Intercultural Agility in Spiritual Direction

Christina Burrows, president of the
Association of Covenant Spiritual Directors,
adjunct faculty member,
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois

We come to spiritual direction, either as a director or directee, with unique cultural experiences and preferences. Culture intersects everything. There is no neutral ground. Intercultural agility in spiritual direction has always been necessary, but we have only begun to bring this part of our formation as spiritual directors to the fore in recent years.

First, what is culture? Soong-Chan Rah defines it this way:

> It is a human attempt to understand the world around us. It is the programming that shapes who we are and who we are becoming. It is a social system that is shaped by the individual and that also has the capacity to shape the individual. But it is also the presence of God, the image of God, the mission of God found in the human spirit, soul, and social system.[1]

And what do we mean by intercultural agility? It is the ability to create new cultural spaces with empathy and effective communication. This is something we do by anticipating, recognizing, and adjusting to the culturally defined behavior of others.[2]

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1 Soong-Chan Rah, *Many Colors: Cultural Intelligence for a Changing Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 38.

2 www.interculturalagility.com. This definition is adapted from the Dubai-based consultancy KnowledgeWorkx's Intercultural Agility framework that includes the Three Colors of Worldview and the Twelve Dimensions of Culture.

To do this well, we need to grow in self-awareness of who we are as unique cultural beings, that we might recognize and stretch toward other people's ways of seeing God, themselves, others, and the world around them. This is part of our call not only as spiritual directors but simply as followers of Jesus. We are all called to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves and to make disciples of all peoples.[3] Unless we are ministering with exact clones of ourselves, we need intercultural agility in spiritual direction to effectively help others notice the movement of God in their lives.

Defining Spiritual Direction

There are many different definitions of spiritual direction, so before we talk about becoming interculturally agile in our practice of spiritual direction, I would like to loosely define what I understand to be the core of spiritual direction practice.

We use different metaphors for spiritual direction, including sifting for gold, candlelight, tending the holy, dancing prayer, offering hospitality, being a spiritual companion, and attuning our awareness toward God. We are soul guides and pilgrims. We are witnesses, helping others to find their authentic voice in their lives with Christ.

Letha Kerl is one of Serve Globally's regional coordinators for Europe and has practiced spiritual direction in Mexico, France, and with global personnel serving in other countries. She speaks of the image of the spiritual director as midwife. In the past, she worked as a doula, so this image is a powerful one for her that she identifies with closely. She said, "I am a holder of space," listening and noticing what God is doing in people's lives.[4]

Each of us has our own definition of spiritual direction. This is mine: "Believing that God is at work in every area of our lives, spiritual direction is a ministry of listening, presence, and prayer, where we walk alongside another to notice together the movement of God in their life." I believe defining our key images and metaphors for spiritual direction helps us know what to hold on to and what to express in new cultural ways of being, thinking, speaking, and doing. All of this helps us learn to flex and become agile in our practice.

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[3] Matt 22:36–40; 28:19–20. Unless identified otherwise, all Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

[4] Interview with Letha Kerl on the topic of spiritual direction with global personnel, March 30, 2018.

Missio Dei

Intercultural agility is not an optional extra to our practice of Christian spiritual direction. It is integral to our calling as followers of Jesus. I would like to highlight a few Scriptures showing that God creates and delights in different cultures and is always reaching out with relentless love across cultural boundaries.

In Genesis 1:26–31, God forms the beginning of the mosaic kingdom with man and woman (diverse humanity from the beginning) as well as the vast array of God's creation. God calls this diverse creation good. God also commissions the man and the woman to become culture creators. God says to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over . . . every living thing that moves upon the earth" (v. 28b).

After the Fall, we start to see the unfolding desire of God to pursue and seek shalom for humanity. Mission is the result of God's initiative, rooted in God's purposes to restore and heal creation.[5] God calls Abraham and in Genesis 12:1–3 declares his intent to bless the nations of the earth through his descendants. "I will bless those who bless you . . . and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (v. 3).

We see threads of this declaration in the weaving of Gentile women into the messianic bloodline shown in the genealogy in Matthew 1. Tamar the Canaanite, Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabite, and Bathsheba the Hittite are all named.

When we pay attention to the life of Jesus, it is impossible to miss the intercultural nature of his disciples. Mortimer Arias describes the group.

