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Systems Thinking and Organizations Culture
CHMN 760 Advanced Leadership
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<u>Seminar Overview</u>

- Understanding systems thinking

- Understanding the communication process

- Understanding culture and diversity as a core system

- Understanding cultural dimensions as a system

- Understanding corporate systems

Charles Tidwell grew up in India, parents were missionaries

Took 62 days to get there by boat

Recently, got back to USA from India in 19 hours.

So, the changes are incredible from a technology standpoint

Communication has changed drastically.

Formerly, letter exchange took 6 weeks with his mom.

There is now a global scope to what we're experiencing today.

<u>Five Core Disciplines</u>

- Systems thinking
- Team learning
- Shared vision
- Mental models
- Personal mastery

What is systems thinking?

Systems thinking is the art of seeing the world in terms of wholes, and the practice of focusing on the relationships among the parts of a system.

Most of us grow up in the West with analytical thinking==once we think we understand the part, we think we have the solution.

Not looking at the whole.

Epidemic on the campus….Charles is on 22 different committees, but the problem is that it breaks things down into parts and overlooks the overall process.

Need to look at the organic focus rather than linear thinking

Think about what your organization is like and how you would chart that entity?

Try to look at the whole and its primacy—key to good systems thinking.

Need to see how the parts relate to the whole.

If you're looking for organizational change, must look at the whole.

Need to have a circular focus…

Team learning: the whole of the group is more important than the parts.

Ex: our interaction is just as important in this class gives synergy to learning.

A team must recognize it should discern its system.

We rarely pay attention to committee structure, rather than one person managing the team.

Shared vision: when individuals recognize their roles and align personal goals with organization and structure.

Shared vision is not something that one person can impose.

Pastor must interact with the parts of the committee to create the vision.

We have to incorporate other's visions to make the whole.

So, how do you deal with those who don't share the same vision.

The values are not similar and are not part of the whole church.

Those who don't share the vision will not be able to contribute as much.

Working together is needed, but leader should give direction and guidance.

"Here is where I think the vision is, what are you bringing to the vision?"

Mental models are the most core to what is going on in systems learning.

These are the assumptions we bring to the table.

Different cultures bring different models: different worldviews

If you don't recognize this, the system will be at odds with itself.

What is the goal of arm-wrestling? To win

How do you do arm wrestling with multiple winners?

Some cultures see competition as wrong and cooperation as right.

There has to be changes in our worldviews.

Personal mastery is that individual learning of all these specific processes.

Systems thinkers see interrelatedness of parts around and develop ways to work together.

Corporate structure
Sustainability is important…

We need not to be mastered by the organization, but to master it.

Definition of a system

A system is an organized, highly integrated collection of parts that accomplishes an overall goal.

There's biological systems: heart and nervous systems

Human mechanical systems: riding a bicycle

Ecological system: predator vs. prey

Social systems: people interactions

Organizations are often made up of many management processes.

A pile of sand is not a system==take some away, but still have a pile of sand.

A car is a system: take away a key component and what does it become? Junk

Vision of a car? Transportation

Can there be many other subsystems of why folks purchase cars?

Radio subsystem

In USA, horn is an accessory of aggression.

But not in India, have to honk…

Look on the back of most trucks, horn please!

If your horn breaks down, essential there.

Most of us don't use that feature of the car often in the USA.

Of all the components of the car, how do they work.

Some parts are peripheral.

Sound system is peripheral, but some organization it is primary—even if Mercedez.

Essential components: engine, tires, brakes, fuel tank, transmission, battery

Peripherals: A/C, heat, etc.

What are the key systems of your organization?

Role of communication, culture, and other.

Multi-cultural congregation: dealing conflict may be different with each group.

Take a few minutes and write down what you think your organization is like?

We have a congregation of members that have moved into our area of Greene county from other medical communities; then, from the local area folks are converted into Christ and join the Adventist fellowship. The culture of our church is being affected by 3ABN and the SDA message; so, more folks are being acclimatized to the TAM's.

