

Effectively Managing Cross-Cultural Conflict



MISSION OBJECTIVE

- A.** I will seek to resolve conflict using biblical principles while incorporating the various ways cultures solve differences.



TEAM CARE AND ACCOUNTABILITY (20 MINUTES)

1. Share how your experience went using the *Discovery Group Outline (Lesson 11 Field Activity)* with your family or friends.
2. Talk further about plans towards establishing an outreach group in the next two or three weeks.
3. What other experiences have you had in following up on your cross-cultural friendships. (Keep using and referring to your *Contact Log* or *Disciple Log*.)
4. What did you learn from study #11 in *My Favorite Missionary* and the video clips?
5. What needs or challenges are you facing that we can pray for?
6. Pray together especially for each other and the friends from other cultures whom you have met.



PRESENTATION (18:14 MINUTES)

WATCH: *Effectively Managing Cross-Cultural Conflict*. Take notes using the following outline.

1. That they all may be (a) _____, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be (b) _____ in Us, that the (c) _____ may believe that You sent Me (John 17:21).
2. But (a) _____ your enemies, do (b) _____, and lend, hoping for nothing in return.... Therefore be (c) _____, just as your Father also is merciful (Luke 6:35-36).

3. *Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him and touch his heart. No one has ever been (a)_____ from a wrong position by censure and reproach; but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, (b)_____ deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a (c)_____ power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God” (White 1896, 128).*
4. *When differences arise among brethren as to the understanding of any point of truth, there is one (a)_____ rule to follow. In the spirit of meekness and love for God and one another, let brethren come together, and after earnest prayer, with a sincere desire to know God’s will, study the Bible with the spirit of a little child, to see how (b)_____ they can draw together, and not sacrifice anything but their selfish dignity. They should regard themselves as in the presence of the whole universe of God, who are watching with intense interest as brother tries to see (c)_____ to (d)_____ with brother, to understand the words of Christ, that they may be doers of the word” (White 1987, 1008).*



DISCOVERY AND DISCUSSION (35 MINUTES)

1. What did you gain from the presentation that is useful to help you deal with conflict in a more godly and helpful way?
2. **Read Galatians 6:1-5.** What further insights for handling conflict do these verses give you?
3. **Read Philippians 2:1-8.** What further insights do these verses give you?
4. Every person sees each situation differently from how others see it. Cultural perspectives add even more complexity. Read the following scenario:
An English-speaking church has rented the use of the church to a group of refugees for use on Sabbath afternoon and Tuesday evenings so they can worship in their own language. The group has not paid their rent in three months though they have promised to do so several times. The kitchen is usually left untidy

and smells like their unique food. One of the English-speaking elders walks through the church lobby one afternoon and sees the children running around during the worship service, up on the platform and into the hallways. He feels it is very disrespectful to the reverence of the sanctuary. Later he notices crayon markings on one of the walls.

By yourself or in groups of twos place a check mark by the sentences that you think would help solve this cross-cultural conflict.

- Hold back your comments and accusations until you better understand their culture.
 - Talk to the children directly to teach them correct principles of reverence.
 - Ask the group's leaders if you can serve as a consultant and spiritual mentor for their church plant.
 - Ask the church board to discontinue renting to this group because it is not a good stewardship of the churches resources.
 - Call the group's leaders to meet with the board to discuss the issues in an honest and straight-forward manner.
 - Talk to the group leader alone, asking questions to help you understand what is happening.
 - Change the locks on the church and don't give the group the new key.
 - Plan meals and other get-together times to informally make friendships and let the problems work themselves out.
 - Help the afternoon church group find another location to meet in.
 - Build a friendship with someone of the group's culture who can help you understand how people in that group typically think, act, interact, and solve conflicts.
 - Other:
5. Discuss together what you think are bad ideas, good ideas, and the best ideas. Write your best plans here:

6. Read this additional scenario:

Malee and Jim are newly married. They are living in the basement of the house where Malee's parents live. Her parents are immigrants from Thailand and Jim is a fourth generation American of German ancestry. The couple attends the same small group Bible study that you do and one day Malee confides that she and her husband are already really struggling in their marriage. She says Jim is often complaining about the amount of time she spends with her parents and that he seldom joins them. Jim also spends money freely without consulting her. If her parents do something Jim doesn't like, he tells them directly and they feel so embarrassed. She had no idea there would be so much conflict in marriage and just wants harmony at home.

