

fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God."⁶⁰ Because of their motives in helping Paul and his work, the gifts were somehow fruit which increased to their credit.⁶¹

Wonderful things happen in local churches when elders, preachers, and teachers direct the body in this course of life.

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CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

GEORGE P. GURGANUS

No two concepts are more vitally related to the purposes of the religion of Jesus Christ than culture and communication. Neither are there two concepts more closely intertwined with each other. In fact, it has been affirmed that culture is communication.¹ The spiritually impelled foreign missionary will excel in his ministry to the extent that he understands culture and can free himself from cultural prejudices so that he can function unhindered in a foreign culture. That is why so many top students of culture and linguistics are missionaries. It is also the reason for calling cultural anthropology the science of the missionary.

"Communication is a process of inducing others to interpret an event, fact, opinion, or situation in accordance with the intent of the speaker," according to Robert T. Oliver.² The speaker comes up with an idea in his head that he wishes to communicate to another person or persons. He encodes this concept in words from his vocabulary and verbalizes his messages by agitating the airwaves.³ The receiver feels the sensation in his ears and decodes the symbols and supplies the meaning from his own background of experiences. This process is complex enough by itself but is further complicated by the fact that there are countless other cues that contribute to the message conveyed to the receiver such as gestures, facial expression, and numerous other possibilities associated with the speech situation. Communication takes place within a culture and people can

¹Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*, Fawcett Premier Book, New York, 1966, p. 93.

²*Communicative Speech*, New York: The Dryden Press, 1955, p. 5.

³See K. S. Sitaram, "What is Intercultural Communication?" *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), p. 20.

only communicate effectively if they share a common culture. Culture largely predetermines the form that the communicative process will take and from the total cultural context the meaning is decoded by the receiver. The Apostle Paul was bi-cultural. When speaking to the Jews, he followed the Jewish custom of recounting God's dealings with Israel throughout history and tied his messages into God's plans for Israel. To the Greeks on Mars Hill, Paul utilized the channel of Greek rhetoric which was customary with them to communicate God's plan for all men. Paul did not here quote the Jewish Bible but used Greek sources to support his claims. To have done otherwise would have been a mistake.

Culture has been defined in many ways. In broad general terms it may be said that culture constitutes the unique way of life of a people or their total design for living. When a group of individual human beings are together long enough to begin to work together for the accomplishment of common goals they form a society. This society then develops a unique culture by sharing common goals, behavioral patterns and meanings. Culture is learned as all habits are formed. Hunger, sexual desire, self-preservation and other basic drives impel cooperative action. These actions encounter success or failure. Successes are repeated and habits are formed. Multi-individual habits or customs are called cultural traits. The cultural trait is the basic unit of culture.

As previously stated, culture has been defined as a system of shared meanings. Only man is able to symbolize; to establish arbitrary meanings. Only man creates a culture. Man gives meaning within a specific culture to artifact, mentifacts and sociofacts;⁴ however, the meaning given in one culture does not necessarily hold true in another. In U. S. culture the automobile has many meanings and functions. On the other hand, if a group of isolated Australian aborigines in the out-back wilderness were to come upon an American auto in the desert, they could not possibly share common meaning or understanding of functions with the Americans or European

⁴Physical creations, mental constructs and social relationships.

Australians. When people share life together they develop common behavioral patterns and establish a system of shared meanings.

The person who is totally monocultural in his orientation cannot possibly understand or appreciate peoples of other cultures and is likely unaware that he is blind to the forces that are determining his course within his own culture. Ruth Benedict indicates that the principal benefit of studying other cultures is the insight that one gains of his own.⁵ In world missions a knowledge of the nature of culture and of one's self as a participant in culture is essential to success.

The Nature of Culture

Any approach to a study of culture is necessarily limited and must be an oversimplification. Cultural anthropology is not an exact science. On the other hand, a map is an oversimplification. It is hoped that this study will be as helpful as a map is to one who is traveling over a territory. Some important characteristics of culture are as follows:

1. *Culture is learned.* When a human baby is born, it has no culture. As the baby grows physically it is learning culture at the same time. This process of growing up in a culture and becoming a part of it is called enculturation. Humans learn culture from their parents and others of the same generation and pass it on to future generations.

