CULTURE & MESSAGE (PT. 1) 
THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

Devotional Thought: 1 Corinthians 14 and the Purpose of Language:

What is language?
1. Language:

2. Pieces of the definition:
   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.
   f.
   g.
   h.
   i.
   j.
   k.
   l.
   m.
   n.
   o.
   p.

What are the characteristics of language?
1. Learned: primary vehicle of enculturation.
2. Unique: Languages are unique.
   a. Arbitrary nature. Similar only when evolving from same mother tongue or by interdependence.
3. Adaptable: Languages adapt to whatever changes take place in the culture. There is some selective borrowing. (ex. footing, computer, schedule, standard).
4. Reflect culture: “learn a language, speak a culture”.
   a. Greeks have four words for love.
   b. Idioms and metaphors are very revealing. (Ex. Rome wasn’t built in a day. All roads lead to Rome. E’ come il Duomo di Milano. If something’s expensive, “ti costa un occhio dalla testa”. On the ball=in gamba. Exercise in futility=fare un bucco nell’acqua, reaching for thin air=arrampicarsi sui specchi.)
   c. Hiebert tells us that words have both
      a.
      b.
What is non-verbal communication? or paramessages?

1. Birdwhistell says that in North America conversation is ___% verbal and ___% non-verbal.

2. What are Hesselgrave’s seven categories of non-verbal communication?
   
   a. U.S. males have ___ eye positions.
   b. pointing
   c. counting with fingers.
   d. come here in Italian.
   e. saying “no” in Albanian and Italian.

3. ___ space between seats and people. (ex. finding a seat in a waiting room).
   ___ territory. Example: fences in Italy or leaving gate open.

4. ___ holding hands
   ___ shaking hands
   ___ hugging (this is more intimate in Italy)
   ___ kissing

5. ___ the amount of time we spend, and the speed with which we talk or move communicates anger, intimacy, care.

6. ___ Ex. in Italy every dialect or part of the country has another cadence.
   ___ Preacher’s voice.

7. ___ adornment (ex. of Peace Child)
   ___ clothes (blue jeans vs. suit)
   ___ furniture
Culture & Message (pt. 2)
Language and the Missionary

Observations on Language Learning Simulation:

Tips to Successfully Learning the Language:
1. 
2. "Learn utterances suitable for situations."
   □ How do children learn a language? Language and thought processes are related.
   □ Learning a language through a grammatical approach is not all bad—but it has its disadvantages. Mainly, it is not context sensitive and creates all sorts of humorous errors.
3. The desire we have to learn the language will be in direct proportion to our love for the people.
   □ What does communication through a translator communicate to the target culture?
   □ How much is lost in translation? Eg. “we all like sheep have gone astray”. Translation, “we are lost because we love sheep” (Shawn Tyler, Uganda)
   □ The most rudimentary level of language is not sufficient to convey the gospel message—it does convey something of our love and respect for the people.
4. 
5. 

Problems in language learning:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Levels of Bilingual Proficiency
1. : One meaning system from which both languages operate (translation).
2. : One meaning system for each language used. Speak Spanish but also think in Spanish; Speak English, but all think in English.
3. A useful scale to describe levels of bilingual proficiency has been developed by the U. S. Foreign Service Institute. It describes six levels of proficiency, from memorized ability all the way to the equivalent of an educated native.
Why is an advanced proficiency level needed to serve as a long-term foreign evangelist?

1. Sociolinguists identify classes of situations, or domains, in which different forms of speech are used: home and family; traditional culture; school, work, trade; religion; close friends, etc.
   - The last domain in which a speaker learns to use a second language is the interpersonal domain; yet it is the most crucial domain in communicating the gospel cross-culturally.
   - Christian faith is not just corporate and public; it is personal and intimate.
   - People are won most often by friendship evangelism—through the forging of a close relationship.

2. Scripture has much unfamiliar information to convey, and much of it is cross-culturally unfamiliar.
   - This involves not just material culture.
   - It involves basic concepts such as the nature of God, evil, forgiveness, reconciliation.

3. A person who lacks advanced proficiency is not able to handle the kind of complex structure in the Scriptures—especially in the epistles.
   - A person may understand the words, but not really understand how they fit together.

4. Discourse in Scripture is not just narrative with events and simple propositions.
   - Scripture contains exhortations, expositions, explanations—complex concepts and arguments.

