

WANTED: CSI Agents

Become a CSI Agent! Seeking "Culturally Sensitive Investigators" that want to learn the essential elements of the Gospel, and how to employ cross-cultural behaviors and strategies that can help you cross the street or cross oceans with the life and message of Jesus Christ. codeword: WIN

Assignment: Find a group of 2 or 3. You are the only Americans and the only Christians living in Badadabuhl, Tajikistan. Plan a Christmas party for your neighbors and write an invitation. English is acceptable, for now. 5 minutes.

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Developing a Cross-Cultural Mindset and Ministry

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Discovery Questions to Help You Find Entrance Keys

What are values that people hold?

Principles of / Realities of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Loving people can overcome a multitude of cultural blunders

Comparing cultures, not criticizing them

Incarnation vs. Adaptation

Have a lifestyle that keeps you available to pursue and preserve these relationships

Be yourself. Be authentic, but sensible and tactful

Keep the essentials of the Gospel uncluttered

If the Bible is silent or neutral, pay attention to your conscience

Adaptability vs. Acceptability

Keep the focus on the biblical message.

Examples of Cross-Cultural Bridges

A Few Cross-Cultural Resources

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A Biblical Basis for Cross-Cultural Ministry

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

1 Corinthians 10:23-33

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

John 17:13-21

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Describing the Essential Elements of the Gospel

Exercise:

	Evangelical norms	Biblical mandates	Another culture's norms
Dress	_____	_____	_____
Language	_____	_____	_____
Music/Dance	_____	_____	_____
Meeting Place	_____	_____	_____
Prayer methods	_____	_____	_____
Social Mobility	_____	_____	_____
Time commitment	_____	_____	_____
Financial commitment	_____	_____	_____
Entertainment	_____	_____	_____
Social Status	_____	_____	_____
Bible translation	_____	_____	_____
Family orientation	_____	_____	_____
Community orientation	_____	_____	_____
Politics	_____	_____	_____
Devotion to core doctrines	_____	_____	_____
Bible as the Word of God	_____	_____	_____
Salvation only through Jesus	_____	_____	_____

Illustration: Going through arrival at international airport; passport check, visa payment and issued, immunizations check, customs declaration, baggage inspection, finally you come to the doors that slide open and lead you into your new country. How many checks have we created that people have to go through before they can finally answer the call of Jesus at the door of their heart?

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Testing and Departing from Your Comfort Zones

The issues described in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 might be defined as "comfort zones". People have preferences of the lifestyle they lead and the worldview they hold to. Even we as Believers have these preferences and migrate in our behavior toward our comfort zones. For example, what language I prefer to speak defines my comfort zone of speaking different languages. Another example might be the preference I have for certain foods. Am I willing to eat foods outside of the preferred foods of my comfort zone?

ZONES	Describe your preferences in each of these comfort zones.	On a scale from 1 to 10, how far would you be willing to depart from your comfort zone to connect with non-believers?									
		Not at all					Completely				
Language		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Food		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Culture (ethnic, traditional, international, urban, rural, etc.)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Religion		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Geography (mountains, dry climate, coastal, tropical, forest, etc.)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Special interests (sports, reading, films, politics, etc.)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Beliefs and Values (man can achieve anything; man needs God; men and superior to women; spirits inhabit people; the dead remain with us; etc.)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Place to Live (developed housing, water supply, electricity, rural location, urban, compound, apartment, etc.)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Social status (educated, poor, illiterate, intellectual, professional, civil servant, elite, blue collar, homemaker, married, single, etc.)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Other Comfort Zones you can think of:											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Developing a Cross-Cultural Strategy

Crossing cultures means entering other people's worldviews. A person's worldview is described by the values he holds to. When identifying with a person's values, you are speaking to his heart. Values are what people operate from, despite what they say. They may work their values out in a wrong way, but these values are at the root of their motivation. Our job in crossing cultures is not to determine whether the worldview is right or wrong, but to understand it in order to begin building bridges from the Gospel to the culture. *Entering the realm of discussing and perhaps challenging a person's worldview demands trust and credibility. These are won with time and service and faithfulness.*

Cultivating a Relational Network

- Initiate friendships.
- Learn their language/jargon
- Spend time where they do
- Meet needs
- Have a genuine platform for taking interest in them. Example: "I'm a pastor and I have friends who live here. I saw you here so I thought I would meet you."; "I heard you had the best food here, so I thought I would come and see. You guys welcomed me, so I kept coming."; "I want to learn your language."

