

Cultural Agility (Part 3)

7. Decision-making

How VS Why

This is to do with Principles VS Application. How to persuade them. This affects how you present to them. In Germany they try to understand the theoretical framework before adapting it to something practical. If this doesn't happen they can feel like they are being expected to believe without an explanation. This is deductive reasoning. Deciding what to do based on a principle. This is different to the Americans who tend to be pragmatic with inductive reasoning. They focus on the applications. This affects how we do church.

Biblical Balance of HOW VS WHY

Romans 1:13-15 ¹³I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, how often I planned to come to you (but have been prevented from visiting until now), in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. ¹⁴I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome....

You can see that often for Paul, the WHY was more important than the how. He did things differently in various situations but the why was the constant.

1 Cor 9:20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

It's interesting that in the verse below the why is different yet Paul seems interested in the fact that the application is the same, the gospel is being preached.

Phil 1:15-18 ¹⁵It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

We tend to judge ministries based our cultural lens of decision-making (Principles or application). We use a deductive approach in that we are word-based and have a biblical view of God's character. However, we are quite inductive in how we encourage people through the power of testimony and a pragmatic approach to church growth.

Head VS Heart

I will trust you and choose you because I know you and have connected with you. E.g. negotiation for Nestle (German speaking Swiss was in China and learnt to practice Guanxi after struggling with a negotiation). My friend doing business with Arabs also learnt this principle in the Arab world and in Kenya. Some will trust you based on the task and others the relationship. That's why some will hire the best person who was assessed and others practise nepotism.

This is similar to the factors around discipleship selection and also low context and high context. Sometimes our doctrine with regards to decision making influences our direction. Do we go just by

prophetic sense or do we look at CVs? Remember we prophesy in part so getting other empirical input sometimes helps. Gut feel has its place when its in an area we are experienced. Sometimes we should learn to make big decisions using both approaches and seeing if they align. When it comes to spousal selection this is important, head or heart or BOTH. This has implications for assessment centres when it comes to recruitment. When conducting international business are people hired the same way in all countries? How do you react when a recruitment decision is made that doesn't make sense to you head-wise but makes a lot of sense to someone else heart-wise.

Balance of Head and Heart in Scripture

Here is an example of heart:

1 Sam 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

How do you see heart on a CV?

Here is an example of head:

1 Tim 3:1-12 ¹Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full[a] respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

⁸In the same way, deacons^[b] are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

¹¹In the same way, the women^[c] are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹²A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Long-term thinking VS Short-term thinking

How does this affect development of society and business? There are some things that take long to achieve. How then do you have a multigenerational vision? Where does saving feature in this? How does this affect you when managing virtual teams? The Chines think in Centuries. There was a lady I coached who had a 100-year vision. Sadly, on the African continent we tend to be like someone on a train. They are facing where they have come from whilst the train is moving in the other direction.

Biblical Balance of short-term and long-term thinking:

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Jesus is encouraging us not to worry about the future partly because it affects our productivity for today. Today needs us. We must be fully present today.

John 17:19-20 ¹⁹For them I sanctify Myself, so that they too may be sanctified by the truth. ²⁰I am not asking on behalf of them alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in Me through their message.

God is multigenerational

Exodus 3:15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

2 Tim 2:2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

As biblical Christians we need to be able to think long-term, whilst being fully present today.

Jesus was thinking long-term and multi-generationally when He prayed. So He was communicating that our relationship with the future must not be filled with worry but we must be future minded when praying.