

A MODEL CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING PROGRAM
FOR SEMINARY STUDENTS: THE SELF-LEARNING DESIGN,
IDENTITY-CONTINUITY STRUCTURE

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I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to offer the outline of a model program for seminarians who are committed to working in a cross-cultural, fieldwork placement during their seminary training. The paper is written in response to a need. An increasing number of Theological Schools and Catholic Missionary Orders today are sending their students abroad for some kind of cross-cultural exposure during their formative years of training. While I support the general direction that this aspect of seminary training is taking, my own experience in such a program and my contact with others who have been involved in similar programs qualifies anything that approximates a full endorsement of this direction. With very few exceptions, I have found both the described purpose of such programs and the programs themselves to be woefully lacking in cohesion, continuity and educative content.

Missionary work in another culture, if entered into without adequate preparation and continuing support, can be and often has been an extremely traumatic experience, both for the fledgling missionary and for the people of the host culture. The model program I offer here will, hopefully, lessen the possibility of such trauma and, more positively, will show how a cross-cultural, fieldwork placement can open to the student a method of learning that will develop his personal charisms and will enhance the search for common ground for the implantation of the Word among the people to whom he is sent.

As one attempts to incorporate these rather lofty ideals into the bricks and mortar of structural guidelines, one encounters an inbuilt difficulty. It is this: How does one structure a model cross-cultural program that can adequately incorporate and relate to any number of very different cultural and personality types working in very different cultural situations? The solution to this difficulty is, I believe, to place the emphasis on the individualized, guided development of each person engaged in such a cross-cultural program, rather than on generalized rules aimed at co-ordinating and standardizing personal growth.

Let I be accused of promoting an extremely reductionistic view of developmental growth I must point out that when a person crosses cultures he or she will move through several identifiable stages which are a constant for any personality type. A model, to be in any way effective, must have definite and generalized guidelines to cope with these stages and to ensure that there is a methodological process that can incorporate into its system the dual problems of diversity -- of personality type and of culture. Yet, because of the unique nuances that each person brings to the enculturation process I

stress again the importance of an individualized development program for each student undertaking a full-time, cross-cultural ministerial placement.

The title I give to the model I am about to describe is the Self-Learning Design, Identity-Continuity Structure. Before launching into the model, however, it is necessary to examine those aforementioned stages of the cross-cultural adaptation process. This is necessary because the effectiveness of the model rests on the student's ability to experience these stages as a process of learning that he fashions according to his own needs and charisms - thus the self-learning design.

II. The Enculturation Process

When a person crosses cultures and remains in the alien culture for a considerable length of time he will experience a process that is usually described by the loosely generic term "culture shock". The hypothesis which I have reached in my struggle to come to terms with the multifaceted nature of this condition has its foundation in two complementary sources. The first source was experiential. Using my own experience as a guide (I have lived and worked in two cultures other than my own), over a period of a year I made a study of a core group of ten people, from several different cultures, who were in one or other of the various stages of the cross-cultural enculturation process. The other source was theoretical, drawn from a number of readings on culture shock and from associated readings in the fields of developmental psychology and sociology. What I offer is a hypothesis that I consider to be both verifiably true and a solid base for the development of a program.

The first stage of the enculturation process is the "Romantic" or "Honeymoon" stage. In this stage one experiences much that is different and exciting. Life is imbued with the fascination of discovering new modes of existence in an environment that is alive with surprises that overflow with potential adventure and promise the satisfaction of increased knowledge and experience. This stage, which is somewhat akin to walking through the pages of National Geographic, quickly passes and one moves into the second stage where a very real fragmentation of one's identity occurs. In my opinion, it is this second stage of the enculturation process that can patently lay claim to the title "culture shock".

In an informative study Garza-Guerrero likens the experience of culture shock to that of the mourning process.(1) What one has lost, and this becomes most potently obvious in this second stage of fragmentation, is one's culture, which is the source and verification of one's identity, the repository of order and meaning. (2) At this stage a person experiences an afflictive admixture of sadness, hostility, desperation and a yearning to recover what was lost. Concomitant with this is the emergence of the growing sensation of discontinuity of identity. (3)

(1) Garza-Guerrero, C., "Culture Shock: Its Mourning and the Vicissitudes of Identity": Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Society, Vol. 22, 1974, No.2, pp. 408-429.

(2) Berger, P., The Sacred Canopy, Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., New York, 1969, p. 18.

(3) Garza-Guerrero, C., op. cit., p. 418.

Eric Erickson, in his study on the "Eight Stages of Man"(4) expounds a theory that is helpful in the understanding of this experience of fragmentation and mourning. Erickson sees the formation of the identity as a transforming, dynamic process which, given its full course, evolves through eight interdependent stages of maturation. Yet since neither we nor our parents, nor the society in which we live are perfect in every way, there are, necessarily, weak links in each person's developmental growth.

