

Missions Emphasis Weekend

Understanding "us" and "them" Better
A Key to More Effective Missions



An Introduction to the Collectivist Worldview

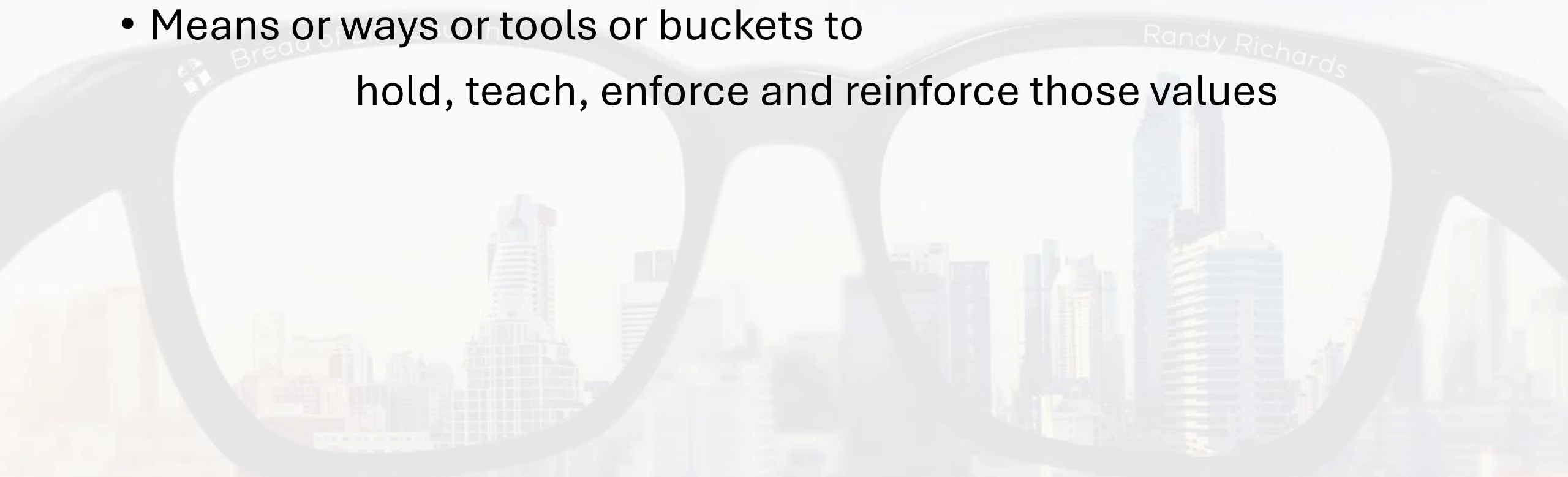
- Most of the modern world are collectivists.
- The biblical world was collectivist.
- You should want to learn about collectivism, if:
 - You are a collectivist
 - You know a collectivist
 - You want to read the Bible better.
 - All great reasons

Bread of Life Church

Randy Richards

Every culture has:

- Primary cultural values
- Means or ways or tools or buckets to hold, teach, enforce and reinforce those values



American Individualist culture has:

- Some primary cultural values:
 - Youth
 - Self-reliance
 - Independence/Freedom
 - Pragmatism
 - Efficiency
 - New (vs. traditional)
- Means or ways or tools or buckets to hold, teach, enforce and reinforce those values
 - Cultural Stories (folk tales), like Cinderella (or modern media)
 - Guilt
 - “Success”

