

Decision Making

1. Styles of decision-making (Stewart, "Culture and Decision-Making", pp. 186-7). Stewart discusses four types of decision making (not intending that these be seen as all the possible styles):

Name of Style:		Technical	Logical	Bureaucratic Group	Social Collective
Found in:		US	West Europe (excluding GB)	North American Bureaucracies	Japan
Decision-Maker	Who makes the decision?	Individual	The individual serving in the role	Committee group	Collectivity group
	Where should the locus of control be?	Expert, technician, those affected by consequences of activity	Headman Authority	Work group Policy makers	Social network Group network
Prediction System	Experience of the decision maker used in process of deciding	Facts Experience Information Digital language	Observations Concepts Theories	Raw data Precedents Experience	Emotion, actions Impressions Experience Facts
	Representing the experience (problem formulation)	Frame, context Positive-negative valences Measurement, risk Problem formulation	Values	Measurement Policy Office/department	Form, precedents Tradition, rules Resulting actions
	Using the represented experience	Alternatives Representing, causal, future problem definition	Classification system Formal cause, present	Prediction systems Plans, classification Present Group processes	Emotion Past, present Social network
	Strategy making (setting the stage for the decision-making frame of choice)	Negative reasoning (avoiding obstacles), rational Anticipate consequences, obstacles, constraints Worst case analysis, means Null logic	Classifying concepts Contrast principle Logical considerations	Policy consideration Anticipated consequences	Imitation, adaptation Historical, mythical Social Projected response
	Reaching conclusions	Choice Conceptual decision	Acts of classification Logical	Group decisions Procedural	Polemics Rituals Customs
Decision-Criterion	Criterion for the decision made	Utility	Goodness of fit	Utility Group maintenance	Goodness of imitation Improvement

	Legitimizing the decision	Practicality	Invested authority	Majority vote	Unanimous consent Social network power
	Implementing	Quick preparation	Slow preparation	No preparation	Detailed preparation

The application of this is shown in the chart constructed by Kume (from Dodd, Dynamics, p. 169):

Communication Function for Decision Making	American Styles	Attendant American Cultural Factors	Japanese Styles	Attendant Japanese Cultural Factors
1. Locus of decision	Individual leader has capacity to direct and take personal responsibility	Individualism Independence Control of events	Group: leader has capacity to facilitate and take shared responsibility	Collectivism Interdependence Group orientation
2. Initiation and coordination	Top-down Use of expert's information Less frequent discussion	Power Competition Self-reliance Doing (getting things done)	Bottom (or middle) up Prior consultation Frequent discussion	Subservience Cooperation Harmony Being-in-becoming
3. Temporal orientation	Planning ahead Quick decision Slow implementation	Future-oriented Linear thinking Sense of urgency Individualism	Adjusting to changing circumstances Slow decision Immediate implementation	Present oriented Circular thinking Gradual buildup Group loyalty
4. Mode of reaching decision	Individual decision Majority decision Split decision	Choice among alternatives Equal opportunity to express "Matters of procedures"	Consensus	Acceptance of a given option Conformity "Tentativeness"
5. Decision criterion	"Rational" Practical empiricism	Analytical Materialistic	"Intuitive" Group harmony	Holistic Spiritual commitment
6. Communication style	Direct Confrontation	Cognitive Dichotomy	Indirect agreement	Affective "Feeling around"

2. Motivation and decision making (Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ-Cross Culturally)

- a. To decide or not to decide: we tend to force "decisions", but some cultures prefer to allow things to remain in tension, for you can never go back on a decision poorly made.

- b. Society and decision-making:
 - i. Consensus decisions are those made uniformly through the society. In Japan, for example, decisions are made within a consensus framework.
 - ii. Peer decisions are those made by an immediate peer or collective ingroup.
 - iii. Individual decisions are those made by the individual (who may or may not give attention to peer group or society at large).

All people tend to operate on all three levels, though for any decisions which we consider important, we will tend to prefer one of the above levels for our "decision-making context".

- c. Decision-making as a process: Modern communicators recognize that our conversion to Christ is actually the culmination of a process of events which led to that conversion. If we can understand the general dynamics of the decision making process as well as the cultural specifics of our target audience, we will be better equipped to enable people to come to culturally relevant and biblically faithful decisions for Christ.
 - i. Hesselgrave presents a five-point conversion process (following the conflict model of decision-making, with the labels given by McIntosh and Janis and Mann also included)

Stage	Labels of Stages by Author				Definition in Christian Context
	Hesselgrave	McIntosh (1969)	Rogers (1983)	Janis and Mann (1977)	
One	Discovery	Assessment	Knowledge	Appraising the Challenge	There is a person called Christ whom the true God is said to have sent into the world to be the Savior and Lord of mankind.
Two	Deliberation	Evaluation	Persuasion	Surveying Alternatives	There is a possibility that I (we) should forsake the old ways and follow Christ.
Three	Determination	Choice	Decision	Weighing Alternatives	I (we) will repent and believe in Christ.
Four	Dissonance	Solution of the Field	Implementation	Deliberating Commitment	Shall I (we) resist the forces which draw me (us) back to the old ways, and continue to follow Christ in spite of present difficulties?