2. *Culture is shared.* It is this aspect of culture that makes effective cooperation and communication possible. To a Texan, a firm and enthusiastic handshake accompanied by a smiling face and friendly talk constitutes a proper form of greeting. Everyone knows this and the nonconformists are disapproved. On the other side of the world, such a behavioral pattern might be meaningless or foolishness to a Japanese. He feels right about a greeting if it is properly done by bowing in the correct manner. All individuals within a

⁵*Patterns of Culture* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1959).

culture who fail to abide by the customary rules of behavior are highly suspect. They are the "bad guys" of the group and often not to be trusted fully.

3. *Culture is a dynamic adaptive system.* There are opposing forces in culture. One is to resist change and the other to change. Change comes inevitably but with varying degrees of rapidity. Primitive societies tend to promote continuity in culture and teach their children to be true to the old ways. The people of the U. S. promote discontinuity and teach their children to leave the old ways and go on to new and supposedly better ways. This leads to extremely rapid cultural change. Alvin Toffler dramatized this rapid rate of change in Western culture in the creation of the term "future shock."⁶ According to Toffler, U. S. culture is changing at such a fast pace that one only has to wait a few years and he is in a quite different culture. In this way he suffers culture shock; therefore, Americans must learn to live in a future oriented society. When a missionary goes to a foreign country and falls victim to culture shock he can get relief by coming home. There is no escape from future shock.

Changes in culture are not often destructive but in harmony with the total context of the culture. It is a system in moving equilibrium like a cloud in the sky. The cloud is constantly changing its shape but remains a unique whole. When the missionary comes to realize the adaptive nature of culture, he is able to see the behavior of the nationals in a different light. Cultural traits are not ridiculous if they are seen in the context of the whole culture and as an attempt by the people to cope with their environment in a way to provide for basic needs. The Eskimo has some strange practices but seen in the context of his environment and the adaptation that he has so effectively made to it, each cultural trait appears more understandable. At least it can be said that the Eskimo has maintained his culture intact over a longer period than most peoples.

⁶*Future Shock* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971).

4. *Culture is patterned.* It is an integrated whole. Culture is not composed of a randomly arranged group of cultural traits but is structured with each element related directly or indirectly with every other element of the culture. Each cultural element has its function as a part of an "organic" whole. Culture is interrelated in all of its parts. Affect one and it affects all other aspects of the culture to some degree. Remove one element of culture and you have affected all others to some degree.

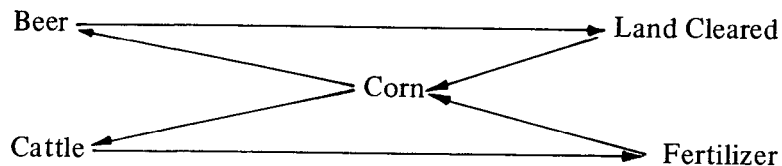
An anthropologist in Zambia told the missionary team there that the daily beer drinking custom of the villages was going to be a tremendous problem to them in bringing the village people to Christ. This custom was tied into other aspects of their culture. It involved their recreation, economics and to a lesser degree every other aspect of their village life. The missionaries were told that they were going to have to recognize this practice as Christian or supply a functional substitute. To eliminate it without a replacement could throw the culture so out of balance that the people would be destroyed. This type of thing was reported to have happened in New Guinea when missionaries introduced steel axes into a primitive culture. Prior to that, the men owned the stone axes as a symbol of their authority. When women and children were given the superior steel axes the result was chaos. The tribe disappeared.⁷

A similar example of the interrelation of beer to other aspects of culture was found among the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico.⁸ A man with beer could have a party. In appreciation his neighbors would help him clear land on which he could plant more corn. More corn resulted in more beer. Corn could also be fed to the cows. The cows produced fertilizer which produced more corn and so on.

⁷Yehudi A. Cohen, *Man in Adaptation: The Cultural Present* (Chicago: The Aldine Publishing Company, 1968), p. 821.

⁸Eugene A. Nida, *Customs and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), p. 45.