> They were as heterogeneous as they could be: men and women, clergy and laity, fishermen, tax collectors, matrons, former prostitutes, the affluent and the poor. But they had one thing in common: they had been "cured," "healed," or "set free" by Jesus' kingdom evangelization. They were living manifestations of the new life in the coming kingdom . . . an incarnational sign of the kingdom.[6]

This intercultural group was an incarnational sign of the kingdom. Everyone has a place in the kingdom of God. What does this mean for

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[5] Darrell Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 4.

[6] Mortimer Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 6.

spiritual directors? It means our directees should also be a diverse group, not just people who are like us. But one might say, I'm not prepared to offer spiritual direction to former prostitutes or the affluent! Indeed, that is why we need to grow in intercultural agility—so we can minister alongside a more diverse group of people.

Jesus declares to his disciples in Luke 10:25–37 that the law and the prophets hang on the commandment to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. He then gives us the parable of the Good Samaritan to ensure that we understand how broad his definition of neighbor is. In Matthew 28:18–20, Jesus gives us his great commission:

> All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Love your neighbor, make disciples of all nations, all peoples, and all ethnicities. Christian spiritual directors[7] because they are first and foremost simply followers of Jesus, are included in this call to love and to lead people of all nations into a living, vibrant life with God, and to recognize that God is already at work in our directees, no matter their cultural background. "If mission is God's work, then God's plan is manifest not only in those being sent out into the world, but in those throughout the world with whom he has already been at work."[8]

The missio Dei, or God's activity in the church and the world in the book of Acts, shows the Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost on people from a multitude of cultures and languages, followed by the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit is already at work in many of those they meet. Philip is sent to an Ethiopian (Acts 8) who was already a worshiper of Yahweh, Peter is sent to Cornelius (Acts 10), who was devout and God-fearing. Paul preaches to the people of Athens (Acts 17), appealing to the evidence of the unknown God among them, quoting their Greek philosophers and poets.

God is inviting us into those places where the Holy Spirit is already at work in all the various countries and cultures of the world. We are fortunate in the US and Canada that we can minister as spiritual direc-

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7 There are also spiritual directors of other faith traditions. They may take a similar approach, but I do not presume to speak for those of a different tradition.

8 Rah, *Many Colors*, 31.

tors alongside people from all over the world. In the same way that Paul used his knowledge of Greek poets and philosophers to effectively communicate the good news of Jesus in Athens, so too will increased intercultural agility help us communicate more effectively with others.

In 2 Corinthians 5:11–21 Paul teaches that believers are all called to be Christ's ambassadors, and to live into his ministry of peacemaking and reconciliation. We get to see that reconciliation occur in the context of spiritual direction. This means that we are seeking shalom, or wholeness, for our directees in their relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation.

In what ways is the Holy Spirit inviting us to notice and join where God is already at work beyond groups of people with whom we are comfortable?

Re-forming Our Approach to Spiritual Direction Training

I want to address the idea that spiritual direction is a ministry shaped by white Christian spirituality. Some BIPOC students training as directors in the C. John Weborg Center for Spiritual Direction (the Weborg Center), have said they need to contextualize the training when the practice and gift of direction moves into other cultures or people groups, noting that most of the training materials are derived from white sources. Looking at the list of people who created the Weborg Center and shaped the initial curriculum, we see a group of intelligent, gifted, and Spirit-filled women and men, some of whom trained me in Cohort 12. All are indeed white North Americans with European ethnic heritage. That has certainly shaped the Weborg Center curriculum and formation culture.

Asian American theologian and spiritual director Cindy Lee talks about this awareness in her paradigm-shifting book *Our Unforming: De-Westernizing Spiritual Formation*. She came to a crisis point when she realized the majority of her education and spiritual formation had been through a culturally white North American/European cultural lens. "In all my studies and explorations of Christian spirituality, . . . it suddenly dawned on me one day that as much as I esteem the many saints and mystics of our faith . . . very few of them look like me."[9] That led her to an exploration of unforming and re-forming her approach to spiritual formation, relearning ways to practice listening for the Spirit together by focusing on three cultural orientations and nine postures. I find these orientations and postures

[9] Cindy Lee, *Our Unforming: De-Westernizing Spiritual Formation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2022), 1.

extremely helpful, but I will not be outlining them here.

