

INTERCULTURAL LIVING

Exploration in
Missiology

The Challenge of Intercultural Living Anthropological and Theological Implications

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Overview

Community and identity today are very different from what they were a century ago, in membership, missiology, focus, and works. The impact of geographical and social mobility has reshaped the contours of international religious institutions. *Assimilation was the* recruitment model: culturally or linguistically different aspirants were expected to "fit in," while the broader community continued, with minimum disturbance.

My thesis is this: given the global changes occurring in the lifetime of today's senior members, the future of international religious communities must increasingly and intentionally become intercultural. Without the tectonic shift from "international" to "intercultural" there will simply be no viable future for international religious orders.

The challenge facing *everyone* now, old and new alike, is to identify and respond to the demands of intercultural living. The broader community must engage with the cultural identity of newer members and abandon the assimilation model as "unfit for purpose," and individual members must respond to the challenge of intercultural living by embracing it wholeheartedly or halfheartedly, or by resisting it and waiting for death. Everyone must stand and be counted: the future, viable or not, depends on it.

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Guiding Principles

The following might provide a framework for intercultural living. Based on certain principles a community is built, its operational methodologies are worked out, and the community members interact with one another.

We Must Build a Home for All

Theoretically, a religious community is the primary group to which we belong by profession; in practice, it can be far from that. We are called to build something in which all can live harmoniously, to which each can lay equal claim, and for which everyone assumes responsibility. Jonathan Sacks contrasts various places of residence, from family home to hotel, nursing home or prison, distinguished according to rights and responsibilities, degrees of freedom or ownership, and comfort level. Reflection on the sense of belonging that each one evokes, and on their advantages and disadvantages, might help us visualize whether a particular community is suited to its various purposes.¹

"A house is not a home"; and a religious community is not a retirement home. A family home is more than a group of relatives living under one roof, it is an *evolving, organic entity*. Its shape constantly changes as spouses become parents, as a child gains a sibling, and as siblings mature. Each person has needs, rights, and has different temperaments. Family survival depends on the quality of interaction between each member and requires compromise and adaptability to unforeseen circumstances. As the children begin to leave home, everyone is affected. A family exhibits elements of stability and change and cannot survive without drama, trauma, fusion, and fission.

Intercultural communities can be compared to a family home. They bear a great responsibility for becoming "fit for purpose" as nurturers of faith and places of mutual support and challenge. They are public witnesses to the possibility that people of different cultures and languages, but a common faith and vision, can thrive for a purpose beyond individual whim or comfort, and *as* a sign of the kingdom or realm of God. But "if identity resembles a hotel, identity will be, not in integration, but separation."²

We Must Learn to Appreciate Our Differences

An enduring human challenge is to value difference positively and constructively. The "cultural flaw" is the human propensity to define by differentiation, and to use the differences to justify discrimination. "To define" is to set boundaries, mark off, delimit, or

distinguish. While it is quite true that I am *not* Chinese, young, female, a physiotherapist, artist or activist, defining myself in this negative fashion discloses very little about my actual identity. The great human paradox is that we are all the same and all different, simultaneously; the great folly is for humanity to be alienated itself by using differences to disagree, dissent and discriminate, and with appalling consequences.

Genesis tells of a community: individuals in unity. Man, woman, and creator are a community-of-difference. The Fall drove a wedge between the humans and God, and between the man and the woman, fracturing the community now marked by enmity and opposition: an original "we" becomes polarized and opposed, as "us" and "them."

In an old rabbinic story,³ the teacher asks the disciples: "When do you know it is dawn?" One says, "when you can distinguish a white thread from a black one." "No," says the teacher. "When you can *see* the outline of a tree against the horizon," ventures another. "No," says the teacher, to this and to all other efforts to answer the question. Finally, he says, "when you can look into the *eyes* of a stranger and see a sister or a brother, then it *is* dawn; until then, it is still night." This summarizes the process and challenge of becoming intercultural communities. We certainly have to identify and learn the skills to engage with our own cultural conditioning, during which, and subtly, the cataracts of ethnocentrism and other biases and prejudices cloud our vision. Such skills are not easily attained, especially during mid- and later life. But we have a model to help us negotiate our prejudices and can take comfort from the fact that it is not through deliberate fault that we create misunderstanding and frustration; they are from our cultural conditioning. The lesson is to learn to overcome our prejudices.

