



Cross-Cultural Relationships in Mission: Teamwork, Conflicts, and More

#urbana15



Questions to answer

- What is culture and why is it important?
- How do you build relationships with people from another culture?
- What does effective teamwork look like in the mission field?
- How to resolve a cross-cultural conflict?

What is culture?

- Culture is defined as the shared set of values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, behaviors, and social structures that define reality, guide our everyday interactions and shape the way we understand the world.
- Culture is an attribute of a group or community with which we share common experiences.



Why is culture important?

- Culture is a strong part of people's lives.
- Culture influences people's views, values, humor, hopes, loyalties, worries and fears.



Why is culture important?

- As we explore culture, it's important to remember how much we have in common.
- At the same time, we can't pretend that our cultures and differences don't matter.



HOW DO YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE FROM ANOTHER CULTURE?

How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

1. Start by becoming aware of your own culture.



How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

Exercise: Try listing all the cultures and identities you have. This is just a list of suggestions to get you started. Add as many as you think describe you.

What is your nationality? race? ethnicity? marital status? age? geographic region? Are you a female? a male? from an urban area? from a rural area? Is your family of origin from the middle class? the working class?

Did this help you think about your identities and cultures? How have these different cultures and identities affected your life?

How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

2. Make a conscious decision to establish friendships with people from other cultures.



How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

3. Risk making mistakes.



If you are not making mistakes,
you're not taking enough risks.

- Unknown

How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

4. Examine your biases about people from other cultures.



How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

Exercise. *List different cultural groups within your community or on your university campus and the possible stereotypes that affect how you communicate or work with them. Examples of stereotypes, which can be positive, negative, or neutral, may include: hardworking or lazy; family-oriented or work-focused; withholding or generous; expressive or quiet; suspicious of strangers, unfriendly, or open and warm; aggressive or gentle; emotional or unfeeling; traditional or open to change; intelligent or ignorant...*

How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

5. When in Rome... ask questions. Ask people questions about their cultures, customs, and views.



How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

6. Read about other people's culture's and histories.



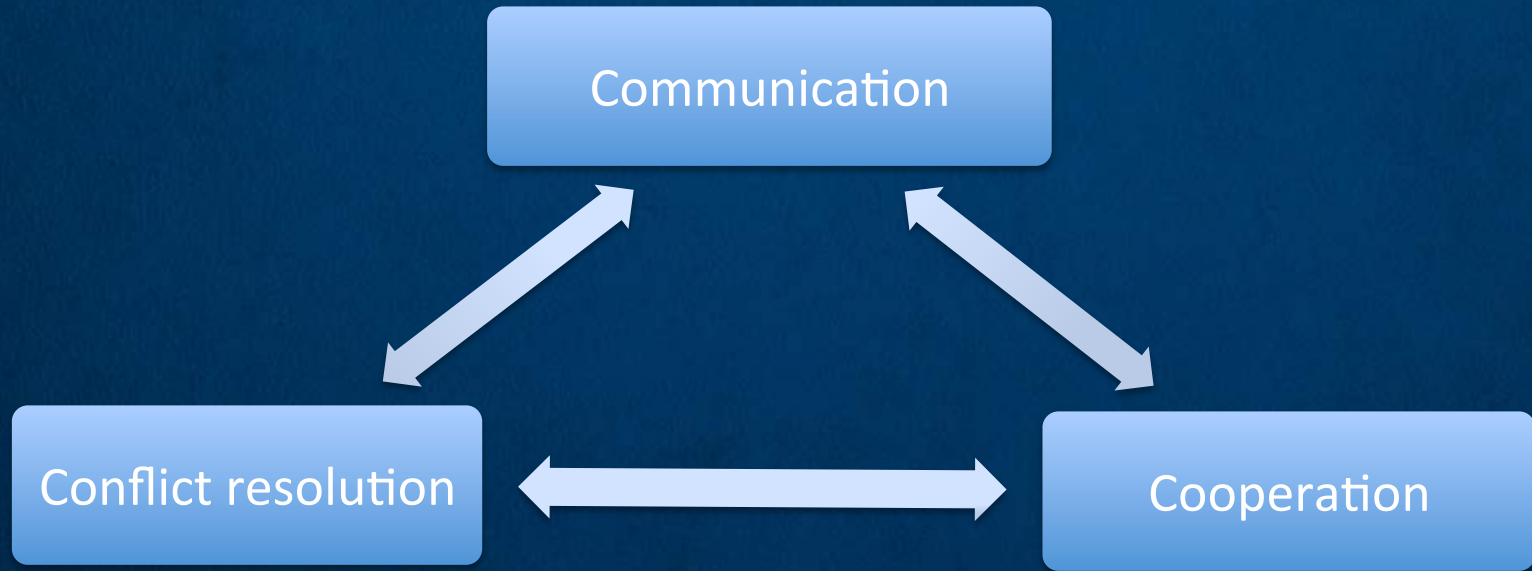
How do you build relationships with people from another culture?