Methods of Language Acquisition
1. Traditional methods
2. LAMP--the daily learning cycle
   - Prepare what you need for the day.
   - Practice what you prepare.
   - Communicate what you know.
   - Evaluate your needs and progress, so you will know what to prepare for tomorrow.

Language learning Realities:
1. Language learners vary in their abilities.
2. Language learning takes time.
3. Is the best investment you can make. Do whatever to learn as well as possible as quickly as possible.
Model of the Process of Communication within a culture:

The Sender:
1. Initiates communication by transmitting a “message”.
   - Encoding — selecting a symbol system, or “medium” to encode ideas into the symbolic forms.
   - Encoding is dependent on:
     a. Language and symbol systems of culture.
     b. Personal experiences and present attitudes.
     c. Gender and age.
     d. Occasion.

The Receiver:
1. Limited to receiving messages transmitted in languages and symbol systems with which he is familiar.
2. Loss of message can occur due to dialectic variations of the same language. (illus. “guys” in the N.E. and here in the South).
3. Remember that languages reflect cognitive categories and assumptions of particular cultures.
4. Decoding — the receiver filters the message through the grids of his own personal and cultural experiences.
5. Loss or distortion of communication may arise when:
   - Selective listening: when the receiver blocks out part or all of message (illus. Pietro, deaf, would turn the other way and not look).
   - Noise —
     - a. Environment: too hot or too cold.
     - b. Incongruity: between messenger and message.
     - c. Foreign ness: mannerisms, dress, media.

The Medium is NOT the message but the symbolic system by which a message is conveyed.
1. Just as there are various ways to transport goods to their destinations, so there are different ways to communicate ideas.
2. The relationship between the media and the message is very close.
   - (Ex. What if we use a web page to communicate a plea to return to the simplicity of NT Christianity?)

The Message:
1. Meanings reside in people, not in symbols or media, and for this reason, we cannot speak of a message, only of the message as understood by various channels.
2. Communication is a cyclical process. Information flows from sender to receiver and back again. In feedback the sender becomes the receiver and must decode the message.

Charles Kraft’s Ten Basic Principles of Communication:
1. The purpose of communication is to bring a receptor to understand a message...in a way that substantially corresponds with the intent of the communicator.
2. What is understood is at least as dependent on how R perceives the message as on how C presents it.
3. Communicators present messages via cultural forms (symbols) that stimulate within the receptors’ heads meanings that each receptor shapes into the message that he or she ultimately hears. Meanings are not transmitted, only messages.
4. The communicator, to communicate the message effectively, must be “receptor-oriented”.
5. If the communicator’s message is to influence the receptor it must be presented with an appropriate degree of impact.
6. The most impactful communication results from person-to-person interaction.
7. Communication is most effective when C, M and R participate in the same context, setting, or frame of reference.
8. Communication is most effective when C has earned credibility.
9. Communication is most effective when M is understood by R to relate specifically to life as R lives it. (i.e. The message is credible and applicable).
10. Communication is most effective when R discovers an ability to relate with C and the relevance of M to his own life.
Eugene Nida’s Three Culture Model:

Implications of the Cross-Cultural Model of Communication:
1. Even under ideal situations, some meaning will be lost in transmission. Hiebert says that 70% gets through in the best situation; on 50% in cross-cultural situations.
2. Communication must be receptor oriented in order to minimize noise, reinterpretation and other loss of meaning. (Illus. Like using a water gun or soaker without sights. You adjust your aim according to where you see it hitting.).
3. Listening to feedback is essential. (Illus. similar to playing “Battleship”)

Our Ultimate Goal:
1. Raise up effective sources of Christian message from within target culture.
2. An Indian brother once said, “Don’t bring us the gospel as a plotted plant; bring us the gospel as a seed and plant it in our soil.”
How these dimensions affect the message:
1. When “culture x” encodes a message, that message passes through a cultural grid or screen that will determine the way that the message will be decoded by the respondent in “culture y”
2. No message can travel around it but must pass through it.
3. This grid is like a cake decorating tool or meat grinder that changes and limits the message as it is communicated.

