

# ***Development Associates International***



Culture, Ethnicity and Diversity

## ***Workbook***

V1.2.1 © Development Associates International





# CULTURE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY



## Session 01 Introduction

### Workbook

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Session learners will be able to:

1. Identify the basic motivation for, and direction of this Workshop
2. Define the terms that will be used throughout this course: ethnicity, ethnocentricity, culture, otherness and oppositional identity
3. Summarize the impact of history and sociology, on the complexity of ethnic identity and culture
4. Explain several tragic case study examples from recent history, of ethnocentricity within the global church
5. Describe the tension between loyalty to inherited culture and faithfulness to our family in Christ

## **Introductions**

### **Exercise 1**

Pair, preferably with someone you don't already know.

Find out about each other - take notes if you like (5 minutes each).

Find out:

- the other person's name
- what they do / their ministry
- what they hope to learn from being here
- where they're based
- something about their family and the culture they grew up in...

Prepare to introduce the other person (5 minutes per pair).

Write your name on the flipchart as you are being introduced; include the name you like to be called by.

## Exercise 2



Go back to your partner and ask, “Who are you”?

Give as many identifying characteristics of yourself as you can - ways you would describe the person you are within, and get as many identifiers as possible from the other person.

Write these ‘internal identifiers’ down and then discuss together which of these traits are really determined by your inherited culture or context and which of these are internal and unchanging?

## **Important Definitions**

### **CULTURE, PARTICULARITY, ETHNICITY, ETHNOCENTRICITY, RACISM**

#### **Exercise 3a**

Discuss what the word on the card means to you and create a group definition.

#### **Exercise 3b**

Discuss the Workbook definition and how it differs from the definition you came up with.

#### **Exercise 3c**

Prepare a short presentation (about 7 mins), to teach the rest of the class the correct definition as it applies to your own context and cultural experience.

## **Five Tragic Stories**

### **1. RWANDA – When the nuns brought the gasoline**



On 22 April 1994, Séraphine Mukamana, a worker at a Christian orphanage, had hidden herself in a garage when militias attacked a convent in Sovu in southern Rwanda. Seraphine was from one of the ethnic groups battling each other in Rwanda, and the attacking soldiers were from the other. She testified later in court:

"We sought refuge in the garage and closed and barricaded the doors. Outside a bloodbath was going on. Suddenly an orphan began to weep as it got too hot in the garage. At once, the killers approached the garage."

The refugees refused to come out, so the militia leader Emmanuel Rekeraho decided to burn them alive in the garage.

The soldiers were uneasy because it was a Christian orphanage but the leader remarked to his fellow soldiers:

"The nuns are coming to help us. They are bringing gasoline."

Two of the sisters from the convent, Sister Gertrude and Sister Kisito, members of the soldiers' ethnic group, approached with petrol cans. They joined the militiamen in setting fire to the garage. Seraphine was badly burned but she miraculously survived to tell her story.

The 1994 Rwandan genocide, killing an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus, is made even more incomprehensible by the documented participation of many representatives of Rwandan church societies. How could God fearing nuns, and even a Bishop, take part in the most cruel crimes against humanity committed on African soil? Even worse, several church societies allegedly were co-responsible for the growing hatred that led to the genocide.

## 2. NORTHERN IRELAND – “You are not allowed to be friends”



Patrick came from a devoted Roman Catholic family who went to Mass and confession every week, prayed regularly and surrounded themselves with reminders of their Christian faith. Ian came from a similar family in another section of Belfast, Northern Ireland, but his family was Protestant. Like Patrick's family, they went to Church every week, read the Bible at the evening meal and prayed and trusted Jesus to meet their needs and forgive their sins.

Patrick and Ian got to meet each other when their schools played football against each other. Though there were many tensions in Northern Ireland at the time, the headmasters of their respective schools hoped that playing sports could help build some peace in their city. For Patrick and Ian it worked. They were both goal-tenders and captain of their teams. Their traditions meant that they led their teams in prayer before each new match.

After one of their first games, Patrick and Ian joined mid-field to shake hands, and they began to talk. They immediately sensed a camaraderie together and they exchanged phone numbers. Two or three times per week they would talk and report on their various experiences in football matches. Soon the conversations got into other topics including their studies, their interest in girls, and even their faith. They soon found out that they had much in common.

When Patrick's team was scheduled to come across town to play Ian's, Ian wanted to invite Patrick over for tea after the game. On Monday, the day before the match, Ian explained his friendship with Patrick to his Mum and asked if he could come over on Tuesday evening. To Ian's surprise, his mother was furious. She scolded him:

“Is that boy from a Catholic school? And you have been friendly with him? Don't you understand your heritage, boy? You're Protestant and he is Catholic. No! He may not come over, and I forbid you from talking to him again. You are not allowed to be friends.”



### **3. CROATIA: Sniping young men for Jesus**



In the city of Mostar in what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina, a river historically separated the Christians from the Moslems. Even though there was inter-religious and inter-ethnic tension in the city that dated back to 1389, the people had lived in relative peace under the forced unity of the Yugoslavian government for several decades. Commerce occasionally brought people together in functional relationships but generally they lived separated lives.

After the break-up of Yugoslavia according to ethnic groups in 1989, the city became totally separated. Warring factions destroyed a strategic bridge that had brought the two sections of the city together. On the Christian side, a high hill gave the Christians a vantage point into the city streets of the Muslim side. Military members from the Christian side would climb the hill every day and focus their scopes on the city streets of the Muslim side. Expert marksmen sat daily in hopes of killing any Muslims that walked the streets in open areas but their special interest was the young men. Men who prayed, read their Bibles, baptized their babies and attended church were assassinating unarmed people with the thought that they were pleasing God.

