



EAST WEST
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

WORLDVIEWS AND THE GOSPEL

TOOLS TO HELP YOU SHARE THE GOOD NEWS CROSS-CULTURALLY

“...all peoples on earth will
be blessed through you.”

-GENESIS 12:3

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FOREWORD

We know our divine calling is to make disciples of all nations, but with cross-cultural hurdles to jump, the task of proclaiming God's glory among the nations can often seem daunting.

If this is where you find yourself today, know you are in good company.

For centuries, believers have sought to learn how to most effectively share the good news of Jesus Christ in various settings and have taken great strides in understanding cultural nuances. Today it is my privilege to share with you a resource we've compiled to help keep you "prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

As you study the different worldviews on the following pages, it is my deep desire that you are ultimately led to a place of worship as you see the breadth of God's plan to redeem multitudes from every people group and place.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kurt". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Kurt Nelson
Chief Executive Officer



WHAT IS A WORLDVIEW?

World-view: *Noun.* A comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint^[1].

A worldview is simply the perspective from which we see the world. The worldview we identify with most ultimately determines how we perceive failure, success, status and respect. It is the frame of reference we use to make sense of our experiences and the events around us.

Today, there are three prevalent worldviews—Honor/Shame, Guilt/Innocence and Fear/Power—that cultures adopt, and each have a profound impact on the way people view sin, God and the gospel. But no one worldview fully captures the gravity of our sin and grace extended to us in Jesus.

By growing in our understanding of all three perspectives highlighted in this booklet, we can uncover greater dimensions of the gospel and how to share it cross-culturally.

WORLDVIEWS IN THE WORD

Paul's prayer to the Ephesians is one of the clearest examples we see in Scripture of gospel messaging that encompasses Honor/Shame, Guilt/Innocence and Fear/Power cultures^[2].

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.” –EPHESIANS 1:18-19

As we dive into each of these worldviews and how they influence culture on the following pages, we've highlighted verses that demonstrate each in hopes that you will see different facets of the gospel and how it holds the power to impact people from every nation, tribe, people and language.



A top-down view of a concrete staircase where numerous pairs of shoes and sandals are scattered. The footwear includes flip-flops in various colors (blue, purple, yellow, green), sneakers (white, blue, purple), and high-heeled shoes (pink, purple). The shoes are arranged in a somewhat organized manner on the steps, suggesting a collection or a display. A dark green banner with white text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

HONOR/SHAME

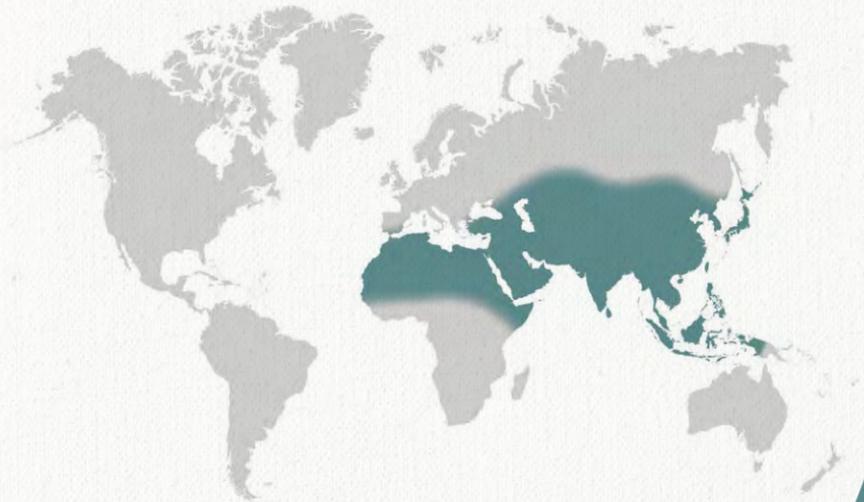
FAST FACTS

Population: 4.37 billion

Culture: Collectivist communities

Major Religions: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism

Primary Location: Eastern World and North Africa



“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God ... the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

—ROMANS 8:14-15

UNDERSTANDING HONOR/SHAME

Honor/Shame cultures are typically collectivist communities and are often marked by generous hospitality. Individuals living in these settings find their value from group acceptance and work to uphold their family and community's honor and reputation.

