

Preaching
with
Cultural Intelligence

Understanding the People Who
Hear Our Sermons

Matthew D. Kim


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For my brothers

Timothy David Kim (1979–2015),
the most intelligent, culturally intelligent,
and selfless person I have ever known

and

Dennis Daniel Kim,
who uses his intellect, cultural intelligence,
and relational gifts to change the world one person at a time.

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To God alone be all of the glory, honor, and praise.

Introduction

A fable exists about two animal friends: a giraffe and an elephant. The giraffe decided to build his family a new residence. Meeting his family's precise dimensions, the abode showcased lofty entryways and majestic ceilings. It was a vibrant expression of the giraffe's creativity and craftsmanship. In fact, it received the accolade of "National Giraffe Home of the Year."

One day, as the giraffe peered out from his woodshop window, he noticed an elephant strolling down his avenue. Having previously served with him on a PTA committee and being cognizant of the elephant's skill in woodworking, the giraffe quickly welcomed him into his home. At that moment there was an obvious dilemma. This house was built for a giraffe and not for an elephant. The elephant could squeeze his head through the doorway, but his corpulent body was quite a different matter. The giraffe proudly proclaimed, "It's a good thing we made this door expandable to accommodate my woodshop equipment. Give me a minute while I take care of our problem." So he took down some adjoining panels to oblige the elephant's girth.

After enjoying a few laughs, the conversation was interrupted by a phone call, which led the giraffe away momentarily. Filling the time, the elephant browsed the room, appreciating the giraffe's workmanship. His curiosity led his eyes to the second floor, but the wooden stairs could not support his weight. The stairs began to fracture with each tentative step. Overhearing the crackling in the next room, the giraffe erupted: "What on earth is happening here?" To this, the elephant responded, "I was trying to make myself at home." The giraffe countered, "Okay, I see the problem. The doorway is too narrow. We'll have to make you smaller. There's an aerobics studio near here. If you'd take some classes there, we could get you down to size."

The elephant was perplexed. "Maybe," he muttered.

The giraffe proceeded with his tirade, “And the stairs are too weak to carry your weight. If you’d go to ballet class at night, I’m sure we could get you light on your feet. I really hope you’ll do it. I like having you here.”

“Perhaps,” the elephant replied. “But to tell you the truth, I’m not sure that a house designed for a giraffe will ever really work for an elephant, not unless there are some major changes.”¹

As an expert in business management, R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr. shares this perceptive fable in response to the mounting challenges of working in a diverse corporate culture. In his book *Building a House for Diversity*, he presents skills that businesspeople require in an increasingly diverse workforce. Thomas observes that giraffes and elephants coexist in every company but he queries whether both are given the permission and the capacity to thrive.

Giraffes represent the majority culture and its leaders, whom Thomas refers to as “the insiders.” Giraffes set the tone for the organization’s culture, vision, values, and strategies. Elephants, however, represent the minority cultures, “the outsiders” within an organization who must always conform to the ways of the majority culture in order to fit in.

I share this fable because, like the business community, the demographics of our churches have also been diversifying. Most congregations in North America are not as completely homogeneous as they once were with respect to denominational traditions, ethnicity, gender, location, socioeconomic, musical preferences, education, ministry philosophy, theology, ecclesiology, and so on. Manifestations of the homogeneous unit principle as espoused by Donald McGavran, who argued that churches grow most effectively when they are homogeneous, linger in various parts of the country.² That is, eleven o’clock on Sunday morning is still regarded as the most segregated hour in the week. Yet in many congregations, widespread demographic shifts are steadily occurring. As preachers, we want to “be prepared in season and out of season,” as the apostle Paul encouraged his protégé Timothy not only to preach the Word but also to preach it relevantly to the various types of listeners God sends his way (2 Tim. 4:2).