The Letter to the Ephesians identifies the "cultural flaw" that opposed and alienated Jew and Greek (Gentile) until Jesus himself came to remove the barrier between "us" (Jews) and "them" (Greeks) by bridging that barrier with his own body and thus drawing each side to a new relationship with himself as mediator or link. Ephesians 2:1-2 and 11-16 bear serious reflection and discussion. The passages dramatically describe an "us/them" world becoming a world of "we." It required cultural imperatives to yield to grace. What God created was good, declared seven times in the first creation story, culminating with God's verdict that "indeed it was very good" (Gen 1:31). We must urgently rediscover the dignity of difference and celebrate it in our intercultural communities.

³ This story, officially cited as "source unknown," abounds in various forms. Mine is a paraphrase as indeed are they all. Versions can be found at <https://tinw.org> (search The Face of Our Brother), or philipchircop.wordpress.com.

1. Jonathan Sacks, *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (New York: Continuum Books, 2007).
2. *Ibid.*, 82.

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The "cultural flaw" is a residual sign of the sin marking every culture and person; but we are also touched by grace. We must identify both sin and grace in self and others, not comparing the grace in our lives and cultures with the sin we find in others. The agenda of those striving for intercultural community is taxing and not accomplished painlessly. But by God's grace and our commitment, we can put our hands to the plow and not look back. "Peace involves a profound crisis of identity. The boundaries of self and other, friend and foe, must be re-drawn."

We Need to Rethink the Way We Think

People influenced by Western cultures operate out of a largely *dialectical* (oppositional or exclusive) mode of thought; either/or thinking pursues an argument until it concludes that one person or thesis is right and another is wrong. By contrast, *analogical* (complementary or inclusive) thinking looks for compromise between two extremes, finding truth or validity in each: this is both/and. thinking. As we develop principles and practices of intercultural living, we need to shift from dialectical to analogical thinking. Each side or perspective may offer valuable insights; each person needs to feel that there is no *us* and *them*, but only a community seeking to identify itself inclusively as *we*. As Rudy Wiebe expressed it, "you repent, not by feeling bad but by thinking different[ly]."⁵ But this is considerably more difficult than simply feeling bad; it is relatively easy to do the latter, but after a lifetime of learning how to think, and to think that our thinking is right thinking, we become rather resistant to thinking differently.

Members of international religious communities today need to face the urgent task of learning the skills and virtues required of each person, though the challenge is formidable, especially perhaps (but not inevitably) for some older members. After all, the gospel calls everyone to ongoing conversion. And in today's multicultural, globalized world, new challenges have arisen and will not disappear.

From Monocultural to Intercultural: The Terminology

Without a common understanding of major ideas, communication is impossible. We need a common vocabulary for discussing intercultural living, partly theological but much of it sociological. Precision of language is critical.

Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 8.
Rudy Wiebe, *The Blue Mountains of China* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 215-16.

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Monocultural and Bicultural

Historically, most people other than nomads have lived and died within a world with a radius of perhaps no more than ten miles. Very few human beings are truly bicultural. Exceptionally, climate or access to food dictates a move, but usually a significant number will be involved; "people like us" describes a monocultural group. Beyond the arena of "people like us" are "people not like us," mostly encountered by individuals, explorers, or traders. Most people live and die within their own social group or culture.

True biculturalism develops in those growing up within a stable domestic arena in which each parent speaks a different native language. A child is socialized in a bilingual context, perhaps benefiting from moving physically between the territories in which each parent was raised, finding it perfectly natural to shift between two languages ("code-switching") and two geographical territories. But bicultural is also applied to someone growing up in one culture and later encountering another culture and language, learning each sufficiently to be able to pass more or less freely between two worlds. If that person is not living in the milieu in which he or she was raised, the more appropriate term would be cross-cultural. I will use bicultural to apply to a person living in two cultural and linguistic worlds simultaneously, as do many bilingual Mexican-Americans, Korean-Americans, and so on.

Cross-Cultural

A cross-cultural person belongs originally to one culture ("culture A") but later moves beyond its confines to reside for a number of years in another environment ("culture B"). The person from culture A is no longer "at home," but the people of culture B are perfectly so. The cross-cultural person is an outsider or stranger in culture B and must learn a new culture and language, the former being every bit as challenging as the latter. Some people naively think that if they commit to the formal learning of a new language, learning the culture will happen naturally. This is a dangerous simplification: adults must learn a new culture with as much care, attention, and trial-and-error as they would learn a new language.