My theory is that when a person crosses cultures and the cultural supports that he took for granted are withdrawn, he regresses to those stages of his development which were unsatisfactory, and the factors that were operative at that stage preoccupy and dominate his present life. With Garza-Guerrero I believe that a person, at this stage, does fantasize about past good object relations in a quest to verify his identity in an unstable situation. Yet in my work with the students who were experiencing culture shock, I found that in addition to this reflective and supportive fantasizing, and recurring often, was the need to resolve past relationships that they considered unsatisfactory and to work through traumatic experiences that they encountered in their childhood and youth. In a very real way the cross-cultural experience demanded of them that they grow up again by robbing them of the many cultural supports that constantly verified their identity, thereby shaking their concept of self-identity to its roots and consequently exposing the weak links in their developmental process.

Moreover, because a person never feels fully at home in another culture, there will be constant pressure on his so-called weak links, which if not recognized for what it is and named, will result in the constant repetition of actions that have their roots in subconscious drives which spiral out of unsatisfactory experiences innate in each person's developmental process. If these pressures are identified and named - a practice which usually requires the assistance of another person knowledgeable in the dynamics of developmental growth and the cross-cultural enculturation process -, an individual will have the freedom to overcome his habitual reactions to stress situations by altering his behavior and by relinquishing those areas of his past life which confine his present situation.

The second stage is the most traumatic of the whole enculturation process, Its effects are lasting, and it is important to realize that in the latter stages of enculturation a person will carry with him traces of unreconciled conflicts and experiences caused by this second stage of identity fragmentation, some of which have their roots deep in his subconscious.

The latter two stages of the enculturation process can be compared to the aftershocks of an earthquake. These tremors, serious in themselves, do have an optimistic aspect. Their pressures show that progress has been made and that the real shock, now past, has been at least somewhat successfully endured.

(4) Erickson, E., Childhood and Society, W. W. Norton and Company, 1963 (2nd ed.), New York, pp. 247-274.

The third stage of the enculturation process can be described as the reintegration or reorganizational stage. Characteristic of this stage is a selective and carefully scrutinized internalization of those aspects of the new culture which fit harmoniously into the person's reshaped identity.(5) Signs of immersion in this third stage are frequent and idealized remembrances of the abandoned culture, aggressively derogatory remarks about the new culture admixed with a certain cheerfulness which vents feelings of both resignation and reserved hopefulness.

The fourth, and final, stage can best be described as the recovery stage in which the person consolidates his new identity. A note of caution is apropos here, It is a mistake to think that culture shock is something that a person passes through and its effects become fully resolved as the person's new identity emerges. The new identity referred to here does not mean that the person is totally engulfed in and by the new culture. Nor does it mean that the person's new identity is the sum total of his bicultural or tricultural experiences. The practice of discriminatory selection, characteristic of the third stage, is still very much in effect in this stage. This fourth stage is an open-ended stage in which, in a continual process of re-editing a person harmoniously integrates his experience of the foreign culture with his own cultural heritage. In this stage a person is reasonably happy in his new environment, or, to put it another way, accepts as good the reciprocal relationship between his new identity and his new culture. He will still long for his forsaken culture but such longing will no longer have an overpowering effect on him. And if he has subjected himself to the full process of culture shock, without succumbing to the temptation to deny or avoid it, he will have learned an extremely important lesson, namely that what began as a serious threat to his identity actually resulted in a significant growth of the self and a confirmation of both his ego identity and self-esteem. In the light of this groundwork, it is time now to consider the model itself.

III. The Model: The Overseas Training Program (O.T.P.)

The Program is divided into three sections:

Preparation

Enculturation (The cross-cultural experience itself)

Re-enculturation (Reintegration into the home culture)

It is extremely important, as the student moves from one part of the program to the next that he both experiences his identity formation as being in a state of continuous progression and also learns how he is learning in each situation. This is the very core of the O.T.P. As well as developing his own style of learning in another culture the student will learn from his experience to the extent that he sees his own development through the program as a continuous whole - thus the Identity-Continuity Structure.

A. Preparation

This section is divided into two interrelated sub-sections: Remote Preparation and Proximate Preparation.

(5) Garza-Guerrero, C., op. cit., p. 423.

1. Remote Preparation. The general thrust of this aspect of the program is to assist the student in understanding himself as best he can. The dynamics of such self-searching, which can be both objective and subjective, should be initiated several years before the student ventures overseas.

Objectively he should seek and be given input concerning the spiritual, educational, societal, psychological, physiological and emotional areas of his being. Such evaluation would come from his spiritual director, any counsellors he met with, a medical authority, an authority in the area of psychology, a Clinical Pastoral Education supervisor, his academic dean and his peers. Most seminarians have access to each of these areas of evaluation and formation. With written input in each of these areas a student, over a number of years should be able to compile an extensive dossier which, cumulatively, should give him valuable input regarding the kind of person he is, as others perceive him to be. The additional point to make here is that the dossier is his, to do with as he wishes. Hopefully he will share it with those who can assist and support him in his development through the various parts of the program. But because it contains such personal information its contents should not be used by others without his knowledge and permission. For the program to be a success a high level of trust, respect and confidence must be maintained at all levels of the O.T.P.