Elephants or the Others (whomever that term means to us) have already entered the church building. They worship among us, and their diversity may not be revealed only in the hue of their skin. Diversity exists in subtle places concealed from our naked eyes. Elephants sit throughout the sanctuary, hoping to hear a sermon that connects with their lives. We may have noticed them, but have they been permitted and given access to feel truly at home in our congregations? Do we prepare our sermons with them fully in our hermeneutical and homiletical views?

Allegorically speaking, the giraffe's perspective in this fable represents a common attitude among preachers today. We may believe that we are the real architects, contractors, and builders of this organization called the church. That is, we like to call the shots. We determine the blueprint of the congregation through our vision casting and leadership prowess. We pour the church's concrete foundation with core doctrinal beliefs and erect the framework with what we consider essential values for our church. Through ecclesial protocols and policies, we set in place a secure roof that provides welfare for our members. We may even build a hedge around the building through our preaching that communicates either verbally or indirectly what types of people are welcome and those we furtively wish would check out the church down the street.

As an ethnic Korean, born and raised in the United States, the impetus for this book derives from my personal experiences living as an elephant in America. Like the proverbial elephant in the room, I and Others often stand out, and not necessarily for positive reasons. In most contexts, the dominant culture places me in the Other category. In other words, I have never felt completely comfortable in white America, nor am I at ease among Korean nationals and first-generation Korean immigrants. Like sitting awkwardly and uncomfortably between two chairs made of timber, I have always sat in the in-between space, what Gerald Arbuckle calls the state of liminality.³ In most cases, being in a sanctuary where I am the Other has meant that my background and experiences have been grossly misunderstood or completely ignored.

Being in the position of the elephant is cumbersome and painful. We do not know what it is like until we have actually experienced it. In preaching to diverse listeners, then, we want to be mindful of the Other, especially because we take the second greatest commandment seriously. To love our neighbors means that we will put ourselves in the position of the Other. Like Jesus's example of the good Samaritan, we care for our church members just as we care for our own bodies and souls. We can demonstrate this care even in our preaching.

As preachers, we want to pause and reflect on life and Scripture from the Others' viewpoint. For example, have you ever asked yourself these questions about your listeners during sermon preparation? (1) How would listeners from Life Situation X or from Cultural Background Y read and interpret this Scripture passage? (2) What excites them, and what do they fear? (3) Which illustrations are most relevant and helpful for these listeners? (4) What does life application look like in their specific context? (5) How can we embrace and even celebrate those who are different from us in our preaching ministry and in "doing life" together?

At points in my life, I have also sat in the position of the giraffe, having served as the senior pastor of a church where our congregation's demographic consisted of different ethnic groups and with people from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Through trial and error, I attempted, albeit imperfectly, to preach God's Word in such a way that the Others would fully recognize and appreciate that I have prepared sermons with them in mind.

Today I serve as a professor of preaching and ministry at an evangelical theological seminary and am seeking to train future preachers from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. As someone who has wrestled with cultural sensitivity and insensitivity all of my life, I am writing this book to prepare twenty-first-century preachers for the realities of congregational diversity in North America and beyond.

So then, how do we prepare sermons for diverse listeners? Think about it like preparing a meal. In order to create an entrée, we need the proper ingredients. If we frequent many grocery stores, we will have observed that somewhere in the store there is an ethnic or international food aisle. As an ethnic person, I enjoy many types of cuisine—the spicier the better, I say. In this designated aisle various spices adorn the shelves from around the globe. Grocery stores have made the requisite adjustments to diversity. We want our preaching to be well informed and well stocked with the proper ingredients as well.

I once spent part of a summer in Kisii, Kenya, on a short-term mission trip. Wanting to learn more about the local fare, I asked our host missionary what the staple diet is in Kenyan culture. His response was, “We eat *ugali* [thickened cornmeal porridge] at every meal.” Likewise, preaching involves three major staples in our sermon preparation: understanding hermeneutics, humans, and homiletics. First, evangelical preachers begin sermon preparation with God's Word. Thus preaching involves hermeneutics, the skill of interpreting the biblical text and its context. Second, we preach to people, so we want to understand humans, which involves preachers building the Homiletical Bridge. Third, we engage in homiletics, the art and science of preaching, which is to take that biblical truth from the text and create and deliver a relevant message for today's variety of hearers.

