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A Note from the Editor

The world is getting smaller, as we often hear people say these days. Many people find themselves sharing classrooms or a workplace with someone who is drastically different in ethnicity, religious affiliation, linguistics, educational background, or, simply, way of life. This is true in the USA as well as around the globe. Multicultural teams in businesses, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations globally have become a reality that both creates new dynamics and presents challenges in these arenas. Lack of understanding of another culture easily leads to embarrassment and offense to the people we try to communicate with, often resulting in broken relationships.

Intercultural communication is concerned with how people from different cultural, ethnic, and religious background communicate and interact. "How do people understand one another when they do not share a common cultural experience?" Milton J. Bennett identifies this as the central question for investigation (1998: 1). Research that investigates and addresses issues and problems, hidden or revealed, in various contexts, then, becomes an integral part of the development of intercultural communication competence.

WCIDJ devotes this issue to research and reflections from scholars around the world: US, Africa, Latin America, and Asia, who address a variety of issues in intercultural communication.

Reference: Bennett, Milton J. *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication*. Yarmouth: Intercultural Press, 1998.

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Cross-Cultural Mentoring: A Brief Comparison of Individualistic and Collectivistic Cultures

Sunny Hong

In his book *Leading across cultures: Effective ministry and mission in the global church,* Jim Plueddemann describes a moment of understanding Nigerian leadership style. When Jim needed a large amount of money to handle a crisis, his Nigerian leader asked him to come to his home at a very late hour. When he arrived at this leader's home, Jim was surprised to see many people were there to consult with the leader about ministry issues. After the Nigerian leader listened to Jim's situation, he offered Jim a large sum of money from his own pocket without asking for a receipt. Jim was shocked. For Jim, business transactions should happen during business hours (Monday through Friday, from 9 to 5) at the office, not at the leader's home; personal funds must be separated from business funds; and receipts are required for financial accountability. What the Nigerian leader did violated all the many assumptions about leadership Jim had as a North American.

Just like Jim's experiences in cross-cultural leadership, parallel issues can surface in a cross-cultural

mentoring relationship. Stanley and Clinton define mentoring:

> A relational process in which a mentor, who knows or has experienced something, transfers that something (resources of wisdom, information, experience, confidence, insight, relationships, status, etc.) to mentoree, at an appropriate time and manner, so that it facilitates development or empowerment. (1992, p. 40)

Where those involved in mentoring relationships are from the same or a similar culture there are fewer misunderstandings and differing expectations due to corresponding perspectives, assumptions, concepts, and worldviews. In a mentoring relationship, similarity and shared experiences provide an easier interpersonal relationship between a mentor and a protégé and it is therefore usually easier to have a mentoring relationship with someone from the same or similar culture. But to have successful cross-cultural mentoring relationship, cultural differences behind mentoring issues need to be understood.

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The purpose of this paper is to briefly describe how individualistic and collectivistic cultures understand key mentoring concepts and to ponder how to use the strengths from different cultures so that cross-cultural mentoring can be even more fruitful than mono-cultural mentoring. Individualistic culture in this article is defined as a culture that values the uniqueness of the individual and promotes equality and independence. Collectivistic culture in this article is defined as a culture that considers the group's goals to be more important than the individual's and has high social distinctions and expectations.

Mentoring process

Zaobary (2000) described four phases of the mentoring relationship process: preparing, negotiating, enabling, and coming to closure. I built upon Zaobary's phases and identified five different stages in the mentoring process: (1) searching for or encountering a mentor or a protégé, (2) setting up learning goals, (3) progressing the accomplishment of the goals, (4) having proper closure of the mentoring relationship, and (5) maintaining relationships after the official mentoring relationship is over. The expectations and assumptions of the mentoring process in these five stages are different if the mentor and protégé are from different cultures.

First, searching

The most important factors during the searching period are the purpose of the mentoring and the expectations of a mentor or a protégé. In an individualistic culture, the purpose of mentoring is to build up a protégé in a professional realm. A protégé, therefore, mainly looks for experience and knowledge from a mentor and does not necessarily seek for a master, teacher, or a father figure. The first three of Crosby's ten commandments of mentoring quoted by Engstrom are: "1) Thou shalt not play God; 2) Thou shalt not play Teacher; 3) Thou shalt not play Mother or Father." (1989, p. 20).

In a collectivistic culture, however, there is a tendency for protégés to look for age, wisdom,

and character in a mentor because the purpose of mentoring is to become like a mentor not only in terms of skills and knowledge but also in character. *Guru, master, teacher, father* are the four words which represent well who a mentor should be in a collectivistic culture. A mentor is a wise expert and has answers, not only on the subject matter, but also on the issues of life. In a collectivistic culture, when a protégé respects the mentor fully the protégé treats the mentor as a guru by acknowledging their authority; a deep desire of learning from the mentor positions the mentor as a teacher; and the high value of taking good care of a protégé makes the mentor a mother or a father figure.

Krallmann (2002) warns about paternalism and over-protectiveness in a mentoring relationship in an individualistic culture. He argues that paternalism should only serve a temporary purpose in the beginning of the relationship and help a protégé to grow fully individually without protection of a mentor. However, in a collectivistic culture a mentor who is not protecting a protégé like a father is not a good mentor. Therefore, unless the expectations and assumptions regarding the purpose of the mentor and mentoring process are clearly understood, a cross-cultural mentoring relationship could cause confusion, misunderstanding, and hurt for both parties.

The expectations of mentoring in a collectivistic culture fit better in a ministry setting because in that setting character is more important than knowledge and a holistic approach to building up people is more desirable. In that setting mentoring can be described as people being influenced by the messenger more than the message. Caution should be taken when caring for and protecting a protégé so that a protégé learns to depend on God rather than a mentor.

Second, setting up goals

In an individualistic culture it is desirable to have clear but difficult and challenging goals set within a time frame in the mentoring process so that the goals can be measured. Vague goals should be avoided because they are hardly measurable and

it is difficult to evaluate whether they have been achieved (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Goals should be negotiated between a mentor and a protégé in the early stage of mentoring so that both parties agree about the direction of the mentoring process and what it aims to accomplish.

However, the collectivistic mindset works differently. A mentor knows better what a protégé should learn simply because a mentor is an expert in the subject area. The goals are then established in a mentor's mind, and a protégé respects the mentor, trusting them to do their best to advise and to share their knowledge and wisdom. There is no concept of negotiating mentoring goals between a mentor and a protégé.

The best scenario in an individualistic culture is that a protégé knows what is best for them and achieves it with the mentor's help. The worst outcome is that a protégé does not receive the best simply because a mentor and a protégé are not in agreement with what is best. The best scenario in a collectivistic culture is that a protégé receives the best because a mentor knows exactly what is best for the protégé. The worst outcome in a collectivistic culture is that a protégé cannot get what they really need because the mentor does not know what the best should be.

Third, progressing the goals

In an individualistic culture it is recommended that the mentoring process be divided into manageable chunks, logical segments, or small goals for the purpose of regular evaluation. Regular evaluation ensures that goals are completed. These segments provide a minor closure for a set of accomplishments (Stanley & Clinton, 1992). Documentation of the mentoring process is important because the documentation itself becomes the tool for reviewing the mentoring process, responding to potential complaints, outlining expectations, providing periodic assessment, recording benefits and outcomes, detecting when to end the mentoring relationship, and bringing attention to certain issues or events (Johnson & Ridley, 2008; Williams, 2005). What works and what does not work can

also be identified during the regular evaluations. If things do not work out well or the expectations of either the mentor or the protégé are not met, the mentoring relationship can end without significantly damaging the relationship.

In a collectivist culture, a mentor is expected to measure progress and give the protégé feedback on their progress. Documentation is only used to back up legal issues where there is no relationship or no trust has been built between parties. Therefore, in a collectivist culture documentation of the mentoring process is viewed as lack of trust.

In an individualistic culture, documenting and measuring the mentoring process provides a chance to review goals, objectives, and relations. In a collectivistic culture, unless a mentor faithfully measures the protégé's progress through proper feedback, there is the danger of missing a direction or not knowing how the mentoring is progressing and where the mentoring relationship is heading. This poses a weakness in mentoring in a collectivist culture.

Fourth, closure

At the beginning of a mentoring relationship in an individualistic culture it is recommended to have an end in mind (Stanley & Clinton, 1992; Zaobary, 2000). A mentor and a protégé negotiate or agree upon the closure time. Successful closure is when the learning goals are met and allows time to acknowledge accomplishments and celebrates milestones.

In a collectivistic culture it is a mentor's job to know when mentoring should end. There is a saying in Korean, "Go down from a mountain," which is what a mentor says to a protégé when the mentor decides the protégé has accomplished all the goals. There is no concept in a protégé's mind to negotiate or initiate when to "leave the mountain"; doing so would show disrespect to a mentor.

In an individualistic culture, if the protégé is not aware that they still have things to learn, the mentoring relationship could end without them obtaining the full benefit. A similar danger also ex-

ists in a collectivistic culture if the mentor does not want to teach or to share knowledge and wisdom, since because of respect the protégé cannot demand to learn more.

Fifth, after closure

In an individualistic culture, a successfully closed mentoring relationship is marked by a satisfactory end and by the beginning of a peer friendship (Stanley & Clinton, 1992; Johnson & Ridley, 2008). The ongoing peer relationship allows for occasional mentoring moments. Krallmann (2002) emphasizes the importance of the mentoring relationship becoming a friendship at the close of the mentoring process; an ongoing mentoring relationship is not recommended when there is no more progress made and both parties meet merely for the sake of meeting. Stanley and Clinton describe a mentoring relationship without end as vertical mentoring. "Vertical mentoring that has no clear end in mind will usually dwindle to nothing with uneasy feelings on the part of both people." (1992, p. 207)

However, in a collectivistic culture, even though an active mentoring relationship ends, the relationship will never be a peer friendship because to have an equal relationship is viewed as disrespect by the former mentor even though the official mentoring relationship has ended. Once someone is a mentor to a protégé, that person is their mentor for life; the respect given to the mentor and the nature of the relationship remain the same. If a former protégé treats a former mentor as a colleague or friend, the former protégé is considered rude and that protégé will lose the respect of their peers and of the mentor.

Other related key concepts

Here we will examine other key concepts related to mentoring in both individualistic and collectivist cultures in order to further examine the differences, strengths and benefits.

Understanding of personhood

There is no universally accepted cultural definition of *personhood*. The concept of boundary,

however, sheds light on the understanding of personhood in an individualistic culture. Cloud and Townsend state:

> Boundaries define us. They define what am I and what is not me. A boundary shows me where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership… Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for gives me freedom. If I know where my yard begins and ends, I am free to do with it what I like. Taking responsibility for my life opens up many different options. However, if I do not "own" my life, my choice and options become very limited. (1992, p. 29)

In an individualistic culture an independent person with clear boundaries is praised as a responsible person. The Merriam-Webster online English dictionary defines a person as "human, individual – sometimes used in combination especially by those who prefer to avoid *man* in compounds applicable to both sexes." As this definition shows, there is no communal meaning of a person in English, which reflects the Western conception of a person as an individual with clear boundaries.

In contrast, collectivistic culture sees personhood in a dyadic relationship, which means a person exists and has meaning only in relation to the other person. For example, in the Tagalog language of the Philippines, the term for "fellow man" is *kapwa*. This word implies the core assumption of ego that exists in relation to someone else. Without another person, *kapwa* does not exist. Another concept of personhood is represented in the Tagalog word *sakop*, which denotes a member of a social group.

> In Philippine culture, the value of the sakop is over that of the individual. Because the sakop prevails over the individual, the main Filipino virtue is *pakikipagkapwa*, which roughly translated means "to be related to others." It comes from *pakiki*, which denotes a continuing act of reciprocal action with *kapwa* (fellow being). This word embraces

all forms of *paki* such as *pakikisama* (being-along-with), *pakikiisa* (being-one-with), *pakikibagay* (in-consonance-with), etc. (Andres, 1991, p. 271)

Koreans usually use the words "we," "ours," or "us" when they mean "I," "my," or "me." Koreans seldom say "my house," "my village," or "my store." Instead, they say "our house," "our village," or "our store." When a Korean says "our wife," that does not mean that more than one man claims her as wife but simply means "my wife." The collectivistic mindset is reflected in the language.

Chinese writing is logogrammatic, in which meaning and philosophy is represented in the form of the character. The Chinese character for "man" is 人: two sticks leaning against each other, each stick representing a person. Therefore, the Chinese character for "person" implies that a person cannot stand alone but needs others to stand together and support them. Chinese worldview clearly shows the concept of personhood in the context of a social being.

Unless the mentoring only intends to pass on knowledge, mentoring relationships require sharing a deep level of understanding. Accordingly, if a cross-cultural mentoring relationship involves sharing life together, it is important to take time at the beginning to understand each other's different understandings of personhood. Unless the mentor and protégé clearly understand their different assumptions of personhood, the mentoring relationship will not develop well and could result in serious misunderstandings. For example, in a collectivistic mindset, once the relationship between a mentor and protégé has been built, the dyadic relationship will be expected to go to a deep level, which to someone in an individualistic mindset could be viewed as co-dependency. Many scholars from individualistic cultures warn against the negative impact of dependency in a mentoring relationship (Whitmore, 2002; Krallmann, 2002). In an individualistic mindset, the mentoring relationship should have healthy boundaries for the individuals while allowing some influence in the

mentoring area. A collectivistic person might view such a mentoring relationship as a surface-level relationship since a dyadic relationship is not created.

