

David A. Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2009)

The second book in the *Youth, Family and Culture* series.

Introduction

"...a significant number of missional initiatives continue to fail because of cultural differences" (12).

Livermore emphasizes that the "primary distinction of this book is that it uses an approach to cross-cultural interaction that stems from inward transformation rather than from information or, worse yet, from artificial political correctness" (12). The key to better expressing love cross-culturally is to "become more multicultural people."

"A cultural intelligence quotient (CQ) measures the ability to effectively reach across the chasm of cultural difference in ways that are loving and respectful" (13).

Cultural intelligence consists of four different factors:

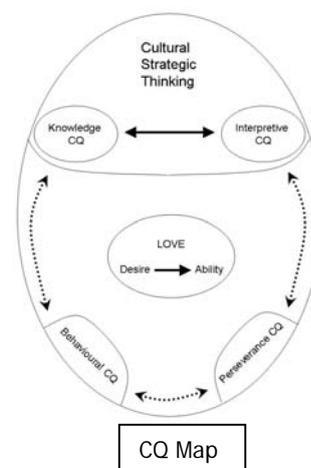
1. Knowledge CQ (understanding cultural differences): measures one's understanding of cross-cultural issues and differences. The most often stressed aspect.
2. Interpretive (metacognitive) CQ (the ability to interpret cultural cues): the degree to which we're mindful and aware when we interact cross-culturally. The key process linking the Knowledge CQ with the actual ability to apply it to how we behave.
3. Perseverance CQ (persevering through intercultural difficulties): Our level of interest, drive, and motivation to adapt cross-culturally.
4. Behavioural CQ (appropriate intercultural conduct): The extent to which we appropriately change our verbal and nonverbal actions when we interact cross-culturally.

The last two factors are the dimensions of CQ that most explicitly influence how we live out knowledge and interpretive CQ.

Why CQ matters:

1. In light of the realities of 21st century ministry.
2. From a theological perspective.
3. In comparison with many other theories of intercultural competency.

CQ "is the pathway for moving us along in the journey from the desire to love the Other to the ability to express that love in ways that are meaningful and respectful" (15).



Part 1. Love: CQ overview

Chapter 1. Twenty-first century CQ: Getting Along in the Flat World

"The flattened world is bringing us more and more encounters with people who aren't like us" (31).

Chapter 2. First-century CQ: God Speaks "Jesus"

Livermore proposes: "As [Jesus] encounters aspects of his culture that reflect the kingdom's presence {already}, he *embraces* them. As he encounters things within his culture that reflect the kingdom's absence {not yet}, he *protests* them" (38).

Livermore sees Jesus' both embracing the temple, yet protesting against the idea that God's presence could be relegated to any physical structure. He contends that Jesus embraced Israel's land, with dubious appeal to "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's" and adopting the controversial rendering "Violent men are taking our land by force" (38). The protest element occurs when Jesus pushes the Jews beyond merely thinking of the kingdom as a domain limited by geographical and national boundaries. Similarly, Jesus embraced the Torah while saying he had come to fulfil the law. Further, while embracing Jewish racial identity, Jesus protests the idea that Jews should discriminate against or even avoid people from other cultures.

Chapter 3. CQ 101: The Path to Loving the Other

CQ draws from Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences.

Looks at Knowledge CQ, Interpretive CQ, Perseverance CQ and Behavioural CQ.

"At the crux of interpretive CQ is the effort to make the invisible influence of culture more visible" (50).

"Cultural strategic thinking", a term used by Earley et al., "is a cumulative result of knowledge and interpretive CQ working interdependently" (51).

"One of the challenges of perseverance CQ is being honest about the points of resistance we feel with cultural differences and learning when to persevere despite the discomfort and when to respectfully decline" (53).

Part 2. Understand: Knowledge CQ

Indicators:

- Am I fluent in a language other than English?
- Do I know the ways other cultures approach conflict?
- Do I know the different role expectations of men and women in other cultures?
- Do I know the basic cultural values of several other cultures?
- Do I understand the primary ways Christians differ in their beliefs and practices in different cultural settings?

"... cross-cultural training without the other aspects of CQ can actually hinder one's effectiveness" (58).

Chapter 4. The Average American: Understanding Our Own Culture

Chapter 5. Getting Below the Surface: What is Culture Anyway?

Livermore lists some helpful definitions of culture, emphasizing the phrases “shared understandings” and “collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede). He speaks of culture as being the pair of glasses through which we see the world. He notes the familiar iceberg metaphor.

“...culture is both an outcome and a product of our social interaction” (83).

He notes Hofstede’s three different levels of culture “software”: human nature, culture and personality.

