

Michael Roberts
Perspective on Missions
Framework for Theology of Culture
Professor Stanley John, Ph.D.

The perspective of culture varies depending on the individual, but there is general agreement that sometimes the understanding is contradictory (Tennent 159). The topic of culture has come to the forefront in theology, mainly because of the shift of Christianity geographically from the west to other parts of the world. According to the author of the article translating the Message, initially Christian mission was a stream that flowed into areas outside the Jewish community (Sanneh, 14). Culture comes into being based on the ingenuity of man and therefore has tremendous beneficial potential. Christians need to implement the subject of culture in their theological narrative to be more successful in their mission of spreading the gospel of Christ. This essay will develop a framework for a theology of culture and how the gospel responds to culture.

The first consideration when thinking about a theology framework is ensuring a good place of worship in a given community. The people in a social group may view the church as a central place where everyone meets. The house of prayer can also enable people to connect on a deeper level with the knowledge that they share common beliefs and customs with others. There are no communities without culture, therefore having a church enables the development of stronger communities (Tennent, 169). Christians affirm that God has revealed himself in the context of human culture, which also allows a solid, culturally attractive message to the surrounding community with a house of worship (Tennent, 173).

God is the source, sustainer of human social culture, and thru the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is inherently relational (Tennent, 171). Therefore, human relationship is essential to God, but he also set the standards whereby cultural groups can also emulate. People want to be loved, but they also want others to treat them with love. It is essential to develop a framework whereby love is central in all human relational experience aspects. Ministries, including evangelism, missions, and others that involve human interactions, will have to be constructed with this in mind.

The structure of the worship services and emphasis on the teaching of God's word will also be an essential component of the framework. According to Herder, human nature put "tendencies towards diversity in our hearts" (Tennent, 168). Therefore, it is essential to understand the structure of diversity in the community. Some churches may be located in a community with only one cultural group, while others may be more diverse due to their geographic location. It would still be a great thing to see diversity in all aspects of society, but unfortunately, that is not always possible.

When God sent his Son into the world, his missional journey to redeem us was an example to follow. Jesus interacted with different types of people, and when he had accomplished his on earth, his disciples began to take the gospel to the world. The gospel message branched out from the Jewish communities to the gentiles and the world as a whole. People from different cultural groups have received the gospel, and the good news continues to resonate. However, it is essential to be strategic by having a framework with cultural groups in mind.

Discuss the missional calling of Israel to be the light of the world.