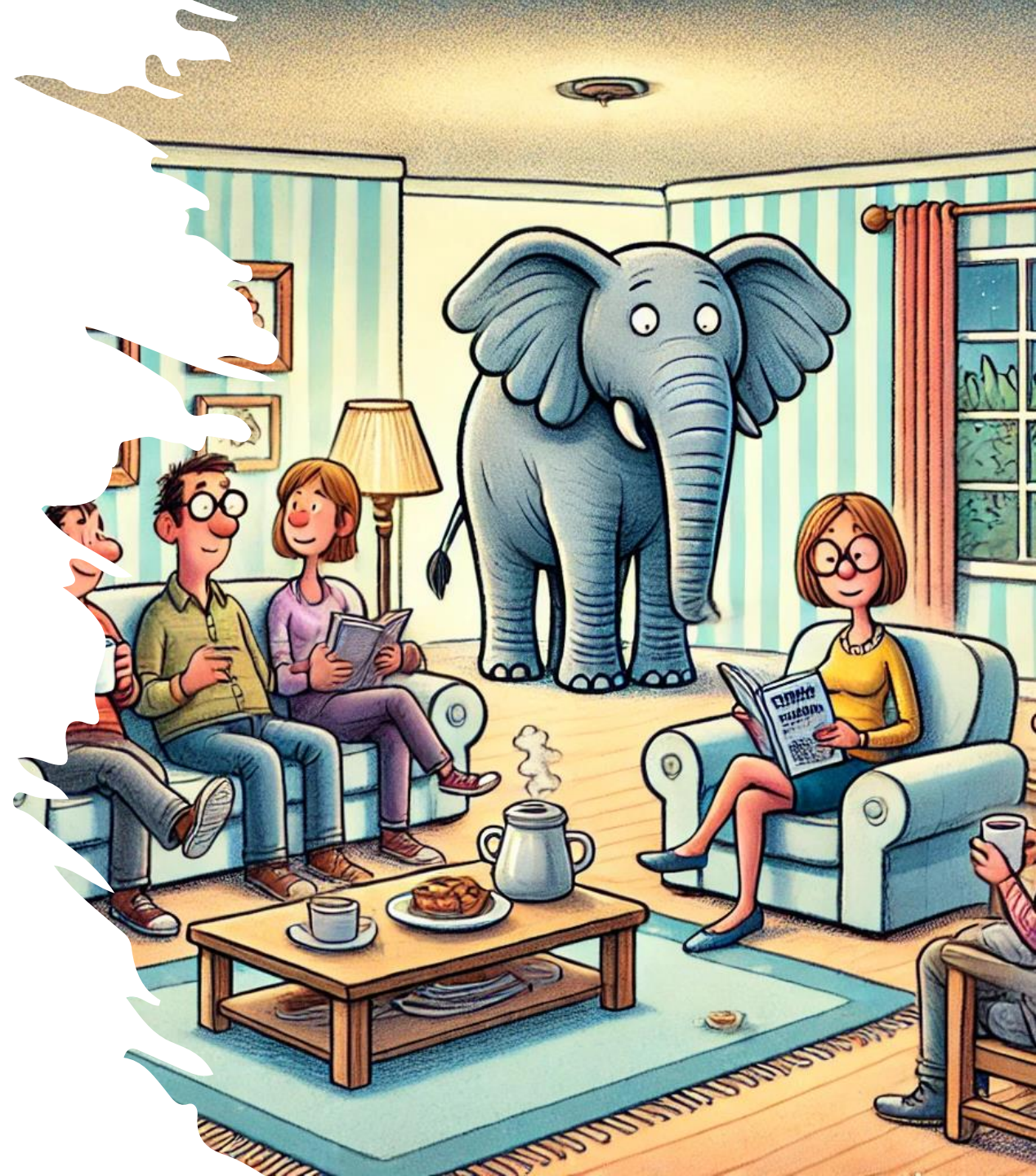
Cultural Values and Cultural Tools...

go without being said.

In fact, *talking about them* tends to remove some of their persuasion in our lives.

American Cultural Values (and how they teach, enforce, and reinforce them)

- Individualist Cultural Values
 - Media
 - Stories
 - Aesop's Fables
 - Cinderella
 - Guilt



American Cultural Values

- Individualist Cultural Values are taught through:
 - Media



“

The most satisfying aspect of my profession is taking people who have significant injuries with functional disabilities and **getting them back to a normal lifestyle.**

”



Anthony Miniaci, M.D.
Deputy Chief Medical Executive
Baptist Health Orthopedic Care

This is a hair loss ad.



- What are they saying to you (without actually saying it)?
- The message “goes without being said.”

