

It has often been an agonizing struggle trying to meet these needs. As Shafir expresses it: "You see, in our culture, you do not invite people and then ask them to pay when they arrive. This is a rather normal occidental procedure but in North Africa it is not so. Hospitality plays a large part in their lives and in fact it is their way of life. I have sometimes tried to impose the western method but it can certainly create some uncomfortable situations. For instance, trying to encourage those who can to contribute as much as possible, while at the same time encouraging those who cannot afford their stay to not worry about it. Those who cannot pay are embarrassed or do not show up..." The situation is complicated by the fact that some other organizations, which are doctrinally inclusive and do not work among Muslims, are competing with the Rabita by inviting these people to their conferences: they even offer to pay their way! This is tempting, of course, but those who have gone have often confessed later that they regretted going as the meetings were not helpful in their situation.

Finally, after the 1985 reunion, the new committee decided that a change was necessary. They approached a number of Christian organizations, asking financial aid for the annual reunion. A number of organizations responded enthusiastically and generously, while some groups did not contribute except through individual members. The committee acknowledged feeling rather disappointed at the response of some missions to which they were the closest. They felt that, despite missionary talk about a need for national leadership, the response reveals a reluctance to recognize and support those who do exercise leadership. There may be a problem of nationals mistrusting nationals, but national leaders are asking, "Do the missionaries trust us first?" In any case, they are thanking God that in 1986 for the first time they were able to hold the reunion on a free-will offering basis. After fifteen years, the Rabita is still alive and growing; it continues to meet a real need in the North African Christian community, and shows promise of more good things to come.

For more information or to make a contribution, write:
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BOOK REVIEW

Lyman E. Reed. Preparing Missionaries for Intercultural Communication: A Bicultural Approach. William Carey Library (1705 N. Sierra Bonita Ave., Pasadena, Ca 91104), 1985. \$6.95.
Reviewer: E.A.M.

The author, who has served as a missionary in Thailand and is presently a professor of mission, is concerned that missionaries be adequately prepared for the task so as to avoid unnecessary drop-outs. It is the writer's conviction that biblical and theological

training are essential, but that cultural anthropology and a knowledge of cross-cultural communication are also needed. The opening chapter explains the reasons for this need. The book goes on to cover various needs and their implication for the missionary task.

Chapter 2, on "The Need for the Missionary to Understand the World," develops an understanding of the terms culture, cultural patterns, variance, and such terms as ethnocentrism. These issues are related to effective intercultural communication and to avoiding misunderstandings.

The next issue is "The Need to Understand the Social Structures" (ch. 3). As in the previous section, the terms and meaning of social structures are explained first, followed by a treatment of their missiological implications. The status and role of the various people in the social structure may guide you in planning your evangelistic strategy or give insight into their resistance or receptivity to the gospel.

Chapter 4, on "The Need for Adequate Language Learning," views language as an integral part of learning the culture and of bonding with the people. This is followed by chapters on cultural shock and ways of coping with it (ch 5) and on understanding the worldview of other peoples (ch 6).

I found chapter 7, on "The Need to Understand the Dynamics of Cultural Change," a helpful presentation of the process of conversion. The missionary's role involves being an agent of change. It is therefore necessary to consider the significance of conversion and its implications in a cross-cultural context. There is a helpful discussion of conversion as a process in relation to the Engel Scale (see What's Gone Wrong With the Harvest? by James Engel & H. Wilbert Norton, Zondervan, 1975). This chapter can be read profitably by itself if you have not found time to read the whole book.

There is one chapter with practical suggestions on becoming bicultural and gaining a cross-cultural exposure. This is followed by a chapter on the Biblical and theological dimensions of cross-cultural ministry (ch 9) and a final chapter of conclusions (ch 10).

This book is a valuable contribution to a part of missionary preparation that is sometimes neglected: it can help workers to be more sensitive to the needs of others, better communicators, less ethnocentric and more appreciative of national believers.

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subscr. good thru: 90