Interrelationship Between Cultural Elements



5. Culture may be oriented in many different directions. Early students of culture pointed out the nature of culture as a total design or as a "Configuration."⁹ Other terms used to describe this integrated wholeness of culture were "Soul" or "Ethos." Sumner used the term "Ethos" to indicate "the dominant set or direction of a culture."¹⁰ Opler later indicated that there were several interrelated "themes" in a culture and not just one unified "theme" for the whole culture.¹¹

Ruth Benedict emphasized the overall unity of a culture and yet in her book *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*¹² revealed two seemingly contradictory aspects of the Japanese people. They were gentle, artistic, polite and non-violent on one side of the coin and belligerent, cruel and destructive on the other. The Japanese were a real enigma to the Americans in World War II. Ruth Benedict unravelled the mystery of the Japanese cultural pattern so that Americans could have a

⁹Robert B. Taylor, *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc. 1973), p. 44.

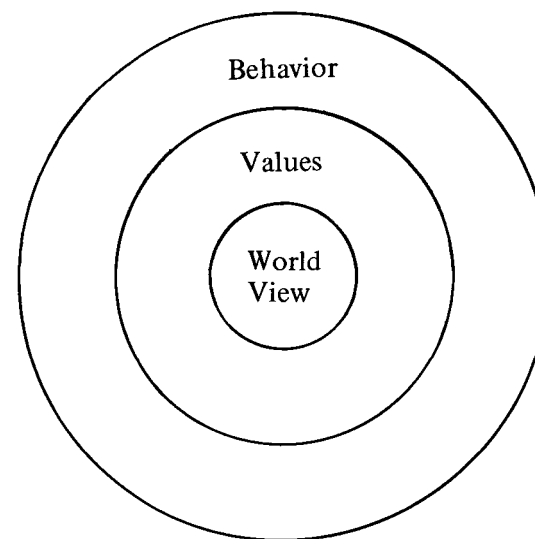
¹⁰Felix M. Keesing, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, Inc. 1966), p. 56. Also see Roger M. Keesing and Felix M. Keesing, *New Perspectives in Cultural Anthropology* (Same publisher, 1971), pp. 391-395 for an updating.

¹¹Morris Edward Opler, "Themes as Dynamic Forces in Culture," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1945, 51:198-206.

¹²(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946).

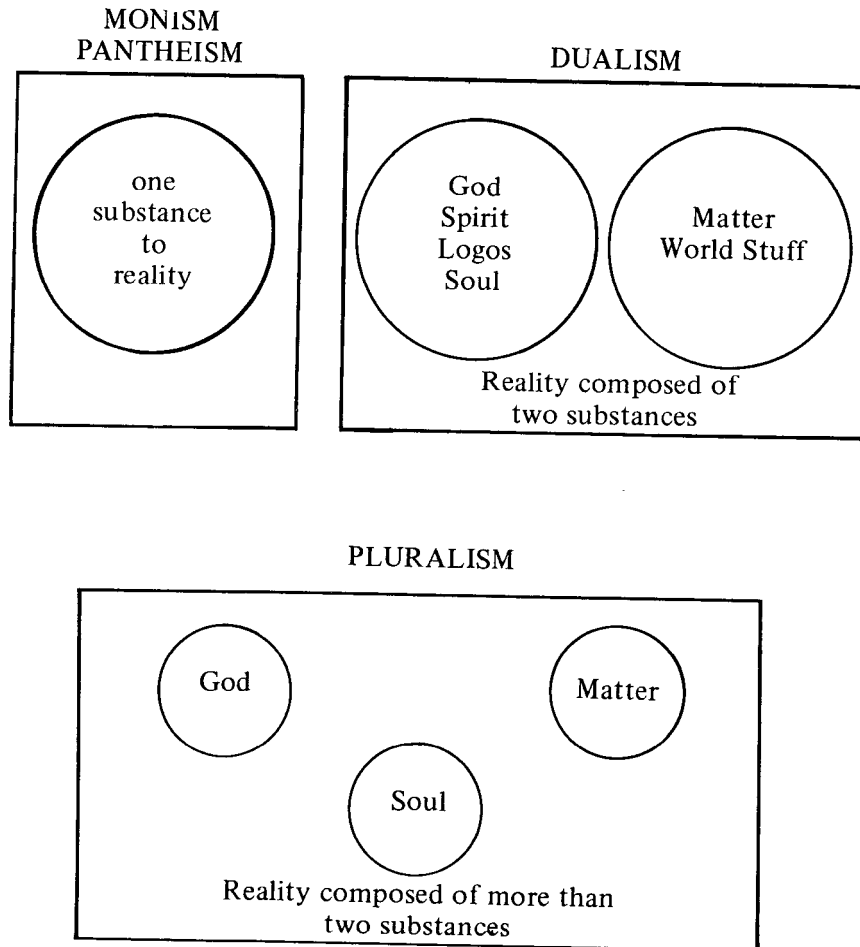
much better understanding of their behavior and be more able to predict what they would do under certain circumstances and why they behaved as they did generally. Before the work of Benedict, the U. S. didn't even know how to fight the Japanese properly. Their behavior didn't make sense to the Americans.