Without any list of suggestions this time, what advice would you give to Malee?

7. How would you help Jim work through his conflicts in this home?

(For further learning about cross-cultural conflict and peace-making you may enjoy the resources that were especially helpful to the development of this lesson: *Cross-Cultural Conflict*, by Duane Elmer and the websites peacemaker.training and rw360.org).

8. What have you learned today and how will you use it this week?



TEAM PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Pray for the amazing miracle of unity in the church both locally and globally; confess the pride and prejudice that divides us; ask for the death of Jesus and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to take away all that separates us and make our love for each other a wonder to the world. Begin to also pray for other people who could go through this training and get involved reaching out cross-culturally.

Promises to Claim:

- ✔ *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one... For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father* (Ephesians 2:14, 18).
- ✔ *I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me* (John 17:20–21).
- ✔ *When the laborers have an abiding Christ in their own souls, when all selfishness is dead, when there is no rivalry, no strife for the supremacy, when oneness exists, when they sanctify themselves, so that love for one another is seen and felt, then the showers of the grace of the Holy Spirit will just as surely come upon them as that God's promise will never fail in one jot or tittle* (White 1958, 175).



ASSIGNMENTS (5 MINUTES)

1. What do you plan to do to follow up on any of the friendships you have developed? Use the *Disciple Log* to keep track of important areas of growth. You can now use this to replace the *Contact Log* or staple them together and use both.
2. Apply the principles you have learned in this lesson to at least one relationship this week, preferably in a cross-cultural situation. Report your experience in *Field Report #12*.
3. Retake the *Mission Survey*, which you took at the beginning of the course. Compare your results. This will help you assess how you have grown in confidence, involvement, and ability in discipleship and cross-cultural missions.

Remember how Jesus worked with the disciples. He patiently worked with them for more than three years. As He saw Peter about to fail, Jesus said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32 KJV). Jesus is also praying for you! He is leading you to a deeper and deeper experience with Him that will make you more and more effective in mission work.

Share your results with your team during Lesson 13 and talk about how you all can further grow in mission effectiveness.

4. Mobilize and Multiply. Share with a friend or family member what you learned about solving conflict cross-culturally. Ask if there is a conflict that he or she has with someone that could be helped through these principles. Pray for God to bring resolution and unity and encourage him or her to take steps soon.
5. Complete study #12 in *My Favorite Missionary* and focus your prayers on those who are "Non Religious" in *Praying for the World Next Door*.
6. Watch the following video clip:
Divisions, unions, and conferences share how they can partner with church members to reach refugees.
7. Read some possibilities for advancing the work in *Lesson 12 Assigned Reading: Potential Mission Steps for Church Administrators*.
8. Optional Assignment. If it is an area that you feel a need for, read and pray through *Lesson 12 Optional Activity: Forgiving Others Brings Great Blessings*.
9. Complete the form: *Field Report #12*.

MISSION SURVEY #2: GROWING WHILE GOING

Jesus asked His followers to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). That is an overwhelming task, but He specifically promised He had all authority to make it happen and He would personally be with us. At the very start of His training of the disciples, Jesus promised, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). You are about to start a similar journey as you go through *Reach the World Next Door*. There is much to learn and so much to do. Jesus has the same commitment to train you and be with you that He gave to Peter, James, and John.

This mission survey will help you assess your interest, confidence, involvement, and ability in discipleship and cross-cultural missions. Take it now to see how you have grown in confidence, involvement, and ability in discipleship and cross-cultural missions.

For each question check one of the numbers that you think typically fits you: *Seldom (1), Occasionally (2), Frequently (3), Nearly Always (4)*.