The cross-cultural person remains an outsider, since an adult cannot simply be assimilated into a new culture. But outsiders come in many shapes and forms, typically "participating" or "nonparticipating." The former can be of great value to the insiders, while the latter are at best irrelevant (like tourists, whose value is not in their intentional contribution to the community), and at worst destructive (like an invading army). Unsurprisingly, the host population will take time and carefully scrutinize well-intentioned incomers before giving them the kind of welcome they seek.

Becoming a cross-cultural person evidently depends as much on the response of the indigenous population as it does on the *bona fides* of the would-be

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cross-cultural person. A transitional "testing time," often lasting months or years and not without pain and frustration, will precede wholehearted acceptance; it is a necessary form of self-protection for local communities that often carry bad memories of previous ungracious and threatening strangers. During this time, the incomer is expected to be learning the cultural rules, responsibilities and sanctions necessary for smooth day to day living.

Multicultural

Any neighborhood, country (or parish) comprised of people of many cultures is *de facto* a multicultural community; but this says nothing about how people of one culture relate to people of another. (the *how* pertains specifically to *intercultural* living). Multiculturalism can be dealt with in many ways, from indifference to hostility, tolerance to friendship, or civility to collaboration. Differences can be eliminated by anything from genocide to assimilation, tolerated by indifference or unconcern, or managed: negatively by "separate development" (*chacun pour soi* or mutual apathy leaving everyone in a state of enduring *liminality*); or positively by mutual cooperation and the encouragement of diversity, as one might create an orchestra or chorus. Awareness of the features of a multicultural society provides a good stepping-stone to intercultural community.

Intercultural

From the 1950s when the discipline that studied the effects of cross-cultural contact was being developed and the vocabulary was unstable, multicultural and intercultural were often used synonymously. This fledgling discipline arose from the social sciences, including cultural anthropology, sociology, and psychology. But gradually, theology, specifically **mission** studies, became aware of the cultural dynamics at work in situations of mission *ad extra*. When theological language is employed, standard usage now distinguishes multicultural (sociological) and intercultural (theological). The former identifies a social reality within neighborhoods or voluntary associations; the latter carries specific theological overtones. An intercultural community shares intentional commitment to the common life, motivated not by pragmatic considerations alone, but by a shared religious conviction and common purpose.

Multinationals hire people who travel internationally and extensively. They need skills for communicating with a wide variety of business partners. For decades, such skills have been identified, taught, and acquired across the business world. Meanwhile, many religiously-based communities have encountered the challenges posed by their increasingly multicultural membership and the awareness of the near-bankruptcy of the standard assimilation model of recruitment ("Come join us, and we will teach you to do things our way").

Over the years, the contours of intercultural living and ministry have become increasingly dear. But partly because they have been shaped by previously gained insights from the social sciences, the majority of people in today's international religious communities have been unaware of, struggled with, or resisted the challenge (which is fast becoming a real imperative) of intercultural living.

Intercultural living is a faith-based and lifelong process of conversion, emerging in recent decades as a requirement of members of intentional, international religious communities. Healthy intercultural living depends on the level of commitment and support generated by every member of the community. Individuals vary in their adaptability and learning-levels, but each one generates positive or negative energy, and the quality of intercultural living depends significantly on the aggregate of positive energy generated by the whole group. A small, resistant group can generate enough negative energy to thwart the wider community. The future of international religious life depends significantly on the ability of each community (local and institutional) to live intercultural; those that fail to do so will fragment or die.

Before identifying the dynamics of intercultural living, we need to address culture, since this is the context for lived faith; there is no person without culture, and faith can only be lived culturally. We live our Christian faith not in a vacuum and not without a specific cultural context; but intercultural living happens in multicultural contexts, since lives unfold in varied contexts. So culture is of paramount significance.

Culture

Most people assume they can identify and understand culture, but it is the topic that needs the most clarification. It is recognizable under many forms, and every human person, raised in a social environment, has culture. But no one is *born* with culture, and, given different social circumstances, any individual might have become socialized or *acculturated* differently. A baby boy born and raised in Shanghai by Chinese parents will become culturally Chinese, all things being equal. But that very same child, flown to Chicago soon after birth, and adopted by Euro-American parents, will become acculturated as a Euro-American. Environment and socialization are critically important.

