

# The Third Wave of Mission Institute



## Introduction to Culture Module Booklet

May 2017

## What is the Third Wave of Mission?

Fr. Robert Schreiter, CPPS, states that the **first wave of mission** developed out of the first round of globalization when Europeans in the 15th century developed sailing skills to reach Africa, Asia and the Americas. They brought along the first missionaries from various religious orders.



With the advent of the steam engine, the second wave of globalization allowed nations to penetrate further into their colonies and national missionary societies developed to plant the church in those areas **in the second wave of mission.**

Today the third wave of globalization with air travel, internet, and cell phones, enables laity to form respectful relationships of solidarity more easily with others around the U.S. and the globe through mission trips, short-term missionary work, and parish twinning. This is the **third wave of mission.**

**The Third Wave of Mission Institute** was formed to respond to the needs of the recent emergence of Christians involved in short-term mission and parish partnership efforts.

## Who is behind the Third Wave of Mission?

The Third Wave Mission Institute includes highly experienced Third Wave Missioners from these trusted mission organizations:

Joyana Dvorak, DePaul University  
Bruce Compton, Catholic Health  
Association

Mike Gable, Archdiocese of Cincinnati  
Mike Haasl, Archdiocese of  
Center

St. Paul-Minneapolis  
Fr. Gerry Kelly MM, Maryknoll

Jim Lindsay, Catholic Volunteer Network  
Don McCrabb, US Catholic Mission  
Association

Julie Lupien, From Mission to Mission  
Fr. Jack Nuelle MS, LaSalette Mission

Bob Short, Maryknoll Affiliates  
Kim Lamberty, Catholic Relief Services

The United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) serves as the “home” of the Third Wave of Mission Institute and supports the website. To learn more about the Third Wave of Mission, visit our website and Facebook page.

[www.thirdwaveofmission.org](http://www.thirdwaveofmission.org)  
[www.facebook.com/thirdwaveofmission](https://www.facebook.com/thirdwaveofmission)

Or call USCMA at 202-832-3112.



## Segment 1. Introduction to Culture Module

- Crossing cultures is a great gift of mission
- Recognize similarities and differences which can stretch us
- “Take off our shoes, for we are on sacred ground”

Why important to learn about culture:

- Respect, sensitivity
- Understanding those we meet
- Insight into how to respond with graciousness
- Appreciate uniqueness and similarities
- Help us to see face of God in everyone

Large group sharing:

1. *What is your history of crossing cultures?*
2. *How do you feel about entering the culture you will be going to?*

## Segment 2. Understanding Culture

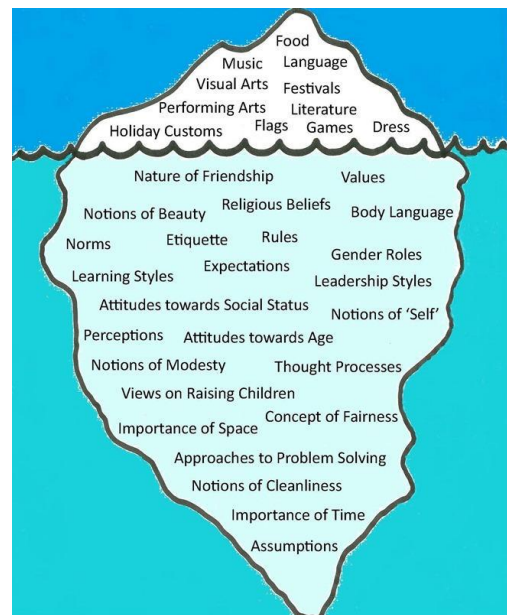
What is culture?

- Learned and shared behavior of people
- Values, symbols, perspectives through which community views the world
- NOTE: one culture is not better or worse than another, just different

*Culture is like water to the fish; essential yet not noticed until the fish is taken out of the water.*

Iceberg Model

- Only tip is visible; MOST is below surface
- Below surface:
  - Assumptions/expectations
  - Values
  - Beliefs
  - Perceptions
- When cross cultures, confusion or tension happens because the unseen part of each iceberg is colliding



### Sharing in pairs

1. *What assumptions might someone make just by looking at you?*
2. *What would others NOT know about you just by looking at you?*
3. *What is a value, belief or attitude, you have now or had as you grew up that is below the surface of your iceberg?*
4. *How do you identify yourself culturally? Has this changed over time?*

### **Segment 3. MY culture**

- Cultural sub-groups
  - Age
  - Ethnic group/race
  - Gender
  - Urban/rural
  - Marital status
  - Socio-economic status
  - Religion
- Unique personalities or life-experiences



### **Avoid making assumptions**

At times, we share values of those in the dominant group around us; at other times our unique personalities and experiences distance us from the dominant group. That is the same for everyone we meet. We cannot make assumptions.