Learning Cultural Entrance Keys

- By asking questions and by making observations, you will begin making mental notes and hypothesis about your friend's culture and lifestyle. You practice using these keys where it is appropriate. For example, using common greetings; enjoying hospitality and foods and drinks; spending natural (not contrived) time together at normal activities; showing proper respect in relationships; speaking their language; celebrating personal and cultural events (birthdays, holidays, etc.)
- You might have to decline from some activities that will compromise your faith, but this is where you have to trust the Holy Spirit and be true to your conscience.
- **Example:** Would you participate in the powder paint festival popular in India as a tourist activity? What questions would you ask yourself in determining your answer?

Learning Value Indicators

- Listen to their fears, concerns, grievances, successes, failures, home life, work life
- Follow the money.
- Watch their priorities.
- Check their integrity. Your new friend might just be a liar, exaggerating to impress you.
- Listen for personal reasons for participating in personal or cultural events.
- Identify motivations.
- Don't loan money. If you want to give to someone, do so as a friend. Don't let it characterize your relationship. I would carefully give to those who ask, and freely give to those with needs I observe.
- Don't grant political favors.

Linking Cultural Values with Biblical Values

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Discovery Questions to Help You Find Entrance Keys

You don't necessarily ask your friends these questions, but you take mental notes over time as your friendship grows. The time period can be short or long. Don't unnecessarily delay relating the Gospel when you have opportunity, but remain sensible and tactful.

These are some questions to ask yourself for individuals

- How do you greet men? women?
- How does age play into relationships?
- How does gender play into relationships?
- Is eye contact appropriate? other non-verbals, e.g. smiling? sitting position, e.g. don't cross legs and reveal bottom of feet?
- What is considered a respectable personal space?
- When is it appropriate to ask for contact information?
- How connected is someone to their extended family?
- What is this person's status in his family?
- What is his work ethic?
- How is time viewed?
- What are the political interests/constraints?
- What are leisure activities, interests, sports, entertainment?
- What is the national/cultural pastime?
- When are national/religious holidays?
- What do people fear? worry about?
- Who do people trust?
- What are the superstitions?
- What is the religious/spiritual/traditional beliefs background?
- What is the response to authority?
- What are their financial concerns?
- Are there distinctions in social and/or economic class?
- How is charity viewed?
- What foods are preferred/prohibited?
- What are daily/weekly routines?
- What are typical occupations?
- What is typical local transportation?
- What are travel habits?
- What is their local history and national history?

These are discovery questions for an event

- Why are you having this activity?
- Who are you going to invite?
- What is the agenda/program?
- What is the best way to communicate with attendees?
- What do your friends like to do together?
- When do they meet?
- How do they meet?
- How do people arrange the room/space?

- How do people participate in the gathering?
- What protocols are there?
- What time constraints exist?
- Who assumes leadership?
- Who assumes hosting?

Project: In Port Arthur, Texas, down on the coast, you have met a Vietnamese-American college graduate working as an engineer in a local refinery. He lives at home, his father is a fisherman, and he grew up with his family going to Wednesday night services at the Buddhist monastery, Saturday mass at the Catholic church and spending all day Sunday with extended family at his uncle's. How might he answer these discovery questions?

FOR FURTHER STUDY _____

What are values that people hold? Find Bible passages that relate to each of these values.

Passage		Passage		Passage	
Trust		Privacy		Religion	
Honesty		Personal pleasure		Nationalism	
Purity/modesty		Power		Security	
Faithfulness		Prestige		Financial security	
Simplicity		Fertility		Personal expression	
Graciousness		Friendship		Possessing knowledge	
Loyalty		Family heritage		Pleasing others	
Politeness		Fame		Tradition	
Competition		Quiet		Networking	
Experience		Adventure		Spontaneity	
Generosity		Punctuality		Task completion	
Achievement		Education		Vulnerability	

Principles of / Realities of Cross-Cultural Ministry

Loving People can overcome a multitude of cultural blunders

- Our most fundamental calling is to love God and love people. Understanding culture is simply educating yourself about people and taking the time to demonstrate care for and interest in people.
- One of the best extra-biblical proverbs applies: When people know you care, then they care to know.
- The focus is not becoming a cultural expert, but becoming a caring and effective representative of Jesus and his Gospel to your friends. That's why Jesus sends us into the world.

Comparing Cultures, not Criticizing Them

- Don't bash your own culture.
- It's not unusual for a person as they discover and appreciate a new culture, that they recognize the shortcomings in their own culture. But it's important that the person resist the temptation to bash their own culture, especially in front of their new friends.
- This sign of disrespect toward one's own culture can raise suspicions by the new friends, wondering why this person doesn't appear more loyal and appreciative of his own home culture.
- Example: American wealth, especially in comparison to developing nations. I can here your host say, "Wait a minute, you want me to stay poor?"

