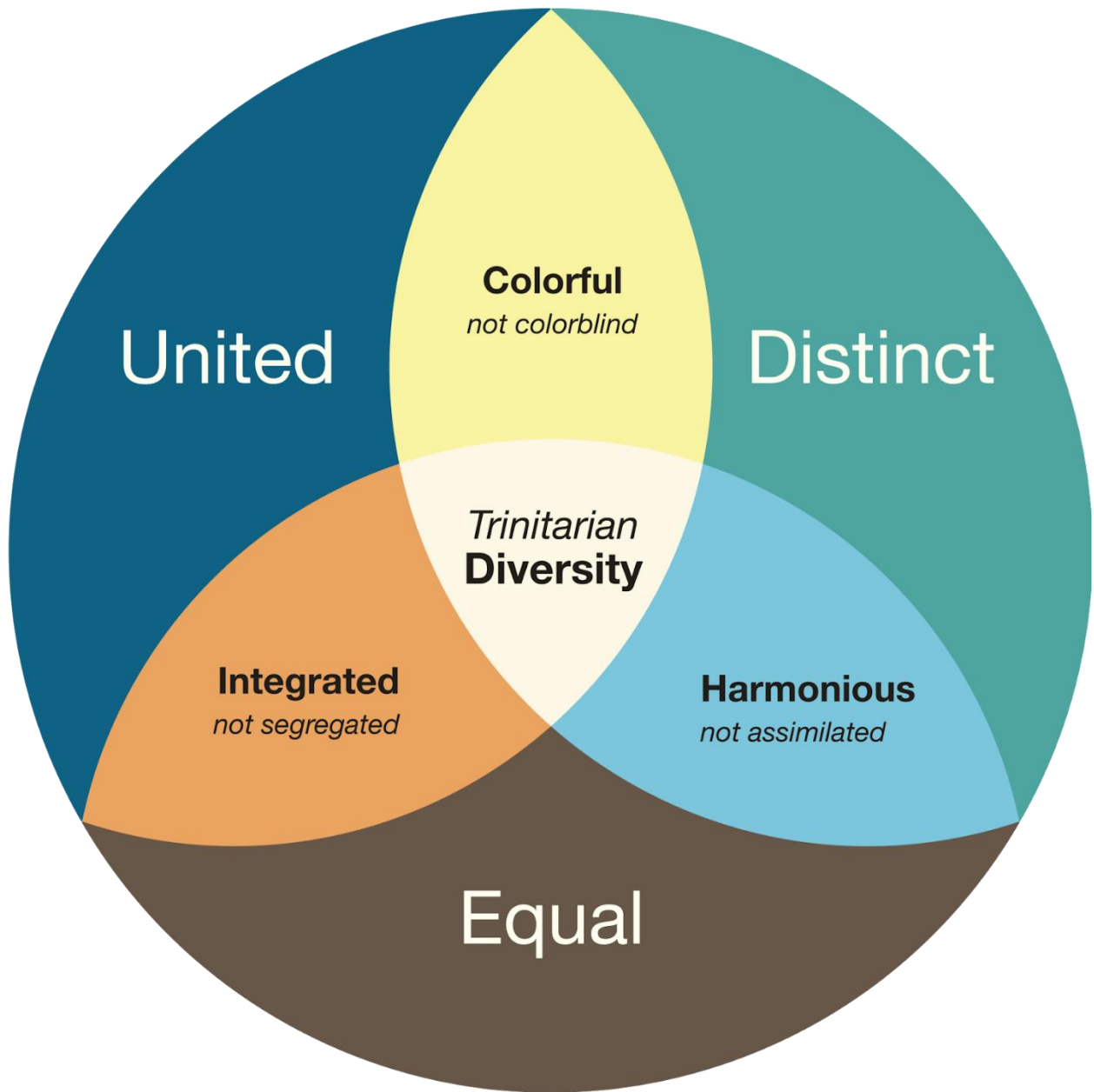


Cultural Work Book

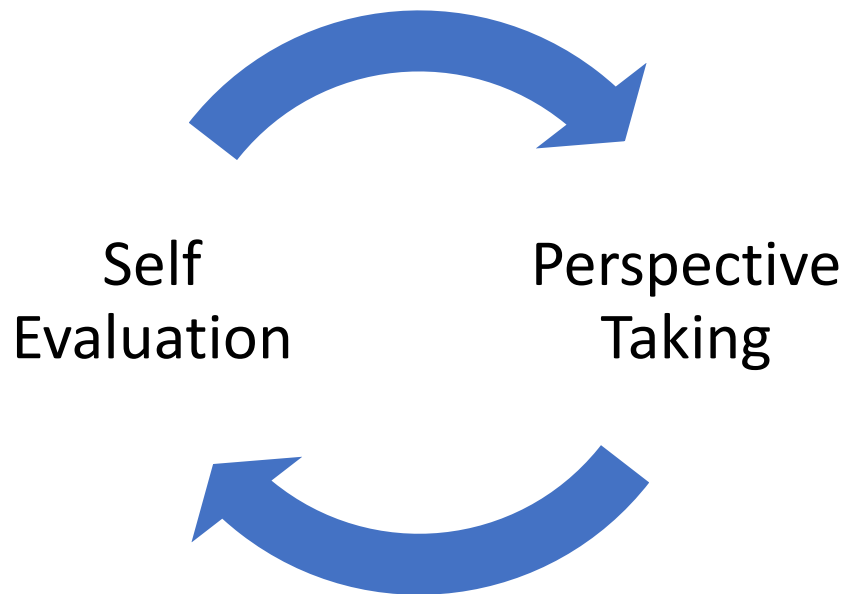
For Integrating Diverse Cultures (Part 1)

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The Journey

The journey for integrating diverse cultures starts with evaluating our own cultures, and their effects on us and those around us. However, this is difficult to see and notice because we see it as normal, and often never question/notice what has always been in front of us. Therefore, taking a different perspective is needed to deepen the awareness of our own cultural setting. In turn, the deeper the understanding we have of our culture, the more appreciation we will have of other cultures. The hope of this is to set in motion a cycle of self-evaluation which leads to perspective taking, which leads back to self-evaluation and so on. It is important to note that there is no end to this cycle, so no one can claim to have “made it,” instead this is a journey that we are all on, exploring the vast worlds of cultures.



The purpose for this workbook is to guide us on our journey, to become more self-aware of our own culture, and develop a better appreciation for other cultures, so that we may be better servant leaders. The route for this Journey to becoming better servant leaders may best be mapped out by working from the end backwards. The structure of this road map is taken from the book “Cross-Cultural Servanthood” by Duane Elmer. We cannot serve someone we do not understand, we cannot understand someone we have not learned about/from/with, we cannot learn from/with someone that do not trust us, someone cannot trust us if we do not accept them, and we cannot accept someone we are not open to, and none of this will be helpful unless we take on a spirit of humility. Therefore, the road map to servant leadership, that will help integrate diverse cultures will be split into two parts as follows:

Part one will consist of:

- Humility
- Openness
- Acceptance

Part two will include:

- Trust
- Learning
- Understanding
- Serving

Now that we've got the route set before us, let's take a minute to get to know one another (this workbook should not be done alone, but in a group setting, hopefully with people from different cultural backgrounds). Here are a few icebreaker questions you can ask people in your group.

1. Where did you grow up, and what was that like?
2. What was your family like growing up?
3. Have you ever traveled to another country, if so, what was that like?
4. What is the strangest meal you have ever eaten?
5. What is the strangest place you have ever gone?

