1]Paul G. Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews, 2003," manuscript, p. 41, Deerfield, IL.

[2]This reality occurs not only among Adventist: Hiebert reflecting on a broader evangelical sense says that "early missionaries often viewed conversion in terms of orthopraxy—in terms of behavioral changes," others "assessed Christian faith in terms of public confessions of faith," or still "in terms of orthodoxy" (Paul G. Hiebert, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 14, 2 [1997], 83.).

[3]Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 42.

worldview premises are not transformed, the behavior and beliefs that are seen to change may exist for only a short period of time or may not be genuine. Deep, lasting change in allegiances and worldview assumptions and premises is the goal of Adventist missions to produce genuine and permanent transformation.

Another implication worldview brings to conversion is the realization that conversion is not always a private/individual matter. The Western worldview assumption of individualism shaped Christian understanding of conversion as a private matter. Worldview studies indicate that this may not be the case where the decision-making process leans toward family or group decisions. In addition, even in the Western countries where conversion is believed to be an individual matter, conversion is still a socio-cultural and psychological phenomenon. In order to fit into the church, a person may adopt Christian behavior and even confess a belief without really believing in it. In the process of socialization, a person may conform to the group's outlook to be accepted, but this is not what mission is about. Focusing on worldview assumption transformation instead of behavior should allow Adventist mission to avoid attitudes of superficial spirituality and foster true transformation of mind at the deep worldview level.

Worldview and Baptism

Worldview also holds implications for the concept of baptism, for baptism must be understood as the starting point of a Christian journey. This idea of journey implies that one should not be expected to behave as other mature Christians do before one can be baptized.

Scripture indicates that those who were baptized by John the Baptist were baptized as the result of a reevaluation of their life and recognition and confession of sins

(Matt 3:6). In addition, in the early Christian Church, acceptance of Jesus Christ as the one who imparts forgiveness of sins and salvation, as well as the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit, were added elements qualifying new believers for Christian baptism (Acts 2:37-41). With the institutionalization of the church, baptism today is often perceived as the acceptance into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and for that, one must conform in belief and behavior to the Adventist community and lifestyle.

Transformation at worldview level is a process and neither believing nor behaving necessarily indicates that a worldview has been transformed. The implication of worldview studies on baptism is the understanding that changes in allegiance toward Jesus Christ as Lord and acceptance of the work of the Holy Spirit "in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8) are inner changes that will be manifested with time. As a result of worldview assumption transformation, there will be stages of development in the areas of beliefs, values, confession, and behavior that agree with biblical principles as one progresses on his/her journey toward spiritual maturity. This approach has the potential to reduce the Adventist emphasis that is often placed on external changes as a sign of conversion, should also change judgmental attitudes towards those asking to join the church, and should promote return to Scripture as the basis for Adventist Christian assumptions about conversion/baptism instead of continuing to follow the institutionalized traditional expectations.

The following case study may get the church thinking about this issue as well as leading to the next implication of worldview and discipleship:

> Can a non-literate peasant become a Christian after hearing the Gospel only once? Imagine, for a moment, Papayya, an Indian peasant, returning to his village after a hard day's work in the fields. His wife is preparing the evening meal, so to pass the time he wanders over to the village square. There he notices a stranger surrounded by

a few curiosity-seekers. Tired and hungry, he sits down to hear what the man is saying. For an hour he listens to a message of a new God, and something he hears moves him deeply. Later he asks the stranger about the new way, and then, almost as if by impulse, he bows his head and prays to this God who is said to have appeared to humans in the form of Jesus. He doesn't quite understand all of it. As a Hindu he worships Vishnu, who incarnated himself many times as a human, animal and fish to save humankind. Papayya also knows many of the 330 million Hindu gods. But the stranger says there is only one God, and this God has appeared as a human only once. Moreover, the stranger says that this Jesus is the Son of God, but he says nothing about God's wife. It is all confusing to Papayya. He returns home and a new set of questions flood his mind. Can he still go to the Hindu temple to pray? Should he tell his family about his new faith? And how can he learn more about this Jesus? He cannot read the few papers the stranger gave him, and there are no other Christians in his village. Who knows when the stranger will come again?[1]