Descriptively, *we* can identify culture in a number of ways. Each merits a much deeper treatment than we can offer here. Culture is,

- *The [hu]man-made part of the environment*: It includes *materials* (artifacts, buildings), *institutional elements* (politics, kinship, economics, belief, and thought/religion), *symbolic elements* (writing, orality, and words-objects-gestures to "say the unsayable"), and *moral* components (values, virtues, and their opposites, vices).

- *The form of social life:* Identified in the actual ("normal," habitual and approved, or "deviant," acknowledged and disapproved) behavior of a social group, it can be interpreted through the underlying belief-and-thought system. But there will always be a discrepancy between what people *say* they believe, approve, or disapprove of, and actual observed behavior. Social life is not always harmonious, virtuous, or lawful. But insiders (and outsiders with appropriate knowledge) can identify ignoble and heroic behavior. Social pathology and virtue can be found within any social system. Culture is expressed in "customary" (not simply individual) behavior, backed by sanctions.
- *A meaning-making system:* A system pervades a whole society and makes intelligible communication possible, given certain standards and rules. Communication can work at several levels, and a meaning-making system need not be technically perfect. So with culture. Linguistics distinguishes *grammaticality* (strict rule conformity), *acceptability* (appropriate information transfer), and *meaningfulness* (adequate information transfer) as three criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of communication. *Rule-governed creativity* allows a virtually infinite number of utterances to be generated *and understood* with a limited core of grammatical rules (about fifty). Natural to the native speaker, it is a very difficult acquisition for those struggling with a second language. The rules of chess are few yet the moves are limitless; it will be years before members of intercultural communities become as proficient as chess players.
- *Culture as skin:* The skin is the human body's largest organ. Grafting it is difficult and sometimes impossible. If it is severely burned, death may be inevitable. And yet skin can tolerate scars, blemishes, wrinkles, and many dermatological conditions. We cannot be "in someone else's skin"; and if ours were to be stripped or "flayed," we would certainly die. Cultures, like skin, need not be perfect and can tolerate wear and tear as well as trauma, but the integrity of the skin is as necessary for life as is the integrity of a culture.
- *An enduring social reality:* Cultures rise and fall, flourish and die, and no culture appears to be immortal; here are features to provide food for thought and discussion for anyone attempting to live interculturally. Culture is transmitted over time, through the generations; it is an ongoing process rather than a simple social fact. Although some cultures (termed "traditional") may appear to be in stasis or equilibrium, every culture is in process of change, whether relatively slow or very fast. Some cultures adapt better to change than others. Reality (what people consider to be real) is socially constructed: people are born into a preexisting community that has already interpreted the world and determined the meaning of things, events, and relationships. The process of socialization or enculturation

extends through the first decades of life, when an individual is aggregated to the preexisting world of meaning. Once adequately socialized, it becomes increasingly difficult to think that our thought or ways are wrong.

Spirituality and Intercultural living

Faith can be lived only within a cultural context, because to be an integrated human person is to be a person of culture. Having identified some of culture's features, we must consider how faith and culture coexist. Christian spirituality is essentially the (new) life given at baptism by the Holy Spirit to guide our faith journey through life. It might be described as a *way of being in the world with God*, when each variable—way, being, world, God—is shaped according to an individual's experience. Through a single lifetime, a person may embrace a number of possible ways (single, married, celibate; having a profession, trade, or employment), experience different states of being (from youth to age and health to sickness), live in a number of different worlds (from rural to urban, tropical to temperate), and relate in different ways to God (Jesus, Spirit, Father; Lord, King, Warrior; Creator, Redeemer, Wisdom).

Spirituality is far more than beliefs. It shapes and is shaped by our attitude to Creator and creation, how we pray or express our embodied selves, how we respond to suffering, disaster, and tragedy, and our life choices. From our perspective, it is critically important to acknowledge the many legitimate cultural and personal expressions of Christian spirituality, realizing that these will create challenges when we discuss liturgy, prayer, ritual, music, dance, language, silence, privacy, conformity, and so on. We must discover ways to approach our cultural differences, with a view to forging an enduring intercultural community. Some of the most contentious issues within a community are also, if approached sympathetically and creatively, enriching for all. Here we can itemize only the following four as among the most worthy of serious consideration.