Two Factors that determine how much of the message gets through:
1. The amount that the respondent understands “culture x”.
2. The amount that the source understands “culture y”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Medium</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Formulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
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Ethnotheology and Contextualization

Introduction: Think of some occasions when you heard the right lesson at the right time
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Three Tools of Theology:
1. These are our beginning points of elaboration. Ex. Source of Authority. Not shared with Catholics, Protestants, JW’s, atheists. Is it enough to assume that we can quote or read Scripture? Reading command to be baptized, or telling the story of Jesus and urging a response to be baptized?

2. What are we going to choose to think about?
   - Nature of God? Nature of Man?
   - Past, present, future
   - Selection is a necessity—where am I going to start?

3. The “how” of elaboration. Are we going to use stories, anecdotes, lecture, activities, sermons, discussions, cartoons?
   - Discussion Question: What are the messages we normally prioritize?

Definition: What is Ethnotheology: The saving message of Christ that
1. leads to .
2. centers on the and of Christ
3. speaks to or provides solutions for felt of the audience
4. new Christians to face specific cultural challenges.

Two Stages of Ethnotheology:
1. — Original evangelization, tantalizing message, scratching people where they itch. “Paul & the Athenians” Bruce, Ezpository Times 10:76 Demonstrates that Paul had two different messages for Jews and Gentiles.
2. — Messages and teaching that stabilizes, deepens faith, enables Xns to face cultural challenges. Acts 15. 1 Corinthians and fornication.

Biblical Examples of Relevant Theology:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

How to Develop an Ethnotheology:
1. Observe
2. Record to the Gospel in the past
3. Discover dissonance or in Worldview.
Practice: Now it’s your turn. Choose a situation and find passages that would be good places to start in sharing good news with...
1. a barren woman in Africa
2. a bulimic teen
3. a divorced person

Hesselgraves Four Stages of Cross Cultural Communication:
1. Definition — explain and define your words. “Terminology must be well chosen to make sense to the host culture.” Ex. in Italian, priest and saint don’t carry the same connotations. Royal priesthood would mean little or nothing. Illus. Taking your shoes off before walking on the floor.
2. Selection — of 66 books, where do we start?
3. Adaptation — Don Daughtery’s “Is God Dead?” used Hab. 1:2 “Where are you?”
Critical Contextualization

Traditional Cultures (all cultures have traditions that must be filtered and influenced by Scripture):

1. Houses, tools, carts, etc.
   Medicines.
   Magical protective charms.
   Idols, images, etc. for religious purposes.

2. Music (Can these tunes be used in worship?)
   Poetry, philosophy
   Story tellers (folk literature)
   (Illus. Ghanian Pentecostals use drums in worship across from churches meeting place in the Centro Sociale in BG. They listened to the sermon but tapped their feet)

3. Life-cycle rites.
   a. Ex. of the Bar Mitzvah. Sexual behavior in Italy. A father or older brother would pay a prostitute for young man’s first time.
   b. What are some examples in our culture of rites of passage? Graduation, getting your driver’s license, first date.
   c. ?
   d. Mark transitions in time (New Year, cycles of moon, change of seasons, planting and harvesting, etc.) Consider Romans 14:15; Col. 2:16; and yet Gal. 4:10–11. What cycles do we celebrate? (Winter solstice, Easter, Thanksgiving and the harvest)

What are the three options of dealing with old cultural ways when one becomes a Christian. Or, how should the missionary respond to traditional beliefs and practices?

1. Why are the old ways completely rejected by missionaries?
   Drums, songs, dramas, dances, body decorations, certain dress and food, customs, ceremonies were thought to be associated with traditional religions.
Sometimes rooted in ethnocentrism—judged the native cultural ways as bad because they were not like their own culture.

Consider the example of JW’s who require you to throw away pictures of parents, art, and no birthday celebrations are allowed.)

What are the problems created by the wholesale rejection of customs:

a. 

b. 

c. 

2. Old cultural ways are seen as basically good and few changes are seen as necessary in order to become a Christian.

Those who advocate this approach have a deep respect for other cultures and realize that the “foreignness” of the gospel has been a major barrier.

Weaknesses:

a. 

b. 

3. Old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination.

Steps:

a. 

b. 

c. 

d. 

