



BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS CULTURAL LINES

Art Credit: "Celebration of Life" Klara Chavarria



When the focus is on how different cultural groups can live together in the same social or political space, we talk of “**multicultural**” matters.

When people travel to foreign places and learn to get around, we tend to speak of “**cross-cultural**” journeys.

When we begin to interact with someone whose cultural formation is different from ours, whether at the ends of the earth, in the next valley, or on our own street, and when we attempt to understand one another well, we are involved in “**intercultural**” interaction. Intercultural describes what happens between cultures. Intercultural learning happens when we learn from one another as our lives intersect.

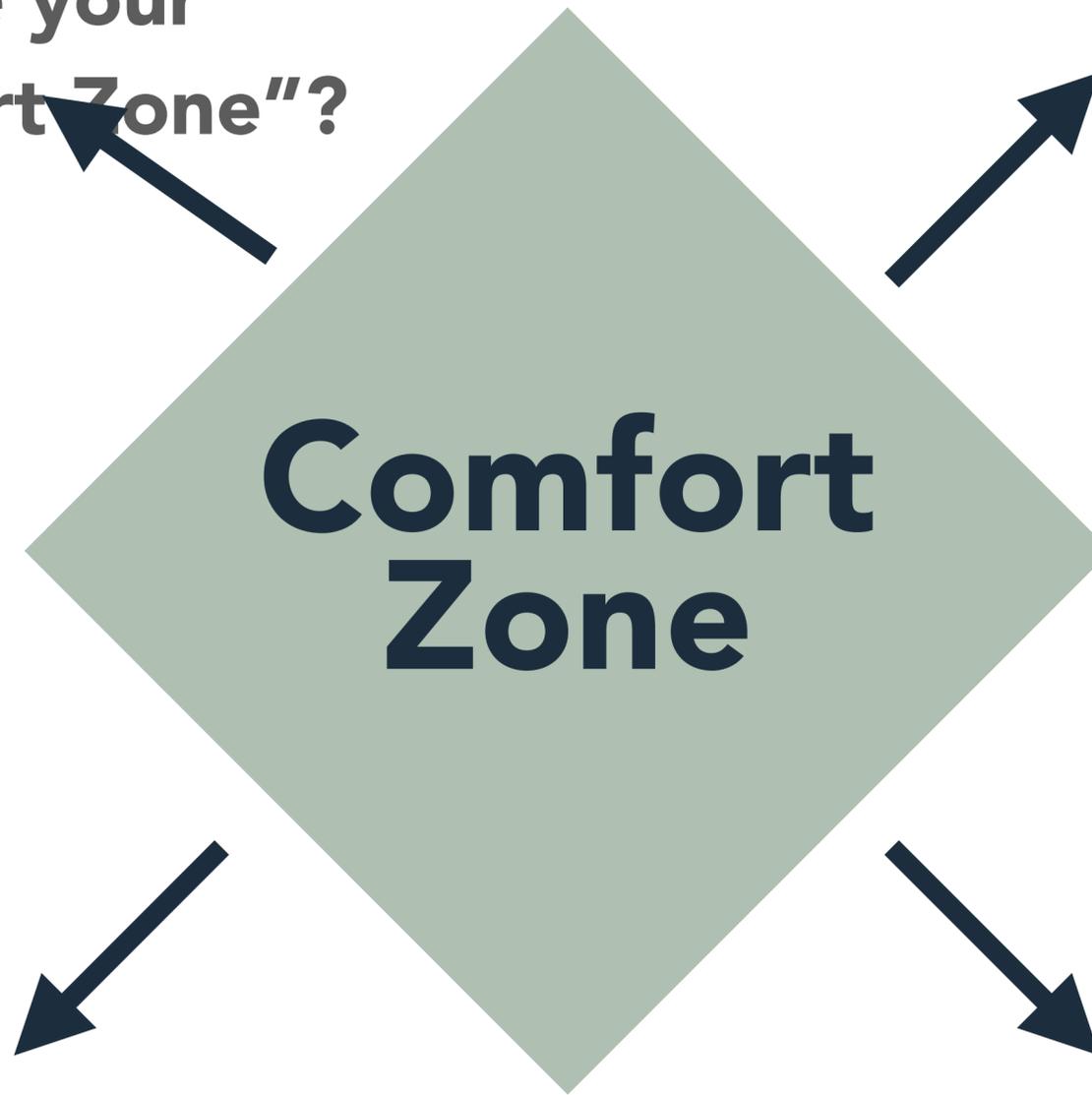
- D. Smith & P. Dykstra- Pruim,
Christians and Cultural Difference

THE RESTRICTIONS OF STAYING WITHIN OUR COMFORT ZONES

Art Credit: "Shared Breath" Klara Chavarria



**What words describe your
"Relationship Comfort Zone"?**



**Intercultural Relationships are, by definition
Outside of our Comfort Zone**



Comfort Zone

**1. COMFORT ZONES RESTRICT
OUR VIEW**

**2. COMFORT ZONES LIMIT OUR
GROWTH**

**3. LEAVING OUR COMFORT ZONES
FORCES US TO CHANGE**

- D. Ireland, *The Skin you Live In*

**Comfort
Zone**

ACTS 10

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ² a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. ³ About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." ⁴ And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵ And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, ⁸ and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Comfort
Zone