The elephant is correct when he says that a home “designed for a giraffe will [not] ever really work for an elephant, not unless there are some major changes.” The same could be said of our preaching. Perhaps we have been preaching the same way no matter who is listening. In such cases, we have not actually considered the Others in our sermon preparation. Other homileticians value diversity but may not know what questions to ask or what the process involves.

If you are reading this book, you probably, like this giraffe, relish an “I like having you here” feeling toward the Others. If so, we want to reflect on the

elephants in the room. We want them to feel noticed, valued, embraced, and celebrated in church life and in our preaching. We want to love elephants in our congregations deeply, just as Christ loved his church. In *Building a House for Diversity*, the author later points out the giraffe's fundamental gaffe: "The house was not built with elephants in mind."⁴ Perhaps more often than we would care to admit, our sermons have been written for giraffes and not for elephants. It is never too late, however, to cultivate skills in preaching to both (so-called) insiders and outsiders.

In the chapters to come, we will become equipped with a conceptual framework and practical model to better understand and preach effectively to various types of listeners. The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 serves as an introduction or backdrop to the theory of cultural intelligence. First, in chapter 1, I introduce the concept of cultural intelligence and give us a framework for how our preaching benefits from developing cultural intelligence. In chapter 2, I present the Homiletical Template by which to implement the concept of cultural intelligence in our preaching. Chapter 3 explores the intersection of preaching and hermeneutics and investigates how Others may read and interpret the written Word. In chapter 4, we embark on a journey toward self-exegesis, to consider the preacher's own cultural context and thereby illuminate how one's cultural lenses impact the hermeneutical and homiletical enterprises. This exercise is critical because only after preachers have deeply explored their own contexts will they have the bearings to interpret another culture.

In part 2, we flesh out cultural intelligence as a homiletical practice and explore five cultural contexts and how each type of listener is wired. The five cultural contexts to be surveyed include denominations (chap. 5), ethnicities (chap. 6), genders (chap. 7), locations (chap. 8), and religions (chap. 9). The format for each major chapter is similar, working through the Homiletical Template in three stages. In Stage 1, we commence with the hermeneutics involved in interpreting Scripture as we contemplate cultural variances. In Stage 2, we build the Homiletical Bridge and explore six areas of life for each cultural background. Finally, in Stage 3, we discuss the delivery element of homiletics in communicating more efficaciously to each cultural group.

We preach the Bible to real people—both to ourselves and to our hearers. Preaching effectively to the Other involves what David A. Livermore and others call "cultural intelligence," and that is what we seek to obtain.⁵ Moreover, preaching with cultural intelligence requires biblical exegesis *and* cultural exegesis. Sermons deficient in either form of exegesis will be found duly wanting in the ears and hearts of our listeners. Both are indispensable to our calling as preachers. I want to acknowledge up front that *Preaching with*

Cultural Intelligence cannot possibly exegete comprehensively every cultural context being covered or tailor cultural intelligence to a given congregation's precise measurements. Some cultures on the reader's immediate radar will inevitably not be explored. However, I trust that as we embark on this cultural intelligence journey together, even one more listener will exclaim on Sunday morning, "Thanks be to God for this preacher who understands God's Word and understands me." So, thank you for picking up this book and for taking the next step in becoming a culturally intelligent Christian and a culturally sensitive preacher. Our efforts are not in vain, because God is worth it and so are our listeners.



