

CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

How to cope with culture shock and
adapt to serving in a different culture

SCOTT A. ARMSTRONG



Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Cross-Cultural Missions Course

Church of the Nazarene

Mesoamerica Region

Scott Armstrong



Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry
A book in the School of Leadership Series
Cross-Cultural Missions Course

Authors:

Charles Gailey (Lessons 1, 2, 3)

Marlen Esther de Soria, Ana María Crocker de Díaz (Lesson 4)

David Ernesto Campos Martínez (Lesson 5)

Patricia y Germán Picavea, Ana María Crocker de Díaz (Lesson 6)

Esther Quezada, editor (Lesson 7)

Erika Ríos Hasenauer (Lesson 8)

Editor: Scott Armstrong

Spanish Editor: Dr. Mónica E. Mastronardi de Fernández

Spanish Reviewer: Dr. Rubén Fernández

Translator: Rev. Samuel Aparicio

English Reviewer: Shelley J. Webb

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Mailing Address: PO Box 3977 - 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica, Central America.

Phone (506) 2285-0432 / 0423 - Email: EL@mesoamericaregion.org

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Tel. (507) 203-3541

E-mail: literatura@mesoamericaregion.org

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Introduction

The School of Leadership book series is designed to provide a tool for the church to train and educate its members so they can actively participate in Christian service according to the gifts and calling (vocation) they have received from their Lord.

Each book provides study materials for a course of the School of Leadership program that is offered by the Theological Institutions of the Mesoamerica Region of the Church of the Nazarene. These are: AIBN serving Guatemala North; ASTN serving El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua; SENAMEX North serving Central and South Mexico; and SENDAS serving Costa Rica and Panama. The leaders and the schools (presidents, directors, academic vice presidents and directors of decentralized academic studies) actively participated in the program design.

The School of Leadership has five core courses common to all ministries and six specialized courses for each individual ministry. After completing the series, the respective Theological Institution gives the student a certificate (or diploma) in Specialized Ministry.

The general objective of the School of Leadership is “to work with the local church in equipping the saints for the work of the ministry, giving them solid, theological, Biblical knowledge and developing them through the exercise of their gifts for service in their local congregation and in society.” The specific objectives of this program are threefold:

- Develop the ministerial gifts of the local congregation.
- Multiply service ministries in the church and community.
- Raise awareness of the vocation of professional ministry in its diverse forms.

This series entitled *Cross-Cultural Missions* has the objective of helping churches to be aware of the reality of the world today without Christ.

The purpose is to involve the church in the preparation and support of those called to cross-cultural missions. We want to thank Ruben and Monica Fernandez, Benjamin Cruz, Ana Crocker, Maddai Gonzalez, Erika Hasenauer, David Campos, Claudia Cruz, Esther Quezada, Marlen de Soria, David Cooper, Charles Gailey, Ulises Solis, Sara de Diaz, German and Patricia Picavea, Samuel Aparicio and Shelley Webb, who all contributed to this project.

A special thanks to Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez for her dedication as General Editor of the project, to the Regional Ministry Coordinators, and to the team of writers and designers who collaborated to publish these books. An additional thanks to the teachers who will share these materials. They will make a difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout the Mesoamerica Region.

Finally, I give thanks to Rev. Edwin Martinez and his team in Mesoamerica Regional Literature for the publication and distribution of these materials, and to Dr. L. Carlos Saenz, Mesoamerica Regional Director, for his continued support in this task, which is the result of his conviction of the important need for the church to be comprehensively trained.

I pray for God's blessing for all the disciples whose lives and Christian service will be enriched by these books.

Scott Armstrong
Coordinator of Global Mission
Mesoamerica Region

What Is the School of Leadership?

The **School of Leadership** is an educational program for lay ministry in different specialties to engage in the mission of the local church. This program is administered by the Theological Institutions of the Church of the Nazarene in the Mesoamerica Region and taught both at these institutions and in the local churches enrolled in the program.

Who Can Benefit from the School of Leadership?

It is for all the members of the Church of the Nazarene who have participated in Levels Saving Grace and Sanctifying Grace - Growth in Holiness of the discipleship program A Journey of Grace, and who, with all their heart, wish to discover their gifts and serve God in His work.

The Plan - A Journey of Grace

In the Church of the Nazarene, we believe that making disciples in the image of Christ in the nations is the foundation of the missionary work of the church and the responsibility of its leadership (Ephesians 4:7-16). For this, at all levels of the church, the implementation of progressive discipleship is promoted as “A Journey of Grace” (John 14: 6), a lifestyle of discipleship. The School of Leadership is part of the “Sanctifying Grace - Ministry Development” section, and is designed for those who have gone through the “Prevenient Grace” and “Saving Grace” sections of the discipleship path.



The work of discipleship is continuous and dynamic; therefore, the disciple never stops growing in the likeness of his Lord. This growth, when healthy, occurs in all dimensions: the individual dimension (spiritual growth), the corporate dimension (joining the congregation), the holiness in life dimension (progressive transformation of our being and doing according to the model of Jesus Christ) and the service dimension (investing our lives in ministry).

Dr. Monica Mastronardi de Fernandez
Managing Editor, The School of Leadership Book Series



How Do I Use This Book?

This book contains eight lessons of the School of Leadership program, along with activities and final evaluation of the course.

How are the contents of this book organized?

Each of the eight lessons of this book contains the following:

- ▶ **Objectives:** These are the learning objectives the student is expected to understand at the end of the lesson.
- ▶ **Main Ideas:** A summary of the key teachings of the lesson.
- ▶ **Development of Lesson:** This is the largest section because it is the development of the contents of the lesson. The lessons have been written so that the book can be the teacher, and for that reason the contents have been written in a dynamic form and in simple language with contemporary ideas.
- ▶ **Notes and Comments:** The information in the margins is intended to clarify terms and provide notes that complement or extend the content of the lesson.
- ▶ **Questions:** Sometimes questions are included in the margin that the teacher can use to introduce or reinforce a lesson topic.
- ▶ **What did we learn?:** The box at the end of the lesson development section provides a brief summary of the lesson.
- ▶ **Activities:** This is a page at the end of each lesson that contains learning activities, for individuals or groups, on the subject studied. The estimated time for implementation in class is 20 minutes.
- ▶ **Final evaluation of the course:** This is the last page of the book and once completed the student must remove it from the book and hand it in to a course instructor. The final evaluation should take about 15 minutes.

How long is each course?

The courses are designed for 12 hours of class over 8 ninety-minute sessions. Each institution and each church or local theological study center will coordinate days and times of the classes. Within this hour and a half the teacher or the teachers should include time for the activities contained in the book.

What is the role of the student?

The student is responsible for the following:

1. Enroll on time for the course.
2. Buy the book and study each lesson before class time.
3. Arrive for class on time.
4. Participate in class activities.
5. Participate in practical ministry in the local church outside of class.
6. Complete and submit the final evaluation to the teacher.

What is the role of the teacher of the course?

The professors and teachers for the School of Leadership courses are pastors and laity committed to the mission and ministry of the church and preferably have experience in the ministry they teach. The Director and/or the School of Leadership at the local church (or theological institution) invites their participation and their functions are the following:

1. Be well prepared by studying the book's content and scheduling the use of class time. When studying the lesson, you should have on hand the Bible and a dictionary. Although the lessons are written using simple language, it is recommended that you "translate" what you consider difficult in order to help the students understand. In other words, use terms that they can better understand.
2. Ensure that the students are studying the material in the book and achieving the learning objectives.
3. Plan and accompany students in the activities of ministerial practice. The local pastor and the director of the respective ministry must schedule these activities. These activities should not take away from class time.
4. Take daily attendance and grades in the class report form. The final average will be the result demonstrated by the student in the following activities:
 - a. Class work
 - b. Participation in ministerial practice outside of class
 - c. Final evaluation
5. At the end of the course, collect the evaluation sheets and hand them in with the form "Class Report" to the local School of Leadership director. Do this after totaling the averages and verifying that all data is complete on the form.
6. Professors and teachers should not add tasks or reading assignments apart from the contents of the book. They should be creative in the design of the learning activities and in planning ministry activities outside the classroom according to the reality of their local church and its context.

How do I teach a class?

We recommend using a 90-minute class session as follows:

- **5 minutes:** Review the topic of the previous lesson and pray together.
- **30 minutes:** Review and discuss the lesson. We recommend using an outline, chalkboard, cardboard or other available materials, using dynamic learning activities and visual media such as graphics, drawings, objects, pictures, questions, assigning students to submit parts of the lesson, and so on. We do not recommend lecturing or having the teacher reread the lesson content.
- **5 minutes:** Break either in the middle of class or when it is convenient.
- **20 minutes:** Work on activities in the book. This can be done at the beginning,

middle or end of the review, or you can complete the activities as you proceed in accordance with the issues as it relates to them.

- **20 minutes:** Discussion about the students' ministry practice that they currently do and that they will do. At the beginning of the course you will need to present the schedule to the students so that they can make arrangements to attend the ministry practice. In the classes when the students discuss their ministry practice, the conversation should be focused on what they learned, including their successes and their errors, as well as the difficulties they encountered.
- **10 minutes:** Prayer for the issues arising from the practice (challenges, people, problems, goals, gratitude for the results, among others).

How do I implement the final course evaluation?

Allocate 15 minutes of time during the last class meeting for the course evaluation. If necessary, students may consult their books and Bibles. Final evaluations are designed to be an activity to reinforce what was learned in class and not a repetition of the contents of the book. The purpose of this assessment is to measure the understanding and evaluation of the student concerning the class topics, their spiritual growth, their progress in the commitment to the mission of the church and their progress in ministerial experience.

Ministerial Practice Activities

The following are suggested activities for ministerial practice outside of class. The list below includes several ideas to help teachers, pastors, directors of local School of Leadership groups and local ministry directors. From the list you can choose the practice most suited to the contextual situation and the local church ministry, or others can replace these according to the needs and possibilities of your context.

We recommend having at least three ministerial activities per course. You can put the whole class to work on a project or assign group tasks according to interests, gifts and abilities. It is advisable to involve students in a variety of new ministry experiences.

Suggested Ministry Activities for the Course: Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

1. Organize a movie night and show a documentary that describes the customs and way of life in a country of the 10/40 window. After, have a discussion about the customs and culture of that country that a missionary would have to adjust to while serving there.
2. Plan a special banquet where all attendees are assigned a country. Ask participants to dress like the people from that culture and bring a dish that is typical of that country. Some will be assigned the same country, but they will have to wait until the day of the banquet to recognize others who are dressed like themselves.
3. Organize a workshop about dealing with culture shock for the immigrant populations in your community, and invite a missionary candidate trainer to lead it.
4. Organize a workshop with a missions professor on the theme of Changing Paradigms for Mission Strategies in the 21st Century.
5. Invite someone who has experience living in another culture to share their experiences of adapting and living in another country.
6. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation to teach the church about the variety of languages the Church of the Nazarene works with around the world.
7. Teach a class for children with the purpose of learning the value of studying other languages. The children will practice words and learn Bible verses in other languages.
8. Teach a Christian song in another language to the youth and have them sing it at a missionary service.



LESSON 1

Learning Another Language

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Objectives

- To learn important information about Bible translations.
- To understand the steps to learning a language.
- To understand the need to learn idioms in another language.

Main Ideas

- People best understand the Bible in their mother tongue, also called their heart language.
- There is a correct order to effective language learning.
- Both verbal communication and non-verbal communication are tools to use when sharing the gospel.

Introduction

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples received the gift of speaking in other languages. This miracle allowed people from Parthia, Mede, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Rome, Crete, and Arabia to hear the message of salvation in their own tongues (Acts 2:1-12).

A person's first language, the one they learned as a child, is also known as their mother tongue. Even people who can speak several languages prefer to use their mother tongue to express their feelings and most intimate thoughts.

The Bible acknowledges the importance of language for communicating with other people. The apostles were aware of this, which is why Paul sometimes communicated in Greek and other times in Hebrew, depending on his audience (Acts 21:37, 40). Communicating the gospel message in the heart language of the people was a key factor in the growth of the primitive church (Acts 2:1-12).

Mother Tongue or Native (Heart) Language

How important is the heart language?



The human brain has an incredible capacity to learn many languages. In addition to their heart language, many people around the world speak a national language or a trade language for work or study. In some places this second language is English, in others, such as some islands of the Pacific, it is Mandarin. For the indigenous people of Central and South America, Spanish is the trade language. English is widely spoken around the world as a second or third language, which is why some people think that global evangelism can be accomplished in the English language.

What begins as a trade language sometimes becomes the mother tongue for a group of people.

Because of a lack of classes and literature that allow missionaries to learn more indigenous languages, theological education around the world has been mainly carried out in foreign languages, such as English, instead of a country's mother tongue. Using these trade or national languages, for example Hindi in India, is often quicker and less problematic for the communicators. However, while the use of a trade language can bring fruit, this fruit will not last long.

In areas where many languages and dialects are spoken, church leaders should consider the benefits of investing time and money to produce literature in the heart language of the people. Using a trade language to educate people about their faith increases the danger of syncretism setting in.

Indigenous people have an easier time using their mother tongue to pray and worship, as well as to communicate theological concepts. This is one reason why churches that use the mother tongue of the people tend to be healthier and more vibrant than those that only use a trade language.

