

Detachment and Christian Maturity

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We all live and die in our tents, the little worlds we erect. Inside it is familiar, safe and secure. Outside the world is strange, unknown and dangerous. We are inside. Outside there are other creatures in other tents and other camps, but they are not human as we know ourselves to be. We need them, but how do we view and relate to them? We have several options.

Egocentrism

It is comfortable and natural to live our lives alone in our tents, to focus on ourselves and our needs and desires. It is safe, and we do not have to deal with the fact that there are others with their needs and desires which are different from our own. We judge others by our definitions of truth and our likes and dislikes. We offer them love when they make us happy. But we never open ourselves to the vulnerability of being hurt or dealing with differences.

The fall reinforced this self-centeredness. Satan did not tempt Adam and Eve to worship him. That would make no sense. Rather he appealed to their self-centeredness and invited them to worship themselves. In the end, sin is self-deification. Paul writes that in the end times people will be lovers of Self (2 Tim.). The consequences of this he spells out in his long list of words: jealous,

Many people live all their lives in the little homes of self. They are hard to live with. They are the center of their world, and must be the center of attention, and have their own way. Everything is measured by how it affects them. They impose their judgments on others, and do not question their own beliefs. It is the duty of others to make them happy and care for them, not for them to make others happy. They expect others to guess what is in their minds. They are

jealous when others receive attention and praise. They are critical of everything different from them. They are complainers for they expect things to work out as they want, and can't handle things when these don't. They are controllers, seeking to keep charge of things, afraid to let go. Like fearful children, they see problems, not solutions. They constantly need care, and care only for those who make them happy. They fear the new and so end up staying in the security of their little world. They see things as black and white--based on what they think and like. Anything that differs from them is sneered at and condemned. They have strongly developed Fearful Children [frightened and insecure] and strong controlling Parents. They have weak Adults

A world of egocentric people is full of conflicts, jealousies, competition and hatred. With the shift from the priority of group to the priority of the individual, and with the shift from the concept of soul to self, this is increasingly the world in which we live. Capitalism, consumerism, self-realization, self-fulfillment.

- self-love. Peterson Devotions February 15. It seeks to add only to itself, so boring.

2. Familiocentrism

We cannot get out of our tents, but we can begin to invite others into our tents. As Eugene Peterson points out, the only way out of our selves is to move the self into a larger house (19##, Feb. 15).

- from me to us family. I to we.

When we become Christians theologically our center is Christ, but in practice we live within the confines of our little worlds. How do we get out of this? What marks spiritual maturity?

3. Ethnocentrism: [class, ethnicity, nationality, tribalism, etc.]

- must bring these into our house.
- at first they come as strangers so we treat them gingerly as guests. Can't argue and relationships are fragile. So we must pass time and live together before we can build trust and ways to deal with conflicts that arise, and deal with our inner distates.
- gradually the other becomes 'us' and we are comfortable to care enough to confront and work things out.
- encounter with others should lead us to begin to see things from their point of view, and then to a metapersonal point of view with both of us in the picture. This develops the sense of 'us', and self-love.
- the move is from participant to participant-as-observer, to observer as participant, to participant. This is Peterson's comment on detachment.
- those who learn to see and identify with others learn love. Love is not a feeling but a commitment to be for the other. It displaces self as the center and puts first 'the other' and then 'us' in its place. They become care givers. Empower others

Meta personal grids:

- humans unique in their ability to be both participants and observers at the same time
- this ability gives self awareness, self-critique, self-realization
- grow up as participants

- as we go beyond egocentrism we gain the ability to be observers, and see our role in the larger social context

- moving into a new culture forces us to develop our observer role. We are outsiders and placed on the margins.

- major positions in any social setting

= participant

= observer

= participant as observer

= observer as participant

- has to do with self awareness, vantage point of perspective, and nature of relationship

- monocultural: with people who share worldview, shared information, implied. Positivism

2.1. Ethnocentrism in the church:

2.2 Ethnocentrism in missions:

- danger of ethnocentrism: us vs them

3. Androcentrism: Group to Humanity:

3.1 Colonial era: judge other by our culture. Not aware of our wv and biases.

- teach right biblical interpretations

3.2 Cultural Pluralism era: judge others by their own, recvognize wv differences, little shared information. Read bible for self

- encounter with other cultures leads us to deal seriously with 'others' and 'otherness'. This can lead us to developing a metacultural grid in which first we see things from the view points of others, then from a metacultural grid in which they and we are one humanity.
- encouter with pluralism first leads to relativism, then to a new transcending frame of reference which includes diversity in the midst of underlying unity.

3.3 Development of metacultural grids: metatheology, epistemological shift,

Theolgy not equated with Bible.

- metacultural grids
- hermeneutics of suspicion

3.4 Revelation comes to all cultures so all are relative to one another and under the absolute judgment of God and revelation.

- racism, classism

3.1 Androcentrism in the church

we do God's work for him. Participants and Participant observers?

3.2 Androcentrism in missions

4. Theocentrism:

- as we mature and approach death, we begin to realize that this world, too, is too narrow a perspective. We begin to detach ourselves from the attachments to this world, and to see things from a bigger perspective.
- again, we move through the participant--part./observ--to observer stage and get ready for heaven.

- metahuman grids.

Theological Perspectives

1. We are participants in salvation history:

- we see the world through our own eyes
- we are in charge
- we act to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth
- mechanistic model and quantification for this puts us in control
- we are in control through management, planning, strategizing and action
- in church, we run committees, plan programs and do jobs

2. We are observers of salvation history:

- God is doing his work in history
- we sit by and watch him do his work
- we need not participate in his activities

3. We are participant-observers in salvation history:

- we and God do the work. We must act and God adds his blessings. Joab [Peterson]
- plan and pray for God's assistance
- measure results of our actions by quantitative measures

4. We are observer-participants in salvation history:

- we follow God as he works out salvation history
- we seek to see where God is working and listen for his call in our lives
- we follow God's lead, and see his serendipities
- spirituality is in everyday life, not as a retreat

Participant Observer in Missions

1. Participant:

- usually we come into a culture and see ourselves as the center of the work.
- we plan the work, we provide the resources, we do the job, we evaluate the outcome
- planning, strategy and activism are the measures of our faithfulness