Part 1

Cultural Intelligence *in* Theory

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Preaching and Cultural Intelligence

Blocks from where I live in Beverly, Massachusetts, lies the Kernwood Bridge, built in 1907 to connect Beverly, known for its scenic public parks and beaches, to the legendary town of Salem, famed for its late 1600s witch trials and modern witchcraft tourism.¹ This bridge not only expedites approximately 7,700 drivers' daily commutes when crossing the Danvers River into the other city; it also serves to bring together these two distinct expressions of New England culture.² Just as physical bridges connect landmasses and town cultures separated by bodies of water, bridges are necessary connective instruments in homiletics. Preachers in the twenty-first century require, as John Stott puts it, the dexterities to stand "between two worlds"³ and engage the world of the Bible and the world of today.⁴ This book is an attempt to put additional flesh on Stott's original skeleton for preaching as bridge-building. It is inadequate to study the Scriptures without marrying this biblical exegesis to the pressing cultural issues of our time and valuing the cultural groups embodied in our churches.

Like the sides of an incomplete Rubik's Cube, preachers survey a checkboard of eclectic people sitting in the pews, trying to make sense of how they can integrate the disparate pieces of their hearers' lives into a clear, contextualized, and unified message. This bridge-building exercise in preaching warrants cultural intelligence. At the same time, the preacher who displays cultural intelligence when preaching is simultaneously and subconsciously building bridges between and among his congregants, who often come from very dissimilar cultural contexts. Congregational cultural intelligence is a trait that is sorely missing in many churches today. That is, people don't have the requisite training to understand each other. In this opening chapter, I want

to define culture through the eyes of a homiletician and explore how cultural intelligence conjoins the preaching process. The chapter concludes with a short description of the Homiletical Template that will augment our competence to preach with greater cultural understanding and sensitivity.

Culture and Homiletics

Culture is ubiquitous.⁵ Just open your ears to the cacophony of languages in the bustling grocery store aisles or glance at the latest fashion magazines vying for your consumption or absorb cultural sound bites by hearing late night talk-show hosts' monologues on CBS, ABC, and NBC. Culture is life, and life is culture. Yet defining culture succinctly and cogently is quite tricky, is it not? The sheer murkiness of the term has led many in our society to dichotomize or parse out culture. Ask anyone on Main Street or in your church lobby what the term "culture" means today, and you will probably hear particularized aspects of culture named, including language, fashion, social media, trends, worldviews, musical tastes, news, values, politics, race, ethnicity, cuisine, beliefs, gender issues, mores, human sexuality, blue collar, white collar, religious preferences, the arts, sports, hip-hop, church traditions, evangelical, mainline, progressive, liberal, conservative, Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist, R-rated, PG-rated, and so on.

Not only have we compartmentalized culture but also culture is never stagnant. All cultures are fluid and ever evolving. New cultural trends are constantly being instated and reinstated by Hollywood, religious leaders, the media, politicians, marketers, designers, and others. How, then, might preachers define culture with regard to understanding the litany of cultures represented in our congregations? The apostle Paul provides this telos, or end goal, of preaching where he writes to the church of Colossae, "[Jesus Christ] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present *everyone* fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me" (Col. 1:28–29, emphasis added). In referring to this text, I am not contending that every single sermon must include Christ, as some propose from the historic-redemptive perspective on preaching.⁶ However, I am submitting that it is in the purview of *every* preacher to understand and appreciate *everyone's* cultural nuances, to move them forward in their sanctification process in becoming more Christlike in their maturity.⁷

Take, for example, Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26–40. The Holy Spirit prompts Philip to stop and inquire whether the

Ethiopian understands what he is reading from the book of Isaiah. The Ethiopian eunuch responds in verse 31: “How can I,’ he said, ‘unless someone explains it to me?’ So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.” At this point, the invitation toward cultural intelligence commences with an exchange of ideas, questions, and dialogue. Then, in verse 35, Philip explains the meaning of Isaiah 53:7–8 and continues to share with him the good news of Jesus Christ. It is not insignificant that Luke records the ethnicity of this Ethiopian eunuch. Here the ethnic moniker of Ethiopian does not refer to modern-day Ethiopia per se, but rather to the Nubian region between southern Egypt and northern Sudan.⁸ Through this cultural exchange, we observe that Philip’s presentation of the gospel for this Ethiopian government official required cultural intelligence.