The following diagram of culture is given as an aid to understanding the nature of culture.



1. The core of culture is the *world view* or very basic assumption about what is real and what is true in the world. This involves the mythology and religion of the people.

People are monists, dualists or pluralists depending on whether or not they believe that reality is composed of one, two or more substances. These positions may be represented as here indicated.



Reality Composed of many substances

Hindus, Buddhists and Animists are for the most part monists. They believe that reality is one and that everything that exists is a functioning part of that whole which is spirit. Western man for the most part may be called a monist also as he believes that God is dead and matter is the only substance to reality. Bible believing Christians would be pluralists.

2. Values of a culture arise out of the world view. The Savi of New Guinea traditionally placed a high value on treachery until the missionary came to tell them of the *Peace Child*.¹³ The people of the U. S. place high value on money, work and individual freedom among other things.

3. Behavior is the observable level of culture. These patterns emerge out of the World View, and Values of the culture. Americans couldn't understand why the Japanese in WWII preferred death to capture until Ruth Benedict revealed the profile of Japanese culture. The Japanese soldier had two honorable alternatives. He could die and have his soul enshrined as a god in the military cemetery in Tokyo where his wife, children, other family and descendants would worship him or he could come home victorious. The surrender of a Japanese soldier was not an option to them. He could never come home again, because he was a traitor to his people. This explains why Japanese soldiers have hid out for decades before being captured.

A serious problem in missions is the missionary who operates in a foreign culture but never goes deeper than the behavioral level. He has to maintain an American colony environment. Inquiry was made into the work of a foreign missionary. "Isn't he a great missionary," the question was asked. "No," came the reply from a fellow missionary. "The problem with him is that he never got out of Texas." This is a common problem. The missionary lives in another culture

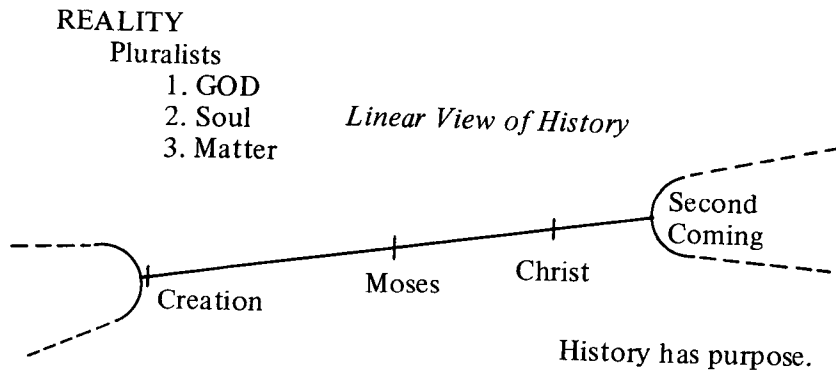
¹³Don Richardson, *Peace Child*, (Glendale, Calif.: Regal Books Division, G/L Publications, 1974).

but he still thinks, reacts and interprets the behavior and other cues of the nationals as he did at home.

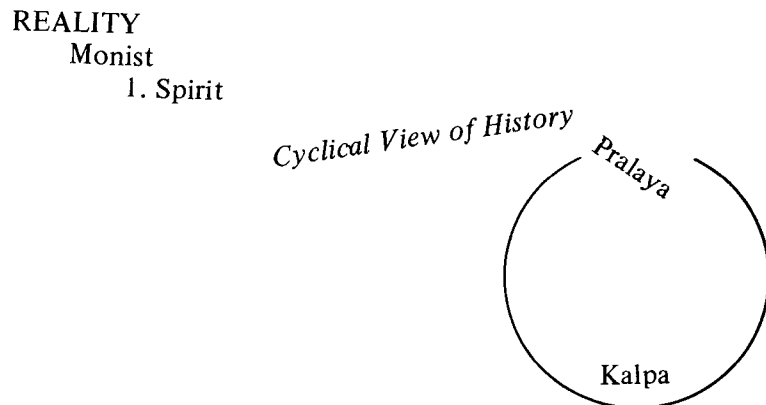
Comparison of Culture

Suppose that an American missionary goes to serve among Hindus in India. How broad will the cultural gap be? Here is a comparison of the basic assumptions of the two peoples.

CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW



HINDU WORLD VIEW



Kalpa = Period of Created Being
Pralaya = Period of Sleep (Suspended Animation)

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

U. S. CHRISTIAN

HINDU INDIAN

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. One life and then eternity. | 1. Reincarnation |
| 2. Goal is heaven | 2. Goal is extinction of personality and merging with great all-Soul. |
| 3. History important | 3. History unimportant. |
| 4. Time is steady progression. A moment gone is gone forever. Each new event is different. | 4. Time is cyclical. Everything has happened before and will happen again. Anything that has not happened will never happen. |
| 5. Truth is absolute. A fact is either true or false. What is true for one is true for all. | 5. Truth is relative. There are many kinds of truth. |
| 6. God can and will forgive. | 6. What you sow in this life <i>you must</i> reap in the next. |

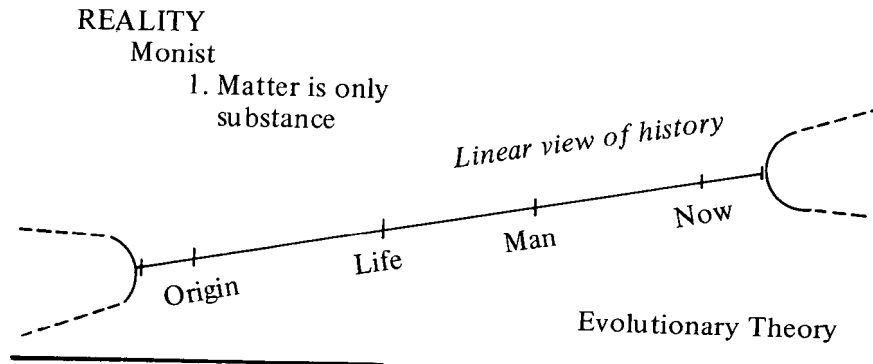
The Hindu culture of India and the U. S. Christian culture are poles apart. The task of bridging this gap is truly great. What about the Hindu who believes that the ideal life is the renunciation of the world and a life as a hermit or holy man in ashes and rags? How is he going to view the U. S. missionary who lives in a substantial home, drives an automobile, wears nice clothes and seems to have plenty of money. The American claims to be a religious teacher but he is enmeshed and enslaved to materialism. The American cannot be a reliable religious teacher. The holy men of India are the ones like Mahatma Gandhi who have renounced material things and who live in austerity. Gandhi wore robes similar to those of Jesus. These are the ideals of Indian people—the holy men. Jacob Loewen describes the “conflict

of missionaries' words as holy men over against the way they are perceived by the Hindu of India."¹⁴

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Holy men wear one dirty, yellow robe. | * Missionaries have a wardrobe of stylish clothes. |
| * Holy men have a begging bowl for a living. | * Missionaries have bank accounts and endless foreign income. |
| * Holy men are celibate. | * Missionaries indulge in sex. |
| * Holy men are totally dedicated to the gods. | * Missionaries say so too, but they have cars and go on furloughs. |

Another cultural gap that the U. S. Christian must face up to in his own country is with the majority of the population—the secular masses. These people have a different world view and value system. Christians need an understanding of culture and communication in order to evangelize in their own country. This evangelism must involve principles of cross-cultural communication in the same way that evangelism to the Hindu in India does.

WORLD VIEW OF THE SECULAR AMERICAN



¹⁴ Jacob A. Loewen, "Roles: Relating to an Alien Social Structure," *Missiology*, IV, 2, April, 1976, p. 221.

The Individual and Culture

The individual and his native culture.

The personality of the individual develops as he grows up in his native culture. Although there are anomic persons (rebels) and well-adjusted people within a culture, most tend to accept the world view, value system and behavioral patterns of the society. The individual as he grows is conditioned to intuitively accept certain attitudes and stereotypes as well as physical responses. One not brought up in a supermarket culture will put out his hand automatically as he approaches a supermarket door. This unthinking response also occurs when greeting or shaking hands with another person.