Worldview and Discipleship

The case study above illustrates the two steps a person should experience towards becoming a mature Christian. First, there is conversion, and second, there is a discipleship process. After analyzing a people's worldview, developing strategies to communicate the gospel message clearly, and helping a person experience shift in allegiance, the discipleship process will biblically shape a person's worldview. The goal of mission in discipling is not to make a person accept a system of beliefs. Although it is important and will be done in a discipling process, the goal is to biblically shape a person's culture and move the person towards a biblically shaped worldview. The cultural analysis process is crucial to achieve the desired results. Through cultural analysis missionaries can identify and isolate cultural elements that need to be changed from those that do not go against biblical principles. This process permits changes at the worldview level while maintaining essential cultural characteristics that will facilitate the process of witnessing by the person being discipled.

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[1]Hiebert, "Conversion and Worldview Transformation," 83.

The central implication of worldview on discipleship is described by Jayakaran:
"We can imagine the process of discipling as three concentric circles. The largest is
Behavior change, the area most prone to change by external influence. Within this circle
is the deeper area of *beliefs*, which needs strong penetrative indoctrination to bring about
change. The controlling center is the *worldview* (or being), and if it is not properly
understood, analyzed and 'discipled,' it will by default revert to its original worldview.
Thus when the external influences of change are withdrawn, the 'undiscipled' worldview
will take over."[1] Changing worldview in the discipleship process denotes a holistic
approach to discipleship. This holistic approach involves a radical shift of loyalty to
Jesus.[2]

The case study above indicates the pressing need people have for discipleship that
will help the person to satisfy their worldview with new explanations to bring stability
back to their culture. In the previous chapter the worldview transformation process was
discussed and the process of intentionally creating worldview level instability in order to
bring worldview assumptions to a conscious level where they can be analyzed and altered
was recommended. In the case of Papayya, the message of the new God created
instability in his worldview and questions where brought to the conscious level. At that
stage, discipleship had the potential to biblically shape his worldview assumptions. This

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[1]Ravi I. Jayakaran, "Holistic Participatory Learning and Action: Seeing the
Spiritual and Whose Reality Counts," in *Working with the Poor: New Insights and
Learnings from Development Practitioners*, ed. Bryant L. Myers (Monrovia, CA: World
Vision, 1999), 33.

[2]Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter Thomas O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the
Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL; Leicester, England:
InterVarsity Press; Apollos, 2001), 93.

process, however, is not simple or immediate. Worldview implications for discipleship

call for patience and consistency in continuously analyzing worldview assumptions and

monitoring their transformation to make sure a biblically shaped worldview is being

achieved without extracting the person from the cultural context. Furthermore, there is

no more important task for missions than to expose these cultural elements that take

people into captivity of Satan. This process, suggests Myers, "requires sensitivity, skills,

and openness to change on both sides."[1]

Worldview and Evangelism

The Adventist Church continues to place great emphasis on public evangelism.

For decades Adventist evangelism has developed its approach, but because of cultural

shifts, especially the shift from a modern to a postmodern perspective, evangelism also

needs to be revisited and worldview studies have many implications to the theory and

practice of public evangelism.

Worldview studies indicate that the notion of evangelism as only verbal

proclamation is losing its importance. The assumption that evangelism is only

proclamation has lead to the development of "one size fits all" type of evangelistic

strategies. Often, international Adventist evangelists are praised for their efforts and

results in evangelistic meetings as if only credit should be given to the public evangelist.

An emerging paradigm of Adventist evangelism must be concerned with worldviews as

the way people interpret, evaluate, and respond to any given message (verbal and non-

verbal). An increasing uneasiness with traditional Adventist evangelistic methodologies

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[1]Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 239.

has already been demonstrated.[1] Those revisiting evangelistic methodologies and

strategies are mainly located in Western countries and mostly urbanized areas where

conventional evangelism is no longer very efficient. Still, hundred of thousands of

dollars are spent every year conducting evangelistic meetings that do not deliver the

expected impact.