Cultural Values (and how they teach, enforce, and reinforce them)

- Media

- Stories

- Aesop's Fables

- The Boy who cried Wolf
 - The Dog and his Reflection
 - The Tortoise and the Hare
 - Cinderella

American Cultural Values

(and how they teach, enforce, and reinforce them)



The hit movie
Pretty Woman

is a Cinderella story

American Cultural Values

(and how they teach, enforce, and reinforce them)

- Media
- Stories
 - Aesop's Fables
 - Cinderella
- Guilt

Maybe there's more we all could have done,
but we just have to let the guilt remind us
to do better next time."

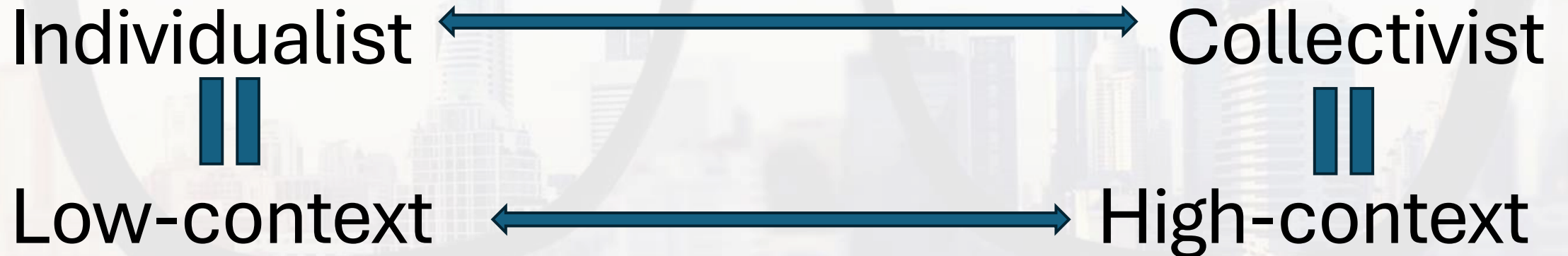
— Veronica Roth, *Divergent*



But all these Cultural Values and Tools...

go without being said.

There is another problem:



The Bible was from a High-Context Culture:

Jesus told a story (Mt 13:3)

A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

- Jesus tells us nothing about how farmers sow seeds.
- ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a **hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.** ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

The Bible was from a High-Context Culture

Let's do another story, where the Bible assumes you know what everybody knew.

Rev. 5

I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

What went without being said...



What does it mean to say the book (scroll)
had seven seals?

What went without being said...



Seven Seals

(1) The Executor of the Will.

(2) The Heir.

(3) Witness #1

(4) Witness #2

(5) Witness #3

(6) Witness #4

(7) Witness #5

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What went without being said
(but we were expected to know)...



Rev. 5

³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.⁴ Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

What went without being said
(but we were expected to know)...



Rev. 5

⁵ and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

What went without being said
(but we were expected to know)...



The Lamb opens all Seven Seals:

- (1) The Executor of the Will.
- (2) The Heir.
- (3) Witness #1
- (4) Witness #2
- (5) Witness #3
- (6) Witness #4
- (7) Witness #5

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So what point does John want us to catch?

John wants us to see three things:

- (1) Jesus is the Heir.
- (2) Jesus is the Executor of the Will.
- (3) Only Jesus was there to be a witness to the original will.

Most Collectivist Cultures have:

- Common primary cultural values:
 - Kinship
 - Patronage
 - Brokerage/Mediation
- Common ways or tools or buckets to hold, teach, enforce and reinforce those values
 - Honor
 - Shaming
 - Boundaries

- **Kinship**

“You can pick your friends, but you can’t pick your family.”

- **Patronage**

“Don’t patronize me!”

- **Brokerage**

“Cut out the middleman!”

- **Honor**

“Honor killings are categorically bad.”