Human groups seem to have a compulsion to feel superior to others. The Pharisee in his prayer was not in the minority of humans when he thanked God that he was "not like the rest of men."¹⁵ People are ethnocentric (group centered)¹⁶ and this is glaringly evident to anyone who listens to human conversation. Expressions like "Mexicans are lazy", "Texas is the greatest", "American food is the world's best", "Orientals are tricky", and "the English are fifty years behind the times" are simple examples of this tendency. Put a Harvard graduate and a rough and ready illiterate cowboy together on a dude ranch in the Southwest and each will consider himself superior and will talk about the other to his friends in a disparaging manner. No problem is greater in missions than this one of ethnocentrism—the superiority attitude and the tendency to look down on peoples who are culturally different. This attitude must go if the church is to spread as it should.

The individual in a foreign culture.

When an American who is monocultural goes to China or India, he literally finds himself in another world where the

¹⁵ Luke 18:11.

¹⁶ People are ethnocentric who judge persons of other cultures by using their own values and customs as the standard of judgment.

people have a different way of thinking and even a different way of seeing and interpreting reality. He is a square peg in a round hole. All of the conditioning that made him able to respond in an acceptable way in his own society are no longer valid. He doesn't know how to behave nor how to interpret the behavior of the local people. Nevertheless, he interprets anyway and has to act anyway. When he does either, he is wrong about 100% of the time. All of the familiar cues that made life so understandable and smooth at home have suddenly become invalid. Working within one's own culture, a person is able to get along very well since his stereotypes fit fairly accurately the general stereotypes of the society. He seems to know what to do and how to interpret intuitively. These same stereotypes are not only useless in dealing cross-culturally, they are generally a downright hindrance. "Lazy Mexicans" might not be too popular a phrase in Mexico. The same is true of Polish jokes in Poland. The attitudes that lead to the creation of such jokes may be an even greater problem to cross-cultural acceptance.

Sometimes the common things done in one culture become offensive in others. The Japanese are offended when people walk into certain homes and buildings without removing shoes. In situations like this, one can act like a good American and still make enemies. An American G. I. married a Japanese girl in a church ceremony in Tokyo. At the conclusion of the service, the G. I. wanted to claim his bride with the kiss. The bride suddenly realized what was about to happen and was filled with embarrassment. Such a public display of affection was taboo in Japanese culture. The Japanese bride thought of the reaction of all of her friends and relatives in the audience and froze. She resisted the bridegroom's embrace. Now it was time for the G. I. to be red faced. Not understanding the situation he interpreted the bride's action as personal. His next move was to lunge at his bride and grasp her in a bear hug. Needless to say, confusion reigned in this conflict of cultures.

When a person becomes immersed in a strange and foreign culture, the first reaction is usually one of *fascination*. This is the tourist level of contact with another

culture. In this stage of exposure the novice is usually guided around by a bicultural native or fellow countryman. However, this arrangement is only temporary. Eventually, the newcomer must venture out on his own and encounter the strange ways and thinking of the people. This is when he discovers that all of the familiar cues and symbols have lost their meaning for him and that he is a "babe in the woods." Helpless in this situation, he becomes more and more frustrated. His attempts to deal with the natives seem to always lead to his own failure. They appear to want to cheat him. He can't trust anyone. All appear to be "bad guys" since they never do as he thinks they should. This frustration leads to culture shock. The anxiety associated with culture shock can't go on and on or it will lead to a physical or mental breakdown. Some adjustment must be made.

The following are some adjustments that missionaries make in relationship to the new culture. The first three are unhealthy adjustments. The final one is preferred.

1. *Go home*. Quick relief can be found by going back to familiar surroundings. The person again knows what is expected of him and how to predict the behavior of others. Life is made easy and simple again. The problem is found in the fact that the person who goes home often does not know what happened to him. He has a reinforced ethnocentrism and a sense of failure.

