



14. The Backyard Missionary: Cultural Intelligence

Thanks for joining the *Big Church Small Church* podcast. We are continuing our journey through the *Backyard Missionary* series. This week we look at cultural intelligence. Like a foreign missionary, we have to do our research and listen to the people in our neighborhood. We can't just assume we know how to reach them. I strongly recommend reading *Cultural Intelligence* by David Livermore after diving into this podcast. It is a must read.

What is Cultural intelligence?

IQ measures intelligence, and EQ measures people's emotional intelligence. On the other hand, cultural intelligence (CQ) measures the ability of a person to work within and relate to different people groups. There are more than 200 different people groups in the United States. People are different by ethnicity, context, culture, or even by generations. Diversity is growing faster than ever in the USA. To be an effective church, you'd better gain CQ.

How to gain CQ

1. Desire. You have to have deep empathy for other people. Put yourself in their shoes to gain perspective. Your understanding will still be limited and incomplete of another's perspective in life.

2. Understanding yourself. What are your own cultural preferences, worship preferences, food, clothing? Mission work means sacrificing your own preferences for the sake of reaching others.

3. Listen up. Listen to God through prayer; listen to people in your neighborhood. Prayer walk. Hang out in places where people meet. Look for the needs of the community. Find ways to build relationships. You don't know what your community needs before you do primary research. Don't assume you know a people group or understand their needs. Seek to understand.

4. Search for cultural artifacts and cultural values. Cultural artifacts are obvious differences that you explore with your senses. They might include differences in clothing, music, food, and celebrations. Cultural values are hidden beneath the surface and are not so obvious. This could be how people communicate (direct vs. indirect) or organizational structures (hierarchy vs. flat). These are much harder to grasp.

5. Pray and review. When you launch a mission, review it every month at the beginning. Do not make your plans permanent. Take time to review with your team. You may need to make several changes for effective mission. Pray, review, repeat.

Questions

1. What are some of the cultural artifacts and values within my own culture or people group?
2. What are the different people groups in my neighborhood?
3. Do we really have a heart and desire to reach people different than we are?
4. How could our church start listening to these people? How could we begin to pray for them?

I want to hear from you! Don't forget to e-mail your questions, comments, and testimonies at jonhunter@churchdoctor.org. Check out thesendmovement.com to apply for discipleship training for SEND Young Adults (18-29) or SEND+ (29+) or for coaching opportunities.

Resources

Cleveland, C. (2013). *Disunity in Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.
Livermore, D. (2009). *Cultural Intelligence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
Sanders, A. (2013). *Bridging the Diversity Gap*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House.