Social Location

Everyone lives within a *microcosm* or enclosed world: the individual body, a room within a house, a neighborhood within a city, or a nation within the world. Beyond the *microcosm* is a *Macrocosm*: a larger world, a community beyond the individual, a school beyond a classroom, a country beyond one's border, or universe beyond one's world. All creation can be seen as consisting of worlds within worlds and worlds beyond worlds. In community building, the *relationship* between *microcosm* and *macrocosm* is critically important. A particular *microcosm* may be closed (strong) or open (weak) in relation to the *macrocosm* beyond; the more closed it is, the more resistant

to extraneous contact or interference, while the more open it is, the more accommodating or welcoming to outside communication will people be.

More interesting than individuals' greater or lesser openness to external forces or relationships is the social fact that whole groups of people (different cultures) exhibit the same dynamic. Some individuals welcome "otherness," in the form of other people, technology, or ways of living, while some appear almost programmed to be suspicious or wary of otherness, in other people, technology, or ways. But when a whole culture exhibits such trends, social facts cannot be reduced to individuals' whims or prejudices.

Intercultural community building requires that serious consideration be given to how members were shaped by their social location, and how tolerant a community can be of individual variation that cannot simply be reduced to personal choice or comfort, or handled by diktat. Conversation about the social geography, the place where individuals were born, the circumstances of their socialization, the climate, the amount of contact with outsiders, or the degree of social mobility will create an informed community and should lead to greater mutual understanding and empathy.

Body Tolerance

Culture and temperament shape attitudes to one's own body, and all must be sensitive to cultural differences. "Body tolerance" is one's comfort level regarding bodily display or reserve, not itself correlated with immodesty or modesty. Every society has norms of modesty, but there is a range of cultural difference; sensitivity and enquiry are required if people are to learn mutual respect.

We can visualize a continuum ranging from "low body tolerance" (Apollonian) to "high body tolerance" (Dionysian). "Apollonian" (after the god Apollo) designates a serene, ordered, disciplined demeanor, and bodily display that is poised and controlled. "Dionysian" (after the god Dionysus) refers to a more relaxed, spontaneous, uninhibited person or style. Some individual differences exist, and there is some correlation between colder or more temperate regions (Apollonian), where bodies are swathed in heavy, uniform clothing, and the warmer, more tropical regions (Dionysian), where people are less constrained and more flamboyant in dress and demeanor.

Official documents of the Catholic Church refer to "the noble simplicity of the Roman Rite": this describes an Apollonian style adopted—indeed imposed—universally. Recently, some things have changed, yet for many communities the Roman Rite remains overchoreographed and too predictable and controlled. Generally, African Americans and others are much more Dionysian than German or British people. But the style of many Asian cultures tends toward the Apollonian. Communities seeking liturgical renewal often find that rules and rubrics range from the awkward to the irksome.

Within intercultural communities, cultural and individual behaviors relating to body tolerance can be very difficult to reconcile, and community members can find that liturgy and prayer, designed to gather, unite, and lead to God, are the major occasions for tension, disharmony, and frustration in the community. Open conversation and true dialogue are needed if community members are to appreciate that the significant differences between individuals are not simply a matter of whim or preference, but coded in their cultural makeup. Topics might include: What was your usual mode of dress: formal or casual, "up" or "down," loose- or tight-fitting, uniform or varied? How much did you wear: a lot or a little; seasonally varied or perennial? How did you present your body: (mostly) concealed or revealed; overdressed or underdressed? What was your attitude to personal and communal nakedness? How would you describe personal modesty? During childhood, and in initial formation in religious life, were most people's attitudes to bodily display and concealment similar to or different from your own?

Health and Sickness

People have very different cultural attitudes to sickness and death. In a highly medicalized society, serious sickness is often presented as a temporary irritant to be cured with maximum speed and minimum pain; and death as something to be postponed almost indefinitely. Even during the dying process, the prospect of recovery is routinely advertised by medical professionals, so death comes as a surprise. Before death, the terminally ill are routinely removed from home and institutionalized, thus minimizing people's encounters with death; to a significant degree, it *takes* place beyond the ordinary daily routine and away from the domestic sphere.

But in societies where expensive and extreme medical expertise is not widely available, sickness is much more frequently encountered by almost everyone, and a person who is evidently ailing is very often cared for and surrounded by family, until death. Even when someone is hospitalized, many family members cook, tend for, and support the dying person. Few mothers have not experienced the death of an infant or small child, and few children have not seen a number of dead persons immediately prior to their burial. Death is part of life; so much so that in many traditions the deceased person will be buried at the threshold of the door or adjacent to the family home.