The opinions of others are highly esteemed and a collective group's social status hinges on each individual's reputation. As one missiologist summarized, "it's like there is an imaginary scale that has shame on one side and honor on the

other and the things you do, the things you say, and the ways you behave can tip the scale in one direction or the other"^[3].

“Shame and honor are contagious; what one person does will affect the entire group.”

—JAYSON GEORGES

Acting out of social norms reaps dreaded shame not only on the individual, but on their entire community. Therefore, it's important to manage and/or conceal shame. Once honor is broken, it is difficult to restore.

In this worldview, it's of utmost importance to keep “face,” which occurs by adhering to your role in the group that's based on age, gender and position^[4]. Acting



COMMON HONOR/SHAME VOCABULARY

In Honor/Shame cultures, it's common to hear and observe behavior related to the words listed below. It's important to note that many of these terms are used throughout Scripture.

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE (HONOR/SHAME) ^[2]

Loyalty	Reverence	Jew/Gentile	Alienation	Public	Patron(age)
Father	Dignity	Harmony	Approval	Feast	Dishonor
Child	Unclean	Allegiance	Glory	Defilement	Envy
Alliance	Worthy	Unity	Purity	Humiliation	Adoption
Respect	Boasting	Hospitality	Inheritance	Worth	
Inclusion	Threat	Reputation	Family	Acceptance	
Face	Mediator	Identity	Community	Disgraced	

“You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household.” -EPHESIANS 2:19



“Annis spent years going through the motions to fit in with her Muslim family and the rest of her community.”

A CHANGED LIFE STORY

Annis* was born and raised in a Muslim home, but in her heart she knew Allah wasn't truly God.

Despite her unbelief, she spent years going through the motions to fit in with her family and the rest of her community ... wearing a hijab, praying five times a day and even attending Muslim congregational prayer each Friday.

One day while studying for her college exams, Annis met a team of East-West short-term missionaries. After some small talk, the group asked her about her faith and shared the gospel with her.

Annis' heart started beating fast. She had never heard Isa (Jesus) spoken of this way, but something about their story of His compassion and willingness to lay down His life for her salvation rang true in her heart.

Suddenly she knew He was the One whose family she longed to be a part of so she could worship Him all the days of her life.

That day Annis made a risky decision in a country known for its persecution of Christians ... she chose to follow Jesus, removed her hijab and hasn't looked back.

** Names and photos have been changed for security reasons.*

A dark, moody photograph of a rusted metal bowl containing crumpled banknotes and coins. The scene is lit with dramatic, low-key lighting, creating deep shadows and highlights on the textures of the metal and paper. A semi-transparent purple banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "FEAR/POWER" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

FEAR/POWER

FAST FACTS

Population: 1.42 billion

Culture: Tribal

Major Religions: Animism

Primary Location: Global South and tribal areas



“Finally, be strong in
the Lord and in his
mighty power. Put on
the full armor of God,
so that you can take
your stand against the
devil’s schemes.”

—EPHESIANS 6:10-11

UNDERSTANDING FEAR/POWER

In Fear/Power cultures, individuals believe that there are spiritual powers at play that rule the physical world. This specific worldview is most often associated with tribal cultures, though it can permeate into other cultures through superstitious beliefs.

“The moral logic of Fear/Power cultures says: do something in the seen world to manipulate the unseen world into helping you.”

—JAYSON GEORGES

spiritual world. According to one article, “you can do this through curses, incantations, charms, or even sacrifices. Each of these is a means to draw power from those supernatural forces, those angry spirits, and in that way to gain power over people”^[3].

Blessings and hardships are considered direct reflections of someone’s relationship to the spiritual realm and sacrifices to spirits are a common practice in this culture. One writer states that individuals under this worldview “continually work to remain in their good graces”^[5].