Differing understanding of personhood is one of the areas to overcome in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Dyadic relationships that allow maximum influence and access to both parties can offer more benefit than an individualistic relationship, not only to the protégé but also to the mentor. A protégé learns and obtains the best of what a mentor can offer, and a mentor gains respect and honor.

Power

It is unavoidable to have power differential in a mentoring relationship because mentors usually have more knowledge, experience, wisdom, authority, and other resources. In an individualistic culture, there is always an effort to level-off power differences. Zeus and Skiffington describe the mentoring relationship as being collaborative. "Modern mentoring relationships… are based on a more mutual, equal and collaborative learning alliance" (2000, p. 17). Whitmore (2002) talks disparagingly about having a hierarchical mentoring relationship which produces dependency, powerlessness, a child-like protégé, and an autocratic mentor.

However, in a collectivistic culture, having the proper hierarchical relationship creates a safe and rich mentoring environment. Without a hierarchical relationship between the mentor and protégé there is no order in the relationship. In a collectivistic culture, if the power differential is denied you may lose credibility and respect, which will lead to no authority in the relationship, which means, furthermore, that nothing will be done and that the relationship will be confused. "When a mentor refuses to accept power and use authority constructively, the power of their position is inadvertently diminished" (Johnson and Ridley, 2008, p. 121). In a collectivistic culture it is important to set the appropriate power differential and know how to properly manage substantial differences in power.

Influence

One aspect of power that is played out in a mentoring relationship is influence. A protégé allows influence from the mentor out of respect for them or for potential benefits for themselves. Hendricks brings up a very interesting point about the granting of influence and power in a mentoring relationship.

> Mentoring is all about influence—one man influencing another. But influence, by its very nature, is rooted in the issue of power. If I influence you, it's because you are granting me the power to influence you. When you let someone mentor you, you are granting him the power to affect your life. (1995, p. 114)

Krallmann talks about the interrelation between relationship and influence:

> As we are with people and really get to know them, the more intimately we relate to them, the more profoundly we can influence them; the closer the contact the stronger the impact. Before we can claim attention, we must first gain credibility. Broad knowledge, great talents and subtle strategies on our part will not avail much if we fail to win people's trust. (2002, p. 149)

Therefore, in general, how much influence a mentor can have over a protégé is affected by how much a protégé respects and trusts their mentor.

Admiration, idealization and identification

When a protégé respects and trusts a mentor and considers them to be a model, a protégé admires, idealizes, and identifies with the mentor. Through that process, a protégé learns and internalizes the skills, knowledge, and character of their mentor. Johnson and Ridley discuss the process beyond idealization and identification.

> Protégés may need to idealize their mentors early in the relationship. Initially it can be the gateway to healthy identification, but idealization poses some significant problems if protégés get stuck there. After identification, protégés can move to individuation as a mature and separate professional. For this process to unfold, mentors must learn to gracefully tolerate protégé idealization. (2008, p. 59)

This is possible in an individualistic culture. However, it is not possible in a collectivistic culture because to stop admiring and idealizing a mentor indicates a broken relationship between the protégé and mentor.

Coercion

In an individualistic culture, imposing the mentor's values is considered coercion and the removal of freedom of the protégé to respect the individual's right, autonomy, and personhood. Therefore, a mentor could suggest options and a protégé is the one who decides. In a collectivistic culture, however, a mentor is considered the one who knows best. If a mentor does not impose what is best for the protégé for the benefit of the protégé, that communicates to the protégé their indifference or a lack of desire to share and teach, which, if repeated, could lead to the end of the relationship. Therefore, in a collectivistic culture, positive coercion for the benefit of the protégé is considered very valuable because it reduces the number of mistakes a protégé will make.

Reflective power

Using a mentor's status and power for the protégé's benefit is called *reflective power* (Johnson and Ridley, 2008). Reflective power can open doors that protégés do not know exist and cannot open for themselves. The mentor's proper use of reflective power on behalf of their protégé can be an effective advocacy for making connections to the right people, removing barriers, providing a stepping-stone, and bringing resources. This concept is very important in both individualistic and collectivist cultures, but especially in the collectivistic culture, in which relationships go deeper.

Nationality

A cross-cultural mentoring relationship exists when the mentor and protégé are different nationalities. The power differential among nationalities is usually parallel to the economic development of a nation. The nationalities of the mentor and protégé can be a powerful factor in the cross-cultural mentoring relationship. However, there can be a reverse power differential in regard to nationality. If people from a less economically developed country are always considered right or are being protected regardless of the situation, then these people could have more power. This complicates the power differential issue. Hence, all the different aspects of power need to be examined in the cross-cultural mentoring relationship to understand how power is being played out.

Admiration, idealization, positive coercion, and active advocacy are the strengths in a collectivistic culture. The ideal power differential brings harmony and balance of respect shown to a mentor and their care for the protégé. At the same time, the concept of leveraging power in an individualistic culture brings the benefit of prohibiting misuse of power. The issue in a cross-cultural mentoring environment is not either/or but both/and, namely, to use the strengths from a collectivistic culture and at the same time to use the benefits from an individualistic culture.

Privacy and vulnerability

Privacy is defined by culture and what is considered private differs from culture to culture. Some cultures consider information about age and income to be private but consider sharing about a stepmother or stepchildren as open information. In contrast, some cultures need to know the age of a person to begin a conversation because they need to choose an appropriate form of respect to address them. Without knowing age, there is no way to converse. In that culture, age cannot be private information. And having a stepmother or stepchildren could be viewed as very shameful information that would not be shared unless the relationship is intimate.

Sharing personal information creates intimacy, connection, and trust in the relationship. Closer relationships foster true caring, emotional involvement, and a positive teaching and learning environment. In a mentoring relationship the mentor and protégé are expected to develop a close relationship. Knowing how to build such a relationship without violating privacy depends on having a clear understanding each others' cultural concept of privacy.

Time

One example of the privacy issue is time. Individualistic culture treats time as a commodity that can be saved or wasted. Time is considered measurable, inelastic, irreversible, and irreplaceable. Time is segmented for work or leisure. Therefore, people guard their time and respect other people's time by keeping scheduled events on time. A mature person is a good steward of time. Stanley and Clinton stress the importance of planning and managing time in a mentoring process. "Set realistic time limits. Have exit points where both parties can leave without bad relations. Have open doors where the invitation to continue can be open. Recognize the necessity of a time limit in any mentoring situation." (1992, p. 205)

Collectivistic culture, on the other hand, does not consider time as property or as segmented. Therefore, work can be combined with leisure. Having a close relationship in a mentoring relationship means one's time should not be guarded, nor should there be a concept of "invasion of time." Scheduling time for mentoring is a foreign concept. Mentoring can happen at anytime, and a mentor should be available for help to a protégé at anytime if the mentor is serious about mentoring. If a mentor guards their time from a protégé, it communicates that they are selfish or not interested in a protégé's learning.

Transparency and vulnerability

In an individualistic culture honesty, transparency, and vulnerability are highly valued concepts. Therefore, mentors are highly regarded when they

share their failures, weaknesses, and struggles and their protégé might then feel very close to them. A protégé can learn from a mentor's failures and mistakes, and it provides an opportunity to acknowledge human limitations. When a mentor admits things he or she doesn't know, it communicates that the mentor is being honest and transparent, and it helps protégés to feel at ease about their own inabilities and to have a realistic perspective (Williams, 2005; Biehl, 1996; Engstrom, 1989).

However, in the collectivistic culture, having transparency does not necessarily mean sharing failures but rather that the mentor is being the same person both in private and in public. A mentor will be cautious in sharing about their failures and in answering questions for which they do not have good answers, for a mentor might then lose the respect of their protégé, or a protégé might consider that there is not much to learn from a mentor if they failed in a critical area. This does not mean that a mentor should be dishonest about their failures and weaknesses; it means that there are appropriate ways to show vulnerability that differ from those in individualistic culture. Therefore, it is important to know how much to disclose and to be appropriately vulnerable. As Chan discusses:

> Certainly, inappropriate self-disclosure could result in boundary violations and interfere with healthy functioning of the relationship (Psychopathology Committee of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 2001). It is important to note that the mentors in this study did not indiscriminately disclose personal information and did not burden their students with unnecessary information. To varying degrees, the mentors maintained personal boundaries and limits in terms of how much they chose to disclose. (2008, p. 179)

In both individualistic and collectivistic cultures, maintaining a balance between appropriate boundaries and being open and vulnerable is an art for the mutual benefit of the mentoring relations. Walls that are too high can result in a closed relationship, but inappropriate self-disclosure can create an inadequate mentoring relationship. The strength of the individualistic culture is that a mentor vulnerably shares their failures to help a protégé mature and not to make the same mistakes. The strength that collectivistic culture offers the mentoring relationship is allowing a protégé access to their mentor's life without time restriction.

Feedback

Giving feedback is a very important tool in a mentoring relationship to build up the protégé. Positive feedback builds the protégé's confidence and self-esteem, while negative feedback provides the protégé an opportunity to do things differently in the future. In an individualistic culture the suggested way to give negative feedback is to be authentic, candid, direct, and specific, focusing on behaviors, not personality (Zaobary, 2000; David, 1991). "Beating around the bush" or being diplomatic or tactful are not encouraged especially in giving negative feedback. Rather, tough honesty is recommended. This works well in an individualistic culture. Yet, in a collectivistic culture, direct and specific negative feedback could result in the end of the relationship unless great caution is applied. People in a collectivistic culture have a tendency to think holistically (Rosinski, 2003, p. 56); hence action, work, and words are a part of a person. When negative feedback or criticism is given inappropriately, personhood is attacked. If repeated, the relationship could end.

Giving feedback of affirmation and encouragement is very important in a mentoring relationship. How to effectively affirm and encourage, however, differs from culture to culture. Some cultures seize every opportunity to give affirmation. On the other hand, repetition of similar affirmation or improper affirmation may be considered insincere affirmation in other cultures.

> Praise insincerely or gratuitously given is hollow indeed and does more harm than good, for phoneyness and manipulation are far more readily recognized than the perpetrators realize. They cheapen the perpetrator

and damage relationships and trust. Even authentic praise can cause difficulty. The person being praised may surrender their ability and willingness to self-assess to the giver of praise, and thereby increase their dependence on the opinions of others. We need to do the opposite, to build the autonomy and self-reliance of our staff. Praise must simultaneously be generous, genuine and judicious. (Whitmore, 2002, p. 140)

Some cultures value actions more than words. In such cultures, what is most important is demonstrated by action not by words and affirming words might be considered empty praise. Rather, affirmation or providing feedback by example or modeling through life speaks louder than the words. For example, giving a protégé a high-profile assignment communicates more clearly than giving affirming verbally feedback. When a protégé fails, a mentor could encourage him or her by giving them another chance rather than encouraging a protégé by uplifting words. Showing faith in the protégé by acknowledging character, ability, judgment, and potential can be a more significant form of encouragement and affirmation. In some cultures, eating together or giving a gift can also be significant tools for encouragement and acceptance in the relationship.

In an individualistic culture, public affirmation builds up confidence and self-esteem. However, in a collectivistic culture, affirming a protégé in public may embarrass them and create jealousy in others. It might be more effective to praise a protégé before others in the absence of the protégé.

It is an art to know how to communicate feedback effectively in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Excessive praise might create a protégé that is overly confident, and withholding praise may make a protégé feel devalued or make them blind to their strengths. Both a mentor and a protégé should strive to learn how to affirm, encourage, and confront in a culturally appropriate way to bring out the full benefits of a cross-cultural mentoring relationship.

Conclusion

While openness to a person and sensitivity to culture are always required in cross-cultural mentoring relationships, there are no clear-cut guidelines to building strong cross-cultural mentoring relationships. As described in this paper, the expectations and assumptions behind mentoring in an individualistic culture and a collectivistic culture are very different and their strengths often paradoxical. The degree to which a culture is individualistic or collectivist will influence mentoring practices. Balancing the paradoxical components is an art to be mastered to bring out the best strengths of both worlds. For this reason, understanding cultural assumptions related to mentoring issues is one of the key factors in cross-cultural mentoring. If the strengths from both cultures can be exercised simultaneously, cross-cultural mentoring could surpass the contributions that mono-cultural mentoring offers.

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Multicultural Teams: Where Culture, Leadership, Decision Making, and Communication Connect

Donald Moon

Abstract

This article reviews sources that emphasize the connection between intercultural communication with leadership and decision making in multicultural teams. Expectations about leadership, decision making and communication are culturally defined. People have cultural patterns that are primarily formed in the environment of their childhood home. The review indicates that people bring their cultural preferences to the team environment cultural preferences affect how people view leaders and interpret their actions in decision making and communication. Differences in cultural practices cause division among team members. Team members and leaders need training in skills that focus on intercultural communication that is effective in building trust, resolving problems, leading effectively and making decisions within the context of a multicultural team, helping them to forge a new cultural paradigm for the team.