When missionary leaders are deciding which language or languages to use for the purposes of evangelism or discipleship, they should opt for the most fruitful one, not the one that seems quicker and easier.

Syncretism:

Refers to the combining of different religions, such as pagan customs being brought into Christianity. In most cases this occurs because of a lack of holistic discipleship in the native tongue for those new to the faith.

The Meaning Behind Words

Why is knowing terminology not enough?



Learning to communicate in another culture involves more than learning words and grammar. It includes learning the meaning being communicated through the sounds and written symbols. Even among groups that speak the same language, there are variations in the meaning of words.

Being able to navigate the variations within a language is as important for effective communication as knowing the grammar of that language. In two Spanish-speaking countries, for example, the same word can have a different meaning. Not knowing the variations in the meaning of a word between locations has gotten many preachers into trouble. In some cases, they offended the audience to the extent that they were not even able to finish their sermon.

Here are some examples from the Spanish language:

Word	Country/Meaning	Country/Meaning
bonche	Colombia: fight	Mexico: a bunch of papers
vestido	Ecuador: women's clothing	Colombia: formal wear for men
morocho	Venezuela: a twin	Argentina: dark-haired person

Bible Translations

Is formal or dynamic equivalence better?



In 1917, the young Protestant missionary William Cameron Townsend was selling Bibles in Guatemala. Back then, this evangelistic strategy was being used in many Latin American countries where it was difficult to evangelize openly, but where Bible vendors could visit public markets to sell books, including the Bible.

Kaqchikel:

An indigenous people living in Guatemala since before the Spanish colonized the Americas. Their language is part of the Mayan language family.

Dynamic equivalence should not be confused with a paraphrase, which amplifies and explains the meaning of the text.

Because these vendors knew the content of all their books, they talked about them to interested clients. One day Townsend was in the market of a mountain town, trying to sell a Bible in Spanish to an old Kaqchikel gentleman (an indigenous Mayan tribe). The man asked Townsend, “If your God is so smart, why doesn’t he speak my language?”

That conversation awoke a vision in William Townsend to translate the Bible into the native languages of all peoples, and he founded “Wycliffe Bible Translators and Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL International).” These organizations have already published translations of the New Testament in 500 languages.

Many pioneer Protestant missionaries used Bible translation as a key component of their missionary strategy. John Eliot, a missionary to Native Americans in the 1600’s, produced Bible translations. In the early 1800’s, William Carey worked on more than 20 different Bible translations into languages spoken in India. Robert Morrison began a translation of the Bible almost as soon as he arrived to China in 1807, even though it took seven years before he saw a person converted to Christianity.

The North American Mission Board arrived in Hawaii (then known as the Sandwich Islands) in the 1800’s. They were so successful in planting an indigenous church they were able to leave after 50 years. Hawaiian authorities have kept reminders of those missionaries, including some of their original missionary homes. Part of the missionaries’ strategy for enculturation of the gospel was to discover the written form of the Hawaiian language, which allowed them to translate the Bible.

More recently, Evelyn Ramsey, a medical missionary, had such an incredible burden for translating a Biblical concordance into one of the languages of Papua New Guinea that, after an illness, she left the hospital early in order to give more time to this project.

Translating the Bible requires the use of dynamic equivalence. This consists of capturing the meaning of the complete thought expressed in the original Biblical text. The goal for the translator using dynamic equivalence is to communicate the idea of the Biblical author. This is different from formal equivalency, which translates a Biblical passage word for word.

But which kind of Bible translation is better? Is it better to do word for word translations which stays closer to the Hebrew or Greek, both in meaning and in grammar (formal equivalence)? Or is it better to translate the full thoughts expressed in complete phrases or sentences (dynamic equivalence)?

The answer to this question depends in part on one’s understanding of how the Scriptures were inspired. For example, if someone believes in the verbal inspiration of Scripture, that the Holy Spirit dictated the Bible word for word to the Biblical writers, that person will be more comfortable with a formal equivalency translation. On the other hand, if someone believes the

It is estimated that humans speak over 7,000 distinct languages, with many of these spoken by small people groups. There are 2,000 languages considered to be main languages (based on the number of people who speak them) which still do not have a translation of the New Testament. The translators of the Wycliffe Bible have embraced a vision to provide a translation of the Bible into each of these languages by the year 2025.

Holy Spirit inspired the thoughts of the Biblical writers but allowed them to use their own language and writing style, they will not have a problem with a dynamic equivalency translation.

Some missionaries who have translated the Bible have been criticized and accused of destroying other cultures. Biblical translation does the exact opposite. Languages of small cultural groups which only communicate orally are in constant danger of disappearing. Putting these languages in written form and producing significant documents like the Bible in said languages gives value to the language, protects it, and ensures its continued use within those groups. Ironically, some Bible translators have been criticized for slowing the integration of some groups into the global culture by encouraging the use of their local languages!

Cross-cultural evangelization is made more difficult when the Bible is not translated into the heart language of the people being reached.

Learning a Language

What is the best way to learn a foreign language?



Some people do not like the idea of learning a new language. This can be due to frustrating experiences in their past where learning consisted of academic exercises which only took a few hours a week instead of being immersed in the social activities of that culture.

Learning a language can also be frustrating when the students are taught the new language in the wrong order. In other words, they may be trying to read a new language before they could actually speak it.

Reading → Writing → Listening → Speaking

INCORRECT ORDER FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

The most natural order for acquiring a new language does not begin with reading. Because a language is primarily oral in nature, learning a language is most effective when the student becomes familiar with the sounds before seeing the written symbols or words. This natural order is also the more productive one for learning a language.

Listening → Speaking → Reading → Writing

NATURAL ORDER FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

Students learning a language should begin by imitating the sounds of a native speaker. Mimicking is the most basic technique for learning and the best way to learn the sounds of a language. This is how children learn their

Children are very good at mimicking and learning different inflections, which are alterations people make to their voice in order to pronounce different words.

mother tongue. It involves observing the teeth, lips and tongue location, as well as hearing the tone, and then trying to copy these things as closely as possible. Children are able to reproduce accents very well, something which is more difficult for adults. This happens in part because adults try to reproduce what they hear without copying what they are seeing.

A second technique for learning a language is repetition. One should listen (and observe) a native speaker and then repeat, repeat, and repeat again. There is no way to skip this practice of repetition when learning a new language.

Along the way, the student will make many mistakes. This is part of the learning process for a new language, which is why students should be prepared to laugh at themselves often. This is what a missionary had to do when he asked for bread with “clowns and channels” (payasos and canales in Spanish) when in fact he wanted raisins and cinnamon (pasas and canela). Language professors often tell students, “You have a million mistakes to make. So let’s get started!”

The third technique for learning a language is practice. You do not learn to swim or play basketball by reading a book, even though you can learn much about those sports in that way. The same is true for language acquisition. To learn a language one must use it in everyday life. One must speak to people who already speak that language, using what one has learned so far, just like children tend to do.

Most linguists say that total immersion is the best way of learning a language. This is the most effective method. In total immersion, students live for a certain amount of time among people who speak the new language. That way they cannot use their own native tongues and are forced to use the new language.

For adult students, immersion learning can seem slow at first, but in the end it is the fastest way to learn the language.

Nonverbal Communication

Linguist:
One who practices linguistics, the scientific study of the structure of native languages and related aspects such as its historic evolution, internal structure, as well as the knowledge that native speakers have of their own tongue.

Thoughts are not only communicated with words.



As we know, communication involves more than words and sentences or even sounds. Albert Meraban, psychology professor at UCLA, states that 55 percent of all communication is nonverbal, transmitted through facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, silence, posture, physical closeness or distance, and many other variables. It involves more than body language; communication can include the environment or context, such as the arrangement of the room, one’s clothing, or the timeliness of one’s arrival.

Nonverbal communication can both enrich and complicate communication. What is shared nonverbally can cause just as many

problems as what is expressed verbally. This is complicated further when dealing with different cultures since what is communicated through gestures or specific movements can vary from culture to culture.

The need to learn nonverbal communication is another reason why learning another language is better when one can be immersed in the culture.

Using Words

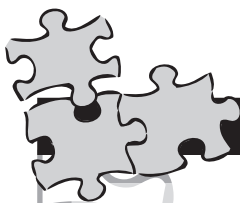
A missionary must be willing to put in the time to learn the language.



Every Sunday in churches around the world, the Lord is worshipped in many languages. You can hear people declare, “Alabado sea el Señor,” “Praise the Lord,” “Béni soit l’Éternel,” “Binecuvintat sa fie Domnul,” “Kia whakapaingia a Ihowa,” “Ann fe Iwanj Senye a,” and on and on in hundreds of other languages. When God hears His people worship in these different languages, He is pleased (Psalm 67:5; Romans 15:11).

It is good to remember that the gospel is not only preached through words. Francis of Assisi is often quoted as saying, “Preach the gospel at all times, and when necessary use words.” To believe the message of the gospel, people need to see the transforming presence of Christ through the actions of Christians. However, what St. Francis said should not be used to minimize the power of words; the spoken language is still the main tool human beings use to communicate.

Since the task of the Christian is to communicate the gospel, those who are involved in doing this must be willing to put in the time to learn another language. In order to become sufficiently incarnated, it is necessary to be fluent in the heart language of the people so they can be reached for Christ.



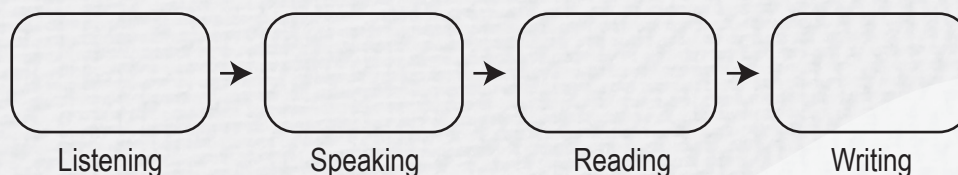
WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Learning grammar is not enough; it is necessary to learn the heart language of the people we are reaching in order to share the gospel. The best way of learning another language is to be totally immersed in that culture and follow this order for language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and then writing.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In your own words, explain why it is important to learn the heart language of the people to whom you minister.

2. Fill in the following figure with a drawing in each square that illustrates the natural order for learning a language.



3. What is complete immersion and what advantage does it provide for learning a language?

4. Divide the class into groups of 2 or 3. Each team will choose one of the countries below and write a short story or letter using all of the sayings or expressions from that country. Afterwards, each group will share their work with the class. When all of the groups have shared, answer the following questions together as a class:

- How did it feel to use words/phrases you did not know?
- Did you find one that is considered a bad word in your country?
- How difficult was it to speak using words/phrases you have never used before?

Canada	USA
<p><i>Eh?: Don't you agree?</i></p> <p><i>Double-double: Coffee with two creams and two sugars.</i></p> <p><i>Housecoat: Bathrobe.</i></p> <p><i>Hydro: Electricity.</i></p> <p><i>Serviette: Napkin.</i></p>	<p><i>Chill: Relax.</i></p> <p><i>Hang out: Spend time together.</i></p> <p><i>Wheels: Car.</i></p> <p><i>Ripped: Has lots of muscles.</i></p> <p><i>Dunno: Short for "I don't know."</i></p>
Australia	United Kingdom
<p><i>Knock up: To wake up.</i></p> <p><i>Stoked: Excited.</i></p> <p><i>Barbie: Barbecue grill.</i></p> <p><i>Tucker: Food.</i></p> <p><i>Go troppo: Go crazy.</i></p>	<p><i>Knackered: Exhausted.</i></p> <p><i>Miffed: Angry or upset.</i></p> <p><i>Minted: Wealthy.</i></p> <p><i>Gobby: Loudly opinionated.</i></p> <p><i>Dodgy: Suspicious.</i></p>



LESSON 2

Cross-Cultural Communication

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Objectives

- To learn how to communicate in another culture.
- To understand the difficulties of learning another language.
- To identify universal characteristics of languages.

Main Ideas

- To become incarnate in another culture, it is necessary to learn the heart language of the people.
- Language communicates more than what the words or phrases mean by themselves.
- We can see God's prevenient grace in that each language has everything it needs to proclaim the gospel and disciple new believers.

Introduction

Have you ever asked yourself, "What is the key for missionaries to be able to establish good relationships in a new culture?" The answer is to learn the expressions and language of that people group.

Culture shock is defined as, "The tensions and feelings of discomfort that come from having to carry out daily tasks, such as eating, caring for one's health, and keeping up interpersonal relationships, in ways that one is not used to" (Brislin, 1986:13).

Language has had a powerful influence in the world ever since God brought the cosmos into existence through His word (Genesis 1). Christians refer to the Bible as God's word and speak of its power. Knowing the power of language, the apostle John ends the book of Revelation with a warning about the dangers of adding or subtracting words from it (Revelation 22:19). The miracle of languages on the day of Pentecost was a sign that pointed to the presence of the Holy Spirit which fell on Jesus' followers. God moved in such a way that people from over a dozen different cultural backgrounds were able to hear the gospel in their native tongues (Acts 2:5-11).

