



*CULTURE, IDENTITY AND MISSIONARY
CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS*

*Your special contribution in building a
multicultural Australian Church*

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Multi-ethnic to a Multicultural Church

- To welcome, enable and integrate
- Pastoral care related to whole person at their point of need
- Recognise, respect cultural difference
- Value our various cultures & resource them
- Communicate cross-culturally
- Structural changes

Culture: a definition

- *Culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group*
- *has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration*
- *that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members*
- *as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.*

The power of culture

- It is unconsciously absorbed and rarely questioned
- How we feel about things, e.g. God. When, where and how often we relate to God
- What is holy, what is sin, what is good ritual
- How we think of family, community, authority, celebration, recreation
- Culture determines what is important and relevant, what is thinkable or unthinkable
- Culture is the framework within which we will inevitably situate everything we come to know
- We must preach to the hopes & fears of our people

The things we take for granted

“The most important thing we know about someone is what s(he) takes for granted: the most elemental and important facts about a society are those that are seldom debated and generally regarded as settled.”

Louis Worth

It is part of our identity and often only accessible when we live in another culture or we meet a stranger.

Migration is a risk –full of pain & possibilities

- Not everyone can do it
- Some never arrive psychologically – they cannot adapt and become hyper-critical of everything local
- For some it is an extremely painful experience
- But if it is successfully negotiated, it can be an expansion of our humanity bringing a new level of tolerance and understanding
- Can see things local cannot, sensitivity into the experience of other migrants
- Has a special role in helping the local church become multicultural

“Guests & Strangers”

- Mission “with” rather than “to”
- We all carry our church of origin with us
- But missionaries are guests and must learn to live on their host’s terms - meet local needs
- We should be learners – searching for meaning in local terms
- Missionaries are strangers – and cannot demand legitimacy
- All mission is done in relationship - receiving & giving

Birth pangs of a new Australia & Australian Church

- We are clearly at the beginning of a multi-ethnic if not multicultural future
- We are conscious of this but need systematic reflection and planning
- We will need cultural awareness, cross-cultural communication skills, pastoral competence, orientation programmes, mentoring and support programmes, if we are to live happily, creatively and fully in such a society and church
- You have a special role to play
- You are more than priests filling gaps in the church's sacramental life
- Our goal is to live happily & creatively while building a truly multicultural Australian Church
- And contributing to building the Reign of God in Australia