Introduction

An overarching component in multicultural teams is communication. Diverse values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, and thoughts are brought by the team members. Therefore, understanding other team member's intentions, messages and expectations, as well as clearly expressing their own, is fundamental not only for the effectiveness of the team, but for its very existence. Expectations about leadership, decision making and communication are culturally defined. Although leadership is modeled differently among cultures, those that lead are always major players in making and communicating decisions. Cultural preferences affect how people view leaders and interpret their actions in decision making and communication.

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By recognizing these preferences and determining together to work through their differences, a team will be more effective in their work and more satisfied in their relationships. It is increasingly important that people who serve as leaders and members of multicultural teams understand intercultural communication.

Intercultural Communication: The Connecting of Cultures

Communication is complex even in the best of situations. Shared values, attitudes, beliefs, customs and thoughts by a majority of people within a society create a central culture.[1] These shared cultural components create cultural preferences, or the preferred way of doing things, with the people who are formed within that culture.[2]

Behavior is visual and usually affects other people and is therefore the part of a person that people first notice and respond to. There is a reason people behave as they do and there are meanings behind their words and their actions. In a multicultural setting, these diverse cultural preferences are bound to clash. What they say and how they say it also affects the dynamics of the relationship. Cultural differences create a sense of suspicion, distrust and even fear if they are misunderstood. As a result, communication can be extremely complex as people from diverse cultures interact on issues where their cultural preferences do not coincide.

Communication involves more than speaking.[3] It involves the constructs of the wider part of life of a person, conveying not only what they say but also who they are and what they believe. When people of diverse cultures share information, both orally and through body language, it is often cultural in nature. Their words and actions are loaded with cultural meanings built on foundational beliefs and values they have been taught. Therefore, in order for there to be effective communication that makes sense, each person has to make an intentional effort to truly understand the other. Lahey, et al. mentions three practices that distinguish competent intercultural communicators: adopting the correct attitude, acquiring the correct knowledge, and developing specific skills.[4]

Cultural Identity: Where Culture Connects with the Person

People's foundational beliefs, values and preferences concerning the meaning of life and how to live life are formed within the constraints of a dominant culture, primarily in their childhood home and among their peers.[5] These are reinforced as they engage with others of their culture and as they make a deeper commitment to the community. Their identity is connected with the way they were disciplined and nurtured.[6] These are powerful foundational forces in a person's life. Situations such as working together on a multicultural team brings people into direct contact with others who have significantly different cultural preferences and practices, requiring them to communicate across cultural boundaries. This can produce discomfort in people because of a lack of shared meanings which provokes an experience called culture shock,[7] causing them to evaluate the cultural preferences of the other. A response of shock, surprise, frustration or anger indicates they find the behavior or preferences of the other person to be incorrect or wrong,[8] which works to validate a person's own cultural preferences.[9] This highlights the need for effective intercultural communication in the context of a multicultural team so its members have an affinity that supports an effective progress in its mission.

Culture: Setting the Stage for Intercultural Communication

The fact of being a member of society presupposes the effects of culture on a person.[10] The way people understand life, what they hold as meaningful, and how it answers the questions they face defines their culture. It provides a foundation for understanding the world around them as well as giving guidance for daily events. This foundation is referred to as worldview which Whiteman defines as "the central governing set of concepts, presuppositions and values that a society lives by."[11]

Eugene Bunkowske designed an ingenious diagram to describe culture that is based on the structure of an onion. He describes culture as layered, with each layer informing the others originating from a profound inner core.[12] Beliefs and values represent the levels were people begin to be aware of how they interact with the world around them.[13] They are broad in scope, affecting how people define the context in which they decide what they do and what they plan to do as well as how they will go about it.[14] Values are in effect limits for the people of a society which enables them to have a foundation from which to make choices and to give them stability and a sense of who they are within their society and culture.[15]

Beliefs and values result in the outward, visual behaviors of individuals and groups. It is these behaviors that are most often seen by others and are the first things that others respond to, whether positively or negatively. People have molded their behavior to the requirements placed on them by their culture for generations.[16] What is often not understood is that the behaviors are the product of the culture and worldview, rather than the source of such.[17]

Silzer and Hong refer to a study by Mary Douglas in which it was found that there are two main recurring themes, Grid and Group, in a wide range of cultures.[18] Silzer refers to Grid as "Structure" and Group as "Community."[19] Structure refers to "characteristics that differentiate individuals in a group."[20] Differences such as age, gender, ethnicity, job title and social class all shape behavior. "Community refers to similarities that reinforce group belonging and identity."[21] These opposing axes, moving from weak to strong, create four cultural types in which people interact.[22] Each cultural type has a "cultural bias" made up of their chosen worldview and values.[23] When people of different cultures come together, they invariably judge each other according to their own cultural framework.[24] If approached in a positive manner, this meeting sets the stage for effective intercultural communication.

Leadership and Intercultural Communication: Helping Cultures to Connect

People bring their cultural background with them when they participate in multicultural teams. To be successful, it is imperative that the members move beyond their cultural preferences and seek to understand how their team members see and understand the world around them. This is even more important for the person or persons who lead the team.

The values held by leaders as well as members of the team are a major influence on their relationship. Culture is a major factor in the development of the individual as a person so it is not surprising that cultural background heavily influences leadership styles and behaviors.

Leadership involves influence, vision, and motivation to bring people together to focus on a common goal. Lingenfelter proposes that cultural differences on multicultural teams are a catalyst for conflict and disagreement.[25] Therefore, a major responsibility of cross-cultural leadership is to help team members coming from different cultural backgrounds have a common vision and to build an environment of trust. Merely trying to reduce cross cultural tensions will not be enough to help people work together effectively. Procedures and practices that help change attitudes and dissipate apprehension, suspicion and doubt are needed. Trust is not built in a vacuum but requires intentional effort that incrementally builds understanding, appreciation and confidence. The leader must provide a vision of trust but it is the responsibility of the team as a whole to build a community of trust.

Hofstede identified five major elements of culture, all of which are embedded in people's values and standards that affect intercultural communication and leadership. They are individualism-collectivism (individual versus community focus), uncertainty avoidance (risk versus threat focus), power distance (equality versus hierarchy focus), masculinity-femininity (dominance of male versus female values) and long term orientation (long-

standing versus short-term traditions and values).[26] Other elements that also affect intercultural communication and leadership include context (verbal versus nonverbal focus) and cognitive style (holistic versus analytic focus).[27] This information is invaluable to the leader that is working to communicate effectively with their team members. It also provides the team members with a tool to better understand their leaders and their colleagues and to understand themselves. Having this information and deciding to act on it are key steps in effective intercultural communication.

Cultural values and preferences play a part in whether a leader's style and characteristics are accepted by team members.[28] Contreras and Saenz divide leadership into two major categories, authoritarian or autocratic and participatory or democratic.[29] In some cultures, the individual is the primary focus of leadership while in other cultures, leadership evokes the collective group.[30] Both leadership styles are used effectively but can also be abused. Plueddemann warns that "leadership styles in every culture have the potential of reflecting good or evil in the heart of the leader."[31] A clash of cultures is imminent when the values held by a team member about leadership differ from those held by the leader. Correct attitudes built on trust and effective communication go a long way in these situations. Often these situations take place early in a team relationship when those foundations have not yet been built. Good leadership adjusts to the requirements of the team and the problems they face. It is imperative that leaders first recognize their cultural style of leadership and its inherent strengths and weaknesses, work to acquire skills in understanding the cultural background of team members and incorporate an effective communication model in their leadership style. This will allow them to respond appropriately in the context of a multicultural environment.

Multi-cultural teams and Intercultural Communication: Where Cultures Connect

As a result of different cultural contexts, it is obvious that there are differences in the way people see each other and how they respond to each other. It is inevitable that there will be conflicts in the arena of intercultural communication.[32] This communication can be positive or negative. The experience of being a part of a multicultural team will begin positively and have a chance of long term success when people agree to serve on such a team, when they expect there will be cultural differences, when they have a positive attitude about working together, are willing to learn and practice skills that build trust and mutual understanding. The possibility of this happening is increased when they have received training about how to identify their own cultural preferences with their corresponding strengths and weaknesses as well as how they affect those of other cultures.

One key to multicultural team harmony and effectiveness is to create a new cultural paradigm for the group. Silzer advocates this through working together as a team to develop a team culture that reflects the image of God and creates a shalom community,[33] while Lingenfelter proposes a team relationship that makes an intentional commitment built around a theological understanding that results in a covenant community.[34] The new paradigm is not a collection of cultural pieces but rather a team based on shared values that flow from a commitment to a higher standard. The team then works together to define the policies and practices that reflect the core commitment.

Disagreement and Resolution: The Clash of Cultures

People have a tendency to recognize the cultural differences of the other members of the team and ignore the fact that they operate out of their own set of cultural preferences that appear strange to their colleagues. When this is the case, the

initial reactions of people as they evaluate the cultural practices of others are usually negative. They readily identify practices they deem as being weak, inconsistent, and thus incorrect. There may be an initial level of curiosity about how others do things but as people begin to work together, curiosity can quickly turn to frustration as people grow weary of working to accommodate the various cultural practices, especially if there are several cultural backgrounds represented in the group. Differences of values may become points of discord, and violence may erupt as people defend their way of life and their values and beliefs.

In the environment of a multicultural team, the effective leader will be sensitive to the cultural traditions of each team member and will work to help them identify with the larger group. Initially, there are differences that are very clear to all members such as language, greetings, eating practices and the formation of relationships. Differences about how people relate to seeming common things like time, crisis situations and job performance can create serious conflicts. This damages the level of trust in the group and causes division. When cultural views differ over deeper values such as religion, leadership and decision making styles or community responsibility, the division in relationships can become extremely deep and maybe impossible to resolve.

Other situations that threaten team unity and effectiveness are when team members from the same cultural background form alliances and insist on their cultural preferences at the expense of other members or when members of the group demonstrate feelings of superiority.[35] In times of crisis, people revert to their default culture - that set of values that they learned as a child that bring them a sense of security and order when they sense anxiety and discord.[36] This exacerbates the problem and can cause others to respond in the same way, effectively dividing the team and suppressing communication.

A team may try to accommodate each member in building a new team culture using parts from each culture represented on the team. This is an attempt to create unity and a sense of comfort for everyone involved. However, as teams evolve and members change, this results in an endless attempt to readjust and redefine team culture. This also creates frustration and breaks trust as team practices and policies are in a constant state of flux.

Problem resolution is directly related to communication and is a specific challenge in a multicultural group.[37] Dialogue is one way to begin to find a balance between cultures but must be understood to include the intentional joint development of a new paradigm which will guide the relationship into the future.[38] Using small group discussions and giving and receiving response during conversations are ways to make sure each member really understands what the other person is saying. Patiently waiting for others to express themselves in a language that is not their mother tongue or putting off a decision until everyone has been heard will help build trust. Being flexible in using various methods to resolve a conflict is important. For example, it may be necessary to use a third party as a mediator to resolve a conflict or it may be better to use a direct one on one approach.

Acknowledging the importance of other cultures and appreciating the cultural differences in a team and learning to capitalize on this diversity can bring vitality and strength to a team.[39] Both the leader and the team members should be trained to use tools that achieve a high level of mutual trust with their colleagues. However, when training programs for leadership are created or implemented, the cultural background of the leader or manager should be taken into account in building an effective program that result in better overall leadership.[40]

Decision Making: A Crossroads of Intercultural Communication

Understanding how decisions are made and what influences the method of decision making is an important consideration for multicultural teams. Social context and cultural background are key

factors in the formation of a person. The values and belief systems of parents are influenced by their context within a culture and are passed on to their children through parent-child interaction.[41] Cultural values passed from one generation to another not only create certain expectations and strategies about solving problems, but also indicate what is not acceptable.[42] The more risk that is involved in the decision, the more culture becomes a factor of influence.[43] This has strong implications for multicultural teams where members come from diverse backgrounds, each with their own preference about how decisions are made.

Differences in decision making preferences present a challenge to team dynamics and specifically to the leader. Because of the ramifications for the person and the team, this challenge must be addressed appropriately. Referring to one of the axes of Mary Douglas' cultural theory, Silzer maintains that "how decisions are made, where authority lies and who wins in conflict situations" help form Structure, or how a person is categorized within a society.[44] Within the axis of Structure, there are two divergent types of decision making. One makes decisions according the rules of the systems through leaders entrusted with authority and with the expectation that the system is right (Strong Structure) while the other embraces individual decision making with authority belonging in the individual with the most power (Weak Structure).[45] The need for effective intercultural communication is evident when people with such contrasting culturally preferred decision making styles, views of authority and ideas of conflict resolution, attempt to work together on a multicultural team.

Enayatil suggests that it is important for multicultural teams to have formal procedures for decision making.[46] Consistent procedures improve the quality of how people communicate with each other and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak equally, creating balance among members.[47] However, there is a danger that defined procedures will promote a more task oriented structure that can be rigid and geared toward production so it is important to attend to the emotional and relational aspects of the team to maintain proper balance.[48] For those interested in a democratic approach to decision making, the following reflective method is suggested:

1. Analysis of the causes and implications of the problem;

2. Consideration of the criteria for an ideal solution;

3. Proposition of a set of possible solutions;

4. Evaluation of the extent to which each proposal meets the criteria for an ideal solution; and

5. Choosing and implementing of the proposal that best meets the criteria.[49]

Summary

The complexities of communication are magnified in multicultural team situations. Each member, including those in leadership, brings their cultural preferences with them to the team. Cultural differences can create discord among members or provide an opportunity to learn from each other. Therefore, understanding and participating in the exchange of cultural information through intercultural communication with those of other cultures is critical for positive team relationships and effective productivity as a group. Leadership and decision making are affected by cultural values and practices which require both leaders and team members to practice flexibility, patience and a willingness to adapt to new paradigms and actively participate in meaningful ways in the development of the team. Team members as well as leaders must strive to be positive in their interactions, work to build trust, acknowledge cultural influences on leadership and decision making styles, and learn new skills that will help them to build a team environment that will be satisfying and effective.