Whether spoken, written, or signed, language can be used to share ideas and dreams, to exchange information, to express feelings, and to deepen relationships. Because language is such an important tool for relationships, its study and practice are fundamental to global missions.

Missionaries Need to Learn New Languages

Is learning another language worth it?



For those involved in Christian missions, learning a new language is just another part of life. Shortly after arriving on the field, a new missionary was expressing how hard it was to learn the language, saying, "I cannot even communicate with a three year old on the train!" Because language is a vital part of every culture, the feeling of helplessness in situations when one cannot understand a language is a trigger for culture shock.

Some new missionaries prefer to join churches where their heart language is spoken. When they explain their reasons they say, "To be honest, we cannot worship in the language of the country where we serve."

When missionaries face frustration in learning the language, they must not give in to the temptation of just getting together with people from their culture. This does not mean they need to avoid all fellowship from people of their own nationality. However, if they spend most of their free time with people from their own culture, they will lose opportunities which could help them learn the language and connect with the culture of the place they are serving.

When missionaries become frustrated with language learning and choose to spend more time with people who speak their own tongue, this isolation causes them to have a setback in the learning process. This in turn increases their frustration and feeds the cycle which hinders their integration, and this is counterproductive to learning the language. Because worship is so integral to a culture, missionaries need to learn to worship in the churches of their brothers and sisters of that country.

Some might think they can communicate well enough through an interpreter, but this is not the best solution for missionaries who will be ministering in that culture. Missionaries are called to become incarnate in the culture, just as Jesus did. Jesus did not speak in celestial tongues which required interpretation. He spoke in the Aramaic and Hebrew languages that the Jewish people of that time spoke. Becoming incarnate in a culture means being able to speak to people heart to heart.

Problems With Language Learning

How hard is it to communicate in another language?



Learning a new language presents several challenges. First, the meanings of many words and phrases in a language are assigned arbitrarily, without any kind of pattern. A quick translation can result in a very different meaning from what was actually intended.

For example, let us look at some phrases that are used in Cuba:

Phrase in Spanish	Literal English Translation	Actual Meaning
Echar un patín	Throw a skateboard	To run
Pegar los tarros	Hit the horn	To be unfaithful
Meter tremenda muela	Stick a big molar out	Talk a lot
Un bárbaro, salvaje, una fiera	Barbarian, savage, beast	An expert
Echar un pie	Throw out a foot	Dance
Se trafa, enreda	Becomes entangled	Messes up
Canta el manisero, guarda el carro	The peanut vendor sings, put away the cart	Dies

“Using a translator or an interpreter does not guarantee good communication. The best way to communicate is by talking heart to heart.”

<i>Se da lija</i>	Sands oneself	Boasts
<i>Es una polilla o una mente</i>	He/She is a moth or a brain	Educated
<i>Machaca las teclas</i>	Pounds the keys	Plays the piano badly

A second challenge to cross-cultural communication is that words from one language do not always have exact parallels in the vocabulary of the other language. For example, in English the word *love* can be used to say “I love pizza” or “I love you.” However, in Spanish you use different words (*querer* o *amar*) to express these different feelings.

Many words have multiple meanings that can only be understood in the context of the culture or conversation where it is used. For example, the Italian word *piano*, which in English stands for the musical instrument, can mean either low volume, softly, or “a floor of a building.” The musical instrument in Italian is called a *pianoforte*. This means that a word’s meaning is determined from the context in which it is used. In order to translate the word *piano* from Italian into English one must know which meaning is being employed since there is not word in English which can stand for all three Italian meanings of the word.

A third challenge involves the structures of grammar and syntax, which can vary greatly from one language to another. Some languages use different tenses or modes which might not exist in other languages. For example, in Greek there is a tense called the aorist tense in which an action is never completed – it is not limited by time and can go through eternity. The English language does not have a matching tense.

These three challenges (arbitrary meanings, definitions which depend on context, and grammatical structures which do not match) are reasons why we do not yet have a computer program that can perfectly translate one language into another. Some programs are able to offer acceptable translations, but sometimes the results are incorrect – these programs are limited.

Some words do not have an equivalent term in other languages because they are so deeply tied to their own culture. They refer to something which has a specific meaning within that particular culture, so in order to be translated it has to carry an explanation with it. For example, to play football (soccer) is referred to differently in different Spanish-speaking cultures: *cascarita*, *jugar bola*, *chamusca*, and *mejenguear*. None of these words have an equivalent term in other languages, since they are so connected to their culture.

A Horror Story

An anecdote from Charles Gailey.



Dr. Charles Gailey tells the following story:

In my early years as a new missionary in Africa, part of my job consisted of attending discipline meetings at school. At these meetings the teachers would report their dealings with students and often present written cases to the committee. I looked over one of these written reports, eager to learn the language, and I asked about the meaning of one of the words: *unesisi*. They told me it meant “pregnant.”

A few weeks later two new missionaries, Robert and Peggy Perry, arrived. They asked if I could introduce them at the church. Robert arrived late without Peggy because, due to her being pregnant, she was feeling sick and was not able to make it. Using my poor knowledge of the language, I introduced Robert to the congregation. Everything was going well until I explained that his wife was not able to come because she was *unesisi*. The congregation exploded into laughter because what I had actually said was that the missionary’s wife had gotten pregnant *out of wedlock*.

The Meaning Behind Words

What other messages are being communicated?



In every culture, the message being communicated goes beyond the meanings of the words and phrases being used. Many sayings, jokes, or phrases carry with them stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination, or gender biases. Those in power use these phrases to justify their methods and their control over others. Those who want to protest, use satire in order to express their disagreements or to criticize the existing power structures. In a literal sense, these phrases do not mean anything. However, they communicate a message that goes beyond the words being used, a message which the people of that culture are able to understand.

Let us look at some examples. People from the African continent usually give very descriptive names to foreign missionaries, names which can express tenderness as well as ridicule. Lorraine Shultz was called *Dez Para Oito* (ten ‘til eight) in Portuguese because she insisted that students at the Tavane Bible School in Mozambique be present to eat at the cafeteria ten minutes before eight.

Sometimes the language speaks powerfully through the use of words which identify people of certain geographic or ethnic origins in negative ways. These terms often communicate scorn, prejudice, or suspicions which do not have any kind of reasonable basis. The use of terms which

Stereotype:

A fixed but oversimplified image or idea that is widely held of a particular type of person or thing.



Prejudice:

A preconceived and fixed idea, generally negative in nature, about something one does not know well.

are considered racist can produce violent reactions and even fighting. Missionaries must avoid using these terms and teach believers to never use words which cause pain or violence. A good principle to follow is to call people the name they prefer. Of course, even here things can get complicated.

Language allows people to express incredible ideas in colorful ways. For example, in many cultures the heart is the seat of love. In some African cultures it is said that the liver is the seat of love, while in the Marshall Islands they say that one loves with the throat. In Fongbe, the language in southern Benin, one expresses tender love by saying, "I accept your smell." This variety of expressions for the same meaning illustrates why languages are more art than science!

COSTA RICAN PHRASES

Phrase	Meaning
Indio comido, puesto al camino (An Indian who has eaten and is now ready for the road)	Used when someone is invited to a home to eat and they leave immediately after the meal.
El que con lobos anda a aullar aprende (He who mixes with wolves learns to howl)	Used with those who spend time with people who have bad habits and end up displaying those same bad habits.
Al mejor mono se le escapa el zapote (Even the best monkey can lose their fruit)	Even the most skilled people can make mistakes.
A quien le cae el guante que se lo plante (If the glove fits you must wear it)	If a person makes a mistake and someone else notices it they should admit to it and deal with the consequences.
Eso va a pasar cuando la rana eche pelos (That will happen when a frog grows hair)	The same as saying "that will never happen."



Discrimination:

To exclude or treat a person or group of people as inferior due to their sex, race, language, religion, political affiliation, etc.

No native tongue exists apart from a specific culture, with the exception of Esperanto, created by Lázaro Azmenhof in 1880 by using words from many other languages (such as Latin, Slavic, Greek, Hebrew, and Romance languages). Zamenhof wanted it to become an international tongue. Today less than 2 million people speak it, and no country has adopted it as its official language.



Some facts about languages.

Here are some basic principles which are common to the first language (mother tongue or heart language).

1. The native tongue is the spoken or written language a group of humans uses to communicate with each other. It is created spontaneously through use. Native tongues differ from "formal" languages which are constructed based on logic, such as computer programming languages. Formal languages have a finite vocabulary and limited grammatical structures, something which is not true for a native tongue.



LESSON 3

One Church, Many Languages

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

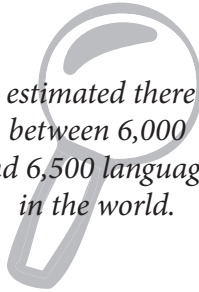
Objectives

- To understand the problems of a multilingual church.
- To know how to help with intercultural communication.

Main Ideas

- More than 150 different languages are spoken in the Global Church of the Nazarene.
- Learning another language can be a great help in improving communication.
- The unity of the church depends on us being able to understand each other and serve together.

Introduction


It is estimated there are between 6,000 and 6,500 languages in the world.

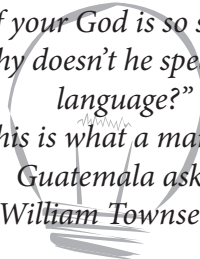
One of the key issues in the edification of a global church is the diversity of languages. Each Sunday, God is worshiped in more than 150 languages in Nazarene churches around the world. How exciting it is to know that God hears and understands every one! Nevertheless, problems arise in working together, since one church may not understand what another is saying.

This barrier in communication can produce many conflicts. If nothing is done to resolve the problem, it could lead to a breakdown of relationships between groups belonging to the same church.

Confronting the Language Problem

One church, many languages, great challenges.




“If your God is so smart, why doesn’t he speak my language?”
(This is what a man from Guatemala asked William Townsend).

What is a language? Language is simply a structured system of arbitrary symbols, usually vocal, by which humans communicate and cooperate with each other. This tool called “language” is absolutely essential for cooperation among groups. In many circumstances people cannot work together if there is not a common language.

Cultural differences can be seen in languages. Even when there is a shared language, there are differences between regions or countries, such as communities which only use local dialects. It is important to know these variants in a language, as much to avoid conflict as to learn the language. One concrete example occurs in the English language, which has variations for American English and British English. Let’s look at two situations that could occur.

The first example: A North American General Superintendent finds himself in a tense business session of a District Assembly in England. One of the members makes a motion and uses the word “table.” The Superintendent, according to his own American English, understands that the person is proposing to “postpone” the matter, or to set it aside until a later time. But in British English the term “table” means exactly the opposite.

That person is proposing that the motion be addressed “*immediately*.” If the General Superintendent does not understand this difference, then the tension could get much worse.

Here is another example: a General Superintendent invites a British District Superintendent to have dinner at his house to foster their friendship. After a good dinner, the British Superintendent pushes his chair back and says to his hosts, “*You know, I am fed up*,” which means, “*You know, I am satisfied*” in British English, but in American English it means, “*You know, I am annoyed!*” Later he addresses his hostess by saying, “*You are a very homely woman*,” which means, “*You are a very ugly woman*” in American English, while in British English it means, “*You are a very warm and friendly woman*.” One can imagine the problems that can result from this conversation, and this is only one example from the English language!

Included below are some of the more recent communication errors committed by leaders of the church:

- A General Superintendent, preaching to a congregation in Ireland, used the phrase, “*Bloody well done*.” In Ireland that is an offensive phrase, but not in American English. As a result the service was cancelled and the congregation separated from the Church of the Nazarene.
- A leader of the church incorrectly said the name of a person that was going to be ordained. The name is Magalula and he said Mejala.
- A missionary was sharing his testimony about when he was filled with the Holy Spirit, but he ended by giving thanks to God because the Holy Spirit “*had left him*,” since he used the word “*phuma*” which means “*to leave*” instead of “*ngena*” which means “*to enter*.”

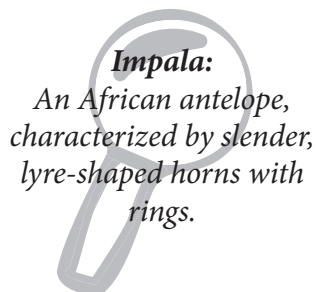
It is clear that the use of language in the development of the global church is a great challenge. In 2011, the Church of the Nazarene was operating in more than 159 world areas, and the number of languages exceeds that number. The use of language could be considered the most important non-theological problem inhibiting the church’s progress.

Cultural Exchanges and Language

Every culture contributes to and receives from other cultures.



The influence of language is not a one-way street, flowing from the west to the east. It goes both ways! Western nations are influenced by the languages and cultures of the east and south. For example, people in North America have been using a Zulu word for a while now without knowing it. *Impala*, the name of a model of popular car, is a word imported to the USA by a Nazarene.



“Nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, personal distance, and physical movements, complicate things. Both verbal and nonverbal language can cause problems” (Charles Gailey).

Many years ago on a trip to Africa, General Superintendent Hardy Powers visited a missionary ministering to the Zulu culture. There he learned about a beautiful African antelope called an impala. When Dr. Powers returned to the USA, he was having a conversation with Harlan Heinmiller, an executive with General Motors. Heinmiller told him they were making a new car which was to be fast, agile, elegant, and beautiful, but they were still deciding on a name. Dr. Powers commented how he had just seen in Africa the “king of the antelopes.” It was fast, agile, elegant, and beautiful, and it was called the impala.

