

# Exit-Learning & Entry-Learning

## **Our Condition of Tribalism:**

Tribalism affects all of us. We are all fully tribalized for we are all fully members of at least our first culture. Some of us are members of more than one culture. Our tribal connection provides us with our orientation, security, identity, meaning, context, and relationships. But it also limits us; it erects barriers to other tribes—two barriers in particular: It blinds us to the ways our tribalism separates us from others and it makes it difficult for us to learn from others. Growing up in our tribe prepares us for many things but not for becoming a member of another tribe. This must be learned from the people of the other tribe. But because we are all so ill-equipped for this we need to be assisted. *First we need help leaving and second we need help entering into our new tribe.*

## **A Response to Our Condition of Tribalism:**

Our tribalism requires sweeping changes in our approach to cross-cultural formation. Initially we need to *learn how to leave home*, and in our new home we need to *learn how to continue learning, leaving and entering*. It should not be left up to individual ministers to implement it because the performance of each part affects the whole. At least two years should be needed for “leaving” and “entering”. The training can and should make use of existing structures and institutions, formational structures, local institutes and other resources, and it needs to draw on specialists. Ideally the process could be integrated into existing Theological formation.

## **Helping Learners to Raise the Right Questions:**

Cross-cultural formation needs to assist ministers to get beyond their *tribalism* by raising the *right questions*.

These concern *access, submission and change*.

**1. Access:** To help ministers in c-c formation to work out in what ways and to what extent they must *have access to the world of the insider* and in what ways and to what extent insiders must have access to their world.

**2. Submission:** To help ministers to work out in what ways and to what extent they need to submit to the insider and the insider’s world *by strengthening cultural similarities and eliminating cultural differences*.

**3. Change:** To help ministers to work out in what ways and to what extent they need to come to grips with their own first culture in order to make changes in themselves and to prepare themselves to submit.

## **Inherent Progression of the Three “Right” Questions:**

1. ACCESS: Members need access in order to do their work
2. SUBMISSION: Access requires submission
3. CHANGE: Submission requires change
4. CYCLIC PROGRESSION: Submission makes further change and more access possible

## **Critical Importance of Change:**

Of the three questions “*change*” is at the *critical hub*. In order to have access to their new tribe, c-c ministers first need to accommodate change. Then they need to submit, then they

will need to gain access and deepen access through more change and submission. From the outset, then, they must be *READY, WILLING and ABLE to change*. They must be ready, willing and able to follow and learn before they lead and teach. Every missionary must either learn to overcome his/her tribalism or be rendered incapacitated, i.e., be unable to fulfil their task.

### **What about if you Can't Change?**

Being ready, willing and able to change, to submit and to put the highest value on access need to be accented in our formational process from the start. Those who do not demonstrate a talent for this, in a very crucial sense, will not be able to do cross-cultural ministry. Selection is an issue here. The applied anthropologist, Edward Hall, tells us that after adulthood, training for change is next to impossible. Realistically speaking, this means that the selection of our cross-cultural ministers is at least as important as their formation. The selection process needs to focus more on the candidate's ability to *change* and *submit*. "Having the knack" for change, submission, and access are the most critical requirements for cross-cultural ministerial training. In order to attract the right candidates our Churches must begin to demonstrate the qualities they seek.

### **Exit-Learning vs. Entry-Learning:**

Overcoming our tribalism is a process that involves a combination of learning and commitment that takes place in *two movements*, each with a different primary focus.

1. **De-parochialization:** learning to leave (exit-learning) (done at home)
2. **De-alienation:** leaving to learn (entry-learning) (done in the mission field)

The formation of cross-cultural ministers needs to clearly distinguish between these two movements and to assist trainees by building supportive infrastructures and processes that respond to these movements and to their corresponding questions and needs.

### **Contents for your own personal Training Program in "exit-learning"**

"Exit-learning" or "learning to leave" must address five stages:

1. Being outsiders among insiders  
manage their differences in language & culture,  
name what's to be left behind (roles, values, identities)
2. Prior experience: how to increase similarities and decrease differences.
3. Taking personal inventory: ability to submit & change
4. Planning one's own development: increase potentials/decrease difficulties.
5. Forecasting: looking ahead
6. Conclusion: concrete written development plans produced by learner

### **Get the help you need: How Learners can be helped in "Exit-learning"**

1. Learners need to be helped to manage the differences between their own culture and their target tribe's culture. They need to increase their awareness of how they can be outsiders among insiders. This can be done through:

- cross-cultural comparisons using various testing materials like the  
"Cross-Cultural Differences"  
"Cultural Analysis Exercise"
- a basic training course in cultural analysis

2. Learners need to be helped to confront the differences in the ways languages are used. A course in practical language-learning techniques focusing on differences in structure, pronunciation, rhythm/intonation/melody, context etc.
3. Learners need to be helped to confront the differences in cultural behaviour and to deal with unfulfilled expectations. This could be done via a series of lectures on the dynamics of culture, hypothesis formation and testing, how to approach our unfulfilled expectations.
4. Naming what must be left behind:
  - Helping the Learner to identify his/her many roles:
    - professional roles: teacher, priest,
    - personal roles: household head, eldest male, etc.
  - Helping Learners to identify the values linked with each,
    - e.g., prestige, recognition, honor, gifts, money, power, authority.
  - Helping the learner to identify what exactly will be required to “leave”.
5. Anticipating the ability to submit. After identifying roles candidates must be helped to ask themselves whether or not they are prepared to leave these cherished roles.
6. Anticipating role-deprivation: Can the learner withstand the effects of severe role-deprivation? This must be tested. What new roles can compensate? How open is the candidate to the learner role? What roles will it be possible to take up along with learner role? Taking these points seriously will shed light on one’s calling. If a candidate is not willing, ready and able to change roles he/she should not go until ready. Cross-cultural ministry is not to be simply identified with “Christian Ministry” and it is definitely not for everyone.