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How One Scholarship in One Language Cannot Cross Continents: between Europe and Africa

Jim Harries

Abstract

*T*he use in Africa of English that is linked to the West can handicap African communities. Because (English) words cannot carry their English meanings across cultural divides, African ones are substituted, resulting in loss in originally intended impact. Areas of truth important to human society being edged out of view leaves decision makers operating on fragile foundations. The above process conceals the 'bridge' that otherwise might have helped African societies become self-sustaining. A new approach to African scholarship employing African languages as used in African communities, that takes account of currently 'invisible' parts of peoples' lives such as their belief in mystical forces is essential for the future wellbeing of the African continent.

Introduction

Africans are being welcomed into the arena of Western scholarship. English is the dominant language of study on the African continent. More and more universities are being opened in Africa using English as media of instruction and communication. Other languages are sidelined. Yet welcoming Africans into Western scholarship using English is ignoring profound historical and cultural differences between African and Western peoples.

The outcome of the monopolization of African scholarship by Western languages and thought forms is, I suggest, at root of many of the Continent's troubles. I want to explore what has happened below, and ways in which a serious contextually relevant scholarship is prevented from developing in Africa, then how such ties the hands of Western scholarship in debilitating ways. I go on to propose some approaches by scholars that can bring a way out of 'Africa's development enigma'.[1]

Jim Harries (b. 1964) has a PhD in Theology (University of Birmingham, UK) as well as MAs in biblical interpretation and rural development. Jim lives in rented accomodation in a village in western Kenya, where twelve local orphan children stay with Jim in his home. He relates closely to many local churches, visiting them and sharing with them in the teaching and preaching of God's word. He does this mostly using the Luo language and sometimes Swahili. He teaches p/t at a local Anglican seminary, is on the adjunct faculty of William Carey International University, and is a Professor of Religion with Global University. He has published three books and over 30 articles in professional journals. Jim chairs the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission (vulnerablemission.org). See also jim-mission.org.uk.

The Colour of Grass

A theoretical consideration of the colour of grass will illustrate how, if the same language is used in different contexts, instead of words being effective in carrying meaning, they can be altered to fit to the pertinent reality. Instead of different language describing different contexts, and instead of words meaning things and those meanings being carried with words as they travel, the meanings and impacts of words may simply change as they move inter-culturally.

Let us imagine that grass in Africa is pink, but in Europe is yellow. Europeans being told 'the grass is yellow' will be the basis on which they know what 'yellow' is (i.e. yellow is the colour of grass). Africans would learn by experience on their continent that because they are told that grass is yellow, and they see their grass is pink, they will know that the label yellow is used to describe the colour pink. Should a European go to Africa and observe the grass, it will appear to him/her to be pink. Should Europeans say 'the grass in Africa is not yellow but pink' the Africans will deny this and say 'no it is yellow'. So, who is right? Obviously the African will be right for Africans, but the European 'right' for Europeans.

Today such situations are handled by ignoring differences in context to preserve the unity of language. A European who insists that the grass in Africa is pink and not yellow, in the face of African scholarship which says it is yellow, will be accused of being racist and will relinquish his / her case. An African coming to Europe will find that European grass is not the yellow that s/he knows, but if the exam question asks (and a very common reason for an African person to be in Europe is to study) 'what colour is grass in Europe' and s/he fails to answer 'yellow', that will result in failing the exam. Because money and power is in Europe, the African must learn to use the same word to describe very different things (pink and yellow) – or risk loosing financial income and academic credibility. In its efforts to be international and intercultural Western scholarship, it seems to me, is forcing seri-ous scholars to close their eyes.

The way to resolve this situation would be to use different languages in different contexts. But the predominance of English is not allowing this to happen in Anglophone Africa.

Impactible Area and Inter-cultural Knowledge

Spoken words are sounds, and written words symbols ('squiggles') that represent those sounds. Neither sounds nor squiggles on paper have any 'carrying capacity'. That is, saying 'sugar in the tea' is different to 'putting sugar into tea'. The words alone do not move the sugar. Ones hand must do that with a teaspoon. If I say 'that is a sheep' when actually it is a goat, the truth of the reality on the ground will not be revealed by what I say. Nor will my words change the goat into a sheep. It will take a knowledgeable person standing besides me to point out my error.

Words have an impact on someone's mind. The impact of words will depend on the mind of the hearer. The hearer will attempt to understand the word(s) according to contexts known to them. A hearer may unknowingly misconstrue.

Because words can only impact what is already in the mind, (or the person hearing wouldn't know what is being talked about) it is important to consider the impactible area of someone's mind. We can do this using set-theory, and considering words to be two-dimensional shapes. (This is clearly a simplification – but a very useful one for illustrative purposes.[2]) The impactible area is clearly related to 'knowledge'. The total possible impactible area of the human mind is equivalent to all the knowledge that humans could possibly have. See Figure 1 on the next page.

Figure 1. *Diagrammatic Representation of Total Possible Impactible Area of a Person's Mind – in two-dimensional form*
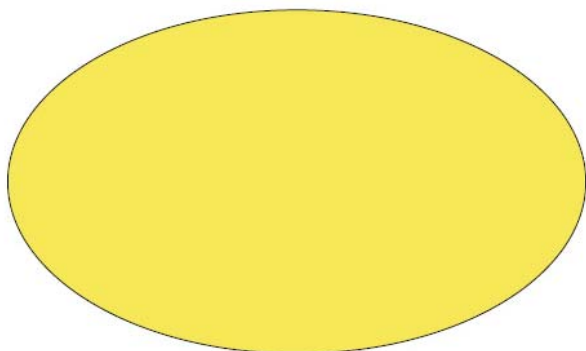
This 'area' is vast. Just to choose a few diverse examples; it includes the experience of giving birth to a baby with two heads, the experience of visiting mars on a space craft, a detailed study of the make up of mitochondria, what it is like to live in a desert, the secondary school London university 1982 'O' level geography syllabus, eating goat meat, the Luo language, Alexander the Great's breakfast preference – and so on *ad infinitum* (and *ad absurdum*).

The actual knowledge held by any individual is clearly only a miniscule proportion of the total possible knowledge or impactible area that someone could have, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *An Individual Person's Impactible Area as a Part of the Total Possible Impactible Area of the Mind (to illustrate how small a part of the*
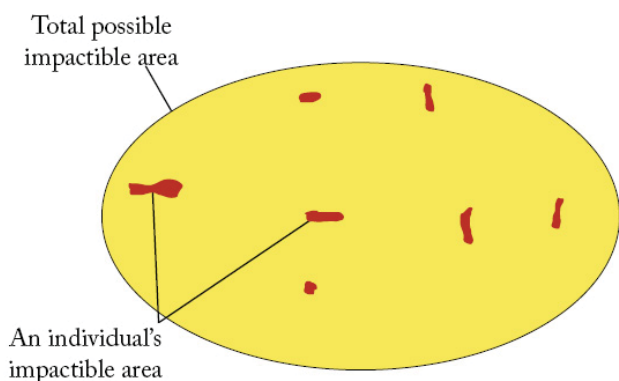
*total possible knowledge any person actually has)*

This illustrates how most knowledge for most people can effectively have no impact. That is; it will pass through the gaps between the small parts of knowledge or 'impactible areas' that someone has. To draw again on the examples given in the paragraph above; to those who do not happen to have shared the experiences in column 1 of Table 1, the comments given in column 2 will not impact (in colloquial English we say they are meaningless). Most things in fact, that could be and have been said by most people most of the time, if overheard by a person chosen at random would be 'meaningless' in this sense.[3]

Table 1. *How Words are Correctly Understood only if they Meet an 'Impactible Area'.*

Necessary Knowledge or Impactible Area	**For These Words to Have Impact**
giving birth to a baby with two heads,	"such a painful birth...",
the experience of visiting Mars on a space craft,	"...the glow we saw when still 1000 miles from the surface",
a detailed study of the makeup of mitochondria,	"the green lining is full of holes",
what it is like to live in the desert,	"...the relief that comes at 6:00pm"
the secondary school London university 'O' level geography syllabus,	"this appearance reveals the rock to be igneous"
eating goat meat,	"not quite as tasty as beef"
the Luo langugage,	"abiro biro limi kiny e dala"
Alexander the Great's breakfast preference	"have the same for breakfast as did Alexander"

I want to make another simplifying but I believe helpful assumption, again diagrammatically. That is, I want to assume for simplicity's sake that the diverse small spots that represent the impactible area of a person's mind can be combined to form a unique single shape that represents the impactible area of a person's mind, which is a subset of the total possible impactible area, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. *Impactible Area of a Person's Mind Represented as One Shape as a Part of the Total Possible Impactible Area.*
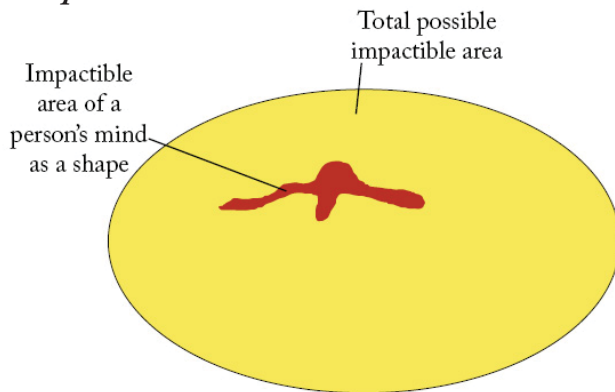
Note that this shape will constantly change in response to the acquisition of new knowledge. A piece of new knowledge is shown to be introduced in Figure 4, which results in the change of the shape to that illustrated in Figure 5.

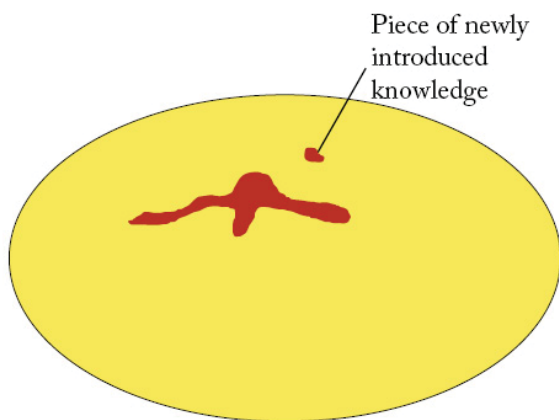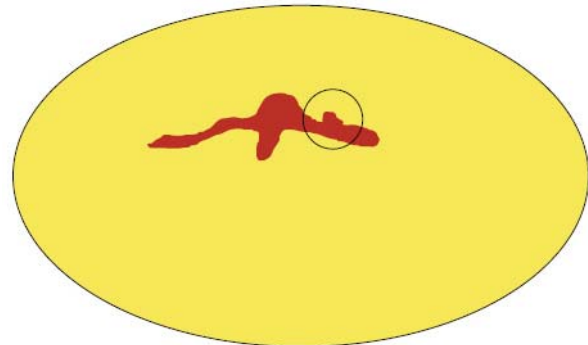**Figure 4. Illustration Representing the Introduction of a New Piece of Knowledge**

Figure 5. *Illustration Representing the Change in Shape of the Impactible Area Following the Introduction of the new Piece of Knowledge (encircled)*

Any addition of new knowledge will affect the pre-existing knowledge, as all knowledge is inter-related. Any new experience, in other words, will affect someone's comprehension of all other experiences. Such impact may be slight, or major. This inter-relationship perhaps needs some explanation. Someone hearing a baby cry after walking through a field of bleating sheep will link the baby's cry and the sheep's bleating in their mind. This pen will feel thin to me, if I have recently used a fatter one for writing. The impact of the term 'Africa' on people's minds will have changed following the chaos that occurred in Kenya in early 2008, and so on.

It should be clear that while the shapes of people's impactible area will vary, shapes of people who have interacted closely and whose lives are spent in similar contexts, will be the most similar. The more different people's life-context and experience, the more their shapes will vary. Sharing a native language clearly results in having a comparable shape or part of a shape. Someone's having a different native language, that uses a different set of categories and boundaries, will give them a different shape that is located at a different place within the total possible impactible area of their mind.

The Question of Overlap in Impactible Area

Some areas of knowledge or 'impactible areas' can be seen as being the province of European and not African people, and others of African and not European people. A people who understand the stars at night to be campfires of the gods (Mboya, 2001) will clearly struggle to comprehend the details of a space-mission designed to observe the surface of mars. Many Europeans will struggle to understand how the death of their aunt can have been caused by the jealousy of their neighbour. (I understand that some scholars and lay people may deny the existence of such a clear difference between cultures. Their arguments lead us to the situation described above under grass-colours, whereby apparent agreement over the similarity of cultures is achieved through an implicit redefinition of words.)