7. Listen to people tell their stories.



WHAT DOES EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK LOOK LIKE IN THE MISSION FIELD?

What does effective teamwork look like in the mission field?



Teamwork: Communication

Case study: You are in a group discussion. Some group members don't speak up, while others dominate, filling all the silences. The more vocal members of the group become exasperated that others don't talk. It also seems that the more vocal people are those that are members of the more mainstream culture, while those who are less vocal are from minority cultures. ***How do we understand this? How can this be resolved? How would you structure a meeting?***

Teamwork: Cooperation

- Cooperative mindset requires you to consider opinions that may be different from your own, respecting your teammates for the contributions they make.
- One of the key factors to effective teamwork is the absence of selfishness.



HOW TO RESOLVE A CROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICT?

How to resolve a cross-cultural conflict?

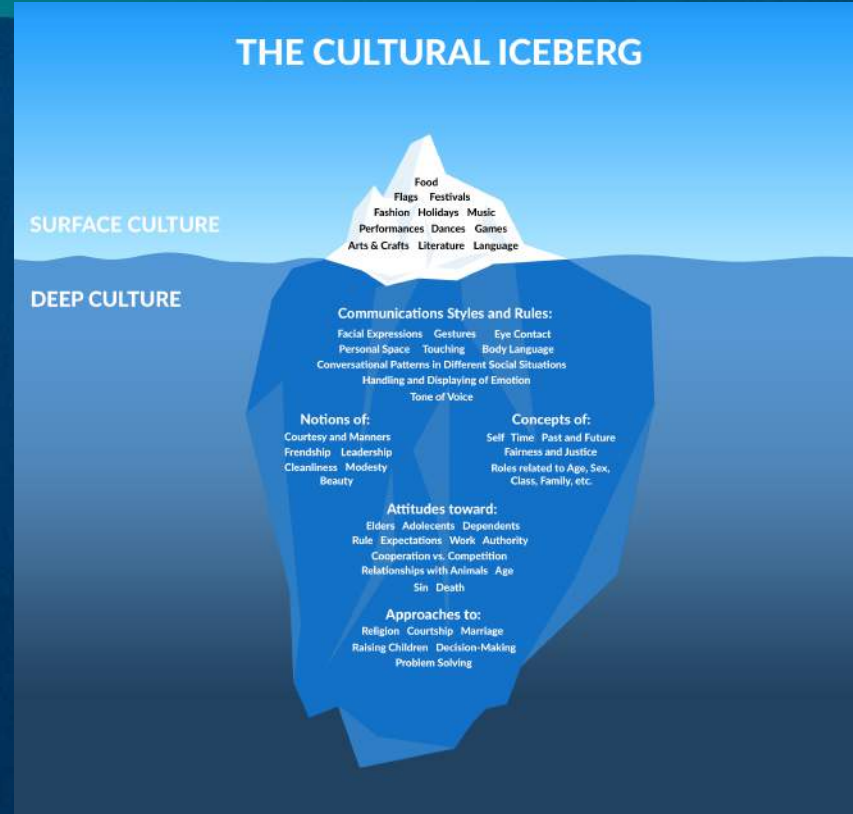
All communications are
essentially cross-cultural.

How to resolve a cross-cultural conflict?

- Individualistic vs. collectivist culture
- Direct vs. indirect
- Cultural norms for decision-making
- Comfort with conflict
- Third parties

Summary

Culture is like an iceberg.