In the past few years, the faculty of the Weborg Center (on which I have served for the past three years) have recognized the need for this unforming and re-forming in training spiritual directors. This includes bringing in more culturally and ethnically diverse faculty and supervisors, including texts from BIPOC authors in each of the five courses, and offering workshops on topics that increase intercultural agility. In addition, NPTS now provides additional financial aid for BIPOC students at the Weborg Center to ensure we are training a more diverse group of spiritual directors for the future makeup of the Association of Covenant Spiritual Directors (ACSD).

Nevertheless, although we do need to develop a more diverse ACSD membership to reflect our broader Covenant ministerium and congregations, that alone will not ensure we are effectively ministering in an interculturally agile way. The majority of our members are female, over sixty, and white. There is no shame in any of these things. We are all created in the image of God and beloved by God. All ethnicities are made for good, have experienced brokenness, and can be restored by Jesus.[10] We simply need to recognize how this group has shaped the dominant culture in our practice of spiritual direction in the Covenant. Any of us, no matter our background, can embrace the posture of a cultural learner and become a spiritual director who is interculturally agile. It is encouraging that over the past several years, we have seen numerous groups of spiritual directors in the ACSD doing just that, by joining Antiracism Discipleship Pathway cohorts and Intercultural Agility cohorts for spiritual directors, going on Sankofa journeys, or pursuing other avenues for growth.

Creating a Space for Healing from Racial Trauma

A history of racial trauma is a universal thread in BIPOC directees' past and present experiences.

> Racial trauma is real. Every day in the United States and across the world women, men, and children of color experience racism and witness lives and livelihoods devalued or lost as if they do not matter. The result is that people of color are carrying unhealed racial trauma.[11]

[10] Sarah Shin, *Beyond Colorblind: Redeeming Our Ethnic Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 21.

[11] Sheila Wise Rowe, *Healing Racial Trauma: The Road to Resilience* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 8.

> Most people of color arrive at spiritual direction with scars derived from their stigmatized status in society. Often they have issues with self-esteem and question why God permits their oppression.[12]
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> The gross inhumanity that crushed our people was of the most horrific and vulgar in Western history.[13]

Becoming trauma-informed is essential to our ability to come alongside people of color in an empathetic and interculturally agile way. This comes both from learning about trauma and racial trauma, as well as learning about the history of racism and colonization in the contexts where we are serving or in the contexts where our directees have lived, wherever that is in the world.

As a British Korean immigrant to California, I experience this in a complex way. My mother experienced oppression as Korea was under Japanese occupation when she was born. She then lived through the Second World War and the Korean War before emigrating to the US, mainland Europe, and finally, England, where she once said of her experience of racism there, "You don't know what it is like for everyone to treat you like a monkey." Knowing that we carry generational racial trauma in our bodies,[14] I wonder what I still need to unpack to become whole.

My father is British. I was raised in England and I am culturally very English. Knowing that the British have historically been the source of so much colonization and slavery around the world is overwhelming. These are my ancestors too. Perpetrators of wrong carry trauma because their actions dehumanize themselves as well as others.

Resmaa Menakem highlights the fact that the brutal practices white bodies perpetrated against Black and Native bodies in the United States were learned and practiced in medieval Europe. "The carnage perpetrated on Blacks and Native Americans in the New World began, on the same soil, as an adaptation of longstanding white-on-white practices. This brutalization created trauma that has yet to be healed among white bodies

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[12] Lerita Coleman Brown, "Praying without Ceasing: Basking in the Loving Presence of God" in *Embodied Spirits: Stories of Spiritual Directors of Color* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2014), 46.

[13] Richard Twiss, *Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 62.

[14] Resmaa Menakem's book *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* (Las Vegas, NV: Central Recovery Press, 2017) gives valuable insight into this, as well as providing practical exercises to help us and our directees move toward healing.

today."[15] I am on a learning journey of discovery and healing as I unpack my family's varied experiences of racial trauma.

In the Covenant, we are blessed to have a variety of opportunities to help us move toward greater self-awareness, healing, and skill in this area, including cohort learning experiences like the Antiracism Discipleship Pathway and immersive learning experiences like the Sankofa journey. As spiritual directors, we need to do our own work of healing as well as learn how to create safe spaces for BIPOC directees to heal from their racial trauma. Cindy Lee suggests, "For BIPOC communities, unforming is just as healing as forming. We need to unlearn the practices, actions, and teachings of patriarchy and colonization that are ingrained in our bodies and habits."[16]

Indigenous theologian Adrian Jacobs also appeals to us to create healing space for Indigenous people in this way:

> To "do justly" we must tell our story and express all the pain of our history. You will hear our bright hopes and our painful deaths. Weep with us and sing with us. The pain will be so deep its only consolation is in our Creator. The great sin against our dignity is answered by a love that brings arrogant violence to its knees. This is the message of the blood of Jesus that speaks better things than that of Abel.[17]

Spiritual directors would do well to grow in intercultural agility by becoming agents of healing from racial trauma through the wholeness that Jesus brings.