Incarnation vs. Adaptation

Hebrews 2:14-18

- We are not the Savior. We are not the Holy Spirit. We do not determine when someone is ready to hear the Gospel.
- We represent the Savior and pray that people's eyes and ears will be open when they see and hear the truth.
- Our success does not depend so much on how effectively we adapt, but how effectively we love people.
- Consider these comparisons:

John 1:14	vs.	I Corinthians 9:19
National	vs.	Ambassador
Becoming	vs.	Becoming like
Going Native	vs.	Identifying with
Mimicking behavior	vs.	Understanding values
- Examples: Not celebrating own cultural or national holidays; not going to better medical care than local people have available. Don't create temptation for your host to question why you left, or had to leave your own culture. Don't make yourself a burden on your host culture.

Have a lifestyle that keeps you available to pursue and preserve these relationships

1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

- Time builds trust and credibility.
- You should be willing to adjust your routine, habits, priorities, etc.
- Some obstacles to this lifestyle:
 - emotionally numbing distractions (e.g technology and entertainment)
 - individualism (e.g. bucket list, 1,000 things to do before I die)
 - mobility (e.g. sheer ability to be busy)

Be Yourself. Be authentic, but sensible and tactful.

Titus 2:1-8

- Example: Eating in people's homes. You may not be able to eat everything they serve. Let your host know if you have dietary needs. This doesn't mean you shouldn't go out of your comfort zone and appreciate as much as possible of your host's offerings. As you get to know people more, they will want to know your preferences and do special things for you.
- Example: Attending cultural ceremonies with spiritual implications; village marriage ceremony, including riddle of asking for the hand of the bride, game of revealing the bride, but not pouring libations; explaining that we will participate in everything, but the pouring of the libations because Jesus has made all the sacrifices we need to please God.

Keep the Essentials of the Gospel Uncluttered

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- Don't introduce unnecessary Christian traditions or legends to your conversations or intentional messages.
- Be careful with apologetics topics where discussion them might lead you to an argument rather than a message.
- Example: America founded as Christian nation; democracy is ordained by God; what American political party is best; what day of the week should Christians meet; which translation of the Bible is ordained by God; how to dress for Christian meetings; etc.

If the Bible is silent or neutral, pay attention to your conscience.

1 Corinthians 10:23-33

- Do what you believe to be best to honor God and honor your host. Don't make non-issues into issues for pride or self-justification. Humbly excuse yourself, if you must, but don't let your hang-up become an obstacle.
- Example: Christian brother who considers himself to be following Old Testament dietary laws.

Adaptability vs. Acceptability

John 5:39-47

- Adaptation and Bridging the Gospel to other cultures means making the Gospel more understandable or identifiable, not more palatable.
- Do not try to adapt the Gospel message to cultural preferences, social trends or politically correct definitions, but find the connection with personal and cultural values and/or needs.
- Example: To my Muslim friend at the end of Ramadan -- "Would you like to see in the Bible where the sacrifice of the lamb originated and what it signifies?"

Keep the focus on the biblical message.

- Don't create arguments out of non-biblical or extra-biblical information (e.g. Christmas celebrations).
- Traditions don't validate the Bible. Statistics don't validate the Bible. Logical arguments don't validate the Bible. History doesn't validate the Bible. The Bible validates the Bible.
- For example, it is a historical fact that Christian missions are responsible for the first schools and clinics and hospitals in most parts of the world. Most of the early great universities were founded as seminaries and Christian institutions. But this does not necessarily add weight to the power of the Gospel. If you started arguing this with someone, they would counter with negative historical facts like, "What about the crusades?" Your job as a witness of Jesus Christ to that culture is not to defend Christian history, but to present an uncluttered, identifiable, empathetic Gospel.

Examples of Cross-Cultural Bridges

John 4:1-55

John 15:13

John 10:10

Project: In the Afghan culture, there is a relational value called "Pashtun Wali" (sp?). With this value, the host considers it an honor and an obligation to receive anyone coming to his home. As such, he will not refuse anyone making a request or needing help. What biblical teachings and stories can you link with this value? How could you communicate the Gospel through this value?

A Few Cross-Cultural Resources

Ministering Cross-Culturally, Sherwood G. Lingenfelter; Baker Books, 1986
Refridgerator Rights, Dr. Will Miller; A Perigee Book, Penguin Books, 2002
A Mind for Missions, Paul Borthwick; NavPress, 1987
Bruchko, Bruce Olson; Creation House, 1973

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