- **Shame**

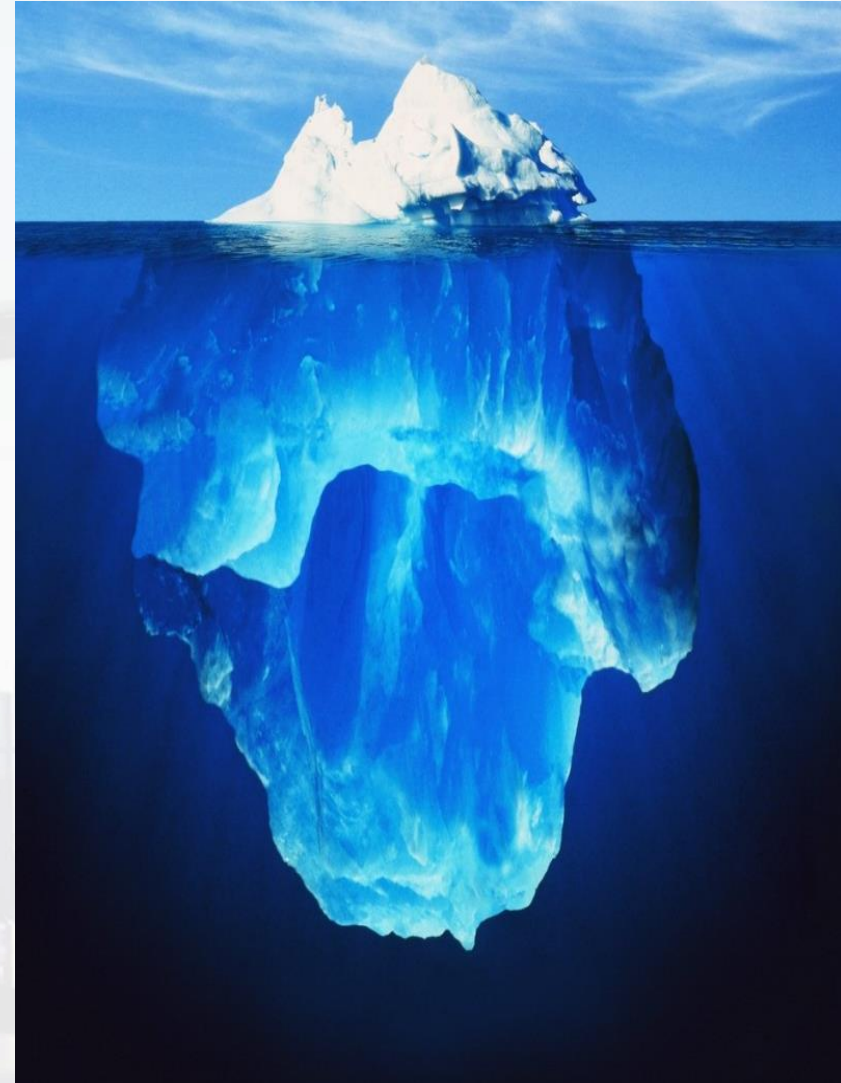
“It is always wrong to shame someone!”

- **Boundaries**

“Don’t fence me in!”

So, let's look at a biblical passage, where a cultural value influenced how I read it.

- Cultural values are like an iceberg.
- I have an American understanding of “rules.”
- We don't talk about it, but it impacts how I read rules in the Bible.

