

Worldview Introduction SCRIPT

Chris Parker | app. 5 minutes | 960 words

OUTCOMES:

1. Understand that, as humans, we are story-formed beings and that we become formed at a very deep level below awareness. We are being formed by culture (stories) from the day we are born. The stories we are formed by actually determine how we engage with the world and others without even thinking.
 2. Appreciate that the Bible is a big picture story of hope and beauty that we allow to counter-form us so that at the deep level we are being transformed into Christ-likeness (at the level before understanding). This is then a God-directed transformation through the renewal of our whole being.
 3. Develop the ability to be critically aware of when we are being shaped by alternative stories (the 'pattern of this world') and discern the themes of shaping stories that are in harmony with God's revealed story and what themes are not. Critical awareness development is helped by reflecting on the key questions: 1. What is a human in this story?; 2. What's the nature of the world in this story?; 3. What's not right about the world in this story?; 4. What solution is being presented in this story?
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Possible Prop: classic fishbowl with a goldfish, bag of water with a goldfish?

The, 'water' of our world,

... the culture, and its storytelling, that we swim in, well, [beat]

it shapes us.

Forms us.

Moulds us. [beat]

It impacts the way in which we [beat] view the world.

The way we feel about people.

The way we engage with the experiences that happen to us.

The way we understand and define meaning, purpose, success in life.

[beat] And the way we decide what is valuable, and [beat] not valuable, in our life.

[beat] The *impact* of this storytelling, the water we swim in, is **uber** significant.

Cultural water informs our small decisions, life passions, and even what we consider to be the *big questions* of our life, and our place in the world.

What do we mean by 'cultural storytelling'?

First, we think here of the values, language, and rituals of our families.
These all go together to shape a story about life that is passed on to us.
But, we also consider the storytelling in our wider society.

It comes through,

Language

Traditions

Fashions

Laws

Technologies etc

Combinations of these form storylines, or narrative themes, that we find *hugely* difficult to avoid being shaped by.

Whether we like it or not, or whether we even *realise* it's happening or not,

...we are a product of the water of our world.

For an example of how this works, let's take the character value of humility, and its flipside, narcissism.

Probably only 2-3 decades ago, good character, virtuous character, included being humble about your gifts and abilities and even the experiences you were fortunate to have.

However, we now swim in cultural water, storytelling, that includes social media woven into the everyday fabric of our lives.

The resultant storytelling (cultural narrative) is that self-promotion, narcissism, is now becoming an acceptable part of good character.

We now easily self-promote because we have been shaped by the water of our world.

Without even realising.

You might be wondering why I called my book about all this, *The Frog and the Fish*.

[laugh] ... though it's entirely possible that you haven't even remotely wondered, 'cause you don't really care, and a 'book', like, well, what's that?

Well, [beat] I did, and your teacher has a copy.

[beat] There is a fable that tells of a frog that has jumped into a pot of water that is placed on a stove.

As easy as it entered, it can jump back out.

But the frog becomes settled in its new happy place.

Although the frog's water is getting warmer, and will soon boil, the frog stays, and boils to death.

It is sometimes also said, "if you want to know about water, well don't ask a fish".

The fish is barely aware of the water its swims in due to a lack of another frame of reference.

Yet it is no less shaped by the water.

If I am honest with myself, I am often like the fish, and I am sometimes like the frog when it comes to being shaped by my culture.

Many of us have been blessed, because the storytelling that has formed us, has included the big picture messages of the Christian faith.

I don't just mean storytelling in the sense Noah and the arc, Jonah and the fish, or Christmas and easter,

... the Bible tells a big picture story about human life having value, meaning, and purpose.

The narrative truth that this world (including you) has been designed and created (and is not random), really is quite significant.

The Bible's message recognises that, even though this world (the creation) is kinda stuffed, and plagued by deception, disaster, and death, God came into it, and became part of it (the creation), as a human—Jesus.

And when He came alive again after being brutally killed (by those who couldn't cope with Him because of how *they* were shaped by the water of *their* world), He began a new era of renewal,

rebuilding,

and redeeming the damage, the injustice, and the yuck in the world.

