



# principles of intercultural ministry

Version 1.0  
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# *I. relating to others with dignity*

## **1. Understanding Dignity**

- A. Dignity: “inherent nobility and worth”[Merriam Webster Dictionary]
- B. Value: relative worth, utility, or importance” “something (as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable.” [Ibid.]
- C. Respect: Respect is a response of esteem and special regard given to a person on the basis of their dignity and value before God.

## **2. The Basis of Our Dignity**

- A. Creation in God’s Image Genesis 1:26-28
- B. Christ’s Work
  - 1. He lives in Believers (Eph. 3:16)
  - 2. He died for unbelievers (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8; 1 Jn. 4:9-10)

## **3. The Kingdom of God and Dignity**

- A. Value in the Kingdom
- B. Identity in the Kingdom
- C. The Justice and Judgment of God in the Kingdom

## **4. Jesus and Dignity**

- A. How Jesus Communicated Dignity in the Gospels
  - 1. What and how Jesus said and did what he did

## **5. Community and Dignity**

- A. How a Community affirms or denigrates<sup>1</sup> the dignity of a person or a group

## **6. Dignity and Spiritual Formation**

- A. Sin and Human Dignity
- B. Salvation and Human Dignity

## **7. Six Practical Responses to Dignity**

- A. Communication
- B. Understanding
- C. Contribution
- D. Symbolic Acts
- E. Empowering Acts
- F. Intent and Effect

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<sup>1</sup>**Den-i-grate** vt; “(1) to defame somebody’s character or reputation; (2) to disparage or criticize somebody or something, to lower somebody’s self-esteem or to make something seem unimportant; (3) to criticize something harshly, while attempting to make others think it has no importance.” Encarta® World English Dictionary © 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

## ***II. the principle of empowering***

### **1. Envisioning**

- A. Ownership.
- B. Inspiration.

### **2. Relating**

A. Empowerment in the body of Christ has a relational dimension. See Barnabus' actions with Saul (Acts 9:26-30; 11:25). There must be a genuine relational dimension to our development of men and women of color. It is important to remember that those who come from outside of the historical American power structure have suffered disenfranchisement and the ensuing emotional and psychological consequences. There should be a coming-alongside that communicates support, confidence in and respect, and opens new important relationships.

### **3. Resourcing**

#### A. Finances

- 1. Salary
- 2. Operational
- 3. Ministry Initiatives

#### B. Infrastructure

- 1. People
- 2. Equipment (E.g. Computer, Fax Machine, etc.)
- 3. Organizational Systems

#### C. Training and Development

- 1. Training
  - a. Specific skill training for the role
  - b. Perspective development - Experience
- 2. Development
  - a. Specific ongoing skill
  - b. Coaching
  - c. Find new developmental opportunities, responsibilities, and roles

### **4. Sharing Authority and Power**

- A. Give the necessary authority to carry out the role.
- B. Share authority to build confidence, competence, and experience.
- C. Don't avoid reasonable risk.
- D. Involve others in real discussion that makes a difference.

# III. the principle of thinking and living like a missionary

## 1. Understanding Culture

A. People Are More Alike Than Cultures.

B. Description of Culture

[From *Survival Kit For Overseas Living* by L. Robert Kohls]

1. Culture: an *integrated system of learned behavior patterns* that are characteristic of the members of any given society.

a) Culture refers to the *total way of life* of particular groups of people. It includes everything that a group of people *thinks, says, does, and makes--its systems of attitudes and feelings.*

b) Culture is *learned and transmitted* from generation to generation.

## 2. Understanding Thinking and Living Like a Missionary

[Modified from *Thinking Like a Missionary* and *Living Like a Missionary* by Bill Mowry, The Navigators]

Thinking Like a Missionary	Living Like a Missionary
Recognizing I live in a multi-ethnic society	•Becoming a compassion-driven person
Understanding the gap between my world and the world of my neighbor	•Living authentically and attractively by the power of the Holy Spirit
Developing skills to connect in relevant and sensitive ways with people	• Working with others • Becoming an outsider who has earned a sacred trust with the people around him/her
Taking the initiative to love and befriend people	• Persevering with people • Being empowered by prayer to reach out to my ethnic friends

## 3. Six Exercises to Help Us Think and Live Like Missionaries

[From Chapter 14 "On Becoming Multicultural: Rolling Up Your Sleeves," *Survival Kit for Multicultural Living* by Ellen Summerfield, Intercultural Press.]

- A. Explore Your Own Cultural Identity.
- B. Develop an "Outsider" Mentality.
- C. Relax, Relax, Relax.
- D. Suspend Judgment.
- E. Be Willing to Teach Others about Yourself.
- F. Let Curiosity Override Fear.

## ***IV. the principle of understanding***

### **1. Understanding *Understanding***

A. What does it mean to understand?

### **2. Understanding is not Assumed Familiarity**

A. E.g. I had dinner with the person, so now I know him or her.

B. I read a book about African Americans, so now I understand who they are.

C. I have an Asian American neighbor, so now I understand Asian Americans.

### **3. Understanding is not Stereotypes or Shallow, Inaccurate Assumptions**

[Practical Suggestions for Dealing with Stereotypes from *Survival Kit for Multicultural Living*]

A. Regard stereotypes with suspicion.

B. Analyze the stereotypes you may have of a group you belong to.

C. Analyze stereotypes you have of others.

D. Test stereotypes against your own information and experiences.

E. Always be prepared to discard your stereotypes and to revise and refine generalizations about groups of people.

F. Analyze your language for stereotypes that unwittingly creep in (e.g., "Indian giver")

G. When talking about groups of people, use qualifying words like *generally*, *tend to*, *often*,

*likely to be*.