#### 4. SOUTH AFRICA: Beatings on Saturday; to church on Sunday



Like most young men in South Africa during the Apartheid regime, Ivor was drafted to serve two years in the military. Ivor was registered 'white' according to the Apartheid Laws, though he knew from his father that his grandfather had had a black wife – which helped Ivor understand his skin tone and hair texture.

Like most South Africans, Ivor attended church every Sunday. And, like many South African military, Ivor was commanded to search through the black townships each week looking for revolutionaries or members of the Africa National Congress (ANC) or other groups that the government had been identified as subversive.

During one week in 1985, Ivor was on a routine patrol in the black township of Soweto (near Johannesburg). He and his patrol heard shouting and pursued the cause. They came upon another military patrol which was angrily interrogating a family suspected of ANC ties. As members of the other patrol sought to forcibly detain two of the teenage boys in the family, the mother and the grandmother tried to intervene. Their cries were a mix of anguish and prayers. They pulled the boys shouting:

“Help us Jesus, help us Jesus.”

As they resisted the soldiers, they both met the force of the butt-end of a rifle.

The mother's jaw was obviously broken; the grandmother was knocked unconscious. After the military vehicles left with the boys, Ivor went towards the women in an effort to help. His commanding officer rebuked him and told him to get back on patrol.

The next day was Sunday, and Ivor was in his all-white Church with his wife and his two boys. As he looked up at the picture of Jesus holding the lamb in his arms, he cried quietly:

“How can I be beating people on Saturday who are crying out to Jesus, and then sitting here on Sunday?”

## 5. NIGERIA: “You are first a Yoruba man.”



Yosuf’s father had converted to Christianity when Yosuf was only a child so Yosuf had been raised as a Christian in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood in the large city of Lagos. When it came time to go to University, Yosuf wanted to pursue studies that were offered only at a school in the eastern part of his country, Nigeria.

He went to the city of Port Harcourt to study for four years. It was a difficult cultural adjustment because Yosuf didn’t speak Ibo, the language of the dominant ethnic group in the East. Yosuf was a Yoruba, the dominant ethnic group in the West. Nevertheless, the classes were in English and Yosuf found fellowship in a local Christian student group which had students from many of Nigeria’s language groups. While he was there, he met Margaret, a strong Christian from a Christian family. Though she was an Ibo, they became close friends.

After graduation, they had grown very close, and they wanted to pursue marriage. Because Yosuf sensed that his father might be resistant to Margaret, Yosuf decided that he wanted to take Margaret to Lagos to meet his family before he approached her father for permission. Together they made the long journey to Lagos. Yosuf’s father and mother welcomed Margaret but, on the first night, Yosuf sensed that his father was upset.

Yosuf went to his father after Margaret had gone to sleep:

“Father, what is wrong?” he asked.

His father replied, “Yosuf, Margaret seems like a beautiful girl, and I know she is a Christian, but she is not one of us – a Yoruba! You must remember: you are first a Yoruba man. I do not want you to marry her.”

### **Exercise 4a. JONAH**

When Jonah was called upon to reach out to people outside of his own cultural group, he ran the other way. His historic bitterness for these people combined with his fear that God might be merciful towards them forced him to run away. Eventually he came back, but not willingly. When God exercised his mercy towards those Jonah hated, Jonah got depressed.

- **Are there people that you hate because of history?**
- **Are there other religious groups that you would not want God to be merciful towards?**

### **Exercise 4b. PETER**

Peter's first identity was in his Jewishness. He believed in Jesus, but mostly as Saviour of the Jews, not as Savior of the world. Like Jonah, Peter probably had some of the same bitterness issues towards outsiders, but he mostly ignored the Gentiles (non-Jews). That is, until God called Peter to go and eat a meal with them. After God's persistent persuasion, Peter went, but he still preferred separateness. To Peter, there was still a "them and us" distinction – even in the church.

- **Do you prefer to have Christian friends who are all from your same group – ethnic, cultural, social or economic?**
- **Do you see your group as the 'us' and those whose skin colour or level in society is different than yours as 'them'?**

### **Exercise 4c. PAUL**

From his pre-Christian life as a radical Jew, Paul's vision of other people was transformed by his understanding of the way that Christ's death on the cross broke down the walls that divide people. He served on a multi-cultural, multi-racial team. He recruited Jews and Gentiles to work together, and he dedicated his life to helping Christians understand that Jesus' sacrifice makes us into a culture of equals, a 'new humanity'.

- **To what extent is it your desire that your church or fellowship realizes that in Christ we are 'one'?**
- **In what ways are you like Paul?**

### **Exercise 5**

Move to the corner that represents the character - Jonah, Peter or Paul, you most identify with.

Discuss with the group there, your reasons for identifying with this character.

## **Our Big Questions**

### **Exercise 6**

Discuss the following questions with your partner:

- a. How important is ethnic identity in your family?
- b. In your church?
- c. In your community?

### **Exercise 7**

On your own, read Luke 18:10-14 and answer the following questions after some personal reflection:

- a. If you were in the shoes of the Pharisee, what would your statement be? Complete the following: "I thank God that I am not like ....."
- b. Where in the life of your community do you see this '*my identity is superior to yours*' mentality? Consider that 'otherness' doesn't always refer to ethnic differences but can also be applied to gender, age and social differences.
- c. Spend a few minutes in prayer asking God to use this Workshop to bring new and compelling insights to your perceptions of identity.

**Exercise 8**

In your table groups, discuss what forces in your society keep members divided on the basis of cultural or ethnic differences, keeping one another at a distance?

