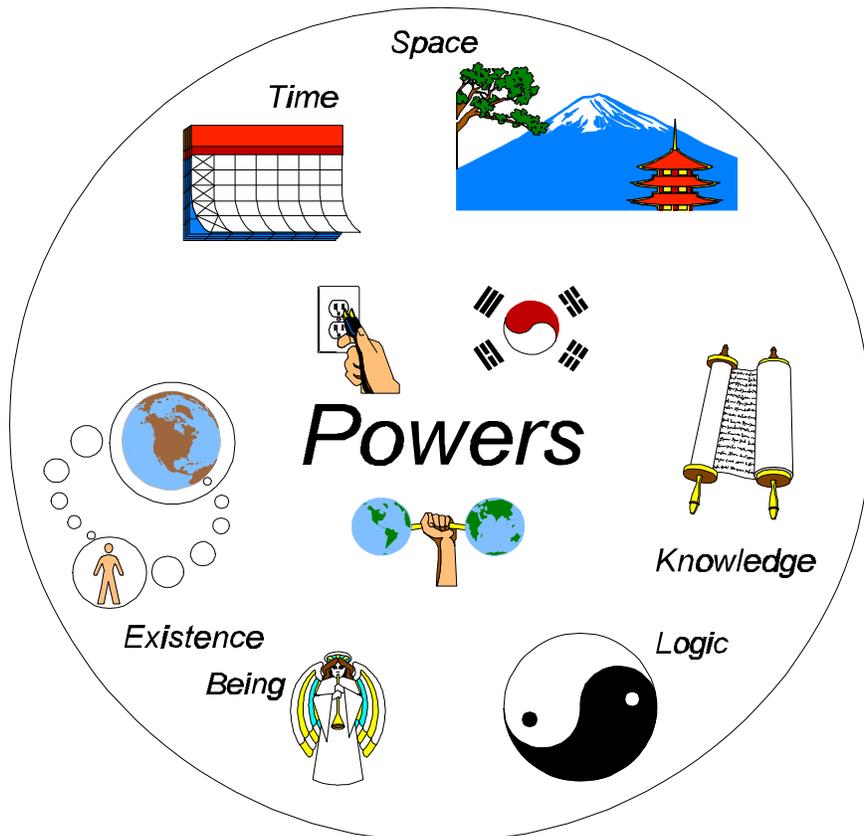


World View

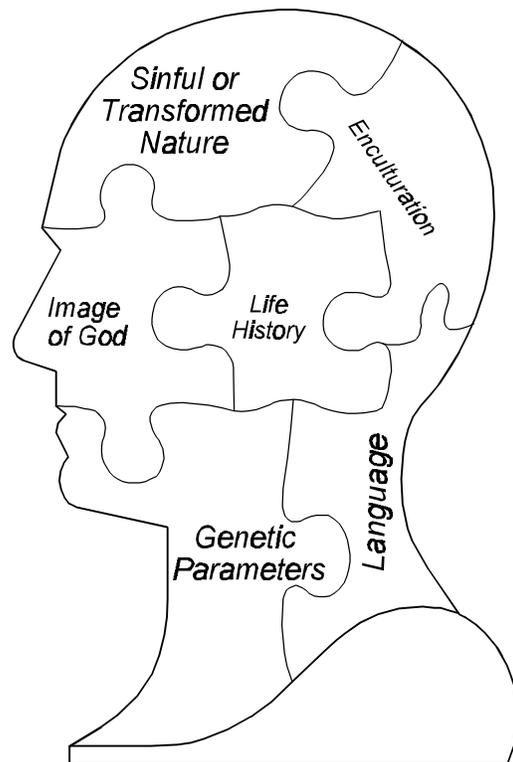
1. World view is often broadly (and circularly) defined as the way in which we understand the world around us (e.g., Geisler and Watkins, 1989, 11; Kraft, 1983, 222).
 - a. It is essentially pre-theoretical in character; it is the foundation upon which theories and the methods of theorizing are built (Walsh, 1992, 16).
 - b. As such, it is a belief system (Dodd, 1991, 75; Olthius, 1985, 155) of the basic assumptions we make about reality (Hiebert, 1985, 45).
 - c. Because it is pre-theoretical, it is generally not found at the conscious level, and the assumptions which comprise it are not necessarily coherently linked to each other--they may even be contradictory. The assumptions world view is generally concerned with include the nature of the world we inhabit (time and space), the nature of us as people (existence and being), the nature of the One we image (powers), and how we know (knowledge and logic):