The Intercultural Development Continuum

I was introduced to the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)[18] in 2018. I did not like it at the time, because the first time I took it, I did not score highly on the inventory even though I am biracial, speak three languages, and have lived in five countries. Now I use it almost every week. As a Qualified Administrator of the IDI, I find it to be a useful tool for helping people, including spiritual directors, to grow in intercultural agility.

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15 Menakem, *My Grandmother's Hands*, 62.

16 Lee, *Our Unforming*, 34.

17 Adrian Jacobs, "A History of Slaughter: Embracing Our Martyrdom at the Margins of Encounter," *Journal of the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies* 4 (2006), 125.

18 http://idiinventory.com/. For more information about taking the IDI, email idi@covchurch.org.

My initial debrief with Prajakta David-Kelley, director of global advancement and mobilization for the Covenant, helped me to realize that although I had gained skills for connecting quickly and easily with people of a different culture, I tended to think that was enough. I had studied French and German language and culture in depth. With other cultural groups, I realized my emphasis was on looking for commonalities. While that is in itself a good thing, I was not making the effort to go deeper with people, to discover ways we are different. Intentionally seeking out and accepting those differences would help me learn to stretch myself, creating new cultural spaces with others. Those spaces are where we can adapt to one another.

When we talk about cultural differences it is important to remember that we are not just talking about race, ethnicity, or nationality. Our culture is impacted by all the ways humans are different. These include:

- Nationality
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Home/geographic roots
- Conflict style
- Socioeconomic status
- Religion
- Gender
- Communication style
- Age
- Family background
- Ability/Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Personality
- Cultural worldview

It is necessary to reflect on who we are as unique cultural beings, and how these and other factors have shaped our cultural identity. Some like to create a collage of key images that represent our cultural journey.

Intercultural development is the growth journey toward becoming interculturally agile. Spiritual directors need a mirror to reflect our self-awareness in our interactions with people of other cultures. The IDI does this by showing us our perceived level of skill and our actual level of skill. The inventory places us along an Intercultural Development Continuum[19] that includes five major markers or orientations of development from a monocultural mindset to an intercultural mindset. These markers are as follows:

1. **Denial.** This is where we miss differences or are unaware of them. When people talk about being colorblind, that is indicative of being in this orientation.

[19] https://www.idiinventory.com/idc.

2. Polarization. This is where we are aware of and possibly judge differences. Here we may see groups of people as "us and them" and either have a view of other cultural groups looking down on our own group, or we see our cultural group as the "normal" group, and others in a more negative light.

3. Minimization. This is where we de-emphasize differences, highlighting commonalities. The danger here is that we gloss over differences, never going deeper. Some people do this as a survival mechanism if they are in a non-dominant cultural group; some do this as they are not yet aware of the differences, especially if they are in a dominant cultural group.

4. Acceptance. This is where we have gone deeper into comprehending cultural differences and can accept them, but we may not yet know how to navigate those differences.

5. Adaptation. This orientation reflects an ability to bridge cultural differences. It does not imply that we give up our sense of self or authenticity; it is simply being incarnational or interculturally agile in order to create new cultural spaces where everyone feels they belong.

How self-aware are we of the way we relate to others? Are we growing and developing in our ability to reach across differences?

Three Colors of Worldview

Once we understand our level of skill in responding well to cultural differences, we need some cultural frameworks to help us move toward agility. Learning about race, nationality, and ethnicity is important, but that doesn't necessarily help us to understand what makes a person tick. Commonalities may be reflected in certain ethnic groups, but there is so much global migration that ethnic, national, and racial labeling is no longer the most effective way for us to understand our differences. We need to learn to discover people as unique cultural beings.

I am a recent US citizen. I could describe myself as an Asian American, but that is not enough to understand who I am. Asian Americans are not a monolith. They come from an entire continent with vast cultural differences. I have never lived in Asia or in an Asian community, so I am culturally far more British and European than Asian. Any stereotypes one may have about Asian Americans are unlikely to apply to someone like me. Rather than relying primarily on racial or ethnic stereotypes in our

initial interactions with people, we need to learn cultural frameworks that help us recognize cultural preferences based on communication and behavior.