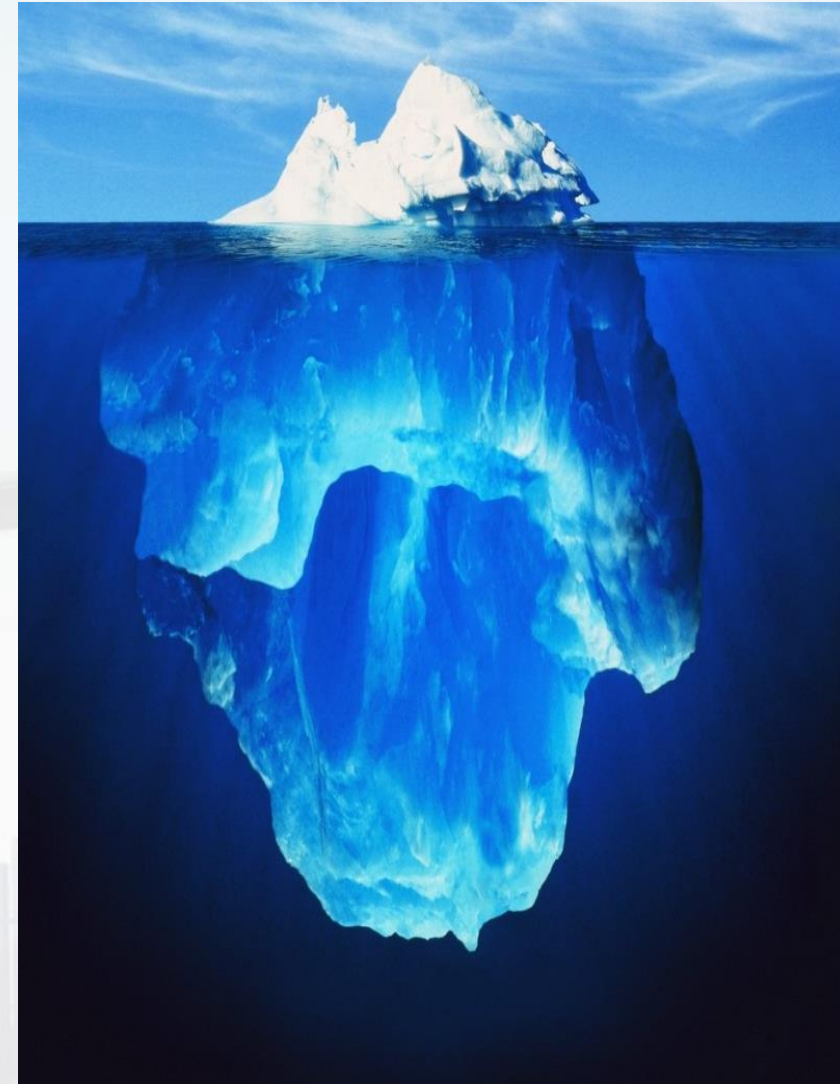


Deep below the Surface

Rules/Relationships

American “rules” about Rules:

1. Rules have to always apply.
(Otherwise they are “broken.”)
2. Rules must apply to everyone
(Otherwise they are “unfair.”)

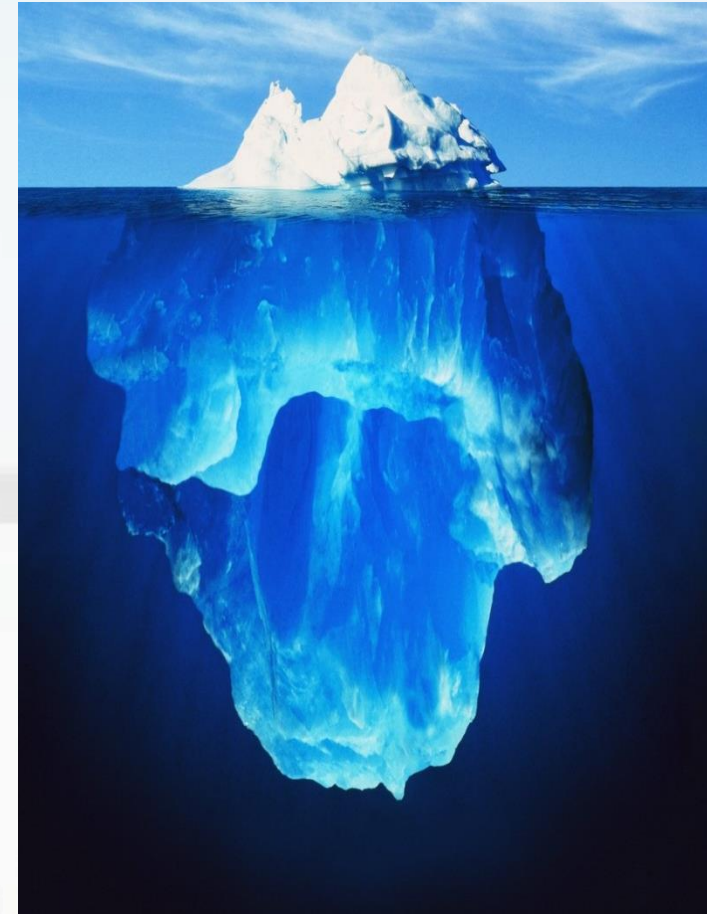


Deep below the Surface

“Rules always apply”