As in Philip’s divine appointment with the Ethiopian eunuch, to be able to “present everyone fully mature in Christ” requires cultural intelligence. It does not happen without intentionality. It calls for extended labor “with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me” to preach with cultural intelligence, by getting to know my congregants and their respective cultures. How, then, should preachers interpret the term “culture”? My definition of culture for preachers seeks to be holistic and intentionally broad in nature: *culture is a group’s way of living, way of thinking, and way of behaving in the world, for which we need understanding and empathy to guide listeners toward Christian maturity.*⁹ In a moment, we will explore what this means in greater detail.

The Genesis of Cultural Intelligence

People working in the business world—what Christians call the marketplace—have acutely felt the pressure to interact effectively with persons who are culturally different from them. A lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity has palpable consequences: a company’s loss of revenue. For this reason, business professors P. Christopher Earley and Soon Ang wrote a trendsetting book called *Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions across Cultures*, to assist businesspeople in understanding and working with people from different cultures and backgrounds.¹⁰ In this book the authors established a business concept called the cultural quotient theory (CQ), also known as cultural intelligence. They define cultural intelligence as “the capability to deal effectively with other people with whom the person does not share a common cultural background and understanding.”¹¹

Cultural intelligence (CQ) resembles emotional intelligence (EQ), which measures one’s capacity for relational and interpersonal skills.¹² David Livermore

has popularized Earley and Ang's concept and provided a concrete framework to achieve cultural intelligence in the midst of often complex and varied congregations.¹³ Borrowing CQ as a conceptual framework to guide this book, my goal is to employ cultural intelligence in our significant calling as preachers. Below is a quick overview of Livermore's four stages of cultural intelligence, which we will adapt for homiletical purposes.

The Four Stages of Cultural Intelligence

As culturally intelligent preachers, we want to familiarize ourselves with and develop in all four stages of cultural intelligence.¹⁴ While each of the four stages is significant to understanding different cultural contexts, the loci of this book will be centered on CQ knowledge and CQ action. CQ drive will be the primary subject of chapter 4, and CQ strategy will be considered more implicitly as we attempt to put cultural intelligence into action via the Homiletical Template.

CQ Drive

First, Livermore articulates CQ drive as “the motivational dimension of CQ, [which] is the leader's level of interest, drive, and energy to adapt cross-culturally.”¹⁵ CQ drive reflects an inner longing to better understand similar and dissimilar congregants. Loving our sheep requires getting to know them beyond simply their names and professions. Who are they? What cultures and subcultures do they most identify with? What dreams do they have, and what are their fears? What beliefs do they hold closely? What causes them pain?

Livermore indicates that CQ drive is the most crucial of the four stages.¹⁶ Here it gauges the preacher's motivation level in seeking to understand one's listeners. For example, someone with low CQ may quickly pigeonhole others without taking any time to consider where such thinking, living, and behaving derives from and the reasons why. They think to themselves, “That's the way *those people* are.” Yet those who possess a high degree of CQ drive enjoy learning about other cultures. They do not consider cultural intelligence as a burden or a chore. No matter where you find yourselves on the CQ drive spectrum, my intention is not for you to feel overwhelmed. Rather, the hope is that cultural intelligence becomes an extension of our everyday lives as we grow to know our congregants over time.