The Three Colors of Worldview[20] (guilt/innocence, honor/shame, power/fear) is one such framework that can provide insights into the cultures around us and the cultures we create in our homes, churches, and workplaces. We begin by identifying our individual cultural worldviews, understanding our own "self-culture." Self-cultural analysis allows us to connect our unique cultural wiring to another person's unique cultural wiring. This creates a space where we can build beneficial relationships, resolve conflict faster, and equip ourselves to be interculturally agile.

Culture can be seen as an iceberg in which only the surface parts are observable. Food, clothing, language, music—these parts of culture are above the surface. The next layer of culture is just below the surface: our different attitudes and approaches to life. The next layer contains our norms and values, our rules for success, and the ways we communicate. For instance, do we use linear communication, sharing information with our listeners in a clear and ordered way? Or do we use circular communication, with a more interactive exchange among a group of people around a central topic of discussion?

Color wheels show three distinct colors—red, yellow, and blue—that can combine to make endless variations of colors. The Three Colors of Worldview are distinct worldviews, but you will never find a person or a community with a cultural worldview that is purely one of the three. Each person has some combination of the three worldviews, and each worldview is a reaction to an environment. Distinct groups of people might prefer one of the three worldviews. It is important to note that no worldview is better or worse than another. They are simply different and have healthy and unhealthy expressions.

Guilt/Innocence

Those who have a predominantly guilt/innocence worldview are focused on doing the right thing and avoiding the wrong thing. They are raised to ask questions, to find the correct answers, and to prove their innocence when necessary. They appreciate a robust legal system and written agreements. They are likely to value direct communication and an individualistic outlook on life. Christians who have this worldview are

[20] www.interculturalagility.com. I am a certified practitioner of the KnowledgeWorkx intercultural agility framework of which the Three Colors of Worldview and Twelve Dimensions of Culture are a part.

often focused on the effects of sin and God's forgiveness.

In talking about his experience of spiritual direction with Australian Aboriginals, spiritual director Carl Starkloff describes the fact that "aboriginals . . . were scarcely able at all to discourse on a history of personal sin." He describes whites as having "sin culture" or "guilt culture" whereas Aboriginals have "shame culture."[21]

Honor/Shame

Those who have a predominantly honor/shame worldview are more focused on their community than who they are as an individual. Their actions are closely connected to the will of their family, tribe, or community. They highly value relationships and will prioritize their relational interactions over efficiency or rules. They are likely to favor indirect communication as more honoring, or face-saving. Christians who have this worldview are often focused on the glory of God, or how God lifts us out of our shame.

Many cultural groups have a more collectivist worldview, including most Asian, Middle Eastern, Latine, and African cultures.

> When a Western person, formed in this worldview of the importance of the person and his or her rights and responsibilities, meets an African in the direction relationship, they meet someone whose experience of the self is distinctly different. In contrast to the West, the African individual does not exist apart from the community. The classic phrasing of this intrinsic relationship comes from John Mbiti: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am."[22]

In a 2020 Antiracism Discipleship Pathway group discussing racism directed toward African Americans, I witnessed two people respond to the same event. An Asian woman replied, "When I heard about that, I felt shame." A white woman said, "When I heard about that, I felt guilt." I almost laughed at how classic their response was, but I too was feeling guilt.

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21 Carl F. Starkloff, "Interiority and the 'Universe of Discourse'" in Susan Rakoczy, ed., *Common Journey, Different Paths: Spiritual Direction in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 55–56.

22 John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1969), 108–9, quoted by Susan Rakoczy, in *Common Journey, Different Paths*, 14.

Power/Fear

People with a predominantly power/fear worldview have a strong awareness of hierarchy. They are aware of the power dynamics in a group of people, in their workplace, church, or broader community, and are likely to interact with people in response to that power dynamic. A person with more power has more freedom to empower and give life to others and to speak directly to others. A person with less power might need to align themselves with someone with more power and speak to them more indirectly. Christians holding this worldview are often keenly aware of the power of God and the works of the enemy. In my experience growing up in charismatic churches, they often reflect a power/fear worldview, both in their view of spirituality and in the way leadership functions. One spiritual director's view of traditional Black spirituality describes a power/fear worldview:

> The nature and being of God in black spirituality are best understood when one pictures God as the Almighty One who is all-powerful, who rules the universe, and who controls all people. Almost always the traditional black prayer opens with a line addressed specifically to "Almighty God."[23]

Many BIPOC Americans I have talked to about the Three Colors of Worldview say they can function in an innocence/guilt working environment because the American educational system has taught them to. At home, however, they may relate to their family and friends with an honor/shame or power/fear worldview.