ACTS 10

⁹ The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰ And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance ¹¹ and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³ And there came a voice to him: **“Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”** ¹⁴ But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” ¹⁵ And the voice came to him again a second time, **“What God has made clean, do not call common.”** ¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

IGNORANCE = EXCLUSION



When we coexist and there is no open conflict, we can believe we are listening to each other and being hospitable. But in fact this type of tolerance often allows us to remain ignorant of others' beliefs and perspectives and to avoid difficult conversations. Willful ignorance is a type of exclusion. I might coexist with people who are different from me, but that does not mean I have extended hospitality to them, either of the food-welcome-shelter or of the open-my-heart variety. A COEXIST mantra allows me to go my own way, [it is] "a civilized form of exclusion." If we exclude everyone who is different from us by just "letting them be," we cannot learn from them. We cannot grow, and we cannot truly understand ourselves.

- D. Smith & P. Dykstra- Pruim,
Christians and Cultural Difference



**Comfort
Zone**

ACTS 10

17 Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate **18** and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. **19** And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. **20** Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." **21** And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" **22** And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." **23** So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him.



Comfort
Zone

ACTS 10

25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. **26** But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." **27** And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. **28** And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. **29** So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." ...

TOLERANCE ≠ RECONCILIATION

“When you investigate the feelings surrounding tolerance, they are not positive, honest, or endemic of an authentic Christ follower. If people tolerate you, it’s because they have not choice other than to be connected with you in some way. Being with you is not their first option. It is... and obligation; it’s forced. The feeling of tolerance undermines the foundation for building healthy [inter-cultural] relationships.

-D. Ireland, *The Skin You Live In*



**Comfort
Zone**

ACTS 10

34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, **35** but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. **36** As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), **37** you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **40** but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. **43** To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."



Comfort
Zone

ACTS 10

44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. **45** And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. **46** For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, **47** "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" **48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.



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THE REWARD OF MOVING BEYOND OUR COMFORT ZONE

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BIBLICAL RECONCILERS...



1. ARE AT PEACE WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES

2. KNOW HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES TO OTHER CULTURES

3. VALUE PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT CULTURES LIVING TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY



**Comfort
Zone**

ACTS 11

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. **2** So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, **3** "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." **4** But Peter began and explained it to them ...

18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."



Comfort
Zone

ACTS 11

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. **20** But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the **Hellenists** also, preaching the Lord Jesus. **21** And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. **22** The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. **23** When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, **24** for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

BIBLICAL RECONCILERS...



1. ARE AT PEACE WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES

2. KNOW HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES TO OTHER CULTURES

3. VALUE PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT CULTURES LIVING TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY

2. KNOW HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES TO OTHER CULTURES

OFFER FRIENDSHIP

OFFER DIGNITY

2. KNOW HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES TO OTHER CULTURES

OFFER FRIENDSHIP

◆ *Expand Your Circle of Friends*

◆ *Offer Hospitality*

◆ *Show Empathy*

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OFFER
FRIENDSHIP

JOHN 4

*[Jesus] left Judea and departed again for Galilee. ⁴ And he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵ So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶ Jacob's well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."
⁸ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)*

2. KNOW HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES TO OTHER CULTURES

OFFER FRIENDSHIP

◆ *Expand Your Circle of Friends*

◆ *Offer Hospitality*

◆ *Show Empathy*

- *Who do you already know?*
- *Where can you go to expand your circle?*
- *What are common interests you share?*
- *How can you offer hospitality (food, welcome shelter)?*
- *How can you strive to understand and share the feelings of another*

“The task before us is herculean. We can never completely understand or appreciate a person from another culture. However, we can grow in ... cultural *empathy*, which is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another and is distinct from sympathy, which amounts to feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.

-Matthew Kim, *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence*

2. KNOW HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES TO OTHER CULTURES

OFFER FRIENDSHIP

OFFER DIGNITY

2. KNOW HOW TO BUILD BRIDGES TO OTHER CULTURES

OFFER DIGNITY

◆ *Engage in Vulnerable Conversations*

◆ *Mutual Respect*

◆ *Hospitality*

◆ *Demonstrate Comfort*

Do you automatically assume that someone of a different culture is lower on the status totem pole than you?

Do you take on a teacher-like tone when speaking to someone of a different culture because you assume you know more than the other person?

OFFER
FRIENDSHIP

JOHN 4

*Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."
17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus
said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband';
18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now
have is not your husband. What you have said is true."
19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a
prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but
you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought
to worship."*

OFFER
FRIENDSHIP

JOHN 4

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

OFFER
FRIENDSHIP

JOHN 4

Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?"²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people,²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?"³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

CONCLUSION

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OFFER FRIENDSHIP

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- ◆ Offer Hospitality
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