There are singles, marrieds, divorced, seniors, young adults, teens, babies, parents, etc.

We communicate our messages on Sabbath morning, by newsletter, by phonetree, by e-mail, by one-on-one meetings in the parking lot, office appointments, regular church committees, volunteer opportunities to serve the community.

What are all of the various parts and how do they relate to each other?

Identify all the different aspects and how do they fit together.

Idea of the church as a club organization: most of us would not see this as essential to salvation.

There are some people who see that the church is not valuable unless it is a social organization.

Often, a church does not see the pastor as a critical part of the church; because there is a core group that operates the functioning of the church.

Want to move on to communication.

A symbolic process in which people created shared meanings

The exchange of meaning (my attempt to let you know what I mean) as well as any behavior that another perceives and interprets (your understanding of what I mean). This includes both verbal and non-verbal.

A dynamic, systematic process…in which meanings are created and reflected in human interaction with symbols.

Diagram: speaker and receiver

When you focus on the process you wonder how you do it?

Why circles around the S and boxes around the R?

Each of us when we send a message to the receiver, the message goes thru a whole series of layers as to who we are.

Messages go thru filters for the receiver as well.

Anything that is part of who that person is, goes thru layers.

The more the layers are aligned, the more likely the message will be received.

Compounding it will be that the message goes thru a whole series of barriers.

It can get so noisy that you actually can't hear the message.

That can happen not only with noise, but with language.

Feedback, can be both blocked and open.

Channels: content channels is what most of us use—use words.

Other people: words are not the message base, but thru a relational channel.

Edward E. Hall: theorist developed high-context, low context communication.

Those of us WASP = low context.

Message is specifically there by the words we use.

Low context culture, our messages are very clear.

Low context culture: Overt messages, plainly coded messages, details verbalized, reactions on surface, flexible in and out group, weak interpersonal bonds, low commitment, and closed time

High context culture: covert messages, internalized messages, extensive non-verbal code, reactions reserved, distinct in and out groups, strong interpersonal bonds, high commitment, and open time.

In most Asian cultures, when thinking about something, appear to be silent.

Silence in business transaction between westerner and Asian, causes the deal to go longer in cogitation and maybe better deal for the Asian.

Marriage: have you ever walked into the house at night and recognize a problem because of a certain silence that speaks volumes.

People in high context cultures have more time: because the relationship is important.

Beware of people in congregation who speak differently than I do.

High context and low context may describe differences.

Low context is overt and high context the meanings are covert.

Meanings are not spoken directly by high context meanings.

When people have a subject in common they don't have to verbalize all the details.

Ex: Lebanese woman moves to the USA and chooses a doctor after becoming ill. She brings the doc Middle East pastries. Later on: Would you be willing to make 300 of pastries for a party I'm having? How much do I owe you?

And so, he takes the pastries and goes.

In Middle eastern culture, you don't want to appear greedy—not after my money.

No, no, we have an agreement here, no money.

He needed to ask her 3 times and work thru the relationship.

The real challenge: we have multiple congregants trying to coexist with a variety of cultural issues, temperaments, personalities, etc.

Barriers to communication: physical (time, environment, comfort, needs, physical medium), culture (ethnic, religious, and social differences), perceptional (viewing what is said from your own mindset), motivational (mental inertia), experiential (lack of similar experience), emotional (personal feelings at the moment), linguistic (different languages or vocabulary), nonverbal (non-word messages), and competition (noise, doing other things besides listening).

Multi-tasking: both good and bad
There is a measure of inattentiveness when you try to do two things at once.

Some people cannot sleep with the lights off.

The more channels you can keep open, the better: visual, audio, taste, feel, smell, etc.

Think of your organizational model…

Must be flexible on these issues of time with multiple cultures.

God is either on time and in time.

Culture defined

A deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.

An integrated systems of learned behavior patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society.

Stats on population of Spanish

In 2050 24% will be Hispanic

Denominational figures: 2004

5 million Hispanics between Inter and South America

Gert Hofstad

Identified 4-5 major traits that help us to understand cultural differences

- Individualism
- Power distance
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Masculinity
- Long-term orientation (Japanese cultures think in terms of 100 years from now.