In reality, despite some graying of boundaries brought about by cross-cultural exchange, I believe there is a clear case to be made for Figure 6 below which illustrates quite simply that while there may be areas of overlap between different cultures, there are also impactible areas (knowledge) that is / are unique to certain cultures. In Figure 6 'A' is unique to Africa, 'E' is unique to Europe, whereas B is shared by both.[4]

Figure 6. *The Impactible Areas or Knowledge of Different Languages / Cultures*

A = unique to African culture.
B = common to European and African culture.
E = unique to European culture.
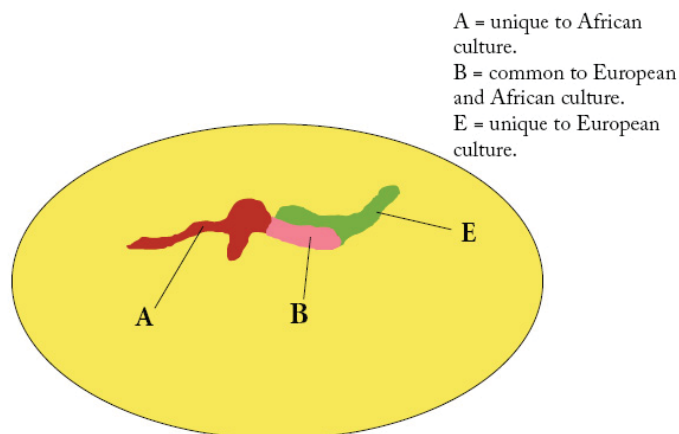
One effect of the relationship shown in Figure 6 is an implication of ignorance or primitiveness by a person of one group of the 'other'. Members of the European and African communities soon discern the limitations of the understanding of the 'other'. Hence inter-cultural dialogue tends to be confined to area B. (The boundaries of B are learned by observing the responses and responsiveness of the 'other' listener should one stray.) This having to confine oneself to B (never of course actually achieved in totality (Harries, 2008b)) gives the impression of the 'other' people being 'simple' or uneducated compared with a person's implicit valuation of his/her own people (with whom s/he talks in the context of E and B or A and B). Europeans often do not, in my experience, realise that this assumption of the primitivity of the 'other' is mutual. (A difference of course is that European's primitivity is combined with relative wealth, whereas Africa's primitivity is associated with poverty.)

Suggesting that people assume the simplicity of 'the other' is itself a bit simplistic. Reality is more complex. An African hearing a European talking in area E has two choices. Either they can take this person as being mad, confused or primitive and / or they can make an implicit link between E and A, so try to work out what is being said in E by making links with A and B. One impact of doing this has already been discussed under grass-colours above. Other examples in brief; what to the African can be miraculous healing can to the European be placebo, what to the African is their homely 'tribe' to the European sounds crude or barbaric, genealogical records that are the basis of an African person's identity will seem an inconsequential detail to many Europeans, and so on. I do not give reverse examples (African views of European language uses) for various reasons.[5]

What may by some be termed 'misunderstandings' can become a part of the system. That is much of E becomes assumed to be a part of A (or A a part of E in the case of a European), and is subtly (or sometimes less subtly) redefined to fit the new context.

It is the redefining of E that aligns it with A (and vice versa) that puts us into a fix. It is an almost natural consequence of the language policies of numerous Anglophone African countries (such as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda) that have for various reasons taken English to be their official language. Perhaps for purposes of prestige and also to facilitate communication with Europe and especially the UK and America, efforts are made to deter the Africanisation of English, and instead to use the same English in Africa as is used in Europe. So the aim and claim of these African states is *not* to have adapted English to their purposes, but to be using it as the British use it.[6] Once that claim has been made, it must be defended. To challenge the knowledge of English usage by leading Africans is to threaten them at a deep existential level, as this claim may be the basis of their finding a place amongst the nations and in ruling and administering their territory. Such challenge is strongly resisted. Because it seems to threaten the essence of African humanity[7] presenting this challenge today brings accusations of racism hot on its heels.

This is not a put-up-show. Educated Africans *have* appropriated English to the contours of their lifestyle, and one dares to say, they understand one another somewhat effectively through its use. (This aided by the fact that the cultures of various African people's have strong similarities (Magesa, 1997, p. 26).) The problem arises when a foreigner, especially a native English speaker, attempts to participate in the conversations going on. A native English speaker, unless very deeply exposed to African ways, will assume English words to be rooted in E, when they are actually rooted in A.[8]

A pragmatic ignoring of this situation is, I suggest, extremely damaging. While the 'stronger' party who try to keep a control of their language are definitely the native-English speakers, they have had to concede the fringes even in their own uses of their language. The 'fringes' that have been conceded are important and significant. 'Fringes' of English that are nowadays considered politi-cally incorrect in usage consist of certain critical points at which A differs from E. The differences between A and E being thus concealed from view, no account of these critical points can be taken in academic study or policy formation. Sometimes physical differences in geography and climate can remain in view, but cultural differences between African and European people are hidden. Thus we get claims by the likes of Professor Sachs that: "the barriers to development in Africa are not in the mind, but in the soils, the mosquitoes, the vast distances over difficult terrain, the unsteady rainfall" (Sachs, 2005). This has further contributed to a state already noted by Steiner that "[twentieth-century] linguistic philosophy … particularly in England and the United States … has … edged … [aesthetics, theology, much of political philosophy] away from professional respectability …" (Steiner, 1998, p. 219).

The corollary of the above is of course that Africans are forced, throughout the formal English-based educational system, to confine themselves to a subject-content that has already excluded any cultural content of their lives that differs from native English speakers, from view! As a result African schoolchildren are forced to learn from early on that their formal education will always tend to irrelevancy. They soon realise that the purpose of 'education' is to give them access to the powerful international economy, and not to be an aid to self-understanding or grass roots progress. The 'weak' are forced to use the sense of the 'strong', whether it makes sense to them or not.

The Economics that Back the Ignorance

The failure to date to develop a resilient African society and economy from the grassroots up contributes significantly to the hegemony of foreign economic models on the African continent. Africa from the perspective of Western economies being something of a basket case, means that the dominant economic model applied is that of 'aid'. The 'good' that Europe produces by intent being widely assumed in Africa to arise by default[9]

indeed results in a very basic material-existence in the absence of foreign aid. This economic effect is however rarely addressed or even realised. Instead outside economic provision all too often confirms African people's conviction that their wise people are most productively engaged in developing ways to counter spiritual evils (this argument is developed in Harries, 2006).

Another effect of this system resulting from enormous dependence on foreign charity is an orientation at all costs to the pleasing of donors. This has contributed to the apparent merging of A and E (see Figure 6) already described above. Such merging is very rational behaviour in pursuance of economic self-interest. Linguistic confusion already described above easily combines with an African orientation to utilise language to create and not reflect reality to produce physical outcomes (Harries 2007, p. 21). The combination of the above two factors results in a habituation to what can in Western English be considered to be 'telling lies'. Such lies are used to provide justification for the perpetuation of unhelpful (in the long term) economic, social and political policies.

In short, scholars need to be very discerning in their research in Africa, in the light of its economic dependence. *Enormous* pressure on all concerned to 'not bite the hand that feeds you', combined with the linguistic confusion already described above, result in conditions akin to a minefield for researchers of the African scene. The way forward, it seems to me, must lie in a vulnerability that can result in free two-way interchange between Western and African people. These days a lot of African people to various degrees (at least overtly) cross and have crossed over to European ways of life. What is harder to find, but desperately needed in order to facilitate scholarship and aid programmes, are Europeans who are able to 'cross' in the other direction, and acquire a close familiarity with African languages and cultures.

Indigenous Education

Even Tanzania, which has an incredibly strong orientation to the use of the African language Kiswahili in almost all official and unofficial public events, switches to English for all formal post-primary education. Some find this incredible and it has been much critiqued (Puja, 2003). Amongst other things reflected by such a policy, I want to suggest, is a deeply ingrained self-doubt amongst African people regarding their own ability at developing scholarship at other than a very basic level. That is, whereas some Africans have become very adept at interacting with and contributing to Western scholarship, very few (if any?) consider themselves capable at building from the ground up in African languages.[10]

This often overseen detail has important consequences in at least two areas. Firstly, it raises the question of whether there is a bridge between African ways of life and more 'modern' cultures? If there is a bridge, then what is it and how can it be found? Secondly, if grassroots thinking does not connect with the academic superstructure then the question must arise – as to what it is that is guiding the day to day thinking of African populations?

The finding of that bridge will enable positive change in African communities. I suggest its finding is essential, and until it is found we must assume that at any depth African communities are not guided directly by Western academia or their formal education systems, but primarily by the largely intact and little changing (as it is ignored by the schooling system) indigenous thinking rooted in long ancestral tradition. This author is facing glaring evidence of this, being located in Western Kenya while writing in early 2008 amidst unrest that has surfaced deeply ingrained tribal animosities that seem to be threatening to obliterate 100 years of intense education using English in Kenya from view. The bridge from African culture to so-called 'modern ways' of life is obscure. The imposition of foreign models of education is a distraction that by offering financial and other benefits to African people to contribute to Western academia instead of devising their own,[11] seems constantly to delay the paying of attention to the important bridge-building process.

There is a desperate need to encourage African (and non-African) scholars to look at African problems as defined by Africans in African languages so as to set a foundation for a truly African academia. Failure to do this is likely to result in the collapse of more and more African states that are building on the foundations of others (such as Kenya in relation to the British colonial legacy) into governorship by neglected but all-too-present 'traditional values'.[12]

Vulnerable Scholars using Indigenous Languages Desperately Needed

While removing the hegemony of Western academia over African scholarship may be a step in the right direction, progress also depends on there being an African scholarship to take its place. One obvious route to follow at this stage is to suggest what African people 'should do' to put right the problems that I am describing. My orientation is however to address Westerners, who in many ways are holding the countries of Africa in an arm-lock. African people, I suggest, should be less bound by financial coercion. I would like to ask about the influence that Westerners can have that will leave African people empowered to follow positive avenues in their own lives and societies. My direct concern is not to correct the methodologies used by those Westerners who force their agendas onto Africa by use of financial incentives or pressure, even if it should by now be clear that I do consider such to be misguided. It is rather to open an alternative avenue that could be followed by those who want to have an impact on Africa that is positive, but not compelled. Scholars are needed to do the legwork that will enable others to work effectively.

The first important, and in today's Africa extraordinarily difficult task for non-African natives, is to escape the identity of being a 'donor'. The association between white skin (and other coloured skins with Western accents) and financial bounteousness is extremely wide and deep. Means of playing up to donors are extremely deeply ingrained. Great care should be taken not to provide financial incentives for any bias in people's responses to a researcher. Secondly, there is a need for careful attention to research methodology. Interviews and questionnaires are far too flawed as methodologies for use in most research on African societies by Westerners. A researcher needs to confine research methodology to participant-observation.[13]

Second but equally important – is for a researcher or practitioner to operate in the language of the people being reached. This language can only be correctly understood if learned in the context in which it is used. Operating using English or with languages learned in a classroom is in Africa leaving perhaps *the* key task in the acquisition of understanding to locals, who almost by definition will not comprehend what a foreigner is trying to communicate (contrast A and E of Figure 6). Using a people's language will be an encouragement or boost to their self-valuation and can be enabling them to function in their community. Use of a foreign language tends to irrelevancy if it is not backed up by large scale funds.[14]

The person who follows the above suggested procedures will in due course realise, I believe, that African people live in response to the actions of a 'supernatural force'.[15] The nature and composition of this force is complex. It is often associated with the content of E (see Figure 6) known as 'God'. Helpful alternative labels could be: 'the force', 'vital force', 'mystical powers' or 'the power'.[16] Comprehending the nature of this force or 'god' as understood by African people is vital for anyone wanting to understand Africa. The force can be compared to a bucket if people are taken as being water – he / it defines the shape and the boundaries of African people's ways of life. Trying to understand African people while ignoring 'the force' is like wondering why water in a bucket stays where it is! It is like trying to understand an individual person while taking no account of their community, family or friendship network. 'Theology', the study of 'God' (or god or 'vital force'), is the vital and desperately needed discipline these days most often missing from studies on Africa.

Conclusion

Numerous misconceptions and over-simplifications in inter-cultural communication and scholarship are here unveiled. It is economic and socio-political dependence, and not good scholarship, that appears to unite the work of the Western and African academia.

Words being sounds do not 'carry' anything. Rather, they have an impact only on what is already in the mind of the hearer. Any one person knowing a tiny fraction of all that is to be known in the world means that much or most intercultural discourse falls in the 'spaces' between impactible areas in people's minds.

Knowledge is discovered to be always subjective and therefore held in a unique way by every person. But that does not stop people from connecting the words of others with knowledge that they hold, so that an assumed transfer of vaults of meaning can occur to someone who may be totally unaware that this is happening.

Native English speakers have lost control over the fringes of their language especially that refer to the 'other'. The 'other', being non-English people, have managed to prohibit those uses of English once used to describe 'them'.

There is little or no evidence that any native Sub-Saharan community has yet managed to find a bridge to 'modern ways of life' without drawing on foreign languages and categories. This bodes badly for Africa (if as appears) the use of foreign languages cannot bring indigenously rooted sustainable development.

This article concludes that there is *great need* for Western scholars to relate to Africa other than as donors, using African languages, and seeking to understand African notions of 'god'.