2. *Go native*. Going native is a maladjustment because it is motivated by neurotic or psychotic tendencies. Often the missionary feels rejected at home or by his own colleagues in the foreign colony. Feeling a deep need for acceptance and security he attempts to join a people that he often considers inferior. "Surely these people will be proud to accept me because I am an American," he thinks. The problem lies in the fact that he is blindly accepting these people and their culture with neither a respect for them nor an understanding of them. This becomes apparent to the local people and they resent the person who goes native. The American tourist girl in Japan sees the lovely kimonos and desires one. She parades before the Japanese in her lovely new kimono in which she looks ridiculous to them. She often wears the wrong shades

and designs for her age and class, she walks clumsily, she doesn't know how to tie the belt and puts it on crudely. This display isn't attractive to the Japanese even though the girl tourist feels that she is complimenting the Japanese by expressing an appreciation for their clothing. This explains how the person who goes native without an appreciation for and understanding of a culture will actually appear ridiculous to the natives.

3. *Go colonial.* In reaction to cultural jolts in a new country a missionary often draws himself more and more back into his ethnocentric shell of culturally acquired beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. He settles in his own American colony with others of his home country residing in the area, his mission station family, or his own home and family. He contacts the local culture and people through native helpers or interpreters. To the local people he is continually extolling the virtues of his home country. "At home," he says over and over, "we have bigger buildings, cleaner streets, better sports, more efficient and honest government, etc., etc." The longer such a missionary stays the more reinforcement he gets for his feeling of superiority over the natives. Such a paternalist, however, often does much more harm than good to the cause of Christ. He maintains the cooperation of the natives only by paying them for services rendered.

4. *Identify with the local people and culture.* The Apostle Paul "became all things to all men" in order to win them to Christ.⁷ Identification is a healthy process of learning and appreciating the people and the culture so as to be able to communicate effectively with them within their own frame of reference. Eugene Nida says that the steps to proper identification are: 1) know yourself, 2) know the people, 3) participate in the lives of the people not as a benefactor but as a co-laborer, 4) be willing for the people to

¹⁷ I Cor. 9:19-24.

truly know you, and 5) love the people!⁸ This process is as vital to the success of the missionary as it was to the Apostle to the Gentiles. The next chapter of this book will deal with identification in far greater detail.

God, Christ and Culture

God's attitude toward cultures is best expressed by Peter when he preached to Cornelius. "And Peter opened his mouth and said: Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him."¹⁹ God sits in judgment of all cultures. He is interested in the men and women in all cultures. In a sense He works through the cultures of men to accomplish His purposes but at the same time He is in continual conflict with certain aspects of every culture. "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."²⁰ Jesus also reveals how the customs and traditions of men's cultures could replace God's commandments.

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." He answered them, "And why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'He who speaks evil of father or mother let him surely die.' But you say, 'If any one tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God, he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'²¹

¹⁸ Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 1684.

¹⁹ Acts 10: 34-5, RSV.

²⁰ Romans 12:2, RSV.

²¹ Matt. 15:1-9, RSV.

God's people are constantly at war with the traditions of men. The Jews were God's chosen people not because of their merits but because of His grace. Yet the Jews interpreted this choice as an indication of their superiority and God through his prophets and through His Son reprimanded them over and over again for their false pride and hypocrisy. He charged them with being a "proud and stiffnecked people."²² The prayer of the Pharisees "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others" and thanked God for the fact that they were "not like other men" represents generally the attitude of Israel through history and peoples in general.²³ Grassi notes the prayer in the synagogue which reflects this attitude.²⁴

Blessed be thou O Lord our God . . .
Who hast not made me a Gentile . . .
Who hast not made me a slave; . . .
Who hast not made me a woman!

Ethnocentrism is the culprit. C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* says that there is a Great Sin.²⁵

There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone loathes when he sees it in someone else; and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty of themselves.

Lewis goes on to reveal this sin.

It is Pride which has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and in every family since the world began. Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may

²²Deut. 9:6, RSV.

²³Luke 18:9, RSV.

²⁴Joseph A. Grassi, *A World to Win* (Maryknoll, New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1965), p. 124.

²⁵C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1952), p. 96.

find good fellowship and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But Pride always means enmity—it is enmity.

It appears that Israel tended toward this type of group pride that is so characteristic of peoples of the earth. Even Christians have a serious problem in this area. At least Peter L. Berger believes so.²⁶

. . . an objective observer is hard put to tell the difference (at least in terms of values affirmed) between the Church members and those who maintain an "unchurched" status. Usually the most that can be said is that church members hold the same values as everybody else, but with more exact solemnity. Thus church membership in no way means adherence to a set of values at variance with those of the general society; rather it means a stronger and more explicitly religious affirmation of the same values held by the community at large.