Subjectively the student should try to come to terms with the recurring themes that dominate his life. As a means of tracing such themes I suggest the student keep a detailed journal. Dr. Ira Progoff, a disciple of Carl Jung, has developed an excellent, albeit intricate, method of journal keeping. His book, "At a Journal Workshop" (6), shows how a journal is organized and describes underlying concepts and operational principles and techniques of the Intensive Journal. I would highly recommend attending a Progoff workshop to experience his method with guided assistance.

The importance and the purpose of these objectives and subjective appraisals is as follows. The more the student can understand and accept the dynamics that are operative in his life, and the more open he is to working with others who can identify these dynamics the more able he will be to accept and, if necessary, alter those areas of his life which will come under pressure during his enculturation experience. Concomitantly, these appraisals will verify, for the student, the fact that his reaction under cross-cultural stress are consistent with his reactions to stress situations in his own culture and consequently will verify a continuity in his identity formation at a time of apparent fragmentation.

2. Proximate Preparation. The basic premise of this section is that learning in a cross-cultural ministerial situation is substantially different from learning in the home environment, particularly in regards to seminary or college education. An example from my own experience might serve to illustrate this point.

(6) Progoff, I., At a Journal Workshop, New York, 1974.

I was travelling back to the mission station at dusk on a small island just off the coast of New Guinea where I was working, when I noticed a very large black snake on the path in front of me. At home in Australia we were taught to kill any snake we happened upon, especially black ones which were, as a rule, extremely poisonous. I killed the snake and because it was so large I put it in a hessian bag and took it back to the station and displayed it proudly in front of the church. The next morning several people from a nearby village came to me and said that during the night they heard the parents of the snake crying in their village looking for their lost child. When I asked them if this snake, or snakes in general, had special value for themselves or for their ancestors they appeared to lose interest in the incident. Yet before they returned to their village they told me, almost as an aside and interwoven into a discussion about the price of the copra, that a recent landslide that wrecked several village houses and injured a number of people was caused by the killing of a snake by a village man. Having related all of this rather impassively, they returned home.

Now there are a number of levels to this incident. For instance, what did the snake represent to the people? What was I saying to them when I killed it and left its mangled body in front of the church? What did they mean by their statement and their story? How did they express their feelings? What effect did this multi-dimensional communication have on me? How did I respond to them, and in myself? What did I learn about the people, about their customs, about myself? How was I going to put this learning into effect? I had been on the island for only a few months. There was no one of my own culture to turn to for advice. I had to work out my own rules from the experience and put them into effect.

Generalizing from this incident I suggest that in a cross-cultural setting, the entire social environment is the setting for learning and every human encounter provides relevant information. The learner is often on his own in defining problems, generating hypothesis and collecting information from the social environment. The emphasis is on recognizing problems and developing problem-solving approaches on the spot.(7) Because of this I believe that a student who intends doing cross-cultural work should be challenged, in an educative way, to develop his own system of learning operations that will stand him in good stead when he crosses cultures. It is a very difficult task to try to develop such rules when one is laboring under the full effects of culture shock, so the student should work at such rules before going for his full term overseas.

(7) Harrison, R. and Hopkins R., The Design of Cross-Cultural Training: An Alternative to the University Model: The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol. 3, No. 4, December 1967, p. 438.

The aim of the proximate preparatory program I am about to outline is to inculcate in the student the ability to understand what he is learning and how he has learned it so that he can act on his learning both consciously and conscientiously. In other words he must develop a personal paradigm for his cross-cultural learning experience, a paradigm that will combine both the content and the method of his learning processes. He must strive to be aware not only of what he is learning but of how he is learning in any situation. Let's go back, briefly to the snake incident. Apart from my learning certain facts about the people of the Island and about myself, in order to be an effective missionary I had to work out for myself a system of learning, of asking questions, of correlating conclusions and of planning, from these conclusions, a system of further inquiry that I would constantly revise until I was satisfied it worked for me.

As mentioned previously, because of the difficulty of working out this system, or paradigm, while subjected to the full pressure of the cross-cultural enculturation process, I suggest that students should experience a cross-cultural situation in their own culture with an ethnic group whose value system and mores are substantially different to their own, before going for their fieldwork assignment. The following principles can be used as guidelines for challenging the student to initiate his self-learning design program and work out his paradigm for cross-cultural learning.

a. The student should be continually exposed to a cross-cultural situation that requires him to diagnose what is going on in the unfamiliar environment, to define the problems he encounters, to devise solutions to these problems and to take action. In this preparatory cross-cultural experience problems should be constructed so that their definition and solution require the student to develop information from the persons who are present with him in the problem situation. Learning to use immediate data gathered from the social environment will free the student from dependence on authoritative sources of information. (8)

b. In this preparatory program the student should be confronted with problem-solving situations which force him to make choices from competing values which have consequences for his relationship with others in the program and in the culture. The aim of this principle is to develop in the student the emotional maturity he will need to deal constructively with the strong feelings which are created by conflicts arising from the confrontation of values and attitudes in a cross-cultural situation. (9)

(8) Ibid., p. 442.