Ultimately, these spirits are to be feared and wielded to gain social status. Fear is overcome by gaining power by appeasing the



COMMON FEAR/POWER VOCABULARY

In Fear/Power cultures, it's common to use combat language, like the terms listed below. It's important to note that many of these terms are used throughout Scripture.

COMBAT LANGUAGE (FEAR/POWER) [2]

Deliverance	Throne	Bondage	Spirits	Exodus	Kingdom
Power(s)	Warfare	Domination	Prayer	Wonders	Protection
Darkness	Exorcism	Signs	Blessing/Curse	Powerful	Stronghold
Magic	Angels	Possession	Freedom	Captive	Idolatry
Miracles	Deceiver	Confrontation	Triumph	Almighty	
Weak	Conquer	Power	Satan	Oppression	
Peace	Healing	Control	Authority	Holy Spirit	

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” -ROMANS 8:38-39

A woman with a purple and white headscarf is shown in profile, looking upwards and to the right. She has a serious, contemplative expression. The background is dark with many small, out-of-focus lights, suggesting an indoor setting at night. A semi-transparent purple box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

“Devya’s spiritual condition was quickly exposed when the demon dwelling inside her took control.”

A CHANGED LIFE STORY

In South Asia, Devya* was at war with the enemy. Possessed by an evil spirit, she often spoke in foreign languages she didn't know. She was an outcast in her community ... a blabbering madwoman.

Overtaken by darkness, there was nothing pure or good about her.

But a God she did not know was sending messengers of good news to her aid in the form of East-West national partners. For three days, these visitors shared the gospel in her village before they met Devya.

The crowds flocking to hear the national partners' stories had grown greatly as interest in Jesus peaked. Devya was curious about this Man and entered their meeting tent to hear the message.

Her spiritual condition was quickly exposed as the demon dwelling inside her took control.

Knowing the Name of Jesus made demons flee, the national partners prayed over Devya and God instantly cast out the dark spirit. Her healing was a miracle, and Devya responded with faith in the gospel and received a new Spirit ... the very Spirit of God.

That day Devya was delivered from darkness and given a new life in Jesus Christ.

** Names and photos have been changed for security reasons.*

A young woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored plaid dress and sandals, is walking on a concrete bridge with metal railings. She is looking down at a small object in her hand. The bridge extends into the distance, flanked by a residential area with houses and trees under a cloudy sky. A green banner with white text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

GUILT/INNOCENCE

FAST FACTS

Population: 1.08 billion

Culture: Individualistic

Major Religions: Christianity

Primary Location: Western World



“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

—ROMANS 3:22-23

UNDERSTANDING GUILT/INNOCENCE CULTURES

Guilt/Innocence cultures are shaped by a code of right and wrong. This worldview tends to be shaped by individualistic thought and people are expected to use their moral compass when interacting with others. Simply stated, “doing right keeps one innocent; doing wrong makes one guilty”^[2].

In this worldview, people are often “obsessed with justice, with keeping people in-check with standards of right and wrong”^[3].

“Integrity is doing the right thing, even when nobody is looking.”

—C.S. LEWIS

Additionally, freedom of individual choice is highly valued, so standing out in a crowd is a trait to be revered and elevates social status. People from a Guilt/Innocence worldview tend to find their identity in their jobs, hobbies, and interests^[2].

Early in life, people are taught rules to obey. When these laws are broken, there is a legal system in place to ensure that justice is served.



COMMON GUILT/INNOCENCE VOCABULARY

Guilt/Innocence cultures highly value justice, which is reflected in the vocabulary listed below. It's important to note that many of these terms are used throughout Scripture.

COURTROOM LANGUAGE (GUILT/INNOCENCE) [2]

Law	Forgiveness	Judge	Payment	Correction	Sacrifice
Appeasement	Debt	Acquittal	Guilt	Penalty	Works
Rules	Wrath	Innocence	Pardon	Punishment	
Condemnation	Justive	Individual	Judgement	Merit	
Sacrifice	Transgression	Personal	Right/wrong	Commands	

“Just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous” -ROMANS 5:18-19



“To the world, Ivan was a decent man living in the Caucasus.”