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Endnotes

1. Adeyemo refers to Africa's 'enigma' (Adeyemo, 2001).

2. See also Harries, 2008a.

3. In reality they may not be 'meaningless' as such – see below.

4. Figure 6 is in identifying B as 'overlap' a simplification for practical purposes. In actual fact no two words of any two languages or cultures are directly equivalent because of the impact of the rest of the language / culture on all words.

5. Examples of African views of Europeans tend to be concealed in and expressed in African languages, and are not easy to translate to the presumed European readership of this article.

6. Many of the dictionaries recommended and used in schools in Kenya are those produced by Oxford. I was struck particularly by this orientation to ensuring the alignment with British English while in Zambia in 2001.

7. Because it is Westerners who set the dominant definition for what it is to be 'human'.

8. And will assume context E+B whereas the African is assuming A+B.

9. African cultural orientation has its people focus on the deterring of spiritual adversaries unlike European cultures that often concentrate on producing 'good', which in Africa is thought should arise by default (Harries 2006).

10. I believe this to be the case almost continent-wide. For example, in Cameroon most indigenous languages are considered "… not yet developed and thus cannot serve as written media for transmitting modern knowledge" (Chiatoh 2006:105) so that most Cameroonians consider their languages primarily as "instruments of preserving cultural heritage …" (Chiatoh 2006:108).

11. It is financially more profitable and socially more prestigious to operate in English than in local languages, whether or not what is produced in English is meaningful.

12. Zimbabwe is one of the African countries considered to be a classic example where this has recently occurred. This is a large topic only dealt with cursorily here.

13. To go into more depth in considering research methodology would be beyond the scope of this essay, but see Harries 2007.

14. If it is backed by funds, then the 'relevance' arises due to those funds.

15. While I use the term 'supernatural', for African people this force is not 'supernatural' in the English sense as for Africans there is no concept of 'nature' (Harries 2007:132).

16. Tempels in his classic work refers to *life, force, to live strongly* or *vital force* (1959:44).

Lessons Learned among Latins, Indigenous Leaders, and Expatriates through Collaboration in the Bible Translation Movement

Jaime Ayala

Introduction

Years ago when our family was attending an evangelical church in a large city in the highlands of Peru, I remember the wife of the pastor telling us that one of the young women who had come as an intern from the capital had become a persona non grata to many of the people in the congregation. It was a very unfortunate situation because she was a very vibrant lady, with lots of energy, and the desire to serve. What happened? In casual conversation with some members of the congregation, the topic of marriage was being discussed and she made the comment that she could never marry anyone from that city because the people were just too lifeless and unaware of what was going on

around them. She didn't know it at the time, but she had deeply offended her hearers and unfortunately when she left to return to the capital, the people were happy to see her go. She had misinterpreted mountain culture and assumed that the quiet, unassuming demeanor of many of the people with whom she interacted meant that they were intellectually deficient and that they were lacking in qualities which meshed with her own.

This unfortunate situation underscores the need for inter-cultural understanding in ministry among separate cultural groups from the same nation. Although the desire of Latin Peruvians to contribute to the Bible translation task is growing, over 60 years of work by expatriate SIL (historically, Summer of

Institute of Linguistics) linguists working directly with indigenous Peruvians has left a definite imprint in terms of how the work was accomplished. Now that Latins are beginning to participate directly, it is a favorable time to step back and consider what can be learned from the interaction between indigenous people, Latins, and expatriates as they work together in this task. What factors are important to consider? How can ongoing collaboration between these three groups be accomplished in a healthy manner so that each group can make its best contribution to the overall task? This paper is an attempt to begin exploration of this issue.

Peru is home to more than 80 language groups (Lewis 2009). Many Peruvians speak of the three major regions of the country; Costa, Sierra, y Selva (the coast, the highlands, and the jungle), but the reality is that the geographical and cultural diversity goes well beyond those three main distinctions. SIL has been doing translation work and related activities since 1946 in this country. During this more than 60 year period much has been accomplished. More than 40 New Testaments have been translated. Several Old Testament translations are in process. Much work has been done in bilingual education. And there has been extensive linguistic research of many of the minority language groups, including surveys, and the creation of grammars and dictionaries. Add to that the vast amount of vernacular literature to encourage reading and preservation of these languages. It is quite impressive to consider all that has been done (Summer Institute of Linguistics Peru).

However, the situation in Peru is changing. When expatriate SIL linguists began their work in the mid forties and fifties, there were hardly any Spanish speaking Peruvians who were aware and interested in participating directly in the work of Bible translation and its related ministries. Over time however, the evangelical church in Peru has grown and awareness of the Bible translation needs, not just in Peru, but all over the world is becoming more known to Peruvians who have a desire in some way to contribute to the task. This is also true in many other Latin American countries. Vision 2025 is being proclaimed in churches, which states, "We embrace the vision that by the year 2025 a Bible translation project will be in progress for every people group that needs it." In addition, the SIL linguistics training school called CILTA (Curso Internacional para la Lingüística, Traducción, y Alfabetización - International Course for Linguistics, Translation, and Literacy, my translation) in Lima is providing linguistics training to Peruvians and many other Latin Americans in order to enable them to contribute to the Bible translation task in these disciplines (Diplomado CILTA).

The methodology used for this study was to interview representatives from each of these three major cultural groups: indigenous cultures, Latins, and expatriates. In order to limit the topic, the focus was on those who have worked in Peru, although similar research would certainly be helpful in other areas of Latin America with high populations of indigenous people, such as Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil. I asked the same three questions of the individuals from each group. By indigenous cultures I refer to the ethno-linguistic groups of Peru whose culture and language are distinct from the Spanish speaking Latin culture. I use the term Latin to refer to the ethnic group that tends to control government, education, and the media and who have Spanish as their mother-tongue. In this paper expatriates refers to U.S. citizens who have lived and worked in Peru with SIL, although there are also expatriate members of SIL Peru from several other nations. For the purposes of this paper, I did not include them in the interviews.

My desire was that from the information obtained from the interviews, I would be able to better understand the perspectives from each cultural group that would be useful to share. My hope is that this information can increase inter-cultural understanding between these three major groups and make a positive contribution to the Bible translation movement in the Americas.

Latin Themes

As I consider the themes expressed by the

Latins working in the Bible translation movement, the attitude of service expressed is noteworthy. Each participant truly desires to be of benefit to the indigenous people with whom he or she works. It is not easy, as their values are very different from the values of indigenous groups. I should mention from the outset that the number of Spanish speaking Peruvians who directly work in Bible translation are relatively few. It is an area of ministry for which, historically, few churches in Lima have had a passion. In my opinion, the Peruvians who are involved are exceptional because they must work against the currents that minimize the value of ministry to indigenous people on the indigenous people's terms. These attitudes are prevalent in Latin culture and in their churches. For the most part the national churches that are based out of Lima consider the rural churches of their same denominations as being under their authority and jurisdiction. The role of the leaders from the rural areas is to be in compliance with the dictates from their authorities. Bivin gives the following example from Panama:

> When the New Testament, with permission from denominational leaders, was distributed to the pastors of one of the denominations, an indigenous pastor excitedly announced to the others that this was just what they needed, for now they would be better able to communicate the Gospel within their churches. He was quickly silenced by the denomination's missionary, who reminded him that they were not free to do whatever they wanted but were under her authority. (Bivin 2010, 72)

In the set of six interviews with Latins, all but one of the respondents are women. Five of the respondents have or are currently working in a language program. None of them are translators. The roles represented are administrator, literacy worker, trainers, assistant to the translator, and mobilizer. Two of the women have worked in this ministry for several decades, long before it was even being seriously considered by the Peruvian church as an

area for their participation. The other four people have become involved within the last 10 years. Of the three major groups I interviewed, there are fewer available Latins to interview than either indigenous people or expatriates. This reflects that it is only recently that the Peruvian church has begun to develop an interest in Bible translation and related ministries.

Relationship Building

Because of the historical context, the Spanish speaking Peruvian is at a disadvantage from the outset from being well received by the indigenous people to which he/she would like to minister. Centuries of oppression by the majority culture have left deep scars upon indigenous people, which mitigates against them truly being able to trust the intentions of the Spanish speaking Peruvian. According to Bivin:

> The dominant Hispanic culture tells them that it alone is the route to success and that their cultures and languages are dead ends. Unfortunately, the Latin American churches reinforce this cultural oppression by not valuing and promoting the vernacular. Spanish speaking church workers and expatriate missionaries must become convinced and must labor to convince indigenous Christians that Christ truly seeks to inhabit and transform their culture and worldview. (Bivin 2010, 76)

In the interviews with Latins they greatly emphasize the importance of deeply getting to know the people to be ministered to. However, this process is fraught with challenges. It does require time spent with the other, but because of cultural differences there are many barriers which keep true understanding from taking place. It is a natural tendency to approach an unfamiliar culture by making comparisons with our own, whether that is done consciously or unconsciously. Hiebert states, "When we encounter another culture, however, we soon realize that we are looking at it as outsiders. We examine its cultural knowledge by using the

categories of our own" (Hiebert 2008, 94). Lucy noted how when she first entered an unfamiliar culture she made these sorts of comparisons all the time. She would compare food, practices, and ways of thinking. It was done in the context of attempting to build a relationship, but all the while thinking that her culture was the norm and that the behaviors in the new culture were strange. She noted that her journal entries from then demonstrated what a difficult time that was for her. She expressed gratitude for having received missiological training later which helped her to sort out some of these cross-cultural issues.

Giving Acompañamiento

Several of the respondents spoke of the need of acompañamiento or walking alongside the indigenous people whom they wanted to serve. Lucy spoke of acompañamiento as an approach from within the indigenous people's own context as opposed to the perspective that outside elements and solutions were superior. According to her this requires a deeper understanding of the indigenous person's reality. She said that she reached a significant turning point when she realized that her education, abilities, and who she was were no longer the focus, but rather the comprehension of how the indigenous person understood and related to their context. This in her view is best accomplished by walking alongside the indigenous person. Later in the interview she reiterated the need to acompañar (be with) the people in the context of empowering, encouraging, forging friendships, and taking time with them. She mentioned that the organization that she works with is putting priority on acompañamiento to help the people discover their own solutions, tell their stories, and come up with their own ideas of what would help them accomplish their goals. Eduardo spoke of the benefits of training and also of acompañamiento, which he related to mentoring. For him this involves helping to develop the self confidence of the indigenous person which results in them being better able to accomplish their work.

Indigenous Priorities – the Latin perspective

Several of the respondents spoke of success as only being possible when we focus on the areas that are of priority to the indigenous person.

Lucy recalled that many times people from the outside would come; assess the situation from their perspective, and assumed they knew what the people's priorities were. Isabel noted that it was much more effective to consult with ministry associations of indigenous groups when one took the time to really listen, observe, and respond to the expressed needs of the people. She commented that when she first began working with different ethnic groups, she was aware that she was ignorant of their priorities. So she decided to keep quiet but take time to observe and listen. Over time she began to understand how they thought and what was behind their actions and only then could she give them relevant opinions.

Inter-Cultural Communication

Inter-cultural communication was another major issue raised in these interviews. Maria explained that it is so important to really get to know the people on your team, especially if they are of a different culture than your own. There were times she found herself in very isolated locations and she realized that the person who was her partner did not have the same understanding of the objectives to be accomplished that she did. It led to frustration among them, which was evident to the people that they went to serve. Isabel mentioned that working on a multi-cultural team had its challenges because the styles of communication were different. She highlighted that for a Latin, it is not customary to express oneself as directly as North Americans tend to do when there is disagreement. It is better to soften the blow and slowly approach the issue rather than hit it head on. She indicated that there are different ways to deal with issues. For a North American it may appear that the issue is taboo for the Latin, however, it is not that the issue is off-limits, but rather that it should be handled in a more indirect manner. This individual

also noted that Latins have a natural connection with each other which enables them to have a better idea of what the other person is thinking. Eduardo expressed the same sentiment.

Eduardo also spoke of the frustration of offering suggestions which were interpreted as directives by indigenous people. He said historically that Andean culture has been subjugated by Latin culture and that when one is an outsider from the dominant group, he is considered to be the expert, the one who knows more. He spoke of the difficulty of not knowing how to introduce an idea for consideration without it being assumed that is the way it has to be done. His desire is to help by affirming what they think, believe and decide and so he is hesitant to give too many opinions which could cause the people to feel the obligation to do what he says, even if that is not his intention.

Humility

The need for humility was also a major focus for the Latin respondents. Susana noted when I asked about suggestions for improvement in facing challenges or problems, that whatever barriers surface can be surmounted when one maintains the attitude that we need to die to self as Jesus instructed. She noted that it was important to submit her own desires rather than demand her own way, whether the issue was a problem with a colleague or with an indigenous person.

Indigenous Themes

Of the eight indigenous speakers interviewed six are Quechua men. They represent five distinct Quechua languages. Five of the six are from highland locations. One of the Quechua speakers is from a jungle location. The two other respondents are also from the Amazonian region. One is a Ticuna and the other, an Asháninka. Overall the indigenous people were very focused on unity, whether it was unity among people in their own ministry associations, between their associations and the church, or within the church itself. Cultural diversity was also recognized, both in the

diversity of Quechua groups and in the diversity of ethnic groups from the Amazonian region. It follows that the need for cultural sensitivity was also emphasized as many issues arise which are based on cultural differences. Another theme is the perception by Quechua speakers that Latin Peruvians consider themselves superior to them. Nevertheless appreciation was expressed for the qualities displayed by the big three – Latins, indigenous cultures, and expatriates. And finally, the need for acompañamiento was a recurring theme, which as already observed, was also expressed by Latin cross-cultural workers.