Heinmiller took this name to the company board and they accepted his proposal. It became the best-selling car in Chevrolet’s history. It was sold worldwide from 1953 to 1985, then again in 1992 as the Impala SS (Super Sport). In 2000 it was distributed once again as a new model. The impala’s shape can still be seen on the logo of the car.



There are people who think impala is a word of English origin. Some years ago the editors of the magazine *Motor Trend* were criticizing a car manufactured in the US with the name *Euro*, saying it would be better to use names from the North American culture for cars made in the US, such as *Impala!*

The truth is that we share our linguistic and cultural riches with each other. In the church, we must learn this truth. Language and culture are inseparable, which is why when different cultures unite under one church the correct use of language is crucial.

Our Role

How can I help to minimize language problems?



“The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It needs no furlough and is never considered a foreigner” (William Cameron Townsend).

When dealing with languages there is always a potential for discord. Words have multiple meanings in different cultures. The Spanish word “querer” (“to love” or “to want”) is one example. We do not “queremos” our pizzas as much as we “queremos” our wives! Sometimes the literal translation of a word into another culture has no real meaning, while other words are so tied to a culture that they cannot be correctly translated in another language.

The difficulty of uniting a global church in this third millennium can lead us to become separated from each other, unless we remember the

Labeling people refers to categorizing or describing people in one word or a short phrase. This can be done to discriminate a person or people group, such as those who are mulato, white, overweight, old, etc.

through the ministry of that evangelist.” Anyone can learn at least two or even three languages.

Leaders serving the church in full-time ministry, such as missionaries, must learn to speak another language. Every Nazarene should at least learn simple greetings in several languages. If you visit a church where French is spoken, it can make a big difference if you are able to say words such as good morning in French, “Bonjour!”

Avoid Labeling Others

We should never use language to label or put people in boxes. Our communication methods should be inclusive. For example, instead of saying, “I met a white (or black) person,” be more specific. Say, for example, “I met a Japanese woman while shopping.” The practice of labeling others can lead to racial or cultural prejudices.

In the end, words are simply sounds which are given meaning by how humans use them. Using one label instead of another could help, but it would only be a temporary solution. As Christians we need to avoid labeling anybody, Christian or not.

Provide Faithful Interpretation

When no common language exists for communication, Christians should have a plan to provide appropriate interpretation and translation services. Is it possible to provide good communication between two languages and cultures different from each other?

Eugene Nida, a well-known linguist, affirms that all languages use metaphors and figures of speech that have similarities. All cultures also possess certain universal cultural principles (such as differences in age, social levels, economic divisions, etc.) which provide a common point of reference. All humans were created with the capacity to understand the meaning of words in one language and translate or interpret them effectively into another language. In many cases this will require some training, but it is possible to transmit a message into another language, thus reducing the possibility of having misunderstandings or offending others. Some cultures have more experience in cross-cultural communication, such as in China, which has more than 220,000 translators and interpreters.

In every level of the church (local, district, regional, or general), Nazarenes should provide the best possible interpretation services possible. We have a lot of work to do in this regard, since good translators are not always available.

Dr. Young-Baik Kim, a leader of the Church of the Nazarene in South Korea, took his own interpreter to one of the meetings of the denomination. Even though this might have bothered some of the people present there, it does show that we need more reliable interpreters for all of the languages of our denomination. We must improve the quality of our interpretation.

Speakers can send interpreters the manuscript of their sermon, lesson, or speech ahead of time so the interpreter can find good translations of the phrases or difficult terms they will have to communicate.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have students work in pairs, studying and memorizing the greetings listed below for 5-10 minutes. Afterwards everyone should close their books and there will be a contest, with the pairs working as a team. The teacher will say the name of one of the languages (for example, Guarani) and the team which is able to correctly say that greeting in that language will earn a point. The contest will end when every greeting is used. The team with the most points wins, and the prize is that everyone else has to give them some kind of gift (a piece of candy, a cookie, a pen, etc.)

Guarani: maitei.

Galician: Olá (informal). Bo día (morning), boa tarde (afternoon), boa noite (night)

French: Salut (informal, the "t" is not pronounced), Bonjour (formal)

German: Hallo (informal), Guten Tag (formal)

Italian: Ciao (informal), Salve, Buon giorno (morning), Buon pomeriggio (afternoon), Buona sera (evening)

Swiss: Hej (informal), God dag (formal)

Arabic: Sabbah-el-Khair (morning) Masaa-el-Khair (evening); the (Kh) is pronounced from the back of the throat.

Hindu: Namaste

Russian: Priviet (informal), Zdravstvuyte (formal, pronunciation: ZDRA-stvooy-tyeh)

Hebrew: Shalom (means hi, goodbye, and peace) Hi (informal)

Norwegian: Hei

Portuguese: "Oi" or "Olá" (informal), Bom dia (morning), Boa tarde (afternoon), Boa Noite (evening)

Turkish: Merhaba

Vietnamese: Chao

Filipino: Kumusta Ka (How are you)

Indonesian: Selamat Pagi (morning), Selamat Siang (afternoon), Selamat Malam (evening)

Nepalese: Namaskar

Polish: Dzień dobry (formal), Cześć (informal)

Hawaiian: Aloha

Thai: Sawa dee-ka (If you are female)/ Sawa dee-krap (If you are male)

Czech: Dobry rano (until 8 or 9 a.m.), Dobry den

Malayalam: Namaskkaram

Chichewa: Moni Bambo! (to a man) / Moni Mayi! (to a lady)

Nahuatl: Niltze, Hao, yahui (informal)

Maltese: Merħba (welcome), Bongu (morning).

Congolese: Mambo

Skånska : Haj (universal), Hallå (informal), Go'da (formal), Go'maren (morning), Go'aften (evening)

Tahitian: Ia Orana

Romanian: Buna ziua

Marathi: Namaskar

Armenian: Barev

Sarites: Coreli (hi), Koi ti né? (how are you?) Luti prinla (morning) Luti moshi (evening)

Valencian, valencià (hi), bon dia (morning) bona nit, (evening) bona vesprada (afternoon)



LESSON 4

Culture Shock

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Objectives

- To define "culture shock."
- To understand how to face the challenges of a new culture.
- To gain awareness of the feelings associated with culture shock.

Main Ideas

- Culture shock is the physical and emotional discomfort suffered when living in a culture different from one's culture of origin.
- Accepting a new culture involves accepting the people and loving them in spite of differences in race, language, and customs.

Introduction

How would it affect you if after you were attached, accustomed to and in love with your culture, suddenly God spoke to you and asked you to go to another country with a different culture? What would be your first reaction?

In today's world, there is a constant movement of people who travel between different countries and regions of our planet. Many leave their culture of origin for a set time or even permanently in order to settle down in another country. This means adapting to another way of life and culture, and this is when the phenomenon known as "culture shock" sets in, which has some well-defined causes and phases.

Every person takes with them two kinds of baggage when they travel: the luggage in which they carry their belongings, and their "cultural baggage" which is invisible but plays an important role in the process of adapting and transitioning to a new country of residence. This cultural baggage carries the values and behaviors learned in the culture and society of origin.

It is natural as members of a society to treasure those characteristics that make our culture and country unique and special on a planet where there are more than 198 different countries. For those who are attached, accustomed to, and in love with their own culture, obeying God's call to go and serve in a different country and culture is not easy.

What is "Culture Shock?"

Defining the term.

Culture shock is the physical and emotional discomfort one suffers when living in a culture different from one's own.

The expression "culture shock" was used for the first time in 1958 to describe the anxiety caused by not knowing what to do, when to do it, and how to do it in a new environment. Culture shock expresses the loss of direction a person experiences when they do not know what is appropriate or inappropriate in a new place. Normally this sets in during the first weeks after arriving somewhere new.

We can describe culture shock as a physical and emotional discomfort one suffers when beginning life in a different location. It happens when learned behaviors from your culture of origin are not considered "normal"

or acceptable in a new environment. This can include how you use the language, how you use machines or tools, or how people treat each other. Symptoms of culture shock can arise at different times.

While culture shock can be a painful experience, it can also provide a great opportunity to redefine our life objectives and learn to integrate different perspectives in our service to God. Culture shock can help us to better know ourselves, and it can stimulate our personal and spiritual growth.

Causes of Culture Shock

What causes this feeling of disorientation?



There are a number of things which can trigger culture shock. Here are a few of them:

1. A Clash of Cultures. When moving from one place to another, there occurs a clash between the culture of origin and the local culture. The cultural baggage the person carries with them, which has been helpful to them so far, is no longer relevant or valid in this new culture.

2. Communication Problems. Having to communicate in a new language can be stressful. It goes beyond pronunciation – in the new culture one has to learn a new kind of non-verbal communication, such as gestures, body language or posture, facial expressions, eye contact, choice of clothes, hairstyle, etc. Non-verbal communication plays an important role in every culture.

3. Losing One's Cultural Framework. In order to communicate in a new culture, new symbols and codes must be learned. The old cultural framework is no longer useful to interpret this new environment. What came so naturally before in your own culture now requires much attention and effort particularly in forming relationships with others.

Gabriela Cortés (2002), citing Oberg (1960:176) explains it this way:

These signs or clues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to give orders to servants, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not. Now these cues which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, or norms are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind and our efficiency on hundreds of these cues, most of which we do not carry on the level of conscious awareness.

4. Identity Crisis. In living in a new and different culture, one will go through an identity crisis. Realizing one is different and does not “fit” into

*“Culture is like water to a fish. A fish only discovers its need for water when it is no longer in it”
(Kalervo Oberg).*

Bicultural identity is the capacity some people develop to function well in two different cultural environments.

this new environment produces feelings of anxiety, anger, and resentment, and one might experience daily negative feelings toward or rejection of the new culture. This happens because it is natural to long for one's own culture, which you will still consider to be better.

The effort required to concentrate on what one says and does in order to fit into the new culture will produce fatigue. The symptoms associated with culture shock are these: fear, frustration, insomnia, nostalgia for one's home country, impatience, headaches, attachment to people from your culture, isolation, and increased appetite.

The Stages of Culture Shock

What does this process look like?



It is very important to learn all you can about ministering in a different culture before you arrive, including an understanding of the process of culture shock. Knowing how this happens and the emotions associated with it will be very useful in the process of adapting, living and serving in a new culture. Culture shock happens in a series of different steps. Each one involves different feelings or emotions, and understanding this helps us face it in a more mature and positive way.

1. Honeymoon. This is the first stage in living in another culture. The “honeymoon” stage is similar to what people experience when they travel somewhere new and return home soon after. When traveling as a tourist, everything seems exciting. You have feeling of euphoria, excitement, curiosity, and fascination both for the country and its culture. Everything new is perceived as good, and few things feel unpleasant. You will probably get to know people who will give you support and friendship and be willing to take you to visit tourist destinations, shopping centers, and other places of interest.

2. Crisis. In the second stage, the negative aspects of this new culture, such as flaws in its customs, systems, and way of life, become evident. One begins to experience the negative symptoms of culture shock and to think that things are not as they should be. The same things which were perceived as good things in the beginning are now annoying and confusing. This happens as one notices that the rules have changed. For example, you cannot greet others in the same way you always did, and you cannot eat your favorite dishes. This is when feelings of rejection emerge towards the new culture, so that the natural reaction is feeling that one does not “fit in” this new environment.

3. Recovery. When the process of recovery begins, individuals begin to more effectively handle the situations in which they find themselves. They become more social with people from this foreign culture and once again are able to feel secure. The individual is able to go beyond the crisis stage as he/she adopts the customs, language, and sayings of the new culture and can

accept that they are different. This happens when the realization sets in that it is necessary to adapt and face these changes. This stage also brings about feelings of security and confidence. Communication with others improves and a renewed interest awakens to better know this new culture. Finally, the person realizes they have now accepted the new culture, feel comfortable in it, and even feel (to a certain extent) that they belong.

4. Adjustment. Scholars such as Brislin and Paul S. Adler (psychologists who are experts in culture shock) agree that this stage is the hardest to reach, and that few arrive at this stage. People who reach this stage feel very comfortable in the foreign culture, even though they are not obsessed with it. They learn to live in harmony with both the things they enjoy and things they do not enjoy about their new environment.

5. Reverse Culture Shock. This is a normal phenomenon that anthropologists coined “reverse culture shock,” and it happens when people go back to their country of origin. Upon their return, the people that knew them sense that they are now different. They speak differently and have different customs and ways of doing things. At the same time, the person notices how the country and culture have changed while they were away, and how they themselves have changed. However, if the person has truly attained bicultural identity they will be able to positively adapt to these changes.

The more someone is prepared to face culture shock and recognize that their own cultural values might come in conflict with the new culture, the sooner they will learn to overcome this crisis and enter the recovery or adjustment phase.

The experience of living in a foreign culture increases understanding and comprehension of one’s own culture. The experience can contribute to one’s personal maturity and development. No one should be afraid of culture shock or of becoming a bicultural person. This is the ability some develop of functioning competently in two completely separate cultures.