### Exercise 9

In silence on your own, write a short letter to one of your children or to a niece or nephew (preferably someone under the age of 15 years old) explaining what the following verses mean as they are applied to the modern culture in which we live:

- **John 17: 20-23** – explain what it means for disciples to be “one”
- **Galatians 3:26-28** – explain what the differences between people (race, ethnicity, gender, economics) mean in terms of Christian relationships



# CULTURE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY



## Session 02 Creation & Fall

### Workbook

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Session learners will be able to:

1. Explain the Biblical foundation of human rights and discuss from Scripture the belief that we are *ALL TOGETHER* created equally in the image of God
2. Describe our need for an 'external' identity, i.e. that, as created beings, we are not self-contained nor self-existent
3. Give an assessment of the ways you and others in your community tend to devalue those who are different, through language, jokes or other behaviors which imply superiority
4. Describe the extent to which your identity in Christ has been constrained by your allegiance to other reference groups

## **Introduction**

### **Exercise 1**

In small groups: Read together Exodus 3:10-14, then answer the following two questions:

- 1. What is it that Moses needs from God to fulfill this instruction?**
- 2. What does God mean by his response to Moses?**

### **Exercise 2**

In the same small groups: Read Psalm 139: 1-18

- Make a list of each point made about your relationship with God**
- Now read the texts below and add to your list. If you can think of other texts, add them as well *Further texts: Genesis 1:27, Matthew 10:29-31, Acts 17:24-28, Jeremiah 1:4-5, Ephesians 1:11-12, Zephaniah 3:17***
- On a flip chart, write up five of the points, that your whole group agree, that have strong implications and make a difference in your lives. Prepare to present these to the other groups explaining what they mean to you and those in your group**

## ***“The Identity Bell”***

### **THE IDENTITY BELL**

#### **I KNOW WHO I AM**

I am God's child (John 1:12)  
I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)  
I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)  
I am bought with a price (1 Cor 6:19-20)  
I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)  
I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)  
I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt 5:13-14)  
I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27)  
I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8: 1-2)  
I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil 3:20)  
I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31 -34)  
I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor 5:17-21)  
I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)  
I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)  
I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom 8:35-39)  
I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor 1:21-22)  
I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)  
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)  
I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3: 12)  
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)  
I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)  
I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 16). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2: 10)  
I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). I have been justified (Romans 5:1)  
I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)  
I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (Phil. 1: 5)  
I have been redeemed and forgiven (Col 1:14). I have been adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5)  
I belong to God  
Do you know  
Who you are!?

**Keep this bell ringing...**  
**'The LORD bless you and keep you;**  
**The LORD make His face shine upon you**  
**And be gracious to you;**  
**The LORD turn His face toward you**  
**And give you peace...'**

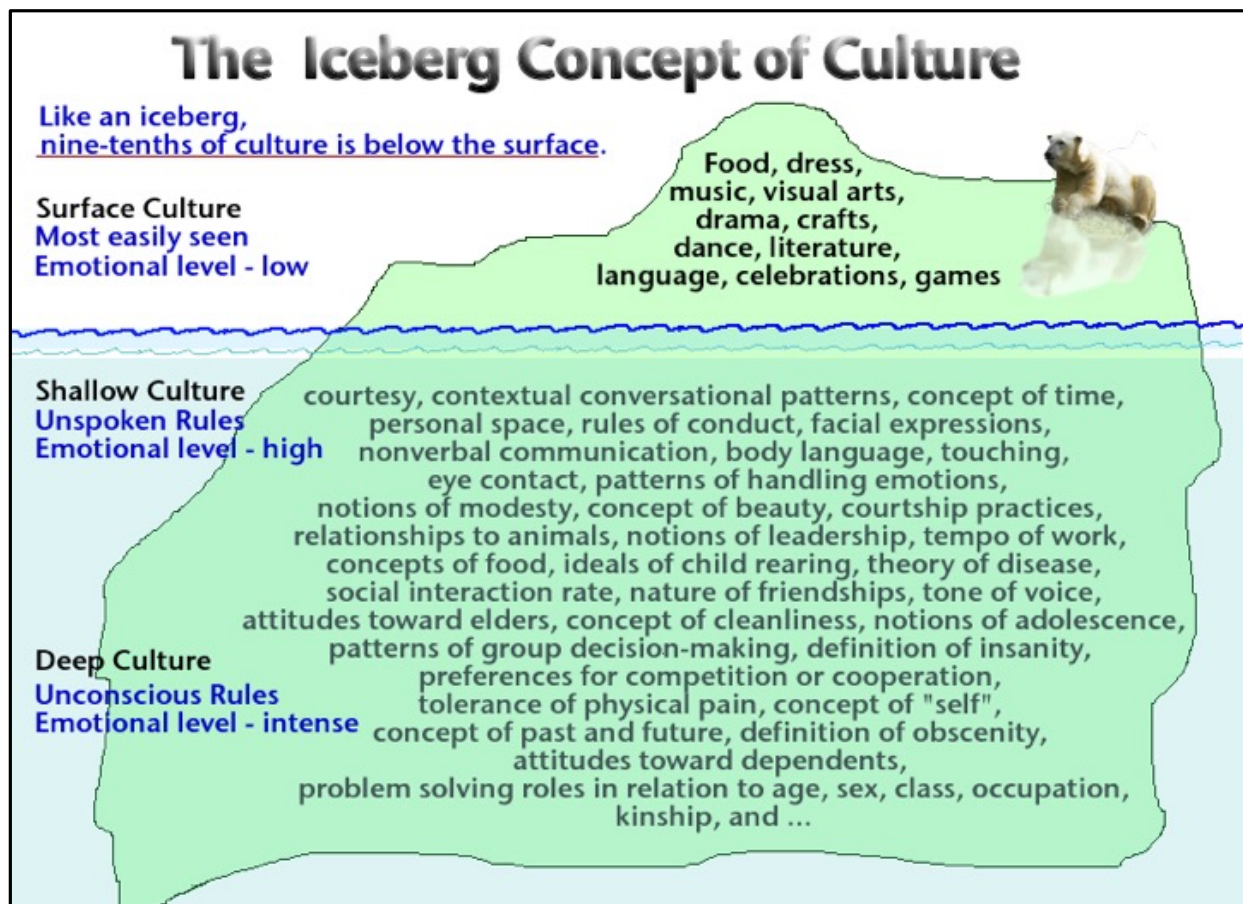
### Exercise 3

Reflect silently, and bring to mind three relationships, or people you are aware of, outside your own family, with people who are different in some way

