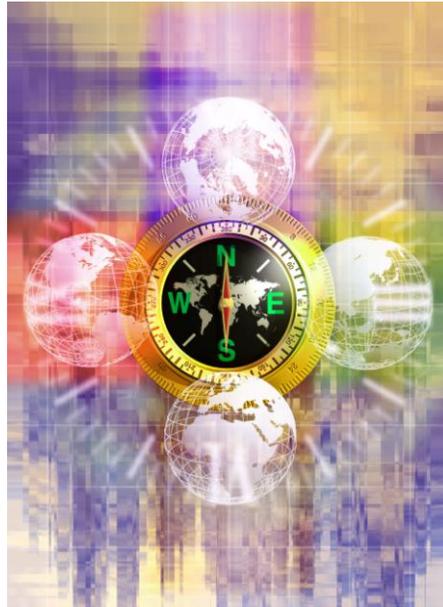


Cross-Cultural Perspectives of the Director



Determining Global Values

Max DePree in *Leadership is an Art* tells of a friend, Dr. Carl Frost, who had an interesting experience in Nigeria during the sixties. Electricity had newly been introduced to the village where Dr. Frost and his family were living. Each family received one light bulb in its home. This was progress. Problems came at night. Families would sit in their little houses and stare at the lonely light bulb. Light-bulb watching replaced gathering around the fire, where storytellers would pass along history. The people “were losing its history in the light of a few electric bulbs.” DePree concludes that every family, college, and institution needs storytellers. “The penalty for refusing to listen is to lose one’s history, one’s historical context, one’s binding values. Like the Nigerian tribe, without the continuity brought by custom, any group of people will begin to forget who they are.” It has been said, “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we are.” I would like to rephrase that. “We teach what we know. We reproduce what we value.”

“Value” speaks of what is significant, useful, or important. What is valuable to one person may not be so to another. Core values; existing at the heart of all we do, think, and speak. If removed, the context of everything that surrounds them is destroyed. There can be no solid system or structure without a set of core values. Andrew Seidel in *Charting a New Course* revealed, “We all have values that we live by, whether we are conscious of them or not. Our values energize the motives that drive our actions. The important thing is that we consciously choose the values we live by.” Ray Disney, the nephew of Walt Disney, once said, “It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.”

The church is universal so has a set of core values that do not change based on location. They are worldwide, timeless, and we simply cannot survive without them. They serve as the compass for all we

do. If handled properly and consistently they can not only impact, but transform, the cultures we work in. There is no need for us to testify, “We will never be able to change the culture!” Take a look at history. Such statements do not hold true with someone whose distant ancestor was a cannibal, slave trader, or headhunter. Every spiritual organization, church, theological school and even the Foreign Missions Division shares at least these four values:

- ❖ We value truth.
- ❖ We value spiritual growth.
- ❖ We value evangelism (missions).
- ❖ We value relationships (with others and with God).

This lesson is deeply developed in our new *Advance Educator’s Series*, a faculty development program with the Global Association of Theological Studies. Check it (and many other lessons) out at <http://gatsonline.org/advancementforfaculty.html>.