Five	Discipline	Execution	Confirmation	Adhering Despite Negative Feedback	I (we) will identify with the people of Christ and live in submission to His lordship and church discipline.
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3. Note the role of the Hofstede work-related values in decision-making considerations

Area of Consideration	Relevant Hofstede Values	Explanation
Locus of the decision for Christ	Power Distance Individualism/Collectivism	PD: Who makes the decision (leader or group) and how it is made (top-down or bottom-up) I/C: Whether group or individual considerations are more important
Motivation for the decision for Christ	Uncertainty Avoidance Individualism/Collectivism Masculine/Feminine	UA: Levels of acceptable risk/security in making the decision I/C: Whether the decision-maker(s) are motivated by self-related or group-related obligations M/F: Personal relations and competition/performance factors in motivating to decide
What factors are important in making any decision for Christ?	Power Distance Uncertainty Avoidance Individualism/Collectivism Masculine/Feminine	PD: Who makes the decision? UA: Amount of acceptable risk (social ostracism, etc.); level of concern with absolute truth and authority I/C: Can an individual make the decision by her (him) self? M/F: Is "getting ahead" (e.g., personal salvation) more important than interpersonal harmony (waiting for the rest to decide)?
How long will it take to make the decision for Christ?	Uncertainty Avoidance Individualism/Collectivism	UA: What (security or risk) pressure is there to make or delay a decision? I/C: To what extent does the (person, group) need to be in harmony before the decision is made?

4. Decisions for Christ: the idea of *elenctics*: Elenctics may be defined as "the science which is concerned with the conviction of sin. In a special sense then it is the science which unmasks to heathendom all false religions as sin against God, and it calls heathendom to a knowledge of the only true God." (Bavinck, An Introduction, p. 222).

- a. Derivation of the term: the Greek word family for *elenctics* "in the New Testament is regularly translated as rebuking, but then in the sense that it included the conviction of sin and a call to repentance." (Ibid.)
- b. Obviously, only the Holy Spirit is able to effectively do this in such a way that a person may turn to Christ. Indeed, this is one of His roles in the world: "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:8, NASB).
- c. Just as obviously, God has chosen human vessels to be the carriers of His divine message. We have some role to play in the elenctic process. The full extent of our role is debated, but the fact that we have a role is clear from Scripture. Hesselgrave concludes:

"A *rational* presentation of truth is important. A *persuasive appeal* to forsake unbelief

and idolatry, and to receive Christ as Redeemer and Lord, is enjoined in Scripture. But the *essential ministry* is that of the Holy Spirit. *Just how the sovereign God of all grace uses reasonable, appealing presentations (and, alas, unreasonable, unappealing presentations) in accomplishing His purpose to deliver men from Satan and themselves and to bring them to Christ must be something of a mystery. But that He does in fact use His servants in this way to convert other men is something which He has clearly revealed.*" (Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally, p. 422; emphasis his)

- d. Initiating the elenctic process: what are possible points of contact that the missionary may use to interest people in Christ (and eventually lead them to a point of decision)? Hesselgrave notes three possibilities (Ibid., pp. 434-6)
 - i. Religious teachings as points of contact (growing out of the study of comparative religions and/or apologetics). Hesselgrave urges caution utilizing similarities between the target audience's religion and Christianity. They can be made, but only when the communicator is ready to continue the dialogue at a much deeper level.
 - ii. Felt needs as points of contact. Again, care is to be used, because felt needs do not necessarily equate with real needs. Further, if we stay only on the level of felt needs, we may never minister to the whole person.
 - iii. The disposition and attitude of the missionary as a point of contact. Kraemer points out, "The way to live up to this rule is to have an untiring and genuine interest in the religion, the ideas, the sentiments, the institutions--in short, in the whole range of life of the people among whom one works, *for Christ's sake and for the sake of those people.*" (Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, pp. 140-1).
5. Missionary appeals in the decision-making process: what types of appeals may the missionary make in seeking to lead people to Christ? The answer, of course, will depend on the cultural context. Several types of appeals may be noted:
 - a. The appeal to selfhood (useful for peoples who are high on individuality)
 - b. The appeal to authority (useful for peoples who have a large power distance and/or a high uncertainty avoidance).
 - c. The appeal to security (useful among people with high uncertainty avoidance)
 - d. The appeal to reason and logic (useful in the low-context academic and intellectual arena; not as useful in higher-context "folk" religion appeals)
 - e. The appeal to shame (useful for people in collective societies).
 - f. The appeal of guilt (useful for people with large power distance and an individualistic orientation)

Bear in mind that none of these are a "sure bet"--it is the Holy Spirit alone who determines people's response to the Gospel. The more appropriate the type of appeal used, however, the less "sociological" clutter there is in the person's (or group's) decision-making process.