“All people are the same. It is only their habits that are different” (Confucius, 85).

Chapter 6. Hutus, Presbyterians, and Boomers: Cultural Domains

There are three kinds of cultural domains which surface most consistently for the majority of ministry leaders:

1. Socioethnic culture. There are two basic kinds of cross-cultural encounters to consider when applying CQ to socioethnic culture :
 - o Intercultural ministry within national culture: interacting with people in our own geographic context who come from different socioethnic backgrounds.
 - o Intercultural ministry across national cultures.
2. Organisational culture : “Organisations, like countries and socioethnic groups, have a ‘shared personality’” (97). Note organization of furniture in an office, the heroes of the organization - internally and externally - what members wear, and what they brag about. Jeremy Sonnenfeld has identified four types of organizational culture:
 - o Academy culture: “employees are highly skilled and tend to stay with the organization for an extended period of time while working their way up the ranks”, e.g. universities, hospitals and large corporations.
 - o Baseball-team culture: “employees are ‘free agents’ with highly prized skills for getting in, applying their expertise, and moving on”, high-risk organizations, e.g. investment banking and advertising companies. Not common in churches, but possibly church-related subcultures, e.g. youth ministry.
 - o Club culture: “The most important requirement... is fitting into the group. Loyalty to the specific organization is highly valued.” Seniority highly valued, e.g. the military and some law firms.
 - o Fortress culture: “...multifaceted behemoths that are continually called upon to undergo massive reorganization”, e.g. savings and loan companies, large automotive corporations. “Survival requires a culture of continually restructuring and shuffling staffing. As a result, employees are always uncertain about their jobs and fear they may be laid off”, e.g. megachurches, long-standing parachurch organizations.
3. Generational culture: “the culture formed by generational difference” (102):
 - o Youth culture.
 - o Generational eras: “...our cultural perspective is shaped to a certain degree by the historical period in which we experience childhood and

adolescence... The subculture of each generational era usually differs in significant ways from that of the generation preceding it" (104):

- Builders (Traditionals): The oldest generation, individuals born before 1946 who experienced the Great Depression and a World War. Emphasise beliefs, ways of life and personal identity.
- Boomers (Moderns): born after WWII and before the mid-1960s. Obsessed with pragmatism and efficiency and value self-fulfillment, individualism and progress.
- Gen Xers: born between the mid-1960s and the 1970s. The angst-ridden generation. Skeptical of big organizations. Value authenticity and vulnerability. More attuned to whole systems and reject categorical thinking. Concerned about AIDS, poverty and social justice.
- Millenials (Generation Y): An unusual aptitude for assessing and applying information. More optimistic than Gen Xers.

"Churches tend to mimic the organizational worlds around them" (101).

Chapter 7. When Yes Means No and No Means Yes: Language

Discusses the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that the nature of a particular language influences the habitual thought of its speakers. Opponents of this hypothesis argue that language has absolutely no influence on thought. The most commonly held view is somewhere between these views, assuming language does in some way affect thinking.

Chapter 8. Why We Do What We Do

Six values are explored:

1. Identity: I versus We. "...the extent to which personal identity is defined in terms of individual or group characteristics" (123). US has highest individualism score, 91 on a scale of 1-100; cf. Australia 90, UK 89, Canada & Netherlands 80, China 20. "The more we travel, the more education, and the more money we have, the more likely we are to be individualists!" (125).
2. Hierarchy ("power distance"): Top-down versus Flat: "the degree of inequality that is assumed to be appropriate and normal.... Power distance is the extent to which differences in power and status are expected and accepted" (128). At the lowest end of power-distance measurements stand places like Israel, Austria and the UK. At the other end of the spectrum stand Malaysia, Middle Eastern countries and France. In societies with a low power distance it is expected that all should have equal rights and it is appropriate for people to question and challenge the views of superiors. In high power distance societies it is expected that power holders are entitled to privileges and people are willing to support and accept the view of superiors.
3. Risk: Tight versus Loose: "the degree to which a culture tolerates uncertainty and ambiguity" (130). Some "tight" cultures are high in risk or uncertainty avoidance, with people endeavouring, as much as possible, to control the unexpected through safety and security measures and through strict laws. Order and self-discipline are prized values. Singapore is an example of such a society, as are Greece, Uruguay, Japan and societies where Islamic law and state law are one and the same. "Loose" cultures welcome ambiguity and unpredictability, with people resisting strict laws and rules and accepting opinions differing from their own, typically

relativistic with respect to truth. Such cultures are often more individualistic and cosmopolitan. Low-risk societies include Jamaica, Sweden and Malaysia.