[beat] If this truth has been a part of the storytelling of your life,

then you will know that to live as a Christian means that you are day by day counter-formed away from the influence of other cultural stories and towards a view of life,

shaped by the story of the Bible,

and the person of Jesus.

This will mean that your default will be to live like you understand that humans have been designed,

loved,

and created, in a way that has characteristics shared with God,

and [beat] with a purpose,

the purpose of caretaking His creation

while seeking to promote the good news of His goodness and truth.

And you'll resist the forming from our culture that views a human as merely an evolved animal, on a struggle for survival.

Or that humans are primarily defined by their sexuality.

Or that humans are on path to redeem themselves through rationality, science, and technology.

[beat] Or that the most important thing, that defines a human, is its identity group.

You are going to have conflict with other people (you know this because you already have, right?). The deep-down ways in which you have been formed by the cultural storytelling of your 'water', will impact how you:

approach conflict

deal with conflict,

allow conflict to get to you

and, [beat] how you will *resolve* conflict.

May you resolve the conflict in your life well.

And may you also develop

discernment and wisdom

to 'read' the cultural storytelling that is forming you.

Are you aware of the shaping stories?

Are you willing to embrace (and be shaped by) the ultimate, beautiful, forming story,

(above all others),

of God's big plan to resolve *all* conflict?

Technology SCRIPT

app. 2+ minutes | 360 words

We're going to hear from Chris Parker, author of 'The Frog and the Fish' about how our personal world is shaped by the world around us, including the digital world.

Hi again.

Do you remember the water?

The cultural water that we are all swimming in?

The storytelling dissolved into the water that shapes our deep default way of thinking and feeling about the world,

... and other people?

Well,

... tech is a significant part of this 'water'.

There is a famous quote:

"We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us"

We are powerfully shaped by our technologies,

Whether we realise it or not!

Take social media.

I already mentioned how its existence in our culture is shaping and redefining what is defining human character,

... and there are many more we could explore.

Let's think about your grandparents growing up compared to now.

The tech concentrated water that shapes us,

is re-defining human to human connection.

It's redefining the nature of *friendship*.

Redefining how, and what, we choose to communicate with other people.

We are even recognising that we are subconsciously settling for shallow connection with other humans,

... even though we are highly *connected*.

Gosh, social media is even shaping us to be more *inclined* to be mean, and aggressive, with each other as we use the tech to put a distance between ourselves,

to *go between*,

the impact we have on others.

[beat – drop intensity]

Have you ever been cyber-bullied by people that would have never bullied you in person?

These tendencies towards conflict have always been lurking in the human heart,
... but the current cultural storytelling,
through communal life immersed in tech like social media,
is changing society,
... changing us!
Unhelpful ways of being human is becoming normal,
acceptable,
and part of our cultural water.

How aware are *you* of the tech water you swim in?

Are you being discerning?

Are you being wise?

Are you willing to let the beautiful good news of the Bible's story counter-form you, even while you engage with tech?

[beat] Do you have the courage to be a techno-peacemaker online?.

[static screen so that what follows is a kind of postscript]

BTW, maybe one of the first places to start is to do some *disconnecting* so that you can nurture some deeper *connecting* with those around you.

Then build from there.

Identity SCRIPT

app. 2+ minutes | 470 words

One of the more powerful shaping themes of the cultural storytelling that we swim in,
the water of our world,
is the theme of identity.

At the level of cultural storytelling, it comes in the form of defining what a human is.

Deep down,

as a human,

who and what am I?

Even though we might not always be thinking about the answer,

our culture will have given us one,

and it will significantly shape our sense of self identity.

One of the stories told in Western societies of what a human is flows from the view that matter [beat] is all there is.

So, through the study of science,
we see that a human, basically, is a collection of
atoms,
cells,
chemical reactions,
and biological matter.

When you die, the sum of you is either burned, or rots away in the ground to nothing.
When you swim in water with this storyline dissolved in it,
your self-identity can't help but be shaped in a certain way.
Usually, not in a particularly, encouraging, hope-filled sort of way!

