



## Chapter 10: Cross-Cultural Communication

Communication is a vital tool for ministry of preachers. It is through communication channels that preachers intend to make disciples out of their people. As the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20 clearly states, a missionary is called *to make disciples* in foreign countries/cultures. And this task requires some cross-cultural training especially in the area of communication and therefore this chapter is added on this manual.

### BEST MODEL OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION



Jesus did not simply preach and teach great messages. He did not make mere converts. Arguing with the scribes and Pharisees was not his main occupation either. Not even healing and casting out demons were his highest goals. Yes, he fed thousands. He attracted hundreds of disciples. He even sent out seventy two of them for a special evangelistic assignment. But he called only twelve men to be his constant companions, to whom he gave special training. He occasionally concentrated on three or only one for even more specialized training. In less than three years, he had so trained the Twelve that he could turn over his work to them permanently. He had left them a foundation and pattern for leadership in reaching other people. His trust in them was well grounded, for his work has lasted to this day.

The heart of world mission has two distinct but inseparable sides.

1. To make disciples (Matthew 28:19)

*" Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ... "*

2. To grow disciple-makers (2 Timothy 2:2)

*"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."*

Jesus was a cross-cultural communicator. His ministry to the lost Samaritan woman in John Chapter 4 certainly shows that to us.

Culture can be a barrier or a carrier. Once you are exposed to a different culture, it is normal for you to experience the culture shock. *Culture shock is*

*caused by the differences in culture coming from unfamiliar background and ethnicity.*

Jesus was to overcome culture differences as well, and it took at least 30 years for him to do so probably because of huge gap between his previous heavenly lifestyle and current earthly lifestyle.

Eventually, he overcame his own culture shock and came for the salvation of mankind. And so can we by the grace of God!

*"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." (Luke 19:10)*

## PRINCIPLES OF CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

### 1. Incarnation principle

The Son of God became the son of man that the sons of men might become the sons of God. This explains the mystery of incarnation.

**Jesus Christ = Son of God = Son of man**

Messiah came through the lineage of Judah (Genesis 49:10, Revelation 5:5) since he was a perfect example to portrait Jesus. It was Judah who volunteered himself to take the place of Benjamin and possibly die for him (Genesis 44:33-34), just as Jesus took our place and died for us (Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45, 1 Timothy 2:6, Hebrews 9:15)

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

*"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners -- of whom I am the worst." (1 Timothy 1:15)*

Jesus Christ is God manifested in flesh. God was in Christ. This event is called the incarnation. The word 'incarnation' comes from a Latin word 'in-carne' which means 'flesh' or 'a voluntary act of assuming flesh.'

*" The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us ... " (John 1:14)*

*" That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ ... " (2 Corinthians 5:19)*

Try to *become one with the local people* if you want to be an effective cross-cultural communicator to them.

### 2. Humility principle

*"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled*

*himself and became obedient to death -- even death on a cross!* (Philippians 2:5-8)

Jesus never showed his superiority to the people he was serving. *He literally became one of the Jews!* Missionaries should *never* show the superiority of their national origins on the mission field.

Jesus humbly accepted even limitation of flesh and blood. As a missionary, do *not* complain about the low standard of life which often exists on the mission field. Remember, Romans 1:1-2 teaches us to offer our bodies as living sacrifices everyday. Life on the mission field can be a good opportunity to practice the teaching of this verse.

*"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

No matter how backward in civilization your mission field may be, if you try hard enough, you can surely find some good things within that particular culture. When you find some of them, please respect and honor those cultural treasures. By doing so, you are indeed one step closer to becoming one with the very people you went to serve.

### WITNESSING IN CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Begin with looking for mutual points of interest. For example, see if you can find a topic which might be common and interesting to them. Then discuss it with them. Lead the discussion to get a hold of chances to introduce Jesus Christ.

#### **Witnessing attitudes (Attitudes of three P's)**

1. Keep a **p**atronizing attitude.

Be kind to those who may oppose your message at the first time.

2. Keep a **p**aternalistic attitude.

Be fatherly to those who seek the truth.

3. Keep a **p**aracletos' attitude.

Be dependent on the most skillful witness of all, the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit is described as the 'Counselor' (John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7) which is translated from Greek 'paracletos.' Paracletos literally refers to someone who stands on behalf of another person. 'Para' means 'side by side' and 'cletos' originated from 'kaleo,' meaning 'to call' or 'to stand.' In our modern vocabulary, an advocate or lawyer fit the best description of the word 'paracletos.' After all, it is the *main* work of the Holy Spirit to witness Jesus by giving power to those who are willing to do the same.

*"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:26-27)*

### Witnessing points

1. Express the universal need of God. Share that the salvation is a necessity.

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)*

2. Introduce the Savior personally.

*"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God -- children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." (John 1:12-13)*

3. Initiate the right action to take. Take time but with a sense of urgency.

*"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20).*

4. Once the person decides to accept Christ, encourage him/her to pray aloud.

5. Get them to confess Christ as soon as possible. When someone receives the person of Christ into his/her heart, the Bible describes him/her as born *again*. Romans 10:10 indicates that there is a cooperation of mouth and heart in this point.

*"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

### Assurance of salvation

Once someone is saved, it is important to implant the assurance of salvation in him/her through the following means.

1. Reading or hearing of the word of God
2. Having faith in that word
3. Making a confession of faith
4. Confessing Christ before men

### Following up new believers

Newly born again believers need follow-ups just as newborn babies need delicate cares. They are as vulnerable to spiritual challenges and temptations as when they were physically born into this world first time as babies. That is why Apostle Paul urged the believers in new church at Philippi, "Therefore, my

brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how *you should stand firm in the Lord ...* " (Philippians 4:1)

1. Focus on nursing, taking care of and feeding the new believers well, as Exodus 2:9 symbolically shows us how God is willing to reward those who look after the spiritual infants.

*"Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.' So the woman took the baby and nursed him."*

2. Make sure that they have an assurance of salvation.

If assurance is not there, it could be possibly because:

- They have not sincerely repented or renounced sin.
- They have not properly understood the truth of salvation by grace.
- They are not truly trusting God's word.
- They have not yet confessed Christ as Lord.
- They have not yet learned to pray and commune with God.

3. Make sure that they have a Bible.
4. Introduce them to baptism.
5. Be a true Christian friend to them.
6. Encourage them to serve God in some capacity.