

Anthropology

What is Culture?

Study Pack 1

Dr. Phil Stringer

Anthropology

What is Culture?

Study Pack 1

“The English word “culture” comes from the German Kultur, meaning to develop or grow. It is the root of words such as “agriculture” and “horticulture”.”

~~ Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*, p. 27-28. ~~

I. CULTURE: AN ADAPTABLE, COMPLETE, AND UNIQUE SYSTEM

- A. Culture is an _____ system.
1. The people have adapted to their _____ and _____ world and are able to adapt more when faced with new things, problems, experiences, etc.
 2. For this reason, the people are able to live where they live.
 3. Illustration: A plane crashed in the South American jungle near the Pacas Novas tribe.
 - a. The people survived the crash, but afterwards died of hunger.
 - b. The Indians, hearing of this, laughed. “No one could die of hunger in the jungle; there is food everywhere.”
 - c. A native in a super market might not recognize most things as being food.
- B. The culture of a group is a _____ system.
1. It is the lifestyle of the people for _____ (physical).
 - a. The Eskimos have a successful life (for them), although we may not do too well surviving in their harsh environment.
 - b. The Incas were a group of about 200,000 and lived in a small area because they could irrigate the land.
 2. It is the lifestyle for _____ (social relations).
 - a. In his culture, a person knows how to behave, how to get a wife, etc.
 - b. If the people tell you that a girl should be a virgin when she marries, what would you think?

- 1) That these people have _____?
 - 2) It could be for purely _____ reasons.
Maybe she will bring a larger “bride price”.
- c. American POW’s refused to bow to Japanese officers.
- 1) To the American this is “worship”.
 - 2) To the Japanese, it is simply a greeting of respect.
3. It is the lifestyle to explain _____ (spiritual).
- a. If you were to ask a Moslem how his _____ is going to be, he would take this as something like blasphemy because the future is in the hands of his god.
 - b. What would you think if you see a person with an object hanging around his neck?
 - 1) It is to protect him from something.
 - 2) It is to bring him good luck.
 - 3) It could be for some reason completely different.
 - (a) adornment
 - (b) symbol of clan or position
 - (c) trophy of a hunt
 - 4) Do not jump to _____.
4. Their lifestyle, and the things that they do, _____ for them.
- a. We want to introduce them to *new* things and ideas.
 - b. But often they do not want to accept them
 - c. We must present the truth in a way that they can _____.
- C. Their culture is a _____ system.
1. Something in their culture that is very similar to something in our culture may actually be very different.
 2. We tend to _____ what we _____ according to our culture and thinking.
 - a. The discipline of children.

- b. Bull fights.
 - c. What might a foreigner think of American football?
3. We must present them a _____ (not just a religion).
 4. We must present them the truth according to their lifestyle.
 5. They must feel the need for our message of God. (They already have a god, religion, and the answers to all the questions of life. They are probably wrong, but they are not atheists or without religion. Why should they listen to us?)
 6. We must present our arguments in the _____ and _____ that they understand.
 7. The missionary must be sympathetic toward them, and _____ and _____ their culture, even if there are aspects of it that he does not agree with.
 - a. He might even learn something from them.
 - b. Is everything in our culture right?
 8. He must understand things that he does not like, such as witchcraft.
 9. We must show them something better in our lives.

II. HOW CULTURE IS ACQUIRED

- A. Culture is _____ it is not _____.
- B. Things that we learn.
 1. Food.
 2. Clothes, jewelry, hairstyles, etc.
 3. Work habits.
 4. Colors.
 - a. The Navajos believe that blue is good and red is bad.
 - b. Some in Africa dress in white when in mourning.

5. _____ .
 - a. The Japanese squat down to rest.
 - b. Some Africans stand on one foot.
6. _____ or gestures.
7. Birth customs.
 - a. In a tribe in Paraguay, after the birth of a child, the father lies on a bed and groans as if he were giving birth.
 - b. Among the Zapotec of San Vicente Coatlan the father of a newborn must take the baby's dirty clothes to a certain place and wash it on a certain rock. Each family has their own rock. Another woman may wash clothes there, but if the father comes there, she must move. If the father fails to do this, the child could get sick.
 - c. In one tribe of South America, the father of a newborn must lay in his hammock for 7 days. By doing this, he is declaring that he is indeed the father. When a priest working with this tribe forced the men to get up and go to work, the mothers killed their babies, because it is worse to have an illegitimate child.
8. Concentration.
 - a. We learn what disturbs us.
 - b. Some groups learn better with _____ .
 - c. Some are _____ by silence.
9. Manners.
 - a. In Ethiopia it is proper to spit at someone as a _____ .
 - b. In Costa Rica, if you like the food, it is correct to lick your fingers.
 - c. In China a loud _____ is the correct way to complement the host.
10. Emotions.
 - a. "A man should not cry"

- b. Among a tribe in New Guinea (PNG) one might cut off part of a finger to mourn the loss of a family member or close friend. A missionary working there had lost part of a finger in an accident, and when a woman would see the missing finger, she would cover her face with her skirt and cry a little bit.
 - 11. Shame, anger, when to faint (women), and what makes you sick.
 - 12. Facial expressions, laughter, etc.
 - a. Some people _____ their _____ when they _____.
 - b. Some laugh when someone else falls or stumbles.
- C. Ways people learn their culture.
- 1. Technically.
 - 2. Formally.
 - 3. Informally.
- D. How does this group teach?
- 1. If they teach in an informal way, and we try to teach formally, we may not succeed.
 - 2. For example, what is _____ and what is _____ ?
 - a. When the Tivs (from Nigeria) work with others and work slowly, this is fun, not work.
 - b. The Zapotecs work on Sundays, but not the normal work. They believe that if they plant something on Sunday, it will not grow. Helping someone build a house is a _____ affair and the women make “holiday” food.

***Anthropology* is the property of the Dayspring Bible College & seminary. The Dayspring Bible College & Seminary is a ministry of the Quentin Road Bible Baptist Church, 60 Quentin Road, Lake Zurich, IL 60047.**

**Copyright © 2013
Dayspring Bible College & Seminary
All Rights Reserved**