Another storyline has the theme, or vibe,
that a human is an animal just like all the other animals.

Purpose and meaning in life come from embracing the struggle to survive, like the other animals, and be counted as one of the 'fittest'.

When you swim in this water,
your self-identity is wrapped up in anxious striving,
to succeed,
to win
to climb to the top,
and be better than the rest.

Another storyline vibe places sexuality as most important in the definition of what a human is.

Human self-worth centres around our,
sexuality,
how 'sexy' we are,
and how sexually active we are etc..

With this shaping story, our self-identity gets all tangled up in anxious striving around our sexiness.

If I'm not sexy and attractive, then I am worth *less* than other people,
swimming with me in this cultural water.

I must admit, I can see ways in which I have been shaped deep down by these cultural
storylines,

and others like them.

And I have seen that I bring these self-identity hangups

(without even realising I have them),

into my relating to others.

And they are certainly evident when I find myself in conflicts.

They get in the way,

they muddy the water,

and they make conflict more emotional than it needs to be.

What view of the nature of a human shapes your self-identity?

How aware are you of how you have been influenced?

Have you considered the freedom that comes from allowing yourself to be counter-formed
by the beautiful truth that you are

designed,

made,

and loved by God.

You are not random,

purposeless,

merely chemicals,

merely sexual

or any other reduced view of a human that is dissolved into our cultural water.

You are loved and valued *just. as. you are!*

Justice SCRIPT

app. 2+ minutes | 300 words

*But our version of what justice looks like is often influenced by our experiences, the way we
view the world and so much more. Let's hear Chris Parker speak about this.*

Justice.

Justice is one of the amazing things that God has woven into the fabric of His good creation.

Like marriage,

music,

leadership,

friendship,

family.

His creation is deeply good and it includes

pandas,

tropical islands,

and binary stars.

But it also includes all these wonderful cultural elements,

like,

justice.

This weaving into the creation also includes placing a sense of justice into the human heart, in such a way that we all seem to seek it.

And, [beat] be affronted by *injustice*.

particularly as it impacts us,

but also, others around us.

So, this becomes another place where conflict can rear its ugly head.

Our beliefs about,

and desires for,

justice,

are formed at a deep default level.

When we perceive injustice,

powerful emotions can be associated.

And potential conflict is never too far away.

Passion for calling out injustice is a good thing.

However, our notions of what is just and what is not,

will *also* be culturally shaped.

our views of how justice should be outworked,

will be informed,
and formed,
by the water of the world we swim in.

When you find yourself in conflict over injustice,
be discerning about how your view of what is just has been formed by your cultural story.
Humility and understanding are required.

I'm not saying don't fight for justice.

Want justice.

Seek justice.

Love justice.

But seek a view of justice that has been shaped by God's big beautiful story of the world.

Not the stories of our cultural water.

The story that centres on God coming into the world to ultimately,

and completely,

deal with *injustice*.

The story with the good news that God has a plan to

redeem,

restore,

and reconcile all injustice.

He invites us to participate in this plan.

What about you?

Wanna join Him?

Controversial Topics SCRIPT

app. 2+ minutes | 400 words

Why do some topics tend to get us a bit more fired up compared to others? Let's here from Chris Parker again exploring what role cultural shaping has on defining what might be controversial.

We have spoken about how our deep-down, default ways of understanding the world,

... and the deep-down, default feelings we have about our life, and relationships, and the world around us,

... are significantly shaped by the cultural water we have been swimming in.

This can be most clearly demonstrated during the really raw, hard,

struggling moments of life.

A great example is conversations with others on controversial topics. Topics where our views are strongly held.

Strongly held because they sit at the place of deep beliefs, and precious held values because of our experiences and cultural shaping.

When we stumble into these conversations,

(or courageously create them),

they have great potential for great conflict.

I'm sure you know what I'm talking about.

I suspect that you have been in these conversations many times in the schoolyard, or online, or maybe even in class discussions.

Why are conversations on controversial topics so 'raw' and conflict so likely?