How can we determine our CQ drive? Imagine this scenario at your church. A new couple who are recent immigrants from Senegal (ethnicity), transplants from Grand Rapids (location), or Methodists (denomination) visit your church

for the very first time. Is your natural inclination to greet them and inquire about their cultural backgrounds, or would you dart toward church members with whom you already share a strong camaraderie? (If you are introverted like me, your immediate response may be driven by your introvertedness and may not necessarily be an indication of your level of CQ drive.) Are you willing to pronounce and remember unfamiliar or “foreign” names? Or do you have the patience to watch movies in a different language, reading the English subtitles? My assumption is that you inherently possess at least a moderate desire for cultural intelligence or else you would have avoided this book. Wherever we fall on the CQ drive spectrum, the goal is that God will increase our inquisitiveness and love for Others in our congregations and communities. A more detailed consideration of CQ drive will be taken up in chapter 4.

CQ Knowledge

The second stage toward cultural intelligence is CQ knowledge, which represents “the cognitive dimension of the CQ research, [and] refers to the leader’s knowledge about culture and its role in shaping how business [in our case, preaching] is done.”¹⁷ The key elements in CQ knowledge are assessing our current knowledge of how cultures are similar and different and “the way culture shapes thinking and behavior.”¹⁸ What knowledge do we currently possess about various listeners as we prepare to preach to them? For instance, what beliefs or values influence their daily decisions?¹⁹ Are they individualistic (making decisions based on individual preferences) or collectivistic (making decisions according to what’s best for a group)? Would they rather spend time with you (as a being-oriented culture) or accomplish something with you (as a doing-oriented culture)? On what do they spend their time and resources? What types of food do your listeners eat, and what do they decline? What cultural values are most highly esteemed in their culture: honesty, hard work, success, age, education, profession, salary, position, or status? What cultural idols obstruct the gospel from taking root in their lives, and more?

CQ Strategy

Third, “CQ strategy, also known as metacognitive CQ, is the leader’s ability to strategize when crossing cultures.”²⁰ Put differently, it is our plan of attack when interacting with those who are culturally different from us. As we strategize, we are engaging in three important tasks. First, we consider our own level of awareness regarding “what’s going on in ourselves and others.”²¹ Second, we plan, thus “taking time to prepare for a cross-cultural

encounter—anticipating how to approach the people, topic, and situation.”²² Last, we exercise CQ strategy by “monitoring our interactions to see if our plans and expectations were appropriate.”²³ CQ strategy represents the process of creating a viable roadmap to help us become more culturally aware and culturally conversant. Our CQ strategy will be teased out through the Homiletical Template in chapter 2.

CQ Action

Last, in Stage 4, we want to develop CQ action, which is “the behavioral dimension of CQ . . . [and] the leader’s ability to *act* appropriately in a range of cross-cultural situations. . . . The subdimensions of CQ action are *verbal actions*, *nonverbal actions*, and *speech acts*—the exact words and phrases we use when we communicate specific types of messages.”²⁴ Put simply, CQ action, for preachers, is the test of how effectively we put into practice our CQ drive, CQ knowledge, and CQ strategy. Once we have implemented our cultural intelligence, we can determine whether our knowledge and strategies have been received well by our listeners and what elements need further calibration.

Becoming Bridgers of Cultures

The demands of pastoral ministry are endless. Growing in cultural intelligence may seem like an unnatural activity, a daunting process, and even an unnecessary inconvenience to an already-crowded schedule. Yet for Christians, cultural intelligence is part and parcel of what it means to be a disciple. By our very vocation, pastors and preachers *are* bridgers of cultures. We are the very transformational agents whom God uses through the act of proclamation to fasten sinners to the Scriptures and meld disparate disciples to one another—especially in such volatile moments of history like today, where our knee-jerk reaction toward Others is one of suspicion, distrust, patronization, dehumanization, fear, hatred, and even violence. We automatically assume the worst in Others and fail to give one another the benefit of the doubt.