(9) Ibid., p. 443.

c. In this living-in training situation should experience the emotional impact of the alien phenomena with which he is dealing to the fullest extent possible. Further, he should learn to translate his ideas and values into direct action, with all the attendant risks and difficulties this implies. The aim of this principle is to enable the student to make choices and commitments to action in situations of cross-cultural stress and uncertainty. (10)

d. The student should be encouraged to use his own and others' feelings, attitudes, and values as information in defining and solving human problems. This implies, and quite rightly, that his preparatory training be done with a peer group and under the guidance of supervisors.

I offer the following suggestions for the concrete implementation of these principles in a cross-cultural preparatory program within the home culture:

a. The program should be of sufficient length for the students to experience culture alienation which is a prerequisite for putting the aforementioned principles into effect. I suggest that the program be at the very least six weeks long, but eight to ten weeks would be preferable.

b. The culture should be somewhat similar to the one the student is going to, although this is not absolutely necessary.

c. Experienced supervisors of both sexes should be present to guide and challenge the students in the new environment. By "experienced" I mean that they have been through the enculturation process, have developed their own self-learning design paradigm for working cross-culturally and are versed in the mores of the culture from which the student has come and in which he is working.

d. The students should sever contact with their home environment. They should not return or call home while they are on the preparatory program but rather should devote their time and energy to understanding their new environment and its people.

e. The students should live with the people of the host culture, sharing their lives to the fullest extent possible.

f. The students should work with the people, at their invitation, doing what they ask. Hopefully their work will be set and evaluated by a member of the local community.

The supervisory role is extremely important in the preparatory stage, as it is in the subsequent stages. The main task of supervisors is not to provide a mass of information about the various aspects of the culture. Their task is to challenge the students to develop their own self-learning design paradigm. In other words they have to teach the students problem-solving processes which are developed from linking the emotions with the intellect and discovering the role of each in the process of defining and acting on problems, evaluating the action and learning from the evaluation. The students must be free to solve problems in any way they choose. Once a course of action has been taken, the supervisors should help the students reflect on their experience. Like good teachers anywhere supervisors should work intuitively asking the right questions at the right time.

The supervisors should have well developed skills in the area of group dynamics so that when students meet to reflect on their experience and elaborate on the development of their self-learning design paradigm they will be able to move the students past the anecdotal stage to a point where they can abstract their learning process from the particular events they experience. Group meetings should be both supportive and challenging for the students. It is up to the supervisors to see that a healthy balance between the two is maintained.

During this preparatory stage supervisory and peer evaluations will become an invaluable part of the students' dossiers. They should also be encouraged to work with their Intensive Journals during this stage. With the help of these two sources students should be better able to decipher personal patterns and reactions in dealing with cross-cultural stress situations.

Before moving to the next section the following question must be addressed: Should supervisors and superiors be selective in recommending students for work overseas? My answer to this is an unequivocal yes. Not everyone is suited for cross-cultural work and this is especially true in regard to cross-cultural ministerial work. It is much more charitable and humane to discourage a person from working overseas and inflict him with immediate disappointment than to allow him to go and, in all probability, to cause irreparable damage to himself and to the people with whom he lives and works. The supervisor's experience in a foreign culture and his or her expertise in the sensitive area of human relations will no doubt help initiate the selection process.

In order to balance any biases that might conceivably creep into a supervisory evaluation, I recommend reading M. Brewster Smith's study: "Exploration in Competence: A Study of Peace Corps Teachers in Ghana." (11) The interesting thing about this study is that it attempts to predict a person's competence for work in a cross-cultural environment under the stresses that have already been mentioned. Admittedly these people were being selected for a specific task in a specific country, but there are enough factors in Smith's study in common with the O.T.P. to make it worthy of considerable attention (e.g., age of students, general cultural background, cross-cultural commitment for an altruistic cause, length of program).

I believe that the quality of the selection process will be an accurate barometer of the quality of the program and the seriousness with which it is entered into.

{11) Smith, B., "Explorations in Competence: A Study of Peace Corps Teachers in Ghana:" Social Psychology and Human Values Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, 1969. pp. 191-209.

B. Enculturation

If the preparation programs - both proximate and remote - have been in any way successful the student will not arrive in the cross-cultural situation devoid of a certain basic knowledge and skill. He will be carrying with him both his dossier and his Journal. Hopefully, also, he will be carrying with him a system of learning which can be adapted effectively to his new situation. The supervisor for this part of the program, by the time the students arrive, should have made arrangements that will facilitate the students' enculturation process. (Because many programs are still in their embryonic form and because of the serious shortage of personnel in most situations of mission work, the O.T.P. in specific countries will most probably be under the direction of one supervisor.) A word of very important advice, students should not be sent to a foreign country alone. Jesus, in his wisdom, knew how essential it was to send his disciples out in twos (Mk. 6:7). Peer support must be counted on as a constant throughout the program.