(or they are broken,
and God isn't broken)

- “I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man” (1 Tim 2:12, NIV)

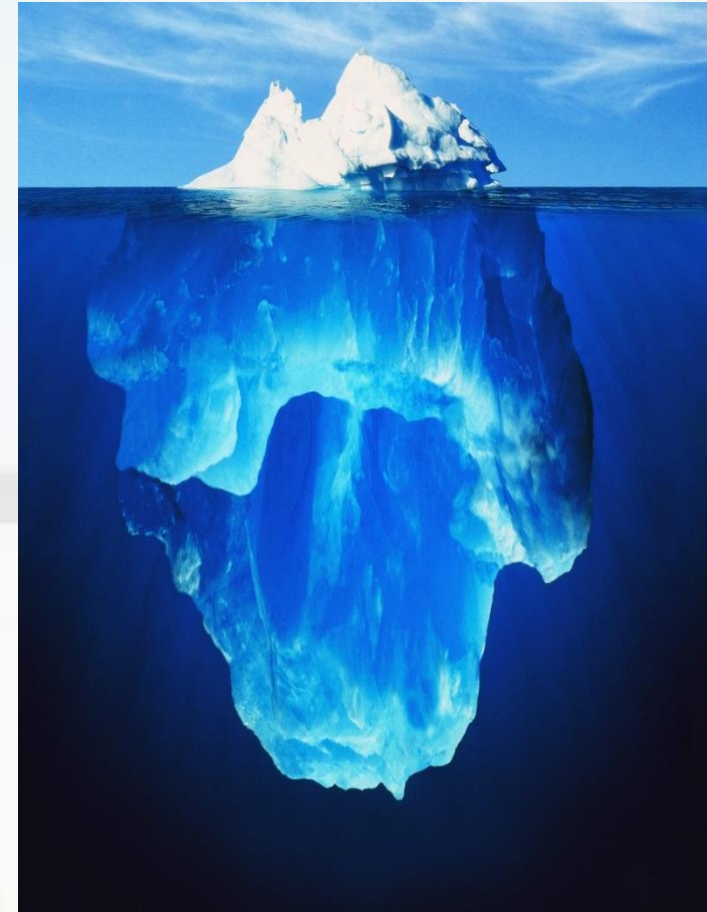


Deep below the Surface

“Rules always apply”

Reading Paul like an American, then I need to “tweak” one of these statements by Paul :

- I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man
(1 Tim 2:12, NIV)
- I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon in the church (Rom 16:1, NIV)



Deep below the Surface

“Rules always apply”

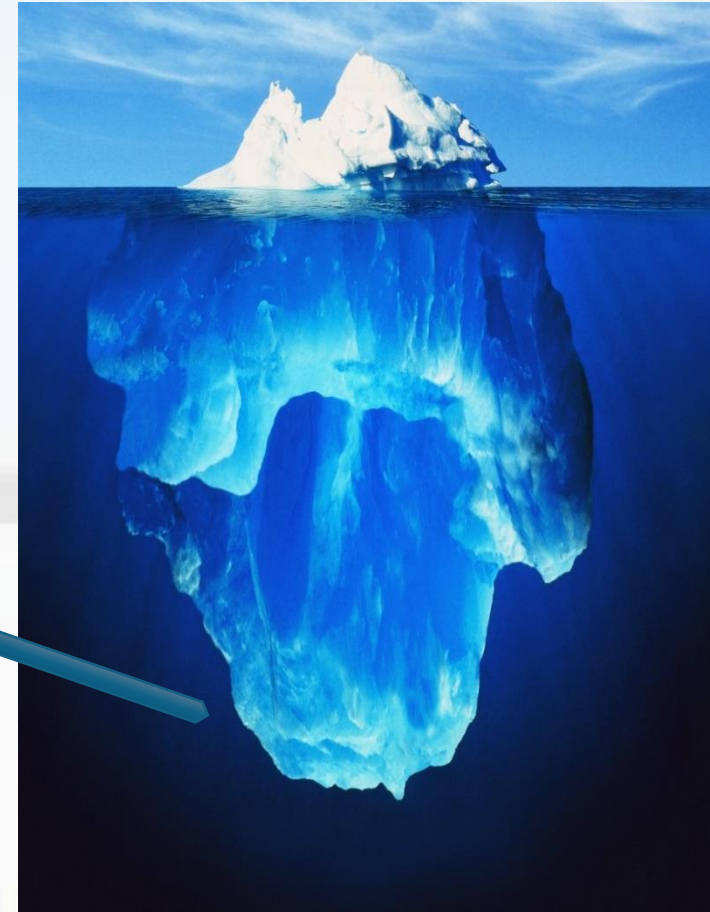
(or they are broken,
and God isn't broken)

