

# Session 2

## Session 2, Part 1 — “Understanding Culture”



Watch this episode:



### THINK

Consider the four metaphors: Onion, iceberg, glasses and fish bowl. Which two do you think best describes the concept of culture? Explain why you choose these two metaphors.



### REFLECT

Read the definition of culture below and circle any specific words that you feel are important for understanding culture.

*“Culture is the learned values shared by a group and is passed from one generation to another. and changes over time. Culture creates a sense of belonging and identity and provides stability and security for individuals in social relationships. (MissionPrep).*

1. “Culture is learned” Why is this good news for someone seeking to cross cultural boundaries?
2. Which is more difficult: To learn a new culture or to “unlearn” something harmful from one’s own culture?
3. Give an example of something you have had to unlearn in your own culture? What does this tell you about God's heart for diversity and the nations?



### DISCUSS

In this video Robert and Tim explain the three dimensions of culture as summarized below.

*“Each of us is like everybody else in some ways (Universal), like the people on our own culture in other ways (Cultural), and like no-one else at all in still other ways (Personal)” (Storti: Figuring Foreigner out)*

- 1) How could this model possibly help as you begin to be intentional in crossing cultural boundaries?
- 2) Which aspect of culture (a. Individual personality, or b. Group-culture) is more important in your social relationships. Please give an example.



### ACT

How might this discussion on culture help you be more self-aware of its influence in how you see and engage the world around us?

How might your understanding of culture help you and your church engage more effectively in bridging cultural differences?



## Session 2, Part 2&3 — “Cultural Definitions and Assumptions”



Watch BOTH [this episode](#) & [this episode](#):



### THINK

Give an example from your personal life that illustrates the difference between “cross-cultural and intercultural” experiences you have had. What do the facilitators mean when they say, “Rome is everywhere”.



### REFLECT

**Ethnicity:** Usually refers to a cultural group with common links such as biology, heritage, language, religion and geography or migration patterns” (Branson, 87)

**Race:** “Classification of humans according to biological or physical features. Folk taxonomies-socially shaped methods of classifying persons.” (Branson. 86)

Why is it important to distinguish between Ethnicity & Race?



### DISCUSS

As you listened to the parable of the Monkey & the Fish what were some key take aways for you and your church? Take away lessons you could apply to yourself and the ministries of your church?

### Getting beneath the surface (2nd video)

In this session Tim and Robert discuss how much of culture lies hidden beneath the surface. Often, we may not be aware of the unconscious aspects of our own or another’s cultural values.

Such hidden aspects of culture may appear in our different cultural assumptions about time, status, individual / group identity, to give just a few examples. Can you suggest others?

Can you give an example of how the hidden aspects of culture caused a misunderstanding in your relationships at work or in Church?



### ACT

Tim and Robert raised questions as to the possibility of having a pure monocultural church in a multicultural context like Toronto. Would you agree or disagree?

Your facilitators stated that “culture is never static but is always evolving.” (Becoming hybrid in nature) If true, how should this influence our ministry strategy of becoming intentionally intercultural as a community?



## Session 2, Part 4 — “Dealing With Ethnocentrism”



Watch this episode:



### THINK

How was ethnocentrism demonstrated in the Pocahontas video clip? Give an example of how you have experienced it in your life?

Ethnocentrism can be defined as: “making false assumptions about others’ ways based on our own limited experiences. It is thinking one’s own cultural preferences are superior to others”.



### REFLECT

Robert suggested that ethnocentrism is part of what he calls the “dark side of culture.” Do you agree that we are all created in the image of God, and we should be able to affirm the many good things in all cultures. Yet, because all humans are fallen, we need to discern those part of cultures needing to be redeemed.

Give some examples of what can be affirmed in your culture and what things might need to be redeemed (Romans 12:1-2)



### DISCUSS

To some extent we are all ethnocentric. We all have our preferred ways of living in the world. The question is not “are you

ethnocentric but rather are you aware of your ethnocentrism.?”

Yes, our culture gives us a “preferred way” of living in the world. However, we must be careful not to allow our preferred way to become culturally biased as the “right and only way.” Give some life examples of this



### ACT

Tim and Robert concluded this session by asking us to consider what builds trust or undermines trust in crossing cultural boundaries. Take a few minutes to give some examples from your experience.

In Acts 10 the Holy Spirit was seeking to change Peter’s heart so he would embrace Cornelius the gentile Centurion. We encourage you to allow the Holy Spirit to so the same in your heart and mine.