The students should be allowed to enjoy their "National Geographic" stage as much as possible. Things will soon be difficult and they will need some good memories of the host culture. The supervisor should resist the temptation to put the students to work immediately in preliminary cultural studies or language learning. Within a reasonable time the students should be given ample opportunities in both of these areas.

The supervisor should give considerable thought to the fieldwork arrangements of the students. The students should be placed in close proximity to one another. Such mutual accessibility will enhance the opportunity for both formal and informal group meetings. If the students are not working at the same site as their supervisor, which is preferable enhancing as it does an objectivity in his supervisory capacities, they should be placed with an experienced pastor who at least understands the self-learning design method and is sensitive enough to appreciate the various stages of the enculturation process with their accompanying traumas and reactions in the student. As with the supervisor, the pastor should be free enough in himself to let the student create his own work situation, guiding him to sources of information concerning the people, their history, their environment and imparting to the student the knowledge he has gleaned from his own experience. He should be a man of both faith and prayer, encouraging the student in both these areas and sharing in them with him.

The principles and values for the paradigmatic self-learning design method, for personal supervision and group reflection elaborated in the preparatory program apply here, with this noted difference: the students' radical separation from their culture will be much more extreme and they will be subjected to, and hopefully will grow through the full experience of the enculturation process.

As the students move into the second stage of the process - the stage of fragmentation of identity or culture shock, the supervisor will find that they will be very dependent on him to sort out the plethora of conflicting feelings and emotions they are experiencing. It may even happen that against all information to the contrary, a student will think that because of his remote and proximate preparation, he has it pretty well together

and will be able to cope well with culture shock. If this is so, when the fragmentation process occurs it will be even more traumatic. In any case at this stage the supervisor will probably find it necessary to meet often with each student, on an individual basis and, with the help of the student's dossier and Journal, help him to understand that his ways of acting out under stress are consistent with the kind of person that he is and his identity, far from fragmenting is, in fact, affirming itself in the student's acting consistently with his past patterns of behavior. It is extremely helpful for students at this stage if they see reasons and patterns in their actions and feelings. It is up to each student to share as much of his dossier and his Journal with his supervisor as he deems safe and necessary. As noted in the remote preparation section, the more he shares the more helpful the supervisor can be in detecting patterns and suggesting ways of dealing more adequately with the situation.

It is in the identification of these patterns that the value of the self-learning design rests. The ability of the student to alter his behavior patterns in ways that both he and the supervisor devise will depend on the extent to which he can verify the continuity in his identity formation. The student will definitely need help at this stage in linking his fledgling system of paradigmatic self-learning, which he devised in his preparatory cross-cultural experience, with the system he is continuing to work out as he tries to cope with the chaotic experience of the second stage of enculturation. It is in this chaotic state, where the boundaries between sensible and senseless are so loosely delineated, that risks involving unforeseeable consequences must be taken. It is from such risky actions that a person in a cross-cultural situation learns and, with guidance, learns how he learns.

The emphasis in group work at this stage of fragmentation and dependence will be on the mutual support of members of the group for one another. Some exchange of personal paradigms from the self-learning design model will be possible, but a prime function of the group at this stage is to assist each of its members in a supportive way, encouraging them to vent feelings of frustration, anger, sadness, confusion and grief. The students will probably not feel free to express such feelings to the people with whom they are working, and if denied or kept inside they could cause considerable damage to the individual. I refer the reader to an excellent article by Sally Dye which shows the effects of culture shock on those people who deny, or who are unaware, of its processes and traumas.(12)

The supervisor's skill as a group leader and facilitator will be called into effect at this stage at the level of creating an atmosphere that enhances the trust necessary for emotional sharing. He should let the students know that it is perfectly all right to mourn for their lost culture and to reach back to it for security and identity.

(12) Dye, S., "Decreasing Fatigue and Illness in Field-Work," Missiology, Vol. II, No. 1, Jan. 1974, pp. 79-109.

As the students move into the third stage of re-integration - which, one must be aware, they will do at different times - they will begin to become more independent of the group and of the supervisor. As they selectively choose elements of the new culture that appeal to them and begin to plan for their future, their ability to conceptualize and articulate the paradigm of their personal learning models will increase. The risks that they have taken will seem less threatening because they will have no doubt tasted success in their dealings with the people, and even their failures will have been helpful in pointing them in more knowledgable directions. At this stage the students will have begun to assimilate somewhat of a knowledge of the language and the culture and probably some form of competition will arise among group members. Consequently the supervisor should give serious thought to the positive and negative aspects of competition as a tool for cross-cultural learning.

Around this time the students will probably be eager to further their academic knowledge of the culture, and suitable anthropological, sociological, historical and literary material should be on hand to satisfy their interest. On an individual level, the supervisor should know the students well enough to work out with them methods of countering negative and recurring behavioral patterns that have their roots in traumatic experiences in each student's developmental process, and which will have exerted a dominating influence in the student's life in his first half-year or so in the alien culture. Such breakthroughs increase the student's creative capacities and freedom, facilitate a richer paradigmatic learning experience and decrease the potential pressures of culture fatigue in the latter stages of the student's stay.