**How would your life change if you really believed the following quotation?**

*"All people are created in the image of God and therefore all races and ethnic groups have the **same status and unique values** that result from being made in the image of God?"*

Write these three relationships down and take several minutes to pray for these relationships asking that God would transform your heart



## Creation and Identity

### **Exercise 4**

Read Genesis 2

In your small groups, answer the following questions:

- 1. What does being “created in the image of God,” teach us about our identity and security?**

Now read Genesis 3.

- 2. When the relationship with God is broken, how does this change the way that we relate to others?**

### **Exercise 5**

In your small groups, read Matthew 5:21-24 and James 3:9-10

**What do these verses teach about the significance of our language – especially when it comes to exalting ourselves at the expense of another?**

### Case Study: What Motivated William Wilberforce?

William Wilberforce is regarded as a hero worldwide because of his persistent and successful fight to abolish slavery. After spending 46 years as a member of Parliament, fighting to secure the abolition of the slave trade, the British Parliament finally voted to abolish slavery in 1807. Wilberforce's steadfast commitment to the equality of all was one of the first principles that flowed from his Christian faith, believing that *"God hath made of one blood all nations of men"* (Acts 17:26). He desired that we should treat others in the way we want to be treated, feeling that it was his duty to "follow peace with all men, and look upon them as members of the same family." Every person, likewise, was "entitled to the debts of justice [and] to the ... liberal claims of fraternal kindness."

### Exercise 6

Some refer to Wilberforce as a "voice for the voiceless" as he used his legislative position to "defend the rights of slaves who had no voice in the British legislature".

Discuss this example of William Wilberforce and reflect together on the voiceless people God is calling you to speak on behalf of.

Take a few moments of silence to think of your own community and consider:

- **Who are the voiceless people that God (their Creator) might be calling you to speak on behalf of?**
- **How will you do it?**

Make some notes below as you reflect on this. Share them with your group

### **Exercise 6 (cont'd)**

Pray as a group for several minutes, thanking God that we are made in His image. Ask God to soften our hearts and give us humility throughout the lesson as we come to understand that we are **all** made in this same image.

### **Exercise 7**

For the next 5 minutes, go and find three other participants – who you know, or believe, may be different from you in some way e.g. from a different ethnic background, different gender or some other way.

Go to these others, look at them directly, shake hands and say:

**“You are precious because you are created in the image of God, and because of Jesus, you are my (brother or sister)”**

Every person will say this, and hear it said directly to them, three times.

## **Creation as the Basis for Human Rights**

### **UN Declaration of Human Rights - Article One**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

### **Human Rights Position Paper, Conference of European Churches 1984**

“The origin of human rights is creation. Man has never ‘acquired’ them...  
They are inherent in his creation.  
They have been bestowed on him by his Creator”

*John Stott*

### **Imago Dei**

“...restores the language of ‘human rights’ to its proper anchoring in a larger framework of our mutual responsibility for one another before God.”

*Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra*

## **Sin Enters the World: The Fall**

### **Exercise 8**

#### **What were some other implications of the Fall?**

Make a list of your observations in your group and be ready to share with others

## **Following Paul's Example**

### **Exercise 9**

Read Philippians 3:4-14 and jot down some answers to the following two questions:

- 1. In what ways does Paul deal with his identity?**
- 2. How does he exemplify someone who is trying to make Jesus the centre of his identity?**



### **No partiality: The idolatry of Race and the New Humanity**

Jew or Gentile, male or female, slave or free, black or white, brown or yellow – all these are socially constructed ways of defining and expressing ourselves over against others, and as such they contradict God's purpose for humanity, the purpose of co-humanity with and for one another, as disclosed in one new human, Jesus of Nazareth. The question that Jesus' new humanity forces upon us is this: **Has our ability to internalize and externalize Christian identity been constrained and even contradicted by our loyalty and allegiance to other reference groups, including our racial group?** Has our old oppositional humanity compromised the response-ability and relations that God intends for God's human creatures? Have we failed to discern God's self-disclosure in the reconciliation in Jesus Christ because we prefer the blinders that come with self- and group – interest? Have we declined to express this reconciliation because we are more comfortable with our old ways of living and our default position is consistent with the temper of our times?

*Douglas R. Sharp, 2002*

## **Exercise 10**

In quiet reflection, spend 10 minutes reflecting on the two questions below:

- 1. Evaluate your own way of looking at yourself – either by your own choices or by the by values that others in your family or society instilled in you.**
- 2. How has your ability to internalize and externalize Christian identity been constrained, and even contradicted, by your loyalty and allegiance to other reference groups?**

Then, go back to your groups and discuss:

**What specific steps can we each take to work through some of the tensions in our own communities or jobs or churches between people who are racially or ethnically different?**

# CULTURE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY



## Session 03 And God Created Diversity

### Workbook

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Session participants will be able to:

1. Locate one key passage in Genesis that emphasizes the fact that culture, ethnicity and diversity were God's creation
2. Explain how we know that God created diversity
3. Describe how our knowledge of God deepens as we learn about other cultures

## **Positive and Negative aspects of Culture**

### **Exercise 1**

Explore the question: **‘In what ways is culture a positive force? In what ways is it a negative force?’**

In small groups, read the following and discuss the three questions. Take notes and create a flipchart presentation to share with the rest of the group.