4. Time: Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation. Livermore distinguishes between *clock time*, typically found in industrialised societies where punctuality and tight adherence to schedules is highly valued, and *event time*, where time is meant to serve the relationships and events which occur within a given day. But in organizational culture it is critical to understand whether the organization is most oriented towards the past, present, the near future or distant future. Cultures with a short-term orientation (emphasising the present or the recent past) are more likely to emphasise the value of truth, while cultures with a long-term orientation (emphasizing perseverance for future opportunities) the value of virtue.
5. Communication: Explicit versus Implicit. The kind of information deemed valuable varies from culture to culture, e.g. some are very interested in what comes from experts, while others are suspicious of it. Explicit versus implicit communication may also be described as direct versus indirect or low-context versus high-context communication: "Direct communication refers to instructions that specifically state and direct an action, whereas indirect communication relies on input and understanding from the listener and the surrounding environment" (135). Western nations such as the US and the UK are typically low-context cultures, while Latin cultures are high-context.
6. Achievement: Being versus Doing: "Achievement is the cultural value that measures the importance given to action" (137). Hofstede measures this value on a continuum of masculine versus feminine cultures, dubiously describing feminine cultures as those which emphasized nurturing behavior and cooperation and masculine cultures as those emphasizing assertive behavior and competition. Doing cultures, which emphasise action and proactive behaviour, value results and materialism. Being cultures, which emphasise contemplation and reflection, value relationships and quality of life.

Part 3. Go deep: interpretive CQ

"One's level of interpretive CQ is the degree to which one is mindful and aware when interacting cross-culturally" (144). The following questions help us to gauge our interpretive CQ:

- Am I conscious of what I need to know about a culture that is unfamiliar to me?
- Am I conscious of how my cultural background shapes the way I read the Bible?
- Do I determine what I need to know about a culture before I interact with people from that culture?
- Do I compare my previous ideas about a culture with what I actually experience during cross-cultural interactions?
- Do I check for appropriate ways to talk about my faith in cross-cultural situations?

Chapter 9. Cruise control off. Awareness and Empathy

Just as we might drive on autopilot when driving around familiar places, so the awareness we need to exercise interpretive CQ is akin to behaving as though we were negotiating our way with a kind of cultural autopilot. One CQ goal is to get to a point where we are able to engage in interpretive CQ *while* in the midst of cross-cultural interactions, that is, having the ability to monitor and adjust our thoughts and behaviours in the midst of action, not merely after the fact.

Awareness is more than active, focused thinking and more than being intuitive and sensing what is going on. It “is stepping back from what we’re doing and reflecting on it. It’s disciplining ourselves to see what we otherwise miss” (148).

Anthropologists use the term “liminality” to describe “a transitional state of openness and ambiguity” (149). In many cultures, as van Gennep pointed out, rites of passage used to transform a boy into a man involve displacing him from the normal world and placing him in a liminal space that shocks him into seeing that his own context is not the only “world.” That is, adults see the world differently from children.

When cross-cultural encounters, for example, traveling to a new cultural environment, is approached with a measure of intentional awareness, a degree of liminality is experienced when encountering the Other.

Livermore recommends various ways of developing greater awareness (which he also describes as “mindfulness”, drawing on the Buddhist idea and the appropriation of this term in psychology by Langer): making time to process alone, making time to process with others, making the most of our spiritual disciplines, and traveling cross-culturally.

Awareness also involves cultivating empathy, that is, “noticing what’s apparent about another person and trying to tune into her or his thoughts, emotions, and feelings” (158).

Chapter 10. What makes an apple an apple? Labeling Our World

“One of the ways we deal with the complexity of our environments is to classify the world into different categories” (163). The names we give to things become the categories by which we think.

Attribution theory studies how we classify the world and “examines the way one’s cultural background, personality, and upbringing shape the way an individual explains what is observed and what happens” (164). For example, some students receiving a low grade might attribute this to a poor teacher or a bad textbook, while others in the same class might attribute it to inadequate study.

In considering how culture influences the way we form categories, Hiebert distinguished between centered and bounded sets. A centered-set way of viewing the world is illustrated by the Hebrew view of God as being relational in nature, e.g. “the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and our forefathers” - Creator, Judge, Lord. By contrast the Greeks exemplify a bounded-set approach, classifying people and things in the light of their intrinsic value, with there being clear boundaries enabling them to be set apart from other persons and things. So to the Greeks God is supernatural, omnipotent and omnipresent, God as he is independent of his relationship to others.