As the students move into the fourth open ended stage of recovery and assimilation of their new identity, their independence will become even more cogently obvious. The supervisor will probably encounter various forms of resistance from the students at this stage. They will probably use their busy work schedule as an excuse for not meeting with the group or the supervisor. It is at this time when they feel the least need for group and supervisory meetings that they will benefit from them and most in the area of further delineating and defining their self-learned paradigm and testing its adequacy in practice, in a fieldwork situation in which they feel more or less at ease and have some control over themselves. They can, at this stage, be more critical of their fellow students' paradigms and can therefore refine their own model in the light of the constructive criticism they receive.

The students should, by this time, not only be somewhat at ease and happy in their new culture, but also should be somewhat at ease and happy in themselves, these two states, of course, being closely interrelated. My suggestion is that once the students reach this stage and are conscious of it, time should be set aside for celebrating. By this time the group will have devised a set of symbols and rituals that represent their corporate experience and carry meanings that point to significant experiences that they have weathered together. Such symbols and rituals should be brought to mind consciously at this stage and, careful not to overly emphasize them lest they become parodies of themselves, but respecting them for what they are, they could be incorporated into a liturgical celebration, the tenor of which should and will be happiness and rejoicing.

Such a celebration should mark the beginning of a vacation together, for both group and supervisor, away from the work site. The purpose of this break, quite apart from its intrinsic value, is to point to the fact that the students have weathered the storm, have in a very real way, died to themselves and, as their new identity is emerging, can celebrate the fact that new life is growing and blossoming, a fact that just did not seem possible in the very recent past.

Although prayer and reflective theologizing must be an essential part of the program to date, they will become especially important at this time. It is highly advisable that, either preceding or proceeding the vacation, the students and supervisor make a religious retreat of some kind. The purpose of this retreat would be to give conscious recognition of the students' cross-cultural experience as a religious journey fraught with mystery, fear and pain from which has sprung vibrant and joyful life and new hope. Scripture passages such as John 12:24 - "unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies.." - will take on whole new depths of meaning, both symbolic and real. This would also be the time for each student to assess the quality of one of the most important aspects of his existence, his prayer life. Hopefully each will come to appreciate communal and private prayer, scripture reading, liturgical celebration and meditation as the central, integrating factors of his cross-cultural experience and will resolve to give them the time and devotion they warrant in his life.

It is important that the Overseas Training Program be sufficient length to allow the students to go through the full process of enculturation which, given the complications of diversity of cultures and personality types, usually takes a year. Also, once the students have gone through the enculturation process and are at the stage where they can define this self-learned paradigm with some lucidity, they should be allowed sufficient time to test it out in practice and continue to re-edit and redefine it. The O.T.P. should, I believe, be at least two years long and even longer in those cultures where language learning is an extremely difficult and drawn out process.

As the end of the training period in the foreign culture approaches, two areas will have to be dealt with. The first is evaluations. The students should be required to make a generalized evaluation of their own sojourn in the foreign culture. If they have been consistently developing their Intensive Journals and have catalogued reports of group and supervisory meetings during their stay, this should not be a difficult task. Both a summary peer and supervisory evaluation should complement this document and the total evaluation should become a significant chapter in the students' personal dossiers. For the benefit of the supervisor, the students should do an evaluation on him as well as on the program in general.

The second area to be dealt with is termination. This could be the final addition to their paradigmatic model that the students add in the foreign culture. At the end of two or more years, the students will have made deep attachment to the people and to their way of life. Since their experience of mourning their own culture was so painful and stress-producing they may instinctively try to deny the termination process in their new culture. Because of the stress this denial will produce later

on and because of the growth and learning that will result if they face it fully, the supervisor should facilitate this process in each of the students. This may take the form of getting the students to describe how they usually terminate relationships, indicating which areas of the process they, and the others, think is not responsible and planning ways of changing this process for the better. The supervisor can realistically go through this process also because he will be going through termination with the students.

When the time comes to say good-bye the grief that the students carry with them will be a good indication of how much they have changed since their arrival.

C. Re-Enculturation: Reintegration into the Home Culture

If the program so far has been even a moderate success, the students will have changed and matured considerably in their time away. They will probably have become more tough-minded and realistic, more autonomous and independent of authority.(13) They will look at their culture with a new appraisal that stems from their experience of another way of life and from their somewhat integrated new identity. They will be able to, and certainly will, evaluate it and criticize it in a more mature and aggressive way. At least part of this aggression will stem from the fact that people at home will not appreciate, and probably will not accept, their new identity. Reciprocally, the people at home will not appreciate the students' criticism of their own culture which, not long ago, they had longed for intensely. A whole new challenge to the identity of each student will emerge. Once again, and probably more quickly this time, he will go into mourning for the culture and the people he has just left and this mourning process will be nurtured by the fact that he feels like an alien in his own culture. To say the least he will be confused by the fact that he finds himself going through the enculturation process in his own culture.