Unity

It is not surprising that indigenous people would have as an overarching theme the concept of unity, especially in light of the fact that often they are from collectivist societies in which the interests of the group are placed ahead of the interests of the individual. Plueddemann states, "In an individualist culture, accomplishing a task is more important than building relationships, whereas in collectivist cultures fostering relationships is the means for accomplishing the task" (Plueddemann 2009:120). Tomás, one of the Quechua respondents indicated that one of the most difficult challenges is helping people to work out their differences in inter-personal relationships. He related these differences to temperament and personality type. As a pastor and leader of a ministry association he relates to many different groups of people and notes how each group has their particular qualities. He also recommends that when people have differences the best course of action as an intermediary is to allow each individual to express everything they need to say so they can get it all out. His role is to listen to them and make sure each party has the opportunity to communicate their grievance. He says that this requires much transparency and sincerity.

César noted that one difficulty affecting unity is deciding which terms to use when translating the Scriptures. He said that Quechua words can mean different things in different areas and that when the incorrect word is used in a particular

context it can be offensive to other people from another dialect area when they read it. Using Spanish loan words has been one way to stimulate unity. He said that it was difficult for some to accept at first, because they were words derived from Spanish not Quechua, but in actuality the use of Spanish loan words increased unity because they were readily understood across Quechua dialect boundaries. In this case Spanish loan words brought unity to a Quechua group who otherwise would be divided over the "proper" Quechua word to use.

Cultural Diversity

When we speak of indigenous cultures it is so difficult to make generalizations because what is being considered is a cultural grouping that includes many diverse ethnic minorities. Generally, in Peru we think of two broad categories; highlands and jungle. The highlands are characterized as being the home of Quechua groups of many different varieties. The Ethnologue lists approximately 30 varieties of Quechua for Peru, which includes approximately five varieties from the jungle and high jungle regions (Lewis 2009). The Amazonian region covers about 60% of the land mass of the country (Hudson, 1992). It also has the greatest variety of ethno-linguistic groups, but the population of these groups tends to be smaller in number than the Quechua groups of the highland areas. The Ethnologue lists approximately 60 non-Quechua languages spoken in the jungle (Lewis 2009).

Most of the respondents made reference to the fact of cultural diversity. Jorge, one of the Quechua speakers, classified the groups in his area according to two basic criteria. Three of the Quechua groups were noted for their work in agriculture. The other two groups were known more for putting priority on education. When he gave me an example of differences in cultural practices from one area to the next, he described how in another area it was customary to shake the other person's hand when greeting each other at the beginning of the day, but in his area, they did not do this. It made him and another colleague from a different Quechua group uncomfortable when they greeted

each other because one expected a handshake and it bothered Jorge to be obliged to do this.

Cultural Sensitivity

Several of the respondents, particularly among the Quechuas, spoke of the importance of cultural sensitivity.

Tomás spoke of culture as what is behind many issues in the church. He said that often when problems come up, the root of it is more cultural than it is theological. He considered the history of how the Gospel was brought by foreign missionaries from the United States and Europe who ministered according to their cultural styles. They used certain styles of music for worship that included hymns. Over time the people developed the idea that this style of music was the only one acceptable in the church. They thus rejected their own cultural forms of music as unsuitable and considered the foreign forms as superior. In his opinion what needs to happen is for people to have a better understanding of their own culture. They need to become culturally aware and recognize that there are positive elements in their culture which are valuable in their own right. José echoed this sentiment as he noted there certainly are elements in Quechua culture that need to change, but that there are also positive qualities that need to be affirmed. It is not as if every aspect of Quechua culture is negative and that if it has a foreign source that it is inherently superior.

Perception of Latin Superiority

Several highland respondents spoke of the perception of Latin superiority. This issue came up in the very first interview with Tomás, when I asked if there had been any challenges or conflicts and if they were due to cultural issues. With regard to cultural differences he commented that Spanish speakers often give the impression that they think of themselves as superior to Quechua speakers. César described the Latin culture (Cultura Castellana – Castilian Culture, in his words) as being closed. Castellano is often the term used in the highland areas to refer to the Spanish language.

With regard to Christians, he said they do not say with words that they do not accept Quechua culture, but they demonstrate it by their actions. He said they think that since the Scriptures are already in Spanish they do not need to also be made available in Quechua. In his opinion that is because they do not understand the Scripture in Revelation 7:9-12 that makes reference to people of many languages before the throne of God. According to him Spanish speakers do not give priority to Quechua Scriptures. Instead, they minimize its importance. Bivin highlights this attitude:

> Since, according to the Latin American worldview, indigenous languages are simply dialectos, most national-level church leaders ignore them. The vast majority of the national church-led mission work is done in Spanish, which is honored as a full-fledged language. (Bivin 2010, 74)

When we spoke about cultural challenges, César made reference to perceptions of money by the Spanish speaking leadership. Since he works with a Christian ministry association in the highlands that receives foreign financial support, he noted that the leadership of the churches in the rural areas has the impression that his ministry association must have a lot of money. Their motivation for wanting to partner with his organization is because they suppose that they will receive some financial benefit from the partnership. When I asked if the leadership of the churches was Spanish speaking or Quechua speaking, he said that the leaders with the highest position were all Spanish speakers.

Expatriate Themes

The respondents represented a cross-section of roles: from Kevin, an administrator who is responsible over an extensive area; to Simon, a translator working with a number of Quechua groups; Brian, another translator/anthropologist who has worked very closely with two distinct Quechua groups; Grace, a Scripture promotion specialist; Cindy, a training specialist; and finally John; an administra-

tor of language programs. It would have been beneficial to also include another expatriate who had experience in working with indigenous cultures from the Amazonian region. Kevin has extensive experience with Amazonian cultures; however it would have been beneficial to include a language programs worker such as a translator or literacy worker in this geographic area, especially because of the considerable amount of work done among these groups over the years.

I observed that expatriates very much enjoyed their work with indigenous people. The work is challenging and cross-cultural misunderstandings happen all the time, but each respondent genuinely seems to enjoy the opportunities they have for service. As is the case for Latin respondents and indigenous respondents, there are overlapping themes among expatriates as well. In this sampling all the expatriates are from the United States. One of these was raised in Peru of missionary parents.

Cultural Differences

It was expressed quite frequently that indigenous cultural values are very different from those of the expatriates. In general expatriates said less about the cultural values of Latins, but this should not be too surprising since most of the SIL personnel who have come to Peru have done so with the expectation that they were going to work with indigenous people. Their primary focus has been in this direction. Working with Latin culture is part of the package, but is not the target culture for ministry. This focus was somewhat different for Kevin, who works at a level in which he relates with much frequency both with Latin and indigenous groups.

Cindy noted that one of the biggest conflicts she has encountered in working in ministry with Quechua culture is in the cultural perception of leadership. She observed that the traditional style of leadership is very authoritarian. The top leader makes the decision and those under him submit to his authority. When describing this process, Cindy said that she thought it was a conflict that

Quechuas had among themselves. She attributed it to possibly being a generational issue; the younger generation follows the traditional model of authoritarian leadership, but they themselves are frustrated with it. They want to see change, but they are not sure how to go about it.

The response to ambiguity was another cultural difference which Cindy emphasized in our discussion. In this case, it was between Quechua leaders who are responsible for teams of expatriates who come to Peru to help with practical areas of ministry such as construction projects or community service. The expatriates look for specific facts regarding schedules and logistics so they can know how to plan and what to expect. Those who host them cannot give them all the specific details because in the mind of the Quechuas it is not practical to plan very far into the future because the situation could change completely by tomorrow. If they were to try and coordinate with the precision that the expatriates desire, the communities they work with would take it all with a grain of salt, because in their view the circumstances are subject to change at any time.

As a final example of differences in cultural values, John noted how as expatriates we often say that indigenous ministry associations are their own and they should be allowed to do things according to their cultural norms and values. However, when it comes to the issue of funding we require them to do things our way. They must report their activities and expenditures according to our specific norms and practices, despite the fact that the methods for reporting these things in the Peruvian context are very different.

Communication

When I asked about conflict with regard to cross-cultural issues, Cindy responded that communication in general was an issue. For an expatriate when a decision is made, it is communicated, and everyone assumes there is a plan and that the course of action is decided. However, in the mind of the Quechua people the "decision" that has been

made is in actuality a possibility. So, the definition of communication varies according to the cultural perspective. She noted that she did not think this had necessarily caused conflicts, but it has generated misunderstandings.

Kevin highlighted that the cultural grid that is used determines how communication takes place. He observed that the North American/Western European cultures hold that there are absolute facts that should be self-evident to everyone. The thinking is that if these facts are discussed and identified, then the rational, logical conclusions should be clear. However, he noted that the primary focus for indigenous groups is on relationships. Thus the motivation for communication is different. The Westerner is motivated by accomplishing a particular goal whereas for the indigenous person the process of how to accomplish it is at least as important. Preserving relationships is a priority. He indicated that the first step to overcoming these cross-cultural challenges is through patient communication.

Ends versus Means

A distinction that I observed in this set of interviews with expatriates is that in general for the expatriate the ends are what are of most importance. There is a strong value assigned to accomplishing tasks and getting work done. It is not as if accomplishing work is not important to Latins and indigenous people, but the focus placed upon it is different depending upon the culture. John noted that the expatriates in his organization are doers. It is their identity, what characterizes them. This makes it difficult to step back and allow others to do tasks that had historically been done by them. It is especially challenging when the perception is that they can do the job better. John likened it to giving up your identity and stop doing what you have always done. It is hard to watch others do your job and perceive that what they are doing is not at the same level of quality.

Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism, according to one source, is

"a belief that some cultural systems, especially Euramerican systems, {are} superior to others" (Dubbs 1980, 15). The issue of ethnocentrism is so pervasive when working in a multi-cultural environment. Each culture has its own ways of interpreting reality and there are inevitable clashes that arise because each culture assumes their way is best. When I asked Cindy about issues that arise between Latins and Quechuas she commented that Quechuas perceive Limeños as being pushy, arrogant, know-it-alls. On the other side, the perception of Quechuas by Limeños is that they are backwards and not very smart. Each side has a stereotype of the other that is rooted in ethnocentrism.

Expatriate Suggestions for Inter-Cultural Understanding

In this summary of interviews with expatriates, they each gave suggestions for improved inter-cultural understanding.

Grace commented that we will never agree with everybody nor will we ever understand everybody. She said that probably the best advice she could give when working cross-culturally was, "just go into it with the full realization that behind the majority of the problems, it's going to be a cultural thing." This perspective will keep us from thinking that the other person is out to get us. We need to understand that the other person has a different way of thinking. In order to communicate effectively it is important to develop a way to get at the bottom of the issues.

When dealing with difficulties in cross-cultural situations, Simon thought it was wise to check out issues with a reduced group of people. If a particular course of action was definitely not palatable to the culture then this reduced group of people could caution the expatriate from making a serious cultural blunder. In addition, when an issue arises he noted that it is important to listen well, not jump to conclusions, and be patient. He noted that it is good to let people talk and express themselves without jumping in to say something too quickly.

Kevin proposed the idea of culture stretching classes. Each of us will need to learn to challenge aspects of our own cultures that make it difficult to partner with others. For the North American it might mean that he will need to allow someone else to lead and be willing to submit himself to their authority. For the Latin it might mean letting go of feelings of discrimination by North Americans in the past. For the indigenous person it might mean being willing to take the lead and being willing to look a North American in the eye and give his opinion. He emphasized that for true mutual accountability to take place each culture needs to be willing to be stretched and take risks.

Conclusion

As we consider the perspectives of each of these three cultural groups -- Latins, indigenous cultures, and expatriates, what conclusions can be drawn? From the Latin side, the attitude of service towards indigenous people is very evident. The few Latins who have committed themselves to serve in Bible translation ministry in Peru have not made the decision lightly. It has involved a cost and effort, especially vis-à-vis those serving in ministries in large churches in the urban setting of Lima.

Relationship building is a priority for the Latins I interviewed. It is a challenge to work on multi-cultural teams with expatriates who have many more years of experience in this type of work. For the Latin it is important to keep the lines of communication open and have the opportunity to express their thoughts aloud. But relationship building for the Latins takes place in two directions; with expatriates and indigenous people. The skill set used to build relationships with one is not the same as those used with the other group. Lucy learned how she needed to present her thoughts in order to be considered credible by expatriates. In relating with indigenous people it is so important to avoid behavior which can be interpreted as paternalistic and to be careful to express ideas or suggestions so that they are not interpreted as directives. It takes time to build relationships with

indigenous people and it is better to move slowly and take time to learn as much as possible about the cultural background of the people, even if their level of Spanish is very good.

Preserving unity stands out as one of the dominant themes among indigenous people. This seems to be the case both for jungle groups as well as highland groups. In the case of the Quechuas, making decisions based upon consensus is very important. Each person impacted by any particular decision expects to have a say in the matter. Competition from others in ministry is viewed as a threat. The ideal seems to be that all should work together in harmony. In the case of Jorge, his disagreement with an expatriate missionary caused him to step down rather than continue to fight against what he did not agree with. Some of the suggestions that I was given for overcoming obstacles to unity included being willing to admit mistakes, making the effort to see the other's point of view, and bringing people together to teach about love and unity.