Functional Substitutes:
The Fourth Self

Group Discussion:
1. When you plant a cross-cultural church, what do you want it to look like after ten or twenty years of effort:

What are the Three Selves?
1. Nearly total acceptance.
   - New churches aren’t automatically evangelistic.
   - Note AIM p. 194 “Although they were too poor to carry on the expensive programs started by the missionaries…”
   - Conclusion: Evangelistic methods must be reproducible. [Example of “English Using the Bible” as a one generation method of evangelism]

2. Divided acceptance by churches. Some support national evangelists and help build church buildings.
   - We appreciate what we pay for. My father made me work for my first bicycle. I took care of it and it lasted from 1st to 8th grade.
   - Buildings and programs paid for with American funds are the source of division and discouragement for growth. Ex. In Italy buildings purchased with American funds are not cared for, argued over, cause for division and sometimes too expensive to maintain. Ex. in Bergamo. We rented a place, the church rented from us but in the end they weren’t able to keep it.

3. Evangelicals find this to be the hardest level. Churches of Christ are accustomed to autonomy.
   - Note AIM p. 195 “No simple solution to the transfer of power.” Easiest if transfer never takes place because self-governance is there from the beginning.
   - Personal observation: God’s wisdom in this plan for the church is already seen in the NT. It is the best and healthiest way, and the Lord’s church is the best prepared group to handle this. We need to make no apologies for our lack of missionary societies or centralized government. Although God’s way may pose challenges, it provides the greatest benefits.
   - Models of church government:
     a. Ex. In Italy the missionary can become a functional substitute for the parocco or parish priest. Everything revolves around him. It is easier to do it yourself than to teach someone else to do it.
b. Naturally accepted in U.S. Every member (even immature new Christians) has a vote. Unspiritual and hyper critical Christians can veto or discourage.

c. Based on Acts 6, each member takes on a separate administration or responsibility.

d. Selection of the 4 or 5 most mature and spiritual men rotating in nationals and new growing Christians. Championed by the Rio Team and used in both the Florence and Rome congregations. (Romans 12:8)

e. The Good, Bad and the Ugly of the Three Selves

1. What are the positive points or strengths of this missions philosophy?
   -
   -
   -
   -

2. What are the difficulties or challenges of this missions philosophy?
   -
   -
   -
   -

Case Study:
Missionaries to an urban city have agreed not to use American funds to provide a church building for the new mission church. When they outgrow their present location, they ask for this policy to be changed. What should you do?

What is the Fourth Self?
1. — developing the ability and giving the right to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves.
   - When should self-theologizing begin?
   - According to AIM in the 3rd or 4th generation of Christians.
   - More ideally nurtured in the process of evangelism.
2. What frustrations will a missionary encounter in nurturing self-theology?
   - Carnal and immature Christians will not interpret the Scriptures honestly. [Ex. taught study on divorce and remarriage to three people in Memphis. One girl determined she could marry anyone; Bobby used the study as an excuse to divorce his second wife]
   - This method requires more time and a personal relationship with God. You can’t explain everything but you must make good use of questions.
   - You can’t run or control the lives of others.
   - Mastering your ego. You don’t know it all and determine to learn insights shared by new Christians.

3. What would you do in a culture where people have been taught that they can’t understand the Scriptures for themselves?
   - Teach them “For we do not write to you anything you cannot read or understand.” (2 Corinthians 1:13) and you strengthen this belief.
   - Nurture their experience of reading and understanding the Scriptures for themselves. [Ex. 13 lessons based on questions of content and thought]
   - Is it better to teach new converts the answers to their questions or how to find the answers to their questions?
   - [Illustrations: The dictionary man became extremely intelligent because he would always read from the beginning of the dictionary to find the answer to his questions. Harold Hazelip in Christian Ethics and Evidences used a historical approach in hopes that we would learn how to formulate ethics and present a defense for faith in various contexts.]

Theological Shock
1. What is meant by this term?
   - Definition: The experience of finding deeply committed Christians interpreting the Bible in a different way.
   - What theological shock have you experienced?
   - Claudia spent one month with us in 1985.
   - The church was much to friendly, invasive and irreverent.
   - We listened to the Bible and hymns while traveling in the car.

2. What are two common reactions to theological shock?
   - Pluralism—reject the exclusiveness of our own theology
   - Intolerance and presumption—reject all other interpretations and assume ours in the only right one.