“Rules apply to everyone”

(or they are unfair,
and God is always fair)

“Pendeta harus laki-laki”

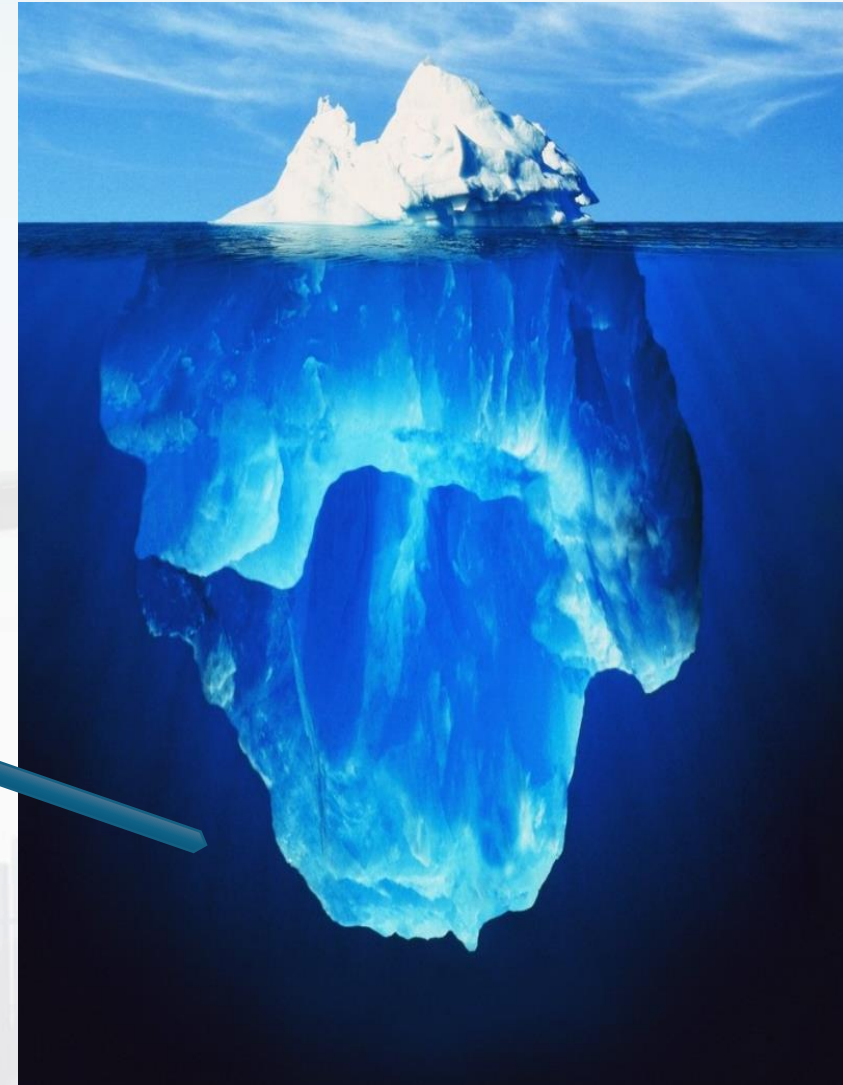
-Indonesian Convention Bylaws



Deep below the Surface

“Rules apply to everyone”
(or they are unfair, and
God isn’t unfair)

Paul: “God set me apart from my
mother’s womb”