A CHANGED LIFE STORY

To the world's standards, Ivan* was a decent man living in the Caucasus. He didn't drink or smoke, he was a good husband and father and he enjoyed helping people. But his friend, Aleksander*—an East-West national partner—knew that unless Ivan believed in Christ's sacrifice at the cross, God would not accept him as “good.”

Out of love for Ivan, Aleksander made an effort to share this truth with Ivan, but he constantly pushed back ... pointing to his good works as proof of a relationship with God. In doing so, Ivan missed the foundation of the gospel.

Good works fall short of God's standard of perfection. A perfect sacrifice was needed, and God provided that through Jesus. This stumped Ivan.

Aleksander began to visit Ivan more often and continued to dive into spiritual conversations in hopes that the Holy Spirit would use him to clear up his misconceptions of Christianity and what it takes to be in relationship with God. But Ivan's heart remained closed to the gospel. Aleksander continued to pray for his friend, trusting that the Lord would change his heart.

On one of his visits, Ivan shared that he was totally without peace. As they talked, Ivan came to realize that his lack of peace was the result of his own sin. He was exhausted from living with the guilt of his wrongs and striving to please God. Ivan repented and trusted Christ.

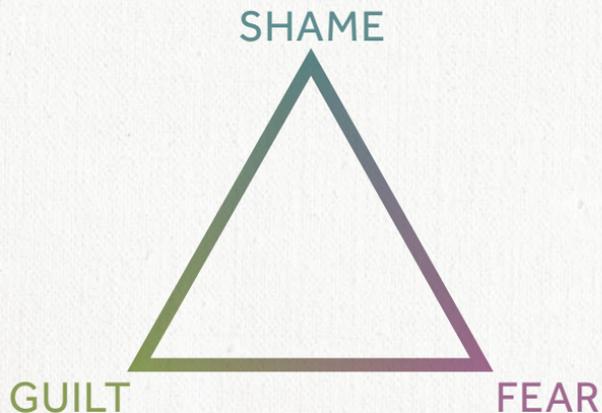
Today he is under Aleksander's mentorship to become a spiritual leader, and these two friends are witnessing the church continue to grow in their community.

* Names and photos have been changed for security reasons.

WHAT'S YOUR WORLDVIEW?

Now that you've explored three common worldviews, which one do you most relate to?

It's common to identify with a primary and secondary worldview. Chart where you think you land on the diagram below and go to www.eastwest.org/culturetest to learn more about your worldview. ^[2]



“The gospel removes shame, it removes fear, and it removes guilt, it restores honor, it restores power, it restores innocence. The gospel speaks to every person in every culture and addresses their every need.”

-TIM CHALLIES

THE GOOD NEWS IN WORLDVIEWS

The chart below from the book, *The 3D Gospel*, includes information to help you share the good news of Jesus Christ with people from Honor/Shame, Fear/Power and Guilt/Innocence worldviews.

	GUILT-INNOCENCE	SHAME-HONOR	FEAR-POWER
1. God's Intention	God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for our life. Jesus came so that we would have eternal life and not perish. Jesus offers us an abundant life.	God values you and wants to honor you as His child. God created us with glory and honor, to live with harmony in his family.	God is sovereign and offers you spiritual authority. God created us to rule his entire creation (seen and unseen) and experience his spiritual blessings.
2. The Human Problem	People are sinful and condemned by God. Our transgressions create a barrier between us and a holy God. Good works fail to reach God's standard.	People are shameful and dishonor God. Our rebellion disgraces the glorious God and produces shame. Our attempts to restore honor fall short of covering the shame of our spiritual orphanage.	People fearfully live under the authority of Satan. Our idolatry separates us from divine power. The powers of darkness rule over all people, causing sin, death, and harm.
3. The Solution of Jesus	Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice for your sins. Jesus died on the cross in our place to pay the penalty of sins. Jesus bore the wrath of God's punishment for us.	Jesus Christ bore all your shame and restores honor. Jesus' disgraceful death removes our shame and restores honor. By honoring God, Jesus allows you to rejoin God's family.	Jesus is the warrior who restores our power. Jesus conquered evil powers and death to bring God's power and blessings. His death disarmed powers and provides us spiritual authority.
4. Our Salvific Response	You must receive Jesus as your personal Savior. Receive Christ as personal Savior and turn from human morality to have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.	You must give allegiance to Jesus to enter God's family. Receive God's gracious welcome into his family and live under His name. Turn from false cultural face to receive God's honor.	You must know Jesus to access divine power. Relationally trust Jesus Christ alone for protection and power. Turn from magical rituals and occultism for authority and blessings.