3. What is the right reaction to theological shock?
   - Deepen our understanding of Scripture and knowledge of God.

4. How should we deal with those whose convictions are much different than our own?
   - Ephesians 4:12-15
Let’s Practice
1. What are the questions that Christians most often ask today?

2. What questions will new Christians be asking ten years from now?
Kids on the Field:  
When to Come Home  
Matthew 10:37; 19:29

1. What are the advantages of being a missionary kid?
   - Rare opportunity to have two mother-tongue languages
   - See more of the world and travel than most all children
   - Receive cultural education in history, art, music, life experience, etc.
   - Unique experience in getting along with others who are quite different.
   - Worldview will be more comprehensive
   - If handled correctly, missions experience can contribute to family closeness
   - Special friendships, brothers and sisters in Christ from all over the world.

2. What are the challenges of parenting in another country?
   - The wisdom of grandparents and elders is far away. No or few support people, or mentors to look up to. You’re on your own.
   - Discipline and parenting standards vary to culture. Be prepared in your early years for the criticism that you aren’t doing it right. Later, hopefully they will ask you how to do “Christian” parenting.

3. What educational choices are there for your children?
   - In our case the public schools were excellent. Much better than the schools in the States.
   - Home schooling. There are many resources available today and companies that specialize in this.
   - Boarding schools aren’t a good idea. Estrangement from the family, feeling “sent away”. At an older age, this works for some.

4. How can a family stay together in the Lord on the field?
   - Create a “holy day”, a family day off together that your kids can count on.
   - Include your children in your work. Bring them with you on some visits. Ask them to pray for evangelistic studies that your having. Realize that they are an important part of the evangelistic team.
   - Remember that your children have souls too. Dedicate at least as much time (hopefully much more) individual attention to them as you would to any interested contact.

5. When should we return to the States?
   - In many countries you don’t have to. If you are fruitful and able, continue.
   - In some areas a return is necessary because of schooling conditions, or concerns for the children.
   - In our case, the best time for the children’s concern is before Junior High school.
   - If you are returning, consider the differences between the USA and foreign school systems and return before there is a noteworthy divergence in schooling methods and curriculum.
   - In our experience, returning in May or June was best so our children could adjust before starting into a new school system.

6. What emergencies warrant an early return?
   - Severe illness or handicap of a family member (although I know some who continue their work on the field).
If you are paralyzed by culture shock or burn out. If you are hiding inside rather than being out with the people. Extended depression or inability to generate new contacts.
- Out of spiritual concern for which you need greater resources than ones that can be found on the field.
- A probable family break up. Seek out help before it’s too late.

7. How can you avoid burnout?
   - Give a high priority to your devotional relationship with God.
   - Recreate, find an activity on the field that your family and you enjoy doing together and do it regularly.
   - Rest, make sure you take one day off each week. Rhythm and pacing yourself is absolutely necessary for longevity.
   - Form friendships with neighbors and with brothers and sisters in Christ.
   - Attend retreats or seminars that help fill your spiritual gas tank.

8. What do children face when moving to the States?
   - Culture shock. Your moving back, they are moving to.
   - Loss of friends
   - Loss of meaning. Before they were important and essential in the Kingdom. What will their new role be in the church and home?
   - Challenges at school
   - Learning to read and write in English

9. What can you do to make this adjustment easier?
   - Maintain family devotionals
   - Listen to your children
   - Don’t worry, realize that children have an incredible ability to adapt.
   - Take advantage of the benefits of returning to the States. (being with grandparents, for example).
   - Help them find service projects they can participate in at church.
   - Teach them some of the songs sung at church.

10. Comments from Jeremy (8 yrs) and Seth (10 yrs)
    - What were the best things about coming back?
      a. Jeremy “I didn’t move back, you did. I moved.”
      b. Seth “Being with grandparents more”
      c. Jeremy “that you are happy about your new job”
    - What was the hardest thing about coming to America?
      a. Leaving the church because we knew the Christians there so well and we were very close to them
      b. Leaving friends
    - Has it been hard to move to America?
      a. Yes…NO.
      b. School’s easier here and it’s easier to make friends. My teacher is nicer here.
    - What do you think about the church here?
      a. It’s too big
      b. Harder to follow what’s going on
      c. We don’t know the songs
    - What one piece of advice would you give to parents moving to the States after doing mission work?
      a. Don’t move, stay if you can
      b. Listen to your children