

WORLD VIEW FOR DUMMIES

www.audreyfrank.com

A friend of mine was born and raised in Tanzania and has been fluent in Kiswahili since childhood. I once asked his help in Kiswahili grammar and syntax as I was learning it for the first time. He looked at me quizzically and said, “Just because I speak it doesn’t mean I can explain it.”

His statement can be made about most of us regarding our own worldview. We operate in it on a daily basis, but essentially many of us are dummies when it comes to explaining it to others. Understanding our world view and others’ is a tool we’ll use again and again in our gospel witness and faith conversations across cultures.

THE BEGINNING OF WORLD VIEW

Roland Muller, author of *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door* (XLibris, 2001), introduced us to the concept of humanity’s three basic emotional responses to sin in the garden of Eden. We see them in Genesis 3.

Guilt

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Genesis 3:7

This was humanity’s first cover-up: trying to cover guilt.

Shame

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Genesis 3:8

Shame forced them into hiding, as it does to us today.

Fear

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked...”
Genesis 3:10

For the first time, man and woman were afraid of God.

by Audrey Frank at www.audreyfrank.com

THREE BASIC WORLD VIEWS

Out of these three emotional responses to sin emerged three basic building blocks for world views as we observe them in cultures today. All cultures contain elements of all three, but one world view is usually dominant at any particular given time in history.

Guilt-Innocence

The Guilt-Innocence worldview is predominant in **individualist societies** where emphasis is placed on the rights of the individual. Behavior and beliefs are measured by the yardsticks of guilt or innocence, right or wrong in Guilt-Innocence cultures.

Examples of Guilt-Innocence Cultures:

The United States, Europe

Example Belief:

A child born with a cleft lip has done nothing wrong; he or she has a problem that can be repaired and rehabilitated with the right medical intervention.

Shame-Honor

The shame-honor worldview is predominant in **collectivist societies** where decisions are made based on their impact on the group to which one belongs. The group is always more important than one's own rights. Honor and shame are positions in society. Follow the rules and maintain a position of honor in the group; break them, be cast outside the group into a position of shame.

Examples of Shame-Honor Cultures:

The Middle East, Asia

Example Belief:

A child born with a cleft lip brings shame on his or her family. In some cases the child and parents are ostracized or the child is hidden from society.

THREE BASIC WORLDVIEWS CONTINUED...



Fear-Power

Power is an important concept in fear-based cultures. When something bad happens, it is assumed that the spirits have been angered. Spiritual power has been put out of balance and must be restored or further punishment will result.

Examples of Fear-Power Cultures:
The Mijikenda Bantu Tribes of East Africa

Example Belief:

A child is born with a cleft lip because the spirits have been angered. The deformity is punishment. The only solution is to appease the offended spirit or cry out to a greater spiritual power.

GOSPEL WITNESS ACCORDING TO WORLDVIEW

The Gospel of Christ encompasses all world views: through the Messiah, we are forgiven of our sins, our shame is abolished, and we are given power over fear. The starting point in faith conversations can make all the difference in our gospel witness being understood within a particular worldview.

Guilt-Innocence Worldview

God is just; He does not lie.

He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie. 1 Samuel 15:29

I, the Lord, speak the truth; I declare what is right. Isaiah 45:19

For I, the Lord, love justice. Isaiah 61:8

GOSPEL WITNESS ACCORDING TO WORLDVIEW CONTINUED...



For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face. Psalm 11:7

We receive forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. Ephesians 1:7-8

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive in Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.
Colossians 2:13-14

Shame-Honor Worldview

We were created in God's image and bestowed with honor.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

When God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female; when they were created, he blessed them and named them "humankind." Genesis 5:1-2

Our position of honor was lost and we were separated by our sin and shame when Adam and Eve disobeyed.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Genesis 3:8

GOSPEL WITNESS ACCORDING TO WORLDVIEW CONTINUED...



Shame has been abolished and honor restored through Jesus Christ.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Fear-Power Worldview

There was a time in the beginning when man and woman walked with God without fear. Sin caused man to fear God and hide from him.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

Genesis 3:8-10

Man began to seek power apart from God.

You call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God. Answer me, O lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again." Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The Lord—He is God! The Lord—He is God!" 1 Kings 18:24, 37-39

God sent Jesus to demonstrate His power over every spirit. Jesus is the name above all names, and defeated all spiritual powers on the cross. Through him we are promised His power to overcome all fear.

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philipians 2:9-11

Further Resources:

- *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door* by Roland Muller (Xlibris, 2001)
- *Covered Glory: The Face of Honor and Shame in the Muslim World* by Audrey Frank (Harvest House, 2019)
- *The 3D Gospel*, by Jayspon Georges (Tim& 275 Press, 2014)
- *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures* by Georges and Baker (2016, IVP)
- *The Global Gospel*, by Werner Mischke (2015)