Questions	S	O	F	N
1. I pray for unreached people groups and the countries they are from. I ask God to raise up laborers to finish the Gospel Commission.	1	2	3	4
2. I am aware of the ethnic groups living in the metro area nearest me and feel concern for their well-being.	1	2	3	4
3. I think about, talk about, and make plans to reach out to refugees, immigrants, and international students because I know it is strategic for finishing the Gospel Commission.	1	2	3	4
4. I am friendly to people I do not know who come from other cultures.	1	2	3	4
5. I know where to find biblical resources in other languages and I share those resources with people who speak those languages.	1	2	3	4
6. I enjoy experiencing other cultures, like tasting new food, learning about holidays, and celebrating traditions, etc.	1	2	3	4
7. I take time to learn about different countries, cultures, and religions.	1	2	3	4
8. When I am irritated by something in another person's culture, I ask questions so I can better understand and appreciate differences.	1	2	3	4

	S	O	F	N
9. I show respect to people of any background, valuing people for their good qualities and contributions rather than their skin color, ethnicity, gender, religion, education, or economic status.	1	2	3	4
10. I take time to learn about the plight of refugees and pray for them.	1	2	3	4
11. I know what organizations are helping refugees and I give to support them.	1	2	3	4
12. I am aware of refugees living near me and I am befriending them.	1	2	3	4
13. I study and think about the biblical passages that emphasize wholistic ministry to people's various needs.	1	2	3	4
14. The way I spend my time and money reflects Jesus' concern and compassion towards those in need.	1	2	3	4
15. I tangibly help people from other countries, like immigrants, refugees, and international students.	1	2	3	4
16. I spend time with God in prayer, Bible study, and worship.	1	2	3	4
17. I am confident that I have a saving relationship with God through Jesus.	1	2	3	4
18. I live a Spirit-filled life, growing in victory, in the fruit of the Spirit.	1	2	3	4
19. I know what my spiritual gifts are and use them for God.	1	2	3	4
20. I take time to break away from work, school, media, and other distractions to grow closer to God.	1	2	3	4
21. I ask questions and listen with genuine interest to learn what people need and believe.	1	2	3	4
22. I affirm the positive things other people value, trying to become a closer friend.	1	2	3	4
23. I look for opportunities to bridge conversations from ordinary things to spiritual matters.	1	2	3	4
24. I share what God has done for me and other stories to help people around me grow in understanding and faith.	1	2	3	4
25. I invite people to try different things that will help them experience God's power, love, and the benefits of following His principles.	1	2	3	4

	S	O	F	N
26. I offer to pray with people no matter what their religious background.	1	2	3	4
27. I share scriptures and study the Bible with people who have never before had that opportunity.	1	2	3	4
28. I share the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection with those who have not heard.	1	2	3	4
29. I invite people to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord.	1	2	3	4
30. I learn about other religions and the various approaches that are effective in sharing truth with people who practice those religions.	1	2	3	4
31. I read the Bible to understand and follow what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and a disciple-maker.	1	2	3	4
32. I help new believers follow Jesus, trying to disciple them as Jesus did His followers.	1	2	3	4
33. I compare my culture to what the Bible teaches and seek to make changes to better follow God's ways.	1	2	3	4
34. I interact with new believers from other cultures and religions to help them examine their cultures in light of the Bible so they can keep what is good, but change or replace what is sinful.	1	2	3	4
35. I am part of a church group and seek to help it be more Spirit-filled like the early church described in the book of Acts.	1	2	3	4
36. I invite people who are not Christian or who are new believers to join a small group Bible study with me.	1	2	3	4
37. I learn principles of conflict resolution from the Bible and try to apply them in the conflicts I face.	1	2	3	4
38. When I have a conflict with someone of another culture, I take time to understand their perspective and seek to adapt to their culture's way of resolving problems.	1	2	3	4
39. I learn new methods so I can be better at witnessing and serving refugees, immigrants, and international students.	1	2	3	4
40. I promote the needs of the unreached and invite others to help me reach out.	1	2	3	4

Total Your Circled Points _____

Today's Date: _____

Called to Go

40 60

Grow While We Go

80 100 120

Multiply

140 160

Place your number on the above scale. The titles remind us that no matter how little we feel we know or can do, Jesus has **called us to go**. Secondly, we should not wait until we feel we have it all together as we will grow **while we go**. And finally, as we gain experience we are equipped to help others get involved and should seek to **multiply** by calling and training others.