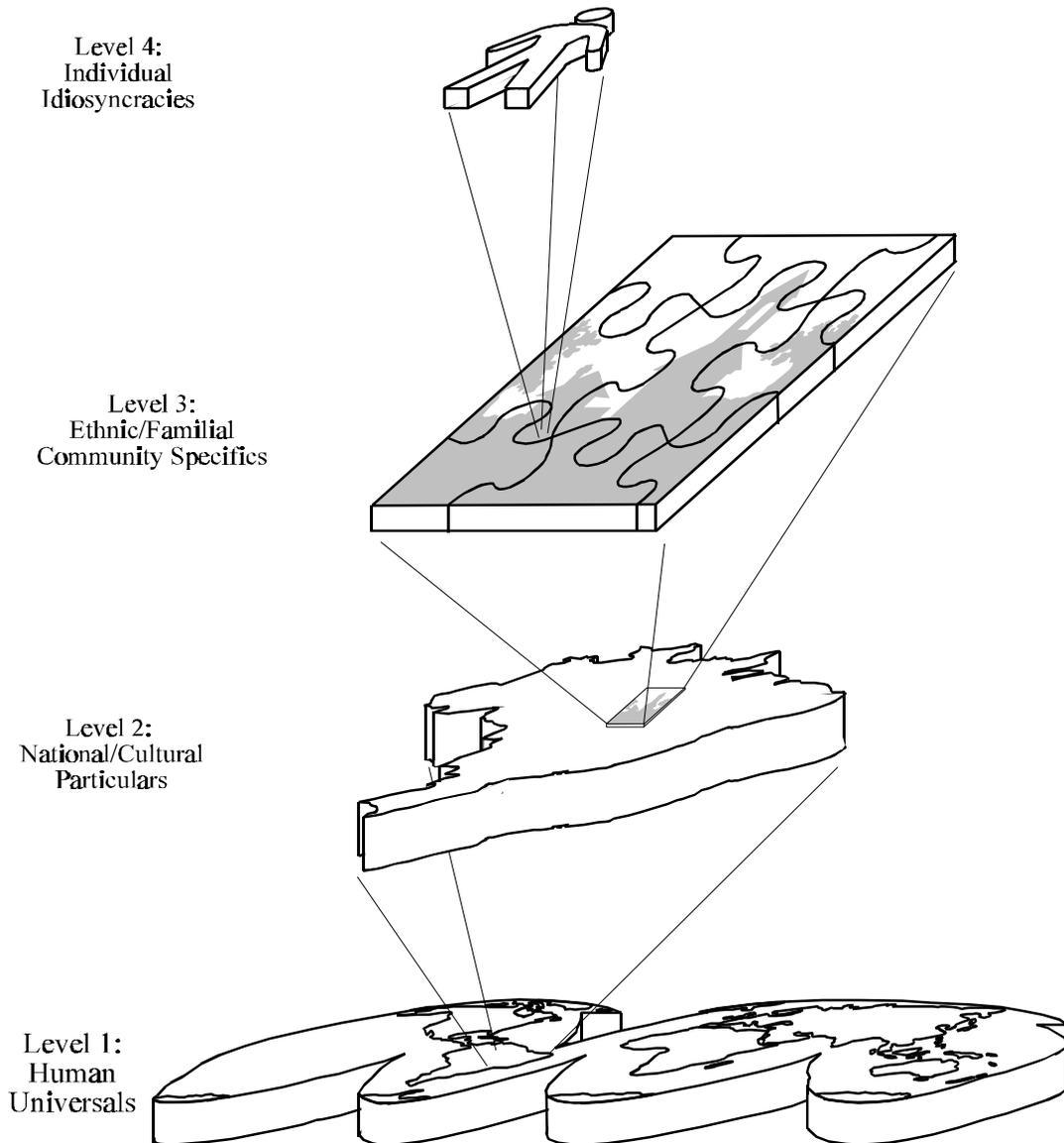
- d. Thoughts about the assumptive areas of world view:
 - i. Our assumptions are conditioned and established through the concepts and training we received from our culture as we were growing up.
 - ii. The assumptions at every level are in some way distorted because of our sin nature.
 - iii. Each set of assumptions is intertwined with the others and cannot be viewed in isolation from the total framework.
 - iv. Our world view is dynamically changing all the time, as new events and circumstances unfold around us. For the Christian, our core assumptions should be more and more conforming to the image of Christ.
 - v. These assumptions are not limited to the cognitive. They also include the affective and the evaluative (from Heibert's model).
- e. World view defines the way we "lean into life"; it is both a map of life and a map for life (Walsh, 1992, 18).
 - i. As a map of life it is a lens or window through which to view and make sense of the events we see every day (Kraft, 1983, 222).
 - ii. In addition to being a map of life, world view provides a map for life (Walsh, 1992, 18-19).

2. Several elements are involved in the construction of world views:

- a. Our genetic parameters
- b. The image of God as foundational to being human
- c. Language
- d. Life history
- e. Enculturation
- f. Our sinful or transformed nature as spiritual beings



3. World view and culture are not monolithic; several “layers” may be noted.
 - a. Human Universals: All cultures build off the basic block of what it means to be “human.” There is a common human core to every culture; and characteristics of all cultures that build on our humanity (includes facts of language, institutions, need for values, social interactions, etc.; see below on “The Common Human Core”).



- b. National/Cultural Particulars: Each cultural unit (in the diagram below seen as a geo-political nation) has chosen particular ways to adapt to its environment

- in light of its historical development. Whether there are truly “national” cultures is debated, but the contemporary constraints of national units (e.g., the need for visas to cross lines; the fact of national level governments, official country languages and school systems) helps mold and shape culture at a national level.
- c. **Ethnic/Familial Community Specifics:** Within the national or larger cultural milieu, each ethnic group (on down to the family level) chooses its own cultural adaptations. In a certain respect, every family unit (whether extended or nuclear) borrows from the culture and ingrains its members its set of values.
 - d. **Individual Idiosyncracies:** Every human being is more than just a product of culture. We all come into the world predisposed genetically to favor certain characteristics (e.g., shyness or sociability). That we are made in God’s image gives us ability to choose to accept or reject values that we see around us.
 - e. Finally, we should note that every person "belongs" to more than one micro-culture--we are something of a conglomeration of such cultures, each with its distinct rules of operation. While each may be distinguished, there are many common threads interwoven among them (e.g., business, home, school, church, friendships, etc.)