In contrast, the apostle Paul prescribes cultural embracement and adoption as ways forward to overcome cultural differences. As an example for all preachers, Paul tells the Corinthian believers, “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). Preaching with cultural intelligence means understanding the various cultures and subcultures (the smaller cultural clusters within a larger cultural context) in our congregations and addressing the various needs and nuances of the

people listening to our sermons with a spirit of empathy. Culture-bridgers take unwavering steps toward seeing life from the Other's perspective and experiences and even fighting on their behalf instead of retreating to the solace of the status quo.

Preachers often find themselves in one of two camps. Some acutely feel the burden of this cavity of cultural awareness in their proclamation, while others assume that everyone's needs are being served. For preachers communicating in the twenty-first century, acquiring and utilizing cultural intelligence is really not optional: it is vital to our proclamation lest we accept being dreadfully irrelevant. Michael Quicke reminds us that "myopic preachers are naïve about culture. They fail to give it much thought and prayer."²⁵ Additionally, Leonora Tubbs Tisdale encourages preachers to engage in cultural exegesis as the way to cultivate "explicit skills and training in 'exegeting congregations' and their subcultures—just as they need skills and training in exegeting the Scriptures."²⁶ Raymond Bakke comments: "Most of us went to Bible schools or seminaries where we learned to design ministry in our own image, i.e., to sing the songs we appreciate, and to preach sermons we would like to listen to. Unfortunately for us, the challenge now is to retool and design ministry strategies in the image of the unreached who may be very different from us culturally."²⁷ Much like these thinkers, we may feel the vacuum of specialized cultural knowledge about the diverse range of people in the pews. Cultural exegesis is the process by which we obtain and employ cultural intelligence. It is taking what we know and what we learn about specific cultures and using that to help them apply God's truth in tangible ways and in culturally germane forms.

My hope in writing this book is to offer a practical framework to help us become biblical as well as bridge-building preachers. As biblical preachers, the truth found in the scriptural text dictates and shapes the central idea of the sermon. That is, we preach the main idea of the text. Bridge-building preachers take that main idea of the text into the deeper alcoves of our listeners' hearts and minds, seeking maximum cultural engagement and sermonic relevance. What we are venturing into will not be without resistance. Some of our congregants may find ways to dissent from our seemingly impulsive itch now to cater culturally sensitive meals to the Others on the outskirts. Michael Angrosino warns, "Be prepared to face questions, criticisms, even hostility from those in your community who do not yet see the value of what you are attempting to accomplish."²⁸ However, through faithfully preaching culturally intelligent sermons, our listeners will in due time see the lasting impact of how cultural intelligence cultivates their appreciation for one another's cultural differences, just as God intended. To facilitate this process

in becoming culturally intelligent preachers, we may need new pathways of approaching culture and understanding cultural intelligence.

A New Model of Culture for Cultural Intelligence

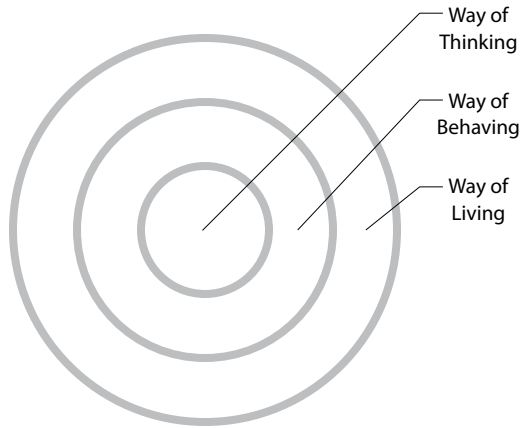
To this point, we have been talking about culture by way of definitions, but what might culture look like if it was presented as a diagram? Since some preachers are visual learners, I would like to present the term “culture” as “visually speaking.”²⁹ A common image to display cultural difference is the iceberg: a few aspects of culture are above the surface, and many others (perhaps 90 percent) lie hidden below. For instance, Patty Lane refers to objective and subjective cultural differences. Objective culture represents the visible portions of the iceberg, which include clothing, manner of greeting, food and language; subjective culture “is the internal part of culture that drives or motivates the visible, objective culture”³⁰ and is less detectable, such as a person’s values, feelings, assumptions, and motivations,³¹ obscured below the waterline. Earlier in this chapter, I defined “culture” as *a group’s way of living, way of thinking, and way of behaving in the world, for which we need understanding and empathy to guide our listeners toward Christian maturity.*³² What if we create a new visual model of culture for cultural intelligence that includes both visible and invisible components of culture as a triad, seen as a way of living, way of thinking, and way of behaving (see fig. 1.1)?

