

Stories of another immigrant: Paul

Can Scripture help us with cross-cultural adjustment? Well, the book of Acts would be a good place to start in looking for examples of cultural adjustment or socialization. Paul, who grew up in modern-day Turkey and then was educated in Jerusalem, moved around the Mediterranean planting churches in different cultural contexts. To the Philippians he wrote: "I learned to be content whatever the circumstances." (Philippians 4:11).

As Paul coped with various cultural issues, he was also dogged by Jewish Christians from Israel who tried to force Gentile converts to become Jewish (in which case Christianity would have been a mono-cultural movement).

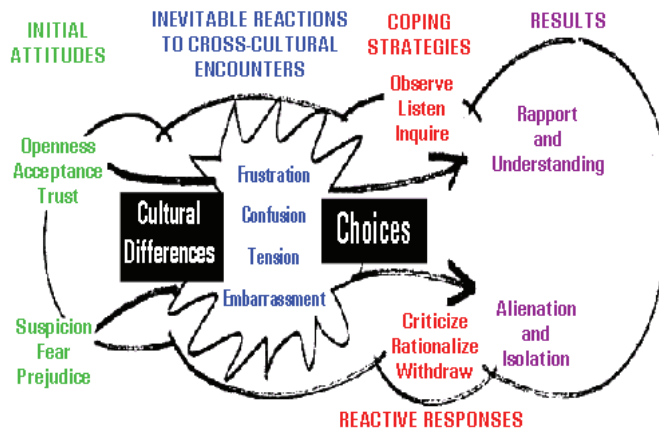
Going on a faith adventure!

Intercultural Network (IcN) Canada has developed the Open Homes, Open Hearts kit. Inside the kit are:

- Invitation template
- An evangelistic booklet
- Webcards
- Ice breaker cards
- Angel crafts
- Comment cards
- Special intercultural dates
- How to be a friend to an immigrant

Other resources: www.powertochangerc.ca
www.interculturalnetwork.com

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<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert>

Symptoms of culture shock

- Unwarranted criticism of the culture and people
- Heightened irritability
- Constant complaints about the climate
- Continual offering of excuses for staying indoors
- Utopian ideas concerning one's previous culture
- Continuous concern about the purity of water and food
- Fear of touching local people
- Refusal to learn the language
- Preoccupation about being robbed or cheated
- Pressing desire to talk with people who "really make sense."
- Preoccupation with returning home

4 Stages of Culture Shock

- Fun:** The excitement and adventure of experiencing new people, things, and opportunities.
- Flight:** The urge to avoid everything and everyone that is different.
- Fight:** The temptation to judge people or things that may be different as bad or foolish.
- Fit:** Willingness to understand, to embrace, and to creatively interact with the new culture.

REACHING THE NATIONS IN CANADA!

"Treat the foreigner the same as a native.
 Love him like one of your own.
 Remember that you were once foreigners in Egypt.
 I am GOD, your God."

Leviticus 19:34



HOW TO BE A FRIEND TO AN IMMIGRANT

Who is coming to Canada?

In 2006, a total of 262,236 immigrants arrived in Canada as Permanent Residents (PRs). The top ten languages spoken by these immigrants are: Mandarin, English, Arabic, Spanish, Punjabi, Tagalog, Urdu, Russian, Gujarati and Hindi. Out of these, 156,310 entered as Economic immigrants; 63,352 as Family Class; and 35,768 as Refugees. Opportunities abound!

The top 6 groups of immigrants, 2006

People's Republic of China	13.2%
India	12.2%
Philippines	7.0%
Pakistan	4.9%
USA	4.4%
Iran	2.8%

Why are they coming?

Recognizing that many who come to this country are looking for a better life, we approach them affirming that their past is valuable and that their future is bright. Culture is nothing more than a set of rituals in which we adhere to and can differ simply because we have not learnt to do things differently.

God is bringing the nations to Canada and in order for us to be diligent about reaching them, we must first come alongside.

What does that look like?