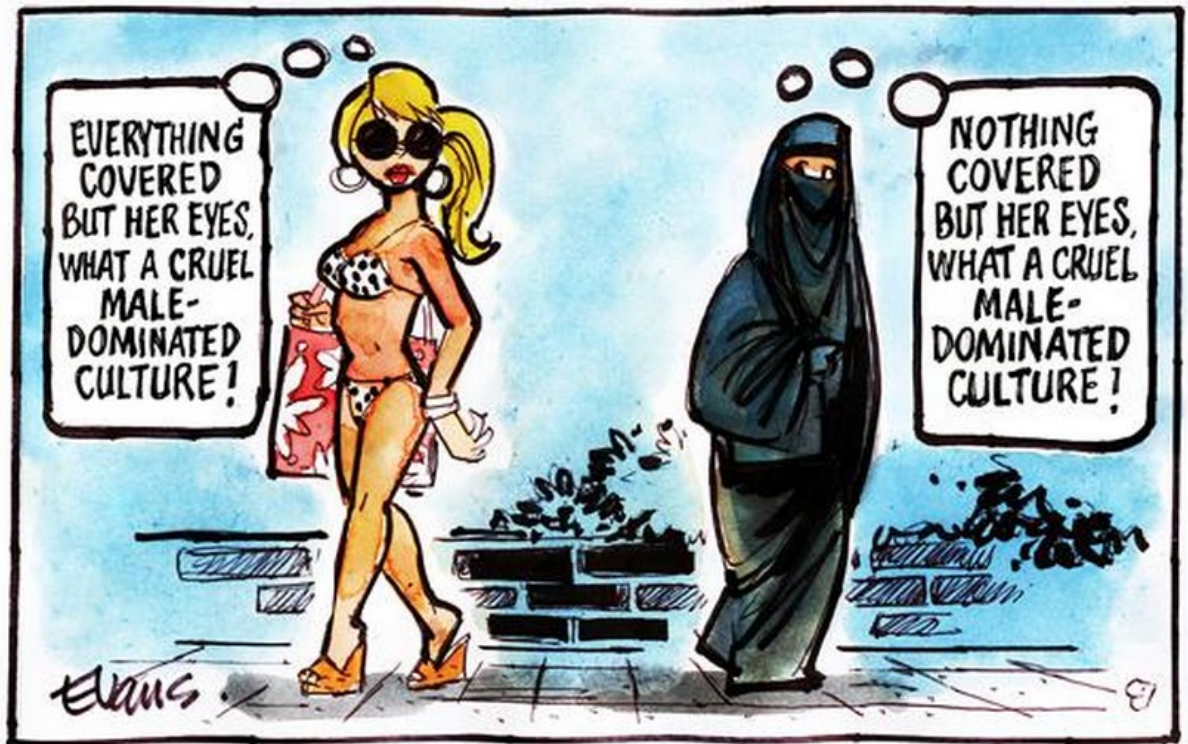
It's because of the different deep starting points we have for our beliefs.

Different starting points give quite different end points,

Different end points mean different ways of living with each other.

Check out this cartoon as an example of how this works:

How helpful we can arrange copyright? Or does Peacewise have a CAL licence?]



The formative water that each woman grew up in, and now lives in, has shaped, deep down, their belief and feelings about how women should dress, *and* about the relationship between men and women. ,

They have quite different starting points for their beliefs, and therefore, as you can see, significantly different outworking's impacting how we live together.

Topics become "controversial" usually because they touch on these deep, default beliefs and values that we have due to our cultural shaping.

Mostly, we don't even realise.

Peacemaking during these conflicts is hard.

But it begins with acknowledging,

graciously,

that I have been deeply shaped.

And my conversation partner has been deeply shaped.

We may have deep down,

emotionally charged,

but different, starting points.

A faithful peacemaker may hold,
and state their beliefs and values strongly.

No problem.

But grace is shown when we recognise the subconscious shaping the other person has also experienced.

Oh, and. It's also worth mentioning,
that a courageous, faithful, peacemaker with also be humble enough to consider re-evaluating their deep default beliefs.

Do you have that sort of courage?

Afterall, conversations with others also forms part of the cultural storytelling that shapes and transforms us!