

**The Church and Cultures: New perspectives in Missiological Anthropology**  
**Louis J Luzbetak, SVD. Orbis 1988**

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**1. Culture is:**

1. a plan 2. consisting of a set of norms, standards, and associated with notions and beliefs 3. for coping with the various demands of life, 4. shared by a social group, 5 learned by the individual from the society, and 6 organised into a dynamic 7 system of control.

Culture as a Plan for living:

Not open ended way of life but a code of action, for survival and success.

Culture is a set of norms, standards, notions and beliefs:

Culture consists of control mechanisms. Provides also values and meanings. Helps cope with context, physical and social, thought patterns and knowledge.

Culture is a Thing of the Mind underlying Behaviour:

It is not the building itself but the blueprint ideas. Things and event reflect the culture. So artefacts are expressions of culture.

Culture as a more or less successful plan:

They only try to cope with problems, learnt from experience. Otherwise it crumbles away.

Culture as a unique plan:

Some common human aspirations etc. but different.

Culture as a comprehensive plan:

Culture embraces all three aspects of life, physical, social and ideational. Holistic.

Overt and covert, manifest and implicit, universals, alternatives and specialities.

**2. Culture as Societal Possession**

The Meaning of Society:

Organised interaction across the generations. Rôle assignments, social control, communicative systems etc. Talcott Parsons Functionalism. Vs. Conflict Theorists of change as normative.

Culture in relation to Society and the Individual:

Culture can be an individual's theory of her society's behaviour. The individual can abstract. But anthropology studies things and behaviour, and not just ideas of culture. Variability: Each person plays the game of their culture according to the rules but many moves available.

Idiosyncrasies are not part of culture but specialities are, such as mini-cultures.

Culture as tradition:

Social heredity is a tradition and part of culture, although culture is not simply inherited from the past. But what is handed on can be formative.

The Extent of Cultural and Societal Boundaries:

Strictly 'culture' is social group speaking same language with same systems, and is largely an embodiment of history. But we speak of 'western culture' more loosely. Sometimes we would be advised to use 'sub-culture'.

Missiological application:

Societal or individual approach to mission? Framework of the local community. Cross-cultural proclamation? Popular religiosity? Syncretism? In-groups and out-groups. Power struggles between groups. Group-consciousness and group centredness.

Culture as a learned design:

Human Beings have to learn culture. Without Enculturation we would be cultureless. Socialisation however is learning to belong.