Hiebert also identified two sets of variables that are essential to forming categories:

1. The *basis* on which the elements are assigned to a category, whether intrinsic (the Greek approach) or extrinsic (the Hebrew approach).
2. The *boundaries* of how sets are formed, whether well-formed or fuzzy, that is, having sharp boundaries or not.

On this basis there are four different ways in which cultures might classify the world:

1. Intrinsic and Well-Formed (Bounded Sets).

The basis of life in the West, with a focus on the boundary. Taxonomies, logical systems and categories are developed for everything. Thinking is in terms of opposites and simplistic categories, either/or categories: good v. bad; rich v. poor; literate v. illiterate. An example of bounded-set thinking: "I was really tracking with this guy who came to candidate for youth pastor until he said Brian McLaren's writings really shaped his thinking" (170).

"In bounded-set organizational cultures, people accept the rules of the organization before being allowed into membership. The boundaries provide walls of demarcation and define identity. As a result, the primary role of leaders in these cultural contexts is to move people across the boundary into the set" (172).

Bounded-set thinking stresses the radical differences between Christianity and other religions to the point of regarding any positive comment or appropriation from another religion as expressive of compromise and syncretism.

Livermore's treatment of bounded-set thinking is unbalanced and inadequate. He insinuates that bounded-set thinking is always wrong or at least suspect. Livermore fails to appreciate that Jesus himself exemplified bounded-set thinking in many instances, e.g. his statements concerning the Pharisees and Sadducees.

2. Extrinsic and Well-Formed (Centered Sets)

This way of thinking emphasizes not the boundary, but the centre. "If the objects to be organized are moving toward the center, they are considered to be in the set" (174). The "boundary is determined by the relation of the objects to the centre and not by essential characteristics of the objects themselves."

Livermore makes a broad distinction between Western and Eastern Christians with respect to how Christian identity is conceived. Eastern Christians using centered-set logic may regard someone as a Christian because he has made a commitment to follow Jesus and join with other Christians, whereas Western Christians, applying bounded-set thinking, may be more concerned with how that person's beliefs and confession lines up with basic credal Christianity.

Livermore is personally persuaded that centered-set thinking is superior to bounded-set thinking, but it is doubtful here, as already indicated, that he has captured the more balanced approach depicted in the New Testament.

3. Intrinsic and Fuzzy

4. Extrinsic and Fuzzy.

Chapter 10. Being okay with gray: category width

The notion of category width is an aspect of attribution theory. This "refers to the number of events individuals place under one common label." The interest here is with how cultures socialize their members to tolerate things that don't neatly fall into one category or another. Narrow categorizers focus on differences. Such people are quicker to characterize things as right or wrong. Broad categorizers focus more on similarities and have more tolerance for things that don't fall into pre-existing

categories. Broad categorizers are more open in their thinking and are more ready to accept that different behaviours can have the same meanings and the same behaviour can have different meanings, e.g. guys holding hands - contrast Western with many other societies; similarly the mwaning is different if women walk bare-breasted in Western society compared to a tribal society.

My problem with Livermore's approach to this issue is that while he recognizes and even emphasises that not "everything is up for grabs or that nothing falls into the right-versus wrong categories" (183), he nevertheless presupposes that developing a broad-categorisation mindset is superior across the board. My response is that we need to learn when it is necessary to be narrow categorizers and when we need to be more broad. Still we do need to recognize that there are people who tend to be locked into one of these two mindsets in their approach to all reality. That is dangerous either way. Elmer's observations, as cited by Livermore, pertain to the person who tends to adopt narrow categorization as a default position (182):

A person with narrow categories has some tendencies that can hinder relationships. For example, narrow categorizers tend to be more ethnocentric, more reactionary and seek less information before forming judgments.

The problem arises when we employ narrow categorization with our cultural bias.

Chapter 12. theory gets a bum rap: a model for going deeper

Livermore contrasts the 'banking' model of education with Paulo Friere's emancipatory model. The banking model sees knowledge as something which the teacher deposits into the minds of students, which assumes that the teacher's way of looking at the world is the only right way. By contrast, Friere's model seeks to empower people to question their lives and position in society, leading to a struggle that is at the heart of praxis. That is, they are seeking to become aware of how they see the world compared to others - interpretive CQ.

Theory is important because the ability to theorise fosters functional self-awareness. Livermore rightly expresses his concerns at the high levels of anti-intellectualism and anti-theory among evangelicals. We need to develop praxis, the skill which helps us to structure meaning around experience; to remain equally committed to both active service and thoughtful reflection.