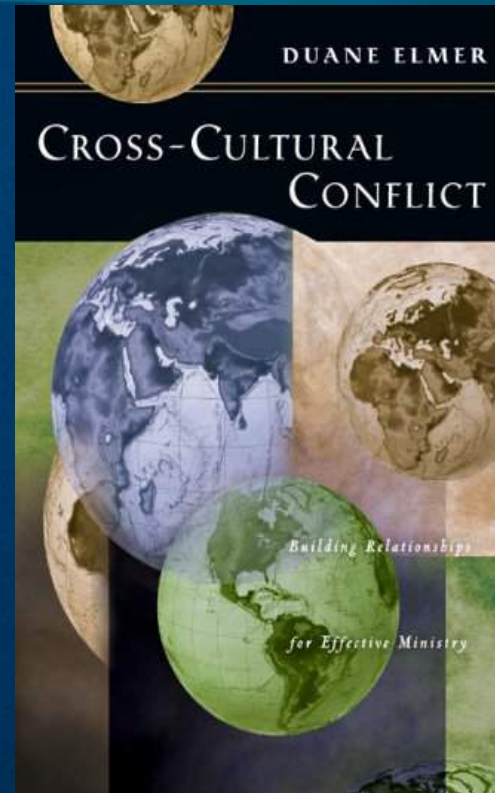
Summary

- Cross-cultural relationships are powerful.
- Together we can change the world.



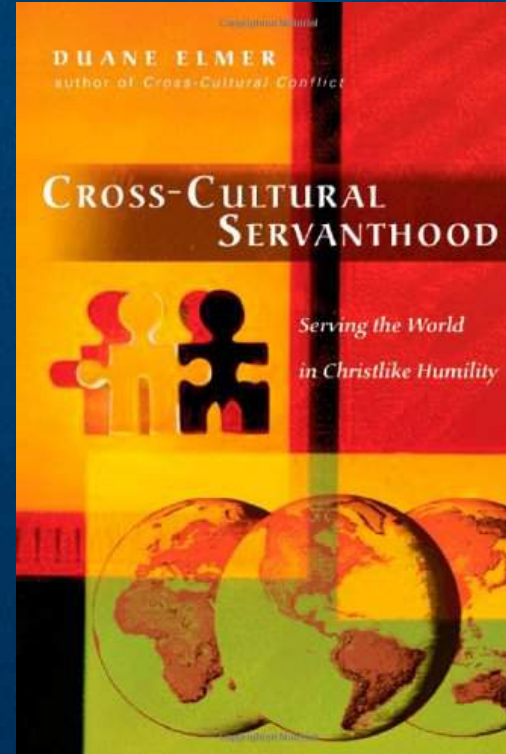
Recommended reading

Cross-Cultural Conflict:
Building Relationships
for Effective Ministry *by*
Duane Elmer (1994)



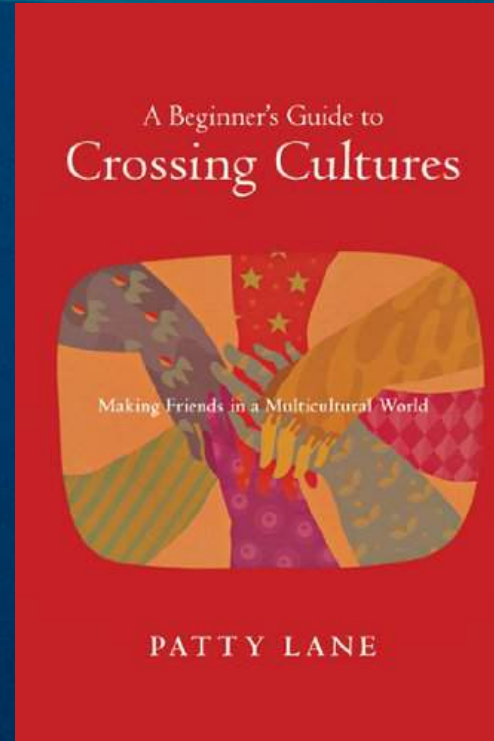
Recommended reading

Cross-Cultural
Servanthood: Serving
the World in Christlike
Humility *by Duane
Elmer (2006)*



Recommended reading

A Beginner's Guide to
Crossing Cultures:
Making Friends in a
Multicultural World *by*
Patty Lane (2002)



QUESTIONS?