In many ways Lane’s understanding of culture emphasizes culture as ways of living and thinking yet addresses issues of behavior less directly. A more holistic understanding of culture involves all three ways: living, thinking, *and* behaving. The objective here is to incorporate more of each of these cultural dimensions in our sermons. Although the default mode is to start with the most visible cultural element (way of living), we would seek to increasingly utilize newfound cultural knowledge to crystallize our sermon with thinking and behavioral elements as well. Depending on your cultural context, there may be some overlap among these three dimensions to culture. Each aspect of culture below provides six cultural descriptors for further consideration.³³ In your cultural contexts, other germane topics may emerge, while others on this list may seem less pertinent to you.

Culture as a Way of Living

On the surface, we can make cultural connections with people from all cultural backgrounds when we talk about food, clothing, language, music, celebrations, and time. These categories are considered visible or external aspects

Figure 1.1
Model of Cultural Intelligence



of culture. Many of these ways of living can be determined by reading books on culture and cultural differences. Of course, the more we spend time with people from other cultural contexts, the more we will be able to experience these ways of living firsthand. Six areas of exploration include food, clothing, language, music, celebrations (national holidays and festivals), and time (as being limited or limitless).³⁴ Ways of living can become stumbling blocks when Others' ways of life conflict with ours. See appendix 2 for more details.

Culture as a Way of Thinking

In this second section, I am alerting us to some of the important cognitive and experiential thinking that goes on within a particular cultural group. These ways of thinking (beliefs, rituals, idols, dreams, God, and experiences, or BRIDGE) will be integral for employment in the Homiletical Template that will be employed as we build the BRIDGE into our listeners' cultures. More details on these six ways of thinking will be provided in the Homiletical Template in chapter 2 as well as in appendix 2.

Culture as a Way of Behaving

Nearly all behaviors are culturally conditioned.³⁵ What constitutes acceptable behavior in one culture is not universally prescribed across every culture. Although the Bible clearly identifies types of behavior aberrant from the Christian faith, called sinful practices, here are six ways of behaving to consider with respect to cultural differences: ethics (what is right and what is wrong),

decisions (who ultimately makes the decision), mores (what is considered acceptable behavior), love (which expressions of love are culturally appropriate), fairness (what is just or unjust), and actions (behaviors that are often influenced by our cultural context). Assistance on understanding different ways of behaving is provided in appendix 2.

Conclusion

I echo Eugene Peterson when he asks, “Who are these particular people, and how can I be with them in such a way that they can become what God is making them?”³⁶ Preaching with cultural intelligence prods us to become more voracious learners about the cultures of our particular people and especially those who sit idly on the margins. To love Others means that we will care for them by interacting with them and getting to know them personally, even when it is difficult. As David Livermore observes, “Embodying Jesus cross-culturally is a messy, complicated process.”³⁷ Developing in cultural intelligence does not happen instantly or without intentionality. It ebbs and flows as we preach and minister to different cultural groups. Allow yourself the freedom to make mistakes along the way and show yourself grace in how rapidly or slowly you are tethering cultural intelligence to yourself. In most cases, your listeners will applaud you for acknowledging their presence, and their glowing countenance will become your incentive to learn more. When making unintended errors, seek Others’ assistance in learning about their culture and plead ignorance to engender endearment. Preaching with cultural intelligence will require a lucid homiletical strategy. That will be the subject of our next chapter.