Even if Jews and Christians are guilty of ethnocentric exclusivism and pride, God does not intend for it to be so. If one begins with Genesis of the Old Testament and reads through the entire Bible, this message that God loves all men equally and that He disdains personal or group arrogance stands out clearly. Look to Exodus 22:21, the second book of the Bible: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Next turn to the third book of the Bible, Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Wait a minute! Wasn't Jesus the first one to say this? Evidently not, since here it is in the early part of the Scriptures. But you

²⁶Peter L. Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* (Garden City: Doubleday Co., 1961), p. 41.

say, this only refers to another Israelite as a neighbor. Is this the case? Look on down to verse 33 of the same chapter: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

Jesus made this principle of God's concern for all men plain in many ways but strikingly so in the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus broke down all walls of prejudice that separate men from each other. To Jesus the first priority was to love God and then one has the basis and power to love his neighbor as himself.²⁷ Neighbor for Jesus included every human being.

The solution to the problem of man is conversion. "If any man will be my disciple," Jesus said, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."²⁸ This will get rid of pride and ethnocentrism. As the missionary goes out to help others understand the gospel, he must free himself from the kind of pride in self or in country that makes him look down upon or be disdainful of others. Paul tells us the way to eliminate the barriers that separate people.

Now if your experience of Christ's encouragement and love means anything to you, if you have known something of the fellowship of His spirit and all that it means in kindness and deep sympathy, do make my best hopes for you come true! Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of one another than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but each should see things from other people's point-of-view.²⁹

²⁷Matt. 22:37-40, RSV.

²⁸Matt. 16:24, RSV.

²⁹Phil. 2:1-4, (Phillips).

Summary

The concept of culture presents a real enigma for the missionary candidate who is monocultural. His very provincialism almost guarantees that his ethnocentrism will blind him to the need for cultural study prior to going to the field; therefore, he will end up on the foreign field where he will suffer severe culture shock or worse. The percentage of failures who return home during their first tour abroad because of lack of training is unbelievably high. Some churches with little or no training lose more than fifty percent of their missionary force during the first tour. Wycliffe Bible Translators, with adequate training, lose three percent.

This chapter is an attempt to explain generally the concepts of culture and communication and to communicate the need for prefield training for the foreign worker. A foreign missionary needs to understand his own culture, himself as a participant in culture, the nature of culture, and the language and culture of his host country or ethnic group. He would be wise to master all but the language and culture of his field of labor prior to his departure from home. The people who promote and oversee the missionary enterprise from the home base also vitally need an understanding of culture and of themselves as participants in culture.

Given the almost infinite variety of human cultures it is a most remarkable fact that the Christian Good News of God's redemption has been preached successfully to so many societies . . . Paul affirmed that in Christ there can be neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all (Col. 3:11). Scythians were nomads from Russia who were the epitome of savagery in the ancient world: they tattooed themselves, took scalps from their captives, and smoked hemp . . . !

Rightly understood and rightly preached Christ is the hope of glory for every man (Col. 1:27, 28), whatever his culture, his kindred, people, tongue, or nation. (Rev. 5:9).³⁰

³⁰Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Christianity and Cultural Difference," *Christianity Today*, June 23, 1972.

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IDENTIFICATION

STAN SHEWMAKER

Introduction

“You know, I can tell you anything that is in my heart and I know that you will understand and not be angry with me. And . . . it doesn’t matter whether I tell you in your language or mine, because I know you will hear every word.”

“I feel the same way about you, brother . . .” was all the missionary could say before choking up with emotion.

In darkness of that small room an African and an American had reached the level of communication where their deepest feelings and values could be shared. Their conversation was honest, genuine, intimate. No phoniness. No pretension.

Every missionary who earnestly desires to share the Good News of love, peace and salvation in Jesus Christ should aim for this type of relationship with the people he wants to serve, a relationship based upon sincere *identification*.

Identification is an extremely complex concept because it involves the totality of human relationships. Far from being merely an imitation of people in another culture, identification means, not being someone else, but being more than oneself.¹ It is a purposeful participation in the lives of others.

For the missionary, identification should not mean stooping to the level of the host people but rather an under-

¹Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 162.