The symptoms of culture shock tend to appear and disappear gradually, depending on how willing the individual is to understand, know, and adapt to the new culture. It is useful to know that when traveling between cultures, one’s reactions and perceptions to other people are not necessarily personal but have to do with culture shock.

The Great Commission Implies Encountering New Cultures

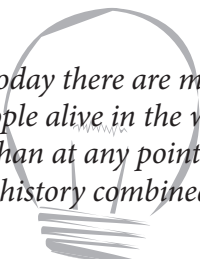
In order to evangelize other people, we must go to them.



In the countries in North, Central, and South America, it is common for children to hear about God. For many, it is so common it becomes routine. However, there are people in other continents who desperately need to know

the message of salvation. We must not forget that carrying out the Great Commission means taking the gospel to people in other cultures.

Part of the mission involves dealing with culture shock. Serving Christ across different cultures means that we will experience customs that are different from ours; these changes will often clash with our emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual points of reference.



Today there are more people alive in the world than at any point in history combined.

In John chapter 17, Christ prayed for his disciples and for us, and he even spoke about culture shock. Jesus recognized that there was a big difference between the world and his disciples: *“I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it” (John 17:14-16.)* Because we have chosen to follow Jesus, when these two worlds collide it many times results in persecution. These two worlds have been clashing in the lives of the people of God since the times of Genesis. The author of the book of Hebrews describes our ancestors in the faith as *“foreigners and strangers on earth” (Hebrews 11:13).*

God has placed us in the middle of this clash of two worlds. *“As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18).* But this is good news! Right? This kind of culture shock has been planned from the beginning of God’s story of salvation. We must be in the world but not of the world. Answering God’s call means experiencing the clash of two worlds with conflicting values, attitudes, and authorities. Serving Christ means walking daily in His presence, and at the same time, walking in a world governed by evil and sin.

In His prayer, Jesus also guarantees that living in this culture shock will bring good to the lives of His daughters and sons. Verses 17 and 23 speak about the sanctification of His disciples, the unity of the church, and the salvation of many as a result of His disciples’ faithfulness. May Jesus’ prayer also become our prayer. Let us ask God to not take us away from the world but to make us agents of His grace as He guards us from evil. Let us pray that we might be one, as He and the Father are one. Lastly, let us plead for the Lord to continue making us holy, shaping us in the image of his Son.

How Prepared Are You?

Advice for facing culture shock.



The central theme of this lesson is to prepare future missionaries or missionary leaders to face culture shock. There are some important things that can help us to be prepared for when these times of crisis come.

- Remember that culture shock is a normal experience for those who go to live in another culture and that it is a temporary phase.

- Make friends in your new country, city, or town.
- Talk to other people who have gone through the same experience.
- Become involved in and be a part of a local church.
- Remember the positive aspects of your own culture.
- Do not change the good customs/habits your own culture has taught you.
- Take time to learn the new language well (if you have to learn one).
- It is normal to feel sad from time to time for the things you left behind: parents, siblings, friends, etc.

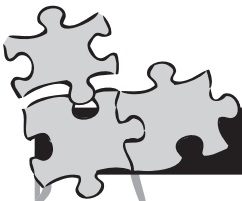
*“The will of God will never lead you where his grace cannot keep you”
(Jim Elliot).*

One of the challenges that those who are called to serve in another culture face is having to go through times of suffering. 2 Timothy 2:10 says, *“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.”*

Missionaries have to be prepared to produce fruit for that is the purpose of their serving in another culture. God expects this fruit to be abundant and to last for a long time (John 15). It is necessary to prepare and receive training before going into the mission field so that one can minister with excellence.

Another great challenge for cross-cultural ministers is learning to love people as they are; in other words, how God loves them. Accepting another culture implies accepting its people, loving them despite differences such as race, language, and customs.

In summary, culture shock involves the physical and emotional discomfort we go through when we go to live to a different culture. We can be confident that Jesus Christ will lighten our load and give us the needed strength to endure any trial. It will be worth all of the effort because the message of salvation will reach the lives of many people who will be rescued from the chains of sin and death through the blood of Christ Jesus.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The process of going through culture shock is normal for those living and serving in another culture. Knowing the stages will help us be prepared so we can face and overcome this crisis of adapting to a new culture.

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write a definition of “culture shock” in your own words.

2. Read the following passages: Daniel 1:8; 3:15-18; 6:7, 10, 16, 22. Based on these Scriptures, answer these questions:

a. What customs from their new culture did Daniel and his friends NOT accept?

b. Based on Daniel’s example, what things in your culture should you avoid since they go against a life of holiness?

c. List some of the customs in your culture which Christians should practice because they are compatible with the life of holiness.

3. In your own words, describe three feelings or characteristics for each of the stages of culture shock listed below. For example, for the “honeymoon” stage one feels great excitement. When everyone is finished, share your answers with the class.

Honeymoon:

Crisis:

Recovery:

Adjustment:

Reverse Culture Shock:

4. Divide the class into groups of three or four. Have the groups answer the following questions and then share the responses with the whole class.

a) What can we do to help missionaries from our local church or district who are going through these stages of culture shock as they begin their ministry in another country?

b) What can we do to help new missionaries from other cultures who might be serving close to us and who might also be going through culture shock?



LESSON 5

Living in Another Culture

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

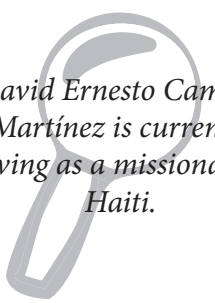
Objectives

- To define the word “culture.”
- To learn incarnational principles from Jesus’ example.
- To appreciate Christian cultural values.

Main Ideas

- In order to become incarnate in a culture, one must be willing to learn, be creative, and be committed to the mission.
- The values of God’s kingdom are above any culture. They are universal and eternal.

Introduction

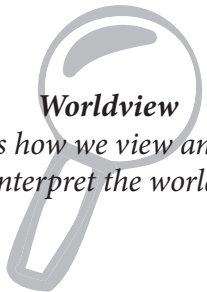

David Ernesto Campos Martínez is currently serving as a missionary in Haiti.

What would you think if at the age of ten your father took you to visit a friend in another town and there he presented you with a group of girls and asked you to choose one to become your wife? Or what would you think about fasting from food and water for twelve hours every day for a whole month as part of a festival, knowing that if you do not participate you might be taken to jail?

David Campos wrote this lesson, and he served as a volunteer missionary in the Middle East for some time. Here he shares one of his experiences of learning to live in another culture. *“During one meeting, I was sitting while leading discipleship with friends who all came from different ethnic backgrounds. Right then I was reprimanded for the way I was sitting because showing the bottom of one’s foot to another person is an insult to an Arab Muslim. I learned, in a not so nice way, how to sit differently. Isn’t that ironic?”*

This lesson will talk about the importance of being able to understand essential elements of a culture for missionaries who are ministering in new and different contexts.

Culture


Worldview
is how we view and interpret the world.

How do we define this word?

Stephen Grunlan and Marvin Mayers define culture as “learned and shared attitudes, values, and ways of behaving of a people” (Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective, Stephen A. Grunlan, Marvin Keene Mayers). Each society is unique with different behaviors, foods, and celebrations. Each culture – be it pre-Colombian, Anglo, Hispanic, Latino, Afro-Brazilian, etc. – has its own way of eating, dressing, acting in public, and driving, among many other things.

All cultures have their own way of answering certain questions. What do you do in a particular situation? The answer to that question is the behavior considered appropriate by people in that culture. What is good or what is the best? It depends on the values held by that particular culture. What is true? The answer will provide the basis for that culture's beliefs. What is real? This refers to the worldview of that particular people. The following diagram illustrates these components which are present in every culture:

(Diagram from Lloyd E. Kwast's article "Understanding Culture," pages 397-399 in the 2009 *Perspectives Reader*, edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne).



Values are principles that allow us to orient our behavior in order to be fulfilled as people. These are fundamental beliefs which help us to prefer, appreciate, and choose certain things or behaviors in place of others.

Jesus As Our Model

What can we learn from Jesus' incarnational model?



When the Son of God came into this world, he became incarnate in the Jewish culture into which he was born, becoming a part of that society. As a human, he felt hungry, tired, angry, sad, and all of the other things we also have to deal with as human beings. The apostle John says in his gospel, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). John makes it clear that the Son of God became a human and dwelt among us; in other words, He experienced everything a human being will experience from birth onward.

Paul also states in Philippians 2:7, "...rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." Christ left everything in order to be with us, even submitting to his human parents as authorities over him. Jesus Christ understands us because he became incarnate and lived as one of us. He does not just understand us as Creator God, but also as one of us.

Jesus' model gives missionaries some key guidelines on how to become incarnate in another culture:

- **Willingness to Learn.** As a child and teenager Jesus submitted himself to the learning process that all Jewish children went through

"During my time in another continent, I always had a small notepad with me where I wrote down new words and facts about the culture in which I was living"
(David E. Campos Martínez).

Missionaries should work alongside the Holy Spirit serving as useful tools. Emptying oneself and renewing one's mind are essential to ministering like Christ.

(Luke 2:42-51). In the same way, missionaries must be willing to learn from the culture they are entering.

- **Creativity.** Jesus was a very creative person. He taught using methods and techniques which were revolutionary for his time, such as the use of parables. For a missionary, creativity is an indispensable tool which is necessary to be able to adapt (Matt. 13; Luke 15). Missionaries can “create” their own learning methods. For example, David Campos states, “One of the things that helped me to learn the Arab language was to memorize the alphabet and write it down. When I asked about new words, I always wrote them in Arabic as well as phonetically so I could pronounce them with the sounds I already knew.”
- **Commitment.** One of the keys for Jesus’ incarnational ministry was his commitment to the mission. As William H. Murray notes, “The moment one definitely commits oneself then divine providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred and which no man could have dreamed would have come their way.” Jesus was committed to the mission God had given him, and this was not dependent on his abilities and circumstances, but rather on his principles and values (Matthew 26:39; John 4:34).

Missionaries must work with the Holy Spirit to be useful tools He can use. Emptying oneself and renewing one’s mind are essentials in order to minister as Christ did. A willingness to learn, a creative outlook, and a commitment to the mission are key for missionaries to succeed and endure on the mission field.

Christian Values and Cultural Values

Ethnocentrism is an attitude or point of view which analyzes the world according to the standards of one’s own culture. Ethnocentrism involves a belief that one’s ethnic group is more important than others, or that some or all aspects of one’s culture are superior to other cultures.

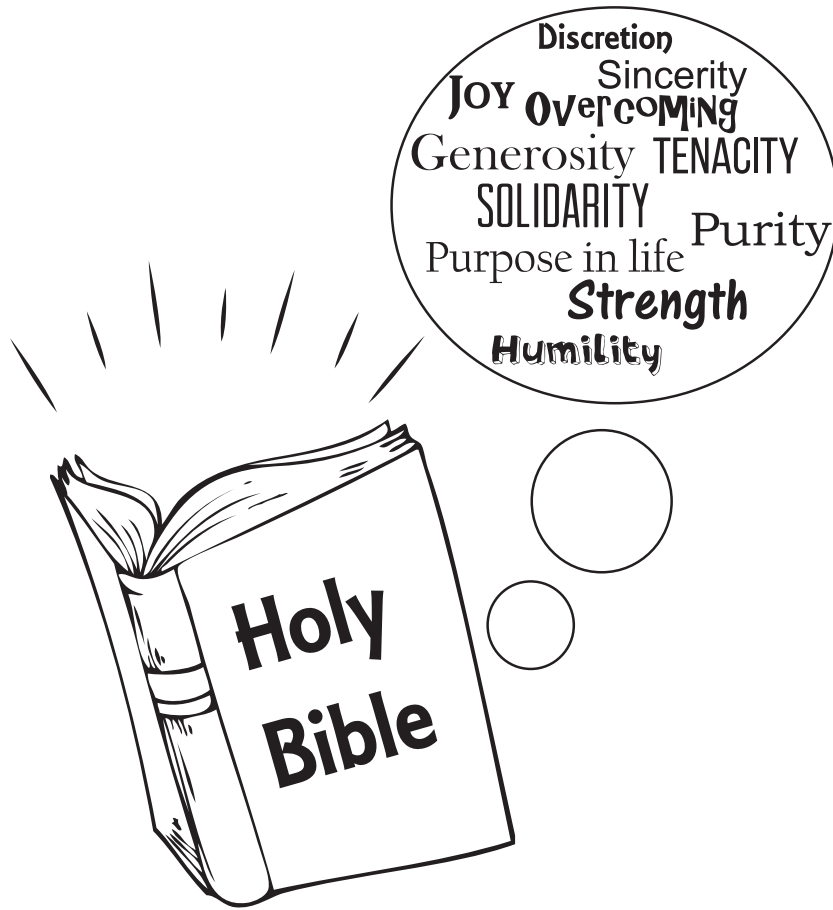
How should a Christian’s values change?



All Christians live in two cultures: the one they were born into and the one they accepted when they became Christian. Their birth culture is the one they learn at home and school, and through things like social media. This culture is established in people from birth and it influences their thoughts, habits, and worldview. Adults teach the new generations what they consider the right way to think and act. The influence of this culture that one is born into is so strong that other ways of thinking are considered incorrect.