Related to this theme is the theme of the perception of Latin superiority. The barriers evident between Quechua speakers and Spanish speakers stem in large measure from the Quechua perception that Latins think of themselves as superior. This point is not even questioned by the Quechuas that I interviewed. César noted that even if Latins deny having this attitude, their actions demonstrate it, particularly with regard to their indifference of the Quechua Scriptures in the church. The perception that Quechuas have of Latins is an ongoing challenge and as Latins become more involved in vernacular ministry the humility that they spoke about will intentionally need to be practiced.

Finally, with regard to the expatriate themes, the cultural differences between the three major cultural groupings will continually generate issues that will need attention. The multi-cultural collaboration taking place in the Bible translation movement will require changes in how each party relates to the others. Some of the primary issues are in the areas of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and context.

Regarding communication styles between the three groups, patient communication was highlighted as the key. Expatriates will need to realize that just because facts are self-evident to them according to their categories; this does not mean they will be viewed the same way by others. The most effective communication will take place in the context of relationship, which generates trust, so that sincere communication can be fostered. Although written communication and agreements are important, they should not take priority over face to face contact, especially in cross-cultural settings. It is easy to misunderstand written communication, especially when it is done in the second language of both parties. Finally, it should be explored how communication is received across gender lines so that men and women can know what to expect when communicating cross-culturally.

Ethnocentrism is a constant battle for any cultural group. Each group has a particular worldview which generates certain values and practices. My observation is that the greatest difficulty lies between indigenous people and Latins because of the history of domination of Spanish speakers over the native populations in the Americas. Those Latins who have committed to work in Bible translation at this point are few in number but exceptionally committed. It will be up to them to set the tone for how future Latin workers should work among indigenous people. It will take time to build bridges of trust by truly learning to appreciate the cultural values of indigenous people. Indigenous people will also need to let down their guard and recognize that they can work hand in hand with Latins as equal partners in the task. Expatriates will need to continue to relinquish control in areas where it has been historically theirs.

I really appreciated the idea shared about culture stretching classes. Each of these cultures will need to be stretched in different ways. For the success of the Bible translation movement in the Americas, the effort must be made to sincerely attempt to understand one another. There are many areas in which complete understanding will not

take place, but if there is awareness that underlying the actions of the other, there are cultural reasons, this can help in being able to extend grace and acceptance. Those Latins who have made the effort and sacrifice to work in this ministry have much they can offer to the Latin Church to put more priority on vernacular ministry. Cultural empathy and inter-cultural communication should continue to remain a priority in preparation for cross-cultural ministry. Each group has much that they can teach the others. They need to recognize that each culture possesses specific God-given qualities that only it can offer to the building of God's kingdom. May the testimony of love and unity be continually evident in the body of Christ in the Americas.

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African Development and Dependency in the Light of Post-Modern Epistemology

Jim Harries

My early explorations on the field into African development were, as I guess those of many other people, rooted in a transfer of assumptions from the West to Africa. *Ceteris Paribas* (all things being equal) – Africa should "develop" as Europe has developed – I thought to myself implicitly.

The question then arises as to what is missing in Africa that is present in the West? The above assessment will form the basis of knowing what will need to be supplied to Africa in order for 'development' to succeed. Answers that appear are widely known: Africa lacks education; it lacks capital; it lacks infrastructure and it lacks business sense. If these things (and others related to them) could only be provided, then of course it is assumed development would 'happen'.
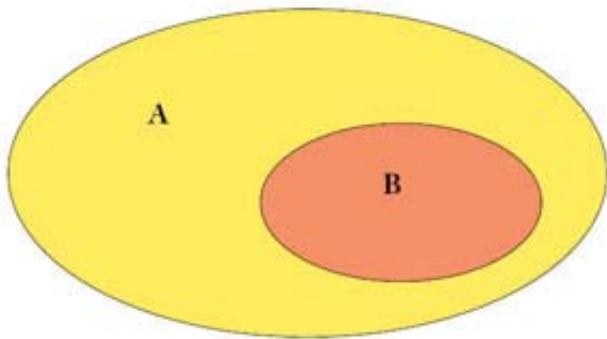
Assumptions underlying the above paragraph include that development is really about economics. Economists have argued this vehemently. This has not been without good reason. It seems very evident that finance and material resources are a mainstay for numerous others of life's activities, even for life itself. Unfortunately, however, this kind of thinking has resulted in an insidious reductionism in which one narrow and peculiarly thought-out discipline has had a hegemony over almost all professional thought for many decades. In reality: life is more than economics.

I am not going to make a comprehensive attack on economics. It can probably best be considered a "case in point". A case, that is, whereby the West considers itself to be knowledgeable of the basic 'model' of development, which it is then qualified to advocate for others to imitate. The model the West works on in communicating economics can be illustrated in Figure 1:

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Figure 1. All Western Knowledge and Economic Knowledge

In Figure 1, A is given as representing the to-

tal of Western knowledge, and B the part of Western knowledge that results in economic success.

The thinking implicit in the presentation of the above diagram is that B, the part of the knowledge that pertains to economic development, somehow stands alone and distinct from the rest of knowledge and the rest of life. That is, to use the terminology of modernism, that it is "objective" and that the part of its objectivity that is essential for the correct functioning of an economy is not or is barely influenced by the content of the rest of A.

This assumption is shown by post-modernism to be misguided. The nature of its misguidedness should not need to be re-argued in an article such as this one. Far from it, this is a foundation stone of the post-modernism that is sweeping the academic and scholarly as well as the non-academic and scholarly world. Post-modernists may ask; where are the words that will be used to describe this "objective situation" to be found in a non-Western (or even non-English) language? Clearly any word found to translate terms that are important to economists in the Western world will have various nuances of meaning, implicatures, ancillary meanings etc. not found in the original English term. The use of English itself as an international scholarly and business language of course does not resolve this situation, as a people will understand English words, at least to an extent, to be transla-

tions of their own indigenous terms.

The above is not to say that teaching about economics in English is of no value to anyone. It can be of great value – but the question arises as to what value and how it is to acquire that value? An international traveller from the West may be impressed by something that he sees in a poor part of the world. Should he want his own people to benefit from whatever process or feature he has been impressed by, he must tackle the difficult task of having that thing be appreciated by others than only him, and then of making it work in its new context. Let's imagine a thing to be introduced from the US to Italy is the game of baseball. Two kinds of expertise are required if baseball is to have any hope of taking hold in Italy. One needs those who know how baseball is played. But also secondly and I think more importantly – one needs those who can bring a fit between baseball and Italy – in all its wholeness and complexity. Why should Italians want to play baseball when they already have alternative games? How will Italians understand baseball given the nature of the games they already play? How can baseball be transformed into being a national sport in Italy, and so on?

I suggest that in this respect economics is not so different from baseball. It also needs to fit into a context. In the process of fitting into a new context its nature will invariably be transformed. It, or parts of it, may be rejected altogether. (Economics does not have clear fixed limits as does a game of baseball...). That transformation or loss of certain components of the original in the process of transfer may result in serious failings in functioning of the economics itself.

I suggest it is actually little less than extraordinary that the above not be more widely realised in today's world. Certainly for Africa – it is little realised. Numerous key leaders in Anglophone Africa are trained in the West. Western trained people end up getting numerous (or most or all) key leadership positions in Africa (especially if we include amongst those who are 'western trained'

those trained in a western way by Africans themselves. Frankly they do need to be included.) The reasons it is little realised, I suggest, are primarily two-fold. One – economics in places like Africa become *extensions* to Western economies that work as long as they are compliant satellites to the latter. Two – massive injections of aid into the poor world conceal what could otherwise be economic disasters.

It may have been possible in prior eras, for Englishes to have developed independently in different parts of the world. For example, for Eastern or South Africa to have appropriated western English and adopted its contents (meanings, implicatures and so on) in such a way that English could make sense to their own African context, people and culture. Globalisation has sounded the death knell to any such project, however. Individual countries are prevented, by the globalisation of education and communication more generally from freely adapting foreign tongues to their own contexts. I think there is a clear case to be made for the sheer difficulty and practically speaking impossibility of this happening in today's world.

The reality that should be becoming apparent from the above is that adoption of a Western technology, process, knowledge base etc. to a foreign non-western part of the world is no simple matter. It is so much not-simple in fact that in sub-Saharan Africa, at least, it frequently fails. The outcome of such failure is often given the label of corruption – thus passing the buck of blame to the "poor country" concerned and excusing Western education as such from liability.

The reason for including this piece in the *William Carey International Development Journal* is to make cross-cultural workers, who should have the souls and holistic interests of the people they are reaching in mind, aware of the potentially calamitous dependency and corruption being created through the subsidised education and economic control of the non-West from the West. Some missionaries from the West, for the above and many other reasons, can help this situation by engaging

in ministry using the indigenous languages of the people they are reaching so as to discover those parts of people's lives that international bodies are missing. They should also be extremely careful of, in the name of the Gospel of Christ, supporting development projects that have a gross mismatch with the context being targeted. Assisting people to improve their own lives requires engaging with what is already there, which requires at the very least use of their language (and really also use of their resources) so that contexts can be perceived, dealt with and not merely ignored.

Hindrances to advances, such as economic development, often arise from factors that are out of sight to the western world. These remain out-of-view to international English. A Christian worker, working on the ground with a people group in a vulnerable way using the local language, is likely to realise something that is missing, and thus can speak in an informed way in the interests of the holistic development of a people.

For more discussion related to the above see www.vulnerablemission.org.

Book Review on *Biblical Multicultural Teams: Applying Biblical Truth to Cultural Differences*
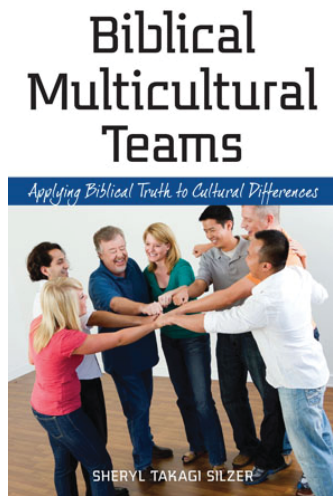
Sunny Hong

This book was written to help members of a multicultural team recognize and understand why cultural differences exist among members of their team and to apply biblical truth to cultural differences. Silzer starts this book by stating that we are all created in the image of God. The image of God is presented in three views: substantive, functional and relational. The substantive view of the image of God describes the image of God as the ability to make decisions by using human will. The functional view of the image of God explains the image of God as the function of taking responsibility of creation. The relational view of the image of God addresses the image of God as the ability to make relationship with God, other human beings and creation. The image of God in us is distorted, however, by following cultural practices rather than biblical truth.

To explain how the image of God is distorted,

Silzer introduces the "Culture-based Judging System" (CbJS) which is the way people decide what is right and wrong based on their culture. Silzer uses Mary Douglas' concept of Grid (structure) and Group (community) and categorizes cultures into four types: individuating, institutionalizing, hierarching and interrelating. Individuating culture has both weak structure and community, and promotes individual rights. Institutionalizing culture has strong structure and weak community, and is governed by rules and regulations. Hierarching culture has both strong structure and

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community and places high value on obedience and loyalty to the authority and group. Interrelating culture has weak structure and strong community and fosters egalitarianism. Based upon cultural types, a society prefers doing things in a certain way and rejects doing things in different ways. Without any bad intention, people believe their way is the right and biblical way. Cultural norms are practiced at home as people grow up, which influences people's worldview and behavior.

Silzer takes the reader through a journey into a childhood home and family tree to show how one's upbringing shapes culture. The cultural practices of visiting, eating, working, resting, and cleaning are reflected to show how these behaviors reveal the values of one's culture. The reader is challenged to look at his or her own cultural practices and biases in such a way that it will lead to better understanding of not only his or her own culture but also the culture of others. How to apply biblical truth to cultural differences among multicultural teams is examined by explaining CbJS at the end of the book. The answer is putting the cross in the middle of cultural differences.

At the end of each chapter, exercises help the readers to understand their walk of life in their home culture. Questions are prepared to understand a reader's CbJS, and reflection questions examine how CbJS has shaped people and what the Bible says in order to align CbJS to biblical truth. Individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the cultural impact of his or her life by doing these exercises. It will be even more helpful to share the exercises and questions with people from different cultures to broaden cultural understanding.

The personal stories of the author offer a glimpse on how CbJS had harmed her life and ministry when she worked as a cross-cultural worker for over 40 years as a Japanese American and how understanding culture redeemed and restored her. A reader could easily concur with her experiences and have a deeper understanding of how culture, not necessarily biblical truth, could dictate his or her life.

This book is rich in anthropological examples and Bible verses to help a reader to understand cultural differences and biblical truth. Various aspects of culture are explained in a practical manner, which helps one to understand his or her own culture. That understanding can be expanded to understand other cultures.

This book is a welcome addition to the few resources about multicultural teams that are currently available. It could be used in training for a multicultural team, which is becoming increasingly important in the 21st century. If an organization is seriously looking for resources to handle multicultural team issues or if someone wants to understand cultural struggles, this book is a good choice.