Go back above and note those areas in which you especially want to grow. All of the concepts, attitudes, and abilities assessed in the mission survey are taught and encouraged in the Reach the World Next Door training. As you apply yourself to learning and implementing, you will definitely become more effective in your mission for Christ and your relationship with Him. You can keep this survey handy to use it in your prayers, asking God to make you an effective disciple-maker and multiplier among the unreached.

LESSON 12 ASSIGNED READING: POTENTIAL MISSION STEPS FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATORS

1. Research your territory to know the pockets of highly unreached people groups.¹
2. Create and apply a priority scale for evangelistic action among these unreached people groups that gives them high priority if:
 - ✔ They are among the world's least reached. (They have between 0-2% evangelical Christians.)²
 - ✔ They have recently arrived. (Many refugees and international students who have just arrived have significantly more urgent needs and openness to the gospel than those who have been here for decades.)
3. Vote a specific call to action for each unreached people group in your area, including:
 - ✔ A prayer profile to enlist intercession and awareness.
 - ✔ An invitation to ministry and church planting among the group.³
 - ✔ A specific statement of financial need for this project.
4. Make the call to action available for your conference, union, and division so that workers, donors, and people who will pray can be effectively coordinated and involved with the ethno-linguistic groups, especially those on their hearts.
5. Repeatedly cast the vision among church members and pastors to finish the work in the world through local cross-cultural ministry.
6. Create a prayer and action committee at the conference and church level, specifically for local cross-cultural missions and make it a priority on evangelism committees.
7. Equip churches to become more lay-led in order to release their pastor to church plant among the unreached or to free up a salary for a church planter for those groups.⁴
8. Provide advisory support and ministry funds (evangelism materials, mileage, phone expense, etc.) to volunteer lay pastors who serve one or two groups.
 - ✔ A quarterly advisory meeting for each distinct ethno-linguistic group has been a successful approach.
 - ✔ Conference visits to lay pastors and church planters are very helpful as many cultures are shy or feel it is inappropriate to make an appointment with leaders or request help.
9. Partner between two or more conferences to provide a full-time salary for a church planter/district coordinator who can work in several conferences with that ethno-linguistic group.
10. Choose a multi-cultural city in your territory and assign one of the pastors to full-time cross-cultural ministry. Have the pastor work to equip the churches in the area to evangelize the immigrants, refugees, and international students. Let this work become the training ground for workers throughout the territory.

11. Create specific policies for church planters and lay pastors that motivate and empower those leaders and their ethno-linguistic groups to give and serve. Policies may include financial provisions, advisories, and training. Seek to avoid:
 - ✓ Either extreme of financially dependent church groups or groups that don't pass on tithe because they have waited too long for any paid leadership.
 - ✓ Workers who feel isolated from the pastoral staff and conference leadership.
 - ✓ Policies and actions based on the potential ability of a group to give tithe rather than the need of the gospel by unreached people groups.
12. Train future workers by encouraging people to sponsor immigrant and refugee members' children through Seventh-day Adventist education. Include also the educational needs of these pastors.
13. Foster ongoing discussion between various ethno-linguistic groups to improve the unity and partnership until everybody has a heart to reach everybody.
 - ✓ Create guidelines for host churches to know how best to support and partner with groups that meet in their facilities. Work towards leadership and self-sustainment by the specific ethno-linguistic group.
14. Place two trained volunteers in the university with the highest number of international students in your territory for a two-year stint. Have them partner with Seventh-day Adventists who are already attending there.