From the perspective of this study, each time an evangelistic effort fails to

communicate efficiently it reinforces a negative worldview assumption about Christianity

and Adventism and makes the possibility of acceptance of the message by the listener

more distant. Contrary to the popular view, those who reject the message given at

evangelistic meetings do so not because they are not interested in religious matters, but

often because the method of communication does not take into consideration the

listener's worldview. This reality often means there is a distorted understanding of the

intended proclamation. The good intentions of the evangelist do not change the fact that

what counts is the perceived reality even though it may not be accurate. The assumption

that seems to permeate Adventist evangelistic mentality is that if a method works in

America or Japan, thus, it must work also in Russia or Sudan. This is not the case. The

case study presented above clearly warns that the interpretation of the message will be

according to the worldview of the listener.

Special attention to worldview assumptions may bring renewed vitality to the

Adventist evangelistic mentality and produce an emerging Adventist paradigm of

evangelism that better fits the complexities and shifts of the twenty-first century.

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[1]For an example of such concern see Ron Gladden, "Paradigm Shifts in
Evangelism Today," *Ministry International Journal for Pastors* (October 2003).

Worldview and the Local Church

Van Engen emphasizes that ecclesiology is one of the most neglected missiological issues.[1] Worldview studies, then, have paramount implications for ecclesiology at various levels.

A decreased interest in church matters has been felt throughout the Western part of the world in recent decades. Secularization in Western countries has been the predominant explanation for the causes of such phenomenon. However, "decline in church attendance cannot entirely be attributed to the influence of secularization" because some churches are experiencing growth, and other religions have been gaining in popularity.[2] It seems more accurate to say that what is forgotten is the changing nature of the church. Van Engen continues to advise that "the church must continually change its mode of expression for it is historically oriented to a constantly-changing world."[3] Relying heavily on authoritative traditions the church became superficial, often emphasizing only one aspect of Christian existence, orthodoxy (doctrine). The younger generations are forcing the church to reevaluate its emphasis and to bring back the balance between orthodoxy and orthopraxis (practice). Worldview transformation is needed in this area of the concept of the church in Adventism. The goal of missions is to maintain commitment to the message while still being able to adapt, without

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[1]Van Engen, 20.

[2]Eddie Gibbs, *Churchnext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 40.

[3]Van Engen, 74.

compromising, to the reality of a rapidly changing contemporary globalized and increasingly urbanized world.

Another area of worldview concern is the popular understanding of missions as only happening overseas. This worldview assumption has prevented the church in the West from engaging in mission work in its local area. The church is just awakening to the fact that the mission field changed its address and is now located in the neighborhoods around the church. The implications for this shift in understanding can be crucial, for example, to the Western practice of prayer. On the mission field, as in the Bible, prayer is an active part of the Christian life not just as a ritual but as a channel for blessings, healing the sick, delivering people from the influence of evil spirits, and the like. A ritualistic practice of prayer among Western Adventists has produced a general lack of faith in prayer as an active spiritual power. Therefore, prayer is largely neglected and practiced mainly ritualistically before meals, before going to bed, and for opening and closing church meetings, etc. Many Western Christians view prayer as largely a last resort for a desperate situation when everything else has failed. Such concepts of prayer have been influenced by deism and the enlightenment and stand in need of worldview transformation.

Worldview studies recognize the generational differences and barriers. Cultural shifts are happening faster these days. Cultural shifts on perception of reality can be recognized from one decade to the next. Changes that used to take centuries now take only years. The lack in recognizing these shifts as genuine has lead to worldview clashes among generations in the same church. Sire warns that "we should realize that we live in a pluralistic world. What is obvious to us may be 'a lie from hell' to our neighbor next

door. If we do not recognize that, we are certainly naïve and provincial, and we have much to learn about living in today's world."[1]

Worldview and Adventist Education

Adventist education is another area where worldview studies can make an impact. The term Adventist education is used here in reference to the school system as well as the spiritual education that takes place in church such as in Sabbath school classes.

Based on the theoretical framework developed in chapter 3 for worldview formation, the goal of Adventist education should be to concentrate efforts on those stages where worldview assumptions are likely to be formed and transformed. Consider for example the money and effort spent on teaching adult in comparison with teaching children. In many Adventist churches around the world, children's Sabbath school teachers struggle to do their job with few, if any, resources. Few churches have a systematic and conscious plan that affects worldview formation and transformation. It seems that there is an assumption that spiritual matters are for adults, but the Bible repeatedly suggests the necessity of concentrating efforts on children's formation instead of adult transformation.

