

## **Lecture 5- Lingual-Cultural Contexts (9); “American” Culture (10)**

*To interpret and apply the New Testament well, we must think cross-culturally.*  
- David Chapman

*One of the great problems (for U.S. Christians)...is that many of the words used in Christian speech have become common. As a result, too often we have lost the oddness of Christian speech because we assume we are adequate speakers because such language is so familiar. The challenge is to rediscover how what we say as Christians forces a reconfiguration of our lives in order that we might see the world as God's good creation.*

*Take, for example, the word church. We usually think we know what we are talking about when we say 'church.' ...[But] the church is not simply a “voluntary association” that may be of some use to the wider polity, but rather is that community constituted by practices by which all other politics are to be judged....The church must be reclaimed from the politics of liberalism that would make the church part of the 'private' realm. In short the challenge before us as Christians is to be a politics that is an alternative to the politics of exchange that otherwise dominates our lives.*

*-Stanley Hauerwas, 1999*

### **Key Terms**

Culture, communication & interpretation; cultures; language; “American;” individual; A-cultural; subgroups; self-reliant; equality; informal; time; communication; fact vs. sentiment; “American missions”

### **Lecture Objectives**

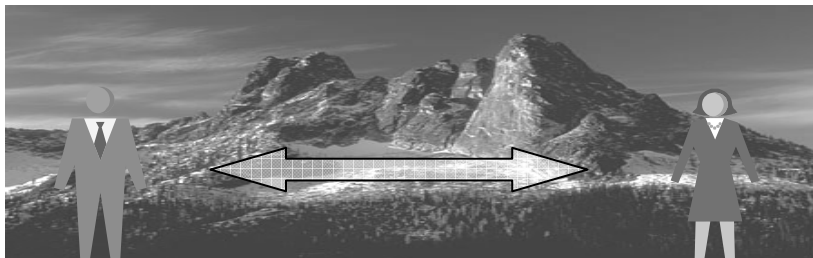
- Describe the cultural context in which the New Testament was written.
- Identify similarities and differences between the NT culture(s) and your own.
- Identify at least one specific implication of the above comparison for how you understand yourself and the Gospel work to which you have been called.
- Identify and describe key characteristics of “American” culture.
- Analyze and evaluate these characteristics with “missionary eyes” in light of Scripture.
- Describe how this discussion shapes, changes, or refines your own understanding of yourself as the Gospel relates to you and you relate to the work of the Gospel.

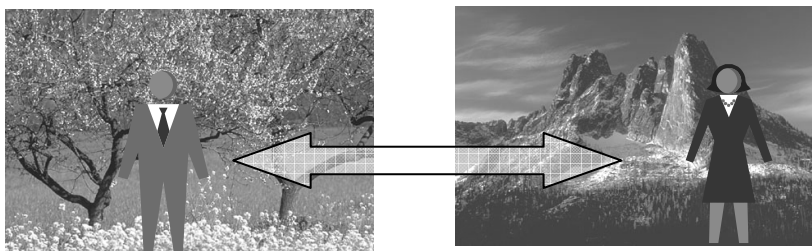
### **Lingual-Cultural Contexts**

*Dr. David Chapman is the guest speaker on the topic of Lingual-cultural contexts.*

I. To Interpret and Apply the New Testament Well, We Must Think Cross-Culturally.

A. Culture, communication and interpretation:





To fully appreciate what the author is saying we must understand his culture.  
 B. Cultures: ours and theirs

Similarities:	Differences:

Similarities make it easy to understand the New Testament, while differences complicate the task of interpretation.

II. To Interpret and Apply the New Testament Well, We Must Comprehend Its Multi-Cultural Missionary Task.

- A. Language of the NT
- B. Recipients of the NT
- C. Missionary activity of Jesus
- D. Missionary activity of the apostles
- E. Engagement of the culture
- F. Some theses about multi-cultural missions in the NT
  - 1. The NT authors hold firmly to the revealed truth in Jesus and in the OT
  - 2. The NT books are contextualized to the situations of the recipients
  - 3. The situations of the recipients vary from book to book in the NT
  - 4. The NT is written into situations in which the churches, saved by the grace of God, could easily perish in a generation or less
  - 5. The NT is essentially a collection of missionary writings

**“American” Culture**

- I. “Americans” as People
  - A. Self-understanding
    - 1. Individual
    - 2. A-cultural
    - 3. Subgroups
  - B. Values and assumptions
    - 1. The free, self-reliant individual and privacy

2. Equality
  3. Informality
  4. The future, change, and progress (not mentioned in audio lecture)
  5. Goodness of humanity (but....)
  6. Time
  7. Achievement, action, work, and materialism (not mentioned in audio lecture)
  8. Directness and assertiveness—with limits (not mentioned in audio lecture)
- C. Communicative style
1. Weather, sports, and social lives
  2. Favorite forms
  3. Depth of involvement
  4. Verbal
  5. Fact vs. sentiment
- D. Ways of reasoning – Getting to “the point”

*The topic of “American” Culture is concluded in Lecture 6.*