This confusion should be addressed on several levels. If the student has found his Journal to be a good means of getting in touch with and expressing his feelings he will no doubt increase its volume profoundly at this stage. He will want to, and should, meet with a supervisor who understands what is happening and can show him the continuity of his actions and reactions within the ambit of his newly emerging identity. Once again the Journal and the dossier will be invaluable for deciphering and confirming patterns and verifying the student's self-identity.

The returning students should also meet in a formal group session. I say formal because, for reasons of survival and sanity, the students will no doubt get together, often in little groups, to swap "in" jokes, to recall (romantically) incidents that occurred in their overseas experience and to revel in the security of speaking their foreign language. But as with the other two parts of the program the re-enculturation stage is essential to the learning process. It must, therefore, move the students past the anecdotal level to a level of real learning. Group and personal supervisory sessions should help facilitate the following goals:

(13) Smith, B., op. cit., p. 207.

1. They should help the students decipher as much as possible how and in what areas they have changed. The constant presence of their home culture and their relatives and friends continuing to relate to them, at least initially, as they once were will serve to enhance this process.

2. As they go through enculturation for the second time, even in the confusion, they will have an opportunity to put into effect the paradigm they derived from their going through it the first time. The group and supervisor can help each student to do this.

3. As the students feel more and more at home they should be encouraged to describe which aspects of both cultures they have selectively chosen as important and integral to their continually emerging identity. This should be an indication of the kind of person that they are and how much they have changed since first leaving the home culture. If the students are happy with their identity, even if they cannot articulate the parameters of their new being (which they never can, of course) they will be encouraged to continue the way of life that has, in the long run, been purposeful, maturing and enriching.

As with the other two stages, and even more so at this stage, it is necessary and advisable to let the student work out the program he is returning to. I am fully aware that the system of degree and ordination requirements militates against such creative and responsible participation, but the students will have charted paths, survived and grown in greater wilderness than that landmarked by credit points and grades. They will have worked out an extremely important, self-taught paradigmatic system of learning in a cross-cultural ministerial situation. They will probably react strongly against re-learning a paradigm necessary for survival in an academic institution, which paradigm they know to be of temporary value, to be discarded when they return to full-time cross-cultural work. A function of the home supervisor here would be to see that the students have a healthy say in designing the remainder of their seminary training programs.

IV. Advantages of the Model

At this stage I will point out briefly some of the advantages of the O.T.P. and its self-learning design, identity-continuity structure. I will begin by describing what is not, although this should have been obvious throughout the paper.

It is not a program designed to fully prepare a person for, or ease him through the enculturation experience. Such preparation is not possible and the value of the program lies in the student's ability to open himself as fully as possible to this experience. Nor is the program designed to make the students come to a complete understanding of themselves, which they can articulate lucidly. They will never arrive at anything like a full understanding of themselves, and to set this as a goal would be foolish. The program does challenge and support the students to discover recurring patterns in their lives, altering them where this seems fit and thereby coming to a new and deeper knowledge of themselves through these changes. The students must continually try to discover these patterns so that they can consciously develop a paradigmatic model of self-learning that will, under constant revision, facilitate their effectiveness as ministers of the Word in a foreign culture.

Some advantages of the program are that it will allow the student to be responsible and creative in a full-time ministerial experience, the immersion in which, with its cross-cultural aspects, will give him a sense of identity, worth and fulfillment that comes from contributing creatively to a cause he believes in; it will certainly be a weighty factor in the student's decision to continue, or not to continue with his theological studies; it will help him focus the remaining years of his theological study which, if he has a significant say in designing the program, he will approach more searchingly and with renewed enthusiasm; if he chooses to continue with the missionary way of life he will be much more capable of defining and describing his vocation; the program will heighten the sense of mission awareness in the communities to which the students return and promote a fruitful exchange of views in the many areas that their experiences relate to; and it will create strong bonds between missionaries and people overseas with people in the home countries. Hopefully this bond will extend to a collaboration concerning the formation of students in the schools of theology in the home countries. (14)

V. Conclusion

The emphasis in this Identity-Continuity structure has been on the formation of the individuals rather than on a generalized model that can be applied to all cultures. The reason for this, already stated, should be obvious. But I feel a qualifying note is needed at the conclusion of the paper. The program makes sense only if it is seen in relation to the people of the cultures that the student experiences during his formation. His primary motivation for going overseas is to come to know the people, to learn from them and hopefully to contribute something to their lives. Real dying to self will take place only if they, not he, are the central concern and priority. And any new life and new identity that emerges will be the result of the student's commitment to understanding and serving the people of the host culture.

Finally, the Overseas Training Program can be of educative value for the missionaries of the culture in which it is operative. The Program lays a heavy emphasis on self-initiating ministry. The student, hopefully will not come to the new culture and assume an authoritarian role, either liturgically or administratively. The stress is on getting to know the people to the extent that they will share their needs and hopefully ask for some assistance in these areas. To get to this point the student will have to show the people that he respects their culture and this will mean growing up as a child in it, learning its nuances and its language, both silent and spoken. This of course will exacerbate the student's identity crisis, but if he sticks with the learning process - learning about himself as well as the culture - he will come to be accepted as an adult. My thought on this matter is that a person will only be respected as an adult in another culture if he shows that he can learn as a child. In this learning process he will discover which personal charisms he can offer to the people in his and their situation. If they feel his respect and trust, they will then be ready to accept him and what he has to offer, as they offer their needs to him.

