2018 APEDS - Brisbane

Contemporary Cultural Challenges
to Passing and Receiving the Baton of Church Leadership

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Contemporary cultural challenges to baton passing

1. Introduction: the culture iceberg

2. Comparing cultures: Hofstede and Hampden-Turner

3. Cultural challenges in the church

4. Where to from here?

The culture iceberg

Explicit culture: conscious, easier to change, visible –
eg. literature; art; clothing; dance; music

Implicit culture: unconscious, more difficult to change, opaque –
eg. beliefs; values; concept of authority; views of time, nature, community & self; decision-making process

Comparing cultures: Hofstede

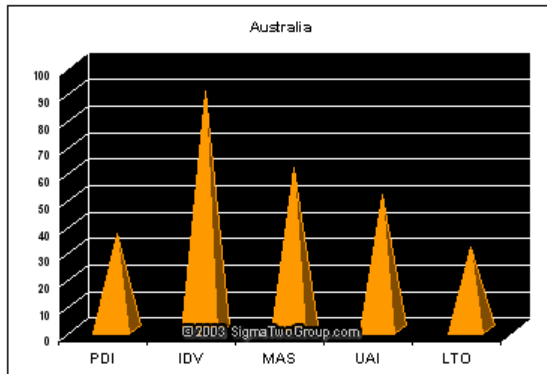Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences* (Sage, 2001):

- Power distance (acceptance of unequal power, hierarchy)

- Uncertainty avoidance (acceptance of ambiguity)

- Individualism and collectivism (self v groups)

- Masculinity and femininity (things, success v care for life)

- Long term orientation (short term v long term views)

"Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster."
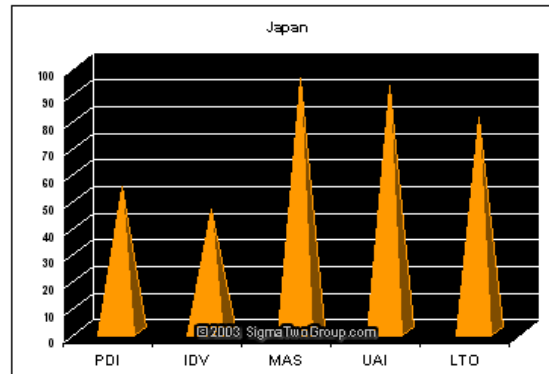
Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor, Maastricht University
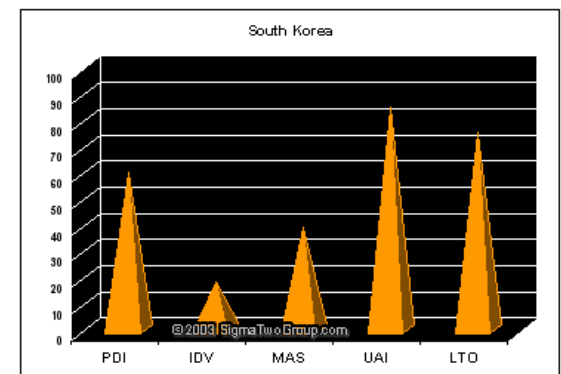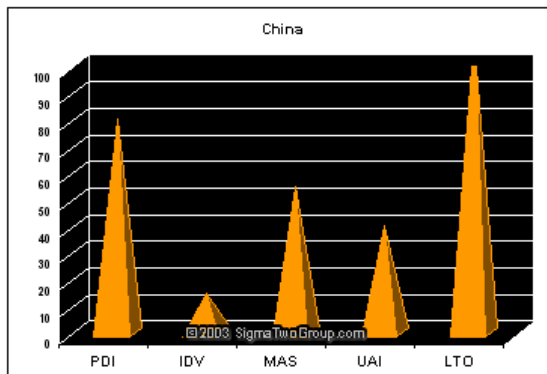
Hofstede's scores

Australia

Japan

South Korea

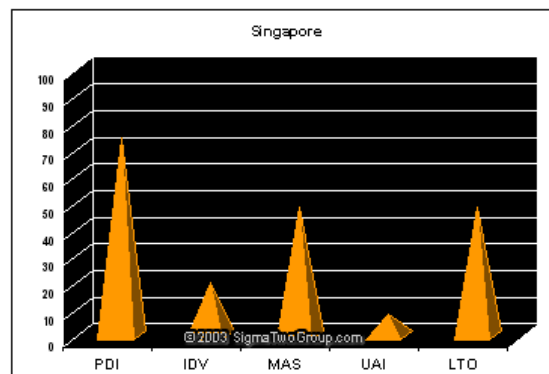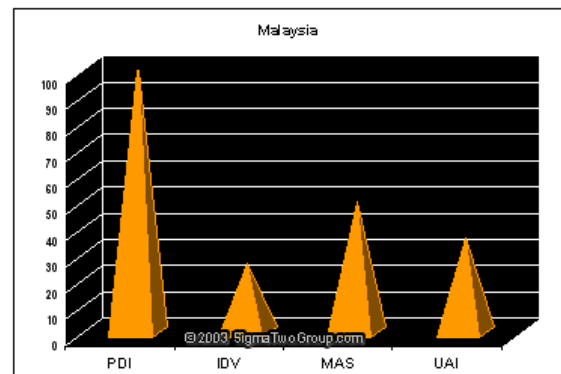## China

Singapore

Malaysia

Comparing cultures: Hampden-Turner

Charles Hampden-Turner & Fons Trompenaars,
Building Cross-Cultural Competence (Yale University Press, 2000)

West	East
Universalism	Particularism
Individualism	Communitarianism
Specificity	Diffusion
Achieved status	Ascribed status
Inner directed	Outer directed
Sequential time	Synchronous time

A cautionary note

Generalisation	Stereotype
Does not apply to everyone in every situation	Deemed applicable to everyone in every situation
Just a "first guess"	A rigid impression
Subject to a normal "bell curve"	Everyone is in the same box
Discarded when no longer accurate	Retained even though no longer accurate

Cultural challenges in the church

1. Trajectory: mono-ethnic church or multi-ethnic church?

2. How is **leadership** viewed across different cultures?

3. How is **church leadership** viewed across different cultures?
   a. Individualism and collectivism (self v groups)
   b. Uncertainty avoidance (acceptance of ambiguity)
   c. Long term orientation (short term v long term views)

4. There are also other dimensions of culture: based on age (young people v older people); education; socio-economic status, etc. How do these play out in churches?

5. To what extent can churches today learn from the cultural challenges faced by the 1st century church (esp. Jew v Gentile issues)?