-
1. Ideas and web links on how to find out about internationals in your area are at: <http://www.reachtheworldnextdoor.com/99/find-internationals-near-you.html>
 2. There are 4,594 people groups in the world who are considered unreached. For definitions of the unreached examine joshuaproject.net. This site lists the countries and people groups who have virtually no gospel witness.
 3. "God calls for personal effort from those that know the truth. He calls for Christian families to go into communities that are in darkness and error, to go into foreign fields, to become acquainted with a new class of society, and to work wisely and perseveringly for the cause of the Master. To answer this call, self-sacrifice must be experienced" (White 1940, 55).
 4. "Instead of keeping the ministers at work for the churches that already know the truth, let the members of the churches say to these laborers: 'Go work for souls that are perishing in darkness. We ourselves will carry forward the services of the church. We will keep up the meetings, and, by abiding in Christ, will maintain spiritual life. We will work for souls that are about us, and we will send our prayers and our gifts to sustain the laborers in more needy and destitute fields'" (White 1925, 171).

LESSON 12 OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: FORGIVING OTHERS BRINGS GREAT BLESSINGS

Life has many disappointments and heartaches. Many of us struggle daily, feeling hurt by people who should have been safe and nurturing. Many of us even carry deep woundedness from abuse, neglect, and rejection—sometimes even from family members or church leaders. An additional burden that we often carry is the feelings of anger, hatred, and bitterness towards those who have hurt us. It feels just and right to be upset at the wrongs, yet we also know that these emotions can destroy us. Negative thoughts and feelings have made many people physically sick or mentally ill. Bitterness and unforgiveness towards an individual often negatively impact our other relationships. Hatred can even lead to revenge and murder. The choices we make to not forgive someone are like weeds in a beautiful garden. If ignored, they can get bigger and choke out everything beautiful. If we hide our feelings and do not deal with the issues, it is as if we have cut off the top of the weeds and left the roots in the ground. The feelings and thoughts will likely grow stronger until they spring up in some way to spoil the garden of our lives (Hebrews 12:15).

How do we get rid of such weeds? Learning to forgive others is a challenging but doable process. Many have found comfort and answers in the principles in the Bible. Our problems are of different types and severity. Some offenses based on misunderstandings can be solved in a short time. Other deep-seated wounds take much longer to heal. Let's determine to grow in our understanding and experience of God's healing ways.

- 1. Express our hurt and anger in healthy ways.** There are many prayers in the Psalms that make it clear God wants us to talk to Him about our feelings, even when we are angry. One example is Psalm 56. God is a safe person to share our concerns with because He knows everything about us, yet still loves us. He also has the power to help us deal with our thoughts, feelings, and situations. It is not healthy or helpful to keep our feelings to ourselves (Psalm 32:3). However, we can also cause real problems by speaking angrily (Proverbs 25:28) or gossiping to others (Proverbs 26:20-27). Many people have been significantly helped by talking to a trained counselor or a caring mentor. Others find it very helpful to write out their thoughts and feelings, and then find comfort through God's Word.
- 2. Focus on God's love and forgiveness.** When we are hurting and broken by what others have done to us, we need Jesus' healing love. "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.... The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5). Jesus experienced horrific physical abuse, terrible betrayal by His closest friends, shame and embarrassment on the cross, and the desperate feelings of abandonment. He understands our pain. He can heal our hurt as we focus on His love and ask for healing. Besides this, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). As we repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness, He freely forgives us and we find peace (Romans 8:1). When we know we are loved and forgiven, it makes it easier to forgive others (Ephesians 4:24). When we recognize that our sins killed God's Son, it humbles our hearts in realizing that we all are sinners who need to forgive each other (See the parable in Matthew 18:21-35). Focusing on Jesus' love helps us move towards forgiving others.

A strong and supportive group of friends can provide the non-judgmental, loving atmosphere in which a hurting or angry person can feel the forgiveness and love of God. We should seek out such people and be that kind of people to help each other experience God's love and be able to extend it towards others.