In the New Testament, we read how the Church expanded geographically reaching towns of people of very different cultures. These Christians had to overcome their ethnocentrism and work to understand people from other cultures. They also had to learn to change the values they had learned in their own culture which stood in opposition to their Christian values. These first Christians had to identify and get rid of cultural values that were not compatible with the way of life Jesus had shown and taught them.

The values of the kingdom of God are universal and eternal, taking priority over all cultural values.



The apostle Paul offers us a good example of this clash of values. In Romans 12:2 he instructs the church, *“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect”* (New Living Translation).

God works in the life of the Christian to transform his/her worldview, beliefs, values, and conduct. This change begins in the mind as it is renewed by the Holy Spirit. In Romans 12:3, Paul says, *“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought.”* As Christians we should never think of ourselves—or our culture—better or more highly than we should. Our birth culture and the Christian culture are not 100% compatible. Becoming a Christian means adopting new Christian values and discarding those old values that are in opposition to them.

The experience of salvation and the process of sanctification produce a gradual change in the worldview, beliefs, values, and behaviors of a Christian. This is all part of the process of growing in the image of Jesus Christ.

Another example is found in the call of Peter and Andrew (Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:8-11). The Bible says that they immediately left their nets and followed Jesus. Jesus was beginning a change in the lives of these two

fishermen. For these two brothers, their encounter with Jesus changed the way they acted and thought. Jesus does the same with every disciple who responds to his call of salvation. (Other examples can be found in Matthew 14:22-33 and John 6:60-69).

The new birth is the beginning of a kind of metamorphosis as the new Christian begins to learn how the Christian culture must take precedence over the culture into which he or she was born. When we compare Acts 4:1-22 to Acts 10:28,34-35; 11:17, we can see that God had a lesson for Peter who thought his Jewish culture was superior to other cultures. When God showed Peter how this kind of thinking was wrong, Peter understood that God's love is for every person in every culture. As we grow as Christ's disciples, the values of our Christian culture must become rooted in us so we can think, feel, and live as Christ did.

Paul's Example

Here we will study Paul's experiences.



Paul wrote,
"I have become all things
to all people so that by all
possible means I might save
some. I do all this for the
sake of the gospel, that I
may share in its blessings"
(1 Corinthians 9:22-23
NIV).

David shares this part of his testimony: "Being on the mission field I thought many times how in my own country we did things differently, how food was cheaper, how the transportation system was more organized, and how where I was born the people respected 'No Smoking' signs. The truth is that, consciously or unconsciously, I was always trying to justify how my lifestyle was better than the city, town, or country I was visiting."

This kind of attitude, called ethnocentrism, is one of the big internal obstacles we will face when we are sent into places that are different from our own contexts. Someone once said, "Inflexibility is one of the worst human failings. You can learn to check impetuosity, overcome fear with confidence, and laziness with discipline. But for rigidity of mind there is no antidote. It carries the seeds of its own destruction."

The Bible provides the key to overcome this inflexibility. Paul thought of this as he was writing to the Romans in chapter 12:2, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." The key is being able to adapt.

One example of adaptation is given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:20-23. "When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ... When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ... When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings"(New Living Translation).

Paul explained how, even though he was a Jew, he adopted Gentile customs on certain occasions. Paul went from being an extremely legalistic

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write down two customs or traditions from your own country.

2. Divide the class in two groups. One will read the paragraph about France and the other group the one about Italy. Then they will answer the following questions. Once both groups are finished they will share their answers with the rest of the class.

- What customs are different from the ones of your country?
- Which of the customs/traditions described in the paragraph do you think are wrong? Why?
- How could you make new friends with people of this culture?
- As a Christian, which custom would be difficult for you to adopt?

France

France has played an important historical role at a global level. Their customs are also part of this history, customs which are changing because of how their society has evolved. The French have a great cooking tradition which is known around the world. People who live in Paris eat at 1pm and then at 7pm or later. Among the French, it is common to greet and say goodbye to each other with a handshake, which must not be too strong or else it might be considered a sign of disrespect. Among friends and family, it is also common to kiss one another on the cheek, even between men. It is also common to arrive at social gatherings 15 to 20 minutes later than the time that was said. This is not considered bad manners, but arriving any later would be. They prefer to go on vacation in their own country, enjoying activities such as camping and skiing, but more and more people are choosing to travel farther for their vacations.

Italy

Italy is a country with some very specific customs. For example, on Christmas Eve they eat antipasti, spaghetti with clams, fish, vegetables, fresh fruits, and nougat candy. To end the year, on New Year's Eve they eat a spoonful of lentils since this food is associated with abundance and money. Close to midnight everyone goes out to their balconies to welcome the New Year. In some regions, they give each other red underwear as gifts among close friends as a symbol of good luck for the coming year.

In some places, such as Naples, Sicily, and Calabria, they have the custom of throwing old furniture (things they are not using anymore) out of their windows. They believe this will free them from all of the bad things that happened the previous year. Before carrying out this tradition, however, they have to make sure the street is clear of people and choose a time when they will do this, that way people can go out into the streets without fear of being squashed by a table. On New Year's Day, people will have a plate of lentils for lunch.

Also of note is the religious customs Italians have inherited from the Papal States. For example, they cannot go into important church buildings wearing shorts or sleeveless shirts, and they have to speak softly or maintain silence during a ceremony. One other custom involves always sharing business cards at the end of a meeting and then after the cards are shared, they shake hands. Shaking hands happens after the exchange of cards, never before. To do otherwise is considered uneducated.



LESSON 6

Serving in Another Culture

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Objectives

- To identify key principles for serving in another culture.
- To understand the process of adapting to another culture as a missionary family.

Main Ideas

- Your personal preference does not determine your country of missionary service; being obedient to God's will and His purposes determines the location.
- Beginning friendships with the people in the country will help the new missionary to understand and appreciate the culture.

Introduction

*“There is nothing in the world or the Church — except the church’s disobedience — to render the evangelization of the world in this generation an impossibility
(Robert Speer).*

Throughout time, God has called people to serve Him, and many times answering this call means serving in a different culture. If God’s call is to have priority over our customs and comfort, we will have to go through a process of adapting to the new culture. In this lesson, we will study what we will face when God calls us to serve in a context different from our own and how a missionary family can best manage this time of transition so they can adapt and enjoy life in the new culture.

Serving God Does Not Mean Going Where We Choose

God chooses our mission field.



When God calls us to serve in a culture different from our own, there are certain things we must be careful to consider.

*“Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek”
(Hebrews 5:8-10).*

There is a natural inclination in all people to do the things we enjoy doing. This is very apparent from an early age. For example, a child likes to go Grandma’s house, but not to the dentist. As we grow, we mature and begin to accept that some things are necessary, even if we do not like them (like going to the dentist). However, even as adults, many choices in our lives are governed by our preferences and whether or not it is enjoyable. Today the philosophy of life which says, “If you like it, do it,” is very popular and reinforces this human tendency.

When we give our life to God, we have to change this philosophy of self-satisfaction to one that says, “If God calls you to it, do it.” This involves nothing more and nothing less than being obedient – an important word for serving God in another culture.

Obedience is our response to the love God has shown and given to us. In John 6:38 we see how Jesus submitted in obedience to the Father’s will. “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who

sent me.” This is a kind of obedience that, according to Hebrews 5:8, Jesus himself had to learn from what he suffered.

Sometimes we confuse serving in a place we like with doing missions. We do not deny that God might send us to serve in a place we might enjoy, but we always need to objectively discern whether we are doing God’s will or following our own preferences. In Luke 22:42, Jesus is confronted with this situation. Jesus prays to the Father asking, “If you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

The Beacon Theological Dictionary defines obedience as, “the supreme test of our faith in God and of our love for God.” The missionary family must understand this concept very clearly. Going to live in a different country is not a matter of taste or personal choice, but instead it involves being obedient to God’s will and calling. God will send every missionary family to the place where He wants to use them.

Serving God Does Not Mean Keeping Our Own Culture

Trying to keep our own customs might be a hindrance to serving God.



When we refer to culture, we are talking about the combination of lifestyle, customs, knowledge, and artistic, scientific, and industrial development that allows for the development of critical judgment. Culture provides every person the parameters needed to examine and judge others. All countries – and even individual cities inside the same country – have their own cultures which govern how they do things. No culture is better or worse than another; they are just different.

When we leave our own country, we take our cultural baggage with us. If we insist on keeping everything from our culture, the process of adaptation will be more difficult and may even produce barriers to serving God in that new place. However, when we set our culture aside and incorporate ourselves into the new culture, serving God is made easier.

Many times we are more willing to leave our country than our culture. Our physical bodies have left, but when we arrive to our new place of service, we turn our house into a small embassy for our home country. Our schedules, meals, holidays, dress, places of residence, and even the school where we enroll our children speak about the culture from which we came. Once I heard someone say, “Don’t call the missionaries after 8pm because they go to bed early.” Obviously, “they go to bed early,” was a reference to the different lifestyle these missionaries led.

Even though it is healthy to keep some of the good habits from our culture of origin, adapting to a new culture will tear down walls that aid in communication. It will help us to work together for the kingdom of God.

What does it mean when we say that serving God does not include taking our own culture along with us?

Is obedience something natural in humans or something we learn?

Keys to Serving in Another Culture

How can we adapt to best serve in another country?



Adapting to a new culture is good for a person's development, although this is easier for some than for others.

“People give value to a country.”

For a missionary family, the reasons for moving to a new country or region do not come from financial, political, or family motives but from wanting to do God's will. This is the motivation that will help us to overcome culture shock day by day, so it is important for everyone in the family to understand this. This way everyone can seek God's help and direction in facing change, and trust that He has his children's best interests in mind. “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28).

Someone who studies and learns to love another culture will be able to better understand God's love for the world. Even so, we need to understand that not everyone manages change in the same way. Children tend to accept a new culture more easily than adolescents and adults. Generally, children are able to make friends and adapt faster as long as their parents are there with them. On the other hand, teens may have more difficulties not because of their new home but because they had to leave their friends behind. At that age, they value their friendships, and it is hard for them to make new friends.

Why do we need to value cultural differences?

A young couple will find it easier to accept a new culture since they are still enjoying new experiences, and they have a higher capacity to adapt. Older couples, if they have never lived in a different culture, will tend to have a tight grip on their own customs and experience more problems adopting their new culture.

The following are keys which could help missionary families adapt to a new culture:

- *Accept that things can be done differently.* Not all of us do things in the same way all the time. For example, in some countries it is acceptable to arrive uninvited to someone's house, while in other countries this is considered bad manners.
- *Understand that we are the ones that need to change, not the people from the culture we are serving.* If in our country of origin they have Sunday morning services, but the country where we are serving they have Sunday evening services, we should adapt to the new culture's schedule.
- *The more we become involved with the people, the simpler and quicker we will be able to adapt.* Making friends helps us to understand and appreciate the culture, and it helps us to feel less isolated. Some people do not like to make friends because they think it will be

Activities

Time

20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. *What are two important aspects of serving God in another culture?*

2. *How does the philosophy of life which states, "If you like it, do it," affect our service to God?*

3. *Name two or three things or customs from your culture which would be difficult for you to leave behind.*

4. *State whether the following statements are true or false by writing a T or F by them.*

For a family to adapt to serving in a new culture it is best to:

- Keep all of the customs from the culture of origin.*
- Go to the mission field when their children are young.*
- Make friends, even if it will be difficult to leave them behind when you leave.*
- Eat local foods and celebrate the local holidays.*
- Teach your children to appreciate the new culture.*
- Wait until you are over the age of 50 to go to the mission field.*
- Try to change the customs of the local people.*
- Talk constantly about how things are done differently where you come from.*
- Stay isolated so that you do not learn the language.*
- Complain to your sending church about the horrible customs in your new country.*



LESSON 7

Dealing with Cross-Cultural Conflicts

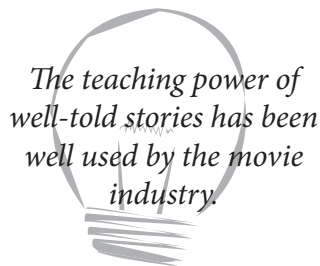
Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Objectives

- To identify difficult cross-cultural situations.
- To learn different ways to resolve cross-cultural conflicts.

Main Ideas

- “Speaking the truth in love” is not the only way to solve interpersonal conflicts.
- Ways of solving conflicts vary according to culture.



Introduction

Many Western Christians think the only way of dealing with conflict between people is to “speak the truth in love” and that this strategy is valid in all cultures. This concept of speaking truth in love works best in cultures where direct, one-on-one confrontation is valued. Western cultures and many Latin American cultures fall under this category.

Being direct has its advantages. First, talking with people face to face reduces the possibility of having misunderstandings. Second, for people who work together, these conflicts often arise as workers are getting to know each other. Third, being open and direct with others is easier to do over time. Work issues are resolved quickly when both people are able to overcome their differences. Many cultures value this kind of direct confrontation, but not all cultures do.

Every culture has its own way of dealing with conflict, and it is not appropriate for a missionary to impose his or her own methods. Those who serve in other cultures must develop their ability to detect and deal with conflicts. In this lesson, we will study a variety of alternatives from God’s Word for dealing with difficult situations in relationships between people of different cultures.