H. When you discover "exceptions to the rule," be prepared to revise the rule rather than simply to declare an exception.

I. Try to discover what the stereotypes you hear or hold are based on.

J. Be on the lookout for reinforcement of stereotypes in Hollywood and the media.

K. Talk with friend or acquaintances about their views on how they are stereotyped and about their stereotypes of you.

L. Don't expect stereotypes of yourself or others to change overnight; this is a lifelong process.

### **4. Suspending Judgment helps Understanding**

A. Suspending judgment is an expression of humility and wisdom. (Prov. 18:13)

### **5. Relational Dynamics and Deep Historical Wounds that have Present Effect**

A. Deep Wounds from the Past and Trigger Points

B. Understanding the Damage and Present Effects of Racial Prejudice

1) Emasculation of Men: Russia & America

2) The depth of the effect of these kind of "injuries" to the human soul requires deep healing. Do we give attention to this in our view of spiritual formation? Do we take the "just get over it" attitude?

3) *Suggestion: Read Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown, 1971.

Read books that detail the atrocities against peoples on the basis of their ethnicity and try to understand what this would do to the psyche of a people.

## *V. the principle of embracing*

### **1. Empathy**

A. Empathy: the ability to identify with and understand another person's feelings or difficulties.

B. Jesus touched the lepers. Empathy is connecting with the real situation of another. If we cannot 'understand' what they feel, we can at least honor them by touching them and being touched by them in their world. Mk. 14:3

### **2. ABC's of Embracing**

Accept versus Tolerate

Belonging

Culture

A. This is an issue of Identity, Dignity, Empowerment, and Ownership.

B. Identity: when a new person who is different ethnically, culturally comes into a group, the group itself already has an identity.

1. Is that identity static, fixed or is it dynamic?

2. If it is fixed, the person is forced into a mode of conformity and loss of their identity

3. Dignity: a person's sense of contribution affects their sense of dignity. Will their ideas, and their person be allowed to affect the corporate identity?

4. Empowerment: The group and the leaders will need to empower the person to give them the authority in the group to affect the group's identity group.

a) This kind of empowerment is simple, but significant. Do ethnic minorities feel they have access to the "power base" of the ministry; Namely, that place in the ministry where the real decisions are made?

b) What can a leader do to empower an ethnic minority in their ministry to appropriately shape the identity or the culture of the ministry?

5. Ownership: A person will not feel ownership of something they do not have a part in shaping.

## *VI. the principle of engaging*

### **1. Engaging at the Personal and Ministry Level:**

A. Participation. To engage means to be a participant, not a spectator.

B Initiative. Initiative is with the leader, not the individual.

C. Learning. To Engage means taking seriously the need to learn more about someone who is different.

- This communicates esteem and value.

i. Remember the principle of Initiative, don't put the burden on an ethnic minority brother or sister to teach you, take initiative to learn.

ii. "We need to take the responsibility to learn, don't put the onus of responsibility on the ethnic minority brother or sister to do the teaching," quotation of an Anglo leader

D. "Go to" versus "Come to" Attitude

i. To engage with a person, I need to go with that person into their world.

ii. There is not substitute for experience! Taste, smell, touch, sight, emotions of real people, responses of people, customs, etc. cannot be learned from a book alone.

### **2. Engaging at the Organizational Level:**

A. Ministering according to gifts and calling, not merely an "ethnocentric-only" perspective.

B. Men and women of non-Anglo backgrounds serving in empowered roles on leadership teams throughout the Nav ministry.

# *VII. earning and nurturing trust*

## **1. Introduction**

A. The Navigators are learning much about building High-Trust Cultures from Bill Thrall and his associates at Leadership Catalyst. The principles that have been taught in the Mentoring Cycles have relevance to building trust with those of other ethnic backgrounds.

## **2. Four Keys to Build and Nurture Trust: T R U E**

### **T = Trust**

1. A matter of experience and our will (choice)
2. Five Keys to Building Trust
  - a) Living in Integrity – Identity and Acceptance
  - b) Experiencing Affirmation – Submission and Love
  - c) Trusting Strengths – Vulnerability and Permission
  - d) Contributing Strengths – Unity and Influence
  - e) Protecting Limitations and Weaknesses
3. Trust and Authority
  - a) The Authority of Relationship (talking, listening, caring, and loving)
  - b) The Authority of Character (integrity, reliability, loyalty, sincerity, morals, ethics, etc.)
  - c) The Authority of Competency (skill and expertise in particular matters)
  - d) The Authority of Position (entitlement, knowledge, power)
4. Trust and Integrity: the quality of character that elicits trust
  - a) Consistency: The same throughout; not treating a person one way in one context but differently in another context (around a different set of social situations)

### **R = Respect (dignity)**

1. A matter of how we treat people and our behavior
2. See Principle I: The Principle of Dignity.

### **U = Understanding**

1. A matter of learning and our mind
2. See Principle IV: Understanding

### **E = Empathy**

1. A matter of feeling and our heart
2. See Principle V: "Embracing"