**Given the fact that sin has entered the world, it permeates everything including culture. Because of this, no culture is all good or all evil. Instead, as Christians we need to look at culture and cultural issues and ask:**

- 1. What aspects of a culture need to be celebrated? This could include respect for elders, beautiful music, care for each other, care for the earth, etc.**
- 2. What aspects of a culture need to be redeemed? For example, loyalty to the tribe could be redeemed into loyalty to the Christian community. Drums used to summon demons could be redeemed into instruments of worship**
- 3. What aspects of a culture need to be rejected? Cultural practices that clearly contradict the Bible need to be abandoned**

### **Paragraph 10 of the Lausanne Covenant “Evangelism and Culture”**

“The development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture.”

### **Exercise 2**

In your groups, discuss one of the scriptures below

Group 1: Mark 7:8-13

Group 2: Genesis 4:21-22

Group 3: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Group 4: Philippians 2:5-7

Group 5: 2 Corinthians 4:5

Discuss in your groups, take notes and be prepared to share with the participants

### **Exercise 3**

In your small groups, read Acts 17:16-34 (Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece) and answer the following two questions together:

- 1. Before addressing the Athenians, Paul observed a variety of aspects of their culture, which distressed him. What were they?**
- 2. How did Paul relate to them as a result?**

## What about the Tower of Babel?

1. Humans disobey the mandate to disperse and “fill the earth” (Genesis 11)
2. So, God confuses their language and people are scattered (Genesis 11:18)
3. Thereby God restores his original intention and plan for humankind
4. Dispersion results in the creation of separated tribes, languages, peoples and nations (a foreshadowing of Revelation 5:9 and 7:9)

### **Exercise 4**

In small groups discuss the following questions:

- 1. Do you think diversity was a punishment for trying to establish a unified culture, or the creative intent of God**
- 2. Are the over 7,000 living languages in the world a result of our fallen state?**

## **Two opposing types of Unity**

1. Unity willed by God that all humanity be in covenant relationship with Him (Genesis 9:8-11)
2. Unity in Tower of Babel: a unity **“sought by fearful humanity organized against the purposes of God. This unity attempts to establish a cultural, human oneness without reference to the threats, promises, or mandates of God. This is a self-made unity in which humanity has a ‘fortress mentality.’ It seeks to survive by its own resources.”**

*Walter Brueggemann*

**“This new identity relativizes every ethnic identity but does not efface it or invalidate its cultural expression. Citizenship in the Kingdom of God is the only absolute, non-negotiable identity for the Christian, besides which all other levels of identity are mobile and may be freely affirmed or laid aside for the sake of the Gospel. The Gospel affirms ethnic identity by enabling the Christian to rejoice in it for its intrinsic created goodness, to subordinate it to the Lordship of Christ, and to use it for the service of God and the neighbor.”**

**International Fellowship of Missions Theologians 1991**

### **Exercise 5**

In pairs, in the context of your community, take it in turns to share:

- specific challenges that you personally face in living in ‘united diversity’
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- how you believe you can better glorify God through the rich differences that exist between you and others of different ethnic backgrounds

After a time of sharing, pray for each other’s challenges and opportunities

## **God's creativity reflected through the richness of different Cultures**

### **Exercise 6**

If possible, sit in small groups with people of a similar or close ethnic background. Discuss the following question and record your group's thoughts to share with the group:

Identify three other people groups that you are familiar with, who would be ethnically, racially or culturally different from yours.

**What aspects of their culture uniquely reflect God's creative work?**



# CULTURE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY



## Session 04 Blessed to be a Blessing

### Workbook

#### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this Session participants will be able to:

1. Explain from Scripture that God's call to Abram (Genesis 12) was to bless all the nations, peoples and cultures of the world, including those who are 'outside' of your own culture or ethnic group
2. Identify ethnocentric behaviors that we have learned about or have seen in our own culture
3. Propose ideas of how we are called 'to be a "blessing"' and list ways we can reach out with compassion and care for those whose needs and value seem most forgotten

## **Ethnocentricity: Past and Present**

### **Exercise 1**

In small groups first discuss the following statement:

**“Ethnocentrism leads the people of God to believe that they are superior to other peoples, and this degenerates into a church that can be exclusive, racist, and even oppressive”**

Then make a list together of signs of ethnic supremacy and domination you have noticed in your daily lives.

## **The Covenant to Abram/Abraham**

### **Exercise 2**

In pairs, read Genesis 12:1-3 and discuss the points and questions below. Make notes to share with the rest of the class.

- 1. What you think these verses are saying? Summarize to one another**
- 2. Which group of people were going to be made into a “great nation”?**
- 3. Who was God referring to when He said, “all peoples on earth will be blessed by you”?**
- 4. What does the central Biblical theme introduced here show us in the context of racial division and ethnocentricity?**
- 5. In what ways can Christian communities and organizations model what God intended?**

## **God's plan for a Multi-Ethnic Family**

### **Exercise 3**

In your groups, read each of the statements below:

1. God claims all the nations
2. God states his concern for the aliens and strangers
3. God extends his grace to Gentiles
4. God describes a vision of an eternal kingdom where all nations and tongues come together

Match each of these statements by finding which of the following scriptures teaches them:

- Isaiah 9:1-2
- Psalm 2:8; 24:1; 33:8; 46:10
- Isaiah 66:18-19
- Jeremiah 22:3; Ezekiel 47:21-23

## **Reaching across Barriers**

### **Exercise 4a**

In small groups, think about people in your own community who are ethnically or culturally different from you. Create a list of three or four ways that God might call you to 'bless all the peoples around you' no matter what their ethnic diversity may be.