A study on adolescence demonstrated that their core assumptions are unlikely to be changed.[2] The stages of worldview formation when core worldview assumptions are formed is described in chapter 3. Stage 3 is the stage when a child will learn the

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[1]James W. Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 21.

[2]Jens B. Asendorpf and Marcel A. G. VanAken, "Personality-Relationship Transaction in Adolescence: Core Versus Surface Personality Characteristics," *Journal of Personality* 71 (2003).

language which is the single most important element in communicating assumptions. Sabbath school classes working with children between 10 months to 5 years of age should be the central focus for Christian education. It is in this age that worldview assumptions are formed and ontological narratives are placed, forming the core assumptions of a person. Efforts should be made for Sabbath school classes to provide local worldview adapted programs as much as possible. It is not acceptable to create a worldwide plan for Sabbath school teaching for children at stage 3 of their worldview formation, by only translating written materials into different languages. The issue of translation as "enough" for communication has already been addressed above and should be a concern for Sabbath school programs. The development of strategies and methodologies that take in consideration the contextual logic system, musical differences, ways of teaching, and other differences must be developed. Sabbath schools must be concerned with worldview formation in context that will lead to biblically shaped worldviews.

A second front of Adventist education is the Adventist school system which has a tremendous impact on the lives of its students. Children at stage 4 of worldview formation are shifting from a mostly parental dominated universe to one of formal school education. At this stage, children will place a high level of trust on the school. Adventist schools must work at the worldview level to continue the Sabbath school influence, for those raised in an Adventist family, and to influence those belonging to different faiths who attend Adventist schools in order to have their worldview shaped and transformed. A continuation of planned action to encourage biblically shaped worldview formation has the potential to create stronger biblical core worldview assumptions that can better assist,

for instance, youth in surviving the turbulent years of identity crisis. If this strategy can be developed it may influence for the better a number of young people leaving the Adventist church today.

These strategies should be coupled with parental training on worldview concepts so that family, school, and church join in worldview formation. Such a partnership in the Adventist context should lead to biblically shaped worldviews.

Worldview and Bible Study

Adventist Bible studies follow the logic system of the Western world and are mainly a systematic approach to studying the Bible. The problems are that different worldviews function based on different logic systems and there is also the necessity to emphasize different aspects of biblical truth. For example, many Westerners may find the 28th Adventist fundamental belief as unnecessary, but this conclusion is based on a Western mentality where evil spirits are not an active part of the culture or at least are not recognized to be active. For many other cultures this belief makes perfect sense and is an answer to daily concerns.

John Dybdahl presents some examples of different Bible studies that have surfaced lately in different parts of the world that address contextual concerns and deal with worldview assumptions.[1] In these contextualized Bible studies, the core message of the Adventist Christian faith is preserved while the emphasis is very different from one context to another. More contextualized Bible studies are needed and must take into

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[1]See John L. Dybdahl, "Doing Theology in Mission," in *Faith Development in Context: Presenting Christ in Creative Ways*, ed. Bruce L. Bauer (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of World Mission Andrews University, 2005), 20-22.

consideration the worldview of the people in order to be more effective in challenging the cultural distortions in contrast with Scripture toward a biblically shaped worldview.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the role of worldview in enabling a person to see reality and, at the same time, blinding a person to see reality fully.[1] This understanding presents a two fold challenge. First, it is essential for missions that missionaries undertake a personal worldview analysis that will enable them to perceive how their worldview assumptions influence their beliefs, values, judgment, and behavior. As Sire reminds us, "So long as we live, we will live either the examined or the unexamined life."[2] This evaluation will also help missionaries to detect areas of life in need of spiritual renovation leading to a personal reencounter with God. The key to personal and missionary success is for the inner being to be totally surrendered to Christ. Second, it is essential for missionaries (and evangelists) to do a thorough worldview analysis of the people they work among. No planning or action should take place before careful worldview analysis to determine the best strategies for missions. The final goal of Adventist missions is worldview transformation leading to a biblically shaped worldview. This will only be possible by understanding a people's worldview and analyzing it under the light of Scripture that will indicate the necessary changes to produce shifts in allegiance without compromising the cultural essences.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the

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[1]The idea of worldview enabling and blinding a person to see reality is offered by Hiebert, "Transforming Worldviews," 20.

[2]Sire, 21.

renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—

his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:2).

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