Three Colors of Worldview in the Gospel

We see all three of these worldviews at the Fall in Genesis 3.

> When man sinned, three great conditions came upon mankind. By sinning man broke God's law and consequently was in a position of guilt. By sinning man also broke God's relationship and consequently was in a position of shame. Finally, when man sinned he broke God's trust and was from that point, in a position of fear.[24]

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[23] Maurice J. Nutt, "Trouble Don't Last Always: Toward a Spirituality of Hope" in Brown, "Praying without Ceasing," 18.

[24] Roland Muller, *The Messenger, the Message, and the Community: Three Critical Issues for the Cross-Cultural Church Planter* (Rosthern, SK: CanBooks, 2013), 113.

Ephesians shows us how, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the good news of Jesus Christ is expressed through all three worldviews:

> **Guilt/Innocence:** "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (1:7a). "But God, who is rich in mercy . . . even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (2:4a, 5a).
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> **Honor/Shame:** "He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ" (1:5a). "You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God" (2:19, cf. 2:12–13).
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> **Power/Fear:** " . . . the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come" (1:19–21).

Jayson Georges encourages us that "reading Ephesians three-dimensionally helps Christians fully perceive 'the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and insight.'"[25] (1:7b–8). Beginning to see the movement of God from all three worldview lenses makes our vision much more expansive.

Each worldview has a healthy and an unhealthy expression. Directors can help directees live into the healthy side of that worldview by asking how their worldview shows up in their relationship with God, self, others, and their environment.

When we are unsure what worldview people have, applying the following "litmus test" to our interactions helps care for people well, no matter their worldviews. We can ask ourselves, "What is the right thing to do? What is the honoring thing to do? What is the empowering and life-giving thing to do?"

The sister framework to the Three Colors of Worldview is the Twelve Dimensions of Culture. Here are two examples:

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[25] Jayson Georges, *The 3D Gospel: Ministry in Guilt, Shame, and Power Cultures* (New York: Time Press, 2017), 9.

Communication: Are we direct or indirect communicators? Do we say what we're thinking bluntly and honestly? Or do we ensure that we preserve the honor of the person we're speaking with, and use more gentle language, communicate via a third party or a parable?

Expression: Do we reveal or conceal our emotions? Do we show everything we are thinking and feeling freely, or are we more careful with the emotions we express, to appear more professional?

We will not describe all twelve dimensions here, but those who participate in an Intercultural Agility cohort based on the KnowledgeWorkx frameworks can take the Three Colors of Worldview and Twelve Dimensions of Culture assessments and practice using these frameworks.

Creating New Cultural Spaces

Intercultural agility is the ability to create new cultural spaces with greater empathy and more effective communication. This is something we do by anticipating, recognizing, and adjusting to the culturally defined behavior of others. To grow in this area, we need to be incarnational like Jesus and take on the humble posture of a cultural learner, something that requires us to be open to and flexible about how the Holy Spirit might call us to practice spiritual direction. How might God be inviting us to respond today? What might it look like for spiritual directors to grow as ambassadors of reconciliation for Jesus?

I want to conclude with the image of the intercultural heavenly worshipers in Revelation, depicted so vividly in the First Nations Version of the New Testament.

> After this I saw a great crowd of people, too many to count, from every nation, tribe, clan, and language. They were standing before the seat of honor and before the Lamb, dressed in pure white regalia, holding palm tree branches in their hands.
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> They lifted their voices and shouted, "The power to set us free and make us whole belongs to the Great Spirit who sits upon the seat of honor, and to the Lamb!"
>
> All the spirit-messengers who encircled the seat of honor, along with the elders and the four living spirit animals, humbled themselves and fell face down on the ground before the

> Great Spirit to give him the honor that he deserves.
>
> "Aho! It is so!" They said with one voice. "Praise and honor and wisdom and respect and power and strength belong to the Great Spirit to the time beyond the end of all days! Aho! It is so!"[26]

In our practice of spiritual direction, may "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven."

[26] Rev 7:9–12, *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021).