**Exercise 4b**

Individually consider what cultural 'comfort zones' you will need to leave in order to start befriending or reaching out to those who are different or are outside your own culture? What are the risks? What might you lose?

Share your answers in your small groups.

**Exercise 4c: Time of Sharing and Prayer**

1. Pair up and share your lists from Exercise 4a with your partner. Also share what you might risk or fear (Exercise 4b) and how you will move out of your comfort zone
2. Commit to keeping one another accountable by checking in with your partner after a couple of weeks to find out what they have done
3. Pray for each other

## Exercise 5: Acts of Mercy towards 'the other'



Re-read Matthew 25:35

1. On your own, list the 6 acts of mercy identified in this verse. Against each, write down what the outworking of the act might look like for you in the context of people of another ethnicity in your community
2. In table groups, take it in turns to share your lists and offer each other feedback in terms of validity and practicality
3. Individually, amend your list in the light of the discussion and select 3 acts of mercy that you will deliberately seek to find opportunities to demonstrate after the Workshop
4. Spend time in pray asking the Lord to grant you these opportunities

© DAI 2017



# CULTURE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY



## **Session 05 Reconciliation and Forgiveness**

### **Workbook**

#### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this Session participants will be able to:

1. Compare the ethnicity lessons we learn from Jonah - including issues related to history, hatred, stereotypes, and forgiveness - with challenges that we might face in our own context
2. Evaluate in our own context what it will mean to express in relationships the fact that Jesus' death on the cross breaks down the "dividing walls of hostility" between separated peoples
3. Describe how Ephesians 2 depicts the true nature of the Body of Christ including the horizontal nature of Christ's redemptive work
4. Describe how Joseph's story helps us in thinking about forgiveness and reconciliation in our own context

## **Maung's Story**

**Narrator:** At a conference in Yangon, the largest city in Myanmar, Maung and others from a variety of the country's ethnic minority groups had come for training in evangelism. Maung lived in an area dominated by the people group known as the "Karen" people, an ethnic minority in southern and south-eastern Myanmar and several of the neighboring countries. On the last day of the evangelism training, we were set to go into the city to do some street preaching and witnessing. Maung refused. He folded his arms defiantly and said:

**Maung:** I am not going.

**Narrator:** We asked him why. He explained that he was from the "Karen" people and that the majority of the people in the city were from the Burmese people. He went on:

**Maung:** For many years, the Burmese have oppressed and persecuted my people, the Karen. If I go into the city and witness for Jesus, a Burmese might become a Christian. If he becomes a Christian, then he will go to heaven when he dies. I do not want any Burmese in heaven, so I am not going witnessing!

## **The Story of Jonah**

### **Exercise 1**

Prepare to share the general themes of your chapter with the other participants:

Chapter 1: Called to Nineveh, Jonah runs

Chapter 2: Jonah repents in the belly of the fish

Chapter 3: Jonah obeys God and preaches in Nineveh

Chapter 4: Jonah resents God's mercy



A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the majority of the page. It is intended for a drawing or a written response.

**Israel hated Assyria, the empire in which Nineveh was the capital; Nineveh sat on the Tigris River, near the modern-day city of Mosul, Iraq. Assyria had stood for 300 years as a brutally militaristic empire known and hated by all its West Asian neighbors for its violence, conquests, and reputation for cannibalizing defeated foes.**

**Assyria conquered armies, took captives, piled up booty, beheaded other kings and impaled them on pikes. They were seen as one of the cruelest and most rapacious empires of the ancient world.**

**Jonah sails from Joppa (modern day Jaffa - about 30 miles northwest of Jerusalem) towards Tarshish, what scholars identify as the city of Tartessus in southwestern Spain – a city over 2000 miles from Jonah’s home and in the opposite direction of Nineveh. We don’t know (in chapters 1 and 2) exactly why he ran – other than the fact that he “ran away from the Lord” (1:3). Fear of Ninevites seems at first to be the logical reason.**

## **Jonah and the Battle with Ethnocentricity**

### **Exercise 2**

Discuss the following two questions in your small groups and prepare to share your thoughts with others:

- 1. Identify the two underlying emotional drives that Jonah was wrestling with**
- 2. In what ways were his perceptions of God’s character distorted?**

## **Two Big Lessons from Jonah**

***A missionary preparing for Bible translation with an ethnic group in West Africa was asked, “How did you come to love these people?” The man shocked the audience by replying, “I don’t love these people.”***

***Then he continued, “I know that Jesus loves me, and Jesus loves these people and I pray that I’ll come to love them. But I’m not going because I love them. I’m going because I’ve experienced God’s mercy through Jesus Christ and I want them to have the same opportunity to receive God’s mercy in Christ.”***

### **Exercise 3**

Discuss in your groups the following questions:

- 1. How could Jesus have treated her?**
- 2. How does this story affect the way that you see other people around you who are outside of your culture, ethnicity, or accepted “group”?**
- 3. Compare together, Jesus responses to the culturally alienated Samaritan woman to Jonah’s outreach to the Ninevites**

When you have finished your discussion, pray together that in the week ahead you will be given eyes of mercy to see at least on culturally alienated person as God sees them, no matter what past hurt might be present

## A Story of Forgiveness from Cambodia

**Sokreaksa Himm**, known as “**Reaksa**” to his friends, saw 14 of his family members killed during the genocide that ravaged Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge in the early 1970’s. His book “**Tears of My Soul**” tells the story of his conversion, his healing through counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder and his subsequent decision to return to Cambodia, find his family’s killers and forgive them.