- 3. Understand the Difference Between a Forgiving Heart and Reconciliation.** Jesus expressed mercy, saying, "Father, forgive them," while the soldiers were still driving the nails in Jesus hands. However, God was not reconciled to any of them until they turned from their sins and repented. This is similar to our relationships. We can choose a heart of mercy and forgiveness towards those who have hurt us, but it would be safe to try

to reconcile with them because they continue to do what is wrong. Jesus said, "If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3). We should humbly seek to work out our problems with each other whenever possible (Galatians 6:1-5). However, Jesus also recognized there are times we cannot reconcile without the help of others. He taught His church a process in which to hold people accountable who are doing wrong to others (Matthew 18:15-20). Some completely refuse to stop their sin and abuse and so separation, not reconciliation, is the only option.

- 4. Extend love to our enemies.** Even when hurtful people continue in their sin, Jesus still calls us to, "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:43). Such kindness is impossible without God's transformation of our hearts. We need to confess our bitterness and unforgiveness to God, ask Him for a heart of love and forgiveness, then step out in faith to do good towards our enemies Jesus, with His huge heart of mercy, can live in our hearts, empowering us to forgive and extend kindness to those who have hurt us (Colossians 3:3, 8-14). Even if the person does not respond and refuses to be reconciled, we can be free from bitterness and unforgiveness, living a life of love.

You may wish to pray something like this:

Merciful God, Full of Forgiveness and Kindness, my heart hurts. I have been deeply wounded by someone I trusted. It was so wrong, so hurtful, so unnecessary. *(Tell God your pain. Speak out your disappointment).*

Thank You for sending Jesus to show me Your love and to experience my pain. He was beaten, mocked, and shamed. Still He said, "Father forgive them" and He forgave me too. Please heal me with Your love. I too have hurt You in many ways. It was my sins that killed Jesus. Please forgive me.

I know I should forgive those who have hurt me, but it feels so hard. I cannot do it on my own. Forgive me for my bitterness and anger towards them *(be specific about the persons and what they have done)*. Please give me a new heart, fill me with Your forgiveness towards them. I want justice. I want them to pay for what they have done. You love them and hope to redeem them. Please find a way to do that. If they do not respond, and continue to do what is wrong, I know that one day, when Jesus returns You will give them what they deserve and I do not need to take revenge. I surrender them into Your hands.

Now give me Your power so that I might not block You from reaching out to them with Your forgiveness. Love through me and help me to often pray for them. Thank You for Your gracious, forgiving heart and for answering my prayer. In Jesus' precious name, amen.

Once again we want to emphasize that forgiving others and inward healing is a process. It can be like an onion with many layers. Various events can often bring up memories that remind us of hurtful experiences, triggering negative thoughts and feelings. Each time we can use these various principles from God's Word to help us, releasing more of the pain and bitterness and receiving more of God's mercy and peace.

It is also important to recognize that in our multi-cultural world we will see forgiveness and reconciliation happening in different forms. Some cultures use a mediator, some make use of stories, and some solve differences through actions rather than words. Regardless, the biblical principles are the same, leading those who follow them to greater peace and release from bitterness.

FIELD REPORT #12



Name _____ Date Due _____

Email Address _____ Phone _____

Home Church _____ Team Number _____

EFFECTIVELY MANAGING CROSS-CULTURAL CONFLICT

1. The person with whom I used the principles of conflict management, how it went, and what I learned:
2. These are the people I spent time with this last week and what we did (keep updating a *Contact Log* or *Disciple Log* for each person or family and keep the sheets in a binder):
3. What I plan to do this next week to disciple my friend of another culture:
4. The friend or family member with whom I shared what I learned and invited to do the same:
5. What I learned and/or what I want to be involved in after reading *Lesson 12 Assigned Reading: Potential Mission Steps for Church Administrators*:
6. Someone or something I would like us to be praying about:
7. Things I want to remember or share with my team from the video clips, my completion of study #12 in *My Favorite Missionary*, and my focus on prayers for those who are “Non Religious” in *Praying for the World Next Door*.