The Intermediary

How does the intermediary work to resolve a conflict?



Mediator:
Person or organization in charge of intervening in a discussion or confrontation between two groups in order to find a solution.

The use of an intermediary or a mediator is a common practice in many cultures. By definition, an intermediary helps people to avoid face-to-face confrontations, and this minimizes the possibility that the parties will be embarrassed or dishonored.

The following story is an example of this. Daniel Hernandez and his wife, who were new missionaries in the Philippines, were enjoying making new friends. However, their children were having problems. On their way to school, certain Filipino children would make fun of them, insult them, and sometimes even throw things at them. This caused the Hernandez children

to feel resentment. It seemed the Filipino children were everywhere they went, making fun of them.

Daniel knew most of the parents of the offending children and decided to arrange a meeting with them. His plan was to be as pleasant, warm, and careful as he could to say what he needed to say without offending them.

But after planning this meeting, he decided to cancel it. The risk was too great. This kind of face to face conversation, even if it were done with tact, would be sure to cause them shame and loss of prestige in the community. How could he handle this situation with the Filipino parents?

Daniel had been making friends with the storekeepers in the local market. In the last few weeks, he had noticed that everyone had a very easy-going and trusting relationship with the shoemaker. In fact, in some strange way this man functioned as an intermediary for all of the information that was shared in that community. We could call this shoemaker an “informal community leader.” Daniel was able to take advantage of this information to solve his problem.

One day Daniel went to the market and had the following conversation with the shoemaker:

Shoemaker: Hi Mr. Hernandez. How are you today?

Daniel: Not very well.

S: I'm sorry to hear that Mr. Hernandez. What's wrong?

D: We're very sad about something.

S: What are you sad about?

D: We're sad for our children, they are not very happy here.

S: Mr. Hernandez, that is very sad. What happened that has made them feel that way?

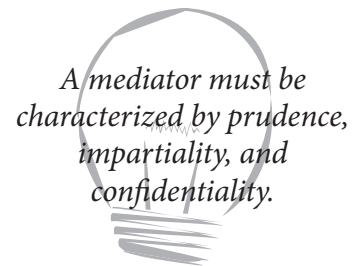
D: Well, they are having problems on their way to school and when they come back home.

S: What kind of problems?

D: It seems that sometimes other children throw rocks at them or insult them. My wife and I love this country and the Filipino people very much, but we are very sad that our children are not able to enjoy it like we do.

S: I am so very sorry Mr. Hernandez. This is very bad. We are delighted to have you in our country and want your family to be happy. We hope you will all feel that way soon.

Daniel bought a few things and with a friendly goodbye went on his way. Within the next two to three days, the problem had been resolved. The Hernandez children were not bothered anymore and soon their feelings toward the country's people began to change. What happened?



After Daniel left the shoemaker's shop, other customers arrived. After greeting and asking them how they were, the shoemaker would mention that Mr. Hernandez was feeling sad. The customers would ask why, asking questions until finally the shoemaker would tell them the whole story.

This happened with every customer that entered his shop. He did not point fingers, he did not mention names, and he did not have to confront anyone directly. However, little by little, the whole town learned about the problem, identified who the "delinquents" were, and the situation was taken care of (even with no direct accusations).

The culture of that Filipino community valued harmony, unity, and peace among their members. Certain families were to blame, but the entire community took responsibility and honored their values in order to assure that their guests would feel welcomed.

Possessing honor is equivalent to having a good reputation. A person is considered to possess honor if they live according to the moral and behavioral norms considered appropriate in that culture.

Saving Face and Vulnerability



What does it mean to save face?

There are many times when the use of a mediator is not possible because of a lack of time, because there is no right person for the job, or because of the nature of the conflict. Assuming a posture of vulnerability can be a culturally appropriate way to resolve conflicts in some contexts. The following story illustrates this.

There was a woman working in a country she was relatively new to when her mother came to visit. In this country, foreigners need to register and have certain documents in order to travel freely. When the woman tried to obtain the documents for her mother, the authorities told her she needed to have her mother's plane ticket. They had left it at her house, so they asked about other options, but apparently there were none.

The woman spoke with the authorities again, but this time she gave a different argument. She said, "I feel terrible. I forgot to bring the ticket. It is my fault that we are having problems. I am so ashamed; I wanted to impress my mother by taking care of her here. This is so humiliating. What must my mother be thinking of me?"

The woman began to tell the authorities the kind of problems her mother would face due to this failure. Going all the way back home to get the missing ticket would be too strenuous for her mother, whose health was very delicate. If she left her mother at the office to go back home, her husband would be annoyed because she would have to travel alone at night. Besides, her mother would feel very uncomfortable being by herself with strangers, which would be terrible. As she described this painful situation, she also expressed how much shame she felt for causing the authorities so much trouble. She ended by asking, "Is there anything that can be done?"

The authorities, sensing how important it was for her to take care of her mother and to avoid being humiliated in front of her, decided to give her the documents. The mother and daughter both thanked them for their extraordinary goodness and went home without any more troubles.

This woman took a posture of vulnerability in front of these people. She made it very clear that whether or not she was humiliated was in their hands. This kind of conflict resolution works well in cultures where one's good name and reputation are highly valued. In these cultures, it is important not to make others feel humiliated. When someone feels shame, they have every right to defend themselves; however, people who mediate in order to save face for someone else, to save their honor, or to restore their credibility in a community, are very highly regarded.

Stories, Rhymes, and Sayings

How do you solve conflicts through stories?



Telling stories is another indirect method for managing conflict which is used in countries around the world. Storytelling is more than using stories. In a broader sense, it involves using words and their meaning to educate and correct. This includes the use of parables, legends, fables, rhymes, games, allegories, and of course stories.

These methods often serve to introduce and involve the youth in the customs and values of the society. However, these same tools are easily used to respond to conflict.

The Snake

An example of a storyteller.



In a conference held on the Ivory Coast, there were missionaries in attendance who were based in the USA as well as leaders from the country itself. Everything was going well until the end of the conference when a heated debate arose which endangered the unity and goodwill of the two groups.

The intensity of the discussion continued to increase, and soon things had deteriorated to the point that accusations were being hurled based on past perceptions and experiences between the two groups. The unity of the church on the Ivory Coast was in danger. At this point, one of the leaders, who had been very quiet, began to tell a story. As the group heard this story, they began to ask themselves: What is this person saying? What does it mean? Who is he speaking to? Is he talking about all of us?

The man began by saying, "I would like to tell a story. A father and his son went out on a journey. Halfway through their journey, they encountered

Phrases and sayings are powerful motivators. John R. Mott inspired thousands of university students to go to the mission field with his slogan, "The evangelization of the world in this generation." Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I have a dream" phrase gave energy to the civil rights movement in the United States.

To what extent has the story of salvation through Jesus Christ transformed your life?

a dead snake on the road. The father told his son, ‘With total honesty, tell me your greatest wish and I will tell you mine. If you tell me the truth, the serpent will come back to life and we will continue on our journey.’

“The father was thinking that his son might want his inheritance, but then the son said, ‘My wish is for your wish to be fulfilled.’ At that moment the snake came back to life and went away. The two travelers were free to continue their journey.”

Everyone there began to think about the meaning of this story. The conflict between the two groups had them at the brink of exploding, and the telling of this story (a kind of indirect confrontation) made everyone pause to think.

Telling stories can be an effective method for finding new solutions. Jesus was one of the greatest storytellers – he used parables to teach profound spiritual truths.

The father and the son traveling together represented the missionaries and the national church. The snake represented a critical juncture, a crisis moment. Would they continue on together or go their separate ways? The people at the meeting were going through a crisis – it was time to face this reality.

The story is a plea for honesty, since the determining factor for whether a relationship can continue is whether each party will be honest with the other one. As the father said, “Tell me your greatest wish and I will tell you mine.” In other words: What is your agenda? What do you wish for? What do you fear? Can you be honest? The people at the conference realized both sides were lacking honesty and that they were losing trust in each other. How could they continue working together without trust? As in the story, this trust could be restored through reciprocal, mutual honesty.

The snake coming back to life symbolizes hope (the new life) for the relationship and a continued journey together. The story dealt with an inheritance, and the national church desired to be independent. The initial conflict arose out of a desire not only for a blessing, but also to be entrusted with the “legacy.”

Without a doubt, the narrator perceived the bad direction this conference would take if this direct confrontation were allowed to continue. That is why he chose to illustrate the conflict with a simple yet powerful story. The hearers had to reflect on whether both sides wanted to find a solution, so they could enjoy a happy future together.

The Case of the Witchdoctor

How humility can resolve conflicts.



Omar tells us of a conjunctivitis (also known as pink eye) epidemic in a South American tribe. The disease is not dangerous, but the infection can lead to serious problems. The spells, potions, and prayers of the traditional witchdoctors were not being successful. Omar offered them a medicine called Terramycin, but the leaders of the tribe rejected it saying, “You are of a different color. Your ways are different from ours.”

Omar could have easily convinced some of them to apply this ointment on their eyes, and when they improved the superiority of the medicine would have been proven. However, he felt this might create a kind of contest with the witchdoctors, which might destroy their role in this culture by shaming their “powers.” Omar looked for an alternative and waited on God’s timing.

Five days later, after contracting pink eye, Omar went to a witchdoctor for help. He tried the usual rituals, but these did not work. Omar went back to let him know he had not improved at all. He asked him to do the rituals again, but this time using Terramycin on his eyes. The witchdoctor agreed, knowing he had nothing to lose.

Three days later Omar’s eyes were clear and free from the disease. Now the problem was, how do you give this medicine to everyone without offending the witchdoctor? Omar waited for the right time to talk with him again. One night he saw him leave his house and followed him for a while before stopping him to talk. Lifting the medicine Omar said, “Why don’t you try healing people with this ointment? You healed my eyes with it. Maybe it will work on your people too.”

In a few days, everyone was healed by the witchdoctor, and his respect among the people grew. He was proud of having been successful with his treatment, and proud of his new potion. He became friends with Omar and continued to help keep his people healthy.

Later the witchdoctor began to include disinfectants in his ceremonies, as well as other medical treatments, and over time health centers began to be managed and attended by the tribespeople. This became one of the great success stories in the development of that community.

A situation which could have easily divided a village became an opportunity to make friends. The initial conflict was dealt with so well that over time Omar was able to see many in the tribe give their lives over to Christ.

Omar’s wise and humble conduct can teach us much. He did not try to become the health provider, and the way he approached the witchdoctor shows his deep humility and respect for the customs of this people.

*A **witchdoctor** is the equivalent of a shaman, someone who uses herbs and potions to cure. People go to them to find cures for physical and spiritual ailments, to undo curses or black magic spells, among other things.*

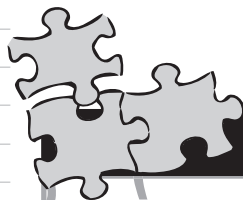
Keys to Resolving Cross-Cultural Conflicts

What principles have we learned?



This lesson provides the following conclusions about what is best to do in order to resolve conflicts among people of different cultures:

1. Chose friendship over confrontation.
2. Introduce changes without violating the roles and customs of the people involved.
3. Do not try to get credit.
4. Build on what the people in that culture already know.
5. Introduce practical changes that respond to the felt needs of the people.
6. Follow the customs of the culture.
7. Depend on the Holy Spirit, for without Him there will be no real or lasting change.



WHAT DID WE LEARN?

In order to solve conflicts in cross-cultural relationships, we must use appropriate strategies so that no one is hurt. One must choose among the many ways of solving a problem according to the needs of that culture.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. During the next week, observe your relatives, friends, as well as others. Keep a diary of all of the conflicts that arise and how they were resolved. During the next class, share your findings with the group.
2. Below there are 16 proverbs/sayings from different parts of the world. Match the sayings with their appropriate definitions from the second list by putting the corresponding letter on the line to the left of the saying.

Sayings

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. ___ Looking for a bone in an egg (China). | 7. ___ He who goes to sleep with kids wakes up soaked [because they will wet the bed] (Latin America). | 12. ___ Mister "I didn't know" hid from the rain in the pond (Africa). |
| 2. ___ Even if a log remains in the river for 100 years, it will never become a crocodile (Mali). | 8. ___ You need two thumbs to kill a louse (Africa). | 13. ___ Visitors' benches were made for sitting (Africa). |
| 3. ___ Do not count your chickens before the eggs hatch (Brazil). | 9. ___ As the big waves go under the boat, little by little, the mountain will come up under your feet (Burma). | 14. ___ If a child wants to tie water with a chain, ask him if he is talking about the water in the pot or the lake (Africa). |
| 4. ___ The cat knows, the rat knows, and the corn barrel is safe (Haiti). | 10. ___ Failure is the mother of success (Korea). | 15. ___ Those in a hurry receive no blessing (Kenya). |
| 5. ___ The more the bamboo grows, the closer it is to the ground (China). | 11. ___ Sometimes shortcuts take longer (Japan). | 16. ___ A skinny dog attracts all the fleas (Nicaragua). |
| 6. ___ A wife is a knife that cuts life, but there is no life without a wife (India). | | |

Definitions

- A. Children want to get married, even though they have to leave the care of their mother.
- B. A proverb about speaking like a fool.
- C. We learn from our mistakes.
- D. The work gets done when there is cooperation. Without cooperation the problem only gets worse.
- E. Big challenges/problems can be conquered one step at a time.
- F. Be careful with unrealistic expectations; do not base your plans on the unknown.
- G. The older you get the more humble you become.
- H. A proverb about being a fool.
- I. When you do something with immature people, you have to be willing to suffer the consequences.
- J. To try to find a fault in another person, even when there is none.
- K. Make sure you know what you are doing if you decide to choose the quicker way.
- L. Not all students will become researchers.
- M. An equivalent to, "stop and smell the roses." Busyness is not a virtue.
- N. As long as two rivals are weary of each other they will cause no harm.
- O. Those with problems tend to get more problems; equivalent to, "when it rains it pours."
- P. Hospitality is a virtue.