In an email interview (2005), he responded to some questions about healing of past hurts. He offered his answers so that we in this course can learn from his experiences.

**Interviewer:** Can forgiveness and healing come for the oppressed without a time away from the oppressors i.e. the way that you left Cambodia before returning or the way that Old Testament Joseph was away from his brothers – even after he met them again?

**Reaksa:** Absolutely, forgiveness brings emotional healing.

**Interviewer:** Related to this, how have those who stayed in Cambodia found forgiveness and healing? Has healing come to those who stayed in the company of oppressors?

**Reaksa:** It is hard to answer this specific question. For me, if no forgiveness, no healing will take place.

**Interviewer:** Can reconciliation happen when the offender does not confess or acknowledge guilt?

**Reaksa:** In my second book, here is what I wrote in my introduction in the chapter on reconciliation.

*“Reconciliation can never take place if forgiveness is not first granted. No-one in the world would wake up one morning and decide to search for their family's killers and begin to build up a relationship with them. It would be relatively easy for each one of us to deliver a message of forgiveness to a far-distant offender but coming face to face with them would be an entirely different scenario, especially when the hurt was so deep. No one could predict the emotional outcome of an individual when coming to face to face with such an offender.”*

**Interviewer:** In Cambodia, how can you tell the difference between lasting peace and forgiveness between peoples versus what one author calls "hatred that is sleeping"?

**Reaksa:** In Cambodian culture, people live with suppression. They do not like to talk about their emotional problems. It is hard to tell about the peace and hatred. It is difficult to identify the two faces. Actually, it is the same, but when anger erupts, we can tell their hatred from their behavior.

## **Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Ephesians**

### **Exercise 4**

In groups of 3 or 4, read together Ephesians 2:11-22 and extract each phrase that relates to the task below:

- Using the image of the cross, make a list of Paul's examples of what Jesus death on the Cross has done to reconcile us – both vertically (in our relationship with God) and horizontally (in our relationship with each other)
- Take a flipchart and two different colored markers. Draw a large cross to fill the paper using a different color for each line
- Write up your lists on both axes along with the relevant the verses

## **Joseph's Story**

### **Exercise 5a**

1. As you go through the text, underline, or make a list of all the emotions expressed by each person in these 3 chapters
2. Assign roles of the main characters to each person in your group, i.e. Joseph, Jacob, Benjamin, Simeon, Judah and Reuben (these last two could be played by the same person): add other brothers if you have a large group
3. Design a skit to illustrate all the conflicting emotions of this story. Try to bring out the critical points in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Feel free to add to the biblical script in ways that are consistent with your character and their emotional state. You may divide the skit into separate acts if that seems appropriate
4. Present your skit to the other group

### **Exercise 5b**

In your small groups discuss the following questions and prepare to share with the rest of the participants.

- 1. What emotion does Joseph express?**
- 2. What do you learn about the emotions that might occur when broken relationships are in the process of being reconciled?**
- 3. How might we speak of past sins? Are we sometimes 'economic' with the truth as Joseph's brothers were when they talked about their family?**
- 4. What does Joseph see as the purpose of his servitude, imprisonment, and separation from his family?**

### **Exercise 6**

Read Genesis 50:15-21.

Discuss the following question in your small groups.

**As you face the challenge of forgiving and releasing others, what do you find most challenging about the example of Joseph?**

## **Exercise 7**



Individually answer these questions:

**1. What in your past do you need to accept and leave behind?**

**2. Who do you need to forgive? How and when will you offer this?**

© DAI 2017



# CULTURE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY



## **Session 06** **The Church after Pentecost:** **Restoring the Beauty of Ethnic Diversity**

### **Workbook**

#### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this Session participants will be able to:

1. Summarize the multi-ethnic purposes of God in the Book of Acts
2. Describe the link between Holy-Spirit fullness and racial reconciliation
3. Contrast the Biblical picture of heaven with the cultural and ethnic realities of their own Christian community
4. Describe the next steps that they have identified as their role in God's mission of reconciliation and how they will remain accountable for this commitment

## **Introduction**

### **Exercise 1**

In your small groups discuss the significance of the book of Acts and be prepared to share your thoughts.

## **An Ethnocentric Church?**

### **Exercise 2**

**On your own** reflect on the makeup of your own Church or Christian organization

**How much cultural or ethnic diversity is reflected in the constituency?**

### **Exercise 3**

In your groups, identify three ways that Stephen's death initiated the expansion of the church into the Roman Empire

### **Exercise 4**

Sit with 2 or 3 others who had put their mark on the spectrum close to yours in Exercise 2 and discuss one of the two questions below, depending on which is appropriate:

- 1. If your church or organization is dominated by one culture or ethnicity, what problems might you encounter if you started encouraging greater diversity?**
- 2. If your church is already multi-cultural, what ways have you found to ensure every person is an equally valued member?**

### **Exercise 5**

Read your chapter individually and then as a group. Make notes on the following questions and prepare to teach the rest of the participants with a flipchart presentation.

- 1. What were the significant events in this chapter that teach us about multi-cultural outreach?**
- 2. What lessons do we learn from particular individuals?**
- 3. Based on our learning from this chapter, what strategies might we recommend to our elders to help build a multi-cultural community of faith within our own context?**

### **Exercise 6a**

Put yourself in this situation:

A person scorned in your culture because of his ethnic, or economic, or educational background has become a Christian

- 1. How do you think your Christian fellowship respond if you brought him with you to a community meal?**
- 2. How will they react if you invite him to speak in church and share his testimony?**

### **Exercise 6b**

Think about your own family or any younger Christians you are mentoring.