- Who are the people who live on my street, or at my workplace?
- Who do you have a relationship with?
- How well have they settled in?
- How can you introduce yourself to them?

Everything begins with God drawing people to Himself. So, first of all, pray for them. Create opportunities to get to know them better. Don't be afraid that they won't respond. People *always* respond to kindness.

The meaning of sowing seeds

“The only thing that matters is faith expressing itself through love.”
-- Galatians 5:6

“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”
-- 1 Cor. 13:13

“Love your neighbour as yourself.”
-- Matthew 23:39

Love is to be a defining mark of the follower of Christ. So what does it look like to love a new immigrant? How do we cross cultures effectively?

Examining Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1 - 42), gives us some practical insights:

1. First, Jesus disregarded societal prejudices and entered the woman's world, connecting with her as she went about her daily routine (vv. 4 - 7).
2. Second, Jesus opened the dialogue with a question (v.7).
3. Third, Jesus engaged the woman in interesting dialogue around a felt need: everyone needs to drink! (vv. 7 - 15).
4. Fourth, when her interest was peaked, Jesus had something to offer (vv. 13 & 14).

Finding common ground



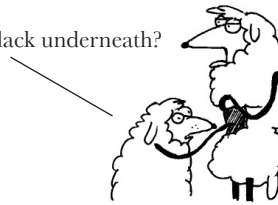
In the book “Finding Common Ground”, author Tim Downs considers the parable of the soil, where Jesus describes various stages of readiness to receive the Gospel. “The sower recognizes that certain soil elements are necessary for a person to be able to understand and believe the gospel. As

Jesus said, there are good soils and bad soils, and each age has its characteristic soil deficiencies that challenge the sowing of the gospel (p.110)”.

Many new immigrants have little to no concept of who Jesus is and carry negative impressions of Christianity. We are called to be sowers, cultivating the soil around us in order to plant seeds of the Gospel. By asking good questions, moving conversations to highlight areas of commonality and agreement, and reflecting Christ in our daily routine, by God's grace we will see hearts soften in order to receive the message of Christ (p. 128-141).

(“Finding Common Ground”, Tim Downs, Moody Press, Chicago, 1999.)

Are you black underneath?



How do we specialize being someone's friend?

There are many ways to begin but there's no better way than learning from them.

1. Questions about the listener's background “What prompted your move to Canada?”
2. Questions that ask the listener's opinion or advice, “Where are your favorite places to eat in our area?”
3. Questions that involve the listener's imagination or ask for their emotions. “How do you feel about the recent changes in our neighborhood?”
4. Discover the joy of practicing random acts of kindness: Surprise a colleague with a plate of home-made cookies or show up at a neighbor's door with a potted plant.
5. Find a need and meet it: Are they in need of ESL classes? Refer them

to local schools or church programs. Do they need help with childcare? Refer them a list of trusted babysitters or watch their children for a few hours.

Are they going through some crisis as a family? Reach out with a simple gesture, such as a card or a phone call, expressing care and offering prayer.

Begin with tea or coffee: Invite them over for a cup of tea in your home or meet at a local coffee shop.

Take an interest in their culture: Learn a phrase or two in their mother tongue or discover a tradition from their culture and ask them to explain it to you.

Which is the greater sin: Tell a lie or to lose your temper?

Take the time to hear every person's answers because when you hear their answers, you will begin a process of cultural understanding that will be repeated thousands of times as you adjust to and minister to another culture.

If you are a North American or from Western Europe (mostly Caucasian) you will likely chose telling a lie.

If you are from another part of the world, chances are greater that you will choose losing your temper.

If you are from the Western world but are a person of colour, you may have had difficulty choosing, since your heritage may allow you to offer reasoned argument for either answer.

In most cultures of the world, friendships and community are among the strongest forces for bringing people to faith in Christ . If we are not good in relationships, if we cannot create solidarity, from a human standpoint there is little that will attract people to the Gospel.

(“Cross-cultural conflict” by Duane Elmer, InterVarsity Press, Illinois, 1993)