Answers: 1-J/ 2-L/ 3-F/ 4-N/ 5-G/ 6-A/ 7-I/ 8-D/ 9-E/ 10-C/ 11-K/ 12-H/ 13-P/ 14-B/ 15-M/ 16-O.



LESSON 8

Changing Paradigms

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Objectives

- To identify old paradigms about missions.
- To learn new models for missions.
- To evaluate new strategies for sending and supporting missionaries.

Main Ideas

- It is important to change some of the traditional paradigms and ideas regarding our models for recruiting and sending missionaries.
- We need to reevaluate our mission strategies so we do not repeat our past mistakes.

Paradigm

From the Greek word paradeigma which means model, example, or sample. A paradigm is a set of patterns which govern how something is done or what beliefs are accepted. A paradigm changes when another one replaces it.

How do you define a paradigm? The best analogy is a vast ocean with its overwhelming, majestic, unpredictable, and powerful waves, waves which cover everything. Similarly, there are different social, cultural, religious, and economic waves which have affected humanity, society, and certainly the church – this includes how missions is carried out.

Waves are never still – they challenge the status quo. New movements continue to shake us and sometimes grow in strength, like postmodernism, globalization, the “without borders” movement, etc.

There are also movements within missions. The way of doing missions in the 19th century was different from how we do missions in the 21st century and very different still from what William Carey, the father of modern missions, taught.

Why do we need to cover the topic of paradigms in this book? Because the world is in constant movement, which means the church is also constantly changing. Mission strategy, missionary roles and the world are all changing.

Anglo

Refers to the people who are descendants from the European Anglo-Saxons whose mother tongue is English. Today most of them live in the countries of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Africa.

New Paradigms

Here we will examine new paradigms in missions.



One of the things which is changing in Christian missions is the profile of the missionary. Today in the 21st Century, the mission profile is commonly a young man or woman, younger than 35, from the middle class, not Anglo, and not from a rich country. Many of our new missionaries are brown-skinned, do not speak English as their primary language, and are willing to take risks! Another change involves the sending countries. Latin America is growing in the field of missions like never before.

The strategies for entering new fields is also changing, which is reflected by terms such as “emerging missions,” “creative access,” “non-denominational,” “tentmakers,” “business as mission,” “medical missions,”

and “short-term mission teams.” New terms are added to mission books every day. Today, those who are called have many opportunities to serve on the mission field. However, so much diversity can be confusing.

While some missionary candidates who have a defined ministry and are self-sustained will simply look for an organization to help them transition into the mission field, others are families with two or three children who are looking for organizations to help them pay for their expenses, including medical insurance and a retirement fund. A few others are subject to the budgets and decisions of their local churches.

A Global Perspective

What are the changes going on globally in missions?



In an attempt to unite missionary sending agencies and help them to dialogue together, established and respected organizations have emerged, such as the Ibero-American Missionary Cooperative (COMIBAM), which has dedicated itself to tirelessly promoting missions.

In a 2006 publication, COMIBAM reported on the strengths and weaknesses of the missionary movement in Latin America, which God has raised up and continues to raise up with great numbers of servants committed and able to do a great job on the mission field. These include pastors, laypersons, church leaders, professionals, businesspeople, and missionary candidates. In Latin America, Argentina tops the list of sending countries, followed by Brazil and Mexico.

More than ever, the global church is turning to prayer, especially these last ten years. Our Korean brothers and sisters have been the inspiration for this movement with their focus on non-reached people groups.

Even though the church has never been more committed to its work, the needs of the world have also never been greater. Because of this, there is a growing need for trained and specialized workers in areas such as education, development, church planting, translation, compassion, and other ministries. This cooperation between different vocations, working together on missionary teams, is producing great results. Hundreds of missionaries are leaving our continent, and even though logistics are better than before, there is still room for improvement.

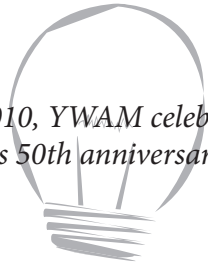
At the global level, the role that Latin America plays involves opening new mission fields in areas of the world such as the 10/40 window. In 1996 there were close to 3,900 missionaries who came from Latin America. Ten years later, COMIBAN reported that there were close to 10,000 missionaries from Latin America, and they project that by 2020 there will be 32,000 missionaries serving in cross-cultural settings. The number of missionary agencies has grown from 286 in 1996 to almost double that number in 2006.

What does a missionary agency do? It promotes missionary service. Most connect those who are called to serve with churches and those on the mission field. Others specialize in supporting individual ministries or raising money to support missions.

Most missionary agencies have a Pentecostal background, but today there are more interdenominational agencies being formed.

***Ecumenical** refers to an ecclesial body that works or serves churches of differing creeds, denominations, and cultures.*

In 2010, YWAM celebrated its 50th anniversary.



Among the missionary agencies in Latin America, we can include Youth With a Mission (YWAM). Its founders, Loren and Darlene Cunningham, had a vision from God to train youth who had a commitment and dedication to missions. YWAM currently has more than 16,000 full-time workers and thousands of volunteers in 177 countries. They develop ministries with children, youth, and adults, serving in rural and urban settings in the areas of evangelism, education, and compassion.

YWAM has made strides in contextualizing and adapting to a variety of missionary profiles by providing service opportunities in ministries that demand high qualifications and specialization, as well as ministries with less requirements, for short, medium, and long term missionaries.

Another well-known missionary agency is Worldwide Evangelization for Christ (WEC). This is a global ministry based in the United States, founded in 1970, which works to evangelize and disciple university students, professionals, businesspeople, and politicians.

Lastly, we need to mention the World Council of Churches (WCC), which is based in Switzerland. Even though it is not a missionary agency, this ecumenical institution made up of 349 churches is moving beyond the traditional methods for doing missions. This international organization participates in diverse nondenominational missionary and theology conferences. The WCC promotes cooperation in missions at a global level, similar to what COMIBAN is doing at a regional level.

New Models for Missions

What are the models being used for missions?



An indigenous church refers to a church which is free to worship, to practice its faith and share its faith within its own language and culture instead of copying what missionaries bring from other cultures.

In the New Testament we find a variety of models for mission strategy. Jesus and his apostles used methods which were innovative and creative for their time in selecting, training, and sending missionaries, establishing churches, and forming native leaders.

In Acts 18:3-4, we see Paul as a tentmaker, supporting himself with the work of his hands as he made friends with the people he met. On Saturdays he would go speak in the synagogue to try to convert the Jews and Greeks. Paul developed his missionary vocation in the midst of a complex and diverse social, political, and cultural mix. He used his gifts, education, and experience to reach the thinkers of the secular world with the gospel. He spoke in the Aeropagus of the city of Athens, a marketplace which facilitated the expansion of the good news through the commercial and intellectual network of that city.

Doing missions involves more than going without preparation and repeating the strategies used in other cultures. Mission work requires creative and appropriate strategies for each mission field. This is the model given to us by Jesus and Paul. Unfortunately, in the past, the church has

committed many mistakes in trying to implement missionary strategies that yielded few results.

Mission scholars have been the most outspoken critics of the mission movement. As it has been repeated numerous times on the field, copying the western or American model for missions is not the answer. We know now that a pure western model does not work in Africa, nor does the Spanish model work in the indigenous area of the Amazon.

We need to carry out a critical and realistic analysis of how we are doing missions today. Many efforts have been put forward by different agencies and organizations, including the Church of the Nazarene, to raise up indigenously-led churches on the mission field. But there is still much more we need to do.

Challenges for the Future of Missions

What do we need to implement for future missions work to be successful?



To conclude this book which focuses on Practical Aspects of in Cross-Cultural Missions, we want to mention some aspects we need to emphasize or change, with the purpose of being more efficient in the future in reaching people who have not yet been reached.

1. Provide opportunities for young people.

There are many young Christians looking for opportunities to invest their lives in something of significance. Most of these young people are interested in missions, but doors are not opened to them. The time a young person invests in missions is equivalent to an intense apprenticeship. God wants to use His Church to channel the calling of our youth.

2. Shape the attitude and commitment of those who are called.

Raising money to send missionary candidates is not enough. A positive attitude, commitment and passion for the calling make the real difference. Latin American missionaries have tended to have a fighting spirit to overcome the limitations they might face. We should help them to form this positive attitude, develop the commitment, and provide the training needed to persevere in missionary service.

3. B flexible with our strategies.

The successful agencies of the future will be those offering “opportunities, flexibility, and friendliness” to candidates. We need to take advantage of non-traditional methods to recruit, train, and send, such as social media, virtual education, etc. Today’s generation is looking for options and methods that will adapt to their needs. The question needs to be addressed, “Should the sending agency adapt to the needs of the candidate, or vice-versa?” Greater flexibility and adaptability on both sides is needed

Jesus called his disciples when they were “working.” They were small business owners, fishermen, politicians, and tax collectors. He formed them to be the planters and missionaries for his church.

so that there will be clearer communication between the agency and the candidate.

4. Everything that sounds “radical.”

Everything that sounds radical is not necessarily bad or negative. Jesus was not an everyday person or a conventional missionary. He was a radical missionary. Some scholars even use the word revolutionary to describe how Jesus lived and carried out his ministry and call. Paul was another radical man from whom we have much to learn. As we engage in missions work, we must possess a radical Christian ethic, cemented wholly in Biblical foundations.

5. A new theology of work.

A new service area is emerging called “Business as Mission,” which is based on the principle that God has called us to be agents of transformation within the context in which we are daily involved (our company, workplace, institution) as a way of impacting the community.

Instead of seeing the work place or the secular world as something apart from the church, this new vision of service pushes us to see our work in a new perspective. The work place and the church can complement each other, and they can learn from each other.

On the other hand, business as mission is a strategy which unites evangelism with the workplace to provide an economically sustainable model. This is so Christian missionaries can be sent and remain in many far away and hostile places. As the pioneer missionary David Livingstone said in 1857, “*Those two pioneers of civilisation – Christianity and commerce – should ever be inseparable.*”

In contrast with tentmaking, business as mission focuses on acquiring the means to support a missionary family and provide them with work through small businesses in contexts where work is limited.

6. Tentmakers

Related to the previous point is the term “tentmakers.” Paul felt uncomfortable in burdening a church going through an economic crisis by asking them to support him financially. As a tentmaker, Paul could have access to people from two social groups: the more affluent owners and the less affluent workers. Paul made friends among both groups.

Today there are missionaries who are medical doctors, dentists, business owners, athletes, etc. who are being light within groups that can be hard to reach. This principle can be applied to every area of work since it is easier to share the gospel with people within our social and work circles.

There are Mexican restaurants opening in Europe and the Middle East for the purpose of mission. These strategies are producing better results than the conventional methods attempted in those contexts in the past.

Activities

Time



20'

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write three arguments in favor of this idea: "It is necessary to allow in fresh, creative ideas, and new missionary strategies. If we do not contextualize, we will lose our effectiveness." Share your arguments with the rest of the class.

2. If you were sent as a tentmaker missionary, how could you use your profession, occupation, or gifts to enter the workforce of another country? Describe two creative ideas and share them with the rest of the class.

3. If you were giving advice to a young man or woman with a missionary call who was just about to enter a university and choose a career, how would you advise them so they might be able to carry out their missionary call according to today's "new theology of work?"

Final evaluation

Time



COURSE: PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

Name of Student: _____
Church or Study Center: _____
District: _____
Instructor: _____
Date of this evaluation: _____

1. *What are the recommended steps to learning a new language?*

2. *Define "culture shock" in your own words.*

3. *Name one of the methods for dealing with cross-cultural conflicts.*

4. *What did you learn from the ministry practice activities in this course?*

5. *How could this course be improved?*

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About this book

Practical Aspects of Cross-Cultural Ministry includes expert recommendations regarding the circumstances to which missionaries must adapt to live and minister in a different cultural context. It includes areas such as learning another language, cross-cultural communication, conflict management, and culture shock, as well as other aspects related to the process of adapting to life in another culture.



The editor

Rev. Scott Armstrong has served as a missionary on the Mesoamerica Region for 19 years and has lived in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. Scott is the regional coordinator of Global Missions and Genesis. Global Missions seeks to discover, develop, and deploy missionaries. Genesis is an initiative to make disciples and start new churches in the cities of Mesoamerica. Scott enjoys ministering to children and youth. He and his wife, Emily, have two children Elijah and Sydney.

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