- **In what ways can you teach your children or grandchildren or your disciples that they need to find this 'first identity' in Christ?**

Be as practical and specific as possible.

After sharing, break into pairs to share who they could teach this 'first identity' lesson to, or who they could invite to a community meal. Pray together about these ideas.

### **Exercise 6c**

- **What will we look like as a community of 'new creations' when we are living in this multi-ethnic household of faith?**

Share a personal vision for your Church in which ethnic uniqueness and cultural background is affirmed but ethnocentrism is suppressed under our unity in Christ.

## **'Missio Deo' - Reconciliation as the Mission of God**

### **Exercise 7**

In your small groups, consider the question:

**What do you think are the implications of being part of God's mission of reconciliation?**

## **United Diversity: Our Foundation for Long-Term Hope**

***"A society that welcomes people of all races and social classes, that is characterized by love and not polarization, that cares most for its weakest members, that stands for justice and righteousness in a world enamoured with selfishness and decadence, a society in which members compete for the privilege of serving one another: This is what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God"***

***Philip Yancey***

### **Exercise 8**

In your small groups, consider the question:

**What do we know for sure about Heaven?**

Identify Biblical passages and stories that teach us about Heaven.

### **Exercise 9**

Individually read Revelation 5 verses 9 to 10 and paraphrase them in your own words:

**And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth"**

Answer the question:

**What do these verses teach about the work of Christ?**

Now read Revelation 7:9

**After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.**

Answer the question:

**What does this tell you about the Christian community in heaven?**



### **Exercise 10 (optional)**

Individually or in your small groups, reflect on / consider the following questions:

**What does this passage (especially 7:9) say to the church of Jesus Christ today in light of the fact that:**

- **There are over a billion people who have never heard of Jesus Christ?**
- **There are still several thousand languages with no written translation of the Bible?**
- **Whole ethnic groups (what John calls “people” or “tribes”) still have no witnessing church?**

## **Two Implications of John’s Vision**

### **1. United diversity sends us out in mission**

The Great Commission mandates us to go outward into all the diverse peoples on earth but the mission is most effective when those who go are themselves an expression of the answer to Jesus’ prayer for unity in diversity (John 17)

### **2. United diversity gives us our foundation for long-term hope**

While we work today for the experience of the truly united yet truly ethnically diverse expression of the Body of Christ (submitting all of our ethnocentric tendencies to Him), we realize that this is indeed a ‘moment’, a foreshadowing of the ultimate fulfilment of Revelation 7:9, when the multitude that no one can count – from every nation, tribe, people and language – gather in heavenly worship of Jesus Christ who saves them all

## **Personal Application and Commitments**

### **Application Exercise Part 1**

In your small groups, consider the following question. Discuss and note your thoughts to share with the whole group:

**If every Church is commanded to go into all the world, what challenges will the Church in your context face in making the Gospel cross-culturally credible?**

**Put another way, what specific opportunities can you identify for progressing with reaching across existing cultural barriers?**

Refer back to your notes for Session 2, Exercise 10; Session 3, Exercise 5; Session 4, Exercise 5 and Session 5, Exercise 7.

Make a list of possible challenges / opportunities.

## **Application Exercise Part 2**

1. Divide into two's or three's and pick one of the challenges / opportunities from Application Exercise Part 1.
2. As a group, come up with ideas of how to approach the challenge or opportunity as a change agent. Create some deliberate action steps that you personally could take, based on your own connections, gifts and experiences. Begin with how you would intentionally plan to share your vision with others, enrol and mobilize support and then collaborate to establish achievable first steps towards a shared vision.
3. Make a commitment to one another so that everyone has an accountability partner for encouragement and support. Write this commitment down and keep it in a safe place.
4. Add your personal or group commitment to the Evaluation Form that you will receive before you leave this Workshop.



# CULTURE, ETHNICITY & DIVERSITY



## Workbook

### Important Definitions

#### **Culture:**

An integrated system:

- of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning)
- of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative)
- of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.)
- of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.)

...which bind a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity.

**Particularity:**

A term used to identify the unique characteristics of individuals, families, communities, or cultures. It is generally a positive term:

- “One of the things that makes our culture unique (our particularity) is our music.”
- It helps us understand that Jesus came for all people (universality) but He came as a Jewish man born in Bethlehem at a specific time in history (particularity)

**Ethnicity:**

- Common culture, including language and other traditions
- A link with some identifiable homeland
- Common proper name based on language or nationality. There may be room for many subsets within the larger name and it may fluctuate over time
- Shared historical memories – especially of an ‘oppositional’ nature; i.e. defining ourselves against our historical opponents.  
Example: Jews use a word – *goyim* – to describe all the world that’s not Jewish
- Sense of solidarity with others from the same group including loyalty and often solidarity in suffering
- An overarching story of a common ancestry, a story that may be true, myth or a combination. Being marginalized by a majority culture often defines one’s ethnicity. It can also produce identification with a larger group

**Ethnocentricity:**

- “The unassailable belief that one’s own ethnic group is superior to all others” (Douglas R. Sharp)
- The exaggeration of ethnic identity that affirms that one’s own ethnicity is not only unique but is actually superior to the culture and ethnicity of others
- “The view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything. Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity and boasts itself superior and looks with contempt on others” (William Graham Summer)

**Racism:**

- ‘Race’ is often used to refer to external characteristics (skin-color, etc.)
- Most commonly used today to identify groups that have a sense of oppression at the hands of some dominant other group
- The use of race as the central criterion by which an individual or a group judges other people (James Tillman)
- “Racism or the presupposition that one’s own race is superior or better than another is a denial that all people have been created in the image of God” (J. Daniel Hays)

If ethnocentricity is a cultural problem; racism is a biological one.