HOW TO SHARE GOD'S STORY

You don't need a seminary degree or apologetics training to be God's witness to the unreached in your sphere of influence ... you simply need to know Jesus. East-West trains believers just like you to use five familiar Scriptures in tandem with the diagram on this page to share God's story—the gospel—with the lost.

- God's story starts with Him. Explain that He has always existed in perfect holiness and created all things ... including people.
- People were made for relationship with God, but we rebelled against Him. This rebellion is called sin and God says all people have sinned (Roman 3:23).
- The penalty of sin is death and eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23).
- But while we were still sinning, God sent His Son—Jesus—to die for our sins (Romans 5:8). Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God offers us a free gift of grace (Romans 6:23).

- Anyone can accept this free gift and have eternal life by confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing your heart that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9-10).
- Make the invitation. Ask, "Is there anything keeping you from believing this today?"



If they believe, guide them in this prayer:

God, I admit that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. Thank You for loving me and sending Your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins. Today I confess with my mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead. Amen.

HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY

Your testimony is a powerful way to tell others about Jesus. We train believers to share their story in three parts: before Christ, meeting Christ and after Christ. In doing so, we ask them to pick three words or phrases that describe what they experienced during these seasons of life and elaborate on their chosen words in one to two sentences.

Here's an example:

Before Christ: Purposeless. Prior to knowing Jesus, my life lacked meaning and I did not know I had a purpose for living.

Meeting Christ: Loved. When I met Jesus, I learned that God loved me and proved it by sending His Son to die for me.

After Christ: Purpose. Now that I follow Jesus, I know that God wants to use me to impact others and that I have an incredible purpose.

Now it's your turn. Spend a few minutes practicing God's story and your story with other believers and intentionally go out with these tools to spark spiritual conversations in your daily life.

BEFORE CHRIST:

MEETING CHRIST:

AFTER CHRIST:

SOURCES

East-West used several sources to compile the information shared in this resource. Below are the books, research studies and articles we used if you're interested in further reading.

[1] Merriam-Webster Dictionary: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worldview>

[2] *The 3D Gospel* by Jayson Georges: <http://honorshame.com/3dgospel/>

[3] Shame, Fear, Guilt: <https://www.challies.com/articles/shame-fear-guilt/>

[4] 4 Keys to Evangelism in Honor-Shame Cultures: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/march/4-keys-to-evangelism-in-honor-shame-cultures.html>

[5] Guilt, Shame and Power Worldviews and the Gospel: <https://p2c.com/students/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Guilt-Shame-and-Power-Worldviews-and-the-Gospel.pdf>

[6] The Culture Test: <http://theculturetest.com/>

GO. MULTIPLY.

Together, we can ignite a worldwide movement of gospel-centered multiplication regardless of cultural differences.