He focused on IBM

He looked at a corporate culture—most significant social scientist in the late 20th century.

<u>Hofstede's Dimensions</u>

Should people have individual approach to things or have a collective approach to things?

In a highly individual culture, my rights are paramount.

Do you make decisions based upon my own individual needs or the group?

A collective society makes decisions with the group.

Are SDA's individualists or groupies?

We talk about the church in terms of the family and taking care of each other.

Our nomenclature takes that into account.

In Hispanic culture there is a collectivism—fastest growing group in USA.

In a high individualism society, the laws are the same for everybody.

Do you expect any special privileges if you break the law.

There are some places in the world with a pastor's insignia, you get a lot of breaks.

Individualism in North America seems to be a positive thing.

Controversy is expected in an individualistic society.

Where two cultures combine, than you have synergy from their agreements.

Individualistic families tend to have fewer family members.

Collective cultures don't promote privacy.

Work relationships: in individualistic cultures having family members doesn't necessarily allow others to be in the same job.

Some cultures you can't hire a family member.

Here at AU, a spouse cannot be a direct report to a spouse.

Individualistic cultures tend to work more hours than collective cultures.

What is the standard work week in your conference?

Power distance

The degree to which a society focuses on equality or inequality.

Lower power distance society, there tends to be de-emphasis on power and wealth.

Look at the way George Bush dresses…

On the overall pattern those running for office, they tended to dress casually.

Other cultures, you will never see powerful people dress down; because they are emphasizing dress up for power.

There is this trend in churches where the pastor dresses down.

In some parts of the world, you must dress up if you are the speaker and if you don't want to speak, you must dress down.

Children are treated as equals in low power distance, but taught and treated with expectation for obedience in high power distance.

Uncertainty avoidance

A low uncertainty culture has a lot more tolerance for a variety of opinions and less rule authority.

USA has high tolerance of diversity.

High uncertainty avoidance: like North Korea—only take a risk where you know the outcomes are.

Low uncertainty avoidance: more like USA

In a low uncertainty avoidance: rules can be changed in the family if the children can't follow them easily.

In the USA, the children makes the rules.
In high uncertainty avoidance: parents make the rules.

Workplace/school: low uncertainty avoidance—teacher says, "I don't know!"
If you come from a culture where there is a low uncertainty avoidance, the pastor does not have to have all the answers.

For the most part Americans tend to be emotional…

But some cultures, you don't know what has happened.

In categorizing cultures, individuals will vary.

Masculinity

Does it emphasize traditional gender roles?
Or does it combine the two genders?

Are gender roles distinct?
How about wealth?
USA—on the higher masculine side.

In Hispanic cultures, the masculinity is still more significant.

In Scandanavia, men get paternity leave.

Nurture is more important—you work in order to live.

US still tends to be a higher masculinity situation in wages.

Fewer women in management
A preference for higher pay in distinction to shorter working hours.

Corporate Cultures

4 Basic systems of Corporate culture

Guided missle structure (more egalitarian and structured)
Eiffel tower (more role structured)
Family
Incubator

A British and French researching pair responded to Hofstede's work.

Guided missile structure is:

Basically thinking of delivering a payload
Very egalitarian
Team work is emphasized
Loyalty to profession
Motivation intrinsic

Eiffel Tower

Very hierarchal
Structure more important than function
Leader is boss
Highly bureaucratic
Rules dominate
Careers depend upon professional qualifications
Symbolic of age

Family structure

Benevolent leader
Power-oriented leader
Long-term relationship
Values, norms are set by elder brother

Incubator (like Sweden)

Organizations secondary to individual fulfillment
Existence precedes organization
Aim at self-expression and self-fulfillment
Personal and egalitarian
Minimal structure
Emotional commitment
Creative, innovative

- Systems thinking
- Communication
- Culture
- Organization

Cultures and Organizations by Hofstede