

The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning, by J Daniel Hess. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press [PO Box 700, Yarmouth, ME, USA], 1994, 280 pages, \$22.95 US. Reviewer: John Hanson

Designed as a tool for the classroom one imagines that this book is a key text for an undergraduate college course. Its avowed purpose is to help students to prepare for, and experience, living abroad. Since there are study guide chapters, numerous examples of situations and people living cross culturally, the materials lend themselves to discussion and debate in a classroom. However, the format of the book does not invite a complete reading. One is tempted to flick the pages and browse.

However, to leave it there would be to lose its value as a tool for workers in the Muslim world. The first section of the book establishes a theoretical framework for the practical exercises which follow. It offers many useful insights for those who want to be more than contented and detached observers of culture in their host country. Hess knows that the traveler will find himself in predicaments of frustration, pain or anger while living abroad. He advises that we identify the difficult incident, reflect on it, re-examine in the light of new information (obtained from a local person) and the resultant fresh viewpoint can lead to changed attitudes and behaviour.

To illustrate this he relates an incident with local police who move him on when he stops his car to allow aged people across the road. He goes over the event in his mind. He goes back to talk to the policeman and finds that he was instructed to keep traffic moving by his superior and that he is available to help pedestrians in need. This gives him a new perspective on the policeman and the problem. He no longer feels angry and impatient.

In the remaining parts of the book which make up its bulk there are suggestions and activities which illustrate his recommended theory. These vary in usefulness for our purposes but some sections are worth time. Those on culture shock and the study of values, provoke thought.

I enjoyed the ten suggestions for what the author called "cultural competence" (a happy state of cultural adaptation to which we aspire!) They complement the familiar recommendations of Kohls in his book, *A Survival Kit for Living Overseas*. He proposes that someone can work successfully at cultural competence by being curious, trusting, brave, secure and teachable.

This is not a book that has much to say about the Islamic world. Learning a language hardly gets a mention in the 250 pages. The greatest motivating force for cultural competence, the constraining love of Christ, is absent. At best this book is for short term visitors and travelers and only casually for Christian workers. Otherwise selectivity is the rule.