Humility

When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom. -Proverbs 11:2

True and False Humility

The Merium Webster Dictionary defines humility as “freedom from pride or arrogance.” Did you catch that? “Freedom from pride or arrogance.” Oh, how often I have found myself shackled and chained by the binds of pride and arrogance, striving to puff myself up, only to be disgraced and deflated. Where can we find this humility to free us from pride when humility goes against our very nature. We want to be seen as better than others, we want to be treated better than we deserve, we want to think that we live in a better way than others, we want our reasoning and will to be superior, we value ourselves above others. What’s more is that we are often blind to our own pride, thinking we are justified in how highly we view ourselves, and will cause us to form a false humility to keep up this ruse. To know what is true humility, we must look at the greatest source of humility, Jesus Christ.

Read Philippians 2:1-11

What is the nature/form of Jesus seen in verse 6? _____

What is the nature/form that Jesus took on seen in verse 7? _____

Discuss what true humility looks like in this passage.

Read Luke 22:24-30, and Matthew 20:20-28

According to these passages, what did Jesus come to do? _____

Discuss what the passages meant by the Gentile rulers lording their authority.

Discuss how people today “Lord it over” people.

Read John 13:1-17

In verse 3, what was put under Jesus's power? _____

In verse 4-5, what was Jesus's response to knowing his power? _____

After washing their feet, what did Jesus instruct his disciples to do? _____

Discuss what true humility looks like in this passage.

We see in these passages a stark difference between how the world wields its power, and how Jesus does. The world uses power to raise themselves up, while Jesus, ruler over all things, used His power to serve, washing the feet of dirty teenage kids. The true humility that Jesus showed, was even though he was lord over all creation, he was not so conceited to shy away from serving us. It's not that Jesus had a low opinion of himself, or neglected who he was, he was, and knew he was, the son of God.

Discuss what made Jesus's response different than the worldly rulers.

Cultural Assessments

Part of what it means to be humble is to view ourselves rightly (Romans 12:3). This works in the area of culture as well. As our humility is hindered by our blindness to our own cultural perspective, it can be a nice starting point to take a cultural assessment, and even better to compare with others. Please note that an assessment is just that, an assessment, it is not a guide or a stereotype, nor does it pigeon hold you into keeping it. The assessment that we will be using is from the book *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, by Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers. My wife and I made an excel sheet of their assessment that auto populates so it's easier to use, and that excel document is located in our resources for your convenience. The assessment grades you in 6 categories, by 12 values: Time Orientation vs Event Orientation; Dichotomistic Thinking vs Holistic Thinking; Crisis Orientation vs Noncrisis Orientation; Status Focus vs Achievement Focus; Task Orientation vs Person Orientation; Concealment of Vulnerability vs Willingness to Expose Vulnerability.

After completing the assessment, get together and share with one another the results of the assessment. Go over each of the graphs and explain why you think the assessment put you where it did. Listen to others who have different or even similar plots as yours as to why they think the assessment put them where it did.

Openness

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak -James1:19

Openness is similar to what Jesus did when he welcomed and ate with sinners (Luke 15:2). It's our ability to see others beyond what they appear to be. Openness to people not like us can be uncomfortable, and perhaps like Jesus, morally questionable.

Before we get into areas to improve openness, reflect on and discuss Luke chapter 15.

Suspend Judgement

A study was done that determined how quick a person judges another person they just met, either negative or positive. The results were a remarkable under five seconds. That means that before a person even gets the chance to really say anything to us, we have already formulated some opinion of them either negative or positive. What makes things worse is that we will start to validate those opinions, and interpret everything they do based on that original 5 second judgement.

Take a minute and google image search the word "people," and be attentive to how your mind will start to formulate opinions about these people. If you can, look at the same picture with your group, and share your opinions (caution people opinions are weird, just let them have them). Discuss what type of personality you think they have and why.

There are many different categories that we judge people on in those first few seconds, like clothes, or posture, discuss what other categories there could be.

Have you ever been misjudged, or misjudged by another? Please share your experience.

Discuss some ways that will help to suspend judgement.

