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CultureBound

MAGAZINE

Culture in Environment

How does your environment influence the cultural trends that shape your world?

MAY 2021

A photograph of a shirtless man wearing a conical hat, carrying two large bundles of rice plants on his shoulders. He is walking through a lush green field. The background is filled with dense green foliage. The lighting suggests it's either early morning or late afternoon.

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Our CAST Workshop exists to prepare you for effective short-term ministry in an unfamiliar culture.



God's Thumbprint

Dr. Terry Steele, Ph. D., Dr. of Missiology

Genesis 1 and 2 tell of the greatest period of creativity in history. In the beginning God made ... everything out of nothing. God's creation reflects the values of God: provision, procreation, interconnectedness, new life. God made the world to provide food for mankind and animals. He gave charge of the earth and His creation to humans so that they might "subdue" the earth and "have dominion over" the animals. While there has been controversy over what "subdue" and "have dominion over" mean¹, there is certainty of the responsibility God has given humans in the care and management of His creation.

¹ Some believe all of the earth is for human's pleasure to do as they will, and others believe that humans must serve the needs of the earth.

The earth has tendencies and patterns, within which humans have learned to work. There are planting and harvesting cycles, harvesting lumber and replanting forests, animal and agricultural husbandry. Human practices in these regards have been impacted by the environment surrounding them. Some cultures from their onset found the surrounding land to be fertile, the environment steady, and animals abundant. These people were able to produce regular crops, build long-term housing and create stable societies due to the consistency of the environment. Other groups found farming difficult due to the hard ground and arid climate. They developed complex systems of irrigation, crops that required small amounts of water, and built large cities of stone and mudbrick. Other cultures adapted to their environment to become fishers, developing a culture at home in the oceans and seas, with industries that focused on seafood delicacies and building extraordinary boats.

God's foresight has allowed human biology to adapt to local environments. For example, the inhabitants of the Tibetan plateau have reduced hemoglobin levels in their blood, allowing their bodies to use the reduced oxygen more efficiently without causing reduced blood clotting or increased chances of heart disease or stroke. Inuit Indians have adapted to their frigid environment with a higher metabolism and increased blood flow to their exterior limbs.

The connection between the earth and humans demonstrate that God is creative, relational, and organic. Both culture's ability to adapt practices to their environments and their biological abilities to adapt to the environment are marks of God. God's Thumbprint is on all of His creation. While humans were made in the image of God, creation was made for the needs of humans. The interaction of humans, human culture and nature illustrate the symbiosis that all of God's creation shares.



Shaping Culture

Dr. Mark Hedinger, DIS

Culture is all about the patterns of life that a group of people find normal and appropriate. The patterns are so normal and appropriate, in fact, that they are taught from generation to generation and they are taught to newcomers. So how do those patterns of normal and appropriate life get shaped by environment?





Weather

Depending on where you live, what are the normal patterns of dress in the hot weather? What about cold weather? Or maybe instead of hot/cold seasons, you have a rainy season? Are there regular times when you can't use some roads in your town because they flood? Even our daily conversation is affected by environment: rainy places like the Pacific Northwest use a lot of words to describe all of the different kinds of rain that exist!

Natural resources

Think of the different ways of life between miners, loggers, fishermen, and farmers. Those industries grow from the land, and they have huge impact on the life of the people!

Seasonal changes

How different is life in the far north or south than life along the equator where day length is nearly the same all year long?

Transportation Patterns

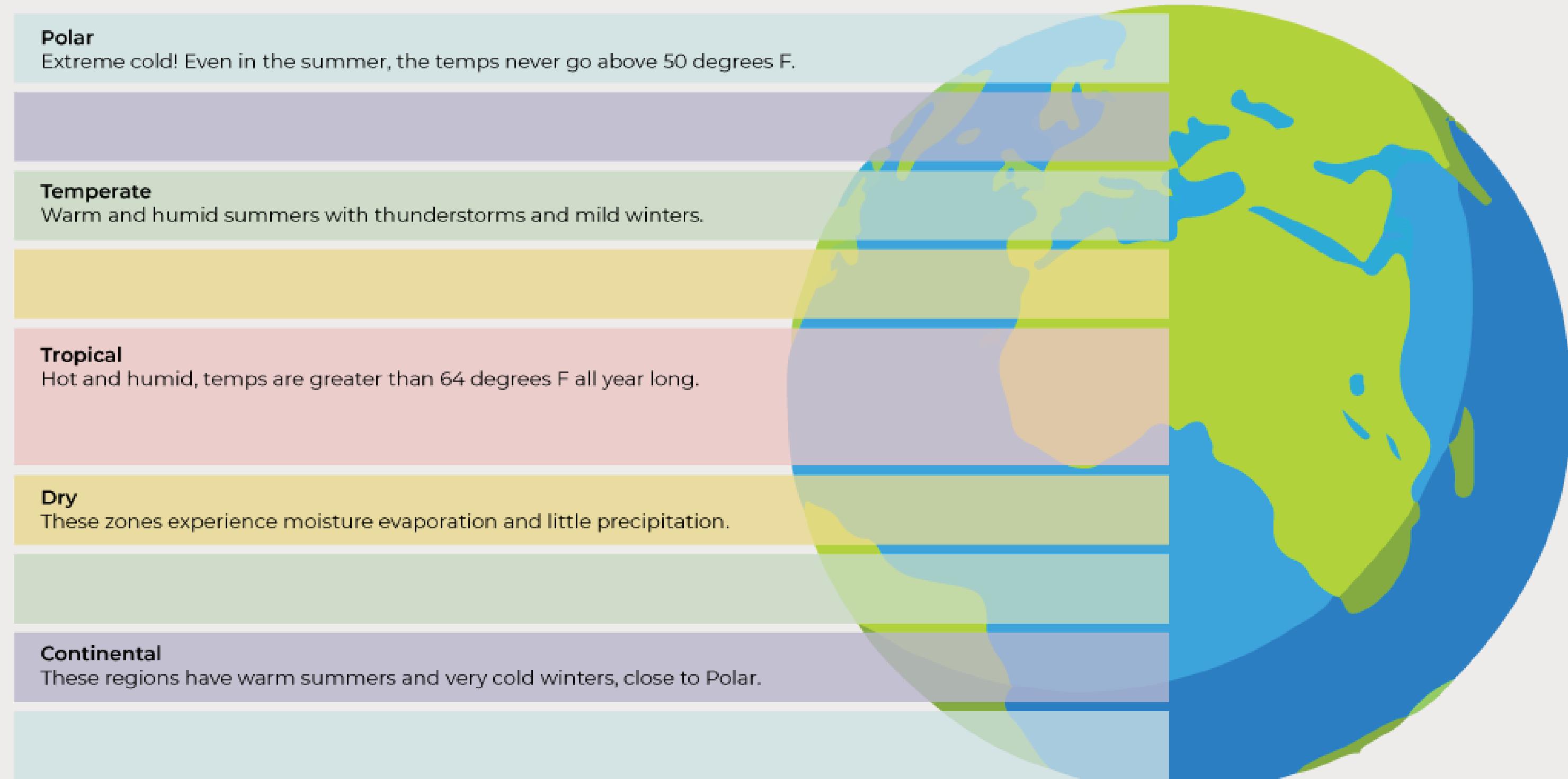
The best route for me to drive to one of my neighboring states includes a highway that is snow-packed many months each year. There are times each year when ground travel between our states is difficult.