Cultural attitudes to health and sickness, death and dying, will inevitably show up on the occasion of the dying or death of a member of an intercultural community, or of a parent or sibling. Talking about such attitudes, the better to prepare the whole community, is highly advisable, though a delicate topic to raise dispassionately.

Time and Space

Cultural attitudes to time (chronemics) are notoriously varied, as are attitudes to space and privacy. Linear or chronological time marks time's regular passage as measured by a clock—or the sun. But some people rarely see the sun, and others rarely tell time by a clock or watch. Not by chance do "clock-watchers" speak of time using verbs associated with economics: saving, wasting, losing, using, or spending time. Nor is it coincidental that in such societies, where people worked long hours for a company or institution, they received a gold watch if they reached retirement age. Up to this moment their time had been largely governed by their employers; the phrase was "time is money," or "your time is not your own." Now their time is finally their own again—a fact symbolized by the gold watch: now, finally, their time is their own.

In rural or nonindustrialized society, the sun is the primary measure of time. People rise and sleep with sunrise and sunset. If electricity is expensive, intermittent, or nonexistent and people have little of what others call "leisure time," they seem less driven and freer to do what they choose. Time is not a commodity to save or waste but the backdrop to daily life. If "clock-watchers" complain of having too little time, people elsewhere usually find that they can make their own priorities and accomplish what is needed. Their attitude is determined as much by culture as by personal whim.

Likewise, attitudes to space (proxemics) can be considered. How people relate physically to others is partly a matter of temperament and appropriateness. Some people like to get close, while others maintain a certain distance. But culture and context also determine appropriate distance and closeness between specific people. People of different cultures need to adjust, and this can be a delicate and even embarrassing process.

Questions arise and might be discussed profitably in a community setting. Did you unconsciously relate to time as a scarce commodity (did you "save, waste, spend, keep, lose" time)? Do you sometimes or often wish you were somewhere else and doing something else? Would you rather be younger? And in relation to ideas about space: How highly do you value personal privacy? Can you live alone? Are you afraid of enclosed/open spaces? Do you favor prayer and liturgy that is more interiorized and private or more social and public?

Living Interculturally

So much remains unsaid. We have not explored "cultural profiles" that contrast egocentric and sociocentric societies, identify different cultural and individual emphases, and show likely tension points for communities. Nor

did we identify the shift that can move a community from assimilation to inclusion and welcome. But we can conclude with some features that mark intercultural communities.

The most important focus is a common project, but not just some practical task. A community may repair property after a storm or undertake a fundraising drive; these are not a "common project." For a faith-based religious community, the common project that would be the community's best understanding of and response to what God is asking would be what draws the attention and stimulates the vitality of each member. It may be the "mission statement," founding charism, or *raison d'être*; and it needs to live not in documents or nostalgic memories but in each and every one. As a plant or animal will die without water, so a community's zeal and focus will atrophy unless its common project is nurtured and tended. And this requires a number of corollary features or qualities.

First, a common project is only common if everyone's contribution is sought and acknowledged; exclusion of any, or disrespect for individual efforts, will undermine their commitment, leave too much to specialists, or become an ideological preoccupation. Second, the atmosphere within the community must be such that people will take appropriate risks and sometimes fail, but mistakes and immaturity will not be so strongly sanctioned as to stifle future effort. Third, because of inevitable misunderstandings and frustrations built in to the community, life must be a forum or procedure allowing people to vent their frustrations publicly, without feeling intimidated, inhibited, or accused of cultivating personal animosity. If one person's frustration is allowed to surface, others can identify with it and move to take constructive rather than destructive measures.

A fourth, complementary, feature is that appropriate correction is sometimes necessary, and leadership is responsible for finding appropriate action. Vindictiveness is unjustifiable, but attentive listening, perhaps mediation, and flexibility are required, as well as sincere attempts at fence mending and an ongoing commitment to dialogue and development. Fifth, attention must be given to stress or depression and differences that can harden unless individuals' psychological well-being is supported and misunderstandings (arising as much from overload as from language differences or bad will) resolved. Finally, members of an intercultural community need to feel that they are all on the same side, working for common goals and the implementation of a common vision. This requires compassion and concern, and sometimes explicit encouragement rather than simply a lack of criticism. Each of these incidences and responses may occur in any human interaction, but in the case of a developing intercultural community; they will require more careful diagnosis and response than they would if all the parties shared a common culture and language.