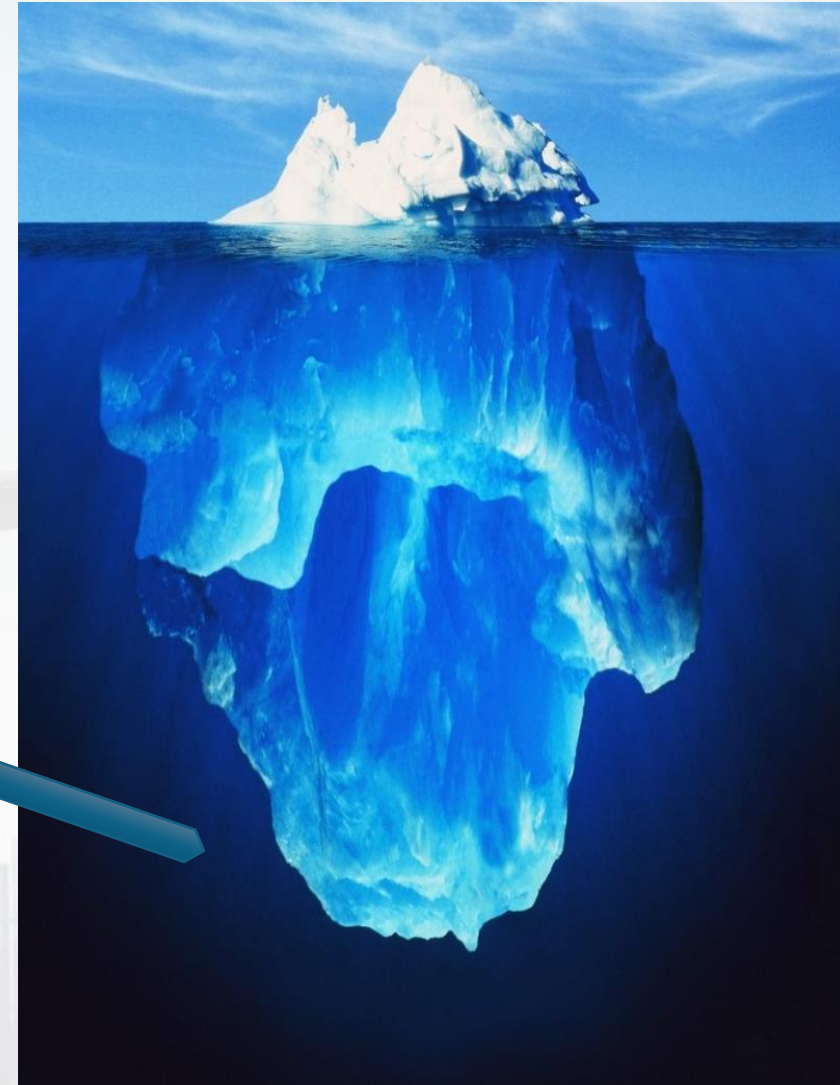


Bread of Life Church

Deep below the Surface

Rules versus Relationships

- My American understanding that rules always apply to everyone
- The biblical view that rules apply except when they don't.



When the Bible leaves out something (that everybody knows), but I don't know it, then my *culture* tells me what to use to fill in the gaps...

When Paul wrote a rule, “everybody knew” that rules apply except when they don't



**Questions?
Comments?**

**Observations?
Objections?**

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When the Bible leaves out something (that everybody knows), but I don't know it, then my *culture* tells me what to use to fill in the gaps...

- The widow's offering
- The tough widow

My culture tells me to ignore something...

The Widow's Offering

Luke 21 As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

Before Luke's story of the widow's offering...

⁴⁶ "Beware of the teachers of the law...

⁴⁷ They devour widows' houses

The Widow's Offering

Luke 21 As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she **out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.**"

Right after Luke's story of the widow's offering...

The Widow's Offering

Luke 21 As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

⁵ Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and **with gifts dedicated to God**. But Jesus said, ⁶ "As for what you see here, the time will come when **not one stone will be left on another**; every one of them will be thrown down."

My culture left out something
that “everybody knows” in Jesus’ story...

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a tough
widow

Randy Richards

a crooked
judge

The Bible left out “what everybody knows”

Luke 18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him