Collective Memory

Think of the stories, songs, fables and shared memory that are passed from generation to generation and that mention the land. What folk songs sing of the virtues of where you grew up? Is there a nostalgia as you "feel" the pride and joy of having grown up in that people, with those forests or seas or cliffs? The place shapes the culture, and the people of one generation keep the memories of that land.

Earth's Climates

Where you live and the weather you experience greatly affects your culture! Those who live in arctic temperatures may go dog sledding for fun! Those in the heat might hang out at the pool. See below for an overview of Earth's climates and consider your own climate. <https://scijinks.gov/climate-zones/>



CultureBound + YOU

CAST Workshop

Serving in an unfamiliar place can be an incredible adventure. Surrounded by a new people group and their way of life, brand new tastes and smells, and new sounds of a new language, excitement is inevitable! While these experiences can be thrilling, it can be easy to get absorbed in the differences, caught up in the ride, and miss opportunities for ministry and relationship-building.

CultureBound's CAST Workshop, or Cultural Awareness for Short-Term Teams, exists to equip you and your short-term team for effective ministry in an unfamiliar culture. We understand that short-term trips are an





incredible opportunity for relationship-building and service. Friendships are developed on these trips that can last a lifetime! This course will help prepare you for cultural differences so that you can devote your focus to these relationships. CAST will help you learn to mitigate the shock of entering a new culture, give you practical observational skills, and direct you as you navigate obvious cultural differences in order to more graciously serve those around you. This training is offered in person from the comfort of your location!

For more information or to register, visit our website!
www.culturebound.org

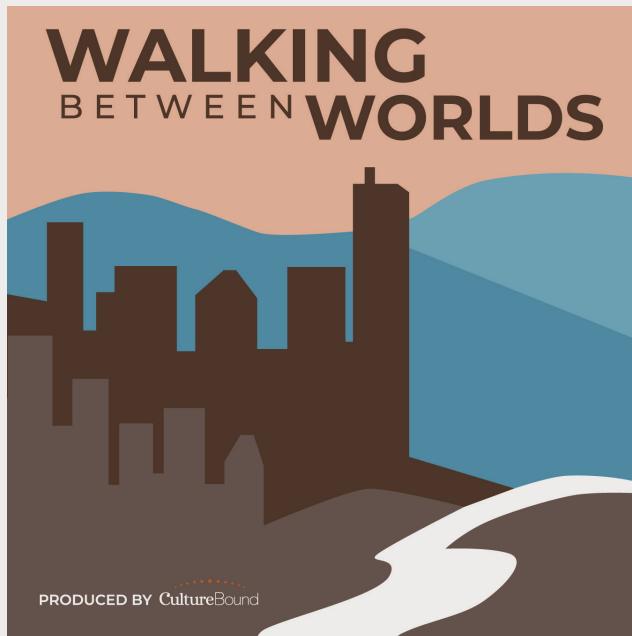
CultureBound's CAST Workshop is a 3-hour training available in person at your location in the United States. Training includes learning & practicing cultural concepts in lecture and interactive portions. Pricing starts at \$300 and is largely based on group size and travel costs. As you prepare to take your team across culture, consider including CultureBound's CAST Workshop as you plan your trip! We would love to work and learn with you.

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www.culturebound.org

✉ PO Box 16716, Portland, OR 97292 USA ☎ 503.235.3818 @ Info@CultureBound.org

For Donations

✉ PO Box 1138, Monument, CO 80132 USA ☎ 719.488.4121
@ CultureBoundDonorServices@tenfoldbpo.org