Livermore summarizes Kolb's theory of experiential learning, suggesting that experience creates the foundation for four modes of learning: feeling, reflecting, thinking and acting - a four-phase learning cycle. Joplin began with Kolb's work and developed a five-stage model: focus (on what we hope to learn), action-reflection, support-feedback, debrief (the organized process of identifying learning that has happened, discussing it with others, and evaluating it), and learning transfer (transferring the learning to the rest of our lives).

Part 4. Express: Perseverance and behavioural CQ

This section is concerned with moving from the *intention* to love to *expressing* our love to the Other.

Chapter 13. When the goin' gets tough: perseverance CQ

"Perseverance CQ refers to our level of interest, drive, and motivation to adapt cross-culturally."

Key questions:

- Do I like cross-cultural interactions that are new to me?
- Do I prefer to stay with locals when I travel cross-culturally rather than in a hotel by myself?
- Do I prefer eating local foods when I go to a new place?
- Do I enjoy spending time with people who don't embrace Christianity as their world-view?
- Am I confident I would be effective in cross-cultural ministry?

Self-efficacy is an important foundation for motivation: "the perception we have of our ability to reach a goal"; "our confidence in our ability to accomplish a specific action" (214). Leo Spitzer challenged Robert Merton's theory of anticipatory socialization, denying that accurately anticipating cross-cultural engagement necessarily leads to a successful encounter. As Livermore points out, "If I think this other culture is very different from my own and doesn't have much to offer me, then I won't feel as motivated to learn and adapt to it" (215). The way we anticipate a cross-cultural experience influences our experience in that culture, just as new employees' anticipator thoughts influence their adjustment to a work culture. Anticipatory socialization, then, concerns "the degree to which one is prepared, before entry, to what occurs in the new cultural context" (216).

The second phase of socialization into a new cultural setting is the encounter stage, often involving culture shock: "the anxiety felt when we lose all 'familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse'" (217).

The final phase of socialization in a new cultural context is metamorphosis (van Maanen), "the personal transformation necessary to continue in a new setting" (218).

Livermore goes on to consider generosity as a power that is not always positive. For example, notwithstanding good intentions, it can end up "objectifying people as a way to make the 'servants' feel good at the expense of those being served" (222).

Livermore stresses, "Perseverance CQ relies on honesty about what we like and dislike about another culture. We can't expect to like everything about another culture any more than we like everything about our own. 'If we genuinely respect another culture, we must allow ourselves to be appalled by it'" (230).

Chapter 14. Kiss, bow, or shake: Behavioural CQ

Key questions:

- Do I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations?
- Do I alter my verbal behaviour (e.g. accent, tone) according to the culture that I am in?
- Do I display different behaviours based on the specifics of the local culture?
- Do I change the manner in which I greet others (shake hands, bow, nod, etc.) when in different cultures?
- Do I change the amount of warmth and enthusiasm I express when talking to others to suit the cultural setting?

Craig Storti discriminates between two kinds of cross-cultural adjustments that he calls type 1 and type 2 behaviours (236):

- Type 1: adjusting to behaviours of the Other that annoy or confuse us.
- Type 2: adjusting our own behaviour so that it doesn't needlessly annoy or confuse the Other.

However, there are some situations in which the best option is not to adapt at all. High levels of adaptation are viewed negatively. "Extensive mimicry will be seen as insincere and possibly even deceptive" (238). "Uncritically accepting everything in a new culture and turning one's back on one's own birth culture is not culturally intelligent behaviour" (240).

Chapter 15. Where do we go from here? Twenty-four ways to advance your CQ
Core Commitments:

1. Start the anthropological dig in your own soul: understanding who I am, how I relate, what drives me; self-awareness about my own upbringing, my cultural heritage, my individual personality.
2. Root our view of the other in the Imago Dei.
3. Seek first the kingdom of God.
4. Live up close.

Practices for increasing CQ:

1. Read
2. Go the movies
3. Eat
4. Journal
5. Learn a new language
6. Attend cultural celebrations
7. Go to the pride parade or a mosque, i.e. to a group "least aligned with your own leanings and seek to understand what's behind the beliefs and behaviours of this group" (248).
8. Be informed
9. Look for the invisible. Ask: How is culture shaping this?
10. Study the Scripture with people from varied cultural contexts
11. Always do mission with the 'oppressed'
12. Beware of culturally embedded language: anticipate the impact of the words we use; think about whether the Other understands the language and concepts you are using when you speak.
13. Speak slowly
14. Observe body language
15. Try mimicry
16. Find a cultural guide
17. Formal education
18. Multicultural groups and teams
19. Overseas experience
20. Attend the wedding ceremony of someone from another culture
21. Read the local paper when traveling
22. Walk through the grocery store
23. Seek out the other
24. Question, question, question