In the light of the December Seminar on "Mission to the First World", the following report from the Tablet gives an encouraging example of home and mission cooperation.

MISSION AWARENESS

by William Burridge, wf

The bishops' commissions, for ecumenism, education, the liturgy and so on, provide the bishops as a body with a means of fulfilling their joint pastoral responsibility in areas of capital importance in the overall life and task of the Church within the boundaries of the country covered by their dioceses. This is also true of course of their Missionary Commission, but the latter has an added and distinctive characteristic in that it throws open those boundaries to an immediate and practical relationship with the Church throughout the world.

One had only to look round the National Missionary Council of England and Wales (the machinery of the commission) as it met in conference at Newman College, Birmingham last week, to realise how true this is. The 80 priests, sisters and lay people who took part represented 20 missionary congregations and societies with wide experience and active work in Africa, Asia, Australasia and South America. There were, besides, diocesan priests who had served temporarily overseas (*Fidei Donum*), representatives of supporting organisations such as CAFOD with similarly wide connection, and, indispensable, directors of the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies.

The episcopal members of the commission - Bishop Grant, its president, and Bishops Cleary, Mahon and McCartie - were there to take an active part, all manifestly conscious that Vatican II had declared that bishops are ordained not just for the confines of a diocese but for the whole Church, and clearly delighting in the opportunity afforded by the Conference to exercise in some measure that universal pastoral responsibility as members of the commission.

The theme of the conference was the promotion of mission awareness in this country, and it was a fifth member of the hierarchy, Bishop Lindsay of Hexham and Newcastle, who in the opening paper dealt with it at the level of the hierarchy and the dioceses. The vivid impressions he had brought back from a three-week stay in East Africa (the kind of experience the conference hoped many of our bishops would avail themselves of) kindled his enthusiasm for the topic. He was in the happy position of having met there missionaries from families in his diocese and indeed two of his own *Fidei Donum* priests. He stressed the importance of personal links of this kind, fostered not least by missionaries on leave and former *Fidei Donum* priests. But, he insisted, making his own the directives of Vatican II's Ad Gentes, it is part of the bishop's own apostolate to foster mission awareness and help. "Missionary awareness," he said, "depends on people."

But dioceses consist of parishes and it was Fr. Peter Moore, of Heston, Middlesex, who read an inspiring paper on awareness at the level of parish clergy. For him, mission awareness is not only a duty for a priest: it is a grace stemming from his realisation of his relationship to Christ. He freely admitted that,

perhaps because of the absence of that awareness in the training given in his day by the excellent men at his seminary or in his early priestly environment, he had come late to that grace. It comprises, he said, a depth of apostolic perspective which is the antithesis of parochial possessiveness, and in turn it stimulates the people to interest, compassion and generosity. But this awareness finds expression especially in prayer. At Heston 140 people undertake half-an-hour of prayer per person per week before the Blessed Sacrament for the Church's mission at home and overseas.

Between them Bishop Lindsay and Fr. Moore had opened the main avenues of thought. Others were to explore them: a headmaster, by telling the conference how best to stimulate this awareness in schools; a panel of five lay people, by registering their reactions to the impact made by missionaries in this matter; CAFOD and Survive by putting the case of the mission of material aid. It fell to the present writer to draw material aid and evangelisation together in a last, short paper. This he did with reference to the Church's own missionary literature, Ad Gentes, Populorum Progressio and Evangelii Nuntiandi, and by insisting on the need for missionaries engaged in "promotion work" to be seen as people motivated by Christ's mission, not least in regard to the centrality of the Mass in the Church's mission.

With its preoccupation with mission awareness, the conference had its eyes turned hopefully to the forthcoming National Pastoral Congress. There had been little evidence so far of this awareness in the preferences sent up from the "grass roots" for the congress agenda. But Fr. Tom Shepherd, general secretary of the Congress Office, was there, with his sparkling sense of mission acquired from his work in Wales, to reassure and encourage. It was a happy note for the end of this conference, of which Bishop McCartie declared the most impressive characteristic was not merely the mass of information, but the permeating joy and enthusiasm of commitment to mission.

Reference: THE TABLET, 22 September, 1979.

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The General Chapter of the Missionaries of Marianhill, concluded on October 4th, 1979, elected the following General Council:

Father Fridolin Züger, Superior-General
(Superior of the Monastery in Marianhill, South Africa)

Father Dietmar Seubert, Vicar General
(Provincial of the German province)

Father Ignatius Schick, Councillor
(re-elected)

Father Martin Boelens, Councillor
(re-elected)

Father Vergil Heier, Councillor
(Superior of the Monastery in Dearborn Heights, USA)

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