

Chapter 6. Cultural Being

- Purpose:
 - To examine the relationship between culture and spiritual needs
- Objectives:
 1. Define culture
 2. Contrast ethnocentrism, radical cultural relativism, and modified cultural relativism
 3. Assess spiritual and cultural influences in health practices
 4. List guidelines for Christian crosscultural nursing in a pluralistic world

Keywords definition

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| 1. Various beliefs and practices in the world | 4 | Ethnocentrism |
| 2. The sum total of the learned behavior patterns and attitudes of a given community | 2 | Culture |
| 3. The process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values | 3 | Enculturation |
| 4. The attitude that one's own group is superior | 1 | Pluralism |

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| 1. The phenomena of cultural belief and behavior that have their source outside of human culture | <u>5</u> multicultural |
| 2. The view that truth, ethics, and standards can be defined only from within each specific culture | <u>4</u> crosscultural |
| 3. Acknowledgment of the many cultural practices that make sense only within specific cultures | <u>1</u> supracultural realm |
| 4. Dealing with two or more different cultures | <u>2</u> radical cultural relativism |
| 5. Appreciation of diverse cultures | <u>3</u> modified cultural relativism |

Assumptions* in cultural being

- You cannot separate health practices with respective cultures.
- Person who use health practices must believe in them.
- Cultural pluralism has positive and negative effects in the global village.
- Tolerance is the virtue to resolve cultural conflict.
- Multiculturalism requires equal acceptance of all cultural viewpoints in academia and the workplace.

* A fact or statement taken for granted.

Christian understanding of culture



Worldview Questions by Sire

- What is prime reality – the really real?
- What is the nature of external reality, the world around us?
- What is a human being?
- What happens to a person at death?
- How is it possible to know anything at all?
- How do we know what is right and wrong?
- What is the meaning of human history?

Supracultural Realm

- How can we recognize what is Christian and what belongs to the culture?



- Only Christ's lordship and the illumination of the Holy Spirit can guide the distinction.

Supracultural Realm

- Recognize supracultural source of evil explains the similarities of evil in many different cultures.
- Modern witchcraft with medieval witchcraft, female genital mutilation, manipulation of the natural world through rituals, mental techniques, and shamanistic trances

Idolatory

Supracultural Realm

- Paradox of Christianity
- Exclusive claims of Christianity by accepting Jesus Christ as my savior, no other way to salvation
- Most inclusive of religions:
Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord on that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in your midst (Zech 2:11)
- Evil culture must be put away; what is good will be transformed and preserved

Nursing, health and culture

- Nursing literature and textbooks
- Discussions about cultural views of birth, health, illness, death
- Discussion of various folk remedies and healing practices
- How do I evaluate each culture's health practices? What is my criteria?
- Criteria as a patient's sense of wellbeing or recovery?

Example of Shamanism in Korea

- Shaman exorcism to heal the ghost of the dead relative inside of a person
- <http://youtu.be/x-AVh3J-YBE>
- Korean Shaman Possessed by General
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRIUy2dyBQA>

Problems of Cultural Relativism

- Human salvation becomes the heart and norm of all religion.
- Making Health the sole criterion for evaluating a practice is misguided.
- Requires the discernment of worldview and religious underpinnings with the observable health practices
- How?
- Critical judgment on assessing health-related practices
- Does a health practice promote God's honor?
 - e.g. massage, use of herbs, meditative technique to the unseen reality

Other problems of multiculturalism

- Truth, ethics, and standards are evaluated by individual's own culture.
- This statement leads to a subjective view of reality
- This view denies the possibility of any objective moral truths from experience.
- It implies that values and norms of each culture guide and judge moral conducts.
- It would prevent nurses from trying to influence the health practices of anyone from a culture other than their own.
 - e.g. refusing immunizations for children due to religious beliefs

Problems of multiculturalism

- Biblical view is that there is a common human nature beyond the physical.
- People observe that human life to gain moral knowledge.
- Scripture guides us to discern moral principles.

Concept of Moral Obligation

- True or False
- No one should impose their moral views on others, because everyone has the right to find truth inside him or herself.
- True or False
- Aren't there people in the world who are doing things you believe are *wrong* – things that they should stop doing no matter what they personally believe about the correctness of their behavior?

Concept of moral obligation

- “Moral” ... is an orientation toward understandings about what is right and wrong, just and unjust, that are not established by our own actual desires or preferences but instead are believed to exist apart from them, providing standards by which our desires and preferences can themselves be judged.

Christian Smith, *Moral Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2003, p.8)

General guidelines dealing with multiculturalism

- We should put away the idea that any one culture embodies Christian faith.
- We should use crosscultural relationships to reflect on our own culture-both to identify our prejudices and to be enriched by others' experiences and ways of thinking.
- We must recognize the effects of sin on all human cultures: human pride, self-centeredness and the desire to be in control

Christian nurses' guidelines in pluralism:

Q: Is tolerance based on commitment to justice and truth or is it merely indifference?

- Avoid ethnocentrism
- Beware of radical cultural relativism.
- Practice modified cultural relativism.
- Be humble and tolerant of differences*.
- Accept people where they are*(p.127).
- Respect people's freedom.
- Refrain from non-Christian practices.
- Pray continually.

Theological reflection

- Where would you draw the line in participating in crosscultural practices? What guidelines would you use in deciding?
- Romans 12:1-6, 14:13-23
- 1 Corinthians 10:23-33
- Philippians 4:8-9