### Sharing in pairs

- *What sub-groups do you identify with?*

**Reflection:** *What have been the greatest influences (from your unique experience and history) on who you are today?*

### Large-group brainstorming:

- *Where might the people you will be with get their information or ideas about Americans?*
- *What do you think people from outside the U.S. believe are American values?*
- *What do you think are American values?*
- *Which of these do you identify with?*

## Segment 4. Crossing cultures

Crossing cultures can be challenging and draining: Culture shock

### Large group Brainstorm

- *(For those who have previously crossed cultures) What helped you during the more challenging times when you entered another culture?*

Some suggestions:

- Take care of yourself!
- Remember all cultures have both positive and negative elements
- Curiosity and respect, not judgement
- Look for logic behind the other's actions
- Ask cultural guide: "Help me to understand"
- Gratitude for opportunity to learn another culture
- Opportunity to reflect upon our own cultural values
- Have faith in yourself and those hosting you and in the positive outcome of the experience
- Remember your purpose in being there

**Reflection:** *The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you. They are unique manifestations of the human spirit.*

Wade Davis

### Questions for reflection

1. *What does Wade Davis mean when he writes "Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you"?*
2. *You are a guest in the culture that you will be visiting. How can this quote influence what being a guest looks like? What actions, behaviors or comments would demonstrate this attitude?*



## Segment 5. How Cultures Differ

Understanding how cultures differ

- Helps us to cope
- Helps us to look beyond tip of iceberg
- A starting point; move beyond so as to not over-generalize or stereotype

Dimension 1. Individualism vs. Group Orientation

- Individualistic cultures
  - Decisions made as to what is best for individual's life
  - Behaviors reflect on me, not group
- Group Orientation
  - Concerned about effects of actions on group
  - Decisions made by consensus
  - Identity tied to group

Dimension 2. Power Distance (Hierarchy) vs. equality

- Low power distance
  - More non-hierarchical
  - Feel closer to power; can change things
  - Inequality not accepted
- High power distance
  - Inequality is accepted
  - Subordinates accept leaders actions; seen as deserving of status
  - Titles are used and important
  - Change through leader's decisions and actions
  - Individual may be at risk to go against authority



Dimension 3. Uncertainty Avoidance

- High
  - Uncomfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty
  - Try to control outcomes, ensure predictability
- Low
  - Comfortable with uncertainty
  - Accept that much of life is out of one's control:
  - "If God wills it" is common expression

Dimension 4. Relationship vs. Task Orientation

- Relationship Orientation
  - Priority/obligation of social relationships
- Task Orientation
  - Accomplishing task may be higher priority than relationships
  - Emphasize time, punctuality and efficiency
  - Being punctual seen as statement of respect for the other person

## Dimension 5. Direct vs. Indirect Communication

- Direct
  - Say what you mean and mean what you say
  - Yes means yes and no means no
  - No hidden meanings
  - Short and direct respects person's time
- Indirect
  - Emphasis on maintaining relationship
  - Avoid embarrassing other
  - "Yes" may mean "no" to allow the other to "save face"
  - May use third party in private to get the info you want
  - Attentiveness to body language is important

### Sharing in large or small groups

1. *Which of the dimensions do you think might be more challenging for you when encountering someone from the opposite side of the spectrum?*
2. *What have you observed about people who seem to be good at relating to different cultures?*

## **Segment 6. Entering the Culture**

Research the culture you are to enter

- Hear from someone of that culture
- Internet searches
- Reading novels or watch movies
- Learn history and current events

*Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on people's dreams. More seriously still, we may forget that God was there before our arrival." John Taylor, Primal Vision*

### Questions for reflection

1. *What are some examples of how your group can "take off our shoes" in this experience?*
2. *What are some key things to remember as you enter the culture you will be visiting?*

Reminders:

- Remember that you are a guest
- Show honor and respect--- “take off your shoes”
- Be yourself
- BE open, flexible and patient
- Remember that every culture has positives and negatives... no culture is perfect
- Aim for curiosity, not judgment
- LISTEN with all of your senses
- Have a sense of humor and laugh at yourself
- Try the local language
- Remember your purpose in going
- When you return, apply here what you learned through this experience