Think Grey

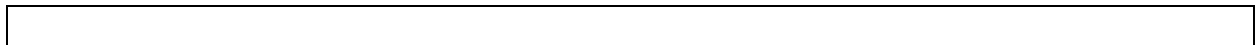


The boxes above are depictions of an exercise we will be doing in a little bit. You will be given a category, and make a bar similar to the ones above, the black represents bad white represents good, while the grey represents neutral. Fill the bar with how much you think the category is good, bad, or neutral for each of the categories.

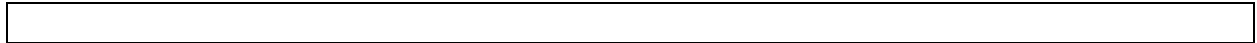
Alcohol:



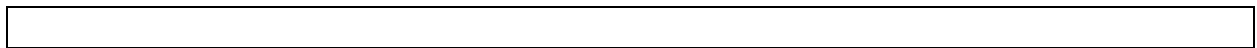
Video Games:



Smoking:



Costumes:

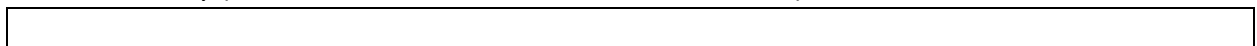


Pineapple on Pizza



Share and discuss, then we will do one more bar to share and discuss more thoroughly.

Morality (how much of life is Immoral, Moral, Amoral)



Share and discuss.

Discuss why expanding our grey area can help us be more open to others.

Acceptance

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:7

What Christ has done

Discuss what it means that Christ has accepted us.

Discuss what it means that we are to accept one another.

In the book “Cross-Cultural Servanthood” Duane Elmer remarks:

“The first principle in the pilgrimage to servanthood is openness. To be open like Christ is to invite others into our presence and treat them in ways that will make them feel safe in our presence. Second, acceptance of others is to proactively communicate respect and dignity to each human being based on the fact that each is an image-bearer of God. Both openness and acceptance are deeply rooted in the character of Christ and expressed in his relationship to all humanity.”¹

One of the reasons that acceptance is so important is that in its absence we communicate rejection. If we are not communicating to another person, in a way that is culturally appropriate for them to understand, acceptance, it says to them that they are not worthy enough for us to engage with them in a meaningful manner.

Read Colossians 1:15-23, in verse 21, what were we to God, before he reconciled us?

Discuss what the gospel is according to these verses.

¹ Elmer, Duane. Cross-Cultural Servanthood (p. 75). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

Hindrances to acceptance

Within the story of Job, are characters that fully represent people who have not accepted Job, and they are called his friends. Don't worry you don't have to read the whole book of Job, but allow me to briefly explain what these characters are doing. After the series of giant misfortunes that befalls on Job, his friends come to mourn with him for seven days, then Job start wondering why all this evil has come on him, and his friends get a little impatient with him. They start accusing him of wrong doing, of some secret sin, there theology indicated that the wicked are the ones who deserve divine punishment, and they could not see beyond that to see a person. This led them to chastise Job instead of comfort him, which in turn made them become super defensive, as Job poked holes through there falsehoods.

Job's friends showed rejection in a variety of ways, first they were impatient in dealing with him. They waited 7 days for him, but it seemed like they couldn't wait to get what they wanted to say off their chest, so much so that the first time we hear them speak, is in criticism against Job.

Have you ever found yourself in a conversation where you started to think about your response before the other person finished talking? _____

Discuss how well that went.

Another way that Job's friends showed rejection, is in the way they conveyed their theology. They were quite dogmatic about the way they viewed God, and used it as a tool to "win" against Job. We do this not only in theological areas, but in cultural areas as well, where we think our cultural way of doing this is superior. When we see someone fail because they used a different cultural method than what we would have used (for example getting yelled at for being late because their friend needed a ride), we think that they should have had valued our own cultural values.

Reflect with each other how the church has done in accepting people, either yourself or someone you know.

Discuss what may have made those who felt rejected by the church feel accepted.