PRAY

Partner with us to advance the gospel among the unreached

GIVE

Steward your resources to make disciples

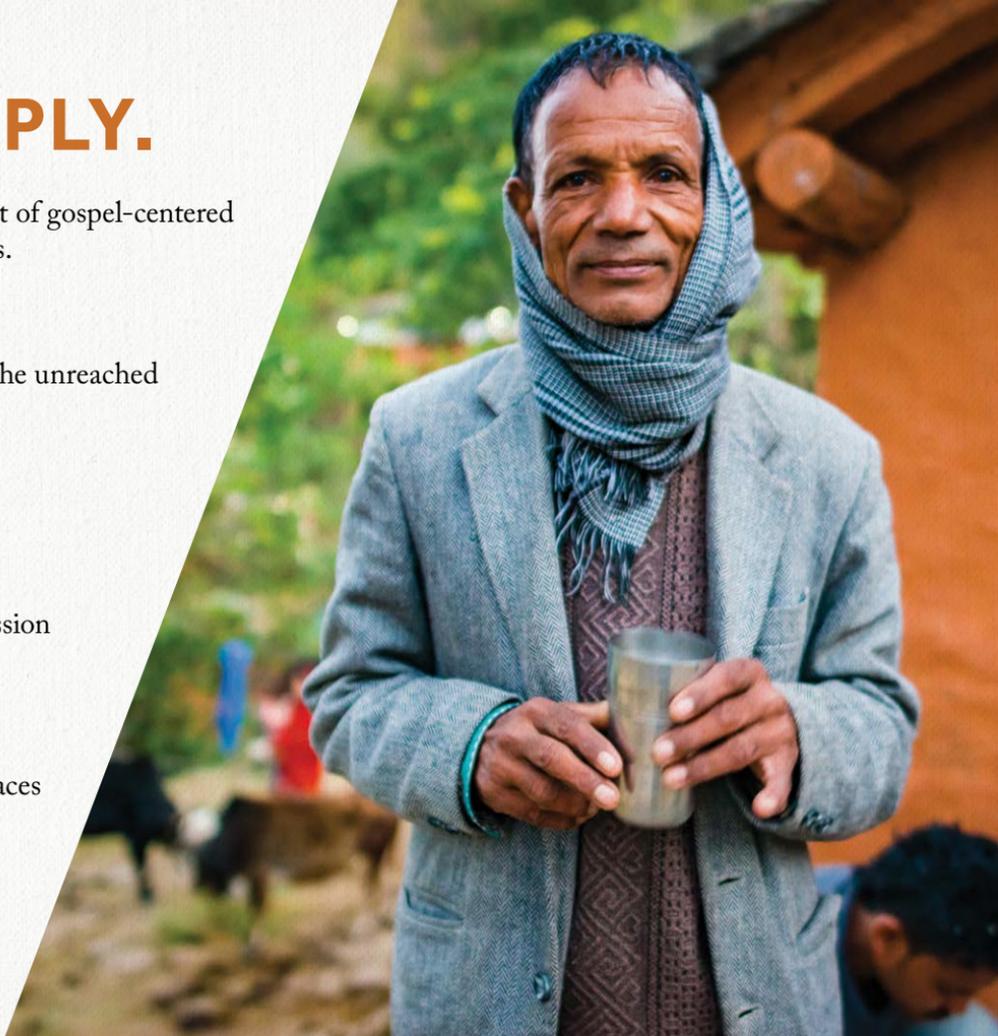
GO

Step into the mission field for a short-term mission trip, mid-term or long-term stay

SHARE

Advocate for God's work in spiritually dark places through East-West

Visit www.eastwest.org/gomultiply to get involved with East-West today.



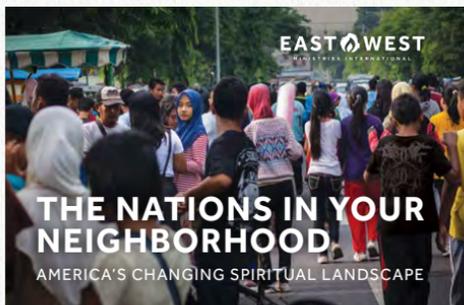
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you're interested in additional copies of this resource or any of the resources listed below, please contact us at info@eastwest.org or 972.941.4500.



A FIELD GUIDE TO MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

Discover the fundamental beliefs of the world's five largest religions and how to share the gospel in each context.



THE NATIONS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Learn how God is bringing the unreached to your community and how you can impact them.



WORLDVIEWS AND THE GOSPEL

Explore three common worldviews and how the good news of Jesus is relevant and present in each.

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

—REVELATION 5:9



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We would like to thank an anonymous donor for graciously
donating the cost of printing this publication.